

Exploring Citizenship and Exclusion: The Dynamics of State Power and Administrative Practices

Jiayan Tu

Macalester College, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Citizenship indeed provides a sense of belonging, but as Marshall discusses, it is more than just a feeling—it's a status conferred upon members of a community, ensuring equality among possessors in terms of associated rights and duties. Marshall argues that citizenship comprises civil, political, and social rights, with civil rights guaranteeing individual freedoms, political rights enabling participation in governance, and social rights ensuring economic welfare. The 20th century witnessed a shift towards recognizing social rights, challenging hierarchical class systems, and revealing patterns of exclusion inherent in the evolution of citizenship, particularly affecting marginalized groups and women. Exclusion seems to be the antithesis of citizenship, which is viewed as inclusive. This paper explores the nuanced differences between exclusion, omission, and elimination, examining state practices across different contexts and their implications for marginalized groups. It discusses how state capacity influences the choice of exclusionary strategies and considers the varying impacts of these strategies on social groups. By analyzing cases from Germany, Malaysia, India, Israel, and the UK, the paper provides a comparative study of exclusionary practices and their outcomes, contributing to the theoretical understanding of citizenship and state power.

Introduction

Citizenship, as Marshall discusses, is more than a mere feeling of belonging—it is a status conferred upon members of a community, encompassing civil, political, and social rights. However, this inclusive ideal of citizenship is frequently undermined by state practices of exclusion. This paper seeks to answer the following research question: How do different states utilize exclusionary practices, and what are the implications of these practices for marginalized groups? Through a comparative analysis of state practices in Germany, Malaysia, India, Israel, and the UK, this study aims to unravel the complex dynamics between state power, citizenship, and exclusion.

The 20th century witnessed a shift towards recognising social rights, challenging hierarchical class systems, and revealing patterns of exclusion inherent in the evolution of citizenship, particularly affecting marginalised groups and women. Exclusion seems to be the antithesis of citizenship, which is viewed as inclusive. Exclusion not only occurred among citizens, where resource allocation differed based on factors such as ethnicity or religion, as exemplified in Saeed's article on the Ahmadiyya community, but also extended to non-citizens, including migrants and refugees, as evidenced by cases such as Germany, Malaysia, India, and the Palestinians, as explored in works by Brubaker, Cheong, Berda, and Sabbagh-Khoury respectively.

Methodology

This paper employs a comparative case study methodology, selecting Germany, Malaysia, India, Israel, and the UK for their diverse approaches to citizenship and exclusion. These countries were chosen to illustrate the spectrum of state practices, ranging from legal exclusion to bureaucratic omission, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of how different states navigate the challenges of managing marginalized populations. The selection was guided

by the availability of robust data and the relevance of each country's practices to the broader theoretical framework of citizenship and state power.

State Power and Administrative Practices

Exclusion is inevitable, as citizenship itself serves as a means of exclusion based on national membership, yet the forms of exclusion vary among nation-states, despite sharing a common objective. The reasons for exclusion are straightforward: within the state, disagreements within groups lead to the state favouring the majority of citizens, thereby excluding minorities; externally, states prioritise the effective allocation of resources to their own citizens.

The tool for exclusion utilised by the state remains largely consistent—administrative practices endowed with infra-structural power, which Morgan defines as the ability of public officials to achieve their goals through coordinated administrative actions and collaborative relationships with civil society actors. Based on that, Mann's concept of infra-structural power, "the capacity of the state to penetrate civil society and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm," views the state as a distinctive source of authority but argues that state power often works through civil society, avoiding command-and-control strategies in favour of eliciting voluntary compliance.

Forms of Exclusion: Elimination and Omission

According to Cheong's model, exclusion is a top-down expansionary approach for the state, as it requires recognition and a certain willingness to know in order to enable stratification and thus exclusion. As discussed by Jacobson and Cinalli, exclusion refers to the process of keeping certain groups or individuals out of participation in societal or political realms. In their exploration of citizenship, they emphasize that citizenship is not an end but rather a tool, with rights deeply rooted in property and independence. The framing of rights as properties of individuals, particularly since the Enlightenment, reinforces the territorial quality of rights, underlining the entitlements and autonomy associated with them.

In settler colonial contexts, elimination refers to the aim of replacing native populations and appropriating their land. It involves mechanisms of dispossession and expulsion, ultimately seeking to establish a new social order by eliminating the native presence. The Absentee Property Law of 1950 in Israel is an example of legislation designed to legalise the expropriation of land from internally displaced Palestinians. Elimination involves not only the dispossession of land but also the forced displacement and expulsion of indigenous populations from their ancestral territories. This can occur through violent means, such as military campaigns or ethnic cleansing, aimed at driving indigenous peoples from their homes and preventing their return.

The example of Palestinian villages disappearing prior to 1948 due to Zionist colonisation illustrates the deliberate efforts to eliminate native populations through expulsion. In settler colonial societies, citizenship often serves to assimilate indigenous peoples, erasing their native identity. For instance, the Bantustan System in South Africa aimed to eliminate natives by granting them citizenship in designated areas, preserving political identification while erasing indignity. Similarly, Palestinians in Israel lack recognition as indigenous despite holding Israeli citizenship, reinforcing the elimination process by erasing their identity and history from official narratives. Therefore, compared to exclusion, which still allows for the existence within society, elimination seeks to entirely replace indigenous populations with settler populations, thereby fundamentally altering the demographic and cultural landscape of the territory.

Omission, as a state strategy, differs fundamentally from other forms of exclusion in that it involves the deliberate decision not to recognize certain populations. This lack of recognition, as seen in the case of the Rohingya in Malaysia, denies these groups basic rights and protections, effectively rendering them invisible in the eyes of the state. Unlike active exclusion, which involves categorization and differential treatment of populations, omission operates through a passive withdrawal of recognition. This distinction is critical because omission allows states to evade

responsibility while still maintaining control over marginalized populations. For instance, the omission of undocumented migrant workers from official records in Malaysia exemplifies how omission can perpetuate statelessness and vulnerability without overtly violating international norms.

Exclusion and omission, as observed in state practices, represent contrasting strategies for population management. Exclusion involves actively recognising and sorting populations into institutionalised social categories through legislation and policy implementation, leading to differential treatment based on classification. In contrast, omission intentionally leaves certain populations unrecognised, withholding or contracting recognition through administrative rules rather than formal laws. This deliberate bureaucratic choice excludes these populations from official records and recognition, denying them fundamental rights and protections. While exclusion categorises populations for differentiated treatment, omission operates by leaving them unrecognised, hindering their access to essential resources and perpetuating their vulnerability.

Conclusion

Although elimination and omission can both be seen as forms of exclusion, they also exhibit significant differences. The similarities between elimination and omission lie in their shared aim of altering the status and recognition of certain populations within society, both driven by state actions. In both cases, the goal is to modify the societal position of specific groups. However, their methods and outcomes differ significantly. Elimination, as observed in settler-colonial contexts like Israel, involves active measures such as dispossession, expulsion, and erasure of indigenous populations to establish a new social order dominated by settlers. This process seeks to replace native populations entirely, fundamentally reshaping the demographic and cultural landscape of the territory. On the other hand, omission, exemplified by cases like Malaysia, operates through the deliberate withholding or contraction of recognition by the state, leaving certain populations unrecognized and thereby denying them fundamental rights and protections. While exclusion categorizes populations for differential treatment, omission intentionally excludes them from official records and recognition, perpetuating their vulnerability and hindering their access to essential resources.

It can be assumed that the state will prefer elimination when seeking sovereignty over the targeted population but will choose omission when seeking a more resource-efficient way to exclude.

State capacity matters, as elimination involves more effort compared to omission, with measures such as dispossession, expulsion, and erasure of targeted populations. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that higher state capacity is required for elimination compared to the neglect involved in omission. It is also worth noting that while both elimination and omission exclude certain social groups, elimination changes their cultural identities, whereas omission simply ignores them. Thus, elimination might be preferred if the state is capable of managing the undesirable social groups yet still wants to extract value from them, especially in settler-colonial contexts where the state seeks to assert its authority over indigenous populations by replacing them entirely. Additionally, elimination may be perceived as a more effective way to achieve desired outcomes, such as land appropriation or cultural assimilation, as it directly targets the presence and identity of unwanted groups. In contrast, omission strategies, while also excluding certain populations, may be seen as less direct or comprehensive in achieving these goals. Omission involves withholding recognition and resources from certain groups without necessarily erasing their presence or identity, which may be deemed insufficient for those seeking to assert dominance or control. Therefore, states may choose elimination over omission when they seek a more complete and direct method of exclusion to establish and maintain power and dominance.

On the other hand, the state may prefer omission over elimination as it allows for a more subtle and covert form of exclusion compared to elimination. By withholding recognition and resources from certain groups without overtly targeting their presence or identity, omission can avoid drawing attention or backlash from the international community or human rights organizations, making it more sustainable, favoring the state actors seeking to maintain a semblance of legitimacy. Moreover, omission strategies may be perceived as less disruptive or destabilizing to existing power structures. Unlike elimination, which involves the forcible removal or erasure of entire populations, omission

can be implemented more gradually and incrementally, minimizing social upheaval or resistance and making the exclusive result more predictable. Last but not the least, as mentioned above, omission may be chosen when the state or dominant group lacks the capacity or resources to undertake large-scale elimination efforts, as implementing elimination strategies often requires significant financial and military capabilities, which may not be feasible or sustainable for all states. Therefore, states may favor omission over elimination when they seek a more discreet, gradual, and resource-efficient approach to exclusion while still maintaining power and control over marginalized populations.

It is also worth noting the extent to which the practices of omission and elimination differ, or whether they simply stem from the exclusion of certain social groups. Based on the examples of colonial settlers and Malaysia's administrative practices discussed above, it appears that a key difference lies in the scope of exertion between omission and elimination, which depends on the citizenship status of the targeted population. In Malaysia, omission primarily targets members of non-citizen communities, aiming to prevent them from obtaining citizenship and thus denying them access to social resources and services. In contrast, elimination involves the dispossession of property and land belonging to internally displaced Palestinians in Israel, who are actually Israeli citizens. Therefore, citizenship seems to be a prerequisite for the state to eliminate and assert dominance.

However, groups that are omitted from the state are more vulnerable compared to those that are eliminated, as omission entails more than just the erasure of identity and history from official narratives. Omitted groups may lack any narrative or recognition from society, making them even more marginalized. Nonetheless, this argument requires further case studies to validate its validity, yet it presents an intriguing research topic for future scholars: Can a state eliminate a group of non-state members as a means of exclusion and dominance? Can a state omit state members (citizens) as a means to exclude or marginalize them? This also extends to a potential hypothesis regarding whether we can interpret elimination as a form of omission, specifically the omission of a category, in this case, the omission of indigenous identity. Omission of certain identities may persist over time; however, if individuals or groups choose to adopt another identity, such as Palestinians identifying as Israeli citizens, they are unlikely to be omitted or eliminated but may experience exclusion due to exclusionary policies.

Another aspect worth considering is the extent to which exclusion can lead to the creation of a permanent minority. Within the state, policies are unlikely to explicitly target certain minority groups, as authorities aim to maintain citizen compliance through voluntary obedience. Therefore, it becomes challenging to determine whether elimination and omission can result in the existence of a permanent minority group. In the case of elimination, since indigenous identity and history are erased, it is difficult to ascertain the presence of a minority. One could argue that cultural identity may still persist within community groups; however, it is not a permanent minority but rather a common majority that the state seeks to establish. In the case of omission, without the involvement of administrative practices, there may not be a minority in the first place, as the undesired group is not acknowledged as a minority at all.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Macalester College for establishing the course SOCI 370 Political Sociology, which gives me a precious opportunity to conduct this research. I would like to thank Professor Eric Larson in giving me honest and pertinent advice and pointing out areas of improvement in the article.

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