

**Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). 224 pp. Hardcover \$29.95.**

Frederick Cooper is a Professor of History at New York University. He has researched, lectured and written extensively about African History. His scholarship explores plantation slavery in East Africa and its legacies, the transformation of colonial labour policies on the African continent, and the discourse about the French imperial project in West Africa. He has collaborated with several social and comparative historians including Jane Burbank, a Professor of Russian History at New York University, with whom he wrote *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2011). In April 2016, he delivered the Lawrence Stone Lectures at Princeton University. These lectures are the basis for his discussion about the relationship between citizenship, inequality, and difference.

In his Introduction, “Citizenship and Belonging,” Cooper reviews the extensive scholarship about this complex relationship. As Cooper points out, scholars have not only traced, over time and across space, the growth of diverse political systems, but also the ways in which competing and conflicting interpretations of citizenship create, maintain, and amend differences and inequalities. Cooper captures this scholarship’s essence by emphasizing the socially-defined differences between citizenship and belonging. On the one hand, legal constructs, exclusivity, and discrimination often shape citizenship. On the other hand, community membership, inclusion, and parity influence belonging. With the French imperial project not only as a reference but also as a comparison, Cooper engages these social, legal, and cultural concepts and applies them to three periods in history.

In Chapter One, “Imperial Citizenship from the Roman Republic to the Edict of Caracalla,” Cooper discusses the origins of citizenship in the ancient world. He begins with a brief discussion of the Greek *polis*, a political community. For example, Cooper points out that, as a self-conscious political community, Athenians articulated clearly defined notions of citizenship reserved for and inherited by free men. Their exclusive—and exalted—status was affirmed by contemporary thinking, like in Aristotle’s assertion that a citizen was one who could hold office and administer justice. As Cooper points out, citizenship’s exclusive boundaries did not extend rights and privileges to the women and slaves who constituted most of the population.

Cooper then compares the restricted world of the Greeks to the evolving and dynamic one of the Romans. Through aggressive military conquest and economic coercion, Roman authorities created several gradations of citizenship as it incorporated conquered territories and peoples into its *civitas* from Britain to Egypt

and from Spain to Judea. Cooper analyzes what it meant to be a Roman both in the republic and the empire. As Cooper points out, in the Roman Republic, being Roman meant having and acting upon a bundle of rights, particularly participation in the republic's governing institutions. These rights did not come without contention, as reflected in the conflicts between patricians and plebeians over issues such as marital rights. In the Roman Empire, being Roman meant having privileges, such as access to Roman courts, anywhere in the empire. As an example, Cooper draws attention to Saint Paul, a key figure in early Christianity's institution building, who asserted his rights as a Roman citizen to avoid persecution from local authorities in Jerusalem. In another assertion, though, Saint Paul assured his fellow Christians—many of them slaves, women, and the disinherited—that their citizenship was in Heaven. Centuries later this assurance would have a profound resonance among enslaved Africans and their descendants in their struggles for freedom and equality in America. Also echoing through history was the Edict of Caracalla. In 212, the Roman emperor extended or granted citizenship to all free men in the empire, regardless of their ethnicity, national origin, or geographical location. In 1946, French politicians referred to the edict in their deliberations about the place of citizenship in their empire.

In Chapter Two, "Citizenship and Empire—Europe and Beyond," Cooper uses citizenship as an analytic lens to examine political discourse and imperial structures in the "long" nineteenth century. In the previous three centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French, and English established seaborne empires that brought foreign territories under their control and domain. In addition to populating their American colonies with their own people, they violently subordinated the indigenous peoples and forcibly imported slaves from Africa. These empires were not only crucibles of diversity, but also social, economic, and political sites where class, ethnicity, race, geography, and ideology interacted and clashed to create differences in status, power, and wealth. These struggles led into the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions, and subsequent ones which informed fierce debates about sovereignty, nationality, and, of course, citizenship.

In the Spanish Empire, the Cadiz constitution of 1812 reflected the problem of power sharing between those who lived in the metropole and those who lived in the colonies. According to Cooper, the breakup of the Spanish Empire was essentially a civil war between two elites, one loyal to Spain and the other committed to South America. Neither elite embraced an inclusive citizenship in the resultant republics. In the British Empire, thirteen North American colonies revolted over their lack of representation in the British parliament. After achieving political independence, the new republic linked its notion of citizenship to whiteness. It would take a civil war to partially remedy that exclusion. The Fourteenth Amendment to the American Constitution adopted the concept of birthright citizenship or *Jus Soli*. Nonetheless, as Cooper points out, race would remain a continuing and defining problem in American citizenship. Other parts of the British Empire in the

Caribbean, Africa, and Asia would also wrestle with representation. In the French Empire, broadly construed in its varied monarchical and republican configurations, citizenship and nationality had a dynamic and tense interplay with one another. Sometimes they converged; other times they diverged. Depending on the political moment and colonial situation, both citizenship and nationality could be inclusive, exclusive, or both. In the German Empire, the concept of citizenship through parents or ancestors or *Jus Sanguinis* was a recurring theme. In the Ottoman Empire, a critical aspect of citizenship was the religion of Islam.

In Chapter Three, “Empires, Nations, and Citizenship in the Twentieth Century,” Cooper challenges old assumptions about the supposedly seamless transformation from empire to nation-state. It took two world wars, revolutions, a cold war, several civil wars, and wars of national liberation to break up or dissolve the old international imperial system and to give rise to the new world order of nation-states and international organizations. Throughout these changes, the notion of citizenship remained a vibrant and demanding social force. Both the powerful and the powerless sought either to maintain their privileges or to assert their rights to belong. Cooper captures these pressures. His analysis explains how several imperial projects dissolved and re-invented themselves. For example, the British created the British Commonwealth of Nations and the French initiated the French Community. Colonial dissatisfaction over citizenship in these arrangements contributed to the establishment of independent nation-states or states in search of nations. Other citizenship projects in the late twentieth century were trans-national ones such as the European Union.

In his Conclusion, “Citizenship in an Unequal World,” Cooper recognizes the challenges confronting citizenship in a world divided into nearly two hundred countries. Many of these territorially bounded states are often socially, culturally, economically, and politically divided entities. Their political struggles and conflicts have spilled over their boundaries into the global economy. Citizenship is not just a national issue but an international one. Cooper feels encouraged by the ideals of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the decisions of the International Court of Justice. His historical perspectives clearly situate him within the progressive notion of history. His study of citizenship reflects his deep humanity and commitment to improving the human condition through the study of history. History does not repeat itself but there are lessons to be learned. And this fine book teaches those lessons.

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