



Citizenship in Times of Crises – Crisis of Citizenship?

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1. Introduction¹

Europe has faced several moments in its recent past that have been labelled as ‘crises’. These developments that shook the European and global community – be it the 2007/8 financial crisis, or the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union and its reverberations for political stability, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemics with its deep and long-lasting consequences for society and economy, the recurring European refugee crisis after 2014, or the Russian military invasion in the Ukraine – have highlighted one important, yet often taken-for-granted attribute of populations – their belonging to states as citizens. For instance, Brexit ended the automatic free movement of people between EU-member states and Great Britain. Equally, the turmoil of the pandemics has demonstrated the blatant differences between citizens of various countries trapped in locations outside their nation-state during the lockdowns. Additionally, due to different political, economic, social, or environmental reasons, millions of people around the globe have gained the status of (illegal) migrants, asylum-seekers, or war refugees, which limits them to fully use their citizen’s rights². The examples just mentioned help us to reflect upon three distinctive moments of citizenship:

- First, belonging to a state and enjoying citizen’s rights and privileges is based on arbitrary criteria: “In fact, the vast majority of the global population has no way to acquire membership except by circumstances of birth” (Shachar 2009: 4). The first fundamental distinction, therefore, needs to be made between the ‘status of being’ and the ‘process of becoming’ a citizen.
- Second, not all citizens within a given territory are equal in making use of their rights and opportunities. While in theory every member of the society is given the same rights and opportunities, “in practice, new entitlements are being realized through situated mobilizations and claims in milieus of globalized contingency” (Ong 2006: 499). The opportunities for full civic participation thus correl-

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² According to the World Migration Report, the estimated number of international migrants in 2020 reached 281 million people, the number still growing (International Organization for Migration 2019).

ate with the spatial fragmentation of territories, leading to emerging spaces with economic hyper-growth and mobilisation of populations, technologies, and markets on the one hand, while leaving whole regions depopulated, impoverished, and politically unstable on the other hand.

- Third, citizenship is not a stable and unchanging concept. On the contrary, the notion of citizenship, especially during crises, is deeply contested, redefined, and reconfigured. Currently, the transformation of the notion of citizenship resonates with a change from 'positional' (modern society) to 'performative' (late modern society) competition over the allocation of goods, positions, privileges, and life chances securing social status and recognition (Rosa 2009: 662 [orig. emphasis]).

Thus, citizenship appears both as an empowering condition, providing its bearers with rights, privileges, and opportunities, and as a performative process of living up to the standards of 'good' citizens, whereby the content of the 'good' has different meanings in different times and places. Apart from that, citizenship touches upon multiple aspects and spheres of life and consists of discursive, cultural, and societal practices (language, rituals, celebrations, artefacts of cultural heritage), political rights and obligations (elections, taxpaying), signs and symbols (anthems, flags, official holidays), materialised manifestations (birth certificates, ID cards, passports, etc.), control mechanisms (barriers, borders, surveillance), state apparatuses and governance policies (educational, cultural, social, asylum and refugee policies), forms of subjectivation (written and unwritten codes of conduct of 'good' citizen, cultivating national identity), etc. The multiple layers demonstrate the vitality and variability of the concept of citizenship, which, through its long history dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, has literally 'witnessed' several crises of state and personhood (see: Bellamy 2008, Ch. 2).

In this paper, the first goal is to use citizenship as a productive entry point for enquiring into the challenges and dilemmas that Europe is currently undergoing and to pay special attention to the role of education in shaping it. The article aims at looking into the concept and practice of citizenship through the lens of the current crises (citizenship in times of crises), while at the same time enquiring whether they are themselves being changed (crisis of citizenship). We proceed in three steps: First, we work with the existing literature on citizenship to embed the concept in the current research debates and highlight the main understandings, approaches to, and readings of citizenship. Second, based on extant research, we choose three dominant trends that have been argued to prompt 'crises' (globalisation, digitalisation, migration) in order to reflect upon the changing representations of citizenship under new conditions. Education seems to be a privileged way to bring about these new qualities to citizenship (global, digital, postnational). Third, we discuss an ongoing exploratory study of how specific forms of education are tasked with shaping the mentalities and experiences of future citizens to cope with the manifold challenges of a crisis-ridden world. The last section deals with the second goal of this paper, namely, to explore whether we are witnessing the emergence of another sense of 'performative citizenship' (Isin, 2017). While Engin Isin's conceptualization of 'performative citizenship'

opened up interesting ways of thinking about how citizenship is less stable than usually thought and is about the struggle over both exercising and claiming a right (Isin 2017: 517), in this paper we explore how, via education, elements of merit are being introduced as new performative criteria for inclusion/exclusion of citizens. In short, the question is whether this gives way to a neo-liberal form of governmentality that works through discursive, dispositional, cognitive, and moral qualities of those seeking inclusion as ‘good’ citizens. We round out the article with some concluding remarks on the issues raised by such a performative notion of citizenship. The following section briefly discusses the different understandings and approaches to citizenship.

2. Understanding Citizenship

Citizenship is a rich concept full of different meanings and myriad historical nuances. Delivering one smooth definition would miss the point of understanding its transformative power and “historical capacity to reinvent itself” (Balibar 2015: 4). It would be equally misleading to enumerate the endless differentiations that the concept offers (Janoski and Compion 2020). Studies on citizenship struggle to keep pace with the ever-changing effects and implications of citizenship fuelled by late modern transformations and their concrete manifestations. Therefore, instead of tediously walking the reader through the complexity of meanings and definitions of citizenship and providing exhausting historical explanations, which already have been delivered elsewhere (see Isin and Turner 2002; Bellamy 2008; Arvanitakis and Matthews 2013; van der Heijden 2016), we adopted two perspectives that help to distinguish between (a) normative, empirical and critical theoretical approaches to citizenship, and (b) the legal, economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of the latter.

2.1 Theoretical approaches to citizenship

From a ‘normative’ point of view, research revolves around two questions: “(1) whom should polities include and exclude as members, and (2) what the substance of citizenship should be” (Džankić and Vink 2022: 361). The first question reminds that citizenship has always been closely tied with inequality and exclusion. While citizens as inhabitants of towns, from old French *citeien* (city-dweller, town-dweller), have participated in the cultivation of the cities and civilizations, those who lived in the countryside did not acquire rights or culture. “From its inception, therefore, citizenship was an exclusionary category, justifying the coercive rule of the included over the excluded” (Ignatieff 1987: 402). Citizenship was defined by the citizens and not by “the excluded (strangers, outsiders, aliens)” (Isin and Turner 2002: 5). Regarding the second question, the substance of citizenship can be approached according to the rights that individual citizens can possess, such as various educational, health care, or financial entitlements (Crouch 2003: 5f.), or according to the responsibilities towards the state, such as the obligation to pay taxes, enlist in military service or simply “be grateful to the state and [...] be proud of the country’s achievements” (Kochenov 2019: 167).

Further, an 'empirical' perspective on citizenship focuses primarily on citizenship regimes, understood as "institutionalized systems of formal and informal norms that define access to membership, as well as rights and duties associated with membership, within a polity" (Vink 2017: 222). In this approach, citizenship is viewed through the lenses of policymaking which seeks to "classify the different models for governing citizenship, produce typologies of citizenship regimes" (Džankić and Vink 2022: 362) and develop measurable indexes based on appropriate indicators. These comparative and explanatory studies also contest the prevailing "monolithic and homogenous understanding of what citizenship means" (Naujoks, 2020: 1) and seek to advance "our understanding of the contours of citizenship in general" (ibid.: 2). As a result, citizenship regimes have gained several meanings that highlight the changing relationship between the individual and the state, such as 'denizenship' (Hammar 1990), 'postnational citizenship' (Soysal 1994), 'quasi-citizenship' (Groenendijk 2006) or 'semi-citizenship' (Cohen 2009).

Finally, a 'critical' perspective on citizenship deals with two sets of issues. First, it tries to capture the relation of citizens towards the political organisation of the state. In this reading, critical or attentive citizens, often disagreeing with the government, are considered "essentially healthy for the future of democratic governance" (Norris 1999: 2f) and represent the "*conditio sine qua non* in modern democracies" (Geissel 2008: 53). The core research interest is to capture citizens' dissatisfaction, negative attitudes towards or the level of support for the government, as well as general orientations and moods of the public (Abdelzadeh and Ekman 2012: 179). A second set of issues is related to the process of subjectivation of citizens in modern liberal democracies claiming that "citizenship is not simply a legal status conferring political rights and obligations, but one that additionally shapes identities and forms of subjectivity" (Olson 2008: 40). As a vital part of the state, citizens possess political, economic, productive and military potential and the government of these forces has been successfully delegated to the individual subjects by developing various models of governmentality, understood as the conduct of self-conduct (Foucault 2008). From this perspective,

citizenship is not so much the sum of rights and duties, or the status a person is endowed with by the state, either by birth or through naturalization, but rather a 'mode of conduct' that is acquired over time. (Milani *et al.* 2021: 758 [orig. emphasis])

However, a distinction needs to be made between 'sovereign' subjects holding full citizenship and being able "to control the terms of their own subject formation" (Olson 2008: 47), and those who "enact a form of citizenship 'from below'" (Rygiel *et al.* 2015: 4 [orig. emphasis]), the excluded, marginalised, undocumented, or rejected citizens. The critical reading of citizenship in this sense seeks to carve out those power mechanisms that asymmetrically distribute citizen's rights and limit their "possibility of not being excluded from the right to fight for one's rights" (Balibar 2015: 66). Beyond theoretical perspectives, citizenship also can be discussed by focusing its various dimensions, as detailed below.

2.2 Four dimensions of citizenship

Out of the multitude of dimensions that might characterise citizenship, we choose the legal, economic, political, and socio-cultural dimension to give an account of the depth, or rather the thickness/thinness of the concept (Isin and Turner 2002: 2).

First, citizenship is understood as a 'legal' term, as it binds the citizens by means of law to the state and obliges the state to protect them and provide them with all necessary services. As such, "it mediates relationships between individuals within a state and relationships between individuals and institutions, including the state itself" (Siapera 2017: 24). By law, citizens are given civil (protection from and against the state), political (legitimation of state power), social (clients of the welfare state), and cultural (participation in education and culture) rights. As a legal concept though, citizenship has been contested by the ancient ideals as much as by the medieval and modern concepts connected to the development and establishment of the market economy: "Modern man was divided between his identity as *bourgeois* and as *citoyen*; the former was his real identity, the latter a false, mythic identity" (Ignatieff 1987: 409). Ignatieff stresses the myth behind the legal dimension of citizenship in contrast to its 'economic' dimension: "we live as market men, we wish we lived as citizens" (Ignatieff 1987: 400). Contrary to the legal dimension, which is based on the shared imagination of 'equal' citizens, economy serves as a more concrete expression of the actual (or real, in contrast to mythical) content of citizenship and can be defined by economic rights, such as "the right to work at the occupation of one's choice (where work includes child-rearing and household maintenance); to earn wages adequate to the support of self and family; to a non-discriminatory job market" (Kessler-Harris 2003: 153).

Second, 'economic', market-based citizenship is informed by the neoliberal discourse, which views citizens "as consumers, namely citizens who exercise choice that is commensurate with consistent or predictable outcomes" (Wilkins 2020: 142). Neoliberalism no longer counts as a purely economic theory about the nature of human-market relations but has gradually become "both a political discourse about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance" (Larner, 2006: 200). The economic dimension of citizenship operates through the production of a particular subjectivity of *homo oeconomicus*, the modern self-entrepreneur (Bröckling 2015), that governs the subjects to enhance their employability through constant optimisation of their skills and competencies (Zelinka 2022).

Third, citizenship is closely related to the realisation of 'political' privileges and has different political relevance in democratic regimes as opposed to monarchies or various kinds of dictatorships. More precisely, "it is the relation between citizenship and democracy that serves as a dynamic for the 'transformation of the political'" (Balibar 2015: 2 [orig. emphasis]), which demonstrates that free citizens are able to make use of their political rights create the basis for the stability and reproduction of democracy. "Equally, however, a democratic system as such is not a panacea for

rights protection” (Bantekas and Oette 2020: 351). The latter applies particularly to groups in vulnerable and multi-disadvantaged positions that experience lack of protection, inaccessibility of services or barriers to learning participation. In this case, education plays a key role in shaping the images of political citizenship and presents “a key variable in explaining democratic participation and democratic enlightenment” (Dalton 2014: 37).

Finally, fourth, “citizenship is also based on group identity and shared experiences” (Stokke 2017: 198) and, thus, cannot be understood without its ‘socio-cultural’ dimension. Identity is central when it comes to citizenship. Apart from legal bounds or economic activities, the sense of belonging to a nation or community within the “metaphorical boundaries” (Staeheli 2010: 394) decides on the readiness and willingness of the citizens to serve and protect their country. In pluralistic democracies, however, “the structure of identity comes in multiple dimensions, such as national, group, associational, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, professional, socioeconomic identities, *ad infinitum*” (Kalu 2017: 64). The socio-cultural dimension of citizenship underscores the difficulty of building a democratic society upon one single identity. Quite the contrary, in democracy “the public space becomes an arena of competing sets of principles and values” (Kalu 2017: 64) among the manifold adversaries and options.

In summing up the discussion above, citizenship refers to the legal and institutional frameworks establishing relationship ties between individuals and national collectives. It also decides over inclusion and exclusion and refers to the process of identification of individuals with a polity. While legal status still determines much of what citizenship means, its practices make the concept porous and problematic. Here, we concur with Engin Isin (2017: 502) in her arguing that citizenship can be considered as “anything but stable” and that a performative perspective is useful in unearthing the complex processes by which individuals become “subjects of rights” (Isin 2017: 502). Understanding citizenship as a ‘mode of conduct’ allows us to scrutinize its changing modes, especially in times of crises. What happens to this concept in moments of crises is the theme of the following section.

3. Citizenship in times of crises

In what follows, we discuss citizenship amidst three core transformations – globalization, digitalisation, and migration – that have been described as crises and which are said to be transforming the concept and practice of citizenship. All three phenomena sparked debates surrounding the changes needed to cope with the challenges and transformations they bring with them and prompted calls for global, digital, and deterritorialized/postnational forms of citizenship. The argument in this section is that they share an understanding of citizenship that is less static and less based on immutable characteristics, but is rather, to a large extent, dependent upon individuals’ own ‘conduct of conduct’, or, in other words, their ‘performativity’.

3.1 'The citizens of the world' and global citizenship

Three days after Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, on February 27, 2022, early in the morning, the following address was published on the official website of the President of Ukraine:

The President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy is addressing all citizens of the world, friends of Ukraine, peace and democracy. Anyone who wants to join the defense of Ukraine, Europe and the world can come and fight side by side with the Ukrainians against the Russian war criminals. (President of Ukraine 2022)

Addressing 'all citizens of the world' is not a simple linguistic figure of speech or a calculated political statement. It is also an act of citizenship. Zelenskyy, as a citizen and as a member of the global community, appeals to his fellow 'citizens of the world' who are willing to defend the right to live in a free and peaceful way. The address demonstrates not only the interconnectedness of the world's different corners, it also highlights one crucial development which is meanwhile considered self-evident: the global scale and global of citizenship.

Globalisation, according to a widespread definition,

denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's major regions and continents. (Held and McGrew 2003: 4)

In this globalisation debate, both the positive and the negative transformations have been well argued.

Living in a global community has steadily become possible through positive human advancements, such as the emergence of global trade routes and booming economic hubs, the proliferation of technological systems and digital communication channels, as well as through the mass mobility of goods, finances, and populations. Globalisation, however, has also been experienced through its negative effects such as the spread of global terrorist networks, climate change, or biological threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic — all warning signals of continuing and emerging crises. In this environment, the concept of citizenship gained new weight and new global dimensions.

The idea of global citizenship has been promoted by international institutions and organisations that sought to call attention to the necessity of concerted action and shared understandings:

Global citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global (UNESCO 2015: 14).

Scholars have indicated aspects that characterise the content of global citizenship, conceptualising it as "global awareness, caring, embracing cultural diversity,

promoting social justice and sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act” (Rey- sen *et al.* 2012: 29). As such, the concept of global citizenship has been informed by various scholarly fields, theoretical perspectives, and lived experiences. It carries the appeal to global morality and shared ethical conduct (Appiah 2006), to global aware- ness on different educational needs (Hanvey 1976), to social justice on a larger global scale (Ife 2001), to its legal recognition and protection (Dower 2002), to the necessity of psychological connection and identification with the ‘global’ others (Rey- sen and Katzarska-Miller 2013), to the establishment of global democratic institutions (Carter 2001), as well as to the emergence of regional and global knowledge economy (Dale and Robertson 2009).

When considering the aspiration of the concept, it is questionable whether ‘global’ citizenship applies the same in different settings. In terms of education, for example, scholars are critical about promoting the idea of global education, calling it instead “a ‘rich world’ initiative” (Hicks 2003: 269 [original emphasis]). Especially in the context of the so-called ‘Third World countries’, the difference between the idea and the reality of global citizenship becomes painfully obvious:

Yet where people live has implications for how citizenship is carried out and exper- ienced. For instance, while students in the developed countries of the West are en- couraged to embark on study abroad and international service-learning programs as part of developing their global citizenship, in developing countries, such travel is often induced by war, repression, poverty, and climate change (Aboagye and Dlamini 2021: 9).

Not only are some populations disadvantaged prior to any attempts to establish global citizenship, they are also being subjected to the hegemony of the neoliberal agenda that takes hold of every level of governance. Some see global citizenship as a possibility, if not to defeat at least to overcome the constraints of neoliberal rational- ities.

Amidst these discussions, citizenship has been embellished with cosmopolitan normative values and moral sentiments that are said to be necessary to create a sense of belonging beyond the national, and from which specific sets of ethical con- duct are derived. As criticized in this strand of the debate, highly unequal structural conditions are made invisible, which potentially can be used to ‘blame the victim’.

3.2 Citizenship in the digital era

The digital era has been characterized based on technological transformations that are said to have the same scale as the industrial revolution during the nineteenth century, heavily impacting on economy and society (Shepperd 2004). It is mostly re- lated to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the faster pace of mobilizing and producing (new) knowledge, elements associated with Third Indus- trial Revolution (Rifkin 2011) and Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016). The di- gital era not only marks the shifting from mechanical/analogue electronics to digital technology since the late twentieth century; it also refers to the sweeping changes

brought about by digital computing, artificial intelligence and big data technologies that are central to today's 'surveillance capitalism' (Zuboff 2019).

The advent of the digital era was accompanied with controversial discussions about the social and economic transformations it brought about both for individuals and society/economy (Doukidis *et al.* 2004; Baumann and Lyon 2013; Skilton and Hovsepian 2018; Helbing 2015). The digital era also saw the emergence of the quantified self (Lupton, 2016; Mau, 2017) which is more or less directly related to issues of performativity³, and discussions about the repercussions of algorithms and big data in decision-making processes at large (Danaher 2016), which potentially threatens democratic governance and raise civil and human rights issues (Han 2022). Again, as with other crisis-induced challenges, educating individuals to cope with these transformations was deemed central to successfully deploying digital technologies. In this sense, digital citizenship refers to knowledge, skills, and the duty to participate meaningfully and safely in the society of the twenty-first century. It also entails the concern to build resilience against online threats (for instance, cyberbullying, manipulation, etc.) (Council of Europe 2022).

In research on digital citizenship, three main perspectives could be recognized: a normative, a conditional, and a contextual perspective (Jorring *et al.* 2019).

In a 'normative' perspective, digital citizenship is understood as "the ideal way to act online" (Jorring *et al.* 2019: 16). This perspective orients itself on a normative definition of what it means to be a 'good' citizen, paralleling a traditional definition of citizenship and highlighting the rights and duties that apply to any digital citizen. For once, the digital citizen should engage online in political participation, educate themselves, seek for information, engage in dialogue etc. Further on, a 'good' digital citizen is expected to know how to behave online when dealing with cyberbullying or online civic engagement. In this regard, digital citizenship opens up many new possibilities. As Isin and Rupert highlight, more than the ability to participate online, the digital citizenship can be understood as "a composite subject of possibilities of obedience or submission to authority, but also of potential subversion" (Isin and Rupert 2020: 67). Focus of attention and locus of implementation of such a set of expectations is the individual, which makes the examination of subjectification crucial. After all, these expectations go hand in hand with a learned specific technological skillset required to fulfil them: "[...] the privilege of cybercitizenship requires skills beyond the technical capacity to search out information, engage in dialogue, or play games" (Berson and Berson 2004: 5).

These skills and the material possibilities to access the digital space and to acquire the necessary skills constitute the ability to participate online, which is the main topic of the 'conditional perspective'. It highlights the importance of access to the digital space to be subjected to the same rights and duties as a 'full' citizen. In this regard, the material and social conditions and requirements needed to access the online space become crucial: "Internet access is seen as a necessity for individu-

³ It seems worthwhile stressing how the very perspective of quantification paves the way for a permanently self-improving self.

als in order to be full citizens in modern democracies” (Jorring *et al.* 2019: 17). Since not all citizens have the means to access the virtual space in the same quality and at the same costs, the digital transformation is very likely to deepen the existing socioeconomic inequalities, rendering digital citizenship a further means of social differentiation.

The third strand of research, the ‘contextual perspective’, critically examines the idea of digital citizenship, placing more value on the different contexts in which we speak of digital citizenship and focusing primarily on the fluidity in the understanding of the concept of digital citizenship. Critical digital citizenship studies are concerned with questions of power and scrutinize the emergence of new power structures through algorithms or big data (see reflection on digital divide: Shelley *et al.* 2004).

3.3 Migration and fragile citizenship

Scholars converge on the idea that the changes that occurred at different societal levels in relation to migration processes over the last decades have produced a new ‘pressure’ on the political, epistemological, and ontological framings of citizenship (see for different perspectives on the issue: Faist 2000; Tambini 2001; Schierup *et al.* 2006; Cinalli and Jacobson 2020). The ‘classical’ understanding of citizenship as the right to belong to a nation-state, as formulated by Hannah Arendt (1951), is undermined by cultural and structural dynamics triggered by contemporary migration flows.

First, the intertwinement between migratory processes and macro factors, such as globalisation, questions the assumption of borders and national state as ‘natural boundaries’ for citizenship as an intrinsically national project (Greblo 2014). The ‘porosity’ of borders is enhanced by forces operating at a meso level, with international non-governmental organizations strengthening cross-national bonds through cooperation and support for human rights at a supra-national level. From a micro-individual perspective, according to Soysal (1994) the activity of transnational institutions enables new opportunities for participation which go beyond national membership. New practices of citizenship (Cinalli and Jacobson, 2020) as forms of bottom-up agency are thus potentially envisaged for social groups that are partially or totally excluded from nation-based citizenship rights (as for instance second generation migrants born in countries regulated by *ius sanguinis*). In addition, the subjective cultural work of re-interpretation of the dominant understandings of citizenship contributes to its constant change, shaping new forms that “are mostly defined by universalistic oriented aspirations, rather than by the belonging to a political regime, as result of a sovereignty acted through formal administrative procedures” (Greblo 2014: 1108).

The combination of these elements has accelerated the erosion of ‘traditional’ nation-based citizenship, even in its academic expression of ‘methodological nationalism’, as pointed out by Beck (2007). Room was thus made for a post-national framing of citizenship (Jacobson 1996; Soysal 1994). This territorially dis-embedded form of citizenship potentially impacts the leeway for inclusion of new citizens based on social/human rights – a supposed key element in contemporary democracies’

agenda – stimulating at the same time claims for exclusion. Paradigmatically, starting from the late 1990s, the significant growth of the formal recognition of dual citizenships across the world has concurred with the emergence of a nationalist backlash feeding populist and sovereigntist politics and social movements.

From a governance perspective, this questions national welfare systems and their capacity to deal with a mutable and de-territorialised form of citizenship. As argued by Schierup *et al.* (2006), it has often led to the paradoxical consequence of even more exclusive welfare systems, which is particularly notable at the European level, as it resonates with the widespread notion of ‘democratic deficit’ of the European system, as well as with the metaphor of ‘fortress Europe’, the update of which refers to a community which resists to the migrants pushing at its borders. In this sense, the still ongoing process of construction of Europe as a supranational community, political project, and legislative body threatens to be countered by the contrast between national institutions’ interests and the endeavours of ‘democratizing democracy’ (Balibar, 2015: 119).

In their cyclical processes of crisis and restructuring, the different European welfare systems have indeed tended to react with more selective criteria for inclusion, entailing

the substantial negation of the right and actual ability to participate as a ‘full member of the community’ (Marshall, 1950), as sanctioned by the edifice of citizenship and the type of social contract on which the liberal democratic national welfare state has typically been founded (Dahrendorf 1985). (Schierup *et al.* 2006: 1 [original emphasis])

Amidst migration debates, changed understandings of citizenship questioned its close ties to national politics and pushed it closer to de-territorialised assumptions and criteria of inclusion.

As stated at the outset of this, we have sought to show how dynamic and versatile the understandings of citizenship can be and how the key developments shaping the late modern societies have created critical junctures at which elements of citizenship were increasingly questioned and slowly but steadily transformed. Although the subsections are not connected to each other and offer separate readings of the same phenomenon, they call attention to the need to consider not only the more substantial features that give form and meaning to the concept of citizenship, but also to the (cultural) practices and contexts, or, in other words, to the performative features of enacting citizenship.

4. Towards Performative Citizenship?

The term ‘performative citizenship’ has already been used (Isin 2017; see also: McThomas 2016) to discuss how becoming/being political subjects – citizens – involves “both the capacity and authority to exercise rights ‘and’ duties.” (Isin, 2017: 501 [original emphasis]) As Isin argued, “‘because’ citizenship is ‘constitutive’ of rights and who can claim these rights is itself ‘contested’, citizenship is defined not just by having

these rights, but also by ‘claiming’ them.” (Isin 2017: 515 [original emphasis]) Thus, citizenship is performative because it is both about exercising a right ‘and’ about claiming a right, even if those claiming it are not seen as (full) citizens. This discussion helped to overcome the idea that citizenship is stable and static concept that separates citizens from non-citizens, citizens from subjects, and opened up interesting avenues of research both of the (unstable) subject positions within and across polities and of the acts of citizenship entailed in enacting and claiming citizenship.

In the remainder of this paper, we explore another sense in which citizenship can be seen as performative, namely as a form of governmentality (Foucault 2007) that prompts individuals to conduct themselves in specific ways — ways that are discursively constructed as being a ‘good’ citizen and as crucial in dealing with crises.

To start with, social theory has debated current developments as effects of a general trend of technological acceleration (propelled by economic, capitalist logic), social acceleration (propelled by secularism and modernity), and the acceleration of the pace of life (powered by functional differentiation of society) (Rosa, 2013 [2005]). Social acceleration refers to processes of dynamization and continuous unsettling of modern certainties. Acceleration, Rosa conjectures, has been brought about throughout history by technical and technological innovations and their implementation in society. Rosa (2009) also discussed the impact of social acceleration on patterns of recognition in society that shapes relationships in modern social life. This is reflected in cultural knowledge, social institutions, and personal relationships, encompassing both structural and cultural aspects of institutions and social practices. Manifesting itself in a ‘shrinking of the present’, this phenomenon makes our relationships to each other and the world fluid and intricate. It seems thus worthwhile asking, whether the implications of this megatrend might go beyond social positions and status and encompass also the notion of citizenship? That is, not only recognition within a polity, but also the terms of membership themselves. Writing about social position/status, Rosa argued that these are no longer taken for granted and positionally ascribed to their bearers but have to be continuously and performatively negotiated and determined anew (Rosa 2009: 663).

Further the developments and transformations discussed above already hinted at changed understandings of citizenship suggesting that elements of merit are introduced as new performative criteria for inclusion/exclusion, as showed by the emergence of workfare systems across Europe. As Ong argued:

Some sites and zones are invested with more political resources than others. Meanwhile, rights and entitlements once associated with all citizens are becoming linked to neoliberal criteria, so that entrepreneurial expatriates come to share in the rights and benefits once exclusively claimed by citizens. The difference between having and not having citizenship is becoming blurred as the territorialization of entitlements is increasingly challenged by deterritorialized claims beyond the state. (Ong 2006: 499f)

Making full use of one’s own citizenship is more and more based on educational credentials as well as individual dispositions that, while not completely supplanting

national citizenship, increasingly determine access to and accessibility of rights, services, and personal liberties. The question we ask ourselves is, whether we are witnessing the onset of a new basis for citizenship. Greeks and Romans based citizenship on either blood lineage (*ius sanguinis*) or place of birth (*ius solis*). More recently, some states started discussing the possibility to add some educational/qualification criteria to nationalization processes. For instance, Italy has discussed the participation in the formal education system as one such criterion under the label '*ius scholae*'⁴.

Performative citizenship, in this context, might be best understood as a form of neoliberal governmentality. Michel Foucault famously coined this term to think about government or the state by rejecting a substantial state theory, that is, a theory of the state as a "transcendental reality whose history could be undertaken on the basis of itself. It must be possible to do the history of the state on the basis of men's actual practice [sic], on the basis of what they do and how they think" (Foucault 2007: 455). Under the premises of the (neo) liberal state, the question of governing appears as linked to the question of how people are governed to govern themselves.

In a similar way, understanding the transformations of citizenship might be pushed forward by looking into the 'practices, concepts and techniques' of performing citizenship.

The term performativity was coined by Judith Butler to describe gender as a form of social action, a process by which reality is socially constructed. Building up on linguistic theories of the act of speaking not solely as constating or describing reality, but as a language that effects changes in the world (Austin 1962). Butler wrote: "Within speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (Butler 1993: 13). In other terms, a speech act produces that which it names by referring to socially accepted norms, codes, etc.; the latter are then iteratively cited or repeated (and thus performed) in the pronouncement. Butler argues that, by ceaselessly referring to the conventions and ideologies of the social world around us, we enact that reality; in the performative act of speaking, people 'embody' reality by enacting it with their bodies, but then again that 'reality' nonetheless remains a social construction (Butler 1990). Butler used the concept to explore how gender and sexuality are constructed by linguistic acts and other forms of social practices. More recently, economic sociologists used the concept to better understand 'economic performativity', namely the fact that economists and financial experts not only describe their subject matter, but also shape them with their own practices (Brisset 2019; see also Beckert and Bronk 2018).

Performing citizenship, entails discursive, dispositional, cognitive, and moral qualities. From a cross-reading of the buoyant literature on citizenship education, one can identify numerous distinctive features that are best described as performat-

⁴ One of the main topics of discussion in the debate for the last elections for the Italian national government (September 2022) has been the issue of migrants' citizenship. The centre-left parties counter the right-wing and sovereigntist parties' claims for the closure of borders by proposing the introduction of the *ius scholae* as a new criterion of recognition of the right to citizenship (cf. Alicino 2021). Even though this discussion was part of political calculations during the elections, it is telling that education figures so prominently in the issue at hand.

ive: flexible, entrepreneurial, singular, resilient, generalist, aware pro/consumer, creative/innovative, tolerant, digital native, reflexive, etc. Further, educational institutions promoting disruptive innovation as the only way forward, also capitalize in cultivating these dispositions in their students.

4.1 Educating performative citizens

In an ongoing research project, we explore how new educational models and institutions contribute to educating performative citizens as discussed in the previous section. We focus on two examples that can be termed 'global universities' both in terms of their ambitions and stated missions, which represent specific forms of education with peculiar consistency with the surrounding discourses about performativity. In presenting these examples we do not seek to provide an empirical foundation for our argumentation, rather we look for resonance at the individual level with the discourses reshaping the dominant understanding of citizenship at a global level.

The first example is the Minerva University, a for-profit elite online university based in California, USA. The Minerva University departs from two basic reasonings for fundamentally changing higher education: First "we are facing a dire, cross-sector, global shortage of effective leaders [...and second] education, and specifically higher education, must play a critical role in solving this problem" (Kosslyn and Nelson 2018: 5). The mission statement is to reinvent higher education and "give students the cognitive tools they would need to succeed after they graduated" (Kosslyn and Nelson 2018: 1) as well as getting to leading positions in a changing, globalized world. Among these cognitive tools are "four core competencies: critical thinking, creative thinking, effective communication, and effective interactions" (Kosslyn and Nelson 2018: 9) around which the curricula and programmes are built based on a science of learning pedagogy and digital technology.

Minerva reorganized the physical facilities, the curriculum, seminars and lectures, the role of faculty and staff, etc. in order to revamp the study experience and to cater to the best students of the world, irrespective of nationality and social origin. Student courses are all held as online video classes, Minerva does not foresee lectures and the seminars are strongly based on the students' 'fully active' participation and on a radically 'flipped classroom' concept, with a strong emphasis on practical, general skills and competences, such as creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Students are required to travel to different places around the globe and spend their semesters in different mega-cities worldwide (San Francisco, London, Hyderabad, Buenos Aires, Seoul, Taipei, and Berlin) in order to become global citizens and leaders.

The second example is the Aalto University, a Finnish new founding model termed 'an innovation university' that combines science, art, technology and entrepreneurship, and aims at a sustainable future through entrepreneurship and innovation (Aalto University 2020; Moisio and Kangas 2016). Aalto reorganized its physical and immaterial settings of learning to create a new education 'ecosystem' that fosters entrepreneurial identities. These new performative subjectivities are crafted not in

traditional lecture or seminar rooms, but rather in joint projects revolving around designing/creating a product or invention as well as in numerous student activities such as start-up events (for which there is even a 'Startup Sauna'), promotional literature and on-campus marketing banners.

As anticipated, our reflection might be enriched by exploring different narratives of people who have experienced the educational and learning models of Aalto and Minerva universities. Indeed, those accounts can be seen as the result of the negotiation between subjective stances and the values fostered by specific educational models that work as institutional 'devices' for promoting performative self. The focus is on the interactions with such pedagogical models and on how the push towards performativity resonates in the accounts of the students. Thus, our attention is mainly devoted to the performative type of engagement and the justification for membership in those universities.

Specifically, our analysis focuses on one 'provoked' narrative (nar_1) collected by a face-to-face interview held at Aalto University and three 'spontaneous' narratives (nar_2; nar_3; nar_4) of Minerva University students uploaded on public YouTube channels.

Before going into the analysis, it is important to highlight some heterogeneity in terms of the general tone of the narratives. Although to some extent all four accounts provide insights about the pros and cons of the participation in those educational environments, we could find different balances, with a stronger appreciation expressed in nar_2 and nar_1, and more room devoted to the reflection on the downsides of the experiences in nar_3 and, above all, in nar_4.

A first common thread among the narratives is the representation of Minerva and Aalto universities as more challenging than 'traditional' universities. In nar_1 this is expressed by comparing the 'classical' atmosphere of art schools with the merging of art and business school proposed by the Aalto University. The idea is that artsy social environments are necessarily unproductive, and this impacts on the atmosphere and the attitudes of their students. Instead in Aalto,

the atmosphere is less Art School, whatever that means. I think that means [...] if there's a person who just wants to like wander around in the Art School, [...] it might not be the best place. [nar_1]

On a different mood, nar_4 tells how the challenging environment has enabled the student to find her ambition, although her performance revealed not adequate:

Minerva challenged me academically, and I think because of that I was forced, more so than I might have been at a normal college, to confront the question of what I was willing to be that challenged to do, and that is how I figured out that I want to work in a creative field [...] but that's kind of TBD because I haven't tried out enough to know for sure. I don't know if I would [to be defined] realized that at a different school. [nar_4]

Aalto and Minerva are described as social environments, where high levels of self-activation are expected. The participation in these communities is expressed

through the collaboration to a 'collective performance'. This resonates in the idea of a convergence of the individual and institutional 'mission', a sort of 'shared destiny' mostly based on reputation (a key dimension of social performativity):

Aalto has a great brand within it, if you say you're from Aalto it's different when you say like you're from [another more traditional art school] [...] I wouldn't want to use it everywhere but if I put it in my Instagram profile to be [...] that is always good topic in a conversation and that is, uhh, that separates when you seek for jobs for example [nar_1].

Minerva ['s aim is to establish", the authors"] themselves as a respected University to build this reputation as a good school. So, I realized that it's not so much whether the institution or school cares about you or not, and what it really comes down to is: what is their interests and does that align with your interests. It is very much in Minerva's interest as an institution that wants to preserve and improve itself, to invest a lot of time and effort into us students right now [nar_2].

Therefore, the general depiction that comes out draws the engagement in those educational environments as intrinsically performative, as it derives from the match between individual attitudes and skills (often framed under the notion of 'talent') and the capacity of the educational institution to recognize and cultivate them. Enrolling in Aalto or Minerva university thus looks more like a privilege which must be deserved, both proving a 'natural' disposition and enacting a proactive approach. This gets evident when students stress the capacity of Minerva to see subjective features of the students, such as their values, and organize the work among them accordingly:

they put you into these professional development groups with people that have similar values and then together you think about what's important to you and how do you turn that into a career. [nar_2]

Evocatively, this goes in the direction of a sort of 'Calvinist predestination' to an exclusive community, and it also embodies elements of the contemporary dominant understanding of membership as a merit which needs constant confirmation. In a broader perspective this is consistent with the 'new' feeling of belonging related to citizenship, which moves from the traditional proudness being a member of a nation (based on geographical and cultural belonging) to a more dynamic and, again, performative vision of it.

On the side of the institutions, this reflects in the attribution of an almost 'redemptive' function assigned by their students, who have found in them a chance to emancipate from the shortcomings of the traditional educational system, in the wake of their change of mindset.

All these new ways of thinking have actually changed how I see the world around me, which is really wild. And then we have to apply these new ways of thinking that we learned to actually, [nar_2]

The shared *telos* of membership embodies several abstract concepts which prevail in the surrounding discourses on global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. In

terms of expectations, it translates into a normative prescription which shape the subjective choices, and promote specific modes of self-conduct, fostering subjectivities oriented to permanent self-improvement. For instance, multiculturalism, which is often referred to as the 'glue' keeping the community together, as well as one of the most relevant values in this context, entails specific forms of performance. To be actualised, such concept requires a permanent mobility (in nar_3 it is reported as 'seven countries in four years'). The high mobility results in a further increase of the social performativity which is enacted in continuously entering and leaving different communities. This impacts the students' experiences making them even more dynamic:

I have the most wonderful, supportive, interesting, kind and quirky group of a hundred sixty classmates more or less from about 40 different countries. People come from so many different backgrounds and experiences and have such a big range of opinions and beliefs about the world, different religions, (so) that you're constantly just having these super interesting mind-blowing conversations where you're always learning something. [nar_2]

Yet, it forces to a constant social proactiveness, which can be very demanding, as pointed out in nar_3, when a period of vacation in the hometown of the student is mostly appreciated as a suspension of social performativity:

Not trying to prove myself to anyone but just being accepted fully, completely, without even trying, not having to explain anything to new people about Who I am and trying to reinvent myself [...] Spending time with my family, my old closest friends it kind of brings me back to this point of like: "hey I deserve to be loved I deserve to be like appreciated unconditionally. [nar_3]

Significantly, the dominant values of mobility and openness to multiculturalism are also the main reasons of struggling for the students, who also express the difficulties faced in participating to those environments. This issue is particularly evident in the fourth narrative, when the student relates her depression to the difficulties faced in moving to different countries, creating positive relationships with her always changing roommates and find support in the different Minerva's psychological counsellors:

when I moved to San Francisco I let myself be completely isolated from all of my friends back home and it quickly became clear that I had serious attachment and co-dependency issues, which I failed to do anything to address. Part of this is because when I did go to Minerva's psychologist counsellor person, I had such a hard time communicating with him that I let him convince me that I was just homesick and that I would get over it. I did not get over it. [nar_4]

Noteworthy, we can find a common attitude in nar_3 and nar_4, where the narrated difficulties are justified. In both accounts, and with some evidence in the fourth, the responsibility for the struggle is always self-assigned, leading to a general self-blaming which is a typical consequence of governmental dynamics. Then neo-liberal 'good citizen' is indeed made responsible for the outcomes of his/her social performance:

I'm pretty sure Minerva exacerbated my depression and made my mental illness worse, just because of how hard it is and how much more uprooted and unsettled you constantly are. And how hard it is to build a relationship with the therapist that you actually get on with well. But then I can just say that my big regret is really that I didn't seek out help early enough that I didn't tell the people that cared about me that I needed help, and that I haven't been able to figure out a way to communicate with the people who can help me in a way that lets them help me. [nar_4]

These narratives are interesting in and of themselves but reading them in the thematic context of this paper illustrates how becoming/being a 'good' citizen is to be achieved by performing in specific ways. Both the educational environments discussed cater to those students willing to excel, to make a change in the world — or quoting the Minerva homepage: "students come together as future leaders and entrepreneurs from 100 nations to live and learn together [...] as one community to address the greatest challenges facing humanity" (Minerva University website). Students at Aalto are also seen as the future transnational 'professional citizens' (Moisio and Kangas 2016: 269) needed to ensure Finland's economic prosperity in the global knowledge-based economy.

5. Concluding Remarks

In the article, we have discussed the dynamic nature of citizenship and its recent performative turn. It is not without difficulty to discuss this concept, as it is laden with multiple meanings due to its historical role and relation to global ruptures and transformations. With the perspective of education, which is called to address the issue of fostering, or even 'producing', good citizenship, we have added another layer of complexity. It enabled us to carve out razor-thin observations on how performing citizenship is replacing the mere status of being a citizen. The aim of the article was exactly this: to walk the reader through the mutual transformation of the global and the individual, the changing nature of the society and the shifting notion of being a member of it. The concept of citizenship offered us a fitting entry point. We have sought to argue that the critical junctures created by recent crises under global, digital, and postnational/deterritorialized circumstances are challenging the nature of citizenship and fostering new forms and practices of self-conduct.

Our argument was built on three premises: First, as discussed in section two, the concept of citizenship has multiple intertwined layers and horizons fuelled by social change. Second, as argued in section three, it absorbs and is affected by critical ruptures in technology, transfer, and scalability as it is linked with the ultimate question of identity. And third, as analysed in section four, it no longer functions prescriptively, but rather performatively. The examples briefly discussed performed the role of 'evocative stimuli' aimed at hinting that how this changed understanding of citizenship is negotiated in educational settings, particularly in those that present themselves as providing a solution to contemporary crises. Such development raises critical questions as to the exclusionary character of citizenship, but more importantly as to the function of education as a leveller of inequalities.

To conclude, the performative feature of citizenship is both provoking and threatening. It provokes us to move beyond the taken-for-granted and birth-given entitlements connected to the arbitrary distribution of citizenship rights and question how being a full member of society can be re-imagined on new grounds. The threat it possesses lies in the very idea of performance, which follows the neoliberal dictum of constantly re-inventing oneself. What appears to be the new promise of education — the saviour from future uncertainties —, can quickly turn out to be a false lighthouse navigating blind, because self-centred, citizens.

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