

EWIS 2021 Call for Papers

A Tale of Two Citizenships: Negotiating the future of citizenship between status and practice

Convenors:

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Imagine the tale of two citizenships: one is an exclusionary governmental technology that perpetrates violence and cements global inequality; the other is the possibility of a life of rights and dignity. This paradox is captured in Hannah Arendt's famous expression of 'the right to have rights' (Arendt 1951), where *universal* rights are only ever realised within *particular* political communities: citizenship. This workshop will address this aporia by investigating how radical practices of citizenship might meaningfully contest and transform citizenship in its legal and institutional form.

Citizenship, understood primarily as a legal status denoting belonging within a nation-state, inflicts great violence, by 'separating the citizens of a state not only from the citizens of all other states but also from the non-citizen residents who occupy a lesser status within the state itself' (Hindess 2004: 309). Critical legal theorist, Nadine El-Enany (2019), argues that citizenship in western democracies is best understood as a post-colonial space, whereby racialised populations are disproportionately deprived of access to the spoils of colonialism and systematically made vulnerable to harm.

Yet, despite the violence citizenship inflicts, many people continue to struggle to achieve its status. Furthermore, both citizens and noncitizens often act in ways that challenge the formalized institution of citizenship. Theorists such as Engin Isin (2009, 2012), Greg Nielsen (2008) and Anne McNevin (2011) argue that citizenship is best understood as the right to claim rights and that practices of claiming rights are best understood as 'acts of citizenship'. When those who aren't citizens act as if they are to claim rights, such acts have a performative force with the potential to transform citizenship.

There is, however, a problem: by making the act the primary object of analysis, performative approaches to citizenship often obscures from view the specific political and social conditions that make transformational politics possible. This workshop addresses this shortcoming by investigating the different sites and scales at which radical performances occur in order to understand how they can be truly transformative.

The workshop invites papers that address questions such as:

1. Can citizenship be more than just the expression of state power?
2. Can citizenship ever overcome its colonial and racialized legacy? Can citizenship be decolonized?
3. Does citizenship entail obligations to others? If so, to whom and how can they be realised?
4. How do acts of citizenship transform state-based forms of belonging?
5. Is the framework of performative citizenship up to the task of thinking through the transformation of citizenship?
6. Can there be non-exclusionary citizenship?

In considering these questions, the intended outcome of the workshop is to develop a new research agenda in the field of critical citizenship studies that builds on the strengths of performative approaches while addressing their weaknesses.

Submit your abstract here <https://eisa-net.org/ewis2021-abstract-submission/> by 18 January 2021