

on the basis of a similar range of sources, but are placed in different parts of the book.

As the contributions, in general, follow up the aim of investigating the “shifting boundaries” and not the “shifting manifestations” of public health, the collection presents itself as a consistent whole. Combined with the thought-provoking introduction and the excellent quality of several papers, this makes the book a valuable contribution both to public health history, and to the history of “shifting boundaries” within other knowledge and policy fields.

Erik Ingebrigtsen,

Norwegian University of Science and
Technology, Trondheim

Engin F Isin and Greg M Nielsen (eds), *Acts of citizenship*, London and New York, Zed Books, 2008, pp. xii, 308, £70.00, \$126.00 (hardback 978-1-84277-951-4), £18.99, \$34.00 (paperback 978-1-84277-952-1).

Since the 1980s, citizenship in many Western democracies has become, throughout the political spectrum, a fashionable concept to articulate dissatisfaction with specific developments in society as well as to put forward solutions. Several social and political issues have been articulated in terms of citizenship: the crisis of the welfare state; the consequences of individualization and economic liberalization, especially the presumed loss of social cohesion and the growing social divide between well-off and deprived groups; mass immigration and growing cultural and ethnic diversity; increasing voter apathy and the declining trust in parliamentary democracy; the demise of communism; and European unification, and globalization. Discussion focuses on the (supposedly disturbed) balance between rights and obligations. Various solutions are proposed, but they all tend towards a revitalization of civic virtues. Neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, and communitarians, as

well as political theorists and commentators have argued that civic, political and social rights have largely been materialized as passive entitlements while the other side of democratic citizenship has been neglected: the capacity and willingness actively to participate in public life and take on social responsibilities. The highly politicized manner in which citizenship has been raised as an urgent public issue is for a large part entwined with a (rightist) rejection of the cultural and political legacy of the liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

This collection of essays is part of the contemporary discussion on citizenship, but at the same time it is an attempt to criticize and surpass it, as the general introductory chapters by Engin Isin, Melanie White and Bettina Bergo make clear. They question current notions of citizenship as a formal and enduring legal and political status within the boundaries of representative democracy and the (nation) state. Advancing the concept of “acts of citizenship”, they shift the emphasis to active, creative and innovative deeds, concrete practices of individual and collective engagement, which rupture the normality of everyday life, challenge the existing social and political order, and also cross the boundaries of states and nations. In this—undeniably leftist—view, the latter substantive form of citizenship is in fact the condition which gives individuals the possibility to constitute themselves as true democratic citizens, who, as activist and recalcitrant agents, demand to be heard in public and who may provoke public dialogues on a wide range of issues. This approach of citizenship implies an argument in favour of diversity and reflexivity, that is, of a consideration of the world from different viewpoints as opposed to a one-dimensional perspective. Bryan Turner, Peter Nyers, and William Walters discuss the significance of such diversity and reflexivity with respect to global migration, increasing cultural pluralism, and the salience of ethnic identity and (Muslim) religion in the public sphere. The chapters by Fred Evans, Greg Nielsen, and Kieran Bonner throw light on the

role of “acts of citizenship” in dealing with problems in cosmopolitan urban environments, such as increasing social inequalities, consumerism, individualization and decreasing commitment to the common good. Yon Hsu employs the concept of “act of citizenship” in her analysis of the heroic efforts of the so-called Tank Man to stop the tanks of the Chinese army from crushing the students’ protests on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

The names of such divergent thinkers as Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Adolf Reinach, Martin Heidegger, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Lacan, Georg Simmel, Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler as well as numerous quotes from their work fly from the pages of this book. However, all too often such theoretical excursions, whereby some authors again and again fall into the hollowness of post-modern word-play, impede the readability of several chapters and obscure rather than clarify our understanding of “acts of citizenship”. Instead of these inflated philosophical digressions, in which the distinction between “is” and “ought” frequently tends to become blurred, I would have preferred a more empirical, especially historical underpinning of the—as yet not very clearly delineated—idea of “acts of citizenship”. The authors suggest that their viewpoint is innovative and that “acts of citizenship” are recent phenomena. However, I doubt whether their line of approach is as original as they claim. Apart from Brian Singer’s valuable contribution on Tocqueville’s reflections upon the special characteristics of American democratic citizenship, historical context is wanting in this volume. However, we can learn from history that from the late eighteenth century, civil liberties and the right of political participation were secured by active citizens, often against governments. The enjoyment as well as the expansion of democratic citizenship—with respect to the number and range of legal, political and social rights as well as the number and range of people who were entitled to them—was again and again

realized through political activism and struggle. Full and equal political citizenship was the outcome of the struggles of the labour and feminist movements, while the social and cultural obstacles blocking the realization of citizenship for other disadvantaged groups—women, youths, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, patients, the handicapped and the mentally ill—were tackled by the various emancipation movements that emerged from the 1960s. Non-democratic organization of power in several semi-public institutions and the private sphere, including health care, were questioned and politicized. All this involved “acts of citizenship”, but, curiously, this recent history is completely ignored in *Acts of citizenship*.

Harry Oosterhuis,
Maastricht University

Ulf Schmidt and Andreas Frewer (eds), *History and theory of human experimentation: the Declaration of Helsinki and modern medical ethics*, History and Philosophy of Medicine, vol. 2, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2007, pp. 370, €54.00 (hardback, 978-3-515-08862-6).

Although the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) of the World Medical Association (WMA) is internationally recognized as a code of ethics for medical research on human subjects, its origins and the circumstances of its various revisions (Tokyo 1975, Venice 1983, Hong Kong 1989, Somerset West 1996, Edinburgh 2000, Seoul 2008) have received relatively little historical attention. The present volume therefore constitutes a welcome addition to the literature on this important “living document”.

Several contributions to this volume provide historical background, especially Ulf Schmidt’s essay on the Nuremberg Doctors’ Trial and the Nuremberg Code as the most influential precursor document for the principles contained in the Helsinki Declaration, or discuss from various