

## Research Interests – Prof. Dr. Ayelet Shachar

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Diversity and equality are the core causes of our time. The oft-noted strain between these aims reflects pressing dilemmas that have burst into the forefront of legal and public policy debates. These are topics of vital importance for Germany, Europe, and the world at large, and they animate the scholarship of Prof. Dr. Ayelet Shachar. Combining insights from law and political theory with innovative problem-solving and institutional design, Shachar's research is motivated by the urgent need to develop new thinking about pressing real-world dilemmas: how to live together in diverse societies, how to grant rights to those who lack formal access to membership, and how to tame the ever-expanding reach of borders and migration control in a world of persistent inequality.

Shachar's first book, *Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women's Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 2001; winner of the American Political Science Association Foundations of Political Theory Best Book Award), challenged the then-prevailing view that women within minority communities must face the horns of a punishing dilemma: your culture or your rights. The system of joint governance she developed offers an alternative, in which women could enjoy *both*, simultaneously. This work inspired a new generation of thinking about how best to mitigate tensions between religious diversity and gender equality. It has also proved influential in the world of law and policy-making. It has been cited by, among others, England's Archbishop of Canterbury and the Supreme Court of Canada.

In *The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality* (Harvard University Press, 2009), Shachar offers a new perspective on birthright citizenship laws, arguing that these laws cast the transfer of membership entitlement as a complex form of inherited property. Based on this analogy, the book develops remedial means to expand the boundaries of political membership and to mitigate the global inequalities perpetuated by this allocation system. The captivating vision here begins with a conceptual analogy between ancient common-law property regimes – think of the “fee tail” or entailed transfers – and contemporary structures of citizenship inheritance. This book also introduced the concept of *jus nexi* as an equitable basis for membership acquisition. *The Birthright Lottery* was selected as a 2010 Notable Book by the International Ethics Section of the International Studies Association in recognition of the book's “superior scholarship and contribution to the field of international ethics”.

The field-defining *Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 2017), for which Shachar served as a lead editor, is another interdisciplinary, agenda-setting publication. It defines future theoretical and empirical explorations, while also revisiting some of the oldest normative and substantive quandaries in the study of citizenship, dilemmas that have renewed salience in today's world. This publication has already emerged as a major reference work in the field for those engaged with citizenship from a legal, political, and cultural perspective. It has been described as: "The definitive source on a critical concept in political and social life. Innovative in its conception and authoritative in its excitation."

Shachar newest book project, *The Shifting Border: Legal Cartographies of Mobility and Migration*, critically examines the role of territory and new measures of managed migration control in selectively restricting (or, conversely, accelerating) mobility and access to the world's prosperous countries, as governments seek to regain control over a crucial realm of their allegedly waning sovereign authority. Here, as in her previous writings, Shachar not only reveals the deep currents that are reshaping the terrain of law and mobility, but also seeks to develop innovative legal responses to break the current deadlock as she seeks to refute the claim that applicable solutions are beyond reach or impossible to imagine. This work will appear under the auspices of the Critical Powers Series, which is "dedicated to constructing dialogues around innovative and original work in social and political theory".

*The Shifting Border* is nested within a broader exploration in which Shachar identifies three grand transformations of citizenship in today's world: the territorial, the cultural, and the economic. This framework permits her to challenge the familiar dichotomous categorisation of open versus closed borders, which has become a major organising tenet in debates about citizenship and migration in a world of growing mobility and inequality. Instead, Shachar shows that countries may strategically and contemporaneously engage in opening and closing their "golden gates" of admission, depending on who is seeking to get in, and according to what criteria.

Shachar's current research focusses on the legal and ethical puzzles associated with the surge of "citizenship for sale" programmes. This inquiry brings into center stage the currently missing debate about the ever more intertwined relations of state and market forces in shaping admission criteria and naturalisation priorities.

Keen sensitivity to diversity and equality inform the applied dimension of her work and reflect a steadfast resolve to offer daring, justice-oriented reformulations to overcome, or at least mitigate, tensions between citizenship and global justice, as well as conflicts that may arise among individual rights, religious traditions, and state laws.