

At the Edge of Justice:
Citizenship, Marginality, and Human Rights in Urban Bolivia

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Abstract:

The paper provides a deeper theoretical and empirical exploration into the barriers for the fulfillment of social and economic rights. Through an examination of citizenship discourses, and modes of membership, the paper establishes "access to justice" as a way to bridge the gap between civil/ political rights and social/economic rights. The empirical case study is based on fieldwork in Bolivia that examines urban marginality of indigenous migrants from rural areas. Despite radically expanded civil/political and cultural rights, for indigenous people, migrants remain barred from socio-economic rights, and substantive citizenship. A lack of access to justice sustains marginality, conditions of poverty, and various aspects of social discrimination, even in light of national celebrations of cultural diversity and indigenous heritage. The Bolivian case suggests a need to develop better theories in regards to how configurations of citizenship laws and practices affect and impede marginalized group's access to justice, human rights, and human security.

Key words: human rights, citizenship, social and economic rights, law and justice, discrimination