



DUPONT SUMMIT 2013

..... Pressing Issues, Economic Realities

December 6, 2013 * Historic Whittemore House, Washington, DC

The Policy Studies Organization

Speaker

Manuel Perez – *BSA Compliance*

“The Changing Face of Citizenship as a Result of Technological Advances in Western Civilization”

Ever since the founding founders of the USA said “We the people...” citizenship has been seen as an individual trait, one that can be changed in an exercise of free will anywhere in the world, leading to revolutions, civil wars, migration and even non-violent resistance.

With the advent of modern transportation, finances and communications throughout the world, much attention has been brought to immigration and refugee issues, yet little attention has been brought to the changes, explicit and implicit, that have come about with the concept of “citizenship”. This presentation proposes policy makers and leaders look at “citizenship” as distinct from “nationality”, and one that could be a contributor to other present social transformations. Thus, this presentation will explore some of the observed worldwide changes to the idea of citizenship, and propose possible directions this change might take.

In spite of new legislation and constitutional amendments throughout the world, the concept of “Citizenship” truly remains an emotional “archetype” in western civilization. In addition, “Citizenship” seems to have acquired for itself the expression of certain “universal human rights”, such as representation in a government, legal identity, financial identity, and even basic protections, even when these rights are not expressed in the respective country’s legislation. The situation of war refugees is an example, where those that have a recognized citizenship can access certain benefits, while those that lack proof of citizenship cannot. This has been addressed by the United Nations by giving a UN passport to those who have none, yet the question arises as to how these people envision or feel about the idea of being citizens of one country or another.



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This topic is often highly controversial because it can touch individual emotions and prejudice, leading most to look at only the legal definitions, but just as many countries have had laws honored in the breach, we find many individuals work around limiting legislation to achieve their objective of becoming part of a specific country (even if it is only as a “de facto” member of the community).

In addition, we need to separate the topic of immigration from that of citizenship: though immigration is considered as a path to citizenship, we often ignore that immigration can take many forms and lead to many different results, including amassing capital in order to return to the country of birth. This is the case of specialized workers to migrate to rich countries just to send money “home”, with the desire and objective of returning as soon as possible. Some countries have actually tried to legislate that this is the only type of immigration they accept, but by not dealing with the social and emotional realities of the individuals that come to the country they usually get unexpected results. More interesting though, is the recent advent of large numbers of individuals who decide to recover past or “lost” citizenship, and the availability of choices in countries available for citizenship. All seem to be new developments in the exercise of civil liberties and the rights to freedom and self-determination, which merits more study and attention.

In conclusion, this presentation will explore how people might feel about “citizenship”, about what other social norms are comparable to that of “citizenship”, about how historical and traditional usages of the term might be changing, and what measures can be taken to use the new way of being a “citizen” to facilitate social and economic development in our communities.



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Biography

Manuel Perez, MPA, CAMS is President of BSA Compliance. He is also President of the Wood-Heights Democratic Club and Constituent Liaison at the New York State Assembly. In addition, he is the author of *Creating Volunteers*, a guide for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

BSA Compliance provides timely, cost effective and high quality support services and training in Anti-Money Laundering compliance requirements and practices to Money Service Business administrators, agents and employees, as well as to businesses in the US and overseas that transfer money to or within the US. In order to allow these businesses to improve their profitability and security through proper compliance with US laws that refer to money laundering and the financing of terrorism, they offer their clients a team of bilingual (English/Spanish) professionals with international business, management, training, quality control, and auditing experience.

Manny earned his BA in Urban Studies, PreMed, and Metropolitan Leadership at New York University in 1975. He earned his MPA in Public Administration, Hospital Administration, and Organization Theory at New York University in 1977. His experience includes almost two decades with Petroleos de Venezuela, SA, and multiple community and advocacy organizations.