

EDITORIAL

Digital Citizenship

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The digital age has contributed to bringing the concept of citizenship back to the center of political and cultural, as well as educational, debate; even if – and it seems opportune to point this out from the outset – the need to qualify the horizon of reflection on citizenship with the adjective “digital”, measures the delay that still separates us from a complete socio-cultural (and therefore also linguistic) metabolization of the now widespread and pervasive presence of devices, individuals, institutions connected to the network. That said, there is no doubt that this transformational process confronts us with an

urgency that cannot be postponed any longer: a radical rethinking of the very concept of citizenship as it is still commonly understood.

And it is precisely in this direction that this special issue has set itself the objective of intercepting reflections capable of proposing attempts to revise a category that is now insufficient to describe the complexity of an increasingly connected and accelerated world. In other words, our hope is to contribute (and try to correspond thanks to the contributions of scholars of different backgrounds and training) to the need for a reconceptualisation of the meaning of the expression “being a citizen”.

An exercise, this one, fundamental in order to become ever and again aware of how the evolution, from age to age, of the very concept of citizenship has redefined and protected relations between individuals and (increasingly) also between humans, non-humans, and

the environment and the contexts that facilitate civil and sustainable forms of coexistence and coevolution.

Not only that, the hope would also be to accept the cultural challenge of those who do not reduce technologies to mere tools of use that, if well managed, can facilitate or simplify daily life practices and interpersonal relationships. Rather, it is a matter of striving to frame them in terms of genuine adaptive challenges, reacting to which we can and must all together redesign the social ontology (and the digital identity) within which to give, again and again, shape and meaning to our lives as citizens, to the labile boundary between individual and collective, public and private – not to mention between what pertains to the professions and, instead, to the leisure time of individuals.

In this perspective – in which reverberate, albeit topicalised, styles of analysis and methodological approaches in some ways indebted to media ecology – it seems more intuitive to realize how, thanks on the one hand to the space-time of a pervasive and increasingly empowered digital world, and on the other hand to the practices, relations and interactions increasingly “redesigned” by the software code (along with data, algorithms, networks and protocols), citizenship inevitably becomes plural and boundless, imposing on people a multiplicity of belongings and redesigning communities and criteria of belonging (and of marginalization or exclusion) in a variety of dimensions, both geographical and sectorial. The digital, in this sense understood as a new wittgensteinian “form of life”, is therefore envisaged as a space-time within which to go and co-design a spectrum of unprecedented strategies and alliances to inhabit the planet that the current horizon of the sense of citizenship cannot in any way contain and describe. And if, just as mentioned above, it cannot be the mere addition of an adjective – “digital” – to guarantee an epistemologically grounded integration of the traditional concept of citizenship in the light of the new scenarios that lie ahead; on the other hand, this same opportunity-necessity shows and measures how much we still have to do to culturally metabolize the digital, above all, precisely, in the perspective of a (new) planetary citizenship project (and citizenship education).

This becomes even more evident if we conceptualize this “digital turn” – as is only right – also as a horizon of meaning and practices in the making within which to try to address and manage the great challenges of humanity, the emergencies of climate, information and inequalities – all issues that require and admit solutions, or at least measures, that are both global and local. From this point of view, therefore, digital citizenship, or rather digital citizenships, become the (theoretical and practical) test-bed on which an increasingly complex society will experiment with ways of life, conditions of habitability and models of coexistence (and relations) capable of re-declining (re-evaluating its profound meaning) the

concept of democracy in (and for) the near and plausible future.

In an attempt to offer readers a more direct access to the contributions collected, it was decided to divide them into three macro-sections that in some way contribute to articulating the complexity of the theme as it has been effectively declined in this issue.

1. From Gaius to Gaia: Citizens in The Digital Age

New technologies such as programmes, data, algorithms and protocols challenge fundamental constitutional jurisdictions and human rights (from the protection of citizens’ data to people’s freedom of expression), calling for a careful investigation of current limits and remedies. But even more, the (r)evolution of digital technology pushes us to question the Western idea of society (world) and, consequently, the traditional idea of citizenship, calling for a more radical critique and hacking of human-centric citizenship.

In this first part, **Massimiliano Panarari** faces the morphing question of public sphere in the age of platformization, analyzing the hybrid nature of the current media system and the consequent emergence of a post-representational politics in which the media directly incorporate different mechanisms of representation. This, Panarari suggests, is the inescapable and ambivalent context within which we need to rethink citizenship.

Oreste Pollicino and **Federica Paolucci** explore the transforming constitutional dimension of citizenship in the digital age. Analyzing as a case study the complex applicability of the right to erasure in the algorithmic society, they illustrate in a situated way the necessary revision that awaits concepts such as identity, citizenship and the city. **Massimo Di Felice** goes beyond the anthropocentric society researching how it will be possible to engage not only human beings and digital rights but also non-human actors and networks in building a new idea of a planetary citizenship (Gaia) beyond jurisprudential heritages (Gaius). The need to go beyond the traditional and intersubjectively shared meaning of citizenship also reverberates in the text by **Daniel Villar-Onrubia**, **Luca Morini**, **Victoria I. Marín** and **Fabio Nascimbeni** who, insisting on the concept of “post-digital”, draw a new horizon of practices, knowledge and skills within which to search for new invariances for a plausible education. Which they do through the comparative analysis of twenty-four reference frameworks (for teacher competence frameworks), selected from geographical areas that differ considerably from a socio-economic as well as a cultural point of view.

2. Socialities, Urbanities, Citizenries in the Making

Social capital and civic participation feed and sustain communities and institutions. But new ways of creating and cultivating socialities (from the web to the social web and beyond) are emerging in the making of a citizen. The changing relationship between spatiality and citizenry is impacted by the morphing contemporary conditions of personal and professional lives. From urban tourists (temporary citizens) to remote workers (citizens of everywhere) to migrants, a ‘variable citizenship’ concept is invoked to face the constant weight of shifting crises, technological changes, human movements and flows. In this second part, both **Maurizio Ferraris** and **Ethan Zuckerman** study the evolution of social relations in the context of platforms that organize collective communications, deliberations and decisions, as well as everyday societal behaviors from entertainment, to education to knowledge. Ferraris, more specifically, describes the opportunity allowed by a digitally augmented ontology to transit from a system of Welfare to a system of Webfare, i.e. a recapitalisation for purely humanistic purposes of the same data that commercial platforms generate and use for liberal purposes. While Zuckerman even puts forward a “modest proposal”. In a scenario in which, appropriately, scholars monitor the potentially negative effects of platforms on the democratic life of nations, and while the relevant institutions legislate in an attempt to reduce online disinformation and ensure the transparency of the platforms themselves; citizens - as such - should progressively migrate to digital contexts that they can manage and control in order to work on building digital spaces in which they can learn and practice the democratic way of life.

Daniele Belleri, Michael Baick, Carlo Ratti discuss new forms of temporary urban citizenship (newly reconnecting civitas and urbs) produced by city stacks and logistical flows. In this re-making of socialities and urbanities, the idea of citizenry is morphing profoundly.

Instead, **Chaka Chaka** seeks to stigmatize the threats to a full experience of digital citizenship for the underrepresented communities of the Global South, placing at the center of his reflection and analysis the risks of marginalization on a global scale connected above all to the colonization of data, as well as to the (“human more than human”) prejudices that vitiate the work of algorithms. The contribution by **Wibowo Heru Prasetyo, Beti Indah Sari, Patmisari, Halimah Sa’diyah, and Noor Banu Mahadir Naidu** also deals with the difficulties of the most disadvantaged areas of the planet in acquiring the necessary preconditions to concretely develop a new widespread project of digitally (and therefore culturally) “augmented” citizenship. They do not

neglect to highlight differences and disparities – attributable to socio-cultural reasons – in the citizenship experience of a sample of Indonesian high school students who, moreover, demonstrate a good average level of digital skills. Which underlines once again – albeit implicitly – how a digital citizenship project cannot in any way be reduced to an updating, however fundamental, of technical-computer skills.

3. Designing the Digital Citizenship Education

In digital ecosystems and tech stacks, people and communities, code and software programs, data and cloud infrastructures, sensors and satellites, animals and forests, protocols and algorithms started to orchestrate complex and collaborative assemblages that sense and respond, process and learn, train and educate. In this perspective, designing the new educational practices for a digital citizenship means first of all reimagining the significance of a new more-than-human knowledge production, circulation and activation. Secondly, it means to question and hack the traditional meaning of digital citizenship moving beyond the current notion of a digitally-skilled human person to envision a more sophisticated and planetary conceptualisation of “being a citizen” of/on/for the Earth.

In this third part, **Pier Cesare Rivoltella** and **Mario Pireddu** frame and envision possible forms of citizenship design from a perspective that deeply involves education. Underlining the gap between digital citizenship in educational discourses and citizenship experience in real contexts, Rivoltella proposes a framework for a more conscious approach in educating digital citizens including different dimensions, attentions, rights and skills. Pireddu closes the loop focusing on rethinking citizenship education in a networked ecosystemic perspective as educational discourses/practices are themselves under a deep tech turn experimenting and forging new horizons.

In other contributions, appropriate training (as well as a widespread guarantee of access) to connected devices and digital contexts becomes instead an inescapable ethical strategy, as well as a political one, in order to contain risky contractions of the very horizon of citizenship - and at different levels. If, actually, **Mercedes López-Aguado, Lourdes Gutiérrez-Provecho, José Quintanal Díaz** and **José Luis García Llamas** focus their reflections and proposals on the attempt to stem the logic of progressive marginalization that affects the most fragile categories (the elderly, people with a low level of education, the sick and disabled, the unemployed and the unemployable); **Antonella Carbonaro, Jennifer A. Moss Bree Kuzelka** and **Filippo**

Piccinini bet on digitally augmented didactic innovation to realize within organizations, and in the context of a global economy, an education that aims at inclusiveness and social justice. And precisely by leveraging ethical-social assumptions set as foundational, **Massimiliano Lo Iacono**, inspired by the principles of Universal Design for Learning, proposes a model of digital citizenship education, functional to breaking down barriers and increasing awareness and responsibility. **Margherita di Stasio**, **Loredana Camizzi** and **Laura Messini**, on the other hand, find in the school a strategic training agency, and rely on the rigorous tool of analytical philosophy, identifying in the analysis of the structure of language (natural and codified) a useful starting point to start a functional literacy course for a citizenship project. Finally, transversal to all the three sections proposed above seems to be the contribution by **Eliane Schlemmer**, **Lisiane C ezar de Oliveira** and **Antonio Wilson dos Santos**, who present and analyze a project of co-creation of a Social Technological Startup. It consists of the re-invention of a dance performance under conditions of physical distance, during the pandemic. The use of mapped projection and wearable technology not only allows for unprecedented experimentation in the specific field of dance, but also opens up an unprecedented (digitally extended) experience of one's own physicality and the way of inhabiting the space of the world and thus also of learning, together with others, in the world.