

# Understanding Immigration through Icons, Images, and Institutions: The Politics and Poetics of Putting the Globe on Display

PEGGY LEVITT, *Department of Sociology, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA 02481, USA. Email: plevitt@wellesley.edu*

---

According to the World Bank, one in every seven people in the world today is a migrant. Many of these people maintain ties to their homelands at the same time that they become part of the places where they move. These dynamics challenge long-standing assumptions about how and where people raise their families, how class and gender are constituted, and where the rights and responsibilities of citizenship get fulfilled. Key concerns for policy-making moving forward are: (1) How and where might we imagine a different kind of nation that does not necessarily stop at its geographic borders? Where are new understandings of identity and citizenship that take multiple identities and allegiances into account being produced? What does it mean to be a national citizen and a global citizen at the same time? (2) How and where are new kinds of social welfare institutions being created that respond more effectively to people's mobile lives, and (3) Where do we acquire the values and skills needed to create successful diverse communities? How and where is knowledge production shifting to create a more inclusive canon that supports greater cosmopolitanism? In this article I respond briefly to each of these questions by sharing findings from my previous research and by charting new directions forward.

**Key words:** immigration, transnational, social protection, museums, culture, canon

---

The world is in the throes of a terrible refugee crisis. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015), in 2014 there were almost 60 million refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) around the globe. That is approximately one in every 122 people. This is roughly the equivalent of all Italians having to leave their homes, and it does not include the large numbers of Syrian refugees who are being forced to flee their homes every day (United Nations Information Service 2014).

And the world is struggling to cope. Greece, Italy, and Turkey, facing serious economic problems of their own, have assumed the lion's share of the burden. Germany and Sweden, at first generous, are now rethinking their open-door policies. In fact, as I write this, Danish lawmakers approved a measure that would

Published online: Month XX, 2016

*Journal of Anthropological Research* (Fall 2016). ©2016 by The University of New Mexico.

All rights reserved. 0091-7710/2016/7203-00XX\$10.00

take refugees' cash and valuables to defray the cost of their support (anything over 10,000 kroner or \$1,450 US), excluding such sentimental items as wedding rings (Bilesky 2016).

As Europeans argue over what to do with the millions crossing their borders, the United States faces an immigration crisis of its own. In 2015, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump even went so far as to call for a ban on all Muslim immigrants entering the United States (*New York Times* 2016). Gridlock has prevented Congress from making any progress toward reforming our immigration system during the Obama administration. This means that the estimated 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. in 2014 will continue to languish in the shadows, in a semi-permanent state of second-class citizenship and disenfranchisement.

Forced migration is not the only category of movement that is increasing. In 2014, William Swing, director general of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), stated that in addition to the 214 million international migrants are an estimated 740 million internal migrants worldwide (IOM 2015). Thus, nearly one billion people (or roughly one in seven people in the world today) are voluntary or involuntary internal or international migrants. More and more, they move between countries in the global south rather than from south to north.

These numbers are expected to keep growing. The World Bank (2015) predicts that the number of international migrants will exceed 250 million by 2016, an all-time high. And these people are sending lots of money back home. In fact, according to some estimates, migrants will send \$601 billion to their families in their home countries this year, with developing countries receiving \$441 billion (World Bank 2016). Migrants are also a tremendous source of ideas, know-how, and skills, and some governments try systematically to harvest these social remittances as well (Levitt 2001). Although the World Bank predicts that economic remittances will decline because of weakened economies in Europe and Russia, they are still one of the principal sources of foreign currency in many countries. Home-country governments that now depend on these funds, such as those of Mexico, Morocco, or the Philippines, want to ensure that the money keeps coming. More and more, they offer dual citizenship, the expatriate vote, investment incentives, and social assistance to migrants in the countries where they settle, to encourage their continuing loyalty, involvement, and financial contributions.

These high levels of movement create what some social scientists call "super-diverse" cities, a term first coined to capture changing migration patterns in Europe. Initially, most migrants hailed from a relatively small group of countries (e.g., the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean, in the case of England). Over the past decade, however, the large numbers of asylum seekers, international students, and labor and professional migrants moving to the continent came from a much wider range of places, faiths, language groups, and immigration statuses. A city such as London has residents from as many as 184 nationalities, with 300 first languages spoken in state-run schools (Spencer 2012).

How these people answer the question “who are you?” gets complicated. They might respond that they are Pakistani or British, Karachites or Londoners. They might also say that they are Muslim, a professor, or an environmentalist, thereby claiming their place in society through their membership in a religious, professional, or activist group.

Many of these people stay active in their homelands, either by choice or because they have no alternative. They continue to vote, invest in businesses, and participate in civic associations in their homelands at the same time that they buy homes, open stores, and join community groups in the places where they settle. Putting down roots where you move, while continuing to remain active in the economics and politics of your homeland, is not just for poor or working-class migrants. There are many highly skilled professionals in the board rooms and bedrooms of cities and suburbs around the world who also buy homes, raise children, invest, and cast ballots across borders. Nor are immigrant integration and enduring homeland ties necessarily at odds with one another. It is possible to be involved simultaneously in one’s homeland and one’s host country. In fact, it turns out that many of the most highly integrated migrants are often the most active in homeland affairs (Portes et al. 2002).

For some migrants, living across borders comes easily. They have the education, skills, and social contacts to take advantage of opportunities anywhere. Many more, such as the numerous construction workers, gardeners, and caregivers who come to the United States from Mexico, are forced into transnational lives because they cannot gain a secure foothold in their home or host countries. Either way, today’s migrants are moving in a world of economic crisis, neoliberal restructuring, precarious jobs, and major cutbacks in social welfare.

These dynamics challenge long-standing assumptions about how people live—how and where they raise their families, how class and gender are constituted, and where the rights and responsibilities of citizenship get fulfilled. But while more and more people live transnational lives, they are still served by legal, pension, education, and health care systems that are stubbornly national in nature and scope. The social contract between state and citizen is national, but immigrants’ lives are not.

Key concerns for policy-making moving forward are: (1) How and where might we imagine a different kind of nation that does not necessarily stop at its geographic borders? Where are new understandings of identity and citizenship being produced and spread that take multiple identities and allegiances as the rule rather than the exception? What does it mean to be a national citizen and a global citizen at the same time? (2) How and where are new kinds of social welfare institutions being created that respond more effectively to people’s mobile lives, and (3) Where do we acquire the values and skills needed to create successful diverse communities? How and where is knowledge production shifting to create a more inclusive canon that supports greater cosmopolitanism?

I want to respond briefly to each of these questions by sharing findings from my previous research and by charting new directions forward. First, I will share some findings from my work on museums and their role in disseminating different understandings of the nation and in creating national and global citizens at the same time (Levitt 2015). Next, I will discuss ongoing research on new types of transnational social protection that are being put in place in response to people's more mobile lives (Levitt et al. 2016). Then, I will briefly discuss my new research which grows out of these questions. When we understand the nation differently and recognize that many people are national and global citizens, what is it that global citizens need to know? In other words, are the global literary and artistic canons broadening to include more voices from different parts of the world? How might we understand how those changes come about?

### WHAT IS COSMOPOLITANISM?

First I want to discuss the concept of "cosmopolitanism" before developing my argument about the role of museums in disseminating the ideas, skills, and political activism with which it is associated. *Cosmopolitanism* is a term that comes with so much Western-centric baggage that many believe it is beyond repair. Others, however, myself included, believe it is a project we cannot afford to abandon. At the end of the day, in this world of heightened diversity and movement, our greatest challenge is to learn to get along.

Many scholars agree, suggesting ways in which to resuscitate and reform the notion of cosmopolitanism. Paul Gilroy (2005), for example, writes of conviviality; Bryan Turner (2002) describes a sense of responsibility that leads people to care about other cultures, to distance themselves so they can reflect on their own cultures, and to take part in cross-cultural criticism and dialogue. According to Ulf Hannerz (1990:239), competent cosmopolitans have the ability to make their way "into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting." Cosmopolitanism has, according to Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco (2009:6), "*a mode of self-transformation*, which occurs when individuals and groups engage in concrete struggles to protect a common humanity and become more reflective about their experiences with otherness" (emphasis in original). Elijah Anderson (2011) wrote about "cosmopolitan canopies" under which diverse people come together, and Nina Glick Schiller et al. (2011) describe cosmopolitan sociabilities, or the skills and competencies people need to participate openly and inclusively in these spaces.

Hiro Saito's (2011) view of cosmopolitanism has three parts: cultural omnivorousness, ethnic tolerance, and cosmopolitics. Cultural omnivorousness is the willingness to appreciate a wide variety of cultural objects. Ethnic tolerance consists of having a positive attitude toward ethnic groups others than your own. Cultural omnivorousness and ethnic tolerance, according to Saito, refer to the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of cosmopolitanism, whereas *cosmopolitics* captures its political dimension.

In my research on museums, I approached cosmopolitanism as an empirical question. I asked 163 museum professionals how they would define it and whether they saw themselves as creating cosmopolitans through their work. Our conversations also revealed a three-part view of cosmopolitanism. For some people, it is an idea or ethos. For others, it is a set of skills and practices that we need to engage with different people and experiences. For others, it was a political project—what would a cosmopolitan world look like, and what we would have to do to create it? Cosmopolitan values and skills generally included such things as curiosity, tolerance, empathy, listening, critical thinking, listening, and being open to interact with different people and experiences. Human rights, democracy, and gender equality were also mentioned, but by no means by everyone.

Not everyone is able or willing to sign on to creating a more cosmopolitan world. Citizenship status, class, and gender are just some of the factors that make cosmopolitanism more accessible and appealing to some than to others. Nor is the idea to agree on a standardized shopping list of “universal” values. In fact, rejecting understandings of cosmopolitanism that don’t match our own is a distinctly uncosmopolitan stance. Rather, my work revealed that cosmopolitanism might be best understood as recognizing the urgent need to have a respectful, constructive conversation about what our common ground might be, to have the openness and skills to participate in that dialogue, and to chart a way forward toward a more just world.

What is clear, however, is that we don’t know enough about how “cosmopolitans are made” (Beck and Grande 2007; Kymlicka and Norman 2000). “Cosmopolitan theories,” wrote Craig Calhoun (2008:110), “need to be supplemented by an emphasis on the material conditions and social institutions that make this sort of cosmopolitan inhabitation of the world possible—and much more likely for some than others.”

This is where museums come in. They are one of the messy arenas in which nations work out how to put their changing faces on display and project new understandings of who belongs and what the membership requirements are.

#### MUSEUMS AS SITES OF COSMOPOLITAN CREATION

Museums have always played an important role in creating nations and national citizens. To grow and stay strong and unified, countries put their most revered customs and traditions on display so that complete strangers could recognize them and feel part of this newly emerging, imagined community (Anderson 1983). When visitors to Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts see the Sons of Liberty Bowl or Thomas Sully’s majestic painting of Washington crossing the Delaware (*The Passage of the Delaware*), they are being told a story about what it means to be American and they are encouraged to feel a part of its narrative. But, as I have already said, we are living in a world on the move. My question in my book *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* was about what kind of citizens museums create in today’s global world. Are they creating local, national, and global

citizens, and in what combinations? What is it about the location of a museum, and its history, demography, and culture, that helps explain what museums do? What can we learn about nationalism in a country by looking at its cultural institutions?

To answer these questions, I visited art, ethnographic, cultural history, and community or constituency museums in Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East. I talked with educators, curators, and museum directors about their past, current, and future exhibitions and the important objects and people that have shaped their collections. I studied museums in cities in three pairs of countries (1) Gothenburg and Stockholm in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark, two countries that have not had recent forays into empire and have experienced major demographic shifts in the past 50 years, sometimes responding quite generously to immigrant newcomers but sometimes with much xenophobia. (2) In the United States, which some would say is at the height of its empire, while others would consider it to be on its way down, I studied museums in allegedly parochial Boston and compared them with museums in the self-proclaimed center of our national cultural universe, New York. And then (3) I looked at museums in Singapore and Doha, two relatively young city-states that are using cultural institutions to create strong feelings of nationhood and to stake out a more regionally if not globally prominent place at the geopolitical table. I wanted to learn how the tension between globalism and nationalism played out differently in an Asian or Muslim context.

No museum I visited told an entirely national or global story. The nation was always somehow connected to the globe and the global was always interpreted through a national frame. In fact, each institution fell somewhere on what I came to think of as a cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum. So, how could I explain why different institutions operated at different points along its range?

The variations I discovered in terms of where institutions fall on this continuum have to do with their histories, funding, collections, and curatorial expertise. They also have to do with whether they are public or private museums—with whether they are tools governments use to pursue social goals or are mostly beholden to a changing cast of donors and visitors. Museums' contrasting practices are partly explained by their scope—whether they were founded as museums of art, created to preserve and display humanity's greatest treasures, or as museums of artifacts, collected and showcased to safeguard national traditions and to teach visitors about worlds beyond their own. They also have to do with the urban organizational ecology. There is often an implicit or explicit distribution of labor between the cultural institutions in a city. Some museums are informally or formally considered better venues to showcase the nation while other are labeled more appropriate for putting diversity on display.

But where museums fall on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum also has to do with the urban cultural armature. By that, I mean a city's history, demography, policies, and institutions. One piece of this is the deep cultural structures laid down by the city's founders, the values and ethos they embraced that continue to echo and

ripple in its institutions today. What these men, and they usually were men, believed about inequality, community, and social welfare set the tone and priorities of the institutions that they created. The seeds they sowed have deep roots and continue to bear fruit today.

So, for example, the poor yet determined group of disgruntled believers that John Winthrop, the governor of the Association of the Massachusetts Bay Company, led across the Atlantic Ocean wanted to establish a moral community they could not create in Europe. Since saved souls were also wealthy souls, they stressed hard work, thrift, sobriety, and frugality. They valued education, intellectual achievement, and responsibility to the community at large. As early as a quarter century later, as historian Thomas O'Connor (2006:18) writes, the "town of Boston, had developed certain basic themes that were not only characteristic of its colonial origins, but which also may be considered an essential part of its present-day distinctiveness." These include Boston's proud, but provincial identity as a city of knowledge, a moral exemplar that the rest of the world should emulate and that, therefore, did not really have to look outward to the world. This was a legacy of power concentrated in the hands of a small group of inbred families who controlled the city's economic, political, and cultural life, often at the expense of new immigrants.

One really important piece of a city's cultural armature is its diversity management regime—if and how diversity gets talked about, labeled, measured, seen as either an opportunity or a problem, and remediated. In the United States, for example, we avidly embrace hyphenated Americanness. We proclaim that we are Indian-American or Chinese-American and few would question the American side of the equation. In fact, these labels are seen as empowering groups to take their place at the American multicultural table. In Scandinavia, one would be hard pressed to hear someone calling him/herself a Pakistani-Dane or an Iraqi-Swede. The same labels that empower in the United States are believed to contribute to social marginalization in Sweden and Denmark. Therefore, how nations categorize and talk about diversity also influences how the nation gets put on display.

A second factor shaping where an institution falls on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum is a country's position in the global cultural hierarchy. Just as nations are ranked by their economic and political standing, so too is there a cultural ranking. To varying degrees, museums operate within transnational social fields—multilayered, unequal networks created by individuals, institutions, and governance structures. More and more, the things on display, the museum professionals who put them there, the financial and administrative arrangements that make it all possible, and the visitors who enjoy the fruits of these labors are connected to people, objects, and politics all over the world. A nation, and its museums, either operates very close to the centers of cultural power, strongly influencing and being influenced by them, or they are located far from their orbit and influences.

Assemblages, or contingent clusters of people, technology, objects, and knowledge, circulate within these fields. There is a global museum assemblage—a changing

package of ways to “do museums,” including ways of putting things on display, explaining materials, educating and doing public programming. Where a country is in the global cultural hierarchy also affects how much it shapes and is shaped by the global museum assemblage.

Where do we see this assemblage at work? The graduate degrees in Fine Arts, Museum Education, or Curatorial Studies programs offered around the world are part of it and spread it. It is in the gift shops, gourmet restaurants, and blockbuster exhibits we have come to expect from our museum visit. It is in the stone of the iconic museum buildings being built around the world by a select group of “starchitects,” including Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvelle, and Renzo Piano. It is regulated by institutions of global governance, such as the International Committee on Museums. The biennales and art fairs, and the artists that curators anoint as important by featuring them at these events, are in conversation with the global museum assemblage. And a transnational class of museum professionals—some of whom circulate regionally and some, globally—form part of these assemblages but also carry pieces of it in their laptops, suitcases, and portfolios with them when they move from post to post.

Finally, where a museum falls on the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum has to do with where a nation is in the arc of its nation-building and world-claiming projects. Some countries use arts and culture not only to build strong nations but to reposition themselves within the ranking of nations. What their cultural institutions do drives forward their regional, if not global, ambitions to claim a more prominent place.

Let me try to make this more concrete by offering a few brief examples. The Swedish museums I studied were the farthest toward the cosmopolitan side of the cosmopolitan-nationalism continuum. This was because Sweden has historically played a prominent regional role and has seen itself, and its social welfare system, as a moral example for the rest of the world. Embracing the global is also a way for Swedish museums to sidestep the national. Putting the nation on display would force Sweden to deal with events in its history that it would rather avoid, such as its role in World War II, its eugenic experiments, and its treatment of the Sami. It is also quite difficult to find the country’s internal diversity on display. As I mentioned, putting someone in the ethnic or immigrant box is feared to socially marginalize rather than include.

The museums I examined in New York were more likely to showcase the nation’s internal diversity, and increasingly so, because there is a growing recognition in the museum community that the people who actually come inside museums do not look enough like the people outside them. In fact, there are museums dedicated to the experiences of particular groups, such as El Museo del Barrio in New York City. At the Queens Museum, with its more modest collections of World’s Fair paraphernalia, crime reporter photographs, and well-loved panoramic model of New York City, the immigrant experience is also front and center. The former director, Tom Finkelpearl, who is now the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for New York City,

believed that just as libraries have users who come in to find resources and make connections, museums should too. In fact, the newly renovated museum, which opened in 2013, will eventually house a branch of the Queens Public Library. The museum's restrooms are located before the admissions gate so anyone using the park outside, which fills with immigrant picnickers and sports enthusiasts during warm weather, will feel welcome to come in and use the facilities. The building, which is the former New York City Pavilion at the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs, used to feature an imposing stone façade which prevented anyone from looking in. It has now been redesigned to include enormous glass panels on either side so that everyone can see from one side of the building to the other—a physical signal to surrounding community members that it is a warm and accessible place where they are welcome.

The Queens Museum also forges relationships with the artistic and cultural communities from which its potential visitors come. Because Ecuadorans are among its many neighbors, one project the museum supported involved an Ecuadoran artist who created an installation working with the truck drivers who parked nearby. Since many were undocumented and could not visit their families, she helped them write “video letters” to send home, which the museum then showed publicly. Thus began a series of curatorial exchanges, artistic projects, and public programs with South and Central America. “I always joke,” said Prerana Reddy, director of public programs, “that there might be more people in Ecuador who know about this museum than there are in Brooklyn.”

Museums in New York, however, while more cosmopolitan oriented than their Boston counterparts, are not as global as their Swedish counterparts. In the nineteenth century, New Yorkers believed it was their God-given right to become the cultural capital of the world, just as it was the nation's manifest destiny to expand westward. But at the same time, the city is located in a nation where many residents believe they live at the center of the world. Because they equate globalization with Americanization, they believe the rest of the world should come to the United States, rather than the other way around. I found, therefore, that in most museum narratives in the northeastern U.S., the national trumped the global as the heart of the story.

Finally, in Doha, where 12–16 museums are being constructed, all the museums tell a national and global story at the same time. The Museum of Islamic Art, for example, says to Qataris that they are part of a deep, rich culture that extends back centuries and across continents. It also tells visiting tourists and businesspeople that this is an important country, capable of creating a world-class museum, in a world-class building, with a world-class collection of Islamic art. It is a country that is cosmopolitan on its own terms, taking what is culturally compatible with Islam from the West, such as tolerance, critical thinking, and creativity, and rejecting human rights and gender equality, which are considered to be incompatible.

In this context, however, citizenship means everything and nothing. Qatari citizens, who make up only about 12% of the country's residents, are entitled to free

education, land, and an estimated income of \$87,000 per year. They do not pay taxes. Non-citizens fall into two broad camps: elite professionals brought in to help Qatar realize its social and economic vision and the hundreds of thousands of construction workers, taxi drivers, nannies, and maids that build and staff it. Non-citizens enjoy few rights and protections; many work under difficult, if not deplorable, conditions. So while citizenship means everything, it also means very little. Few citizens clamor for political voice because all their needs are met. In fact, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who handed power over to his son Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in June 2013, firmly solidified his family's position by spreading the wealth and power around to make sure that they did not.

### TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

Thus far, I have explored if and how museums, as one potential site of global citizenship creation, helped visitors imagine a different kind of nation that does not necessarily stop at the border. When we realize that people live lives across borders, we also realize that different kinds of social protections are needed that cross borders too. New kinds of transnational social protections are being put in place, but we need to understand who benefits and who loses out from these developments. Do they broaden and deepen social protection; if so, for whom? and what new gaps are created? We have taken up these questions at the Transnational Studies Initiative, which I co-direct with Jocelyn Viterna at Harvard University.<sup>1</sup> Our focus is on how people on the move (whether documented or undocumented; voluntary or forced; permanent, short-term/seasonal, or circulating) are protected and provided for. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) subsumes the following categories under its "social protection" label: pensions, unemployment insurance, survivor benefits, disability, family and child care, health, job training, and housing. To these, we add education to capture the growing number of binational teacher training, student retention, and reciprocal credentialing schemes that are being put in place. We also add, under the category of labor, the efforts of states and NGOs, such as unions, to protect worker safety and guarantee certain basic rights.

We identify four possible sources of protection. States provide social protections through a range of institutions that operate sub-nationally, nationally, or supra-nationally. Markets provide social protections such as private health insurance or contracted childcare to those who can afford them. Third-sector organizations, including NGOs, church groups, and labor unions, often provide low-cost protections such as health care, employment training, education, housing, and more. And individual social ties include networks of family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others upon whom individuals call to help with housing, childcare, or finding work.

We define "transnational social protection" as the policies, programs, people, organizations, and institutions that provide for and protect individuals in the above areas in a transnational manner. Our main focus is on social protections for mobile individuals, but non-migrants and refugees also benefit from these policies and

programs. We include grounded actors that provide for and protect people who move transnationally; transnational actors that provide for and protect grounded individuals; and transnational actors that provide for and protect transnational individuals.

Migrants clearly move between spaces where the strength and breadth of the state and the footprint of the rule of law varies considerably. In countries in the global north, some kind of state-provided social safety net likely exists for citizens and documented migrants, although we are witnessing a period of serious cutbacks and these protections vary considerably in different sub-national jurisdictions (Avato et al. 2010; Bossert 1998; Holzmann et al. 2005). In the global south, where the state is often weaker, underfunded, or effectively nonexistent and the rule of law only weakly established, NGOs and individual and community social networks are likely to be the primary sources of social protection. In fact, it is non-migrants in Ghana who often help their relatives through economic downturns in the Netherlands by providing financial support (Mazzucato 2011). In increasing numbers of examples, sending states step in to care for emigrants by providing services they cannot access in the countries of settlement. The Mexican government, for example, offers health care to emigrants who cannot afford to purchase it at mobile clinics located in its consular offices.

We suggest the concept of a “resource environment” to help scholars map, analyze, and understand the rapidly transforming world of transnational social protections, and how access to transnational social protection varies through time and space, and across individuals. An individual’s resource environment is constituted from a combination of all the possible protections available to him or her from our four potential sources (states, markets, “third sector,” and social networks). The cluster of protections that is ultimately available depends upon the nature of the market, the strength and capacity of sending and receiving states, the third sector organizational ecology (i.e., the number and types of organizations, what they do, and their capacity to provide), and the characteristics of individual migrants and their families. An individual’s resource environment may change as they move across different sub-state or state environments, as their legal or economic status changes, and as their social networks transform.

Although the logic of coverage in receiving states tends to be administered and regulated at the nation level, in many countries, particularly those with highly decentralized political systems, access and benefits vary considerably across states and regions. In the U.S. and in Spain, for example, sub-national and local jurisdictions have a great deal of discretion with respect to migrant coverage (Dobbs and Levitt 2016). Migrants’ access to public systems of health insurance and healthcare provision, schooling, social welfare, and pensions largely depends on place of residence and legal status. Therefore, an undocumented Mexican migrant from Puebla who settles in New York City will have access to a package of resources and benefits based on what she is eligible for in her village of birth as a resident of the state

of Puebla and as a Mexican national, as well as the services offered by New York City, New York State, and the United States. Her resource environment will differ markedly from a similarly undocumented Mexican counterpart from Zacatecas who moves to Los Angeles because the services provided at each level of governance, in each country, are not equal (Dobbs and Levitt 2016).

Furthermore, a Mexican immigrant with similar levels of education, skills, and language capabilities who moves to Wyoming faces a different set of challenges. As I already noted, her resource environment will differ because of the very different U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and city-level government benefits provided to immigrants and non-migrants. But they will also differ because the third sector is much more developed in Los Angeles and New York than it is in a destination such as Wyoming. The strength of the labor market in each locale will also be different such that varying numbers and types of employers will be more or less amenable to hiring undocumented workers and to offering them benefits. Finally, that migrants would be more visible in Wyoming than in NYC or LA, for example, may make it more dangerous for them to access resources even when they are available (Schmalzbauer 2014).

Two things stand out from our preliminary research. Rather than having most needs provided by a single, national bound source, such as the state or the market, many people piece social protection for themselves and their families from several different, formal and informal, sending and receiving state sources. These are not contractually guaranteed and, therefore, can be unreliable and ephemeral. Whereas laws contractually obligate states to provide for citizens, and whereas market forces ensure that most purchased protections will be provided, there is no such security for those who rely on social ties and third-sector organizations, each of which can withdraw their resources at any time and without recourse for the migrant and her transnational family.

In sum, the concept of a resource environment helps capture the complexity of social protections in an increasingly transnational world. In addition to understanding what happens to particular types and groups of individuals (how and where they access services, in formal and informal settings; what actually happens as opposed to what the official policy says should happen; how family, community, and other institutions filter individual access, etc.), we must also consider:

**Institutions:** What new kinds of institutional arrangements, from what sectors (public, market, NGO, formal/informal), in what combinations give rise to functional, effective resource environments? What is the relationship between these institutions and existing providers? Do they replace, complement, or compete with each other? What kinds of new hierarchies arise as a result?

**Sectors:** When we look at how people provide for their health, education, or old-age security, how do these sectors compare? Do resource environments

function in the same way? Do they interact with, compete with, or enhance one another? How must our outcome measures be redefined?

**Ideology and Ontology:** How do these dynamics challenge our understanding of social welfare and democracy? How do the terms and categories we use now obscure new developments, and what kinds of new words and categories do we need at this historical juncture that are more in line with the actual organization of social experience? At the end of the day, what does this mean about the social contract between citizen and state and about the actual rights, responsibilities, institutions, and spaces of participatory citizenship?

### CHANGING THE CULTURAL CANON

Now, let me circle back to the last piece of my puzzle. If increasing numbers of people embrace cosmopolitan values and practices, and the social safety net is changing (if only at the edges) to reflect more mobile lives, how does what global citizens need to know also change? Is the cultural canon, be it literature, art, or music, becoming more inclusive? How are these decisions made, and what new voices are being included?

Again, let me try to make this more concrete with some examples. UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention, which began as an exercise in shared responsibility for humanity's most prized sites, is now a sort of "go-to" list for the global cultural connoisseur (Rausch 2013). Tangible and intangible heritage is included. Mexico boasts eight officially approved cultural artifacts, the highest number in Latin American (tied with Colombia), including indigenous celebrations of the dead (Día de los Muertos), food from Michoacán, and mariachi music. Literary anthologies are also sites of global canon curation. What gets included in a canonical book such as the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* has implications for the worldview of generations of students to come. Literary festivals, proliferating in places such as Jaipur, India; Singapore; and Treasure Beach, Jamaica, showcase the work of new writers and put it on par with their better-known contemporaries.

But the politics behind who is included are, of course, riddled with power. Since the World Heritage List is such a powerful catalyst for tourism, nation building, and economic development, the national interests behind the desire to be included on it often overshadow concerns about global patrimony (Brumann 2014). At Education City in Qatar, where eight U.S. universities have established branch campuses, there is a seeming paradox between Qatarization—a policy that structurally favors citizens for jobs after graduating—and an American-style university system designed to create cosmopolitan "global citizens" who embrace individualism, meritocracy, and multiculturalism (Vora 2014).

My new work seeks to understand how a writer or artist goes from being a national star to one with more global prominence. How is the artistic and literary canon being broadened, who gets included, and on what terms? These questions are

important, not only because of fairness and because they help right long-standing Western-centric biases, but because a more inclusive shared knowledge base can provide the grist from which fellow cosmopolitans, or people who aspire to become cosmopolitan, find common ground.

I have begun to do some preliminary work on these questions and I would like to end by sharing some of my early hunches. It appears that the global artistic field does not map onto the global literary field exactly but that the same momentum that drives one forward also drives the other. Let's take the example of the Philippines. When the Philippines finally became independent, after successively being a colony of the Spanish, the United States, and Japan, it was in a hurry to create a long and deep civilization for the newly sovereign nation that would stretch from the Stone Age to the new international economic order. Citizens needed to know that the nation had a big past and was moving toward a big future. Although Imelda Marcos, the wife of former President Fernando Marcos (1965–1986), is probably best known for her shoe collection, she was the perfect spokesperson for this project. Beautiful, powerful, and energetic, Imelda became a great patron of the arts and all things Filipino. She created the Cultural Center of the Philippines, which is still a prominent art venue for displays of national and international talent. She popularized the “mestizo dress,” a sophisticated version of the national costume (the *baro't saya*), by wearing it often and with pride. The national government, with Imelda at its helm, resurrected traditions and created new ones for national and international audiences.<sup>2</sup>

When Corazon Aquino became president after President Marcos was deposed, she decentralized government support for arts and culture. The Marcos' top-down approach gave way to Aquino's more grassroots, narrowly nationalistic vision. It also gave rise to regional art centers that preserved, promoted, and marketed regional handicrafts.

These efforts sowed the seeds of a well-developed cultural ecology including the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (created in 1992), a system of state-sponsored museums, art galleries, two auction houses, and several annual art and literary fairs. It has produced several international art stars, including David Medalla, the first Filipino artist to be collected by the Tate Museum in London, and Noberto Roldan, whose work was acquired by the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

But to truly understand this story we have to look beyond the nation's borders and across time. During this period, the ASEAN community was created to promote greater regional cultural as well as economic and political integration. The Philippines became a major exporter of people to Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the United States. While many settled permanently, they continued to support national artistic production, some of which was made with this transnational community in mind. They used their contacts with galleries and publishing houses around the world to promote their compatriots' work.

And although initially it was Australia that promoted the Asia Pacific region, through activities such as the Asia Pacific Triennial, Singapore is now “the tide” lifting the region’s “boats,” including the Philippines. The art and literary commercial fairs and festivals it sponsors, the new museums it created—such as the National Gallery Singapore, which boasts the world’s best collection of Southeast Asian art—and its strategic use of culture to pursue its global economic goals also helps Filipino artists and writers to gain global prominence. Singapore is actively promoting Southeast Asian art, and anyone wanting to collect, view, or research it must necessarily traverse its shores. While it places itself at the heart of this new cultural region, the Philippines figures prominently in its landscape as well.

### CONCLUSION

More and more people choose to or are pushed into living lives that cross borders—earning livelihoods, raising their political voices, caring for family members, and saving for retirement in more than one nation-state. They will call many places home—the scattered sites where their dispersed family members live, where they work or study, the places they remember and dream of, and the homes they long to return to and rebuild. Their movements even diversify societies that still insist they are not diverse, bringing languages, faiths, traditions, and histories into daily contact. And all this unfolds in a world plagued by economic crisis, heightened ethnic and religious strife, and declining social protection.

A world on the move produces opportunities and anxieties, more wealth and much more inequality, a decentering of power into more loci where power gets concentrated anew. New social safety nets are needed that protect and provide for individuals outside the traditional nation-state framework, and different kinds of health, education, and social welfare institutions that respond more effectively to people’s mobile lives. It is no surprise that countries across the world are grappling with how to create citizens who can live successfully in diverse neighborhoods and who actively engage with the world at the same time. An important next step is to move away from false dichotomies, such as the global versus local, the nation versus the global, or us versus them. Instead, we must move forward, with courage and clarity, to understand that we live in different kinds of nations that do not always stop at the national border, that mobile individuals need different kinds of social safety nets, and that new and different kinds of knowledge needs to be produced and mastered to help create a more equitable world. I hope that others will join me in this agenda.

### NOTES

This article is based on the XLII *Journal of Anthropological Research* Distinguished Lecture, which was presented at the Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, on February 25, 2016. I would like to thank Lawrence Guy Straus and Ann Braswell for this kind invitation and all of my colleagues at the University of New Mexico for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

1. Our team also includes Charlotte Lloyd, Armin Mueller, Erica Dobbs, Sonia Parella, Alisa Petroff, and Simone Castellani.
2. Interview with Patrick Flores, curator and professor, University of Philippines, Manila, January 9, 2016.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nations*. London and New York: Verso Books.
- Anderson, Elijah. 2011. *The cosmopolitan canopy: Race and civility in everyday life*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Avato, Johanna, Johannes Koettl, and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler. 2010. Social security regimes, global estimates, and good practices: The status of social protection for international migrants. *World Development* 38:455–66.
- Beck, Ulrich, and Edgar Grande. 2007. *Cosmopolitan Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Bilesky, Dan. 2016. Danish law requires asylum seekers to hand over valuables. *New York Times* 26 January. (Available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/27/world/europe/denmark-asks-refugees-for-valuables.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/27/world/europe/denmark-asks-refugees-for-valuables.html?_r=0))
- Bossert, Thomas. 1998. Analyzing the decentralization of health systems in developing countries: Decision space, innovation and performance. *Social Science and Medicine* 47: 1513–27.
- Brumann, Christoph. 2014. Shifting tides of world-making in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention: Cosmopolitanisms colliding. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37(12):2176–92.
- Calhoun, Craig. 2008. Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Social Imaginary. *Daedalus* 137: 105–14.
- Dobbs, Erica, and Peggy Levitt. 2016. The missing link? The role of sub-national governance in global social protections. *Oxford Development Studies*, forthcoming.
- Gilroy, Paul. 2005. *Postcolonial melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Glick Schiller, Nina, Tsypylma Darieva, and Sandra Gruner-Domic. 2011. Defining cosmopolitan sociability in a transnational age. An introduction. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34:399–418.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1990. Cosmopolitans and locals in world culture. *Theory, Culture & Society* 7:237–51.
- Holzmann, Robert, Johannes Koettl, and Taras Chernetzky. 2005. *Portability regimes of pension and health care benefits for international migrants: An analysis of issues and good practices*. Discussion Papers 0519. The Global Commission on International Migration. (Available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALPROTECTION/Resources/SP-Discussion-papers/Pensions-DP/0519.pdf>)
- International Organization of Migration. 2015. World Migration Report 2015. (Electronic document <<https://www.iom.int/world-migration-report-2015>>, accessed 15 March 2016)
- Kymlicka, Will, and Wayne Norman, eds. 2000. *Citizenship in diverse societies*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The transnational villagers*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- . 2015. *Artifacts and allegiances: How museums put the nation and the world on display*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

- Levitt, Peggy, Charlotte Lloyd, Armin Mueller, and Jocelyn Viterna. 2016. Transnational social protection: Setting the agenda. *Oxford Development Studies*, forthcoming.
- Mazzucato, Valentina. 2011. Reverse remittances in the migration-development nexus: Two-way flows between Ghana and the Netherlands. *Population, Space and Place* 17:454–68.
- New York Times*. 2016. Why they voted for Trump. (Electronic document, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/us/politics/why-they-voted-for-trump.html>>, accessed March 6, 2016)
- Nowicka, Magdalena, and Maria Rovisco. 2009. *Cosmopolitanism in practice*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- O'Connor, Thomas. 2006. *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825–1845*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Portes, Alejandro, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, and William J. Haller. 2002. Transnational entrepreneurs: An alternative form of immigrant economic adaptation. *American Sociological Review* 67:278–98.
- Rausch, Christoph. 2013. *Rescuing modernity: Global heritage assemblages & modern architecture in Africa*. PhD dissertation, Maastricht University, The Netherlands.
- Saito, Hiro. 2011. An actor-network theory of cosmopolitanism. *Sociological Theory* 29: 124–49.
- Schmalzbauer, Leah. 2014. *The last best place? Gender, family, and migration in the new west*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Spencer, Sarah. 2012. Sarah Spencer: Super diversity and the city. (Electronic document, <[http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone\\_stories/sarah-spencer-super-diversity-and-the-city/](http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezone_stories/sarah-spencer-super-diversity-and-the-city/)>, accessed March 6, 2015)
- Turner, Bryan. 2002. Cosmopolitan virtue, globalization and patriotism. *Theory, Culture, & Society* 19:45–63.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2015. UNHCR warns of dangerous new era in worldwide displacement as report shows almost 60 million people forced to flee their homes. (Electronic document, <<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=55813f0e6&query=60%20million%20refugees>>, accessed March 15, 2016)
- United Nations Information Service. 2014. 232 million international migrants living abroad worldwide—New UN global migration statistics reveal. (Electronic document, <<http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/2013/unisinf488.html>>, accessed September 9, 2015)
- Vora, Neha. 2014. Between global citizenship and Qatarization: Negotiating Qatar's new knowledge economy within American branch campuses. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37(12): 2243–60.
- World Bank. 2015. Remittances growth to slow sharply in 2015, as Europe and Russia stay weak; pick up expected next year. (Electronic document, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/04/13/remittances-growth-to-slow-sharply-in-2015-as-europe-and-russia-stay-weak-pick-up-expected-next-year>, accessed March 15, 2016)
- . 2016. Migration and remittances factbook 2016. (Electronic document, <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbookpart1.pdf>>, accessed March 15, 2016)