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Environmental citizenship in geography and beyond

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The need for wider action against environmental problems such as climate change has brought the debate about the role of citizen to the political, practical, and scientific domains. Environmental citizenship provides a useful tool to conceptualize the relation between citizenship and the environment. However, there exists considerable variation in the ways environmental citizenship is understood regarding both the aspect of citizenship and the relationship to the environment. In this article, we review the literature on environmental citizenship and investigate the evolution of the concept. The article is based on a literature search with an emphasis on geographical research. The concept of environmental citizenship has moved relatively far from the Ancient Greek or Marshallian conceptualizations of citizenship as rights and responsibilities bearing membership of a nation state. Environmental citizenship literature has been influenced by the relational approach to space, focus on citizenship as acts and processes rather than a status and the broad spectrum of post-human thinking. However, conceptual clarification between different approaches to environmental citizenship is needed especially in relation to post-human approaches. Geographical thinking can provide fruitful ways to develop the understanding of environmental citizenship towards a more inclusive, less individualized, globally responsible, and plural citizenship.

Keywords: environmental citizenship, climate citizenship, sustainable consumption, new materialism

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Introduction

In the quest to find functioning solutions to the great environmental challenges that humanity is facing, the roles of citizens are actively debated in political, practical, and scientific domains. In the academic domain, environmental citizenship represents the core concept with which the role of citizens has been developed (e.g. Dobson 2003; Latta 2007; Bell 2013). However, there exists considerable variation in the ways environmental citizenship is understood regarding both the aspect of citizenship and the relationship to the environment. Furthermore, while citizenship and civil society are highly relevant concepts in political geography (e.g. Desforges *et al*. 2005; Staeheli 2011), the concept of environmental citizenship has gained relatively little attention amongst geographers. This review contributes to this gap by providing an overview of the environmental citizenship and related concepts from the perspective of geography.

The concept of environmental citizenship emerged in environmental governance practices and related debates well before academic environmental policy research or political theory (Bell 2005). It can be originated to the Canadian Environment Agency in the 1990s, but the UN Environment Program (UNEP) has also adopted the concept in the early 1990s (Bell 2013). Both in academic and practical contexts, environmental citizenship is discussed using different terms. Dobson (2003) makes a distinction between an environmental citizen and an ecological citizen. In addition, the terms green citizen and sustainable or sustainability citizen are common (Bullen & Whitehead 2005; Mason 2014). These concepts are often used interchangeably, and their distinctions are not well established (Gabrielson 2008; Scoville 2016). In this article, we use the term environmental citizenship as encompassing ecological, sustainable, and green citizenship. Parallel to the environmental citizenship concepts, the utilization of more focused citizenship concepts, such as energy, food or climate citizenship is emerging (Baker 2004; Vihersalo 2017).

Traditionally, citizenship has been connected to the public sphere – as the right of ancient Greek free adult men to join in the debate on city affairs (Delanty 2000). In the last two centuries, citizenship has been defined mainly in the context of the nation state, but the global nature of environmental degradation calls into question whether nation states, and citizenship bounded by the borders of a nation state, are adequate as the basis of citizen rights and responsibilities. In this context, a new kind of citizenship that is supranational, over-generational, and addresses the private sphere along with the public one, has become a central part of the debate (Dobson 2003).

In wider citizenship studies, the static view of citizenship is challenged by viewing it as formed in the practices and acts of citizenship (Isin 2008). Practices involve the formal and semi-formal actions in which citizenship becomes visible, such as voting or participation in demonstrations. Acts of citizenship broaden the understanding further to include action beyond the status of citizen or established practices of citizenship (Wood & Kallio 2019). In the context of the environmental citizen, the 'acts of citizenship' perspective shows how environmental citizenship does not exist as such, prior to the "politics of nature" or actual environmental struggles but emerges in the conflicts and concrete environmental action (Latta 2007). Thus, in the context of the environment, citizenship is increasingly understood as unbound in time and space. Besides the global perspective, also a more general spatial focus on local spaces of acting environmental citizenship is explored with clear geographical interest.

Paradoxically, the common understanding of environmental citizenship refers to all kinds of environmentally friendly activities in private and public arenas, making environmental citizenship simply about the everyday practices of environmentally concerned people and voluntary care for the environment. This very practical utilization of the concept has blurred the theoretical roots of citizenship and there is a need for more theoretically subtle interpretation of what citizenship means in the context of the environment (Bell 2005). Both clarifying the roots and exploring the new directions of environmental citizenship in relation to space are called for. Geographical research could play a key role in this.

Environmental citizenship in the Web of Science

To identify the use of the concept of environmental citizenship in English research literature, we searched the Web of Science database in September 2020 with the terms "environmental citizen*",

"ecological citizen*", "green citizen*", and "sustainable citizen*". We restricted the results to all document types written in English in 1945–2020. The result was 370 hits. We complemented the search with terms: "food citizen*", "energy citizen*" and "climate citizen*". Of these, food citizen was the most common with 42 hits since 2004. Energy citizenship generated 23 hits starting from 2008 while the concept of climate citizenship was used only 6 times since 2015.

The first result of the combined search was from 1974, but the term was used in the context of a lawsuit on citizens' claims regarding the environment. The next hit was from 1987 and the third from 1993, after which the concepts have been used every year. The utilization of the concepts has considerably increased in the 21st century, especially after 2015 (Fig. 1).

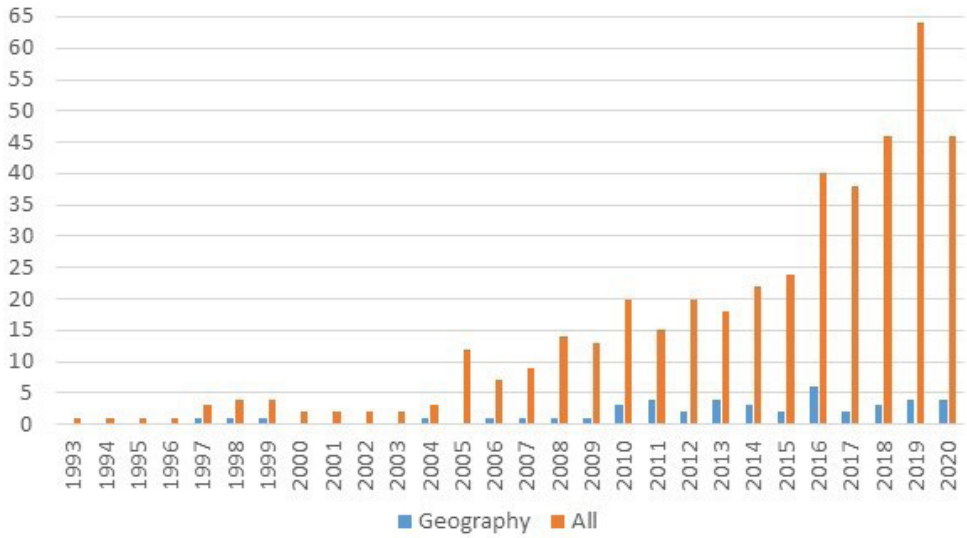

Fig. 1. The occurrence of the environmental citizen and related concepts from 1993 to September 2020 in the Web of Science database.

Based on the literature review, the academic work regarding environmental citizenship and related concepts occurs mainly in North America and in Europe. A quarter of the articles are written in the United States of America, 18% in England and 10% in Australia. Looking into the geographical divide, we can see that environmental studies is the most common discipline in Europe, North America, Asia, and Oceania. In South America, the concept is most commonly used in environmental sciences and sociology, and in Africa in geography. Articles related to political science as well as geography are common in both North America and in Europe. In North America, Oceania, and Asia the concept is also widely used in educational research.

Our focus is on the discussion about environmental citizenship within geography. Web of Science classified 45 of the search results under geography and 20 articles used the term "geography". From these, we excluded articles in which environmental citizenship or related concepts were only mentioned without any elaboration on the meaning of the concept. This left us with 30 articles. All the geography articles could be categorized under human geography and they mainly fell under the fields of political and social geography.

The research on environmental citizenship has been widely published in various journals, but especially in *Environmental Politics* and *Sustainability*. The core theoretical discussions have been written around the mid-2000s. These include Dobson's (2003) *Citizenship and the Environment, Environmental Politics' Citizenship* theme issue (Dobson & Sáiz 2005), and Dobson's and Bell's (2006) *Environmental Citizenship*. However, many empirical articles refer only loosely to the discussions of

environmental citizenship within political theory, if at all. Therefore, it is useful to examine the concept in a broader framework.

In our analysis, we use the core theoretical articles as well as other widely referred and conceptually important ones, to gain a general understanding of the development of the concept. To reflect these developments in relation to the geographical literature, we analyzed all the geography-related articles in detail. What follows is an account of the evolvement of environmental citizenship with a particular focus on its use in the geographic literature. The core questions we examined were: what is environmental citizenship about?, who is an environmental citizen?, and how, and on what scales and sites, should she/he act?

Roots of environmental citizenship

The concept of citizenship originates from ancient Greece and Rome and the foundation of western political theory. There emerged the basic ideas of the two distinct views of citizenship existing today, *liberal* and *republican*. Their modern conceptualizations have developed in the evolvement of modern democracies and market society. The liberal model emphasizes citizenship as a public statute, which secures political, social, and civil rights as a member of a political community. The republican model, in turn, highlights public responsibilities and political agency for the common good (Dagger 2002). This division is still important in contemporary political theorizing on environmental citizenship, in which environmental citizenship brings new (ecological) content to citizenship, such as new rights and obligations (Bell 2005; Hayward 2006; Barry 2008).

At the center of republican political thinking is an active virtuous citizen working for the common good, which is generally seen as a fruitful starting point for environmental citizenship. Construction of a sustainable society is easier if based on environmental duties (such as nature conservation or recycling) performed by citizens striving towards sustainability rather than those demanding their rights (Barry 2005; Dobson 2007).

The republican idea of citizen duties involves civic virtues that enable fulfilling the duties. Environmental citizenship, especially as political activity, reflects traditional republican virtues such as self-discipline, loyalty, or commitment to principles (Barry 2005, 27). Via cultivating the virtues related to environmental citizenship, citizens become active and willing to perform their duties (Barry 2005). The state can facilitate this cultivation of the virtues via education for example, as emphasized in the Agenda 21, which presented citizen participation as central in dealing with environmental issues. In geography literature, republican thinking is visible for instance in examining attempts to create responsible citizens for forest conservation (Bell & Evans 1997), and in studies that emphasize the role of education in enhancing environmental citizenship. Ideally, sustainability education produces environmental citizens by changing attitudes, developing skills, fostering responsibility, and improving knowledge (Hawthorne & Alabaster 1999). However, the duties set by the state or virtues cultivated via education seem to proceed slowly, which stresses the importance to assess the potential of environmental citizenship in the context of rights and individual freedom.

In modern liberal thinking, the justification of civic obligations related to environmental citizenship poses challenges. One of the key elements of liberalism is what Rawls (2001) calls the "fact of reasonable pluralism" (see Bell 2005, 184), according to which there exist multiple reasonable moral doctrines and political justice cannot be based on just one of them. From the viewpoint of environmental citizenship, this means that sustainability is not seen as more important a moral doctrine than for example property rights.

However, some researchers have interpreted environmental citizenship further within a liberal framework. Hailwood (2005, 198) argues that the non-instrumental value of nature, in accordance to sustainability, can be accommodated to the framework of liberalism by respecting the "otherness view" of nature's value which involves a kind of self-restrained attitude for not identifying nature with human purposes only. This, according to Hailwood (2005), does not require the interpretation of nature as intrinsically valuable but recognizes nature also as independent of the roles we humans grant it in our cultural and economic projects. Thus, the respect for nature’s otherness and the ability to acknowledge a non-human reality "should be a virtue of political liberal citizenship" (Hailwood 2005, 195).

Bell (2005), in turn, argues that liberal theory should be complemented by the requirement of a right for the environment, not primarily as a property, but as a satisfier of basic needs. Although liberalism emphasizes rights, the liberal framework also includes obligations. It is the task of the democratic process (the state) to choose from justified differences of opinion (reasonable disagreements), those opinions that protect the environmental rights of citizens. On that basis, the state can impose obligations, such as environmental laws, on everyone. In the liberal view, compliance with the obligations created by a just democratic process is compulsory for the citizen. However, all other environmental activities are voluntary; they may or may not be undertaken by the citizen (Bell 2005). The disadvantage of the democratic process, to which the liberal political tradition is fundamentally committed, is its slowness in achieving concrete results in preventing the rapidly progressing ecological degradation (Latta 2007). Waiting for the general approval through a just democratic process may be too slow to prevent climate change.

In the geography literature on environmental citizenship, rights and responsibilities continue to be highly relevant especially when discussing their division between people in the global North and South, in the context of global environmental governance and in culturally different and shifting understandings on environmental responsibilities (Clarke & Agyeman 2011; Arora-Jonsson *et al*. 2016). However, both republican and liberal conceptualizations of citizenship see the citizen as a membership of a political community, essentially the nation state, within which the rights and responsibilities are defined (Humphreys 2009). The current literature usually rejects this confining of environmental rights and responsibilities inside national borders. Rather, citizens are seen as "citizens of the environment" because the causes and impacts of ecological degradation are global.

The idea of global or cosmopolitan citizenship is not new but derives also from ancient Greece. Beyond the environment, also the rise of economic and social transnational networks and flows makes it more relevant in modern conceptualizations on citizenship (Linklater 2002). From the political theory perspective, the problem in global environmental citizenship is the ambiguity of membership towards a polity: in which political community the citizen has membership?, to whom is she obliged to?, and who sets duties and rights, who controls them, and are those duties and rights only moral by nature, not political, as the concept of citizenship would seem to require?

In the environmental citizenship context, Dobson's (2003) solution to the polity problem is *post-cosmopolitan citizenship*, the conceptualization that actually launched the current discussions around environmental citizenship. In post-cosmopolitanism, people are bound together by the material conditions of everyday life, in a globalized world with unequally distributed power and resources. Instead of the nation state, "ecological footprint" serves as the political space of ecological citizenship (*ibid*., 99). According to Dobson, the ecological footprint based on material relationships is of a political nature. In a globalized world, power and its effects are distributed asymmetrically, indicating that also responsibilities should distribute asymmetrically (Dobson 2003, 2007). This asymmetry is evident between the poor and the rich, roughly global North and South, and it manifests itself, for example, in uneven negotiating positions on the rules of international trade and burden bearing. Dobson claims (*ibid*.) that the obligations laid via ecological footprint represent a kind of social contract between people in the North and South and does not need political authority.

Dobson's post-cosmopolitan citizen shares the idea of civic virtues present in republicanism. However, in post-cosmopolitanism, justice is the most central virtue, and it is examined in relation to the environment and the ecological footprint of an individual. Thus, the global environmental duties broaden the scope of duties beyond republican virtues, including also care, compassion, and responsibility for the vulnerable (Dobson 2003, 63; see also MacGregor 2014). For Dobson (2003, 61–62), the motivation behind environmental action lies in the virtue of social and environmental justice leading to care for the environment.

The post-cosmopolitan idea of citizenship formed via individual's ecological footprint and related action, to reduce the footprint, paves the way to understanding environmental citizenship in the private sphere, as evolving in action, in relation to space and even challenging the human/nature dualism. Connected to wider developments in relation to citizenship studies, both within and beyond geography, this has meant significant diversification of the liberal and republican notions of citizenship.

Evolving concept

Sustainable consumption and its problems

While citizenship has traditionally been mainly understood as (political) action in the public sphere, Dobson's post-cosmopolitan environmental citizenship opened the private to the public sphere, making also private consumption and lifestyle choices a matter of environmental citizenship and the political. The emphasis on environmental justice legitimizes the idea of a post-cosmopolitan good environmental citizen primarily as a citizen who lives sustainably and minimizes his/her environmental impact (Dobson 2003, 132). Despite the original intentions, this has partially led to loose interpretations of environmental citizenship in terms of sustainable consumption with relatively little attention to political theory and conceptual definitions of (environmental) citizenship. In this context, environmental citizenship is understood as sustainable practices and consumption choices, and the virtue of environmental justice can be enhanced by different attitude and awareness influencing means, such as environmental education creating environmentally conscious citizens (Robinson 2015).

Studies on environmental behavior are often based on attitude surveys (e.g. Howell 2013; Asilsoy & Oktay 2018), providing a rather limited view on environmental citizenship by assuming a set of attitudes or values to produce environmental citizenship. The perspective in which sustainable consumers (as environmental citizens) are assumed to be freely acting human subjects ignores the underlying political, economic, and social structures that condition the choices, that is, make them im/possible in the first place (Barry 2005, 23). From the perspective of geographic research, the sustainable consumer aspect of environmental citizenship has encountered criticism especially from the perspectives of communitarianism and neoliberal governmentality (e.g. Barr 2014; Eli *et al*. 2016; Hatanaka 2020).

In this context, the concepts of energy citizenship and food citizenship are particularly relevant. They are often developed in connection to community-oriented projects and movements focusing on renewable energy or local food production (e.g. Baker 2004; Jhagroe 2019; Hatanaka 2020). Both highlight the importance of increasing civic activity beyond consuming and see consumption as political, collective activity in the markets. These movements and projects create possibilities for consuming differently, for example in the context of community gardening or other local food projects (e.g. Seyfang 2005; Crossan *et al*. 2016). While doing so, they form new modes of (economic and) environmental activism embedded in the community and challenge the material flows in the capitalist market economy (Barr & Pollard 2017; Jhagroe 2019). This focus on community action as political borrows ideas from communitarian citizenship (Kenis 2016). The communitarian approach to citizenship is diverse and internally incoherent with different strands that can be traced to liberal and republican ideas (Delanty 2002; Eckersley 2006). Central in all communitarian thinking are social bonds and loyalty (Eckersley 2006). In the environmental citizenship context, this means collective, community-based local action in creating change towards sustainable development by finding and utilizing sustainable solutions that resonate with the everyday lives of a community of local people (Kenis 2016). In order to be environmental citizenship, the sustainable action needs to be performed in the context of (political) community action (Crossan *et al*. 2016; Gabrielson 2016).

However, despite the community-centered developments, also these forms of sustainable consumption can be seen as representing neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality. This concerns the emphasis on citizen responsibility and action in the private sphere as well as public influencing through market action (be it collective or individual) combined to minimizing the role of the state in environmental governance. Seen from this perspective, citizens are reduced to individualized consumers defined by market relations (Rose & Miller 2010), and the responsibility for environmental degradation is placed on individuals and local communities instead of the state or industry (Gabrielson 2016). This kind of citizenship reduces citizens as actors focused on their own behavior: environmental citizens are governing themselves to create a sustainable society and the community projects are means for this governance. Critically then, wider questions regarding

societal structures behind environmental degradation may remain untouched and unreachable for citizens and local communities (Rutherford 2007).

In geography literature on environmental citizenship connected to community action, it has also been pointed out how community action opens the potential for resistance and political citizenship by creating new relations between people, local spaces, and institutions, including the state (Crossan *et al*. 2016). According to these studies, while important, the neoliberal governmentality critique represents only a partial picture of the community-based citizen action and leaves unnoticed the diverse ways the local action functions to enact citizenship (Jhagroe 2019). This highlights the need to examine citizenship in more detail in relation to space and in action, which is the focus of an important part of the geography literature on environmental citizenship.

Citizenship in relational space and action

Within geography, the traditional territorial definition of space has been accompanied by relational reading of space. In this context, space is seen as produced via networks and relations that evolve beyond the actual local qualities of the place (Amin 2004; Desforges *et al*. 2005). In this relational space, citizenship is less about status with rights and responsibilities and more about processual negotiations of becoming a citizen and what it could entail (Bullen & Whitehead 2005; Isin 2008; Spinney *et al*. 2015). In the context of the environmental citizen, this relational understanding of space also means shifting the attention towards diverse acts of citizenship. The relational space can be examined within the acts by focusing on how environmental citizenship emerges in action and what kind of relations work to construct it (Bullen & Whitehead 2005).

Arora-Jonsson and colleagues (2016) illustrate the relationality of space in the context of global climate governance. Forest conservation in Africa as a means for Northern countries to reduce their emissions creates new relational political space, in which citizen rights and responsibilities are redefined as the governance is practiced. In the case study (*ibid*.), villagers in Burkina Faso and Tanzania become part of a global carbon assemblage as responsible environmental citizens who look after global commons.

Citizen subjectivities are shaped in action via the influence of different relations between people, and between people and things. Environmental citizenship "becomes" in multiple mundane actions (not only in relation to the state), and citizenship and the subjectivity it entails are both constrained and enabled in relation to a particular time and space. Action represents moments that create new spaces and ways of being political – being a citizen. From this perspective pre-existing citizen virtues, such as environmental justice, become less relevant, as the virtues are negotiated in the action alongside the environmental citizenship itself (Mason 2014; Roe & Buser 2016).

This openness and negotiability of citizenship has made it possible to diversify the understanding of citizenship in research. In general citizenship literature, attempts towards diversification have been made especially from the feminist perspective (Lister 1997) and translated to environmental citizenship via ecofeminism (MacGregor 2004, 2014). This highlights particularly the role of care as a core constituent of citizenship. Beyond gender, geographic environmental citizenship literature is interested in wider questions of inclusion and exclusion, as well as related alternative conceptualizations on what environmental citizenship means, and how it is narrated, imagined, and acted in different places (Baldwin 2012; Harris 2014; Fadaee 2017).

The action-focused and relational understandings of environmental citizenship can enable wider inclusivity and a more diverse understanding of what citizenship is about (Fadaee 2017). The current ideas of environmental citizenship mainly come from the global North and, thus, risk excluding cultural diversity, which can provide important perspectives for tackling future environmental challenges. This diversification has meant exploring citizenship from the perspective of marginalized groups such as black and minority ethnic groups in Britain (Clarke & Agyeman 2011), Australians of Asian ancestry (Waitt *et al*. 2020), indigenous people in South America (Latta 2013), or racialized climate change migrants (Baldwin 2012).

Similar questions related to inclusivity and belonging are also tackled within the global North. The normative demands to live sustainably and to be a good environmental citizen can create even new

excluding categories. Environmental citizen practices, such as cycling, can position practitioners as barely or less citizens when the proper citizen uses his/her car (Spinney *et al*. 2015). This way environmental citizen practices can also conflict with what is generally understood as a good citizen. The focus on acts of citizenship makes these kinds of differentiations visible as citizenship (Painter & Philo 1995; Isin 2008), as ways of doing political work and defining what is citizenship (Crossan *et al*. 2016). Environmental citizen practices can articulate and form collective identities, as well as create and claim rights to space and decision-making, and thus contest marginalization (Sinreich & Cupples 2014; Crossan *et al*. 2016).

The inclusion to and exclusion from citizenship often takes the relations between people, and those between people and things, as their core focus. Waitt, Voyer and Fontaine (2020) explored the creation of citizen subjectivities in recreational fishing as affective intensities in relations between people, matter, and place. They showed how the circulation of these affects both reinforced and challenged the mobilization of the environmental citizen. Based on their racialized bodies, fishers with Asian ancestry were excluded from citizenship, but they themselves aligned with the obligations with sensitivity to specific fishing sites and formulated identities as citizens in the context of recreational fishing.

In Turkey, according to Harris (2014), the relationship to environmentalism was ambivalent and raised emotions. While Turkish people imagined environmental citizenship as something to strive for and related to Europeans, the Europeanism raised feelings of colonialism and suppression of Turkish culture and ways of living with the environment. Thus, environmental citizenship is not isolated but emerges in the context of time and place, and in emotional and affective relations that shape citizen subjectivities.

The role of the post-human in environmental citizenship

When environmental citizenship is discussed in terms of action and relations, the influence of the non-human world in the formation of citizenship becomes relevant. Roe and Buser (2016) examine the emergence of food citizenship via the materiality of food. They argue that food becomes a political agent, which supports sustainable human engagement and exchange in the food system. Thus, non-human matter is seen as a part of citizenship. For geographers, the relationship between humans and nature has been particularly interesting. This research has been influenced by the post-human and new materialist thinking, which have evolved within social sciences and geography since Bruno Latour's actor network theory and Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's assemblage thinking. In the context of environmental citizenship, the inclusion of non-humans varies from the citizenship of non-humans (Latta 2014), to seeing them as influencing the citizenship of humans (Bullen & Whitehead 2005).

Bullen and Whitehead (2005, 504) see environmental citizenship involving "a trans-human community of being, which crosses time, space and substance". Besides past (in the form of responsibility for historical legacies) and future generations, and global space, citizenship extends to involve non-humans. This means human care for the environment in the form of co-joining the rights and responsibilities of humans with non-humans. The idea of giving *legal rights* to non-human beings dates back to at least the 1970s, to the seminal article *Should Trees Have Standing?* by Stone (1972). In the 21st century, it has gained new impetus through the granting of legal rights to nonhuman entities in the constitution of Ecuador (Gudynas 2011). In legal systems, the rights of forests, mountains or rivers are claimed by humans and political agency is reserved for them. For Bullen and Whitehead (2005, 507), the political agency of humans is also influenced by non-humans as citizenship is formed in "myriad networks of socio-ecological flow".

However, if political agency in the form of environmental citizenship is constituted in acts of citizenship, in which matter and things play a role, the non-humans can also be seen as to have agency along with humans (Latta 2014). From this perspective, environmental citizens are hybrids or assemblages and agency is distributed among humans and non-humans (Latta 2014). Moving beyond nature-culture binaries, this also means that neither humans nor non-humans can be citizens on their own. In Roe and Buser's study (2016), new sensory experiences related to food and a space for performing food in unusual manners for the participants, such as baking or cultivating, made the invisible connections between people and food visible. For the participants, this concretized issues such as food poverty and environmental damage caused by food production, and aligned them with ecological citizenship. Without the action of non-humans together with humans in gardening and baking, this citizenship

would not have emerged. Similarly, water (Latta 2014) and trees (Sinreich & Cupples 2014) have been interpreted to work with humans to oppose or influence new forms of governance.

Corporeal, sensory, and emotional dimensions are important in the construction of human–non-human entanglements that result in environmental citizenship. Lorimer (2010) explains how working with rare animal species, such as elephants and jaguars, provides affective encounters for international conservation volunteers. These encounters construct environmental citizenship, in which the charismatic animals become "active participants in global networks of ethical concern and economic activity" (*ibid*., 319). As a side effect, the global volunteering assemblage reinforces marginalisation of other animals, places, and citizens already in disadvantaged positions.

The inclusion of non-humans to the sphere of (environmental) citizenship can help clarify and highlight the interconnectedness and inseparability of the human and the non-human. The recognition of the role played by non-humans reinforces collective responsibility for environmental problems: instead of a focus on individual responsibility, seeing environmental citizenship as enacted in assemblages enables placing responsibility in these collectives (Gabrielson 2016). However, this includes also a risk of losing human responsibility altogether (see next section).

Problematic environmental citizenships

Our review revealed different interconnected ways of understanding and utilizing the concept of environmental citizenship (Fig. 2). Liberal and republican forms center around rights and responsibilities within the nation state, while post-cosmopolitan citizenship provides a more nuanced way of conceptualizing environmental citizenship as it broadens the realm, sphere, and virtues related to citizen action. The acknowledgement of action in the private sphere and everyday life as part of environmental citizenship and related interest in the relations within which citizenship emerges has lifted even post-human approaches as relevant for discussion. However, the developments contain two important problems that merit further discussion. The first concerns the potential dilution of the political in environmental citizenship, and the other the inclusion of non-humans.

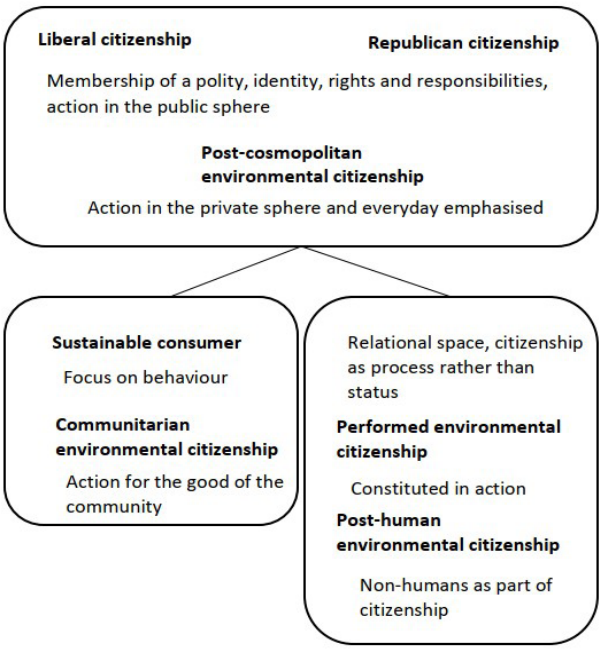

Fig. 2. Different ways of understanding and using the concept of environmental citizenship in geographical literature.

The danger in thinking environmental citizenship via diverse acts of citizenship is that everything and consequently nothing becomes political. There is a need to draw at least some kind of a line between what is considered as acts of citizenship and what is not. One approach for clarifying the political in acts of citizenship is to include only motivated, intentional, or oriented action towards shaping the society, as producing citizenship (Kallio *et al*. 2020). In the context of environmental citizenship this means, for instance, that participation in community food production with an aim of creating a more sustainable food system produces environmental citizenship.

A slightly different perspective is provided by Staeheli and colleagues (2012, 630), who see the political arising from the processes and relationships that "provide the basis for political struggles". Thus, intentionality or orientation is not required. This includes different kind of action in daily life yet not just any – only action that contributes to struggles is relevant for citizenship. Thus, environmental citizenship is also constructed in relations; as a child of the community food activist eats a lunch prepared with ingredients from the community farm, it is a political act, even though the child herself is "just eating".

When political struggles, and the political space that enables the struggles, are seen as constituted in relations, these relations can be extended to include those between humans and non-humans. This, especially in the environmental context, contributes to the emergence of *matters of concern* (Latta 2013). The role of non-humans can be seen as passive properties that influence human actors, but they can also be seen parallel to humans, as part of the political becoming of citizenship. From this perspective, environmental citizenship is not just about the politically intentional human, participating in community food production for instance. Instead, environmental citizenship emerges in the intra-action of human(s) and field, seeds, climatic patterns, and so on. Thus, the political emerges in processes with agencies that are distributed. Even this last perspective does not collapse everything into citizenship. The key in all the versions is the matter of concern, political struggle, or shaping the society, which implies the necessity of a process that contributes to the development of a more environmentally sustainable society.

However, the inclusion of non-humans to the sphere of citizenship in assemblages of humans and non-humans is not widely embraced in citizenship studies. Particularly, this relates to the discussion on duties and responsibilities of citizens and a perspective that only humans can have (political) agency (e.g. Häkli 2018). Citizenship can be seen as a category reserved for humans, with an emphasis on the subject of citizenship (Yeatman 2007), and via acts of citizenship through which humans construct themselves as citizens. Non-human entities can passively influence this process, but political agency of the moral citizen-subject needs to be reflexive and intentional. Else, there is a risk of losing human responsibility of the acts that, for example, cause environmental degradation. If environmental degradation is caused by human–non-human assemblages, consequently, these assemblages (not just humans) should carry the responsibility of their actions. However, as the distributed agency in these assemblages is not intentional, this would entail that no-one is responsible. Without responsibility, a core meaning of citizenship is lost.

Thus, to be able to include non-human nature in citizenship, the assemblages should carry responsibility. This would require some kind of shared responsibility and an ability to account for different degrees of intentionalism and reflexivity as well as different capacities. As Haraway (2016, 116) puts it: "We are all responsible to and for shaping conditions for multispecies flourishing in the face of terrible histories, but not in the same ways. The differences matter – in ecologies, economies, species, lives." The post-human claim of the inseparability of humans and nature is convincing. From the perspective of environmental citizenship, closely attached to ecological processes, the separation is difficult to maintain. However, to be able to understand citizenship in these terms requires more conceptual work on the subject.

Thus, the environmental citizenship theorizing could benefit from similar refinements as the concept of lived citizenship (Kallio *et al*. 2020), which clarifies the differences between observing citizenship in space, action, relations and affects. While this particular refinement is not related to the non-human agency problem, these kinds of refining attempts within the current, empirically focused, and relatively muddy discussions on environmental citizenship would be needed.

Past and future of geography for environmental citizenship

The geographical debate on environmental citizenship reflects more general trends in social sciences and human geography, such as post-colonialism, relational perspective on space, focus on mundane practices and everyday life and the growing interest in post-humanism (Bullen & Whitehead 2005; Latta 2013, 2014; Harris 2014; Roe & Buser 2016). In particular, the focus on the relationships between humans and non-humans has been central and an important contribution of geographic thinking in environmental citizenship. This involves the potential ways to include non-humans in the assemblages of citizenship, as having agential qualities, or at least figuring out the role of matter and other non-humans in influencing human agency.

Another core area of geography in environmental citizenship concerns the examination of cultural differences, racialization, and colonial aspects of environmental citizenship as primarily a Western concept. While usually examined in the context of relational space, these issues have territorial roots, and they are strongly linked to national and international policies and power structures, and formal citizenship status. There is room for developing an understanding of the linkages between national citizenship and the different understandings and acts of environmental citizenship.

However, the geographic literature on environmental citizenship is overall relatively small and often not oriented towards conceptual development. Corresponding to wider development in citizenship studies and the important role of geography, geographers could take a more active interest in the concept of environmental citizenship. Geographical thinking could help in clarifying differences between different perspectives of environmental citizenship, particularly, related to the more recent developments in relational and post-human thinking.

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