

Special Issue - Call for Papers

Acts and Lived Experiences of Citizenship among “Second-Generation” Youth

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The public debates on migrants’ descendants have taken a dramatic turn during the last decade in Europe (Crul & Schneider 2013). Associated with “failed multiculturalism”, they have been approached in problematic terms and in connection to “unsuccessful integration”, crime, radicalisation, or the development of “parallel societies” in Western European countries. Simultaneously, research on the so-called “second generation” has proliferated during the past decades. In Europe, studies conducted over the past fifteen years have aimed at assessing how second-generation youth are faring in European societies, by focusing on educational and labour market attainment, intergenerational mobility, identity and belonging, experiences of inclusion and exclusion across different national contexts (among others Heath et al. 2008; Colombo 2010; Crul et al. 2012; Mollenkopf & Crul 2012; Portes et al. 2016; Crul et al. 2017; OECD 2017, 2018; Frisina & Hawthorne 2018).

Overall, these studies present a picture in evolution, with migrants’ descendants scoring gradually better on “integration” indicators and proceeding along paths to inclusion (see also projects CILS4EU, Children of Immigrant Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries and ILSEG, Investigación Longitudinal de la Segunda Generación). At the same time, research in the field of transnationalism has shown how second-generation youth continue to foster transnational ties and activities towards their parents’ homeland (Levitt 2009; Brockett 2020), in ways that relate to their identity construction (Somerville 2008; Skrbiš et al. 2007) and understandings of citizenship (Malik 2017; Toivanen 2014). Only recently, more attention has been devoted to the second-generation’s political activism, which has been compared with that of their native peers and of first-generation migrants (Quintelier 2009; Zinn 2011; Pilati 2018; Riniolo & Ortensi 2020) and analyzed in relation to their perceived discrimination and feelings of inclusion/exclusion (Alanya et al. 2015; André & Dronkers 2017). Overall, extant research shows that the realities of the second generation are extremely variegated and diversified.

This special issue aims to provide new and critical insights into the everyday practices and experiences of citizenship among second-generation youth (18-35 years old) in the European context, by focusing on new ways of be(com)ing citizens. Rather than reducing citizenship either to a formal status or to formal practices, we approach citizenship as being constituted by individuals’ acts (Isin & Nielsen 2008) and lived experiences of belonging (Kallio et al. 2020). We suggest that more attention should be devoted, on one hand, to the *agency* involved in *practicing* and *experiencing* citizenship, and on the other hand, on the conditions that may hamper such agency. We furthermore posit that examining the acts and lived experiences of citizenship among second-generation youth also enhances our understanding of the broader transformations concerning citizenship and political (dis)engagements *in general*. In this sense, we fully adhere to calls to “de-migranticize” research on migration (Dahinden 2016) and to

move beyond the “ethnic lens” (Brubaker 2005). Following this, we argue that it is important to approach the “generational” component of “second-generation” youth in sociological terms, i.e. by viewing them also as individuals who belong to a particular age cohort. This also means critically appraising the employed terminology (including “second-generation”) and the related theorisation (Chimienti et al. 2019).

Hence, we welcome original empirical and theoretical papers from different disciplines that deal with the acts and lived experiences of citizenship among second-generation youth in and across different national contexts in Europe. We invite scholars to shed light on novel forms for claiming belonging and rights, and on the emergence of new narratives and practices of citizenship in second-generation youth’s daily lives, also by paying attention to local, supranational and transnational forces that shape them. These practices can be either routinized or occasional activities through which migrants’ descendants situationally and relationally choose “where they belong”, construct their presence in that context, switch cultural codes, and make sense of their trajectories and of their everyday life. The special issue also aims to analyse alternative “sites” - including bodies, streets, networks, borders, social media, cultural movements, small or large-scale initiatives, new claims and informal mobilisations - where citizenship is practiced and belonging staged. The focus is also on various “scales” where identities are expressed and citizenship is experienced, including the urban, regional, national, transnational and international ones. At the same time, we are also interested in contributions that critically address how the more traditional forms of political participation (voting, working in associations and parties, demonstrating, etc.) may acquire new meanings through the (dis)engagement of second-generation youth.

Contributions can, for instance, focus on the connections between citizenship and second-generation youth’s 1) political and civic activism, and transformation of political subjectivities, 2) constructions of identity, belonging and home, and 3) experiences of inclusion and exclusion, including racism and discrimination. We also welcome more theoretically and methodologically oriented papers that capture the generational dynamics of these aspects, and that offer critical perspectives into research and conceptualisation related to “second-generation” youth.

Important deadlines

Submission of abstracts (300 words + bibliography): October 1, 2020

Notification of acceptance/rejection: October 15, 2020

If accepted, submission of full papers (7500 words) to Guest Editors: March 1, 2021

Request of possible revisions to full papers: Spring 2021

Submission of final papers to *Ethnicities** for peer-review process: June 1, 2021

Estimated publication time: August 2022

* We intend to submit the special issue proposal to *Ethnicities* for consideration.

Please send the abstracts to the Guest Editors: giulia.mezzetti@unicatt.it;
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Likewise, all queries about the Special Issue should be sent to: giulia.mezzetti@unicatt.it;
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