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Topographies of Home and Citizenship: Arab American Activists

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Abstract

Home and citizenship carry contradictory and ambiguous meanings for immigrants as they negotiate lives 'here' and 'there.' We use the concept of topography to analyze the ways in which activists in the Arab-American community draw connections between homes in the United States and Middle East. In intensive interviews, we ask activists about how their understanding of home influences their activism and positioning as citizens within the United States. Activists often bring to their work conceptualizations of home and citizenship that are open, and that connect home to broader forces operating at various scales and in more than one place. Rather than pursuing a deterritorialized, transnational citizenship, our respondents forged a politics of home and citizenship whose topography transcended localities and nations, even as they were often rooted in the spaces of both.

Topographies of Home and Citizenship:
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'Home' is a bundle of contradictions. It conjures feelings of safety, belonging, and connection. It can be a site of violence, oppression, and alienation. It is firmly rooted in place. It is an abstraction that extends beyond the walls of a house, linking people and relationships within the house with the external world. It is fixed and bounded. It is mobile and open.

If home is contradictory in general, it carries particular contradictions and ambiguities for immigrants and their offspring. In leaving home, immigrants must make a new home, and they must negotiate the contradictions of both homes, even as they may feel they are part of neither. As Amy Kaplan (2003, page 86) notes, the first meaning of 'foreign' is the antithesis of home; it refers to the physical space outside the house and to things at a distance from home. So how are immigrants positioned with respect to home? Most importantly, as foreigners they are never conceptualized *within* the home. As likely alternatives, Kaplan suggests the terms 'exile,' 'diaspora,' and more ominously, 'terrorist.' With these possibilities circulating in the receiving society, how could immigrants ever create homes in the places to which they have moved? What happens to sense of home when one's country of residence rolls back rights for migrants or attempts to define more sharply what citizenship means and who fits into the polity, the political home? At the same time, what happens to a sense of home when the country of origin collapses politically or economically? When geopolitical events and life courses make it impossible to ever return? How can immigrants negotiate homes 'here' and 'there'?

Arab immigrants to Western countries confront many of the issues and conundrums just mentioned. Long before September 11, 2001, immigrants from Arab countries and Americans of Arab-descent were viewed with a mix of curiosity and outright suspicion and hostility. Negative stereotypes of Arab culture, and particularly of Arab women, were pervasive. After September 11th, suspicions increased and many Arabs felt their loyalty to their new homes was questioned.

It is in this context that we situate our analysis of home, home-making, and their implications for the political incorporation of Arab immigrants and their off-spring in the United States. In so doing, we will focus on activists within the Arab-American community, trying to understand how their ideas of home influence their activities, their feelings of attachment to multiple homes, and what this may mean for their positioning as citizens within the United States. By asking about home, then, we are also asking about political identity, the nature of commitment, and the meanings of citizenship in substantive and legal senses. This differentiates

our analysis from much of the literature on transnationalism and home, as that literature tends to focus on the *maintenance* of ties with the sending society, whereas our questions revolve around the *implications* of those ties for a sense of hereness and citizenship in the receiving society. In so doing, we begin to challenge dominant ideas of citizenship and political identities as meaningful statuses that are located solely and exclusively within one national state. We argue that these activists often bring to their work conceptualizations of home and citizenship that are open, and that connect home to broader forces operating at various scales and in more than one place. These activists argue that their work deepens their sense of belonging and attachment to the places in which they live and is part of building a new home and, in some cases, a new form of citizenship.

The paper is organized in five main sections. In the first section, we present our conceptualization of the topography of home, drawing on feminist and geographical theories. In the second section of the paper, we discuss the relationship between place or homeland and belonging that is implicit in many contemporary theories of democracy and citizenship. Taken together, these two sections provide a backdrop for beginning to understand how immigrants negotiate citizenship through the construction of home, and the challenges their activities pose for our theories of citizenship. The third section of the paper briefly discusses the contexts in which Arab-Americans negotiate home and citizenship, while the fourth section of the paper presents our methodology for understanding the topographies of home and our interview strategy for talking with Arab immigrants in the United States. In the final substantive section, we analyze the narratives of home amongst Arab-American activists as a way of understanding the nature of political identity, commitment, and citizenship.

Topographies of Home and Home-making

We use the concept of topography to understand the complexities of home that migrants experience and negotiate. Rather than a bounded dwelling unit or place in which relationships between residents are internally defined, we view home as constructed in and through political practices and power relationships that differentially situate individuals with respect to material and metaphorical aspects of home. This way of theorizing home draws from Doreen Massey's writings (1994), in which she argues that home is constructed by external relationships as much as it is by internal relations; it is unbounded, open and constantly changing (see also Marston, 2000). The concept of topography suggests the importance of a detailed analysis of key features of home and the embedded processes and connections that operate between places that are part of the home's construction. We follow Cindi Katz (2001, page 1228) in arguing that "…a critical

topography makes it possible to excavate the layers of process that produce particular places and to see their intersections with material social practices at other scales of analysis. Revealing the embeddedness of these practices in place and space in turn invites the vivid revelation of social and political difference and inequality."

In thinking about the topography of home, three key elements are central to our discussion: home as a place, home as the relations between internal and external, and home as pluri-local and multi-scalar. The first—and perhaps most intuitively obvious—aspect of home is the material, physical place. When we think of home in this sense, it implies an ability to identify a site—a building or a locality—that is in some way bounded or delimited. Within that bounded space, a set of domestic relationships are enacted and deepen over time. Home-making also involves acts that, through repetition, begin to take on symbolic, affective meaning. Chief among these meanings is a sense of being 'at home,' of belonging to the home. Thus, home as a place is not merely material, though it is material; it is also laden with emotional attachments and concerns about inclusion and belonging.

The connections between inside and outside form the second element in the topography of home; here, the concern is to understand the relationships and practices that constitute or help to make the home as not simply internal, but as also extending beyond the physical home. Of particular concern in this context are the power relationships and cultural practices that "locate" people as belonging to a specific place (Cresswell, 1996), as well as the links between dwelling units, communities, and nations. As Massey (1994, page 169) argues, it is difficult to distinguish between what is internal to a place—a home—from what is outside of it, as "…it is the presence of the outside which helps to construct the specificity of the local place" (see also Kaplan, 2003). As such, one cannot situate individuals or social groups completely and uniquely in one home. The border between internal and external, while permeable and fluid, draws attention to the differentiated inclusion of individuals with respect to home (Espiritu, 2003). As Katz (2001) argues, this differentiated inclusion highlights the importance of situated knowledge in understanding how people negotiate power relations, since their positioning within a particular space shapes their sense of political possibilities and constraints.

We will argue further that we must imagine the connectivity between homes that may otherwise seem distant and unrelated. In conceptualizing topography, Katz (2001, page 1229) argues that we should imagine the ways in which places (and we would argue, homes) that seem distinct are connected through the operations of a given process. She writes that topography

"...offers a multifaceted way of theorizing the connectedness of vastly different places made artifactually discrete by virtue of history and geography but which also reproduce themselves differently amidst the common political-economic and socio-cultural processes they experience. The notion of topography involves a particular precision and specificity that connects distant places and in so doing enables the inference of connection in uncharted places in between."

Thus, home is not discrete or singular, despite appearances and despite the binary of domestic/foreign mentioned earlier. Rather, homes are connected, and an important analytical task is to understand the nature and implications of those connections.

The final element of the topography of home draws directly from the sense of connectedness; this is the recognition of multiple homes for individuals and groups that may overlap or be constituted at different scales. One way to think about the connectivity between internal and external, for instance, is to think about the how home is constructed in a dwelling, a community, a region, a nation, and a culture. Thus, home can be thought of as operating at multiple scales. Further, the relations that link internal and external processes can also link homes in different places, homes that are themselves multi-scalar and overlapping. Thinking about home in this way suggests that we understand it as a set of sites and scales in which seemingly separable, discrete places are brought into juxtaposition and create heterogeneous social worlds (D'Alisera, 2004).

These three elements of the topography of home combine in different ways, making the connections indirect and sinuous. But topography implies more than a social network; it also implies the sedimentation of processes in places, creating a landscape in which homes and lives are built. Further, the sense of belonging and identification with home is also part of the topography. It is thus useful to think about the complex pathways through which identities are shaped, home is made, and a sense of belonging is forged.

This way of understanding home, we wish to suggest, is especially relevant to the case of migrants, who, by the very act of moving from one place to another, throw into question the ability to locate people and communities in specific places, specific homes. Migration always involves some degree of separation from one home and the need to make a new home, often in circumstances of great hardship and discrimination. In the following section, we explore the complex topographies of home experienced by migrants and the ways in which these challenge ideas about citizenship.

Migration, Citizenship, and the Ambiguities of Home

For many politicians and academics in receiving societies, the expectation has been that migrants and their descendents will sever links with their homelands and will tie their fate to their new homes. In the case of the United States, for instance, scholars and politicians typically have operated under the assumption that immigration signals a definitive move from one homeland to another, and that the main social questions emerging from migration concern the manner and degree to which immigrants blend with "mainstream" society (e.g., Clark, 2003; Glazer, 1993) and become full citizens. While there are long-standing debates about the nature and extent of immigrant assimilation (that is, whether immigrants completely melt into the majority or whether they retain some level of difference), such debates rest on the understanding that immigrants and their descendents are "here to stay"—that the United States has, in fact, become their home. It is anticipated in much of American political discourse, therefore, that immigrants will (or should) take American citizenship as the fullest expression of belonging and assume an identity as American before all others (Foner 2001).

Such expectations reflect, in part, the reality that most immigrants in the United States do stay permanently and become part of the societal fabric. But discussions about immigrant assimilation and integration in the United States and in other immigrant-receiving societies are also embedded in and are reflective of conceptions of citizenship and social membership rooted in the modern nation-state system. Such conceptions, in turn, carry with them particular understandings of place, belonging, identity, and home. Common understandings of immigrant assimilation, integration, and home-making are tied to a model of national citizenship, which is in turn tied to the opposition of foreign and domestic realms. That is, the expectation that immigrants can and should assimilate—become domestic in other words—and the incessant questioning of whether they do assimilate, reflects the belief that the act of immigration brings individuals into a new cultural and political community and a distinctive homeland. Immigrant-receiving countries, of course, operate with very different models and philosophies of immigrant integration and have been more or less favorably disposed toward permanent settlement and naturalization (see, for instance, Favell, 1998). But in many immigrant-receiving societies, immigration has been conceptualized in political and academic circles as a process in which "people move for the purposes of settlement" and in which "attachments to the home left behind are imports that inevitably fade, as immigrants and their descendents gradually assimilate into a mainstream whose social ties are bounded at the water's edge" (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004, page 1193). Such an approach rests on an assumption of a rupture between past and present homes.

In the past decade, however, scholars and social commentators have increasingly questioned the extent to which the model of a bounded, national citizenship reflects the empirical reality of contemporary migrants' relationships to places of origin or destination, and whether, as a normative construct, it remains tenable in an era of globalization and high levels of mobility. The burgeoning literature on migrant transnationalism, in particular, by documenting the extensive political, economic, and social connections that contemporary migrants maintain with their countries and towns of origin, has challenged ideas about national citizenship and has forced us to reconsider how migrants create and re-create home.

Most scholars of transnationalism agree that migrants' enduring ties with homelands do not signal the demise of nationalism or the nation-state system (e.g., Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1999; Nagel, 2004). But transnationalism does challenge assumptions about the nation-state citizenship and expectations about immigrant assimilation (Baubock, 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003) For Jacobson (2002), the growing prevalence of transnationalism, along with 'de-nationalization' of states through multiculturalism, signals a profound shift in the way we understand place, homeland, and belonging. He states, "The traditional role of citizenship in directing loyalties, in determining 'one compulsory community', that is, the nation-state, in promoting civic and republican participation, and in designating moral as well as physical 'place' is being undone" (page 168). Other authors agree, pointing to the development of 'post-national' conditions in which international human rights regimes function to replace states with reduced capacity or willingness to ensure basic rights (Soysal, 1994). Transnationalism allows people to forge a sense of belonging and home that is not tied to any single place, but rather, is constructed through connections between 'here' and 'there;' these connections are the basis of an emerging topography of citizenship.

Discussions of home found in the literature on transnationalism, however, remain quite limited in some respects. While this literature theorizes connections between places, conceptions of home tend to be conflated with country or village of origin (e.g. D'Alisera, 2004; Espiritu, 2003; see also contributions in al-Ali and Koser, 2002 and in Yeoh, et al., 2003). In conceptualizing home as relevant only to the place of origin, some authors suggest that migrants are never fully at home in their new countries. The sense that emerges is of the partial inclusion and perhaps reluctant and fragmented integration in the new country without the development of a sense of home in it (e.g. Espiritu, 2003; Levitt, 2001; Menjivar, 2000; Waters, 1999) or to a sense that it is necessary to make homes in places that are not necessarily of one's choosing (e.g., Pratt, 2004).

We do not wish to downplay the importance of migrants' links with homelands, but rather to recognize that the nature of these links may vary widely, and that ideas about and relationships to home among migrants may be more complicated than what has been suggested in the literature on transnationalism. Connections to homeland may be very tenuous or undesirable, even for some first generation immigrants, and a narrow focus on ties to homeland may divert attention from the efforts of immigrants to make new homes and to imagine and enact citizenship within them. Again following feminist geographical thought, we wish to emphasize here that home and citizenship are actively made in political and ideological contexts that are highly variable, geographically and temporally. How migrants imagine, articulate, and make home, and the scales at which they construct home and citizenship, will be tied to the circumstances presented by these contexts, as well as to individual motivations, beliefs, and experiences. From this point of view, home and citizenship appear more ambiguous and ambivalent; they are constantly negotiated, constructed, and linked from multiple points of reference. We frame these points of reference in terms of topography to highlight the landscape of citizenship. This framing is somewhat distinct from the more frequently discussed spaces of citizenship (e.g., Painter and Philo, 1995) in that landscape is formed by connections between places and across scales, rather than being delineated by either boundaries or an implication of discrete spaces. We attempt to illustrate this in the following sections, which deal specifically with Arab-American activists.

Arab-Americans: Homes Here and There

Arab immigrants are often viewed by American society as not fully belonging as citizens to the place of residence they call home (Joseph, 1999); they are often viewed with suspicion and their loyalty is questioned. For example, Daniel Pipes, a political commentator who appears frequently on television and radio news programs, has often suggested that cultural and religious differences place Arab-origin and Muslim communities at odds with mainstream American values (Pipes, 2002). In a similar fashion, Representative Peter King of New York argued that 85% of Muslim leaders in the United States are agents of other countries and are an "enemy amongst us" (CAIR, 2004). Talk of the United States as a country founded on Christian or Judeo-Christian values leaves those immigrants who are not Christian or Jewish either wondering how they fit into their new home or, conversely, sometimes determined to assert their citizenship and to struggle to change exclusionary attitudes and practices. For these people, the ideal of home may be of belonging and inclusion, but the reality they live is one of partial inclusion and the uneasy experiences that often accompany it.

Questions of belonging, however, also apply to experiences with the place or home that migrants left. This may be most significant for those who were forced to leave because of war or fear of political persecution; in this situation, geopolitical forces have made them outsiders with respect to their original homes and rendered them incapable of acting as citizens there. Even those who migrate more or less voluntarily and without concern for the ability to return find that both their homes in the Middle East and they themselves are changed by migration in subtle—and not so subtle—ways. The children of migrants and those who moved at a young age may feel this alienation most acutely.

In some senses, the appellation "Arab-American" is itself a signifier of the topographies of home and citizenship. While the label "Arab" is often contested in the Middle East, homogenizing as it does several national, religious, and ethnic groups with their own histories and cultures, many Arabs in the United States use it as a term to signify a connection to a home and a heritage that is outside the West; it is also a term that many adopt out of convenience, for example believing that Americans will not understand the subtleties of what it means to be Palestinian with a Jordanian or Lebanese passport. At the same time, the inclusion of "American" in the label is important as a means of demonstrating commitment, loyalty, and hereness. The hyphen in Arab-American, then, can perhaps be thought of as a metaphorical contour line, connecting homes and identities of equal importance. Yet as will become clear later in the paper, the entire issue of identification is laden with symbolic and political significance. While many feel that place-based identifiers (e.g., Arab-American) have been important to adopt, these identities and connections to home are highly contextualized, politicized, and specific to individuals.

Methods and Analytical Strategy

Our analysis is based on interviews and focus groups with Arab-Americans in three cities: Los Angeles, Dearborn, and Washington, DC. The cities were selected because they offer very different contexts in terms of the size, duration, and national composition of Arab immigration. Respondents come from Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Yemen. We thus are seeking to understand the diversity of Arab-American communities and the variety of outlooks and opinions within them (Nagel and Staeheli, 2004).

We conducted in-depth interviews with 43 participants in Arab-identified community organizations in 2003 and 2004. Most, but by no means all, of the respondents hold legal citizenship in the United States; about one-quarter of the respondents were born in the US. We chose to work through organizations for a variety of reasons, including the wariness of some

Arab immigrants when it comes to having 'outsiders' ask sensitive questions about belonging, attachment and citizenship; this is a wariness that has only been intensified after the implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act and what many consider to be an effort to target Arab-Americans as disloyal and even terrorists. In working through organizations, we have interviewed people who have asserted their identity as Arab-Americans, fully entitled to legal and substantive citizenship. Some of these activists have also become skilled in dealing with the media and in interviews with 'outsiders' (see Shryock, 2002). This strategy opens us to the charge that we are interviewing only a small portion of the Arab-American community, and a particularly vocal and politicized portion of the community at that. We understand this position, and so do not extend our arguments to all Arab-Americans. We argue, instead, that the interviewees represent particular outlooks on home and citizenship; they are outlooks, however, that may be especially important, as these are individuals who are actively seeking to change the positioning of Arab-Americans within American society.

While gender, nationality, class, religion, and generation undoubtedly condition the interviews and the answers to questions, we have not analyzed the responses in those terms. We are struck, instead, by the complexity of the ways in which home is understood. The ways in which the social locations of responses shapes their answers are not entirely clear, however, and we do not wish to attribute particular answers to social factors at this time. Furthermore, we do not believe that the evidence we have collected is suitable to such causal arguments, given the preponderance of activists in our sample. Our argument at this point is about the complexity and ambivalence of home, rather than about the determinants or social locations underlying these responses. We do note in our analysis, however, when people qualify their comments with statements that attribute their responses to gender, generation, religion, or nationality. We do not use the names of respondents or organizations, as confidentiality was promised as a condition of the interviews.

To get at issues of belonging and incorporation as a citizen in the United States, we asked a series of questions about identification and citizenship, about activities that connect people with the Middle East, and about where home was. Many, if not most of the respondents said that they were "American first and foremost." The interview respondents were, of course, actively engaged in political and community-building organizations, and most of them talked about the need to demonstrate the loyalty of the Arab community to the United States; participating in the interview was seen by some as an opportunity to demonstrate that loyalty. In delving a bit deeper, however, many interviewees said that their identity depended both on the setting in which they were asked the question and the person who asked it. When we asked about home—

where it is and what it means to them—the answers often were nuanced. Home was multiple, and most people talked about several different attempts to make homes where they could participate as citizens.

Topographies of Home and Citizenship

All of the respondents were involved in organizations that attempted to enhance the social, political and cultural standing of Arabs in the United States, although their organizational foci and strategies varied. When asked about the major issues facing Arab-Americans in the United States, almost all of the respondents mentioned civil liberties, the Iraq war, and US policies toward Israel and Palestine. Respondents linked these issues to each other and to the position of Arab-Americans in American society; they argued that the issues facing the Arab-American community reflected racist practices, a disregard for human rights, and biases against the Arab and Muslim worlds.

In responding to these perceived threats, respondents engaged in actions designed to educate people—Arab and non-Arab alike—about Arab culture, about issues facing the Middle East, and about Arab-American rights and responsibilities in the United States. In so doing, they engaged in home-making and citizenship, but in ways that highlighted linkages or between here and there. These actions reflect a conceptualization of citizenship that is often open and based on connections between—rather than denial of—homes in more than one place.

In examining the topography of home and citizenship, we consider the definitions of home provided by the respondents and their sense of citizenship. For most of the respondents, home is multiple, both in the definitions they apply, but also in that they locate home in the United States and in the Middle East. We argue that the spatiality of home described by the respondents is also reflected in ideas about citizenship that assert commitments to 'here' and 'there.' Some people express these commitments through place-based or territorially-defined meanings of home, which are sometimes overlain with metaphorical meanings of home related to culture. The multiplicity of homes, however, does not necessarily reduce or qualify their belief in American citizenship.

At the same time, a few respondents expressed a deterritorialized sense of home, in which home was either discussed as culture or as an absence. These respondents were more likely to also talk of a more transnational or human rights basis for citizenship. Somewhat paradoxically, however, constructing this kind of citizenship often involved place-based activism. While this narrative is important, we argue that to focus on the deterritorialized aspects of home

ignores the ways in which respondents are still actively involved in creating new contexts for citizenship within the United States.

Place-based Homes and Place-based Citizenship

The Middle East and the towns from whence people came remain important sites of home for most of our respondents; they talked of a feeling of comfort, the beauty of the places, the ability to live with an extended family nearby, the poetry of people speaking in Arabic, and the sociability of life. The continuity of life, of roots, after having gone through the disruption of war and migration was also important. One woman, for example, talked about feeling more complete as a person when she went back to Jerusalem and of her love for the city. She spoke poignantly of life for Palestinians in Jerusalem, saying:

"You know the funny thing about Jerusalem is that I go to the street, the place where I was raised, and I go to downtown Jerusalem, and every time I go I see the same stores, the same store owners. They are there, the same people. Just every time, they grow older. Because they have so much pressure, their life is so much harder, they are much older. They look much older than people our age, because life is so hard… But my grandmother is there and you still know the people you were raised with."

At the same time, this woman's daughter, who was born in the US, expressed the attachment to Jerusalem and Palestine somewhat differently, saying:

"We are very tied to home as Palestine, as the Arab world. That is a part of our identity. So our feet are in both worlds. I think both are home, and neither are home."

The enduring connection with the Middle East as home was mentioned by all but a handful of the respondents with whom we spoke. While it was stronger for those who had some direct experience there, it was nevertheless strong for the second generation, as well as for some who were forced to move from their ancestral homes when Israel was created or when the civil war in Lebanon made life intolerable. As one Palestinian who was president of a hometown association put it:

"I have never actually been to Palestine. I have no idea what it looks like. I've lived all my life in Lebanon and here. I have no idea even what it looks like. But I love Palestine. It is my home and my parents' home, and I still have family that lives there."

Thus, for many respondents, their understanding of home is firmly rooted in the Middle East and is an important part of their identity; it is why they identified as Arab-American, rather than simply as American. As we shall discuss later, respondents argued that this continuing attachment to homeland did not detract in any way from their participation in American politics as American citizens. Rather, the continuing identification with their homeland was part of their Americanness, a collective identity built on immigration and the diverse cultures immigrants brought with them.

Many of the same people who talked about the Middle East as home also talked about home as being in the United States. For some people, this was a simple matter of reality: they recognized that they had been living in the US, and without necessarily intending it, the US had become home. For others, talking about home as the US reflected their conscious decision to make a new home and take a new homeland; "American by choice" was a common phrase. But for still others, talking about the US as home involved a recognition of the opportunities they had in the US and their ability to make a new life. Sometimes people talked about this in terms of the political freedoms they enjoyed—and used—in the US. Refugees, asylees, and those fleeing repressive regimes and war spoke of this frequently. Women often mentioned this, too, as the US offered the possibility of making new homes in which strictures on women's activities and chafing gender roles could be abandoned. Significantly, these women spoke of their home in the US as the place where they gained their personhood. One woman talked about her ability to start her own business in the US and to gain independence from her husband to whom she had been wed through an arranged marriage. Another woman talked about her ability to act on her dream of helping women. She said that in Palestine and Syria, where she had lived previously, she wanted to be able to help women, but no one took her seriously.

> "I got most of my success in this country. I always say it to people around me:
> 'do you think if I was in my country, I would get into this position?' It would be
> hard. It would be hard for an uneducated, divorced woman in another country to
> be successful. So I do see myself here, doing everything. I don't see myself as
> less than anybody else. So, the self-esteem that you get in this country is really
> powerful."

These women, and others who spoke of the opportunities they gained in the US, were very concerned about the increasing restrictions on freedoms and liberties accompanying the PATRIOT Act. Many of them were engaged in civil rights organizations and other efforts to ensure fair treatment. Many noted that they had fled their home countries because of restrictions on liberties; they were not going to let the US restrict freedoms without a political fight.

Still other people began to think about the United States as home as they began to raise families. There was a certain resignation in some people's voices that the children would probably not feel that the Middle East was home, or at least would not feel it in the same way that the parents did. In response, many organizations and activists turned their attention to issues facing youth, including schools, cultural activities, and building stronger relationships with other, non-Arab organizations in the area. As one leader of a hometown association put it:

> "We have to [change our orientation]. Basically, the youth are here. We need to
> maintain a relationship with [the hometown], but we need to stop focusing there.
> I think we should focus efforts here and be part of the process, but we can't
> ignore our relationship with people back home. But I think the new generation
> will probably dictate to us."

In these and other comments, respondents moved back and forth between homes in the US and homes in the Middle East.

Respondents seemed motivated to bring these two senses of home together and to so in ways that would be meaningful for their children, children who were unlikely to leave the United States. The leader of one civil rights organization reflected on this, saying:

> "You belong to where your kids belong; you don't belong where your parents
> belong, because your kids are what you live for….That is the true sense of being a
> citizen. You're a citizen of the country where your future is. The interest of my
> kids is what I struggle for. If I talk about tolerance and understanding and ending
> discrimination, it's not for me… But I'm talking about my kids. I don't want
> anyone to look at my son or my daughter and say 'Your name is Omar. You
> must not be an American.' And I know it's not going to happen, because we're
> going to be able to make people accept Arabs and Muslims the way they finally
> accepted the Irish and Italians….Hopefully, that will happen soon."

The definition of citizenship used by most of these respondents had a strong, place-based aspect. It was American—and perhaps also Lebanese or Jordanian or Egyptian—citizenship that bound them to the places in which they lived. Many emphasized that they were "Americans by choice," and said that they wanted to make the United States a place that was inclusive and democratic and that lived up to its lofty ideals and rhetoric. There is, of course, a practical element in thinking about place and citizenship that led most of the immigrant respondents to take American citizenship. An American passport provides a degree of access and security when traveling that is important, particularly if immigrants do not have to give up their original passport and citizenship. Citizenship also makes it easier to get certain jobs, such as with the

federal government, and enables participation in elections. More and more Arab immigrants now recognize that citizenship provides protections that classification as a permanent resident does not. As one activist put it:

> "After September 11, I know a lot of people who didn't have citizenship, but
> might have been residents, who are very afraid to be active and involved in any
> way. So I guess being a citizen really gives you rights, which otherwise you
> wouldn't have. Before September 11, you didn't think needed them, but
> obviously, you do now. Unless you're a citizen, you're not given rights under the
> Constitution."

As this person, and others also noted, however, those rights for naturalized citizens that had seemed sacrosanct are also now under threat.

While the legal standing was important, most of our respondents discussed citizenship as much more than just a matter of a passport. They argued it also involved good values, being informed about issues, participation and making a contribution to the local and national community, and working for justice for all people. These are the hallmarks of republican citizenship, and almost all respondents mentioned them. The man who spoke about the importance of rights, for example, continued:

> "I don't want to use the word patriot, but I do feel patriotic. I have feelings and
> patriotic instincts for the country. So I do feel obligations to my country, my
> community. I live here and people I care about live here, so of course I have
> obligations and duties. That's what drives me also to start an organization like
> this. I think it's positive for the community."

At this level, the respondents pose no challenge to the kinds of citizenship values espoused by political commentators, whether conservative or liberal.

What may distinguish the understanding of American citizenship espoused by many of our respondents, however, is the way that it was connected with participation and activism around issues in the country of origin, thus extending citizenship beyond the boundaries of the United States. For example, one woman commented:

> "At events, if it's a vigil, a demonstration, or anything along that line, when I'm
> carrying a Palestinian flag, people on the street will ask, 'well why are you carrying
> the Palestinian flag if you're an American?' I say 'I am an American of Palestinian
> origin.' Also, I'm carrying sometimes the American flag, and Arabs will say 'why
> are you carrying that?' I think we have to remember that we are Americans and
> you have to be proud to be an American. In order to be proud, you have to want

your government to do what's right. I hope my government can do what's right, whether it's in Palestine, whether it's in Iraq, whether it's in other countries, and not only on Arab issues. With the cause in Palestine, and also as an American, we want to be proud of what our government is doing."

This woman, and many others, argued that it was a duty as an American citizen to be informed about the injustices that stemmed from US policy and to try to persuade the US government to change course. It was precisely their willingness to speak as American *and* as Arab about issues in their American and Arab homes that was a marker of their commitment to the United States. As one civil rights leader put it:

"It's, I guess, realizing where you belong, that you belong to something, and that thing is not mutually exclusive. You can be a citizen of [a town], a citizen of California, and a citizen of the US and a member of the Muslim community and hopefully a member of the human race."

This notion of citizenship has a spatiality to it in that citizenship is not rooted in a single nation-state, but is embedded in places at nested scales. Citizenship in this case open and not exclusive, but nevertheless remains grounded in place and in the relationships that constitute place. And as the woman quoted previously argued, just as citizenship is multi-scalar, it can also be constituted in and through attachments to multiple places as citizens seek to promote justice for all.

For the majority of our respondents, home and citizenship were rooted in place, or perhaps more accurately, in places. Their transnational activities were important to them, and were part of the reason they identified as Arab-American. Contrary to what one might expect from the literature on transnationalism and from some of the political rhetoric within the United States, however, the ability to link homes and commitments in two places led to enhanced, rather than diminished, commitment and contributed to respondents' sense of Americanness.

Deterritorialized Homes and Citizenship

There were however, several people whose sense of home and citizenship were not so grounded in place and who might be described as enacting transnational or perhaps post-national citizenship. In discussing these ideas, we focus on those people who only expressed a deterritorialized sense of home. Many other people mentioned some of the issues described next, but they also talked about home as located in a place; this metaphorical sense of home was layered onto more material homes. At this point, we focus our attention on those people who only talked about a deterritorialized home.

What do we mean by "deterritorialized home"? In simplest terms, we mean conceptualizations of home that were detached from place in some way. The two most common deterritorializations were home as culture and the absence of home.

Home as culture is metaphorical, rather than physical or place-based. For people who discussed this sense of home, home was found wherever Arab culture prevailed, or was at least accepted. As one man said, "Home is the culture." While few respondents were as direct as that, many were involved in efforts to share Arab culture with their children and to infuse Arab culture into broader American society as a form of home-making. Many were at pains to show the compatibility between Muslim, Arab, Christian, and American values, especially with respect to family, obeying the law, and a sense of justice and fairness. Cultural festivals, language schools, newspapers, and outreach activities were intended to teach children to value their heritage and to show other Americans the beauty of Arabic art, music and poetry, and to share the rich history of the Middle East.

There were tensions, however, as some organizations and respondents struggled over how far to assimilate or how much to integrate Arab and American cultures. Many commented on the delicate balance they sought to maintain, as they wanted to hold onto a core of Arab culture as distinct and not to lose their Arabness. As one leader of a party-based organization put it, "The biggest challenge is to be different and similar at the same time." But how or where that balance between similarity and difference was to be achieved was unclear, and the subject of considerable debate even within families. In several interviews, respondents commented that their mother/father/husband/wife thought the respondent was too Americanized and that their politics reflected Americanization with little inflection of Arabness.

And it should be noted that some respondents were wary of extending cultural awareness beyond their communities. One cultural organization, which has a significant on-line presence, was reluctant to take on a goal of sharing the culture with "foreigners." The respondent argued that it was important for the members of her organization to have a space where they could be at home in the culture, without worrying what foreigners thought or always having to explain things; if that were to happen, the culture and the cultural space they were creating would no longer be home.

Running through many of the interviews, including the one just mentioned, was a sense that some part of home was lost to the respondents. This was perhaps strongest amongst Palestinians whose physical homes were taken. One woman, for example, spoke of returning from a teaching job in Kuwait to find that her parents had recently been displaced from their home.   This woman has never been able to return to the place she grew up, where her ancestors

lived, and to the nooks and crannies of the house where she had hidden treasures as a young girl. Other Palestinians talked about loss, as well, as did those who were forced to move due to war or political repression. As one man said, he would not have lived to be 20 as a Palestinian activist during the Lebanese civil war. Among these respondents, involvement in organizations to force change in US policy were common, as were efforts to enact changes in their country of origin. Few people, though, actually anticipated moving out of the US. For example, none of the people we interviewed who were involved in a right-of-return organization wanted to actually move to what is now Israel. The *right* to return to a lost home was the goal, but they felt that it could no more be their home than the United States.

Some of these respondents experienced not just the loss of homeland, but a feeling that they belonged nowhere. For these people, the constant reminders of their otherness that they experienced and their continued frustration at what they perceived to be unjust actions on the part of the US government in Palestine and in Iraq meant that the US would not be home, even though it was where they built their houses and communities and where they participated as citizens; the linkage between citizenship and home was severed for these people. At the same time, they felt they would never be at home in the Middle East, whether because they could not go there for legal reasons, or could not build a life there, or because their Americanness meant they would be outsiders there, as well. One man recounted his experience returning to Lebanon after several years with his American wife and children. He reacted with something akin to horror when his wife said she would like to live there, as he had come to the realization that the Lebanon he left as a young man no longer existed. The feeling of homelessness was particularly strong for second-generation activists who were repelled and confused by American attitudes toward Palestine and Israel, but who could not consider Palestine home. One woman explained the feeling of separation, of homelessness in this way:

> "My instinct, my thoughts, everything in the way that I function is Amercian; it's
> all I've known. It's where I was born and raised. But my values, my identity, is
> very much rooted in Palestine, as well. It's an uncomfortable place to be
> sometimes. But while I'm in America, Americans can point to me and say 'you're
> not one of us.' But when I'm back home, I can't speak the language, and I don't
> fit in. I stick out…."

She later commented that the stark contrast between lives in Palestine and lives in the United States was difficult to negotiate:

> "We carry it with us all the time. People here have a rough day because they may
> have spilled their coffee on the way into the office, while I have been sitting there

while Dad's on the phone, and on the other end, you are hearing gun shots at

your family members. You have to go to work that morning, and act like it's just

'how was your weekend?' Well my weekend is not that relevant to me right now;

my family is under curfew and may not get to eat. These kinds of things put you

in a whole different room, and that's become a way of life because the tensions

have been high for so long. It just puts you in a different place, and it does cause

divides."

But while discussing the divisions and sense of alienation from both places, this woman sees herself as something of a bridge, saying "In some ways, I feel like a bridge between the two because they both make sense to me….I don't know how it fits together, but it does." Through her activism, she tries to reinforce that bridge so that other Americans see the connections—the topography—that links what happens in Palestine to life in the United States and to questions of justice in the world.

In some ways, these people might be the ones most likely to challenge the territorial model of citizenship inscribed in the nation-state; they feel they do not belong anywhere, yet they claim to act as citizens. But citizens of what? These were the people who claimed they were citizens of the world, who pursued justice and human rights without regard to national borders or institutions, who called themselves humanists and internationalists. One might be tempted to conclude that they followed a post-national model of citizenship or relied on a supranational human rights regime to act as citizen (Soysal, 2000). And to some extent they did.

What was striking, however, was the way these respondents nevertheless relied on place-based institutions and affective senses of place in pursuing their activism. Several people, for example, proclaimed their internationalism, but worked in their local community to protect civil liberties. One woman said the question of home kept her awake every night; yet she worked with an organization that provides social services to Arab immigrants to help integrate them into American life and that is trying to redevelop a depressed neighborhood as an Arab-American shopping district and enclave. One male immigrant linked his internationalism to an absence of home, but only until a Palestinian state is consolidated:

"I'm definitely American, but I have enjoyed being introduced as a citizen of the

world, but with a Palestinian heart. And I'm a Palestinian only because of the

cause, the Palestinian cause. Until it is fulfilled, when there is a Palestinian state, I

am an internationalist."

In these comments, he denies home and citizenship as an American until a Palestinian state in which he will not live is constructed; once an independent Palestine is built, he will simply be an

American. Yet he is also the founder of an Arab-American party-affiliated organization. What seems contradictory when read from the standpoint of nation-centered citizenship can also be seen as a demonstration of the ways in which understandings of citizenship shift over time depending on contexts of home in more than one place.

On the surface, it is reasonable to argue that the relationship between home, belonging, and citizenship has been severed for these respondents; having no home, they are citizens of the world. They are good candidates for the kinds of political subjects in a post-national world. But in delving deeper, in asking directly about citizenship and belonging, it became apparent that many activists used the resources of citizenship and the institutions and relationships within places to build homes of various kinds. This was even true of some cyber-activists and organizations that rely primarily on the Internet for mobilization. Thus, even though their sense of home and citizenship may seem deterritorialized, processes of reterritorialization are also evident. Citizenship was used to build a sense of home and belonging, but it was not necessarily a home located exclusively within the United States.

Topographies of Home and Citizenship

The geographies and politics of home we encountered were complicated, nuanced, and ambivalent. Certainly, they are more complicated than what comes through much of the popular and academic discussions of transnationalism and politics. We have suggested elsewhere that those claims about transnationalism need to be moderated, be made more specific to certain kinds of activities, and be sensitive to differences between and within immigrant groups (Nagel and Staeheli, 2004). But there is more here than just a need to be more limited in the claims that are made.

Home for our respondents was rarely fixed, but rather was full of shifting meanings. Indeed, a common answer to our questions about home was that it depended on the context in which they were thinking about it, and who asked them about it. In a post-9/11 context, such awareness was a necessity for members of Arab-identified groups. What did seem clear, however, was that the multivalent nature of home—incorporating material and metaphorical spaces—did not weaken attachment to the United States for many respondents. Rather, it seemed as though the multiple locations of home in some ways enriched respondents' sense of Americanness and their involvement in American politics.

Significantly, most respondents attached clear, substantive meanings to being American citizens. At the same time, few respondents felt they needed to abandon their Arabness in order to perform their duties as American citizens. In addition, there was little evidence of the use of

citizenship to promote group difference or to separate Arabs from the core of American citizenship; rather, respondents believed their activities *as citizens* would lead to greater integration into their homes in America, rather than separate or detach Arabs from it. Very often, they thought their experiences as Arab-Americans and as having lived in more than one place made them better able to serve the US as citizens. They also argued that their position on American policies in the Middle East reflected their concern with American prestige, as much as their attachment to their countries of origin.

Some respondents did, of course, feel less attached or less certain of their homes in the United States, but they also felt uncomfortable identifying with homes in the Middle East. These deterritorialized experiences of home and of citizenship are important aspects of the topography of home and citizenship, though by no means the most frequently mentioned amongst our respondents. Interestingly, these deterritorialized expressions of home were accompanied by emotional and substantive commitments to particular places. It appears difficult, in this regard, to fully divorce citizenship and sense of belonging from territory, despite the yearning of some academics and activists for political identities that transcend geography.

It should be remembered that we did select people for this study who were involved in Arab-American organizations. Some of these individuals are trying through their activism to project a particular image of their communities to the population at large; this undoubtedly conditions the picture that emerges from the interviews. But however much respondents' comments were tailored for our consumption, they do reveal relationships and understandings of home that are more complicated than those implied either in traditional models of citizenship or in current theorizations of transnationalism.

Political attachment, it seems, may be expanded rather than allocated; it is not a zero-sum, as some of the transnationalism literature and political debate suggests. Rather, there was a sense that respondents struggled to find a new language or means to express the ways in which rootedness in places outside the US made them better Americans. In other words, many of our respondents pursued a politics of home and citizenship whose topography transcended localities and nations, even as they were often rooted in the spaces of both. It was a topography that shifted, was open, and was unbounded.

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