Introduction: Performance and Citizenship

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The intertwining of performance and politics has become an established topic in studies of political leadership and campaigns. The increasing mediation of politics demands performances from politicians seeking public recognition and support (Alexander, 2011; Craig, 2016). In response, politicians skill themselves, attempt to manage the media and to establish popular appeal through public appearances. Some suggest that such changes herald a focus on the strategic aspects of politics at the expense of more substantial political questions leading to an increasing scepticism of politics among citizens (Capella and Jamieson, 1997). To some this leads to the loss of meaning in political rituals displaced by the strategic rationality of performance as the media is identified with a rationalization of political culture (Alexander, 2011). In all this, citizens are mainly conceived of as audiences observing the mediated performance of politics alongside concerns about the potential effects of apathy, disenchantment, and cynicism. However, the mediatization of politics - in contrast to the mediation of politics - leads to questions about the ways in which media has become part of political culture, or 'the political' rather than 'politics' in Mouffe's terms (2000). Such questions draw attention, for example, to uses of technologies of engagement for citizen activism, and the blurring of the boundaries between politics and everyday life. In this context, citizenship, as well as the exercise of political authority, becomes central to the performance of the political.

This special issue is concerned with the possibilities that the performative turn opens up for the study of spaces, practices and processes of citizenship and the problematization of political culture as a space of appearances and performances. The special issue brings together different approaches to performance in the social sciences and the humanities to examine the intersection between citizenship and performance. It does so by exploring, theoretically and empirically, different ways in which cultural, political and social performances problematize and expand understandings of citizenship and political culture. We will see how cultural and political performances can become key sites for struggles about and around the recognition of difference, values, and identity, in social, cultural and political spheres. As part of this endeavour, the papers in the issue extend the application of the concepts and analytical tools of performance studies to the study of political communication and political culture.

There is a growing recognition that the classical liberal view of citizenship, which implies a vertical relationship between the state and the individual, is increasingly inadequate to articulate contemporary forms of civic engagement, citizen participation and collective belonging. The influential and formative normative model of Marshall (1950) presupposes that citizenship is an ideal status to which the excluded might be granted access. In contrast, contemporary scholarship in citizenship studies is more concerned with how practices of citizenship take place in a variety of sites within and beyond the state-centred arena of politics and articulate different modes of being a citizen (Clarke, Coll, Dagnino and Neveu, 2014). These arguments reflect both the idea of the dispersal of power from centralised state institutions to practices in everyday life, and the idea of the hollowing out of the state vis-a-vis new forms of local, regional and global governance (Jessop, 2000). The turn to citizenship as realized in the culture of everyday life informs Isin's (2008, 2009) influential notion of 'acts of citizenship'. This concept offers a useful analytical lens to understand citizenship as a practice through which actors (e.g., NGOs, persons) constitute themselves (and others) as citizens through claims to rights (Isin, 2009). The focus on practices of rights claims takes place in the context of an emerging digital citizenship that expands the contexts and idioms of political engagement and activism shifting meaning of citizenship (Isin and Ruppert, 2015). Acts of citizenship not only articulate formal claims to citizenship and the associated rights that constitute citizens as claimants, but also create new, dispersed and culturally embedded sites of contestation, belonging and struggle. Through an ethnographic lens, Stack (2012) sees in such changes a conception of citizenship as a kind of freedom in the sense of 'room for manoeuvre' to pursue alternative political projects and citizenship practices beyond the state-centred arena of politics. This 'citizenship beyond the state' does not necessarily imply a rights-bearing membership of nation-states, originating instead from people's experiences of civil sociality as they strive to live in a civil way notwithstanding their formal status (Alexander, 2006). Debates in citizenship studies while still very much concerned with citizenship in terms of struggles around the terms and modes of citizenship (Tambakaki, 2016), are also engaging with a conceptualisation and study of citizenship as a subject-position and lived everyday experience (e.g., Lister, 2007; Bassel, 2008), which goes beyond an exclusive focus on formal rules and norms of inclusion (i.e., who has access to the community of citizens and who has not; who has access to rights and who has not). As Mayblin (2016: 195) suggests 'listing formal rights – as full, partial or absent – does not get at the full range of activities which make up the experience of citizenship'. There is here an important point of connection with debates about citizenship in the field of media, communication and cultural studies that

suggest that experiences of citizenship cannot be adequately captured by legal definitions of citizenship. Dahlgren (2009), for example, points to the limits of formal and state-centred understandings of citizenship to argue that identity is crucial to what he calls 'achieved citizenship', referring to the ways in which people go on to act and recognize themselves as citizens. In a similar vein, Hartley (2010) invites us to consider citizenship as a relational identity realized through cultural practice rather than a purely legal category, and to consider civic participation as a practice, which he analysed as ludic, playful practices not reducible to the Habermasian tradition of rational discussion and debate. Stevenson (2003) is also concerned with the links between media, culture and citizenship, arguing that citizenship cannot be adequately conceptualised without considering questions of imagination, identity, recognition and belonging within and beyond the limits of the nation. What these approaches in the field of media, communication and cultural studies have in common is the emphasis on citizenship as a civic practice through which people connect to others and act as citizens in a mediated public sphere. The idea of citizenship defined through activities and practices, embedded in contexts and forms of life, in material and social contexts of realization, lends itself to an understanding of citizenship as performance; the theme of this special issue. While Hartley (2010) uses the metaphor of game playing and Dahlgren (2009) the idea of achievement to emphasise that citizenship is an accomplishment, not only a legal category, the contributions in this special issue take as their starting point the idea of social practice as performance. The notion of performance is not a new way of thinking about social practice. For example, Goffman (1956) developed an account of the dramaturgical forms of social interaction in everyday life, Turner (1982) mapped the cultural transformation of ritual to theatre in terms of a performative and reflexive anthropology, and Alexander (2011) developed a performative account of the sociology of culture. These approaches all, in different ways, draw on performance studies to grasp ways of acting as a social being in political contexts and cultures.

The articles in this volume draw on the tradition of analysing social practice as performance in the context of the mediatization of political culture, which puts at the disposal political subjects the potential to perform politics and citizenship in a variety of mediated contexts. Our contributors are interested in analysing how poetic-expressive devices (e.g., acting, visual and music styles, gestures, *mise-en-scene*), performance tools and non-discursive modes of communication might enable individuals and groups to articulate voice, relationships of belonging, conflicts over citizenship, and claims to rights. Against this backdrop, this special issue is especially concerned with foregrounding the communicative dimensions of social,

political and cultural performances, the ways in which these can be constitutive of practices of citizenship, and the possibilities that performance as embodied practice offers to both the so-called common citizen and the social and political struggles of oppressed and marginalized social groups. Performance - as embodied practice – deserves analytical and theoretical attention in the study of citizenship because while the ideal public sphere relies on the diversity of voices, those who speak out of place are often roundly criticized (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994: 160). Thus, more attention needs to be paid to how the demands and conventions of performance shape and constrain a public sphere or civil sphere that is constituted not purely by critical dialogues (Habermas, 1989) but also encompasses expressive, embodied, marginal and affective modes of address. Perspectives in performance studies (e.g., Schechner, Conquergood, Taylor) and sociology (Alexander's cultural pragmatics; Goffman's dramaturgy) offer useful theoretical and analytical lenses to study and analyse political culture and citizenship as performance. These approaches have informed in a variety of ways the various contributions. One of the aims of the issue is precisely to illuminate some of the ways in which political and cultural performances are capable of engaging the 'hearts and minds' of citizen-audiences, not purely discursively by upholding or criticizing an argument (Habermas, 1989), but symbolically and meaningfully, by enabling new, performative imaginings of what it means to be a citizen.

From acts of citizenship to the performance of citizenship

Isin's theorisation of acts of citizenship offers an important point of departure for understanding practices of citizenship as performance focusing on what people do to achieve membership, inclusion and participation in the political community. This is interesting because it opens up the possibility not only how particular actors challenge formal regimes of citizenship and engage in modes of being political, but also offers a useful springboard to think about citizenship as performance. As Isin puts it, it is important to recognize 'acts as those that "create a scene", which means both performance and disturbance' (Isin, 2009: 379). He further suggests that by constituting 'acts' as an object of analysis we must focus 'on a rupture that enables the actor (that the act creates) to create a scene rather than follow a script' (Isin, 2009: 379). While Isin accepts that acts can be articulated via linguistic and non-linguistic means, he never explicitly borrows from performance studies approaches and pays little attention to the expressive dimensions of acts of citizenship. The notion of acts offers, nonetheless, a useful lens to research how creative subjects (Isin, 2008: 38) become 'activist citizens' and has

informed a wealth of scholarship on how citizenship is enacted, for example, by social movement actors or non-citizens (e.g., aliens, asylum-seekers), challenge established modalities of citizenship. But, more importantly, the focus on 'citizen-becoming' invites scholars to think about how acts that make a break or constitute a rupture are communicated by expressive means.

Ratto and Boler (2014) use the idea of DIY citizenship as a heuristic notion for understanding how people become citizens through alternative forms of political participation, creative practice and 'critical making'. The notion of DIY citizenship is important not only because it encourages the rethinking of binary distinctions such as cultural/political and professional/amateur, which constrain in important ways how scholarship in the arts, humanities and social sciences understand the relation between cultural production and politics (Ratto and Boler, 2014: 18), but also because it places creative and expressive practices at the heart of citizenship and political life. Ratto and Boler call for new understandings of the public sphere and participatory democracy by proposing the idea of DIY citizenship, which they see as a hybrid of art and politics that can challenge exclusionary political structures and power imbalances in technologically mediated societies. The extent to which this constitutes a critique of public sphere theory is open to question as it intersects with Habermas' (1989) understanding of the cultural public sphere and public discourse which he distinguishes analytically from the public and political spheres (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013). However, Habermas did not anticipate the degree to which media would be part of a de-differentiation or blurring of the systemic boundaries in his sociology of culture. DIY citizenship emerges, ultimately, as mode of political poesis, that is, 'a productive practice in which ethical and social interventions cross through a number of different modalities and materialities' (Ratto and Boler, 2014: 19). Whereas there is little acknowledgement of the significance of performance tools and concepts in Ratto and Boler's approach, they clearly note that the term of DIY citizenship 'is intended to highlight the diversity of ways in which citizenship is enacted and performed' (Ratto and Boler, 2014: 3). These performances of citizenship can be found, for example, in the work of artists engaged in participatory public art projects as they go on to advocate the arts as a site of political agency (Iannelli and Marelli, this issue). DIY citizenship is, therefore, performed through creative practices that can include and amplifying the voice of the common citizen as much as marginalized voices. This understanding of citizenship resonates with Hall's (2006) work on Black diasporic artists in post-war Britain. Hall argues that the visual arts offer a compelling and productive horizon of possibility for Black diasporic artists to express and channel their struggles for belonging and inclusion in the community of citizens. Looking at

shifts in artistic practice in history of the black diaspora visual arts in post-war Britain, Hall suggests that artistic questions created a horizon of possible futures within which the first generation of artists born in the diaspora could 'think the present'. This new horizon produced a polemical and politicized art in contrast to the more universalist and cosmopolitan outlook of the first wave of diasporic artists. Against the backdrop of Black experiences of racialized social and political exclusion, shifts in the artistic practices of Black diasporic artists from the late 1970s onwards signalled a turn to cultural questions of identity and belonging articulated through performance. Hall notes that questions of identity and belonging – “‘Who are we?’”, “‘Where do we come from?’”, “‘Where do we really belong?’” (Hall 2006: 18) are not only powerfully articulated in new aesthetic and thematic choices in the visual arts, but also in the styling of dress and body (e.g., the ‘dreadlocks’ that make up the iconography of Rastafarianism), music, and popular culture. Inspired by interactionist accounts of the use of personal front that combines manner and appearance in dramaturgy (Goffman, 1959), Hall articulates the notion of a ‘performative identity’ that paves the way for the ‘production of a new, black subject’ (Hall, 2006: 19). The foregrounding and performance of the Black body as a racial signifier in, for example, the genre of self-portraiture provided important critical answers for resisting ‘stereotyped, abject, black body of racialized discourse’ (Hall, 2006: 19). Although Hall does not use the language of political rights or engage directly with debates on citizenship, he places the experiences of citizenship at the heart of his concern with illuminating how stylised action in popular culture and Black visual aesthetics constitute a site of resistance to those racialized discourses that sustain the inclusive/exclusive logic of citizenship (see Tyler, 2013: 146). Furthermore, Hall (1990) argues that hybrid and syncretic cultural forms have a subversive force that is most apparent in the way in which Creoles, patois and black English decentre, destabilise and carnivalise the linguistic domination of 'English' - the nation-language of master-discourse. Thus, the performance of identity in the arts and popular culture enables marginalized and oppressed Black communities and artists to carve out spaces of freedom and resistance to articulate their own struggles for belonging and inclusion in the body politics reflected also in Gitlin’s analysis of the role of culture in disrupting the culture of political conformity in 1950s in the US (1987)

There is a point of connection with Ratto and Boler’s call for rethinking the binary cultural/political in Hall’s suggestion that, while it is important to recognize that many political struggles acquire a cultural dimension, critical scholarship should also acknowledge that art works do not pertain to ‘an inviolate aesthetic space, where only critics, curators, dealers and connoisseurs are permitted to play’ (Hall, 2006: 23). Equally important is Hall’s (1990)

suggestion that the articulation of a performative identity by diasporic subjects destabilizes mono-linguistic and mono-ethnic affiliations to the national community. This proposition resonates with what performance scholar Conquergood (2002: 146) calls the ‘the visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge [which] blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation, silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares (...)’. In a similar vein, Diana Taylor (2003) has argued that the repertoire of embodied practices (performances, singing, dancing, theatre) transmits memory and identity while also eluding archival capture, which is based on Western modes of knowledge and information storage. Performance, broadly understood as “any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed” (Schechner, 2013: 3), is also a methodological lens to consider artefacts of culture and art (e.g., texts, architecture, media, visual arts, dances, singing) as events, practices, and players in ongoing relationships, not as objects or things. Arguably, then, both Hall and strands in performance studies scholarship are concerned to expose how the hegemony of textualism and the archive are often threatening for oppressed and marginalized groups, whether these are undocumented migrants, diasporic communities, or indigenous groups, illuminating how embodied practices and extra-linguistic human action open up creative spaces for performances of resistance and subversion. Hence, we suggest that Hall’s work on diasporic identity and Black diasporic artists, Taylor’s work on the repertoire, and Conquergood’s work on subaltern performances (1995, 2002) offer cultural studies scholars insights and concepts to examine how performances of identity, and resistant or disruptive performance practices, in popular culture, the arts and new activism (see Rovisco, 2016) inform the analysis of cultural citizenship. For example, Hill, Askanius, Kondo and Urueta (this issue) demonstrate how Taylor’s work illuminates the analysis of how performance can generate alternative perspectives on traumatic pasts and conflicting knowledges for audiences struggling to engage with challenging political and moral dimensions of film and documentary.

Another important strand of research for understanding and conceptualising the relation between citizenship and performance is Alexander’s analysis of politics, performance and power as a cultural pragmatics (2011). He proposes an analytical model that treats performance as symbolic action and separates out the elements that compose social performance based on concepts drawn from performance studies: i.e., background representations, scripts, actors, means of symbolic production, *mise-en-scene*, social and interpretive power, and audiences. Drawing on Durkheim’s (1915) cultural turn in his late work in the sociology of religion, Alexander addresses the problem of ‘authenticity’ in modern, pluralistic, complex societies through an analysis of what makes social performances such as protests, political performances

of politicians, election campaigns, public performances by intellectuals, counter-performances convincing and successful. As Alexander (2011: 28) puts it, ‘a successful performance depends on the ability to convince others that one’s performance is true’. While Alexander (2011) recognizes that in contemporary societies control over the media is vital for connecting performances with audience-publics (Alexander, 2011: 67), he also notes that one of the barriers to successful performances is ‘the fragmentation of the citizenry in multiple public spheres’ (Alexander, 2011: 76). An important consequence of this process is that divided by race, class, religion, region, citizen-audiences can respond to social performances in dramatically different, sometimes opposed ways. Multiple and subaltern public spheres (Fraser, 1992) can, nonetheless, offer fertile ground for counter-performances when citizens mount critical and creative efforts to question or disrupt official discourses and performances. Not surprisingly, Alexander (2011: 87) sees citizenship as ‘the legal capacity for skeptical viewership, the right to criticize and choose among performances, and the right to form one’s own performances in response’. Alexander’s theory of cultural pragmatics has informed a wealth of research from music competitions (McCormick, 2015) to presidential elections (Mast, 2012), but has so far had a limited impact in cultural studies scholarship and media and communication studies. Hence, one of the aims of this special issue is to show how cultural pragmatics can usefully inform research on citizen performances, whether these take place, for example, in the context of a television programme (Lunt, this issue), or relate to the performative qualities of intellectuals (Stevenson, this issue). Although there are important epistemological, methodological and ideological differences between cultural sociology approaches and cultural studies approaches (Smith, 1998), we suggest that cultural pragmatics can help bridge some of these tensions and divisions. The analytical model of cultural performance offers a productive lens to study – as symbolic action – the performances of oppressed and marginalized groups struggling for inclusion in the community of citizens, as well as other forms of citizen participation and protest in nationally-defined public spheres and beyond.

Finally, another important theoretical lens to interrogate the relation between performance and citizenship is Judith Butler’s performative theory of assembly (Butler, 2015). Here, Butler moves from her earlier concern with gender performativity to consider the political meanings of bodily performativity in precarious lives. Influenced by Austin’s theory of speech acts, Butler’s (2015: 9) thesis is that ‘“acting in concert can be an embodied form of calling into question (...) powerful dimensions of reigning notions of the political’. Performativity is not just about speech, but about bodily action, movements and bodies that appear in public space.

Butler comes close to performance studies scholarship when she notes, for example, that contestations enacted by assemblies such as strikes, vigils and occupations of public space are not only about discourse, whether written or vocalised, but also about embodied actions that signify in non-discursive ways. She is ultimately concerned with understanding how bodily acts become performative. She goes on to propose “political performativity” as a new vocabulary to understand and ‘describe the modes of agency and action undertaken by the stateless, the occupied and the disenfranchised’ (Butler, 2015: 80). She conceptualises performative politics as a struggle for and against precarity that is sustained by an insistence on existing, mattering and appearing precisely when and where precarious subjects and bodies are erased from the public realm. Developing her stance in critical dialogue with Arendt’s theorisation of the space of appearance, Butler is sceptical of the power of media images, which circulate in global networks, to effectively mediate the condition of appearance of bodies in public space and virtual spaces. This is because the media can only offer an incomplete visual representation of political performativity; ‘some version of reality from the outside’ (Butler, 2015: 102). Against this backdrop, we suggest that Butler’s performative theory of assembly offers interesting insights to cultural studies scholarship by inviting the question of how critical scholarship might respond to the effacement and invisibility of precarious bodies in the domain of visual and media representations. More attention needs to be paid to forms of embodied expression and who gets to appear and be visible in public life and those who do not; to the ways in which performances of various kinds become a vehicle for subjects whose stories are often unheard or distorted in the public sphere (Rovisco, this issue).

Having outlined the key questions and theoretical lenses that are of concern for this special issue, we now turn to the articles themselves.

Lunt’s article is concerned with examining how in the context of two television programmes broadcast during the UK Brexit referendum campaign of 2016, members of the public successfully enacted performances of disruptive citizenship that challenged the claims to personal authenticity and political authority of Prime Minister David Cameron’s performance of power. Lunt argues not only that the mediated engagement between the Prime Minister and members of the public illuminates in important ways the role of popular culture in public and political engagement, but also to how the relatively unscripted performances of individual lay participants can be seen as performances of individualized dissent, which embrace some of the tactics of new protest movements and consumer activism. Lunt’s key argument is that changes in the format of the television programmes, which meant that the programmes were managed by broadcasters rather than being controlled by politicians, created opportunities for citizens to

articulate their political interests through individualised performances. These performances can be seen as agentic and skilful deployments of material and symbolic resources through which citizen-audiences successfully challenge the performance of power of the Prime Minister. Lunt shows how the transformation of the format of the Brexit television programmes enabled citizens to create a “contested performative space” where lay participants emerge as players on a stage with the purpose of disrupting the performance of power of the Prime Minister.

Like Lunt, Stevenson is interested in understanding how citizens in the guise of public intellectuals deploy exciting stories and compelling performances. Stevenson’s article looks at the performative qualities of intellectuals illustrated by Raymond Williams’s writing and intellectual positions vis-à-vis his idea of an art of the commons. Stevenson argues that while Williams was not an especially charismatic speaker or a celebrity academic, it was his ability to connect his experience and location within the working class that lends his work an “authenticity” and a sense of working class subjectivity that is missing in the work of other New Left intellectuals of his generation. Stevenson’s aim is to recover what he calls the “performative quality of Williams’s writing and intellectual positions” in order to show how his ideas resonate with audiences beyond his intellectual circles. Stevenson shows how the performativity of William’s writing is located in his ability to emphasise how the sensibility of artists and working-class intellectuals disrupt the instrumentality and corruption of the capitalist system. In so doing, he also points out how William’s ideas about the culture of the commons and the long revolution depend on a shared educated and participatory democracy to connect to visions of radical social movements against austerity and neoliberal capitalism.

Drawing on interviews with the director of *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence* and interviews with viewers from different countries, Hill, Askanius, Kondo and Urueta’s article uses the notion of provocative engagement to analyse the ethical shock that performative documentaries, in which those who inflicted and were victims of violence and torture re-enact their actions, provoked in audiences in Scandinavia, Japan and Colombia. As in Lunt’s paper, their article is concerned with the relation between popular culture and civic engagement. Hill, Askanius, Kondo and Urueta use the idea of provocative engagement as a lens to demonstrate how the affective dimensions of the documentary play an important role in various forms of civic engagement. They show, for example, how the films are resources for engaging Swedish and Danish audiences as self-reflexive citizens, while viewers in Colombia and Japan found the films harder to engage given their traumatic memories of war and violence in their national contexts. This article is, ultimately, concerned with how audiences from different regions respond to the films in dramatically different ways, which reflect their own personal and

collective experiences and memories of war, violence and social justice. A key finding of the research is how performance documentary challenges the affective relationships between filmmakers and their audiences through a raw and provocative engagement with the act of documenting genocide in historically and culturally specific contexts. The performance mode of documentary uses enactments of perpetrators and victims to challenge official histories, in ways that generate conflicting and critical knowledges for audiences struggling to engage with the subject matter of the films that address themes of moral ambiguity, violence and impunity. Finally, the contributions by Rovisco and by Iannelli and Marelli close this special issue by directing the analytical lens to the relation between artistic performance and civic engagement. Both articles examine some of the ways in which artistic practices constitute an important terrain for the exercise of embodied and expressive practices of citizenship and civic engagement. Drawing on interviews and textual analysis of a film (*Wait*) and a performance (*Welcome to Dreamland*), Rovisco uses performance tools to examine how citizenship is staged and contested in the work of UK-based artists with a migrant or refugee background. Calling for an expanded notion of voice as an act of self-expression that is not purely discursive, she argues that artistic performances by migrant and refugee artists can enact in meaningful ways the struggles for belonging and inclusion in the body politic. She further emphasises that – as situated collective experiences – such performances have the potential to bring together a range of interlocutors (artists, subjects of representation, audiences) and open up an artistic communicative space where the voices of marginalized subjects and groups can be heard and valued. Here, Rovisco is concerned with how the voices, embodied experiences and histories of migrant and refugee artists and subjects of representation come to matter in the contexts of artistic performances. An underlying assumption here is that the staging and contestation of particular modalities of citizenship needs to be understood in relation to questions of visibility; that is, with the ways in which the artists use the resources of the creative imagination and performance tools (such as “ghosting”) to make visible those personal stories of migration or displacement that remain invisible and unheard in the public sphere. Iannelli and Marelli’s article looks at the role that contemporary artists working in participatory public art in Sardinia play in nurturing and fostering various forms of civic engagement. Departing from the idea that contemporary performances of citizenship in the field of participatory public art need to be understood as civic cultures in action, they shed light not only on how the artists seek to directly influence formal politics, but also on the ways in which the artist-citizens go on to invite various types of audiences and publics to voice their concerns about urbanity and territorial governance to bring social and political change in contemporary cities. The article aims to add to debates

on maximalist forms of political agency by shifting the focus from the media sphere to the cultural sphere of public art. Iannelli and Marelli observe that despite the artists' scepticism of institutionalised politics, they perform their civic identities because they believe that the relationships they built with participatory audiences and their collaborators had a positive impact in the public life of local communities.

Our hope is that scholarship in cultural studies takes up more seriously the relation between citizenship and performance by drawing on the resources of the various strands of performance studies scholarship that informed the contributions to this special issue. In this Introduction, we have shown, for example, how cultural pragmatics (Alexander, 2011) offers a useful theoretical and analytical lens to analyse counter-performances by citizens in television programmes and the performative qualities of a New Left intellectual such as Raymond Williams, and how the notion of performance – understood as embodied and expressive practice (Taylor, 2003, Schechner, 2013) – is a useful analytical tool to analyse resistant and disruptive performances of identity in popular culture and the arts.

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