

Lived citizenship: Conceptualising an emerging field

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Abstract

Lived citizenship has emerged as a key concept in citizenship studies over the last two decades. A growing number of authors have applied ideas of lived citizenship as a generative approach to recognise the embodied, relational and lived experiences of *being* a citizen in everyday life. However, lived citizenship currently lacks conceptual clarity and framing which weakens its analytical power and potential. In this paper we consider the theoretical origins, current applications and development of lived citizenship in order to clarify it as a concept and consider possibilities for its future. We propose a conceptual framing underpinned by four dimensions of lived citizenship (spatial, intersubjective, performed and affective) to serve as a starting point to sharpen and define this emerging field. We then explore these dimensions through three domains of scholarship, of children and youth, asylum seekers, and city-regional dwellers to illustrate the potential of a lived citizenship approach. We conclude by examining some of the implications of this concept as well as its limitations, with the aim of opening a dialogue with inter-disciplinary scholars to help us to further conceptualise this emerging field and widen its future possibilities.

Keywords

Lived citizenship, acts of citizenship, issue-based citizenship, children and youth, asylum seekers, city-regions

Lived citizenship: Conceptualising an emerging field

Introduction

Over the last two decades, lived citizenship has emerged as a key concept in citizenship studies. Drawing a distinction from more formal understandings of citizenship as a legal status with associated rights and duties of those who are full members of a community (as defined originally by Marshall 1950), lived citizenship draws attention to the significance of citizenship as it is experienced and enacted in various real-life contexts. Rather than a fixed status, the lived approach seeks to account for “the meaning that citizenship actually has in people’s lives and the ways in which people’s social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens” (Hall and Williamson 1999, 2). Drawing inspiration broadly from critical and feminist studies, it places at centre-stage the embodied performance of citizenship, and how people negotiate rights, responsibilities, identities and belonging through interactions with others in the course of daily life (Lister 2007).

The growing field has expanded conceptions of citizens by shedding light on the experiences of people who have traditionally been excluded from economic, political and social esteem, alongside more expansive and inclusive citizenship modes. Lived citizenship has been explored through a range of empirical studies, including childhood and youth studies (Lister et al. 2003; Bartos 2012; Wood 2010; Kallio and Mills 2016), the life of transnational migrants (Ho 2009; Staeheli et al. 2012; Pascucci 2016), and the intersections between lived religion and citizenship (Laksana and Wood 2018; Nyhagen 2015). Two interlinked theoretical factors have propelled the concept forward in recent years.

First, the *spatialities* of citizenship have been problematized to contest territoriality and its major manifestation – the state – as the naturalized context of citizenship (Linklater 1998; Isin 2000; Maestri and Hughes 2017). Whilst the physical boundaries of nation-states continue to have a profound effect on the political, social and economic rights people are entitled to, there is a growing recognition that citizenship needs to also be understood as a set of relationships through which it is constructed – often beyond territorial borders (Staeheli 2011; Bauman 2016; Häkli and Kallio 2016). In response, we join many scholars who argue for post-national and spatially more expansive understandings of citizenship characterised by flexible and multiple notions of identity and connectedness beyond the nation-state, especially in the context of heightened patterns of transnational migration (Isin and Turner 2007; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Nyers and Rygiel 2012). Therefore, while territorial notions of

citizenship remain significant in shaping the contexts in which people relate to one another in the everyday, a lived citizenship approach enriches and deepens our understandings of citizenship as experienced beyond the nation-state or territorial boundaries.

Second, in contrast with citizenship based on status and the respective rights granted by the state, attention is increasingly paid to *less formal* modes of political participation and ways of enacting citizenship beyond the largely institutionalized practices within states. Here lived citizenship is what people experience and practice as part of their everyday living, personally as well as in groups and movements, including more and less intentional civic activities. These ‘alternative citizenships’ identify a broad spectrum of political realities and agencies in the relational world, including claims to citizenship when people lack status, rights, and access to civic practices (McNevin 2006; Walters 2008; Caraus 2018). In sharp contrast to status-based citizenship, lived citizenship is about people’s daily, mundane lives and how ‘the political’ is worked within informal and domestic spaces (Dickenson 2008; Dixon and Marston 2011), as much as in relation to changes such as those associated with globalisation, migration and the diaspora (Behrman 2014; Puggioni 2014; Bargu 2017; Pfeifer 2018; Wood and Black 2018).

Together these changing perspectives have called forth re-conceptualizations of civic engagement and action, with a growing stream of work coalescing around the notion of lived citizenship. As researchers we have seen the utility of this concept in our own research; how it holds potential to uncover the agency of young citizens in fresh ways (e.g. Wood 2012; 2014; Wood and Kallio 2019), enables more flexible notions of space and interrelationships of citizens (Kallio and Mitchell 2016; Wood and Black 2018), and helps foreground gaps in existing forms of political belonging (Kallio, Häkli, and Bäcklund 2015; Häkli, Kallio, and Ruokolainen 2019). Such an approach opens up a whole realm of political insight which encompasses “the feelings, experiences, practices and actions of people outside the realm of formal politics” (Pain and Smith 2008, 2). However, we have also become aware that lived citizenship has not been well defined and, while it has grown in popularity across many academic fields, there is a call for further theoretical and conceptual clarity about what it is and is not.

Our aim therefore in this paper is to take stock of this burgeoning field and consider its theoretical origins, current applications and theoretical development in order to clarify and critically evaluate its future potential before it escapes into ‘everything’ and therefore ‘nothing’. In doing so we make two contributions to the field of citizenship studies. First, we provide a timely and strategic review of the literature associated with lived citizenship to

consider how this has expanded in theory and application in recent years. Second, as a result of this review we propose a framework that encompasses four ‘dimensions’ of lived citizenship – spatial, intersubjective, performed and affective. We suggest that this framework could serve to clarify and demarcate the field, and then explore these dimensions in three empirical domains. In doing so, we intend to address several questions: What *can* and *can’t* lived citizenship as a concept do for us? Where are the borders between what *is* and *is not* political in the meaning of lived citizenship, and what kind of specificity is required from the spatial contextualization of such an idea?

We begin by reviewing the origins of the concept by drawing a lineage from feminist scholarship in the context of critical citizenship studies and in particular Ruth Lister’s (2003, 2007) seminal research and subsequent discussions, many that have occurred within the journal of *Citizenship Studies* in the past two decades. This is followed by our proposal of four dimensions of lived citizenship (spatial, intersubjective, performed and affective) to serve as conceptual clarifications. We then illustrate how these dimensions play out in three empirical contexts that we are familiar with from our own research: children and youth, asylum seekers and city-regional dwellers. These illustrations reveal how the concept of lived citizenship provides opportunities to widen the “vocabularies of citizenship” (Lister et al. 2003), deepen understandings of the relationship between formal and informal citizenship, broaden methodologies of citizenship, and thus open up new territory for broad interdisciplinary understandings of what it means to live as and be citizens.

Lived citizenship – origins and dimensions

The concept of lived citizenship has derived from several theoretical and disciplinary origins. Broadly, it aligns with philosophical paradigms including phenomenology, interactionism, existentialism, pragmatism and hermeneutics which all seek to highlight the everyday, lived experiences of people (Jacobsen 2009). A focus on the everyday began to attract more widespread attention from the late 1960s onwards by researchers from a range of disciplines including sociologists, geographers and anthropologists who sought to focus on the life of ‘ordinary’ people in their natural contexts (Adler, Adler, and Fontana 1987; Jacobsen 2009). Theoretically, this focus has been explored through a range of critical positions including feminist, queer, Marxist, postcolonial, anti-racist, cultural studies and other critical theories. Underpinning them is a desire to expose the ordinary and everyday, to demonstrate the ways in which the state is enmeshed in these spheres, and to highlight the political possibility of such spaces (Staeheli et al. 2012). A key attribute of many such studies of

human experience and 'living' is the emphasis they give on the "politics of difference" (Lister 2007, 52). This is of particular interest to us as it provides a bridge between generic phenomenological studies and the more political focus.

Feminist research has been a key vehicle through which studies of citizenship and politics have expanded. Feminist theorists have been critical in exposing how, despite claims to universalism, "citizenship was drawn according to a quintessentially male template so that women's exclusion (and the chequered nature of their inclusion) was integral to both the theory and practice of citizenship" (Lister 2007, 52). This has had a distortionary effect on understanding how citizenship is experienced by women and other marginalised groups, as well as the relationships between them and wider socio-economic patterns and relations in society (Smith 1987). A further key tenet of feminist critique is the challenge it has made to the public-private dichotomy which has underpinned traditional associations of citizenship with the public sphere. The focus on public expressions of citizenship (such as voting, political representation and political processes) have traditionally ignored domestic, informal, and private spaces of participation which are frequented by women, children and marginalised groups (Lister, 2003, 2007, 2008).

This critique has drawn attention to the significance of context alongside the embodied and everyday nature of expressions and experiences of citizenship – or in Lister's (2003, 2007) words, lived citizenship. Rather than seeing citizenship as a fixed status, scholars have sought to account for the meanings that it actually has in people's lives, and how this is shaped by particular social, political and cultural contexts (Hall, Coffey, and Williamson 1999). Importantly, the attention to context loosens the bounds of the nation-state by acknowledging that, in practice, citizenship extends beyond borders, on a spectrum from the local through to the global (Lister 2003).

Feminists have also drawn attention to the significance of small, everyday acts of politics within domestic and ordinary spaces where citizenship is actually practised, arguing that examining such mundane spaces gives insights into broader patterns and scales of power, politics and citizenship (Dyck 2005). A focus on human agency therefore is central to understandings of lived citizenship; the ways people enact political agency through everyday acts sheds light on their status, rights and responsibilities as citizens. As Dickenson and colleagues (2008, 105) argue, if we see everyday life as a lived process within which citizenship acts accumulate, we come closer to understanding "how everyday life can also operate as an arena for the contestation and transformation of dominant, often oppressive

modalities of citizenship”. Such struggle for political rights is expressed in many ways beyond the public discourse.

Understanding these multiple forms of agency and resistance is a key to understanding less normative conceptions of citizenship (Lister 2003), and ushering in a more nuanced focus on citizenship as positioning and identity-shaping (Baraldi and Cockburn 2018) where the personal can be seen to be political in more radical and pluralist ways. This also includes less essentialised and more plural ideas of cultural identity as Rosaldo (2004) reminds us in his work on cultural citizenship.

Researchers applying these ideas in the past two decades have expanded upon Lister’s original ideas and provided a rich vein of empirical evidence about what it means to *live* and *be* citizens. Scholars within multiple disciplinary traditions have explored the lived citizenship of, for example, migrant groups (Cherubini 2011; Ho 2009; Staeheli et al. 2012), community and women’s organisations (Moon 2012), social work (Warming and Fahnøe 2017), religious groups (Nyhagen 2015; Laksana and Wood 2018), and amongst children and young people, asylum seekers and city-regional dwellers (explored later in this paper). In the next sections, we review this growing body of research associated with the concept of lived citizenship and illustrate the four closely related dimensions which we argue characterise lived citizenship – namely spatial, intersubjective, performed and affective.

A framework for lived citizenship – four dimensions

As a way to contain and clarify the notion of lived citizenship, we identify here four dimensions which we see present in our own empirical and theoretical research as well as in the emerging literature that has employed the term. We propose these in order to open up a scholarly discussion with other researchers who seek to define this field and to help to prevent the term from becoming an empty signifier. First, we have identified the *spatiality* of lived citizenship as a significant dimension, due to the profound way the concept has necessitated a deeper engagement with space. As Lister and colleagues say, “as lived experience, citizenship cannot be divorced from its context – temporal and national” (Lister et al. 2007, 1). Geography scholars in particular have demonstrated the significance of space in lived citizenship experiences. In the special issue on the ‘new geographies of citizenship’, Desforges and colleagues (2005) argue that shifts in politics and globalisation have led simultaneously to a rescaling *downward* of citizenship with the performance of citizenship focused more locally “as part of the transition to a new mode of governmentality” (p. 440), as well as a rescaling *upwards* beyond the nation-state through broader political allegiances

(such as the European Union), thus developing transnational forms of citizenship (also Kallio and Mitchell 2016). All of these scalar configurations have enabled new connections and relationships to be forged, thus expanding widened understandings of the lived experiences of citizenship (Wood & Black 2018).

One further aspect of the spatial dimension has drawn attention to the mundane spatio-temporalities of everyday life (Dickinson et al. 2008; Dyck 2005; Isin and Turner 2007; Mitchell 2003). Understanding the way citizenship plays out within the messiness of daily living, not only provides deep insights into economic, political and social patterns in society (Dyck 2005), but highlights the intersections between the private and the public, the individual and the institutional: “In this way citizenship emerges as the radical potential of the non-radical, the democratically mundane, the already here — the everyday” (Dickinson et al. 2008, 108).

The second dimension that lived citizenship has drawn attention to is the realm of social relationships, which we term the *intersubjectivity* of lived citizenship. In the processes of (spatial and political) socialization, citizenship is constituted at the intersection of relationships with significant and strange others (Habashi 2019; Kallio 2018; Wood 2013). It is not carved out in an isolated endeavour, but is lived, practised and shaped interpersonally and intergenerationally. As a result, it is therefore important to consider citizenship as “both a status and a set of relationships by which membership is constructed through physical and metaphorical boundaries and in the sites and practices that give it meaning” (Staeheli 2011; Staeheli et al. 2012). The intersubjective perspective can hence enable us to understand the intersection between the formal political sphere of citizenship and people’s relationships and connections in public (Hörschelmann and Refaie 2014), but also shed light on the more immediate, localised and relational experiences that make up citizenship (Hall, Coffey and Williamson 1999).

Closely associated with the spatial shifts outlined above, growing rates of travel and migration have shaped identification with differently scaled and situated communities, the building of networks across cultural, political and physical borders, and people’s participation in various formal and informal channels (Kallio and Mitchell 2016; Jeffrey and Staeheli 2015; Kallio and Häkli 2017). Translocal and transnational spatialities, such as city-regions and the new relationships of citizenship they evoke, perhaps manifest the ‘new normal’ as people’s mundane political realities (Häkli, Kallio and Ruokolainen 2019). They are closely tied up with interpersonal, emotional relationships, which are inseparable from gendered,

classed and raced experiences of being citizen in diverse spatial locations (Bartos 2013; Wood 2014).

Thirdly, the concept of lived citizenship highlights the practices and actions associated with citizenship. We refer to this as the *performed* dimension, the ideas of which have been taken up by a number of researchers (e.g. Bargu 2017; Behrman 2014; Isin, 2008, 2009, 2012; Kallio and Häkli 2011; Larkins 2014; Pfeifer 2018; Puggioni 2014). Isin's (2008) work on 'acts of citizenship' has particularly advanced the performed dimension of lived citizenship by drawing attention to moments when, regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens through their acts of citizenship, or drawing on Arendt (1951, 296), the acts of those to whom "the right to have rights is due". In Isin's (2008, 16) terms, such performed citizenship constitutes the "practices of claim-making citizens in and through various sites and scales".

The final dimension we suggest has developed as a result of researchers working with ideas of lived citizenship in relation to *affective* experiences (e.g. Bartos 2012, 2013; Marshall 2016; Wood and Black 2018). Whilst citizenship as status has traditionally overlooked emotional aspects, the lived approach highlights the deep significance of the feelings associated with being a citizen. Feelings of belonging or not belonging are inseparable from the experience of both being and feeling a citizen. In turn, the attributes of 'care' associated with acts of citizenship also merit deeper engagement with, as they illustrate the responsibilities and agency of citizens within and beyond the neoliberal state (Massey 2004; Wood 2013; Reddy 2018). To us, the idea of affective lived citizenship seems a potential cross-point for strengthening connections between intersecting streams of research.

When approached from the vantage point of one or several of these four dimensions, how does lived citizenship manifest itself in multidisciplinary empirical research? In the following sections, drawing from three domains of scholarship with different empirical foci, we explore how the four proposed dimensions could help to corral the ever-widening usage of the term and provide a generative approach for future research.

Lived citizenship in childhood and youth studies

One of the most significant fields of research to develop the idea of lived citizenship is in studies of children and youth. Ruth Lister's work has been particularly pivotal in bridging the work of feminist theory into this realm. As Lister (2008) argued, the grounds for children and young people's exclusion as citizens have many parallels with women's traditional exclusion: they are perceived to lack citizenship competence (due to age), and their exclusion from

citizenship has been justified on the grounds that they lack economic independence and public responsibilities and occupy mainly domestic and informal spaces. To respond to these critiques Lister (2008) proposes, in an Arendtian spirit, a “differentiated universalism” understanding, in which children can be recognised as *different* to adults, yet *equal*, and the sites and modes of participation as ones infused with political potential and possibility (Lister 2003, 2007, 2008, also Kallio, Häkli, and Bäcklund 2015).

The feminist-informed perspective on children’s participation has opened up “new important and fertile territory” (Mannion 2007, 405) for the field of children and young people’s lived citizenship. In the past twenty years, a significant body of research has been established, demonstrating how children and young people live their citizenship in the daily lives (Hall, Coffey and Williamson 1999; Harris and Wyn 2010; Bartos 2012, 2013; Wood 2012, 2014, 2016; Staeheli, Attoh, and Mitchell 2013; Olsson 2017; Baraldi and Cockburn 2018, see also Kallio and Mills 2016, for many further examples). This research is characterised by strong foci on *intersubjective*, *performed* and *affective* aspects of lived citizenship as well as the significance of *spatial* contexts.

Indeed, a key attribute has been the attention drawn to *spatial* contexts for citizenship – and in particular how *intersubjective* relationships operate within such contexts. Empirical research confirms how children and young people’s citizenship actions almost always intersect with the lives of others (Percy-Smith 2016; Wood and Kallio 2019). Research shows that relationships founded within both domestic and informal (micro) spaces (such as homes and schools), can also extend to public (macro) spaces (Staeheli 2011). For example, while rural young people in Trelle and van Hoven’s (2016) study in Estonia felt they had little opportunities to contribute to their local community through formal avenues, their everyday creation of community relationships and insightful ideas about how to improve their local environment– such as organising the Christmas gala and erecting lights for the football field – provided an opportunity for them to participate as active members and citizens of society. The way children and young people live alongside others as citizens therefore reveals a great deal more about citizenship beyond narrowly defined measures of public and formal participation.

Another stream of research in children and young people’s lived citizenship has highlighted how the *embodied performance* of lived citizenship can reveal new insights into agency and resistance (Dixon and Marston 2011). A number of authors have illustrated how children and young people’s embodied forms of agency can be read as acts of resistance (Bosco 2010; Marshall 2016). Marshall (2016) for example outlines how for children in a

Palestinian refugee camp, play is a form of resistance (*sumood*, or steadfastness) in the face of daily occupation and dispossession. His study documents how acts of creativity through play and art can grow into forms of resistance, illustrating the daily struggle against the occupation felt and lived within the *embodied affective experience* of cramped, dirty and crowded streets. Bosco (2010) advances on these ideas by arguing that if we focus on children's 'doings', we begin to see the political impact of their daily actions (work, play etc) and how children contribute to create conditions for political and social change. Using an example of Latino immigrant children on the border of US/Mexico, Bosco shows how children's actions as young citizens were inseparably 'fused' to their mothers' involvement in women-led migrant advocacy group through language translation, fund-raising, cultural celebrations and service activities, by adding their creativity, actions and skills to the wider political endeavour of the group. The *intersubjective* and *performed* aspects of these examples illustrate how children are actively shaping the world around them, fostered through close relationships in families and communities in everyday life. The *affective* dimension of these is also significant as children's caring relationships and friendships underpin much of how children and young people understand, experience and express their citizenship (Bartos 2012, 2013; Wood 2013; Korkiamäki and Kallio 2018).

Lived citizenship in the study of asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are a further particularly interesting case for the study of lived citizenship as traditional approaches which prioritise status – the legal recognition of rights and responsibilities based on membership in a territorially defined political community – exclude those who do not hold such attributes. For asylum seekers, the lack of status typically means limited opportunities to participate in the public life of a polity. However, following Isin, (2008) a focus on lived citizenship through 'acts of citizenship' highlights the strategic ways asylum seekers and refugees often *perform* as citizens – even if not holding such status.

Isin (2008, 2009, 2012) proposes a three-fold theorization of citizenship which he outlines as holding characteristics of status, practices and acts (Isin and Turner 2007; Isin and Nielsen 2008). 'Status' and 'practices' are closely connected as formal and semi-formal practices are derivatives of citizenship status (e.g. voting in elections, getting involved in organized participation processes, commenting on public decisions and taking the initiative, participation in public demonstrations, and expressing public opinion). While asylum seekers are excluded from most such practices, some may be available to them – or to some of them, some of the time – such as civic events and discussions in public space in liberal democracies

which are in principle open to anyone. However, in practice access to them is limited for various reasons (e.g. gender, language, physical restrictions, lacking knowledge). Adding to these, Isin's third aspect of citizenship as *acts* brings vividly into view the *performed* dimension of lived citizenship. Acts of citizenship create new sites of struggle alongside the already existing political arenas, thus challenging, reworking and reinventing established relationships between the state, politics as governing and practice, citizenship as status and agency, and the boundaries of political communities (e.g. Staeheli 2011; Leitner and Strunk 2014; Häkli 2018). The important difference between practices and acts of citizenship is that the latter can be performed less publicly and without direct political intentions (*vis-à-vis* taking part in demonstrations or expressing views on politicized matters through media).

As an example, Isin (2009) discusses the Sans-Papiers – a group of undocumented migrants and refugees who occupied a church in Paris in 1990. The Sans-Papiers enacted themselves as activist citizens, through claims for justice and freedom of movement, which Isin argues illustrates how the right to regularized citizen status can be demanded by people with no status whatsoever. This focus on lived citizenship as *performed* shows how citizenship formation can be enacted through such a process of articulation of rights, which shifts the attention from the actors to the acts *per se*. The Isinian perspective hence appears particularly fruitful in the context of asylum seekers as mundane political performances often offer the only opportunity for them to enact and claim democratic agency. In a similar vein, Behrman (2014), Puggioni (2014), Bargu (2017) and Pfeifer (2018) have explored how international migrants in vulnerable positions may mobilize embodied political agencies in the form of public and private demonstrations (e.g. lip sewing, hunger strikes), and by so doing act politically (without formal status, right to citizenship practices or even access to public space) whilst requesting to be recognized as human beings in a polity (i.e. subjects of democracy). We view Isin's theory of acts of citizenship as providing a powerful parallel theory as it contributes explanatory depth to lived citizenship by drawing attention to what people do, why and where, regardless of their formal status. Furthermore, in the sense of 'civil behaviour', *obediently-performed* citizenship may also be requested from asylum seekers, precisely in the mode of acts.

Whereas the above-mentioned actions can be seen as forms of activism, scholars have identified even more mundane ways in which asylum seekers enact citizenship, highlighting other dimensions of lived citizenship. Pascucci's (2016, 340) study shows how by "creating and maintaining transnational ties and negotiating transnational identifications" asylum seekers practice transnational lived citizenship *intersubjectively*, as part of their everyday

activities, even in very challenging circumstances such as those dominated by experiences of “waiting” in places like Cairo. Writing about “politics of living” in the Palestinian diaspora context, Feldman (2012, 166) notes that, “It is frequently in between these daily *spaces* [relations between parents and children, husband and wife, with neighbours] that values – the vocabulary of national politics, ideas about community, who fits where, what it is and will be to be Palestinian – are worked out.” The rescaling of citizenship through transnational relationships emphasizes the *spatial* dimension of lived citizenship that in Pascucci’s case appears in the form of intimate transnationalization. Further, in his study with undocumented families in the UK and Sweden, Lind (2018, 3) identifies “mothering as a citizenship practice or ‘acts’ of citizenship”. Broadening the concept of ‘motherwork’ to include all members of the family, he shows how parents and children act *intergenerationally* as their own humanitarian agents, through various *affective activities* that aim at keeping the family together by avoiding deportation.

While asylum seekers do not typically consider themselves as citizens when acting in such ways, these examples demonstrate how they may perform acts of lived citizenship that are primarily effective through intersubjective and affective impacts, formed in relation to matters politicized in their current life situations that unsettle fixed territorial spatial configurations.

Lived citizenship in the study of city-regional democracies

An emerging field of studies into lived citizenship concerns city-regions as a particular spatial context for civic life. Interest in the democratic experiences and activities of city-regional dwellers stems particularly from the fact that city-regions rarely exist as institutionally established polities. More often they appear as multifaceted and constantly changing urban contexts of social, cultural and economic life, perhaps involving loose political steering and administrative structures, yet without citizenship as a recognized status. Moreover, unlike municipalities, counties and states, city-regions are prone to continuous geographical change, driven by economic forces but also cultural and social factors. This *relational spatiality* poses challenges to citizenship: Who are the citizens of such a constantly evolving polity? Lived citizenship, we contend, provides a fruitful analytical lens for identifying city-regional political agency as a rich variety of urban statuses, practices and acts (De Carli and Frediani 2016; Pascucci 2016).

In existing scholarship, the ambiguity of city-regions as polities has been found to align with a tendency to highly selective forms of active citizenship and political participation. The complex nature of city regional planning and development make it difficult for city-regional

dwellers to gain knowledge of the processes or actors involved. Often it is well-educated and well-off inhabitants involved in institutional politics in professional roles that are over-represented in citizen groups *performing* city-regional citizenship (e.g. Lidström and Schaap 2018). At times NGOs and grassroots organizations also hold awareness of planning processes and can sustain collective capacities to act in citizen-positions. However, city-regional dwellers with little contact with municipal politics, or whose national status is unclear or partial – such as migrants, children and youth, but also people of lower socioeconomic position – seem completely missing as citizens and participants in city-regional planning and decision-making.

It is here precisely that the idea of lived citizenship may help circumvent difficulties that sustain inequalities between city-regional dwellers. Instead of basing citizen participation on institutional capacity or professional expertise, city-regional citizenship can be enacted through the idea of “issue-based political agency”, which centres on people’s *affective* lived experiences and *performed* city-regionality (Pickard 2019; Häkli, Kallio, and Ruokolainen 2019). The premise in this approach is that, with limited motivation and resources to focus on generally politicized matters, people are inclined to direct attention to issues that concern or interest them particularly as they hold personal or social significance. This attunement is likely to reflect “being *affected*” by the issue, either in the sense of “having an interest” or “taking an interest” in it (Barnett 2017, 189, our emphasis, see also Kallio in Samers et al. 2020), thus forming the basis of politically oriented agency (Vromen 2003). Negotiations of importance make spatially embedded *intersubjectivity* a key constitutive power for issue-based political agency.

An example of issue-based agency influential in the city-regional context are various cyclist and biker groups enacting their lived citizenship in the form of mundane acts and practices through which they claim rights to everyday mobility in their city-regional lives regardless of their citizen status (cf. Aldred 2010). These acts, that highlight the *spatial* dimensions of lived citizenship, include children biking to school and hobbies regardless municipal boundaries, youth moving about between homes, friends, studies, work and leisure activities, elderly people taking care of their personal needs, meetings and exercise by the help of the bike, immigrants cycling to work and running errands, and of course hobbyists such as trekking and mountain bikers, and sport and racing cyclists (cf. Shklovski and Valtysson 2012). Having little in common otherwise, these dwellers share many interests related to city-regional biking and cycling, such as the development and maintenance of cycle routes, the promotion of biker safety, and adequate road markings and signposts (Furness

2007; Cooper and Leahy 2017). Often these shared interests resonate strongly with the *performed* and *affective* dimensions of lived experiences.

Unsurprisingly, on the basis of existing scholarship, it appears that transportation, broadly understood as mobility, forms a promising context for enacting lived citizenship in city-regions. Issues such as cross-municipal public transportation, cycling routes, children's travel to school and hobbies, transportation opportunities in running everyday errands, commuting for work and studies, and maintenance of caring relations within families form interfaces where citizens' everyday experiences and mundane city-regional knowledge – i.e. city-regional lived citizenship – can meet with planners' professional knowledge and ongoing planning processes (Koglin 2015; Legacy 2016).

The question of issues as the basis for political agency offers another nuance to the conception of lived citizenship that we build on feminist approaches and seek to broaden through Isinian theorization. Introduced in the city-regional context, it draws attention to all four dimensions of lived citizenship. Emphasizing issues that people find important in their lives – important enough to generate politically oriented awareness, attitudes and activities – this conceptual delineation offers opportunities to consider people from different citizen-positions as members of issue-publics.

The plural approach of lived citizenship

A focus on how people live and experience life as citizens has emerged as an integral aspect of recent citizenship studies, leading to the development of the concept of lived citizenship. This focus begins with the premise that we must discover what citizenship practically means to those who are living it. Lived citizenship provides a framework which a growing number of authors have found useful as a way to explain and enrich understandings of the experiences of *being* a citizen. These often occur beneath the radar of public expression and beyond the borders of the nation-state. This paper has sought to define and progress this field by tracing the theoretical origins of lived citizenship and some recent applications, and by proposing a lived citizenship framework composed of four inter-related dimensions, namely spatial, intersubjective, performed and affective. We believe these dimensions help to both define and conceptualise this emerging field, and to provide cross-cutting elements that could be shaped through further engagement theoretically and empirically. In this final section we consider some of the implications of such an approach for research more broadly and identify further challenges ahead in not allowing the concept of lived citizenship to slip into 'everything' and therefore 'nothing'.

The field of lived citizenship and its focus on the ubiquitous and informal necessitates a reconsideration of how citizenship has traditionally been studied. Not only does it shift our gaze – from public and formal sites to often private and less-seen sites – but it also requires new methodological approaches. These are often founded upon what Dixon and Marston (2011, 446) describe as a “complex, feminist ethic of care” characterised by “a committed period of fieldwork, and the careful gathering of lengthy, *in situ* interviews, participant observation, focus groups, visual methodology and months spent in the archives”. Innovative studies of children and young people’s lived citizenship have employed a range of visual, ethnographic and creative approaches to data collection in order to resist limiting and normative notions of citizenship, and to enable the potential for broader understandings to be captured (Wood 2014). While such approaches are familiar to anthropologists, they require an adjustment for some other disciplines. Yet, such considerations are needed if we wish to meet the goal of “mapping out citizenships on the ground” (Desforges, Jones, and Woods 2005, 447), in the way that citizens actually live their lives.

One further implication of a more expansive understanding of citizenship that the concept of lived citizenship draws into view is, where to draw a line between what *is* and what *is not* lived citizenship. In the desire to capture less normative definitions and expressions of citizenship, there is a danger of collapsing everything into the political (Kallio and Häkli 2011; Häkli 2018). Our starting premise for defining lived citizenship begins with the citizen-subject and asks the question, ‘what are the issues which people notice, care about, attend to and work to change, and how can their spatial contexts be traced?’ Observing people’s responses opens up the possibility of seeing citizenship as it is lived in different geographical contexts, helping to identify citizenship through agency rather than status or territorial belonging. Lived citizenship then can be seen as “acts that can occur, either individually or collectively, that are intrinsically concerned with shaping the society that we want to live in” (Vromen 2003, 82-83).

The desire to actively shape and create society necessarily occurs at the intersection of self and others – it is a relational process and not an isolated act. The enactment of lived citizenship involves specific motivation, orientation, reflexivity or intention, which can also be embodied and expressed in less visible ways than how political agency has traditionally been viewed. In addition, a lived citizenship approach does not preclude the enduring significance of citizenship status in shaping the political, economic and moral resources and conditions of citizens (Staeheli 2011). However, status alone cannot explain the experience of *being* a citizen. The proposed approach therefore pays close attention to how citizenship is

constituted and experienced within daily lived experiences, and also positioned within complex institutional and large-scale contexts (Staeheli et al. 2012).

In sum, lived citizenship refers to issue-focused, relational and motivated political agency which involves specific orientation, reflexivity or intentionality. These non-essentialist criteria are intended to unsettle dominant notions of the citizen and to recognise the deeply varied experience of being a citizen – especially providing space for the inclusion of those traditionally excluded from the status and esteem of citizenship. This paper proposes a framework to clarify the field of lived citizenship, with the intention of inviting interdisciplinary scholars to continue to shape its future possibilities by opening up an exciting new field of critical citizenship studies.

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