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Scales of participation and multi-scalar citizenship in EU participatory governance

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Abstract

The EU still has a democratic deficit and its legitimacy is strongly questioned. This reveals the importance of citizenship and participation in the context of the challenges the EU faces today. The article contributes to the current discussions on the shifting frameworks of participation and citizenship through empirical research into the EU's participatory governance. It asks how participation is framed in terms of scale and how these scalar framings are used to formulate citizenship in selected projects funded by the EU programmes on citizenship and culture. This microlevel analysis yields new insights into the politics of scale in the EU's multilevel participatory governance. Frame analysis of the texts produced in these EU projects indicates how the combination of European and local scales is articulated to shape and regulate participation, citizenship and the EU as a community. The article therefore introduces a new concept, Euro-local scale, to make sense of this rehierarchisation of scales in the EU's participatory governance.

Keywords

European Union, participatory governance, citizenship, politics of scale, framing

Introduction

Part of the complexity of citizenship both as a status and as an agency is that it can be attached to many scales. In this article, I explore which scalar frames are discussed in participatory projects funded by the European Union (EU), and how these framings are used in formulating citizenship in general, and a key aspect of it, participation, in particular. This sheds light on the current flux of both citizenship and participation. Multilevel governance and many other international and sub-national transformation processes – such as

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globalisation, regionalism, localisation, European integration, migration and the changing significance of nation-states – are transforming the contexts of citizenship. Simultaneously, participation is becoming attached to various territorial and administrative frames, and forms of participation are changing. Citizenship of the EU, established in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, exemplifies the transformation processes of the contexts of citizenship and the concept itself.

Since the renaissance of citizenship in academic and other discourses in the late 1980s and early 1990s, multi-scalarity of citizenship has been hotly debated (Bauböck, 1994; Benhabib, 2004; Bohman, 2007; Dobson, 2006; Falk, 1994; Fox, 2005; Kostakopoulou, 2007; Kymlicka, 1998; Linklater, 2007; Maas, 2013; Parekh, 2003). In these discussions, EU citizenship has been used as an example of a different status from the most usual scale of citizenship, the national. It has been suggested that the ties of citizenship with the state and the nation must be seen as “contingent, historical, political and cultural constructions, inscribed and flowing from different political projects” (Clarke et al., 2014: 57). Instead, attention should be directed to social, political, cultural, spatial and temporal contexts of citizenship and the heterogeneity of its sites, settings, spaces and scales (Clarke et al., 2014: 8, 14). In these different contexts, citizenship as a concept, status and agency has no fixed meanings but is constantly contested and constructed by a range of actors.

The article seeks to contribute to these discussions on the changing frameworks of participation and the shifting scales of citizenship. While such debates are often conducted in an abstract way, this contribution is based on empirical research into participatory governance in the EU. Participation is investigated here at the level of individual projects funded by EU programmes regarding citizenship and culture. The purpose is to explore the scalar framings that materials produced in these projects ascribe to participation, and how these framings shape citizenship. Such a micro-level analysis can bring new insights into the politics of scale in the EU’s participatory governance.

The EU’s attempts to connect more tightly with the citizens – through the Union citizenship itself and various other ways, such as the projects examined here – can be interpreted as responses to several economic, political, and humanitarian challenges that Europe and the EU are phasing. These challenges range from struggles of the Eurozone and European financial markets to the dispute among EU member states regarding deepening and enlarging the integration. A Euro-sceptic and anti-EU atmosphere has been growing and demands to exit the common currency zone and/or the European single market and political institutions have been presented, as demonstrated by Brexit. Contradictory views within the EU and its member states exist on how to deal with the mobility of people fleeing violent conflicts and difficult living conditions to Europe since 2015. Increasing public acceptance of the populist, nationalist and radical right-wing parties and groups across Europe add to the challenges. That the EU’s democratic deficit is still not solved and the legitimacy of the EU is strongly questioned indicate the importance of citizenship and participation in the context of these challenges. The emergence of a European demos would require developing Union citizenship as an agency guaranteeing political rights and facilitating equal participation.

European integration raises questions of spatiality and territoriality; what to do with, to and in Europe, how to deal with other territorial scales, and how Europe as a metaphorical space enables and limits governing in the name of Europe. These questions are also asked in EU policies on citizenship and culture, and the projects funded by EU programmes are ways of answering them. As such, they are one of the various sites in which the EU as an imagined community as well as its members are constituted (Clarke et al., 2014: 107). The EU projects are here approached as social practices that, through their scalar framings of participation,

not only give meanings and interpretations to citizenship but also contribute to construct and govern Europe and the EU. As Anssi Paasi (2001: 21) points out, the EU itself exemplifies social production of European space.

In what follows, I first establish the theoretical framework of the empirical analysis by explaining the relevance of scale for participation and citizenship. After that, I briefly introduce the research material and my way of examining it through the frame analysis. In the two succeeding sections, I first explore the scalar framings of participation made in the EU projects and then interpret with the frame analysis how they are used to bridge the gap between the citizens and the EU. I conclude with remarks on the politics of scale manifested in the usage of the scalar framings of participation in the projects.

Scales of participation and citizenship

As citizens' membership in a polity is constructed through dynamic and complex processes, it is crucial to ask how scalar framings are utilised to produce and shape communities and memberships. For Catherine Neveu (2013: 212), "connections made between citizenship(s), sites, levels, and competencies are signs of the politics of scales; that is, of specific conceptions about politics, citizenship and their legitimate levels and forms of expression and enactments". Following this understanding, I analyse the roles of scalar framings of participation and the politics of scales in shaping citizenship in the selected EU projects. I approach them by bringing together literatures on scale, citizenship, participation and participatory governance from disciplines such as political science and geography.

Attention to scale can unveil new ways in which politics is spatial and space is political (Moore, 2008: 204). Instead of a fixed or given category, scale is conceived here as socially constructed, fluid, contested and contingent (e.g. Brenner, 2001; Howitt, 2008; Marston, 2000; Moore, 2008). In the complex practices and discourses of producing scale, scale can point to size, reach, levels, hierarchies, sociospatial relations and more. Following Henri Lefebvre's (2002) ideas of social production of space, power and power relations are inherent in the constructions of scale (e.g. Paasi, 2001: 13). Ideas of scale can be used to change power relations and to promote and legitimate political aims (Moore, 2008: 217–218). Established organisations and institutions, such as the EU, use various "sociospatial classificatory practices" (Moore, 2008: 215), from material culture, such as currencies and monuments, to passports and more abstract technologies of power, such as border regimes, to naturalise the space in question as a central scale of identity and power.

Politics of scale (Smith, 2008: 229) refers here to the ways in which various actors give meanings, make sense, produce, govern and define phenomena by using the notion of scale. Neil Brenner (2001: 599–604) distinguishes singular and plural understanding of politics of scale. The first one pertains to the processes of establishing particular spatial forms "as a differentiated unit of sociospatial organization, activity, conflict, struggle, discourse and/or imagination" as well as its boundaries (Brenner, 2001: 599). The second draws the attention to the intertwining of scales and its implications for each of the scales (Brenner, 2001: 600). The EU projects can be seen as tools in both types of politics of scale: first, in producing Europe in several senses (although not all scalar) and second, in rehierarchising and redefining of the relations between, in particular, the local, national and European scales.

Common to several ways to understand citizenship (e.g. Wiesner et al., 2018) is that it defines membership in a political community together with access to citizenship, as well as citizens' rights and duties. As a complex conceptual cluster, citizenship concerns citizens' participation in democracy, collective identity-building as well as multidirectional power relations, inclusions and exclusions. Citizenship has been scaled both down and up; we talk

about local, global, and multi-layered or multilevel citizenship (Desforges et al., 2005: 440–441). While citizenship has had a close link to the city since the Greek polis, the most influential scale used in citizenship definitions has been the state. However, ideas of transnational, global and multilevel citizenship have been proposed throughout history, whereas the contemporary state-centred definition of citizenship is “a recent aberration” (Maas, 2013: 2). EU citizenship brings about changes to the meanings and scope of the concept of citizenship, reframing it from a national to a transnational context.

The EU citizenship, a current manifestation of multi-scalar citizenship, is granted to nationals of all member states in addition to national citizenships (Treaty, 1992: 7). This formulation states that citizens can be members of more than one polity at the same time. The right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States as the first right mentioned in the citizenship article of the EU founding treaties underlines this. In addition, Union citizenship includes the right to petition the European Parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to use any official EU language in the communication with the EU institutions and advisory bodies (Treaty, 1992: 7). A concrete example of political participation included in Union citizenship is electoral rights: EU citizens have the right to vote and to stand as candidates in both the European Parliament and municipal elections in their Member State of residence “under the same conditions as nationals of that State” (Treaty, 1992: 7). These political rights indicate that citizens can participate in several political communities simultaneously. The right to launch citizens’ initiative to the European Commission and Parliament also reflects the idea of transnational political participation, as it requires participants from at least seven member states.

Indeed, Nira Yuval-Davis (2011: 9) argues that “citizenship should not be seen as limited to only state citizenship but should be understood as the participatory dimension of membership in all political communities”. This makes it crucial to analyse the multi-layered structures of citizenship in sub-, cross- and supra-state political communities (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 9). Against this backdrop, this article analyses how participation is framed with different scales in the participatory practices of the EU.

Citizenship consists of multiple kinds of relations with fellow citizens and the community. These are not natural, but “built in the face of specific stakes and aims, and need significant cultural and political work to be deployed to make them come true” (Clarke et al., 2014: 114). Citizenship has been used as an idea “through which different sorts of collectivities of people and connections between people may be imagined, mobilised and brought into being” (Clarke et al., 2014: 107). Union citizenship as a status and concept has a significant role in the processes of imagining, constructing and defining the EU as a community.

Governing participation and citizenship often involves several scales (e.g. Cardullo and Kitchin, 2018), and in the EU’s multilevel governance based on complex networks and partnerships, the question of scale is intrinsic. Governing is enabled through framing: through discursive mechanisms that represent the issues to be governed as a field with specified borders and characteristics, the components of which are linked (Rose, 1999a: 31). EU policies on citizenship and culture are defining the fields of ‘European culture’ and ‘European citizenship’. These fields are reproduced through policy instruments like EU programmes and projects, which – with their participatory practices – are core elements in the multilevel governance of the EU. Ideas of scales and the relations between them are explicitly addressed in many key policy documents regarding EU programmes on citizenship and culture. Such programmes can be interpreted as a way to nurture and regulate relations between the EU and citizens, seeking to create interaction vertically between the citizens and the EU institutions, and horizontally between citizens from different member states (Mäkinen, 2012: 271–275; Mäkinen, 2018: 198). They provide an example of how “[c]

itizenship projects are connective: linking people, places and power in distinctive – and very different – ways” (Clarke et al., 2014: 132). The EU’s multilevel governance structures thus change practices of citizenship and ways of understanding the political community.

In these policies on citizenship and culture, a transnational space called Europe is imagined and organised. Ideas of scale are present in debates about the entire EU as an economic, political and cultural community. For Paasi (2001: 8), the EU provides a powerful example of politics of scale. European integration can be viewed as part of the multiple processes of sociospatial and scalar structuration (see Brenner, 2001: 608), conceptualised as “re-scaling” (Paasi, 2009: 214) and “reconfiguration of political space” (Bialasiewicz et al., 2005: 333). Engin Isin (2007: 217) sees the Union itself as an indication of the development of scalar thought, in which several scales of governing are involved. Indeed, “framing the spatial and temporal context is central to the ultimate success of any political project” (Moore, 2008: 218), which makes it important to investigate scalar framing and the contestations inherent in it. Debates on Union citizenship and participation are embedded in processes, in which “continual social exchanges between actors create distinctive scaled visions of what it is to be European, and what roles and responsibilities this entails” (Clark and Jones, 2008: 309). In these processes, different scales intermingle, confront and contradict, and actors use power to advocate their visions. As a key player in the social construction of Europe, the EU uses a wide range of tools in several policy fields (e.g. Clark and Jones, 2008; Moisio and Luukkonen, 2015).

Participation, as well as other central dimensions of citizenship, can be attached to various territorial, administrative and other frames. While participation is understood as central in most conceptions of citizenship, it is especially highlighted – in differing ways – in conceptions drawing from republican theories of democracy, radical or participatory democracy, and input democracy. Participation makes citizenship active and enables citizenship as political agency rather than just status or identification with a political community, thus bringing forth the multiple power relations intrinsic in citizenship. Different forms of participation (Arnstein, 1969; Van Deth et al., 2007; Verba and Nie, 1972) convey citizens’ voices into the public sphere and place new issues on the agenda, which is significant for democracy. Ideas about how much and what type of participation is sufficient and suitable for realising democracy vary from representative to direct democracy, and from bottom-up civic activity to participatory practices organised by the administration (e.g. Martín and Van Deth, 2007: 305–311; Rosanvallon, 2006: 26).

In the last couple of decades, participation has become a popular concept at different levels of administration from local and national to European and global, and in this “participatory turn” (Saurugger, 2010), new forms, channels and interpretations of participation have emerged, both bottom-up (civic activity) and top-down (organised by the administration). The latter type of participatory practices, such as the EU projects addressed here, have been generated increasingly within so-called new, multilevel or participatory governance (Lindgren and Persson, 2011; Michels, 2011; Moini, 2011; Newman, 2005; Newman and Clarke, 2009; Nousiainen and Mäkinen, 2015; Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007; Parkins and Sinclair, 2014). They aim to engage actors from various levels and spheres in policy-making through auditions, projects and partnerships without coercion but instead by appealing to their free will to conduct their conduct in a suitable way (Cruikshank, 1999: 4; Dean, 1999: 10–16, 67; Rose, 1999a: 69; Walters and Haahr, 2005: 118–119). Participatory governance is characterized by governmentality that seeks, through various technologies of agency, to produce subjectivities and guide conduct so that the targets of governance would themselves participate in voluntarily fulfilling the aims of governance (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1991). Some of the participatory practices involve citizens in

decision-making, for instance through participatory budgeting. In others, participation is rather tokenism without clear influence in decision-making or power relations. Thus, the relationship between participatory governance and democracy is ambiguous: participatory practices may offer opportunities for more direct democracy, but perhaps only under conditions defined by the administration (Mäkinen, 2018).

One way in which the EU administration is attempting to increase participation is via programmes, which fund projects by applications to promote citizens' co-operation across the member states in different fields. This article investigates projects within two such programmes. Typically to participatory governance, the EU programmes do not dictate the forms, contents and frameworks of citizenship and participation but it is up to the projects themselves to interpret them. The question here is thus not about the conceptual struggle between the EU institutions. Instead, it is about how the projects function as instruments in the EU governance despite and through their autonomy in the micro-level implementation of EU policies of citizenship and culture and how they contribute to promoting the respective policy aims. Hence, the purpose is not to ask, who is doing the scalar framings and why, but rather to explore how citizenship – and concomitantly 'Europe' and 'European citizens' – are produced and governed through individual EU projects with their social and discursive practices and citizens' participation in them.

Research material and methodological approach

To shed light on the perceptions of participation and citizenship produced in the EU's participatory governance, the article pays attention to the conceptual choices related to participation and its scalar framings made in the selected EU projects. The material analysed here was produced in seven projects that received funding from two EU programmes, namely Europe for Citizens and Culture, in the programme period 2007–2013. The EU's citizenship programmes have a central role in implementing Union citizenship. Through the Europe for Citizens programme, EU funding is provided to citizens' projects, town twinning, civil society organisations, European public policy research organisations, events, information and dissemination tools, and to preserve sites and archives associated with deportations and commemoration of victims (Decision, 2006a: 34–35). Similar activities are funded in the programme period of 2014–2020 (Council Regulation, 2014).

The programmes regarding culture, for their part, are central to implementing the cultural policy of the EU. The Culture programme aims at supporting co-operation projects, bodies active at the European level in the field of culture, and information collection, analysis and dissemination (Decision, 2006b: 4). In the subsequent programme period, funding continues under the programme titled Creative Europe (Regulation, 2013). In the course of European integration, culture has been seen as central to producing citizenship, and it was made an official field of European governance in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992.

From the two programmes in 2007–2013, I chose to analyse seven projects. The selection criteria were based on their description texts, published at the websites of the two programmes in a list of the funded projects, and that they specifically refer to participation and citizenship. These are listed in Table 1.

The material, consisting of websites, descriptions and reports, was produced in close conjunction with the practical activities of the selected projects. Most of the material was published on the websites of the projects or of institutions involved in the projects, such as arts organisations, cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations or public (mostly municipal) administrative bodies. The authors of the texts are not often mentioned but they can be expected to be the project co-ordinators or members of the advisory boards.

Table I. The EU projects analysed in this article.

Project (abbreviation or short title used here, followed by full title in brackets)	Funding programme	Years of operation	Countries of the organisations and municipalities involved (the country of the co-ordinator party is listed first)
Brick (<i>Building Our Community</i>)	Europe for Citizens	2012–2013	Finland, Denmark, Slovenia, Spain (participants also from the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Sweden)
I am Europe	Europe for Citizens	2013	Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden
My European City	Europe for Citizens	2010–2011	France, Italy, Poland, Romania
Flow4YU (<i>Young Flow – Network on Dialogue Between Young People and Public Institutions</i>)	Europe for Citizens	2011–2013	Finland, Croatia, Italy, Sweden
Celebrating (<i>Celebrating European Cultural Intangible Heritage for Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship</i>)	Culture	2013–2015	Romania, Belgium, France
Eclectis (<i>European Citizens' Laboratory for Empowerment: CiTies Shared</i>)	Culture	2013	Netherlands, France, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain
Europe City	Culture	2013	Spain, Finland, Great Britain

Some texts were written collectively by the participants in project workshops or other meetings, representing the grass-roots activity of the projects. I see these texts as presenting the public face, which the projects wish to show.

The texts produced in the EU projects contribute to producing and re-interpreting citizenship through their discursive practices on participation. Analysis examining concepts and rhetoric of the project texts both supplements and challenges high-politics approaches to EU integration. The focus on conceptual choices at the micro-level practices increases understanding of the EU's multilevel participatory governance. This approach draws from the social constructivist research, in which identities, interests, norms and subjectivities are understood as created in the collective processes of meaning-making (e.g. Christiansen et al., 2001).

The reading is guided by the notion of scale, which is conceived here as a frame used in the project texts to make sense of participation. It is addressed as a discursive frame, as a way of framing social reality and thereby defining, constituting and organising it (Delaney and Leitner, 1997: 94–95; Moore, 2008: 204–205, 218). The analysis focuses on how the project texts make use of scalar framings as well as territorial and spatial metaphors and expressions. I approach the texts through frame analysis (Goffman, 1986; Rein and Schön, 1996) following the interpretive policy analysis that sees framing as dynamic, interactive and political activity (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016). Different individual and collective actors, such as interest groups, social movements and institutions, frame issues in their own ways in debates. They give meanings to events, situations, relations, practices, concepts and experiences, try to turn them into problems that need action, and then define the ways in which decisions should be made and implemented. In these processes of interpretation – both

consciously and unconsciously – these actors use various interpretive frames, compiled from facts, values, theories and interests, in direct or indirect interaction with other actors. Frames provide guidelines for thinking and action by directing the attention to something and thus away from something else. Debates about policies include several competing interpretive frames that can be perceived as strong narratives (Rein and Schön, 1996: 89), drawing their ingredients from broadly accepted cultural norms and themes, which themselves are also social constructions.

The euro-local scale of participation: Connecting the local and the european

The EU projects analysed here create and regulate connections between scales before, during and after the period when the projects are active. With few exceptions, global, national and regional (sub-national) scales are not discussed in the project texts, which follows the policy documents regarding those EU programmes through which the projects were funded (Mäkinen, 2012). The national scale is central to the formulation of EU citizenship in the founding treaties of the Union, as only nationals of member states are Union citizens, and “[c]itizenship of the Union shall be additional to and not replace national citizenship” (Treaty, 2012: 56) but, in the project texts, this relation is not discussed. The invisibility of the global scale implies that citizenship of the EU can hardly be seen as a pre-model of cosmopolitan citizenship.

Instead, the project texts most commonly locate participation in local and European scales (see Table 2). Participation is also frequently attached to the projects themselves as well as to the individual scale. As scales are not simple and exclusive, they are not clearly defined but several meanings are given to them in the project texts. Connections between

Table 2. Central aspects of participation in the EU projects, excluding those common to all the analysed projects.

Project	Dominant scalar framings	Arenas of participation	Forms of participation (examples)	Types of citizenship
Brick	Local	Community development	Designing a game on community development	Residents
I am Europe	European	Policy	Writing a blog about citizens' participation in the EU policies	Democratic agents
My European City	Local European	Urban planning, Urban development	City tours	Residents
Flow4YU	Local	Policy	Visiting local decision-makers	Democratic agents
Celebrating	Local	Cultural heritage, Community development	Practising conservation and restoration skills	Residents
Eclectis	Local	Urban planning, Urban development	Investigating participants' living environment with practical equipment	Residents
Europe City	Local	Urban planning, Urban development	Public sphere	Residents

scales are frequently made in the project texts, which reflects the understanding that scales are in dynamic interaction with each other, and the current divisions are by no means natural (Delaney and Leitner, 1997: 93; Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 8).

The projects themselves are central frameworks for participation in all the projects. Participation is primarily conceptualised as networking and co-operation between participants within the projects. Other arenas of participation include local politics, European politics, community development and the urban environment (see Table 2). Although participation is not clearly defined in the project materials, it is linked with concrete ways of acting within the projects, as Table 2 illustrates. *I am Europe* and *Flow4YU* focus on developing participation as citizens' engagement in decision-making and using power in the public sphere, but it is more common in the project texts to understand participation as exchanging information and developing the participants' capacities in the project's subject area. In these conceptualisations, participants are mainly seen as team workers, thereby depoliticising both participation and citizenship.

Furthermore, the individual sphere is presented as significant for participation. For example, *Flow4YU* emphasizes the need for face-to-face interaction between young people and politicians and civil servants of the municipalities (About *Flow4YU*). In *I am Europe*, the individual scale is tightly connected to the European scale: "If the EU becomes more appealing to its citizens and generates greater participation, it will be mainly thanks to committed and active citizens" (About *I am Europe*). According to the editorial in the project magazine, "we are Europe", and thus "it is we who must change", if the EU is to "change the ways it deals with its citizens". Similarly, citizens' participation in the projects as an individual experience and a way to create direct personal relations with the EU are highlighted in many other projects, as well as in EU programmes on citizenship and culture.

The local framing of participation is manifested by the fact that many of the projects focus on the participants' own living environments, for example their villages, towns or neighbourhoods, and are organised by or with municipal actors. The centrality of the local scale is exemplified in *Flow4YU*, which aims at developing connections between young people and the local administration. The most common scale of participation is local also in *Eclectis*, which aims to create new relations between the participants and the urban space around them (*Expeditio*). The local is an essential framework of participation in *Brick*, a project about developing local communities: "The objectives were that the citizens would actively participate in the development process of their home community", as the *Brick* project description defines (Project description). In *Celebrating*, discussions about communities and concrete places such as historic buildings indicate that the dominant scale is local (*Transylvania Trust*).

Europe in the projects refers mainly to Europe as a geographical and social entity or to the EU including the institutions and member states of the Union. Furthermore, the project texts also pertain to the idea of Europe produced in and through EU initiatives. This 'Europe' is a joint economic, political, and cultural community of 'Europeans' conditioned by the EU (Lähdesmäki et al., 2020: 14-15), and the EU policies on citizenship and culture as well as the projects funded from the EU programmes are part of the processes that seek to create and sustain it.

In *I am Europe*, citizenship and participation are clearly framed with the European scale. The aim of the project is "to exchange, explore, evaluate and (re-)invent participation tools to enlarge the influence the citizens can have on EU policies". *I am Europe* seeks to create a framework in which citizens could "maximize their impact on European policy and in the public domain".

“I am Europe (iEU) is an exploratory expedition into the heart of the European Citizenship concept. Through this project we want to learn what citizens’ participation can mean in a European context, and find out what is needed so that European citizens get more involved in EU policymaking. [...] This project aims to enrich the general public debate on European Citizenship and hopes to put forward innovative models of citizen participation that can be applied at the EU level.” (About I am Europe.)

Participation is here perceived as citizens’ activity that is expected to have an effect on policymaking, which is not always typical in participatory governance.

In the projects, participation is located in ‘Europe’ both concretely and metaphorically. At least some of the issues that the projects focus on are framed as ‘European’, such as politics in *I am Europe*, cultural heritage in *Celebrating* and urban environment in *My European City* and *Europe City*. In some of the projects (*Brick*, *Celebrating*, *I am Europe*), participation is also more explicitly seen as a channel through which the participants are involved in constructing the EU as a community. While participation is ‘Europeanised’ in the projects through explicit use of ‘European’ as an attribute, Europe does not always refer to a concrete territory, but rather to ‘EUrope’: the EU, “European policy” (*I am Europe*) or networks with “European partners” (*Brick*). Some project texts discuss “European identity” (*Brick*), “our European cultural heritage” (*Celebrating*) or “common European values” (*My European City*), where Europe appears as mental and imagined. The Europe of the projects can thus be interpreted simultaneously as both a spatial and a non-spatial frame employed to define and shape highly diverse phenomena. For example, the European framing of cultural heritage and history in *Celebrating* and *Brick* indicates “the territorialisation of memory and the past” (Paasi, 2001: 17) that is used in producing Europe as a cultural community instead of only an economic interstate organization.

In several projects, participants’ agency is constructed simultaneously as both local and European. Linking European and local scales with each other, and with the individual and project scales, follows the idea that the EU should be visible in citizens’ daily lives expressed in the history of EU integration at least since the 1980s (Committee on a People’s Europe, 1985). The merging of the local and the European produces a new scale that can be called a Euro-local scale, applying the concept of glocalization that combines the global and the local (Swyngedouw, 1997).

My European City provides a clear example of the Euro-local scale, as it seeks to link local places with the European scale and explicitly sees this linkage as relevant for European citizenship.

““My European City” [...] came about as the response to a feeling that we are too distanced from our European citizenship. The purpose of the project was to make all European citizens more aware of the presence of Europe in their daily lives. Europe can be found in our streets, our buildings, in the history of our cities and through the companies in our local area.” (Jeanne et al., 2011: 8–9.)

Tension between proximity and distance is the content of the project. The same spatial metaphors recur also in policy documents regarding EU programmes on culture and citizenship and other EU documents: the fact that citizens feel that the EU and Union citizenship are far removed from their lives is seen as a problem. The solution, according to EU documents, is to give citizens more information and ‘to bring them closer to the EU and each other’. The EU programmes are contributions to this solution (e.g. Commission of the

European Communities, 2005: 2). In a similar vein, the feeling that European citizenship is far away is constructed as a problem in *My European City*. To solve it, the project proposes to “make all European citizens more aware of the presence of Europe in their daily lives” (Jeanne et al., 2011: 9) and to construct a connection between Europe and local spaces such as streets, buildings and companies. A bond between individuals and ‘Europe’ should be created through concrete local places and by giving them ‘European’ definitions. This is given the form of “European tours”, a guided tour on foot and a virtual visit on the website, as well as a map and a brochure. In addition to these concrete attempts to provide information and spatial experiences, “common European values” are mentioned as a more abstract way of raising awareness of European citizenship, echoing the EU documents’ value discourse. (Jeanne et al., 2011: 9)

Another example of the Euro-local scale is offered by *Europe City* with its focus on attaching urban places to the European context. The project aims at “updating, promoting and popularising a European concept of the city”. City is understood as a social construct and social space, not just a built environment. The idea of public space is central to this notion of city. Architecture, people and participation are discussed together and deemed important for the public space and social cohesion. (Public Space) Citizenship and citizens’ activities are central to this perception of the city as a public and social space, as indicated by the project objective to facilitate “that people will become actively involved in the shared task of city-making”. Concrete manifestations of citizens’ involvement are, however, lacking, which exemplifies the typical way of participatory governance to rhetorically emphasise citizens and their participation but ignoring them in practice.

The relation between local and European scale participation as well as the EU’s effects on local life are elaborated also in *I am Europe*. It aims to build a bridge between the EU and the local through participants who are active at the local contexts – implying an idea of a Euro-local agency: “We chose to work with citizens who are already strongly engaged at local level because we believe they can be the motor of change within the EU” (About *I am Europe*). The Euro-local scale of participation is constructed also in *Eclectis*, in which “site-specific experimentations will be [analysed] at European level [. . .] giving the opportunity to go beyond local issues and to nurture the reflection at European level” (*Eclectis: Project: Topics*). In *Brick*, local activity is put into a European framework in several ways, using the same key terms as in EU programmes on citizenship and culture, such as building networks, sharing good practices, co-operating, common challenges and common European identity. According to the list of its impacts, the participants understood “what impact European policies have on their local community” (Project description).

The intermingling of scales is concretely demonstrated in the names of the projects, such as *Europe City*. The articulation between the scales is made intimate with personal pronouns in *I am Europe*, *My European City* and *Brick – Building Our Community*. These conceptual crisscrossings illustrate that spatial scales are more complex than the distinction between local, national and global drawn in traditional state-centred thought (Brenner, 2004: 3–4). They tell us about “complex diversity”, which challenges the “billiard-ball diversity”, in which belonging is ordered in distinct “layers”, and instead emphasise that the layers themselves are increasingly heterogeneous and that cultural identities and social divisions intertwine in many ways (Kraus, 2012: 12–13).

Kindon et al. (2010: 3) argue that focusing on space and scale of participation makes it possible to see how the local is “intimately connected to the global, regional, national, household and personal”. In the EU projects, the local and European scales are indeed connected: with each other, the personal sphere and the project context. Forging bonds between individual participants within (and beyond) the projects can be interpreted as an

attempt to construct a “horizontal dimension” of citizenship which, according to Neveu (2013: 205), “stresses that the relationship between citizens is at least as important as the more traditional ‘vertical’ view of citizenship as the relationship between the state and the individual”. This horizontal dimension refers to interpersonal relations constituting the nexus of citizenship together with individual-institutional relations (Dobson, 2006: 3). A notion of networked citizenship is constructed in the project texts not only by emphasising horizontal connections between participants but also by conceptualising participation as teamwork in the projects. Hence, the EU projects can be conceived as “local practices and representations of citizenship [...] actively engaged in the ‘politics of scale’” (Clarke et al., 2014: 156).

With their simultaneous presence of many scales, the EU projects reveal multi-layered structures of citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 9), consisting of local and – to a lesser extent – regional sub-state communities, cross-state communities formed by coordinators and participants coming from different member states, as well as supra-state communities, since the projects with their participatory practices are funded and designed by EU programmes. When participation is framed with the local scale (Brick, Eclectis, My European City), the participants are mainly viewed as residents. Citizenship is also joined to the abstract idea of being involved in the construction of the EU as a community, meaning membership in the EU. To some extent, citizenship is perceived in the projects as democratic, using power in public issues aiming at change, either on the local (Brick, Eclectis, Flow4YU) or European scale (I am Europe). Furthermore, citizenship is closely associated with identification processes, particularly with the construction of ‘European identity’. For instance, in *Celebrating*, citizenship is explicitly linked with identity, in which locality and Europeaness are intertwined. The projects thus follow the Europe for Citizens and Culture programmes, in which identity is a core component of citizenship (Mäkinen, 2012: 191–249).

Framing participation: The story about bridging the gap

Van Hulst and Yanow (2016: 97; see also Rein and Schön, 1996) distinguish five partly overlapping acts in the processes of framing: sense-making, selecting, naming, categorising and storytelling. The framings present in the project texts investigated here seek to make sense of the role of citizens and their participation in the EU. In the project texts, the relationship between the citizens and the EU has been selected as the main focus, even though citizenship and participation involve myriad other aspects. This relation is interpreted as a problem: the distance between citizens and the EU is seen as too great, as discussed above. In the process of framing, the situation is often named with a metaphor (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016: 96). In the project texts, the relationship between citizens and the EU is described with the metaphor of a ‘gap’.

In the project texts, scalar frames are used to categorise participation – most notably through the European and local frames, but also to the individual and the projects themselves. These narrow categories exclude a broad range of other types of participation, such as voting, public demonstrations, writing to newspapers, strikes, workplace democracy, consumption choices and other bottom-up type activities. Moreover, the emphasis on the individual sphere detaches participation from collective activity.

Through storytelling, the different practices and elements of framing are combined as a coherent plot that both diagnoses the problem and offers a solution (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016: 101). In the project texts, the ‘gap’ between the citizens and the EU is constructed as needing to be ‘bridged’ by the projects – spatial metaphors frequently used in EU discourses in general. Creating the Euro-local scale is a way of bridging the gap. For example, local

places are framed as European to help the residents experience Europe in their daily environment and thus 'near' them. My European City explicitly asks: "How can understanding the European dimension of a city lead European individuals to discover their own link with Europe?" (Jeanne et al., 2011: 9). I am Europe "is designed in small steps so that participants can bridge the gap between the local and the EU level" (About I am Europe).

This kind of framing of participation stems from the rhetoric of proximity typical to EU documents as a way of regulating relations between the EU and the citizens. Co-operation within projects is perceived as an instrument for building networks between the project participants and creating proximity and connectivity that is expected to last even after the project. The projects function as tools of spatial socialization (Paasi, 2001: 18), through which the EU 'comes close' to citizens – directly to local and individual scales, mostly bypassing the regional and national scales. This rhetoric can be interpreted as a technology of proximity (Walters & Haahr, 2005: 76–78), in which participation mainly means involvement in activities designed in the EU programmes. Citizenship then appears as identity and partnership with the administration rather than agency.

In the EU, as in several other contexts, notions of scale are used in community building and identity construction (Kaplan, 1999; Moore, 2008: 203, 207). Through their scalar framings of participation and rhetoric of proximity, the EU projects not only give meanings to citizenship but also contribute to construct, define and govern the EU community as a framework of participation and as a place close to citizens. Project participants are perceived as members of this community, and smaller 'sub-communities' are produced through their co-operation and networks as building blocks within the 'European construction'. This is governmental communitarianism, in which public authorities produce the community as a sector for government with their discourses (Clarke et al., 2014: 126–128; Delanty, 2006: 87–90; Rose, 1999a: 167–184; 88–94; Rose, 1999b) and increasingly also with participatory practices, such as the EU projects discussed here. Moreover, when citizenship is conceived as identity, it becomes an instrument of creating citizens' belonging to Europe. The scalar framings of participation in the EU projects thus eventually also tell the story about the EU as a community.

Conclusions

The article demonstrates how scalar representations are constructed and produced discursively and materially through political activity (Clarke et al., 2014: 132, 140–149; Grundy and Smith, 2005: 392; Moore, 2008: 211–212). The frame analysis of the participatory practices designed by the EU programmes and implemented through the EU projects showed that participation is most often framed with European, local, individual and project scales, all of which are interconnected. The project texts produce a Euro-local scale, in which the European and local scales are combined and presented as mutually creating each other. This exemplifies how scales are a political product: "their ordering is the outcome of particular projects and struggles" (Clarke et al., 2014: 132). Through the scalar framings, a story about distance and proximity is told. All the projects explored here share the conception of participation as a way of generating proximity between the EU and citizens, as well as among citizens from different member states. In emphasising and combining the local and the European as well as seeking to create proximity, the project texts follow the EU policy documents on citizenship and culture.

The projects themselves are examples of the production of a Euro-local scale. Designed and funded through the EU programmes but implemented in the local scale, they are employed as arenas of promoting and regulating connections among the participants as

well as between the EU and citizens. Europe is performed in the local through practices, vocabularies, symbols and identifications that – typically to the governmental characteristics of participatory governance – travel between scales via the projects from application to the reporting phase and beyond and shape conceptions on participation, citizenship and Europe as a result of detailed instructions given at the programme level and the free will of the project organizers and participants. Rather than adopted as such in a top-down manner, they are interpreted and adjusted in the multidimensional power dynamics of participatory governance. The bypassing of the national and global scale, typical to the EU governance, underlines the importance of the Euro-local scale as a building-block of EUrope and EUropeans under construction. Further concrete examples of the production of the Euro-local scale can be found in various sectors from urban and regional policy to education and youth. For example, in cultural initiatives such as European Capital of Culture or European Heritage Label, the European Commission requires the designated cities and heritage sites to frame the local with the European (Lähdesmäki et al., forthcoming). This reterritorialization of state manifests also in the new regional configurations and the related rescaling of governance in which local and regional actors develop their own relatively autonomous projects in the context of EU spatial planning (Deas and Lord, 2006).

Founding, maintaining and governing an organisation like the EU presupposes spaces that can be organised. Lefebvre (2002: 269–291) highlights how space can be addressed from the perspective of power, and how it has been conceptualised and produced as an object of political activity. EU programmes and projects are political-administrative practices in which Europe is rendered an object of politics. The EU projects analysed here contribute to the process of imagining and governing a transnational space called Europe by creating a Euro-local scale of participation – that is, by framing participation within Europe, and by attaching the European scale to the local and individual scales. In addition, cultural heritage, city, values, and more are framed as 'European'. 'European' is thereby demarcated as a relevant framework for participation, activities, meanings and identifications, and issues related to the EU are made more known and approachable to the participants and wider audiences. Such a 'citizens' Europe' can be interpreted as a "lived space" (Lefebvre, 2002: 362) built through personal experiences of teamwork and cooperation within the projects. This imagined 'EUrope' is utilised to make 'Europeans' governable. Indeed, European governance is essentially about how, in different phases of integration, it becomes possible to identify and name various issues "Europe" or "European" (Walters and Haahr, 2005). Through the rhetoric used in the EU projects and programmes, 'European participation', 'European citizenship' and 'European culture' are made thinkable and hence governable. 'In the name of Europe', participation, the foci of the projects as well as more implicit policy objectives can all be governed in novel ways.

Framing participation as European and building Europe through the local resembles the circle model critically discussed by Cris Shore (1993, 2004), in which the European is represented as the outer level of a series of concentric circles. The model illustrates the scalar thought criticised by Isin (2007: 211) as hierarchical: the frameworks of participation are presented as nested and layered, the uppermost unit appearing superior to the lower-level units and having the right to create the ones 'below it'. The framing of participation with the Euro-local scale can be perceived as an apparatus of capture (Isin, 2007: 214), as the EU's attempt to produce, order and conquer spaces by entering local contexts and distributing governance through implementing its policies via programmes and projects. With their practices and discourses, they aim to glue together the European and local scales. However, participatory practices can both facilitate and resist this governance. The idea of concentric circles ignores the fact that different scales can contradict each other. If the European scale

is emphasised at the cost of other scales, there is a danger that the local, regional and national scales are represented only as variations within the European (Shore, 2006: 17) and that Europe is used as a superordinate term that swallows the tensions between scales. Scalarisation – like frames in general – highlights some issues and hides others: When we talk about 'where' participation should take place, we do not talk about how and by whom and with what effect it should take place. Hence, this kind of “framing [...] manifests discursive power” (Van Hulst and Yanow, 2016: 101), through which support for one's own ideas is sought for and other ideas can be occluded or silenced.

In the framing processes, scale categories can be used to simultaneously “include or exclude certain actors, legitimate political projects, rework relations of power and coalesce political processes around particular scalar orders” (Moore, 2008: 218). Through its programmes and projects, the EU – without being a unified actor but rather an assemblage of complex and contradictory policy processes – attempts to legitimate itself and EU integration. It seeks to gather political, social and cultural processes around itself and a naturalised notion of Europe. Through the framings made in the programme documents and project texts, the local and individual scales are included in this attempt, whereas the national and global are mainly excluded. Articulating the local, European, individual and project scales of participation and ignoring the national and global scales exemplifies the central role of the politics of scales in shaping participation and citizenship in the EU projects.

Framing participation on both European and local scale indicates that the EU projects are “projects and practices that imagine citizenship in 'local' forms” but simultaneously also “connect people to supranational, transnational or global citizenship questions, relations, identities and demands” (Clarke et al., 2014: 156). These assemblages of scales hence imply multi-scalar citizenship, which involves a variety of “discourses and practices from the local to the national and supra-national scale” (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003: 132). The EU projects can be interpreted as “citizenship practices and processes that connect non-continuous places, levels and sites” (Neveu, 2013: 209). The project texts are “[s]calar stories, frames and metaphors” that “operate as yoking mechanisms that name, assemble and delineate sociospatial boundaries and relations” (Moore, 2008: 221). EU projects offer a transnational platform for participants who may be active on different scales, but these scales do not constitute a continuum. Since these platforms are not representative, participation in the projects may be detached from other ways of participating and enacting citizenship. Union citizenship may therefore remain distinct from citizens' other forms of agency. Nevertheless, local actors were deliberately selected to participate in *I am Europe*, which implies the idea of a Euro-local scale.

Union citizenship as a status and practice can be understood as governance implemented through a scalar change. Participatory practices in the EU projects discussed here contribute to this rescaling. While Union citizenship maintains juridical connections to member states, in the EU projects and policy documents concerning citizenship and culture, citizenship is not a mere legal status. Instead, political, value-related, social and cultural aspects of citizenship are defined on the European, local, project and individual scale, disconnecting them from the state scale – which, as Isin (2007: 218) notes, has never been the only framework for citizenship with its various aspects. The construction of a Euro-local scale of participation and citizenship and omitting the national in the projects demonstrates rehierarchisation of the relations between the scales.

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