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TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP: THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP AND ITS CONCEPTUALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Abstract. The issue of citizenship has been one of the main topics of political thinking since antiquity, when its origins were significantly shaped by classical philosophers, whose ideas are also important for modern thinking. Gradually, with the intensification of globalization many new conceptualizations of the classical concept of citizenship were formulated to address global challenges. These shift away from the basic view of the interconnectedness of citizenship with a specific territory and give humans a wider, global identity with an associated appeal to global responsibility. One such concept is environmental citizenship. This article is aimed at examining the historical development of citizenship, particularly in its republican and liberal versions, and its conceptualisation in the context of environmental problems that overcome national borders. The demands on citizens must be adapted to this reality. This article highlights the growing potential of environmental citizenship as one of the possible key factors for achieving a more sustainable world, which however requires the active involvement of nation-states.

Keywords: global environmental challenges; environmental citizenship; classical citizenship concept; environmental virtues; responsibility; citizen

1. Introduction. 2. The development of the concept of citizenship in political philosophy. 3. From a national to a global dimension of citizenship. 4. Environmental citizenship as a necessity arising from the intensifying global challenges. 5. Conclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness of the contemporary world, the deepening global problems affecting individual countries, and the growing urgency of global challenges have led philosophers, practitioners, activists, and researchers in different fields, to become increasingly concerned with a new conceptualization of citizenship to address current global issues. One of these conceptualizations is environmental

citizenship. It is still quite an ambiguous concept, mainly because of its global character. However, there is a growing need to emphasise the environmental dimension and take advantage of the unifying principle that citizenship as such inherently contains, as it can contribute to more environmentally responsible human actions on a global scale. As D. Špirko points out, we need to be aware of our own destructiveness and the responsibility we bear for the world – for all that we have created, and for everything that was given to us – for the life on Earth (Špirko 2012).

The current era of globalization is characterized by high interconnectedness and interdependence. We also observe that the intense and dynamic global changes – especially in the environment – taking place in recent decades, are mainly related to the exponential growth of the human population, the pursuit of unlimited economic growth, as well as the growth of material consumption (see Svitačová, Moravčíková 2017). All this contributes to the emergence of problems that affect the whole world to varying degrees. Global strategies in different areas are dynamically changing and the strategies for social change must face new challenges (see also Lysý 2016). Today, humanity and individuals have far-reaching opportunities to influence the development of a world in which nothing is far enough and almost no borders are insurmountable. As a result, the potential of environmental citizenship based on environmental awareness and responsibility is dynamically growing, and its importance is based precisely on the historical concept of citizenship and its unifying character.

This article is aimed at examining the historical development of the concept of citizenship from its ancient classical roots. The current form of citizenship has been shaped over time by developing ancient ideas, and gradually citizenship has been deprived of its exclusivity and made an essential part of human identity, which also equips man with a certain degree of belonging and responsibility for the common good. Such development has been influenced by republican and liberal

types of citizenship throughout history, and this distinction remains to this day. Furthermore, our main objective is to focus on exploring the citizenship in the context of the global environmental challenges and to examine the significance of the still emerging environmental dimension of citizenship, which takes citizens out of the boundaries of nation-states and equips them with a global identity.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The concept of citizenship continues to be an antagonistic and sensitive issue even today. Its understanding, interpretations and existing forms vary from country to country, from society to society and also from time to time. Citizenship has been an important part of political philosophy since antiquity, and contemporary ideas, as well as its definitions and delineations, are rooted in these early times, which have their origins in the Greek city-states and the Roman *res publica* (Pocock 1998, 35).

Looking at the type of citizenship of the polis, one of the first things we notice is its exclusivity. Citizens had a higher status than non-citizens. Women were deemed irrational and incapable of political participation, although a few thinkers, mainly Plato, disagreed. Plato favored the Spartan ideal of citizenship, associating it with warriors (from whom he did not isolate women), whose main duty was to prepare for war. He saw a key component of citizenship the adherence to the law, respect for the social and political system and internal self-control (see Plato 2009). On the other hand, Aristotle, although educated by Plato, had a very different vision, which still informs our contemporary understanding of citizenship. In his concept obligations were deeply connected with one's everyday life in the polis. He saw citizenship as a legally guaranteed role in creating and running a government (Aristotle 1984). Aristotle considered people predisposed "by nature" to live in a political system and to take

turns in governing. Unlike Plato, however, he believed that women were incapable of citizenship because it did not fit their nature. His citizenship was strongly exclusive – it applied only to adult and free Greek men who could rule and be ruled at the same time. Women, children, slaves and foreigners were excluded from this status and political participation (see Aristotle 1984).

For the overall development of citizenship the Roman concept of citizenship was also important. It was based on similar foundations as the Greek concept but had many distinctive features. It was not as exclusive as in Greek city-states and it applied to much wider circles. Even prisoners of war had the opportunity to obtain the so-called second category of Roman citizenship, whereby they gained the opportunity to participate in public life and also received the full protection of the law (see Hosking 2005). The Roman vision of citizenship placed a strong emphasis on law. J.G.A. Pocock sees this as a change in the nature of citizenship, which became more impersonal, universal and multifaceted (Pocock 1998). The Roman conception of citizenship was thus more complex; women, in particular, obtained more respect. As G. Hosking suggests, they were subsidiary citizens (Hosking 2005). Cicero's notion of citizenship, however, was closer Aristotle's. His conception of citizenship was based on civic virtues, which required living a public life instead of a private one and placing the interest of the republic before everything else, including oneself (see Tollenaar 2019).

From the ancient times to the present day, the concept of citizenship has undergone extensive development. It has been one of the central issues in political philosophy debates throughout. Since antiquity, two basic types of citizenship developed, namely the republican one, represented by the citizenship of the Greek city-states, and the liberal one, represented by the Roman citizenship. These have been further developed throughout history, but this division has persisted to the present day.

Feudalism and the domination of the Church in Europe influenced our understanding of citizenship until the Renaissance, when particularly in the Italian city-states the Greek and Roman concepts were revived and further developed. A significant change was that subjects became citizens – first of the city and later of the state. As M. Weber notes, being a citizen often meant not only participation in the selection of officials but also subordination to municipal law (see Weber 1998). Modern states began to take shape and citizenship was one of their prerequisites. Increasingly, the idea of citizens as individuals who voluntarily choose loyalty to the state, accept the status of citizenship with its rights and duties, became widespread. Significant in this period were also the ideas of N. Machiavelli: he was sceptical of social virtues, but his notion of citizenship required devoting time and resources to the republic, since no one can be a “private citizen” (Machiavelli 2012, 50-54). This is line with both Cicero and Aristotle and their requirement for a good citizen to live a public life. Going beyond them, Machiavelli saw both the nobility and the plebs as active participants in political life (see Machiavelli 2012; Weber 1998).

Citizenship has also received intense attention in modern political thinking and contractual theories. J. Locke oriented his entire vision of the social contract around the duty of the state to protect its citizens. He placed man, the citizen with his individual freedom, at the center of his attention and of the whole state. In this vision, a person acquires the citizenship of a particular nation by availing himself with the facilities provided by that country. This he called a tacit consent to citizenship (Locke 2011). In the development of the concept of citizenship the idea of popular sovereignty was important. It was advocated by J.J. Rousseau, along with strong feelings of nationalism. Rousseau’s ideas followed strongly on Aristotle’s (he also excluded women from citizenship and placed them in the private sphere so that men could serve in the public sphere). Citizenship for Rousseau was not a question of law, nor a question

of how to behave individually in order to be a good citizen. He sees it as a matter of social conditions. It is the central concept of his *Social Contract*, in which he requires the constant active participation of citizens in the governance of the state, through the general will – the collective will of all citizens – which is the source of law and makes citizens equal (Rousseau 2010).

Significant in this respect was also I. Kant's conception of citizenship, once again based on exclusivity. He distinguished between so-called passive citizens – enjoying minor benefits – and active citizens, defined in terms of gender and class. These were free and equal members of the state who participate in its existence and laws. However, Kant also introduced the idea of a so-called cosmopolitan citizenship. He called for states to unite in a federation, which was intended to support his ideal of a perpetual peace, where everyone would be part of this single federative entity governed by cosmopolitan law. He spoke of citizens of a universal state, with corresponding rights of citizens of the world (see Kant 2016).

When discussing citizenship exclusivity, a significant shift was marked by J.S. Mill. He introduced the notion of gender equality into the concept of citizenship: he believed that there should be no differences between men and women as both were capable of being citizens (Mill 2017, 128).

With the passing centuries and the spread of similar ideas, we observe that citizenship lost its exclusivity and it was no longer a matter of political action. J. Habermas points to this fact and thinks that modern democratic citizenship was reduced to a judicial protection and an expression of rules and law. Although the modern concepts of citizenship maintain the idea of participation in political life, this is limited mostly to the system of representative democracy. Habermas also emphasizes that citizenship has become more common, but it has lost value (Habermas 1991). Citizenship thus moved away from its Aristotelian understanding and gradually become more inclusive and democratic, aligned with rights and national belonging (Heater

2004). Since antiquity, the scope of citizenship rights has expanded to include more groups of people (Shafir 1998). The way citizenship is understood today is very much linked to the concept of the nation-state and to the assumption of shared values and identity.

3. FROM A NATIONAL TO A GLOBAL DIMENSION OF CITIZENSHIP

The development of the last decades, according to S. Krno, has resulted in the fact that the ideal citizen has become a homogenized, unilaterally oriented person, dependent on excessive consumption and unified artificial habits (Krno 2007, 433). However, as T. Marshall (Marshall 1950) highlights, citizenship requires a vital sense of community in terms of loyalty to a common community. Citizenship is perceived today as an important part of each individual's identity, as it represents a principle of imaginary equality and a way of combating social, political, cultural and other forms of exclusion (see Kastoryano 2005, 693-696; Bellamy 2008). It provides equal rights (at least formally) to enjoy the social goods provided by a given political society, but also implies (again formally) equal obligations in promoting and maintaining them.

The understanding of citizenship changed throughout history; the requirements for citizenship also changed within different societies as well as globally. Whereas until recently citizenship was associated mainly with the nation or territorial state, today, in addition to national citizenship, we also recognize the so-called supranational citizenship, according to which intergovernmental organisations have extended the concept of citizenship and apply it to all citizens of member countries. It is a type of secondary citizenship, directly dependent on the existence of national citizenship of a member state. The most well-known is the citizenship of the European Union characterized by rights guaranteed by two mutually exclusive entities. As stated in Article 8. of the *Treaty on European Union*, every citizen who holds the citizenship of a Member State is also a citizen of the European

Union (Council of the European Communities 1992, 15), which equips people primarily with additional rights and promotes a common European identity.¹ Habermas is concerned with the uniqueness of this identity. He perceives it as the basis for even higher world identity and world citizenship. He saw European Community as a model that he believed could be extended to the whole world in the future (Habermas 1994). Like Kant, however, he was thinking about world citizenship within the existence of a single world state.

In addition to transnational citizenship, we are experiencing the rise of new dimensions of citizenship expanding to different areas evolving in the context of social and global change. This concept is linked, above all, to the fact mentioned above that citizenship as such has a great unifying power. It binds people to the state and gives them a common identity (see Gross 1999). Thus, it can deeply connect people also within other even wider wholes. J. Carens refers to this feature as to the psychological dimension of citizenship (Carens 2000, 166), which inevitably influences the strength of the collective identity of a particular society. When many people demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to a particular community, social cohesion is strengthened and the identity is increased, which can motivate citizens to participate more actively in the life of that community. Therefore, in the context of a deepening globalization and the escalation of global environmental problems, we also observe the rise of global dimensions of citizenship, extending citizenship to the whole world, taking on the positive elements of the concept, leading to a kind of universal inclusiveness and transnationalism.

Some professionals doubt whether citizenship can become global when, as a state institution it assumes a reciprocal relationship between rights and duties and presupposes a relationship between rights and a particular territory. Citizens in the classical conception exist within

1 There are other similar institutes within various intergovernmental organizations, such as Commonwealth, MERCOSUR, etc.

the political boundaries of a state, and as long as there is no truly global state they consider it misleading to speak about a “global citizen” (see e.g., Isin, Turner 2007). Today, however, citizenship clearly transcends the boundaries of the state, because in the Anthropocene era human action has a global reach due to dynamics of enormous scale and technological advances. Therefore, it can no longer be defined within the boundaries of a single state or group of states.

Moreover, in contemporary political theory and practice we see an unstoppable rise of new global forms of citizenship as a result of the changes that nation-states are undergoing after the strengthening of the international dimension of politics (Valencia Sáiz 2005). Many authors also stress the decline of classical citizenship due to the weakening of nation-states as a result of the rise of global market forces. They argue that the weakening of state autonomy and the emergence of other arenas of decision-making and power beyond the control of the state are weakening the traditional ties between individuals and the state (Falk 2010). One emerging identity that is growing in importance, then, is global citizenship in its various forms, which, as R. Falk argues, may represent new forms of political identity reshaping the meaning of citizenship, creating multiple loyalties, and replacing monolithic conceptions of citizenship (Falk 2010).

G. Alexander argues that this kind of planetary citizenship is about identifying with the planet as a whole and with the whole humanity, about seeking to create a world based on cooperation rather than competition, with an economy driven by social and environmental needs rather than financial ones (Alexander 2004).

D. Held claims that one of the political challenges of the future will be that every citizen of the state will have to learn to become a cosmopolitan (global) citizen (Held 2000). This implies that citizenship is a multi-level concept covering four dimensions: rights, responsibilities, participation and identity (Delanty 1997).

A. Dobson suggests that the idea that citizenship rights and duties must be exercised only at the country level has become

increasingly unsustainable due to the intensification of the processes of globalization. There has been a growing awareness that individual actions have an impact that transcends national borders, and increasingly affect the global environment (Dobson 2003). The causes and consequences of environmental degradation are global. Therefore, the delimitation of environmental rights and responsibilities within national borders is not acceptable anymore. Dobson emphasizes that environmental problems transcend national borders and are linked to broader transnational processes associated with globalization (such as international travelling, trade, consumption) (Dobson 2003). A solution to this problem is inevitably linked to more transnational or global views of citizenship, which imply a sense of connectedness and responsibility for geographically distant places and people. H. Pallett is another scholar who emphasizes the recent boom of transnational and global forms of citizenship (Pallett 2017, 3) as a result of new reconceptualizations within current challenges. She states that there is a significant shift in the rise or emergence of so-called environmental virtues and responsibilities attached to this form of citizenship (Pallett 2017). Thus, in searching for effective solutions to the greatest environmental challenges humanity is facing, the roles of individual citizens are being actively discussed. Environmental citizenship is seen as the fundamental concept through which the roles of individual citizens are being shaped (see Dobson 2003; Bell 2005). In this context, new global forms of citizenship are also emerging in the environmental literature. These are: “environmental citizenship,” “ecological citizenship,” “sustainability citizenship,” “green citizenship” (Bell 2005), “environmentally sensible citizenship” (Hailwood 2005) or “environmental stewardship” (Barry 2002). This conceptual variety reflects both the complexity of the notion

of citizenship and of environmental issues. We suggest environmental citizenship as the concept that best covers all of the above.²

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP AS A NECESSITY ARISING FROM THE INTENSIFYING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Environmental citizenship, which encompasses the whole world and transcending the boundaries of states, regional groupings and continents, inherently leads people – citizens – to the idea that they are not only citizens of their countries, to which they feel more or less belonging, pride and responsibility, but that they are an essential part of the world as a whole.

Globalization is changing our understanding of the world, as well as environmental politics. It relates to environmental problems in two ways. First, environmental problems and their consequences are global. Therefore, solutions beyond the competence of nation-states are needed. Second, globalization can benefit a sustainable balance between the local and the global (Valencia Sáiz 2005, 136). Today, it “is possible to think and act globally and locally at the same time” (O’Riordan 2001, 237). The task is to understand this transformation of the world in the context of global environmental problems (Valencia Sáiz 2005). Environmental citizenship (or other designations of it) is precisely the way to proceed and it is also particularly important as a mechanism for inclusion (see Arias

2 Dobson however sees the model of ecological citizenship as potentially more effective in achieving change than environmental citizenship, which he argues is too closely associated with market mechanisms for pro-environmental behavior change. Thus, he sees it as a better alternative because it emphasizes responsibility and virtues, sometimes in opposition to market logic (Dobson 2003). Similarly, Barry questioned the appropriateness of environmental citizenship and proposed the notion of sustainability citizenship as a better alternative (Barry 2005). Sustainable citizenship, according to him, challenges consumption-based definitions of environmental citizenship by requiring engagement with the underlying structures that cause environmental degradation and injustice, rather than simply inculcating pro-environmental behavior.

Maldonado, Valencia Saíz 1998). Therefore, environmental citizens can play an active role in the world thanks to globalization and strong interconnectedness. This type of citizenship inherently encourages a positive collective environmental awareness, as well as greater environmental responsibility and activism for our common planet and its environment.

Environmental citizenship is therefore based on the idea that each individual can contribute to change (Young, Commins 2002). Promoting our self-acceptance as environmental citizens can also yield a more global view on our own existence (Mravcová 2017, 19-20).

D. Held underlines that environmental problems go beyond individual countries and, therefore, that citizenship as environmental citizenship can no longer be based on exclusive belonging to a particular territorial entity, but on some general rules, values and principles that are applicable globally and equally to all (see Held 2010).

Environmental citizenship, like global citizenship transcends national boundaries (citizenship beyond the nation-state). Non-territoriality is the key element leading to a kind of universal inclusivity and focus on environmental responsibility – one’s responsibility towards the environment and the world. Environmental citizenship does not have a unified determination and it is defined by different approaches, particularly in the field of political thought. This basic insight into environmental citizenship is introduced by Pallett. She describes it very simplistically as a combination of two concepts – “environment” and “citizenship,” thus linking the basic content of citizenship in the context of its national dimension, characterized mainly by rights and duties toward a particular community, including its surrounding environment (Pallett 2017, 1916). However, this is a very narrow understanding of this very complex term. A deeper insight is provided by Dobson, who describes environmental citizenship based on the relationship between the individual and the common good (Dobson 2007).

There are two main approaches to encouraging environmental citizenship: a participatory rights-based approach³ and a personal obligations-based approach.⁴ Apart from this, the definition of environmental citizenship and its practical implications are usually a combination of claiming rights and fulfilling obligations (see Melo-Escrihuela 2015). Also, most existing views lean towards emphasizing duties over rights,⁵ the requirement to cultivate environmental awareness, responsibility and literacy and the blurring of territorial belonging.

The prevalent opinion is still that, although environmental citizenship has long been theorized it is unclear what such citizenship entails in practice or what methods can be used to cultivate it (see also Schild 2016). As discussed above, the concept of citizenship originates in ancient Greece and Rome and it is a cornerstone of Western political philosophy. It is characterized by a division into two main streams – liberal and republican. Its modern conceptualizations have evolved together with the development of modern democracy and market society, and have adapted to the evolving global dimensions of citizenship, including the environmental one.

This is also relevant with respect to environmental citizenship. The liberal model emphasizes citizenship as a public status that secures the political, social and civil rights of each member of a community – including rights to environmental goods.⁶ The republican approach

3 Citizen's involvement in environmental decision-making is seen as crucial and must be incorporated into institutional reform (Melo-Escrihuela 2015).

4 At the heart of this approach is the definition of environmental citizenship as taking responsibility for one's actions and fulfilling personal commitments to protect the environment (Melo-Escrihuela 2015).

5 Dobson is also of the opinion that environmental (ecological) citizenship as a form of post-cosmopolitan citizenship emphasizes duties over rights (Dobson 2003).

6 The rights-based conception of citizenship advocated by T.H. Marshall can also easily be extended to the idea of environmental citizenship. Marshall's understanding of citizenship encompasses three dimensions: the development of civil rights (to civil freedoms and legal protection), political rights (to democratic participation) and social rights (to basic

emphasizes participatory rights in decision-making, deliberation, civic participation and a commitment to the public good (see Dagger 2002; Bell 2005; Barry 2008). At the heart of the republican view is the active virtuous citizen who acts for the common good. U. Beck stresses that cosmopolitan environmental citizenship emphasizes interconnectedness and interdependence on a global scale that transcends national boundaries (Beck 2010). Contemporary political thinking on environmental citizenship, then, adds to this traditional division new – environmental – content, insisting on new rights and responsibilities.

The core of the concept of environmental citizenship emphasizes that environmental protection is everyone's responsibility and that policies need to be based on decisions that minimize negative impact on the environment (see Tamby *et al.* 2010). This concept aims to redefine the relationship between man and nature, change or develop attitudes and behavior and encourage personal participation, while being fundamentally linked to environmental rights and responsibilities (see, among others, Dean 2001) as a specific type of rights and duties, and to the vision that everyone should be able to enjoy them equally. In this context, J. Barnett and his colleagues emphasize the need to look beyond the satisfaction of one's own immediate interests and to consider the well-being of those who live in other parts of the world, as well as the needs of those who will come after us (Barnett *et al.* 2005). This is closely related to the consequences of one's actions, so the environmental citizen should behave and act in such a way that his or her actions mitigate the consequences of environmental crisis and through environmental

social welfare). According to some authors, with the emergence of the environmental movement Marshall himself would certainly have added a fourth dimension to his conception of citizenship, namely environmental rights, which provide protection for the individual from the effects of environmental crises (see Newby 1996; Dean 2001).

responsibility, awareness and willingness participate in the protection of the common environment.

One of the problems with the global view of citizenship, however, is the fear of losing national identity and belonging. However, as R. Wonicki emphasizes, environmental citizenship does not require a rejection of the values and responsibilities of local communities or the importance of national identity. With respect to the environment, one's duty and responsibility to the local community and to the global community can be considered equivalent (Wonicki 2019, 59). In this way, national belonging actually overlaps or even equates with belonging to the global environment and both are inseparable from each other.

We lean toward the view of J. Barry and many others, who stress that environmental citizenship can contribute to developing a more sustainable society and world by transforming values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of individuals in favor of the environment – that is, individuals who consider themselves part of the evolving global environmental community (see Barry 2008, Mravcová 2019). Dobson defines environmental citizenship as pro-environmental behavior and action in both the public and private sector, based on the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, participation and the collaborative development of sustainability policies (Dobson 2007; 2010, 6). It is the active participation of citizens in various decisions toward sustainability. In this context, Dobson highlights that local initiatives have special potential because every human action has an impact on the environment, including local ones. The main purpose of the environmental citizen is therefore to live and act in a way that minimizes the negative ecological footprint, and thus to live sustainably so that others can live well too (Dobson 2007). As R. Sťahel argues, “environmentally sustainable care should be founded on conscious self-limitation, knowing that one's welfare and security cannot be secured at the expense of others” (Sťahel 2017, 451).

He also directs its vision of the environmental citizen toward the civic virtues of republicanism. He regards justice as the most important virtue, which he considers in relation with the environment and the individual ecological footprint (Dobson 2003).⁷ Thus, he states that global environmental duties extend their scope beyond republican virtues and the motivation for environmental action lies in the virtue of social and environmental justice leading to environmental care (Dobson 2003, 61-63). J. Connelly also examines virtues in the context of environmental citizenship and defines them as character traits that motivate a person to realize environmental goals (Connelly 2006, 51). Connelly thinks environmental citizenship does not require acquiring new virtues. Traditional virtues suffice to achieve an environmentally sustainable society. Similarly, Connelly and Barry think that by cultivating the virtues associated with environmental citizenship, citizens become active and more willing to fulfill their responsibilities (Connelly 2006, 66; Barry 2005). According to this view environmental citizenship requires an active role of the states, which must set the appropriate conditions and guide citizens toward such virtues and activism. Achieving environmental goals and sustainability is easier and more effective if it is supported by policies and based on environmental duties and specific societal rules (such as conservation and recycling) carried out by all citizens. As a political activity, environmental citizenship thus reflects mostly the traditional republican virtues, such as self-discipline, loyalty and commitment to common principles.

It is therefore widely accepted that environmental citizenship can be one of the key drivers of sustainability, a green and circular economy and a low-carbon society as urgent requirements of the contemporary world. It is seen as an important factor in addressing global

⁷ It is the ecological footprint that according to Dobson and many others replaces the state and its boundaries and serves as the political space of environmental citizenship (see Dobson 2003, 99).

environmental issues – a concept with potentially significant impact in many different areas (see Reis 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that environmental citizenship offers a normative basis and a set of requirements for how citizens should behave and act to reduce their negative impact on the environment. However, its theory and potential applications encounter many shortcomings and limitations associated with a still unclear understanding of the possibilities of global belonging. One of the most relevant difficulties, as pointed out by J. Wolf, is that changes done by individuals may not be large enough to have a real and effective impact (Wolf 2007, 7). On this issue, J. Valdivielso argues that many motivated and active citizens do not have enough opportunities to practise environmental behavior adequately (Valdivielso 2005, 244). There has been little research in this area that has focused on environmental citizenship in real life or in the context of specific environmental problems. One such research project was implemented in Canada to study climate change. The data demonstrate that realizing environmental citizenship motivates individuals to respond to climate change. We understand that such actions are influenced by many other variables, notably standard of living, awareness and perceived intensity of the problem (see Wolf *et al.* 2009). Therefore, more active state policies seem necessary.

Despite its many limitations, the concept of environmental citizenship already has its integral place in the world and the potential to significantly influence human motivation, behavior and actions to a greater extent than other approaches. Combined with an appropriate degree of political will, environmental citizenship can contribute to implement the necessary changes to mitigate the environmental crisis, as well as increase the likelihood of sustaining life on Earth into the future.

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