

Panel Proposal: Who is the postnational citizen in times of crisis?

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The emergence of a ‘postnational citizen’ is partially visible in the entrance into the realm of citizenship rights of politically disenfranchised subjects who had been traditionally ignored by the national paradigm of citizenship. As Europe though plunges into deep crisis, the political integration of non-nationals becomes less and less fashionable as an academic and political issue. However, the quality of democracy (Diamond, Morlino 2005; O’Donnell, Cullell, Iazzetta 2004) cannot be seriously debated if important political actors are dismissed on the basis of their status before nationality. Thus non-national citizens should too be more present in the whole debate around the challenges to democracy. While monitoring the quality of democracy might have looked a task reserved for democratically less mature countries, the fact is western societies too seem to be struggling more and more with issues on the quality of their own democracies. European societies, particularly those more deeply affected by the economic crisis (Batic 2011) are by no means immune to this kind of worldwide retreat of democracy (Kurlantzick 2013). Theoretically we may still be looking at democracy as the arena of preparation of decisions that once taken will hopefully lead to the creation of the common good (Birch 2002), but reality gives citizens the daily transformation of democracy into a stage of *a posteriori* legitimation of already taken decisions, making Dahl’s definition of democracy as ‘contestation open to participation’ (1971) difficult to understand.

Following this, the panel welcomes high quality papers attempting to answer questions such as:

Who is the new citizen emerging from the legal profile that states promote through immigration policies and nationality laws?

What ethics supports the criteria of preferable admission to legal residence or to national citizenship of highly skilled and financially attractive immigrants, in detriment of less appealing subjects?

Can the political/economic reasoning underneath such criteria guarantee “better” citizens from the point of view of future engagement with participation, transparency and accountability?

How is the on-going economic crisis in Europe affecting the exercise of political rights among its immigrants?

How is the crisis affecting the arguments on behalf of expanding/contracting immigrants’ access to political rights?

Are immigrants more prone to fight for and make use of conventional political rights (electoral rights generally speaking) or is there evidence of stronger engagement with non-conventional forms of participation?