

Research Article

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Reclaiming Citizenship in the Post-Democratic Condition

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Abstract: This article reviews the central problematique of citizenship, arguing that the challenges imposed by neoliberal globalisation involve the loss of political, social and civil rights. By negating the mediations performed by citizenship between the people and the state, post-democracy renders citizenship meaningless. The article traces two main responses to this, a reactionary and a progressive one, none of which can address the problems of citizenship. The grains of a new response are found in three developments: a new ontology of the citizen, brought into being through digital acts; the existence of dual power, creating new forms of governance and social reproduction from below; and between these, the development of new procedures that directly engage with state power. Taken together, these considerations indicate a new possibility for the radicalisation of citizenship rather than a return to the former state of affairs.

Keywords: citizenship, digital media, post-democracy, dual power

1 Introduction

At its most basic, the notion of citizenship refers to the rights and obligations conferred to an individual by virtue of their membership in a political community such as the nation-state (Tilly, 1997). It is a mediating concept, in that it mediates relationships between individuals within a state and relationships between individuals and institutions, including the state itself. In this spirit, Tilly (1997) understands citizenship as a kind of tie that binds people to one another within the jurisdiction of a given state, but which also binds them to the state in specific ways. Citizenship is further connected to territory: etymologically, the word already contains the word ‘city’ and in *jus soli* legal conceptions, citizenship is conferred by virtue of being born in a territory. Talking about citizenship, therefore, mediates citizens’ relationships with territory, with power and with one another.

Recent developments point to the specificity of the current historical juncture, which presents monumental challenges that radically reorganise our relationships to territory, to power and to one another. Recognising this, Bryan Turner (2013) argues that previous forms of citizenship have converged towards a passive type, in which the state has withdrawn from commitment to full employment and welfare and where civil society has been replaced by the market. In this type, the citizen is a passive apolitical and isolated consumer. Critically engaging with Turner’s arguments, this article takes a step further, arguing that the current historical juncture can be understood as moving towards a post-democracy (Crouch, 2004). This process has affected some countries more than others, but the trend is clear. On the other hand, contrary to Turner’s arguments about passive citizenship, we trace the emergence of progressive and reactionary responses to post-democracy, alongside the rise of a new form of citizenship, namely,

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digital citizenship. This represents a new opportunity to recuperate some of the losses while also changing the very notion of citizenship. In pursuing these arguments, this article begins with a discussion of the normative foundations of citizenship and its various evolutions or mutations. It then identifies the main problems encountered by citizenship and the specificity of the current situation, which is understood here as the post-democratic condition. The final section discusses the responses to the challenges of post-democracy and the promise of digital citizenship.

2 Normative conceptions of citizenship

Norms emerge out of established practices. For citizenship, the two most basic forms were the ones practiced in Athens and Rome. Walzer (1970, 205) identifies the Roman position on citizenship with that found in Jean Bodin (1566/1945): “a citizen is one who enjoys the common liberty and protection of authority”. ‘Liberty’ in this instance, as Walzer points out, is conceived in negative terms, as protection from interference from other people or authorities. This conception is very different to the one found in Aristotle’s *Politics*, where he defines a citizen as “a man [sic] who shares in the administration of justice and in the holding of office” (quoted in Walzer 1970, 211). This formula understands the citizen as first and foremost a member of a political community under the obligation to be actively involved in the affairs of the polis.

These are the two normative underpinnings as identified by Walzer (1970; 1989), which broadly speaking correspond to the liberal and republican positions. The republican model requires that citizens participate directly and indirectly in political decision-making. However, as Walzer points out, this thick and substantial conception of citizenship cannot take place unless a society is very closely bound together, sharing ethics and morality and having high levels of trust in one another, conditions not seen since Athens of the 5th century.

The liberal model, on the other hand, posits no such conditions. Indeed, it emerged out of the very different requirements of Imperial Rome, where citizenship had to expand beyond the confines of the city and where people sought to enjoy the protection of the state across all its territories (Walzer, 1970). In the liberal model, citizens are free in the sense of being protected from interference by the state authorities or from other individuals. Inevitably, it is this thin conception of citizenship that underpins current legal and ethico-political understandings, as it is far more flexible and compatible with the requirements of modern nation-states under capitalism.

Though these two perspectives are distinct, it is clear that they are both part of what citizenship is taken to mean today, both legally and in practice. As Walzer points out, for the most part, we operate as passive recipients of rights, but there are occasional eruptions of demands for more active and substantial participation in political life as well as instances of actual participation. For Walzer’s generation, this was expressed in the civil rights movement, which struggled for the expansion of both rights and liberty. Walzer implies that the current state of affairs – in which a ‘thin’, liberal conception predominates, occasionally usurped by ‘thick’, republican demands for more (rights, liberty, participation) – is appropriate for pluralist societies, because it allows for more flexibility and mutual adaptation. At the same time, a thin conception is preferable according to Walzer, because, realistically speaking, the private realm has assumed primacy and citizens are unlikely to make politics their main business again.

This is a crucial insight, because it shows the division between active and passive forms of citizenship as two different conceptions that should be reconceived as two poles in one continuum. However, Walzer’s formulation implies a kind of spontaneous uprising when citizenship is under attack or in order to expand it; but what if the mechanisms by which this takes place, i.e. the ways in which state power concedes demands, are no longer there? Walzer considers that states are autonomous units, and that citizenship is a matter to be negotiated between citizens and states. Historical developments, however, have cast doubts over the ability of nation-states to unilaterally determine the meaning and application of citizenship. At the same time, technological developments have made participation in governance much more efficient,

potentially allowing for continuous and thicker conceptions of citizenship. Before going into this in more detail, it is necessary to look at the various adjustments to the concept obtained through different struggles and under diverse political circumstances. This will provide the historical backdrop for the discussion on post-democracy.

3 Citizenship in modernity: a historico-political account

In understanding and explaining the different historical manifestations of citizenship in modernity, Turner (1990) outlined a sociological theory of citizenship, mapping it across two dimensions: active/passive and public/private. Looking at the various combinations of these, Turner developed a typology of different political contexts that institutionalised citizenship in different ways. On this basis, he outlines four types: citizenship in revolutionary contexts, citizenship in liberal pluralism, citizenship in plebiscitary authoritarianism and citizenship in passive democracy. Historically, these can be mapped onto the French revolutionary tradition, American liberalism, the passive English case and German fascism. In his discussion of these types, Turner argues that in the French tradition, the requirement for an active citizenship came at the expense of a private life; this kind of citizenship can slide into totalitarianism. Conversely, in American liberalism, while public participation is encouraged, it is in tension with the primacy of the private realm. In the case of English passive democracy, citizenship and rights are handed from above while citizens appear as subjects. Finally, in the case of German fascism, the state is elevated into a quasi-sacred position, with citizens permitted only minimal participation, with the private sphere giving priority to family life.

In part, Turner developed this account in order to offer a more nuanced understanding of citizenship to the one found in Marshall's hugely influential *Citizenship and Social Class* (1950). Marshall begins with a division of citizenship into three sets of rights, namely, civil, political and social. He offers a somewhat linear historical account of a gradual emergence of rights in turn. Civil rights, "composed of all the rights necessary for individual freedom" (Marshall, 1950, 10) emerged first, around the 18th century. Civil rights constitute the fundamental category of rights, argues Marshall, and to some extent political rights derive from civil rights.

The formative period for political rights, which pertained to rights necessary in order "to participate in the exercise of political power" (op.cit.: 11), began when civil rights became widely diffused, leading to a tension between principles of freedom for all and restrictions on participating in the exercise of power. Political rights therefore involved struggles for the expansion of the franchise, from property owners to non-owners and from men to women.

Social rights, which refer to the range of rights typically associated with the right to education and social welfare, emerged in the 20th century. Marshall's argument was that social rights must be thought of as prerequisites to civil and political rights, since no citizen can be free and exercise their political rights unless they are educated and safe from the extreme effects of the free market. In other words, social rights addressed social inequality in ways that allowed citizens to be citizens and are therefore fundamental to citizenship. However, although historically civil rights, or liberty, provided the basis for political rights, now this situation is reversed, as we see that political rights, i.e. participation in the political decision-making process, allow certain groups to claim an expansion of their civil and social rights. For example, in the US civil rights movement of the 1960s, people demanded an expansion or a re-signification of such rights to include people of colour and women, although such groups were already enjoying formal political rights (Zivi, 2012). In this sense, it can be said that today, political rights underwrite and enable other forms of rights and, in this manner, any loss of these implies loss of other rights as well. This, as we shall see later, is crucial as post-democracy involves primarily the loss or effective nullification of political rights.

But this historical account cannot be complete without specifically thematising the politics of citizenship. This revolves around the question of who has the right to citizenship and which forms of citizenship, or which combinations of which rights, are offered or prioritised (Isin and Wood, 1999; Zivi,

2012). Any struggles around citizenship inevitably evoke these questions and correspond to various challenges posed by circumstances external to the nation-state, which is still the only locus of citizenship, as well as by actors within the nation-state. These will be discussed next.

4 Challenges to citizenship: struggles, expansions and contractions

While different theorists speak of different challenges to citizenship, chronologically, the first challenges to citizenship were on the basis of gender and equality: being male and having property as a basis for political rights was actively challenged, leading to the expansion of the franchise, but tensions involving equality remain. Thus, although citizenship rests on the assumption of equality among citizens, specific groups of citizens have challenged this assumption, maintaining that they do not actually enjoy equal rights. These challenges mainly come from feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) rights groups, as well as from ethno-cultural minorities. Secondly, the rise of globalisation is among the chief challenges for citizenship, as it affects the nation-state and its ability to confer rights. A third, and interlinked, set of challenges comes from the expansion of the domain of the market and its logic across all fields of life; this has led to the prioritisation of certain understandings of citizenship, which end up drastically altering the balance between the various rights and duties. These three sets of challenges can be seen as having led to two expansions and one contraction for citizenship: these can be summarised as feminist and multicultural citizenship, post-national and cosmopolitan citizenship, and consumer or market citizenship.

The feminist critique of citizenship revolves around two central issues. Firstly, the association of citizenship with the public sphere, a realm from which women were, and to an extent still are, excluded; moreover, in the conception of the public sphere articulated by Habermas (1991), citizens are meant to participate in a manner devoid of any other kind of identity. This however, has ended up prioritising a rational detached point of view that fails to take into account gendered experiences (Young, 1989). Additionally, the tensions between civil and social rights, as well as the resolutions achieved, in different nations have largely overlooked the asymmetrical distribution of care for others, which typically falls on women. By assuming that individuals, men and women, have the same position in society, welfare systems have ended up discriminating against women who may rely on these disproportionately (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). Similarly, minority groups, such as black or LGBTQ groups, argue that citizenship rights are not distributed in an equitable manner and do not address their specific needs in terms of resources, status or recognition distribution (Richardson, 1998). Extensions to citizenship rights in terms of accepting and addressing these demands have led to gendered and (multi)cultural citizenship framings, and although these have been codified differently in different nations, they have mostly extended civil and social rights associated with citizenship.

Secondly, if by globalisation we mean the spread and intensification of interconnectedness and interdependencies between nation-states, which can be economic, social, cultural and political (Held et al., 1999), then it is clear that concepts of citizenship that are rooted in monocultural and autonomous nation-states are put under strain or may even become irrelevant. Urry (1999) discusses the rise of global corporations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and brands operating across borders, alongside institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and so on. Nations are also bound by international agreements, including trade agreements and rights-related agreements, overseen and implemented through international courts. This global institutional apparatus and the globalised marketplace are challenging citizenship through their challenging of the nation-state itself. Soysal (1994) refers to a post-national kind of citizenship, in which rights and obligations are determined and implemented by international agreements, bodies and institutions. This extension towards a post-national, global or transnational citizenship (Baubock, 1994) was seen as an already-here, de facto and necessary

development and as the result of the rise of a globalised, interconnected world and increased human migration.

While liberal theory and normative principles may underlie citizenship, it is in fact neoliberalism as an economic and political ideology that ended up dominating globally through international agents such as the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF), *European Central Bank* (ECB) and the World Bank. The main doctrine of neoliberalism is that human societies are better served by the emancipation of individual entrepreneurialism in a framework of strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2007: 2). States must act as guarantors of these and intervene only in protecting free markets and in creating them where they are not present (e.g. in the provision of education, healthcare, water, etc.). More broadly, Harvey (2007) argues that neoliberalism concerns the expansion of the logic of the market across all spheres of life.

In terms of citizenship, it is evident that neoliberalism is not compatible with any form of social rights and welfare as these would be seen as interference with free market, while civil rights are re-interpreted as consumer and entrepreneurial rights. If nationalism and liberalism were forces for emancipation that ended up structuring an expanding version of citizenship (Dahrendorff, 2008), globalisation and liberalism – rather than fulfilling the promise of post- and transnational varieties of citizenship – ended up in a minimal conception, a contraction of citizenship. Turner (2013) refers to this as market or consumer citizenship, in which individuals have the obligation to consume, often leading them to debt. Participation therefore is participation in the market, which is meant to resolve any and all tensions if left to operate freely. However, when such tensions emerge, e.g. because of rising unemployment or precarity, these have been resolved through stigmatisation of those concerned, resulting in a decrease in their moral worth (Somers, 2008; Turner, 2013). This is why this version of citizenship can be understood as a contraction: citizenship is no longer a set of rights, but a privilege handed over because of one's participation in the market (Somers, 2008). In a similar vein, Turner (2013) views it as the convergence, or replacement, of all other forms of citizenship by market citizenship. This has effectively led to the creation of two kinds of citizens, i.e. to a bifurcation of citizenship, which now includes the stigmatised poor, unemployed or underemployed citizen and the passive consumer who observes society as a spectacle from his/her own private sphere (Turner, 2013). While Turner correctly identified the movement towards an impoverished conception of citizenship, the implications are more far-reaching because the emerging type of citizenship involves an erosion of political rights that underwrite civil and social rights. In implementing neoliberal doctrines, nation-states in effect signed over their own political power vis-à-vis their own citizens, notwithstanding the existence of nominal political rights. This is what has led some critics to describe the current state of affairs as post-democracy. The following section explains why the post-democratic challenge is one of the most critical challenges for citizenship.

5 The post-democratic constellation

The current dominance of neoliberalism echoes the condition in the 19th century, which Karl Polanyi (1944) theorised as the great transformation towards a market society. In his view, the dis-embedding of economy from society leads to upheavals that force its re-embedding. Yet, some 70 years later, the economy has dis-embedded from society to such an extent that it has further imposed a dis-embedding of the social from the political, because social pressures for relief are no longer mitigated by the political sphere. This is what may be described as post-democracy.

In his short book on post-democracy, Colin Crouch (2004) suggests that the indisputable primacy of the economic domain, alongside the rise of global multinational corporations as well as a political class pandering to these, have led to a receding of democracy and the role of democratic institutions in political decisions. While all these institutions are still present, their power and their actual role in decision-making have dramatically declined. Crouch argues that three kinds of developments have led to this. First is the loss of political identity, which was the result of the universalisation of citizenship. Crouch holds that

demands for citizenship were eventually met, and this has had the paradoxical result of a loss of political consciousness and awareness in subsequent generations, even if people are still sociologically part of a given class, gender and so on. The exception to this is the global class of business executives, major shareholders and business leaders; these people, argues Crouch, know very well who they are, where their interests lie and how to influence political decisions. Economic globalisation and the rise of multinational corporations that can move freely and cannot be bound by national decision-making, while democracy and citizenship are still territorially bound, comprise the second development. Finally, the result of these two processes has been that the political establishment can no longer relate to voters through parties, as they are more geared towards the interests of corporate elites and lobbyists; this means that elections can no longer address or express serious conflicts of interests. Despite these, Crouch does not consider post-democracy an accomplished fact; rather, he points out, we are on a long march towards it (Crouch, 2016).

Citizenship under post-democracy is apathetic, responding to signals in the (mass) media, connected to a well-documented shift in political communication from argument-based communication towards political marketing and spin as well as a clear dumbing down of complex issues (Crouch, 2000; 2004; see also Negrine, 2008). At the same time, citizens may also be overconcerned with micro-issues that do not belong to the field of politics proper: precisely because there is no real difference between political parties, the focus then shifts to issues ranging from morality to technical implementation of policy, but which really have little to do with politics, understood as addressing questions of power distribution and contestation. Crouch (2016) concedes that it is difficult to define a priori which questions are political and which are not, but he argues that when such questions are obscuring or not thematising major questions of who is currently profiting from the system and who is excluded, then we may argue that constant and exclusive concerns with relatively minor issues constitute part of a post-democratic form of citizenship.

Crouch is not alone in pointing to a crisis of polity. Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Jacques Ranciere (2014), as well as Wendy Brown (2015), point in different albeit overlapping ways to the same phenomenon: the primacy of the economic over the political (Mouffe, 2000), the conflation of the political with the domain of administration and the police (Ranciere, 2014), and the degeneration of politics into toxicity, ranting and posturing (Brown, 2015: 39).

We can see, therefore, that citizenship in the post-democratic condition is both apathetic and overinvested in micro-issues, the result of the loss of political efficacy (i.e. the ability to participate in political decision-making in an effective manner), and the conflation of political participation with consumer choice. This is how citizenship in representative democracy in the context of the nation-state has diminished in power, and political rights are only nominal. But at the same time, the social and civil rights have been diminishing as well, since there are no substantive political rights to demand and guarantee these. We, therefore, witness the collapse of universal welfare rights into a form of an option for supporting the 'deserving poor' (Crouch, 2000: 8), as well as the collapse of civil rights through intensified securitisation and ubiquitous surveillance (Andrejevic, 2012; Deukmedjian, 2013). This is a more fundamental and pernicious development because it erodes both normative bases of citizenship at once: neither a passive nor an active conception can be valid or have any meaning anymore, because citizens are no longer involved in any kind of political decision-making beyond the nominal periodic elections for very similar political parties or candidates. While nominal political rights remain unchanged – i.e. we still have the right to vote – the political process is deprived of meaning. As Mouffe (2016) put it, it is now no more than a question of choosing Pepsi over Coke.

However, as Crouch has pointed out, post-democracy is not yet complete. In this respect, Turner seems to have overstated the passivity and apathy of citizens. Indeed, recent contentious referenda in Greece and the UK, as well as polarising elections in the US (and recently in France, the Netherlands and the UK), show the beginning of a struggle over politics that appears to be over substance. What these events, which had different outcomes, have in common is a clear frustration with the current pre-empting of the political and an attempt to wrest back control. The outcomes show on the one hand the inequality of states within the global system, and on the other, that attempts to regain political power from this global system may lead to exclusions and sharpen existing inequalities when they take the form of a reactionary return to nationalism. Where do we go from here? How can the historico-political developments sketched by

Turner and Crouch be reconciled with some recent events, including electoral politics, political activism and technological innovation? The final section will explore these questions.

6 Responses to post-democratic citizenship

Crouch identified a central tension and contributory factor in post-democracy: an increasingly interdependent economy that operates globally, and a political system that functions at the national level. Indeed, the only political space available for citizens is the national one. It is at this level that we can therefore locate the two main responses to the post-democratic condition. These can be characterised as progressive and reactionary. The following section discusses these two as they have so far manifested in the context of Europe and the US, arguing for a necessity to formulate an alternative to both, as the former is politically problematic and the latter lacks efficacy and the political agency that is necessary for political change.

The two clearest instances of what we may call a reactionary response to post-democracy have occurred in the two countries that have been unequivocal in their support of neoliberalism: the US and the UK. This response revolves around a rhetoric that is explicitly against globalisation and in favour of the nation-state and prioritising the needs of (certain) citizens. Donald Trump's successful slogans 'Make America Great Again' and 'America First', his policy proposals for tax repatriation and job creation for local people, as well as his rhetoric against those seen as not belonging to the country and who are not rightful citizens all point to the tensions and challenges discussed earlier. While the US has offered little social welfare to citizens, the discussion on Obamacare and its eventual repeal by the current administration alludes to questions of deservedness and moral worth, as well as to employment as the basis of citizenship, all present in the election campaign but also forming part of a long genealogy of citizenship as conceived in the US context (Turner, 1990; Somers, 2008). At the same time, the erosion of civil rights can be seen in the increased securitisation but also in the riots and protests under the emblematic #BlackLivesMatter hashtag. This was re-signified in Trump's election campaign as a question of national security, and civil rights returned as protection no longer from the State but against outsiders, 'illegals' and terrorists while keeping Second Amendment rights to bear arms for protection.

Similarly, in the Brexit campaign, the main slogan was 'Take Back Control', referring to the perception that the EU is the main political decision-making body while the national government of the UK has lost control. A controversial poster used by the UK Independence Party (UKIP), one of the most vocal Brexit parties, had a picture of a long line of refugees, taken in Hungary, with the caption, 'Breaking Point'. This indicates the ways in which the Brexit campaign used both the EU and migration as scapegoats for the loss of political rights and for pressures to the welfare system. Indeed, in another controversial electioneering move, a campaign bus had the slogan 'We send the EU £350 million a week, let's fund our NHS instead'. This turned out to be wrong (WeKnowNow, 2016), and the Brexit camp backtracked from the promise to spend the money on the NHS (Helm, 2016), but the promise and its resonance are due to the diminishing social rights and the chronic underfunding of health services in the UK. Just as in the US, migration and the emphasis on border control, another mainstay of the campaign, point to the securitisation of civil rights. The recent relative success of Jeremy Corbyn can be attributed to the successful attempt of the Labour Party to shift the discussion towards the loss of welfare and the impact of austerity across the British society, using the slogan 'For the many, not the few'. For Natalie Fenton (2017), this success is a sign of democracy fighting back.

In these cases, the campaigns successfully re-signified existing concerns and experiences of diminishing rights, while at the same time signalling an attempt to reclaim political rights. In both the Trump and Brexit campaigns, the loss of rights was expressed as resentment against figures that had become scapegoats: those seen as the undeserving poor, migrants, feminists and other 'social justice warriors'. In both the US and the UK, it was the first time in many years that political questions were truly political and elections were decided on important political questions, but the rhetoric of the winning camps was exclusionary and

reactionary in the sense that they sought a return to the previous status quo, of strong and homogeneous nation-states. While nation-states have never really been as homogeneous or successful as implied by these campaigns, as we saw earlier, nation-states in combination with liberalism have led to significant gains for justice and liberty. On the other hand, nation-states without liberalism are very close to Turner's (1990) plebiscitary authoritarianism or, in other words, fascism. The resentment that followed the alienation created by the loss of political and civil rights has not led to a return to some form of collective organising and an associated collective conscience, which may have held some potential to actually redress this loss by thematising the material questions of production and redistribution – though the Corbyn campaign is a sign that things are changing (see Thorsen, Jackson and Lilleker, 2017). Rather, this reactionary form of citizenship expresses itself in symbolic and affective terms, invests disproportionately on leaders and key figures, all the while leaving out the main questions of who has power and who is profiting from the current system.

But this reactionary response was not the only one. The protest movements under the Occupy label, including the *Aganaktismeni* movement in Greece and *Indignados* in Spain, signalled an attempt to reclaim political, social and civil rights in the tradition of other protest movements in the past but relying on social media and the digital domain to find resonance within their own countries but also across the world (Gamson and Sifry, 2013). While, in most countries, these amounted to few – if any – significant political gains, in Greece and Spain, these movements were linked to the rise of Syriza and Podemos, respectively. More specifically, in Greece, the protracted economic crisis led to a political crisis and the collapse of the party system. The result was the rise of strong social movements, which held society together and eventually led to the rise of the Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza). Syriza won the elections of January 2015, with a mandate to renegotiate the bailout deals imposed on previous governments. This led to a tense negotiation process with Greece's creditors, in which Greece sought to alleviate the austerity conditions imposed, arguing that no economic growth is possible under these conditions. In the summer of 2015, the government of Syriza/ANEL called for a referendum over the acceptance of a new bailout deal that would involve further austerity. The main slogans in the very brief campaign were 'Oxi', meaning 'No' in Greek, from those against the conditions imposed by the creditors, and 'We stay in Europe', from the opposing camp. The results that came in surprised almost everyone: a resounding win for 'No', with almost 62% of the vote, and a clear mandate offered to the government to negotiate on the basis of no more austerity. Less than a week after the referendum, the government accepted all the demands of the creditors, in a spectacular U-turn that blatantly ignored the will of the people.

This incident summarises all the developments discussed earlier: the rise of neoliberalism and the loss of rights for citizens. The attempt of the citizens to reclaim power was frustrated by a government that was unable to stand up alone against the forces of the global capitalist class and their enforcers (Sheehan, 2017). But the ways in which citizens sought to reclaim their lost rights and self-determination were very different from the Brexit referendum and the Trump campaign, because, in Greece, the material and economic circumstances were explicitly thematised as part of a referendum that concerned these very questions. Despite the attempt of the 'Yes' camp to symbolically link the referendum to questions of culture and belongingness, the majority voted on the basis of seeking an alternative economic arrangement even if this came at the cost of a Grexit. In this, the Greek referendum can be seen as part of a progressive attempt to redress the loss of rights involved in post-democracy: the demand was to have a direct say in the economic policy to be applied, as opposed to having one imposed on them. This was not a call to return to a previous stage of national harmony but a call to develop a different economic programme that addresses the needs of everyday people, especially of those who suffer under austerity policies. In this way, it may be argued that there was a development of a collective consciousness concerning material circumstances, which was not based on the exclusion of others. Political rights were connected to social rights: the rejection of a politics of austerity was directly linked to a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources and to the alleviation of suffering. But all these demands were frustrated by the unilateral decision of the government to cede to the creditors and impose further austerity policies, illustrating the impotence of citizenship in post-democracy. This shows, on the one hand, the unequal distribution of power in the global system – as Greece is not the US or the UK – and on the other hand, the inability of

citizens' national-based decision-making to translate into a political intervention with enough power to deal with global developments.

It is clear that none of these responses can adequately address the challenges of post-democracy. But learning from their inadequacies and from the analysis herein, we can begin to formulate a third alternative. Based on the preceding analysis, we identified as the main problem the concurrent erosion of all three rights that constitute citizenship, but we highlighted the loss of political rights as the most problematic because political rights can demand and guarantee other kinds of rights as well. In this sense, any response to the liquidation of citizenship must explicitly address the loss of such rights. It is for this reason that discussions of expansions of citizenship in terms of the cultural sphere and/or the techno-digital domain are not enough on their own to redress and reclaim the losses that have been incurred in the context of neoliberalism and post-democracy. However, some recent developments have created the space to think of the problem differently.

While the notion of digital citizenship and its various formulations have been the subject of a burgeoning field of study (Mossberger et al., 2007; McCosker et al., 2016), we focus here on Isin and Rupert's (2015) recent work. Isin and Rupert understand digital citizenship as the new modes of being that are emerging through people's actions in cyberspace. The authors consider citizenship in its dynamic form: instead of understanding citizenship as a set of static rights, they view it as a constant struggle that involves claims to more or to different rights. It is through these that (digital) citizenship is born. This is at once more extensive and different from national citizenship, as discussed earlier. It is more extensive because it is not limited to the territory of the nation-state, as people meet, interact and exchange ideas with others located in very different territories but also within another kind of space – cyberspace; digital citizenship therefore mediates another kind of spatial environment. It is different, because it does not concern civil, political and social rights, but digital rights, which, in their more expansive expression, concern our – humanity's – technological future.

Digital rights are brought into being and configured by certain digital acts, which Isin and Rupert classify under three categories: callings, closings and openings. Callings refer to the opportunities created by participating, connecting and sharing; these initiate certain responses, such as filtering, tracking and normalising which can end up enclosing the digital domain. Conversely, opening digital acts, such as witnessing, hacking and commoning (Linebaugh, 2008), push boundaries, subvert conventions and expand our imagination. For Isin and Rupert, the question of digital citizenship is that of a constant interplay between obedience and subversion. Referring to subversive figures, such as Aaron Swartz, Julian Assange or Edward Snowden, they show how they have expanded our imagination but also at the same time constructed a new understanding of a subject who makes new rights claims over new domains and territories that go beyond nationally endowed rights.

By engaging with processes of subjectivisation through digital media, Isin and Rupert point to ways in which citizenship is ontologically changing and can be thought of and brought to existence outside the domain of the nation-state. Their argument echoes arguments on the subject of the American Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Human Rights; how did the signatories to these declarations make these claims? How is the foundational move made? It is made again through a performative act: they bring into being what they state; they found the people because they claim on behalf of the people (Honig, 1991). In a similar manner, we can see in the rights' claims of digital citizens a glimpse of a different political subject making claims on behalf of a new kind of people no longer limited by national territories in their demands. Isin and Rupert therefore provide an account of the new ontology of the digital subject, who can then act upon the material domain and change the political process.

However, in the political process, as well as in the domain of law, citizens are very much bound by national territories. And within these, their political rights are compromised. So how can the foundational movement of digital citizenship be turned into a politically efficacious movement? To do so, it must explicitly address the question of political power in its formal dimension: in other words, to deal with state power. In political theory, foundational movements are almost always revolutionary movements. But revolutionary movements do not always involve 'storming the winter palace' or overturning state power by violent means. They may involve the creation of an alternative form of government from below and operate

in conditions of dual power. Dual power has been conceived by Lenin (1917) as involving the concurrent operation of two forms of power, one by the movement of people from below and the other by the state institutions, which would eventually be replaced by the emerging power from below. Today, as Broumas (2017) argues, we have seen the operation of dual power in the context of the Zapatistas movement in Mexico, in Rojava in Syria (Cemgil, 2016; Dirik, 2017) and in Venezuela (Ciccariello-Maher, 2007). The extreme circumstances in these states allow few parallels to be drawn between them and the rich and developed countries in Europe and North America.

Yet, the continued pressures of post-democracy widen the gap between state power and the citizens, leading to increased alienation expressed as resentment. But this is only one response even within these countries: there exists a movement from below, as yet not fully organised but nevertheless present, which enables people to exchange ideas, push boundaries, formulate demands and address needs. These acts, both online and in the contexts of cities, can be seen as the development of a movement from below, which performs or brings into being the kind of citizenship alluded to by Isin and Ruppert but extended beyond the domain of the digital. In Greece, people's self-organised movements have stepped in to deal with the state withdrawal from health, education, caring for refugees and in other domains, by creating and offering such services to others (Rakopoulos, 2014; Kioupkiolis and Karyotis, 2015; Broumas, 2017). The existence of a solidarity economy, built around cooperatives and not-for-profit companies, point to the existence of a form of dual power. But the question of state power still remains: states must be seen as sites of contention and eventual capture. In these terms, such initiatives must at some stage grapple with the electoral process and use existing means available to them in order to seize back the power they have lost through post-democratic processes.

A way in which this has been done is encountered in the political practices of XNet, a collective based in Barcelona, founded in 2008. XNet began with an anti-copyright and freedom of information agenda and subsequently expanded to other domains, such as online democracy, free internet and techno-politics, which they understand as “the practice of networking and taking action for empowerment, justice and social transformation” (XNet, About, in Siapera, 2016: 103). XNet's significant difference from similar initiatives is two-fold: firstly, they are involved in interventions that shape the political agenda, and secondly, they are pursuing transnational links and exporting their know-how to other movements and networks globally. They engage with the political process in several ways: they hold politicians accountable and demand total transparency using, when necessary, legal means. This is crucial, because as Crouch (2004) has shown, behind-the-doors lobbying is a standard practice by which global elites influence, seduce and coerce national governments. In the context of Spain, XNet constitutes one of the main groups behind the 15MpaRato movement, which brought a prosecution against Rodrigo Rato, a banker and a former chief of the IMF and which ended up in his imprisonment for corruption. They did so through online organising, digital whistle-blowing of the type made famous by Wikileaks, crowdfunding and old-fashioned legal means. In another political move, XNet has founded a political party, Partido X, which seeks to reclaim citizen power. Partido X has developed a set of elaborate procedures for citizen direct participation and involvement in decision-making processes, as well as in drafting policy (Siapera, 2016).

In this manner, XNet provides an example of the missing link between online (*uniform resource locator* or URL) and ‘in real life’ (IRL) approaches, as well as being the link between actions from below and those from the state or institutional power, thus linking the digital with the material political world. But in a crucial departure from national politics, XNet is actively networking with other initiatives in Europe and elsewhere, transmitting know-how but also acquiring new learning in the process. Partido X's first foray into the electoral process was in the European elections of 2014. It is global change that they are seeking, using the national political arena as a starting point.

To sum up, any kind of effective response to the challenges of post-democracy must involve engagement by the citizens themselves in forming networks or coalitions that can mobilise against further encroachment. Such networks bring into being new political subjectivities that emerge through but beyond the social, cultural, political and territorial boundaries of the nation-state and the technological boundaries imposed by algorithms and social media corporations. However, for these to be politically effective, they have to explicitly address the question of state political power. This is what we have referred to as dual power, and we have used examples from Greece and Spain to illustrate how this can and has been done.

7 Conclusion

This article reviewed the central problematique of citizenship, from its normative bases, through its ideal types and historical evolutions, to the impasse of post-democracy. We have seen that the challenges imposed by neoliberal globalisation do not only involve a shift towards a consumer-based citizenship, but more fundamentally the loss of political, social and civil rights. By negating the mediations performed by citizenship between the people and the state, as well as among the people, post-democracy renders citizenship meaningless.

In addressing this liquidation of citizenship, the responses so far have been either reactionary or progressive but inefficient steps. Neither of these can address the current and future problems, and while the latter can be seen as a failed effort, the former is truly dangerous as it involves a further deterioration of citizenship and a shift towards plebiscitary authoritarianism. The seeds of a new response may be found in three separate developments: a new ontology of the citizen, brought into being through digital acts; the existence of dual power that creates new forms of governance and social reproduction from below that can support progressive governments; and between these two, the development of new procedures that directly engage with state power. Taken together, these observations indicate the possibility for a new mode of citizenship, rather than an expansion or a return to a former state of affairs.

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