

PROMOTING ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Carme Melo
PhD Candidate
Keele University

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Abstract

Citizenship has been a hot topic of debate within the green literature since the 1990s. Concepts like ecological and environmental citizenship capture the linkage between green politics and theories of citizenship. Although a significant number of contributions to the meaning of ecological/environmental citizenship have been made, their practical implications remain under-theorized. With the purpose of addressing this gap, my paper explores the conditions necessary for ecological citizenship to flourish. While pointing to the connection between questions of meaning and promotion, I seek to move debates from discussions on the theoretical concept to the possibilities for its cultivation. Two main trends aimed at fostering green notions of citizenship are highlighted and analyzed, namely, the rights approach and the personal duty approach. I explain why I find these two tendencies problematic, and contend that a third approach on the issue of promotion is needed, that is, one that transcends the individual. My claim is that a civil society perspective has to be introduced when thinking about the practice of ecological citizenship. Finally, I conclude by advancing a framework – based on political agency – for further research on the obstacles and possibilities for the promotion of ecological citizenship.

Introduction

The language of ecological or environmental citizenship¹ has been spoken since the 1990s, and throughout the 2000s, in policy documents, academia and institutional campaigns. At the theoretical level, discussions on the topic have to be contextualized in

¹ Most literature treats environmental, ecological and, to a lesser extent, green citizenship synonymously. However, assuming that there is a distinction between environmental and ecological citizenship, and accepting the difference between ecologism and environmentalism – to which I will return – I deliberately regard the term “ecological citizenship” as the topic of this paper. Despite this choice, and although the distinction between ecological and environmental citizenship will become important in my analysis, I am concerned here with raising the issue of the promotion of ecological citizenship, rather than the normative dimensions and definitions of the term. In addition, since the earlier sections of this contribution seek to present a critical literature review on the question of how to foment ecological citizenship, I will use both terms to reflect the diverse terminology displayed in the literature.

the revival of interest in citizenship studies, which started in the 1900s². Political ecology was not oblivious to those debates. After a “first wave” in eco-political literature – from the end of the 1980s till the early 1990s – concerned with the ideological foundations of green politics, a “second wave” – from the mid-1990s till the present – aimed to develop the movement’s own interpretation of classical themes and concepts in political theory, such as democracy, justice and citizenship (Dobson, 2000, ix; Valencia Sáiz, 2005, 171). The debate on ecological or environmental citizenship has to be framed within the second-wave literature.

Despite the growing widespread use of the terms ecological and environmental citizenship, the relationship between green political thought and citizenship remains under-explored, and the concepts of ecological and environmental citizenship under-theorized (Valencia Sáiz, 2005, 170; 2004; Dobson, 2003, 85; MacGregor, 2006a, 85; Dean, 2001, 490). Such lack of attention might be due to the fact that most approaches to sustainability focus on regulatory and economic reforms – e.g. ‘sticks-and-carrots’ measures, which assume that humans are rational beings acting only according to self-interest. Nevertheless, there is another option, which has been conceived both as an alternative as well as a complement to institutional and market transformations. That third option is citizenship (Bell, 2005, 179). The making of sustainable societies requires more than changes in behaviour – achieved, for instance, by fiscal measures, such as charges in electricity consumption. Deeper shifts in people’s attitudes to the environment are needed, and that is what the “citizenship approach to sustainability”

² Among the reasons for the renewed interest in the notion of citizenship in contemporary political theory and democratic practice, Valencia Sáiz (2004, 88-89) points to the changing role of the nation-state and the evidence of the international dimension of politics – as a result of phenomena such as economic globalization, migrations and transboundary environmental problems. Valencia Sáiz explains the increased interest in the concept of citizenship in light of the need to move beyond state-based politics and towards global or cosmopolitan forms of governance. See also Valencia Sáiz, (2005, 167-168). However, the proliferation of citizenship theories can also be related to the search for political identity and community bonds in individualist, post-industrial, neoliberal societies.

seeks to achieve (Dobson and Valencia Sáiz, 2005, 157-158; Dobson and Bell 2006, 1-4).

The meaning of the term ecological or environmental citizenship is not univocal, since it is still an infant concept. Indeed, it gains different nuances depending on the theoretical framework taken as a starting point, or on the purpose of the institution attempting to develop it. There have been a number of suggestions as to the different ways in which citizenship and the environment might be related, namely “ecological citizenship” (Christoff, 1996a; Dobson, 2005; 2003; Smith, 1998; Curtin, 2002; 1999) “green citizenship” (Dean, 2001; Smith, 2005), “environmental citizenship” (Dobson and Bell, 2006; Luque, 2005), “sustainability citizenship” (Barry, 2006), “environmentally reasonable citizenship” (Hailwood, 2005) or “ecological stewardship” (Barry, 2002; 1999), among others. This conceptual diversity, far from being a mere terminological issue, reflects the complexity of the dimensions surrounding the citizenship and environment issue. Indeed, there are specific situations in which a particular notion of ecological citizenship – or one of its features – is in direct conflict with another. For instance, for some authors, activities such as recycling or sustainable consumption would fall into the category of ecological citizens’ duties and obligations (Dobson, 2003; Barry, 1999), whereas others would regard them as private choices, as personal rights to live a green life (Bell, 2005). These sometimes conflicting approaches to the greening of citizenship make it difficult to offer a generalizable definition of the terms environmental or ecological citizenship. Besides, that is a task which falls outside the scope of this paper. Rather than looking at the substantive and normative elements of ecological/environmental, I want to focus on their practical implications.

Debates on citizenship in green political theory have culminated in a significant amount of work done in recent years, but the practical aspects of ecological citizenship have not been explored in detail. Discussion has focused above all on the nature of the

concept and, especially, on whether there is a distinctive type of green citizenship, or, on the contrary, whether environmental/ecological citizenship can be accommodated within models of citizenship advanced by existing schools of thought³. However, especially since 2005, some green political thinkers have addressed the issue of how to promote ecological/environmental citizenship, and have looked at the obstacles and possibilities that current neoliberal democracies and global capitalist economies offer for its practice. A few authors have attempted to institutionalize ecological citizenship through suggesting reforms in existing socio-liberal legislations and political processes. As a result, the focus has been on the extension of citizenship rights – both procedural and substantive (Bell, 2005; Hailwood, 2005; van Steenberg, 1994; Twine, 1994) – and on the connection between ecological/environmental citizenship and the widening of democratic participation (Christoff, 1996a; Barry, 2002; 1999).

There is a different body of literature, less concerned with political processes and more centred in the notions of responsibility and duty (Dobson, 2005; 2003; Christoff, 1996a; Barry, 1999⁴; Light, 2002; Newby, 1996; Curtin, 2002; 1999; Dean, 2001; Smith, 1998). Ecological/environmental citizenship is therein related to the assumption of responsibility for one's acts and the fulfilment of duties to protect the environment. Some theorists have explored the possibilities of articulating a duty based model of ecological citizenship in the economic sphere, through practices such as ecological modernization (Christoff, 1996b), the social economy (Smith, 2005),

³ Dobson (2005; 2003) and Valencia Sáiz (2005; 2004) claim that ecological citizenship is a genuinely new type of citizenship which cannot be expressed by simply transforming or “greening” notions of citizenship held by the different political and philosophical traditions, namely liberalism, civic republicanism and cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, Bell (2005) and Hailwood (2005) believe that the notion of liberal citizenship can be modified – through an exercise of immanent critique of liberalism – so as to accommodate a green liberal account of citizenship. Other theorists, like Barry (2006; 1999) and Light (2002), advance a republican type of citizenship in which the notions of virtue and common good allow for a strong connection between republicanism and environmental concerns, as ecological republicanism stresses (Curry, 2000).

⁴ Although Barry and Christoff favour the assumption of responsibility towards the environment and the acquisition of an ecological consciousness, their theories will be included in the section on rights, since they defend the necessary reform of political processes – especially representative democracy – as a means to promote ecological citizenship.

sustainable consumption (Seyfang, 2005) or ethical investment (Carter and Huby, 2005). The key question in these attempts has been whether such economic activities allow the fulfilment of ecological citizenship duties. Others have found the site for the promotion of a green account of citizenship in the classroom environmental education. Discussions on this terrain have focused on the type of knowledge that would lead to the practice of ecological/environmental citizenship (Carlsson and Jensen, 2005; Gough and Scott, 2005), and have addressed the issue of whether liberal democracies – allegedly neutral as far as normative assumptions and conceptions of the good life are concerned – could legitimately encourage in public schools the type of environmental education that would make ecological/environmental citizenship, and related values, flourish in society (Hailwood, 2005; Dobson, 2003; Barry, 2006). Finally, it has been argued that ecological citizenship could be fomented by means of environmental activism. Thus, Horton (2006) looks at the everyday practices of members of the green movement's organizations as an attempt to illustrate how environmental citizens live their lives, while Latta (2007) pictures environmental justice activists as ecological citizens. All these initiatives to foster ecological/environmental citizenship through the economy, the education system and activism have not been systematically explored, since the emphasis, as far as the promotion of ecological/environmental citizenship is concerned, has been placed on rights, democratic processes and personal duties.

The participatory rights approach and the individual or personal duty trend are the main tendencies in the literature on the promotion of ecological/environmental citizenship. On the one hand, it is argued that green notions of citizenship should be institutionalized and that, to do so, environmental substantive (e.g. right to clean water) and procedural rights (e.g. rights of information on environmental issues) are needed. From this point of view, ecological/environmental citizenship is related to a participatory democratic model. On the other hand, there has been an interest on

citizens' voluntary assumption of individual duties as a means to achieving sustainability, as well as global and inter-generation justice⁵; the observance of these duties has been identified with ecological citizenship activity. Despite how ecological citizenship is conceived, it seems that both its understanding and its practical implications are always related either to claiming and enjoying rights, or to fulfilling duties – or involve both rights and duties. This connection evokes the meaning of citizenship, which always involves activity exercised through rights claiming, rights of political participation or the fulfilment of duties and obligations – if not a combination of all these dimensions⁶.

It is then possible to offer a definition of ecological/environmental citizenship by choosing some of the features which are part of the notion of citizenship itself. This is the approach I take in this paper; I explain what ecological citizenship is by discussing one of the conceptual dichotomies - rights and duties – which form the concept of citizenship. So rather than trying to formulate a more general and univocal definition, which will always be contested and confronted with others, I will focus on one dimension – which, obviously, might be contested too, but which reduces the coverage of this paper in the light of my concern for promotion, and not on definitional aspects.

In the following sections, I pick up the thread of the arguments developed so far in order to offer a critical review of what I regard to be the main trends in the promotion of ecological citizenship: the participatory rights approach and the individual duty

⁵ The question of inter-species justice or ecological justice in relation to ecological/environmental citizenship has not been, to my knowledge, addressed

⁶ However, my interest in rights and duties does not imply that I regard ecological/environmental citizenship as being *just* about these dimensions. Ecological/environmental citizenship also refers to the place where citizenship happens or where citizenship activity is carried on: the local community, the nation-state, the world (See MacGregor, 2006a for a classification of green theories of citizenship based on issues of scale). The way in which green citizenship contributes to the development of ecological and political identities could also be explored (Tomashow, 1996; Hilson, 2001). Environmental/ecological citizenship is also about which spheres of life become domains for citizens' activity: the public or the private, or both? Finally, green discussions on citizenship also involve the concept of virtue: do virtues play a key role, and, if so, which virtues count as the virtues of ecological citizens? All these are issues concerning the meaning of citizenship; but, at the same time, they shape the direction debates about promotion might take.

approach. My purpose is to explain that both tendencies have limitations in terms of effectively contributing to the enhancement of ecological citizenship – a critical and deconstructive exercise – and to roughly indicate possible alternative understandings – a more constructive task. These include the idea of linking ecological citizenship to civil society, something that has already been proposed (Barry 2006). However, I explain why my interest in civil society, and the way I connect it to ecological citizenship, is different. In the final section, I develop a conceptual framework – based on political agency and on the identification of three possible agents for transformation: the state, the green state and civil society – and propose its use for the analysis of the promotion of ecological citizenship and as a means to start thinking about the practical implications of ecological/environmental citizenship.

Rights, Democracy and the Environment: Environmental Citizenship as a Status

The increased interest in theories of citizenship and the reform of liberal representative institutions, so as to build more participatory democracies, are part of the green objective of creating sustainable societies. There seems to be consensus among green theorists that the achievement of the aims of political ecology has to be accompanied by a process of democratization – and not just by a move toward more sustainable practices. The general assumption is, as Barry (1996, 116) puts it, that “the more democratic a society is, the more likely it is that sustainability be enhanced”. Citizens’ involvement in environmental decision making is seen as crucial, and therein lies the necessary revision of liberal institutions. The participatory rights approach to the promotion of environmental/ecological citizenship has to be read in this context.

Part of the debate about environmental citizenship conceived as a status and promoted through rights has focused on the reconciliation of the ideas and political

theory of liberalism with the principles underlying environmental sustainability. From this point of view, environmental citizenship would be promoted through the extension of citizenship rights, so as to add an environmental dimension to the list of civil, political and social rights (Bell, 2005; Hailwood, 2005; van Steenbergen, 1994; Twine, 1994). The compatibility between the alleged neutrality of the liberal state and the promotion of both environmental citizenship and sustainability has been a key issue in such attempts.

Attempts to bring liberalism and green politics closer entail a redefinition of the liberal notion of citizenship, which usually takes the shape of an immanent critique of liberal political thought. Such critique aims to prove that liberalism can – and should – subscribe to a view that is less property and market orientated and that it can be placed in a position capable of respecting nature, without breaking its commitment to state neutrality⁷.

In fact, Derek Bell (2005) points out that the main problem for a liberal approach to environmental citizenship is the conception of nature as property in liberal theory. His alternative is that liberal citizens should view nature as a provider of basic needs and as “a subject about which there is disagreement” (2005: 185). From these particular understandings of nature, he argues, it is possible to deduce a series of liberal environmental citizenship rights, with their correlative duties, both of which to be regulated and protected by legislations. Bell claims that, from a conception of the environment as a provider of basic needs, it is possible to deduce two types of rights. On the one hand, he refers to substantial environmental rights, such as the right to clean water, and, on the other hand, to procedural environmental rights to defend existing substantive rights and to campaign for the establishment of new rights.

⁷ See, for instance, Hailwood (2004) and Stephens (2001). Hailwood introduces the “otherness” view of nature into liberalism while Stephens tries to overcome liberal atomism and instrumentalism by reinterpreting John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism in a green way.

As a result of his second conception of the environment – as a subject about which there is disagreement – Bell suggests that environmental liberal citizens should have the right to take part in environmental policy-making and decision-making processes as well as personal rights that allow them to be greens and to join an environmental organization; that is, personal rights to protect and promote the environment. It is important to highlight here that Bell claims that environmental citizens also have the right not to be greens and not to engage in any activity to defend nature, for being an environmental citizen does not require individuals to be greens or to actively participate in activities seeking to protect the environment. Despite his emphasis on rights, duties are not irrelevant for Bell; actually, his “liberal environmental citizens” have duties correlative to rights. The main duty is to obey just laws, that is, those laws democratically made directly by voters or indirectly via the parliament. Bell acknowledges that, in so far as environmental citizens are conceived as citizens of the planet earth, the first duty should be to promote environmental global justice⁸. This is, on the contrary, what ecological citizens’ duties in the personal duty approach aim at. But, from Bell’s point of view, this would be too demanding a task, as citizens could spend every hour, every day of their lives fighting injustice and there still would be a lot more to do. For Bell, we are not obliged to promote justice unless there is a law telling us to do so, and promoting just arrangements means no more and no less than promoting just laws.

Other examples of the participatory rights approach are those provided in the work of theorists like John Barry and Peter Christoff⁹. Barry (2002; 1999) argues that

⁸ That is his specific environmental instantiation of the liberal principle that liberal citizens have the duty to further just arrangements not yet established when that can be done without too much cost, as enunciated by John Rawls in his Theory of Justice.

⁹ Both Barry and Christoff argue for notions of ecological citizenship centred on duties; therefore, their work would also qualify as an example of the individual duty approach that will be illustrated in the next section. For them, ecological citizenship refers to the acceptance of responsibility for fellow citizens and for the environment but, in their view, the best way to assume such responsibility – or to act according to

reforming the existing liberal political institutions is not enough. He instead proposes a deliberative democracy which would involve a re-organization of the whole economic system and the state machinery¹⁰. Deliberative democracy has been described as “the practice of public reasoning”, in which “participants make proposals, attempt to persuade others, and determine the best outcomes and policies based on the arguments and reasons fleshed out in public discourse” (Scholsberg et al., 2006, 216). The distinctive feature of deliberation is the open and equal discussion in which participants are given equal treatment, respect and opportunities (Saward, 2001, 564)¹¹. In so far as deliberative politics take into account citizens’ preferences, and given that it focuses on the education and formation of such preferences, it has been argued that deliberative institutions provide a good framework for ecological citizenship to be cultivated on the basis of democratic and bottom-up grounds¹².

In contrast, Christoff (1996a) rejects the deliberative democratic solution and offers instead several alternative models. For him, ecological citizenship is to be promoted as an institution for participation in environmental decision making of all those affected by ecological problems. This includes the representation of the interests of future generations and of the environment itself. He offers various options: the creation of regional parliaments; referendums held among all the citizens in the

such responsibility – is active involvement in political processes, especially in environmental decision making.

¹⁰ The question on whether deliberative democracy complements and strengthens liberal representative democracy, or, on the contrary, replaces it, remains open. Barry (1999) sees deliberative institutions as a supplement to representative ones; he believes that the exercise of an active type of citizenship, like ecological citizenship, can act as a means to bring participatory and representative forms of democracy closer. Other theorists, like Dryzek (2000), believe that deliberative democracy needs to be critical to power structures, including the liberal state and its institutions.

¹¹ This brief description of the distinctive features of deliberative democracy might appear too much a generalization, since there are different, and, often, contradictory, conceptions of deliberative democracy. For instance, deliberative democratic theorists disagree over who should participate in the deliberative process; the meaning of the “rationality” that should be deployed in debates; the collective aim of deliberation as well as the individual or citizen expectation, and over the adequate terrain for deliberation, among other issues. For an overview of such debates, see Saward (2001).

¹² A large amount of work has been dedicated to explore the relationship between deliberative democracy and political ecology. See, for instance, Barry, 1996; 1999; Dryzek, 1994; 2000; Eckersley, 2000; 2002; 2004; Dobson, 1996; Smith, 2003.

countries concerned by a specific environmental issue; or, alternatively, the constitution of a flexible electorate with a changing composition according to the nature of the specific question under consideration (Christoff, 1996a, 156).

In most of the above-mentioned proposals, ecological/environmental citizenship is seen as a mechanism of inclusion and political participation. As a result, the stress is placed on the rights of access to information and participation, as well as democratic models more inclusive and participatory than representative democracy – e.g. deliberative democracy. Thus, ecological citizenship is articulated as a status that would be guaranteed by virtue of enshrining environmental substantive and procedural rights in constitutions and laws. In this respect, the 1998 Aarhus Convention¹³ can be taken as an example of how environmental procedural rights might be institutionalized in legal systems, since it establishes three different groups of rights: information rights about environmental concerns, rights of participation in policy-making and rights of access to justice. The Convention also illustrates how a rights-based conception of environmental citizenship could be instantiated.

Attempts to increase citizens' participation in decisions concerning the environment, as well as projects to strengthen existing democratic institutions are, undoubtedly, part of what ecological or environmental citizenship should be about. Nevertheless, the promotion of these green types of citizenship as mechanisms for political participation has a number of problems that should be considered. Firstly, there are issues concerning motivation and citizens' material possibilities to exercise their rights of participation. It seems difficult, for a variety of reasons, to see all citizens interested in environmental issues and in designing environmental policies. Some

¹³ Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe framework on 25 June 1998 in Aarhus, Denmark. See www.unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf for full text in English.

people might not have the time to get involved in democratic processes – for instance, due to gender inequality and unbalanced distribution of socially necessary labour¹⁴. Others lack the necessary resources and, in so far as they do not have their basic needs covered, they cannot take part in political life. In other words, citizenship can be exclusive since some people do not even have the chances to live as citizens, because of material inequalities disguised under the formal equality that the citizenship status grants. Injustice and social inequalities are obstacles to the exercise of citizenship rights. So, in the end, it may happen that just a minority of citizens can take decisions to act sustainably.

However, even if a large number of citizens do get involved in collective decision making, ecological outcomes will not be guaranteed¹⁵. Greens usually argue that if people have better access to information, and if they enjoy various and different opportunities to take part in decision-making processes, citizens' participation in public life as well as common governance of public issues will increase. This is seen as crucial in the environmental context, where the key idea is that sustainability will only be achieved through increased cooperation by citizens and by people from different societies working together. But a common objection to green demands for more political participation – which comes often from within the green movement and even from green deliberative democrats¹⁶ – is that it cannot guarantee that ecological objectives will be achieved. This is a key debate within green politics, since the relationship between political ecologism and democracy has always been problematic;

¹⁴ This argument is part of the well-known feminist distrust toward the concept of citizenship (See Philips, 1993 and Voet, 1998 for a feminist analysis of the gender-biased elements of classical citizenship theory). MacGregor (2006a; 2006b) offers a feminist critique of notions of ecological citizenship based on active participation in public life and the assumption of personal responsibility.

¹⁵ This is not to say that citizenship in general and, particularly, ecological or environmental citizenship are conceived merely as instruments for the achievement of sustainable societies. The intrinsic value of citizenship is acknowledged. But my contention is, at the same time, that citizenship has to be placed within a collective project for socio-political transformation, as will be argued in the next section.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Smith, 2003 and 2005.

in so far as green politics aims at the creation of sustainable societies, results are privileged over processes. There is, then, a conflict between adherence to democratic procedures and ecological ends. Once overcome the authoritarian trend of early environmentalism, political ecology has totally embraced democratic politics. The paradox is, however, that citizens' might democratically decide to keep on sustaining the unsustainable.

It can be further objected that the rights of information, participation and access to justice – granted, for instance, by the Aarhus Convention – are procedural rights, not substantive rights¹⁷. The key point here is that even justice is regarded as a procedural right. This is a feature of liberal democratic theory: justice applies to procedures, not to outcomes. Agyeman and Evans argue that such a procedural rights-based approach “do[es] not necessarily imply any real changes in levels of social inclusion or social justice” (2005:196)¹⁸. This neglect of social issues applies to Bell's conception of liberal environmental citizenship.

On the other hand, in order to participate in environmental decision making processes, citizens need to have access to reliable information about ecological problems, their causes and consequences. This relates to debates on the production of the relevant knowledge and the diffusion of information. There is a controversy in political ecology related to how environmental information, including the concept of “nature” itself, is produced. Is it an exclusive concern of science, technology and

¹⁷ Tim Hayward (2004; 2002; 2001; 2000) is one among those who have worked extensively on the concept of environmental rights. He argues that the right to a healthy environment – e.g. clean water and air – is a human right and therefore should be enshrined in all constitutions. Substantive environmental rights are highly problematic insofar as they need to be justified – why do we have to protect the environment? – and defined – what does clean water mean?. On the contrary, procedural rights have a different nature. Derek Bell defines them as the rights to defend existing substantive rights. This includes the right to complain when a substantive right is infringed, the right to accessible and understandable information and the right to participate in policy-making and decision-making mechanisms (Bell, 2005, 186-187).

¹⁸ Agyeman and Evans (2006) are critical of the concept of ecological citizenship. They believe that the language of “environmental justice” is more adequate to capture the sort of demands related to ecological citizenship. However, as Latta (2007, 386) suggests, “environmental justice can be read *in terms of* a politics of citizenship”.

bureaucracy, or do citizens and non governmental organizations have any role to play? Should it be informed by facts, or values, or both? Do scientists have power over politicians or do politicians dominate scientists? (Latour, 2004; Forsyth, 2002). John Dryzek (1993) observes a shift from “scientism” to a more discursive system, which allows the participation of a plurality of actors. In this sense, Douglas Torgerson (1986) and Frank Fischer (1993; 2000) refer to the possibility of developing mechanisms – guaranteed by participatory rights included in constitutions and laws – to integrate experts and citizens, to exchange information, evaluate projects and advise legislators. The term “citizen science”, which refers to knowledge and expertise acquired through direct experience, has also emerged (Fischer, 2000). However, there is still disagreement regarding whether “citizen science” and social or locally based knowledge are more effective than expert knowledge, in terms of facing environmental problems. In any case, this uncertainty compromises citizens’ meaningful participation in environmental policy making based on rights of access to information.

As a means of concluding the rights approach to ecological/environmental citizenship it can be noted that this trend gives great importance to the individual, while neglecting the collective aspect that green notions of citizenship should embody. Since citizens might encounter difficulties – e.g. time, resources, motivation - , which prevent them from exercising their rights of participation, it appears necessary to introduce a focus on social issues and a collective perspective.

Ecological citizenship and personal duty: the privatization of environmental responsibility

The second tendency I have identified as far as the promotion of ecological/environmental citizenship is concerned is what might be called the personal

duty or lifestyle change approach (Dobson, 2005; 2003; Christoff, 1996a; Barry, 1999¹⁹; Light, 2002; Newby, 1996; Curtin, 2002; 1999; Dean, 2001; Smith, 1998). Andrew Dobson is perhaps the most representative theorist of this trend, especially since the publication of his *Citizenship and the Environment* in 2003, a monographic work on the concept of ecological citizenship and some of its practical implications. He develops an interesting distinction between environmental and ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2003, 88-90).²⁰ Dobson uses the term environmental citizenship when attempting to deal with the relationship between citizenship and sustainability from a liberal point of view. Environmental citizenship stresses the importance of human environmental rights in the constitutional context, together with procedural and participatory environmental rights as a means of achieving sustainability. This is a state territory-based conception of citizenship practised exclusively in the public sphere. Its aims are the inclusion of environmental concerns and widening of citizens' participation in the environmental decision-making processes and governance. Environmental citizenship can be, thus, read as an extension of liberal citizenship seeking the introduction of an environmental dimension in the citizenship status²¹. On the contrary, ecological citizenship is based on non-contractual responsibility, and duties that go beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. It gives importance to virtues and is conducted both in the private as

¹⁹ Although Barry and Christoff favour the assumption of responsibility towards the environment and the acquisition of an ecological consciousness, their theories were included in the previous section, since they defend the necessary reform of decision making processes as a means to promote ecological citizenship.

²⁰ Barry (2005) makes a similar distinction between environmental citizenship and sustainability citizenship. The differentiation between environmental and ecological citizenship, and between environmental and sustainability citizenship, can be contextualized in a broader distinction between ecology or green politics and environmentalism. For an account of such a distinction, see, among others, Dobson (2000: 2-12); Bookchin (1980: 77-78); Eckersley (1996: 234).

²¹ Dobson believes ecological citizenship cannot be spoken in the language of any of the existing theories of citizenship, namely liberal, civic republican and cosmopolitan. He therefore develops "post-cosmopolitanism" as the new framework needed to capture his distinctive conception of citizenship. His claim that ecological citizenship cannot be defined in terms of dominant models of citizenship has been objected on various grounds. There is an illustrating debate between Dobson and Hayward in *Environmental Politics*, vol. 15, n.3, 2006. Since this controversy refers more to the meaning of ecological citizenship than to the promotion, I am unable to echo it here. Similarly, the reasons offered by Dobson to justify his claim that ecological citizenship is different from cosmopolitan understandings of citizenship fall outside the scope of this paper, since this question is related to the theoretical concept of ecological citizenship and not to its practical articulation.

well as in the public sphere. While ecological citizenship is aimed at promoting global and environmental justice, environmental citizenship is focused just on the environment, as it doesn't take into account the socio-political and economic aspects of the ecological crisis²². In this respect, ecological citizenship differs from environmental citizenship in that the former envisages an alternative society that is not only sustainable but also just²³, and aims at the fulfilment of citizenship political duties in order to secure justice. If one follows Dobson's characterisation, the proposals presented in the previous section of this paper would be theories of environmental, rather than ecological, citizenship.

The emphasis on obligations and responsibility is not just a trend in green theories of citizenship but also dominates the broader field of eco-political thought²⁴. Drawing on Gérard Delanty (1997, 294-295), who claims that the idea of responsibility has been detached from conservative ideology and is being fostered by new social movements, Ángel Valencia (2005, 169-170) has pointed to the contribution of environmental political thought to concepts of citizenship based on obligation and responsibility. Similarly, Mark Smith places (1998) ecological citizenship at the heart of what he refers to as "the new politics of obligation".

The duty based approach to citizenship and the environment acknowledges the existence of citizens' environmental rights, especially of human environmental rights – e.g. right to a healthy and liveable environment – or the right to have enough ecological space (Dobson, 2003); but the stress is placed on citizens' personal duties.

²² That does not apply though to Hailwoods's liberal characterization of environmental citizenship, that is, his "environmentally reasonable citizenship" (2005). Besides exclusively environmental issues, he takes into account the existence of inequalities in wealth distribution and power as a broader focus for environmental citizens.

²³ This assumes the idea that there can not be sustainability without justice, which does not necessarily mean that justice is to be taken as instrumental for achieving ecological goals.

²⁴ Ángel Valencia (2005, 169-170) suggests that the stress on duty and responsibility in green political theory stems from the fact that, for greens, the environment and future generations are subjects of rights; hence the collective responsibility that humans have to secure those rights. Another factor contributing to a green political discourse based on responsibility is the global nature of environmental problems and their consequences, which demand the establishment of shared obligations and duties.

These duties and obligations arise from citizens' moral responsibility towards the non-human nature, fellow citizens and future generations – in Dobson (2003), though, this responsibility is explicitly political; it is based on causal relationships or relationships of injustice, triggered by the impact of one's acts on the environment and on other people's lives, which makes these duties be citizen obligations, rather than moral obligations. They are also global duties that transcend the territorial boundaries of the nation-state and embrace the private sphere – together with the public sphere – as a site for citizen activity. Examples of these type of duties and obligations include recycling, boycotting unethical and unsustainable products or engaging in pro-environmental campaigning.

This way to promote ecological citizenship based on the voluntary assumption of personal duty can be objected on a number of grounds. For instance, MacGregor (2006; 2005) has pointed at the “gender blindness” of notions of ecological citizenship, which place the emphasis on individual citizens' duties in so far as they assume citizens' equality – and, specifically, gender equality – and a fair division of labour that would allow all citizens the necessary time to fulfil such personal duties. Furthermore, green political thought, and most notions of ecological citizenship, has been revealed to be inherently instrumental. It has been argued that, especially in duty based approaches to ecological citizenship, citizens are regarded as instruments for the achievement of the ends of ecologism, while the intrinsic value of citizenship (MacGregor and Szerzynski 2003), as well as its democratic dimension (Latta, 2007), are often neglected. In what follows, however, I will focus on a different objection to notions of ecological citizenship based on personal duty: that they foment an individualistic understanding of citizenship and politics and that they encourage the privatization of environmental responsibility.

Underlying understandings of ecological citizenship and of the possibilities for its promotion based on the voluntary assumption of responsibility is the presupposition

that sustainability can be achieved through the summation of individual acts. In the above proposals, citizens are regarded as the main actors for social and environmental change and asked to do their bit for the environment, to abandon certain commodities by bringing about changes in personal lifestyles, such as following the “three Rs” rule: reduce, reuse and recycle. The danger that consumption societies represent for nature is emphasized and self-discipline becomes a public virtue. As MacGregor (2006; 2005) argues, in such articulations of ecological citizenship, selfish and irresponsible citizens – like those not following the “three Rs” rule – are suggested to be at the origins of environmental problems. Latta (2007, 380) has defined this trend “ecological citizenship as self-restraint”, as aimed at changing attitudes and linking individual ethical principles to political goals – by regarding sustainability as the common good – and achieving sustainability through an “inner revolution.”²⁵

An over-focus on individuals might lead us to the idea that ecological citizenship is demanding the fulfilment of personal duties and that, once such duties are discharged, citizens have successfully met their responsibilities. It also suggests that the lifestyle of certain citizens – those with affluent lifestyles or whose everyday activities have larger environmental and social impacts – is the *main* cause of environmental problems. Nevertheless, suggesting that some individual citizens are agents of injustice and of unsustainability due to their production and reproduction patterns is a problematic strategy. As Iris Marion Young argues, the stress on individual responsibility rather than on collective responsibility is misleading, as it draws attention to citizens instead of to “complex structural processes that do connect persons and institutions in very different social and geographic positions” (2003, 40). In the environmental context, this results in the risky tendency toward depoliticising and

²⁵ As Latta (2007) points out, the “inner revolution” has long been a central theme for the green movement.

privatising green issues. The fact that some people are agents of injustice because of being part of a system with unjust structural features cannot be left apart, if ecological citizenship wants to be something more than a variety of personal duties aimed at changing lifestyles.

So the idea of personal change has to be linked to a further analysis of relations of power in order to provide a social context for ecological citizenship activity. Citizens might not be able to choose freely according to their preferences and values because choices are shaped and controlled. Questions of the affordability, availability or convenience of green goods, which do depend on economic, social and political institutions, might be an obstacle against citizens' will and preferences. The systemic structures are themselves causes of unsustainability and injustice and represent an obstacle that can only be challenged through collective action (Seyfang, 2005, 295-297). It follows, then, that ecological citizenship cannot be just a matter of personal behaviour, but must entail collective action too: collective action aimed at producing the social, political and economic conditions where citizens choose to act, both as individuals and as part of a community, in a sustainable and just way.

It is important to state here that a focus on collective responsibility and on systemic change, together with a conception of ecological citizenship as a potential agent for such a structural transformation, does not mean rejecting the importance of personal duties and obligations. Lifestyle changes and collective action can be reinforcing (Luque, 2005, 216). In fact, citizens' participation and motivation is as necessary to protect the environment as collective action. Accepting personal responsibility and acting accordingly can help raise citizens' awareness that they can make a difference with their behaviours and attitudes (Light, 2001, 28). Although ecological citizenship should transcend the individual, its promotion will always embrace lifestyle practices, since it seeks to include the private sphere into the realm of

politics by considering the private domain as a site for citizen activity. But it is dangerous to emphasize individual duties over the social context, ignoring socio-economic structures in which human beings are integrated and avoiding debates about relationships of injustice. The main peril is that an individualist conception of ecological citizenship can easily be co-opted by governments and state agencies because it is widely accepted and not seen as a challenge to the current capitalist system. And precisely due to this lack of threat to the state and to powerful interest groups in society, such as businesses, ecological citizenship can be supported and encouraged by economic and political institutions, losing all its potential for questioning the *status quo* and bringing about social change (Seyfang, 2005, 297-298).

There is a common problem, then, in theories and initiatives to enhance ecological/environmental citizenship centred both in personal duties and participatory rights: they lack a collective dimension. This can be introduced by looking at ways to foster ecological citizenship in the terrain of civil society. Civil society provides the collective scale in so far as it is the space that exists between the state and individual citizens; it goes beyond the individual but remains outside the state realm. This is, obviously, one among the possible understandings of the concept of civil society. Others would contend that civil society also includes state agencies and market institutions. I will return to this controversy in the following section²⁶.

²⁶ In relation to the personal duty approach, there is a further reason suggesting the convenience of the civil society perspective in the promotion of ecological citizenship. Delanty (1997, 286, quoted in Valencia Sáiz, 2005, 169) argues that “the concept of responsibility cannot be exhausted by reference to the notion of duties to the state, for it is held we have duties to nature as well as society.” This definition of responsibility applies to duty based conceptions and ways to promote ecological citizenship. In this approach, ecological citizens bear duties to future generations, non-human nature, and to other human beings, both members of one’s society and other societies. In other words, ecological citizenship is more about horizontal relationships between citizens themselves than about relationships between citizens and the state (See, for instance, Dobson 2003). This non state-centred perspective points at the relevance of civil society as the terrain for the practice of ecological citizenship.

States, Green States and Civil Societies

So far I have been referring to participatory rights and duty approaches to the relationship between citizenship and the environment, and I have given reasons why I regard them to be the dominant trends in the literature on the promotion of ecological/environmental citizenship. However, there is another issue which emanates from green writings on citizenship and which will be the focus of the final sections of this paper, namely the question of political agency. Sometimes explicitly acknowledged, sometimes implied in the literature, there is another crucial question to be considered: who is the agent – or agents – responsible for the transformation of citizenship into ecological citizenship, and for the transformation of unjust and unsustainable patterns of contemporary societies?

The state is the first agent that emerges, since most understandings of ecological/environmental citizenship and initiatives assume, for their practical articulation, a state committed to their promotion. The dominant position in the field of green politics is that the transition toward environmental citizenship requires governmental policies to create the conditions and spaces for its exercise (MacGregor and Pardoe, 2005, 3; Dobson and Valencia Sáiz, 2005, 162). Partly because most of ecological/environmental citizenship theorists live in liberal democratic states, partly because it is thought that any transformation of liberal democracy has to depart from existing liberal institutions (Eckersley, 1996, 213), attention has been given to prove that current neo-liberal states can and should encourage more sustainable forms of citizenship (Dobson, 2003; Bell, 2005; Hailwood, 2005; Valencia Sáiz, 2005).

Actually, the term “environmental citizenship” was first used in 1990 by Environment Canada, the Canadian Ministry of the Environment (Szerszynski, 2005,

75). According to its view²⁷, “as citizens of the world, we do not have a good history of managing our environment well – we have taken our resources for granted and have often abused the resources which we inherited”²⁸. We are therefore encouraged to be environmental citizens, as a “personal commitment to learning more about the environment and to taking responsible environmental action”²⁹. This notion of environmental citizenship – in which individual duty is stressed over collective responsibility as a path to a more sustainable society – mirrors the personal duty approach and thus encounters similar problems.

Governments know that they cannot deliver sustainability on their own. Despite environmental legislation, green targets will not be met without citizens’ cooperation. Citizens are therefore asked to be environmental citizens, to reduce their environmental impact by means of recycling, riding a bicycle or saving water. As Barry (2005) points out, state-based campaigns to promote environmental citizenship ignore the socio-economic and political dimensions of sustainability. It seems there is no will to place environmental issues in a broader analysis, to foster debates about sustainability, or to change unjust situations that contribute to environmental degradation and social inequality. Citizens are just encouraged to be “good citizens” and to do their best for the environment, even to “sacrifice” for the environment. But the structures of power and the capitalist economy which reproduce ecological and social problems remain untouchable. As Emilio Luque (2005) notes, citizens need the type of information that contextualizes the ecological crisis within a system encompassing social, economic and

²⁷ Since it is not my aim to give evidence of current trends in the promotion of environmental citizenship by state actors, but to highlight some of the main differences in – respectively – state, green state and civil society based initiatives to foster ecological/environmental citizenship, I cannot explore the implications for the concept of ecological citizenship as promoted by Environment Canada. A good analysis is provided by Éric Darier (1996).

²⁸ Environment Canada web site http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/info/pubs/mountain/e_intro.htm (Accessed in November 2005).

²⁹ Environment Canada web site http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/info/pubs/mountain/e_intro.htm (Accessed in November 2005).

political issues, and that helps citizens to identify injustice – and not only environmental threats – and relate it to the way industrial societies are organized.

In addition, governmental initiatives to green citizenship can be regarded as a way for the state to unload the burden of achieving the targets set by international agreements, such as the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, onto individual citizens. Public campaigns encourage citizens to use more public transport and to drive fewer cars, but in most cases, industries that are also responsible for carbon dioxide emissions are not targeted. Rather than going to the roots of the problems, institutional campaigns appeal to citizens' ecological sensibility with messages related to health issues and welfare. This could be seen as an example of how the state is constrained, especially by the need to secure economic development without compromising investment. If industry is targeted, there might be consequences that undermine economic growth. So in this respect, citizens are easier and less dangerous an objective than corporations.³⁰

In view of these and related obstacles, some theorists claim that deep transformations of state institutions are needed, and advocate for a green state which would “create the conditions for green citizenship” (Barry, J. 2005: 28) and for an “ecologically guided democracy” (Christoff, 1996a). Raising people's environmental awareness by providing the citizenry with more information has not been as effective as was expected when the idea of ecological consciousness and green social movements

³⁰ Some might argue that exceptions to the personal duty approach to sustainability at the governmental level can, however, be found. This is the case of the Climate Change Levy introduced in the United Kingdom in 2001. The levy applies to the use of energy in industry, commerce and the public sector. It seeks to encourage business – a sector that contributes the most to overall UK emissions – to be more efficient in their energy use. This measure is framed within a programme set out by the British government to reduce UK carbon emissions by involving all parts of society, since “each of us, whether citizens, consumers, businesses or motorists, we all have something to offer” (UK Climate Change Programme 2006 web site). Although industries are being targeted here, this initiative is not aimed at promoting environmental citizenship but ecological modernization, which seeks to “greenwash” the economy and the unsustainable consequences of capitalism by assuming the compatibility between economic growth and sustainability.

first appeared in the 1970s. So, for Barry and Christoff, some regulation and compulsory imposition of ecological behaviours by the state is needed.

There are existing states with features that could be seen as an indicator of a move toward an ecological democracy (See Dryzek et al., 2003), but proper green states do not exist at present. From a normative point of view, Robyn Eckersley (2004) has examined how a green state could be produced, taking existing state structures as a starting point. Her green state is a democratic state – as opposed to an eco-authoritarian state depicted in the early literature – informed by ecological democracy. This does not simply require the greening of liberal democracy, but, rather, new institutions and principles: new procedures, decision rules and forms of representation and participation³¹. Christoff (1996a) contends that a green state should integrate participatory democratic processes with the rights to oppose actions which violate the ecological principles and rights enshrined in constitutions. A green state, he claims, “needs to apply powerful sanctions against those who step outside the bounds of the ecologically guided democracy” (1996a, 166). The question remains whether a green state, if it is to be a democratic state, will be capable of pursuing green outcomes, changing people’s ecological attitudes and addressing the justice-related dimension ecological citizenship also deals with.

Green statist claim that transformations within existing economic and political structures will culminate in the emergence of a green state. They argue that, in order to come about, a green state needs citizens’ action to force the necessary changes in the existing institutions. Ecological citizens are then thought of as the agents for the creation of green states. John Dryzek and his colleagues, through their research on the problems green social movements had/have to encounter in dealing with different types of states, show that greens working collectively as movements in civil society can

³¹ See also Barry and Eckersley 2005.

impose new demands upon the state. They can contribute to creating a connection between ecological problems and the legitimization and economic state imperatives.³² This connection could lead to the establishment of a new state imperative, the environmental conservation imperative, “which would democratize the state still further by including environmentalists in the core, creating the green state” (Dryzek et al., 2003, 165). In his latest work on ecological citizenship, Barry argues for a critical sustainability citizenship that challenges dominant economic and political actors, as “without such resistance and pressure, it is unlikely that anything approximating a sustainable development path will be realized” (2005, 33). He places ecological citizenship in the realm of civil society, but his idea is that working towards this type of citizenship has to be linked with working towards new theories of the state. He even suggests that citizens could devote part of their time to being ecological citizens through a Compulsory Sustainability Service enforced by the state in order to achieve sustainability (2005: 28-32).

Contrary to what green statist favour, a focus on civil society does not have to be instrumental in order to pursue a green state. Civil society is a place of political action itself, and changing society – as well as the structures of power within it – is a legitimate political goal. In so far as it is not bound to imperatives (Dryzek et. al. 2003: 103), civil society is not as compelled as the state; therefore, ecological citizenship in civil society is less likely to be co-opted and neutralized by the state. While there is no guarantee that civil society will be green, without a critical civil society, there is no chance that the current non-ecological state structures can be eliminated.

Even though civil society has not received enough attention from green theorists of citizenship, ecological citizenship placed in civil society can help overcome some of

³² Dryzek et al., define state imperatives as “the functions that governmental structures have to carry out to ensure their own longevity and stability” (2003: 12) and identify them as the domestic order, survival, revenue, economic and legitimation imperatives.

the problems of the institutional approach – e.g. the risk of co-option and privatization of environmental responsibility – while promoting a concept of ecological citizenship more attentive to social, economic and justice related issues. Nevertheless, the defence of the civil society approach will have to face some criticisms. In the first place, there is the peril that ecological citizenship in civil society ends up having the same limitations that the personal duty approach has. On the one hand, civil society can help overcome the individualism inherent to duty-based theories to promote ecological citizenship. But, at the same time, if it is not properly placed within a collective project, it risks being about isolated individuals “doing their bit”. Besides, the civil society approach can also end up favouring those with more time and resources and excluding those who cannot actively participate in public life. Rather than being discouraging, though, these issues point out that attempts to relate ecological citizenship to civil society have to emphasize its location within a collective structure – e.g. an NGO, the community – while at the same time raise issues of limitations to active involvement in civil society suffered by some citizens.

In addition, following the work of theorists like Khilnani (2001) and Keane (1998a; 1998b; 1998c), who identify civil society with non governmental organisations, some will argue that questions of lack of representation and legitimisation of civil society arise. It can be further objected that stronger links between, on the one hand, civil society, and, on the other hand, the state and law have to be established if ecological citizenship is to be articulated. If Khilnani (2001, 30) is right when claiming that civil society cannot exist without a set of given institutions, like a “legal structure of property rights”, a “system of markets where such rights can be exchanged”, and “a legal recognition of political associations and voluntary agencies”, research on ecological citizenship in civil society will have to be connected to research on neo-liberal states systems and markets. This approach would be favoured by those seeking

to conceive ecological citizenship as environmental citizenship or as an extension of citizens' formal rights and duties, or by those who believe ecological citizenship is best nurtured through partnerships between state institutions and groups in civil society – e.g. recycling schemes run in collaboration with city councils, where ecological citizenship complements the state. In opposition to Khilnani and Keane, Terrier and Wagner (2006) believe that civil society should not be subordinated to any institutional setting, and warn about the perils of making a strong linkage between civil society and the state. That is the approach to civil society I want to suggest as part of the conceptual framework for the study of the promotion of ecological citizenship. However, this is not to say that states and civil societies do not influence each other; it means, rather, that civil society should exclude market institutions and organizations formed by governmental bureaucracies.

An example of ecological citizenship practiced in civil society – outside the market and the state – would be what Seyfang (2005, 301-302) calls “alternative sustainable consumption”. This includes non-market exchange tools such as “community currencies” – e.g. time banks – that favour economic models alternative to capitalism, while building social capital and contributing both to environmental protection as well as to building community cohesion and mutual aid.

Toward a conceptual framework for the study of the promotion of ecological citizenship

As stated in the previous section, the controversy about the role of the state is a constant – more or less manifest – in the literature on ecological citizenship. As a result, I want to suggest that discussion on the promotion of ecological citizenship can be framed within this debate: are contemporary states ready to encourage ecological

citizenship or, on the contrary, do state institutions need to be transformed, resulting in a green state? On the other hand, it has also been stated that some authors are inclined to place ecological citizenship within the terrain of civil society. Most literature on ecological citizenship and civil society, though, aims at the consolidation of a green state – which would be created by citizens themselves, opposing and resisting traditional and anti-environmental state institutions. Civil society is seen as an instrument and disregarded as a field for transformation on its own. This gap in the literature will be the third element I will use to triangulate a framework for discussion on the promotion of ecological citizenship around three *agents for transformation*, both of citizenship and of the current approach to the environmental issue; that is, the state, the green state and civil society.

I have chosen these three agents for transformation, since, in my view, they encapsulate all the possibilities for the metamorphosis of citizenship. There are other sites for action, like the local community or the transnational organization, but they could be accommodated within these three categories³³. State and civil society are well-established concepts, with a long tradition in the fields of political theory and philosophy, unlike the green state, which has just recently emerged – although it has already become a decisive theme for green political theorists³⁴. Notwithstanding, it is difficult to draw rigid boundaries between the three agents for transformation themselves. Thus, for instance, the green state is a type of state; therefore it will share

³³ For instance, depending on the nature and concept of ecological citizenship that the local community and the transnational organization foment, together with the model of political organization both the local community and the transnational organisation have, they will be placed within the domain of civil society, the state or the green state.

³⁴ In the previous section I provided working definitions and a brief account of different ways to conceive the green state and civil society. I cannot deal with the vast amount of theories of the state here. When approaching the state from a sociological point of view, the first obstacle one encounters is that there are many different types of states, perhaps as many as the number of states itself. In relation to the conceptual framework I seek to introduce here, the focus should be on Western liberal states, since all theorizing on ecological citizenship and the possibilities for its promotion has been conceived to be articulated in the context of neoliberal, advanced capitalist states. Besides, initiatives enhanced by local and regional governments, as well as transnational organizations constituted by states – e.g. European Union – would also be included under the heading of the state.

features with more conventional state structures. On the other hand, civil society is regarded to be an important agent for the construction of green states – as argued earlier. So debates on the state will emerge when discussing both the green state and civil society. In fact, the green state could be seen as an intermediate political agent, located between the state and civil society, since it shares some features with the modern nation-state, while incorporating an openness, flexibility and inclusiveness of actors and political processes more typical of civil society. In addition, it has been noted earlier that some theorists are inclined to define governmental agencies as part of civil society; for them, civil society is placed in that space of intersection between state and non-state actors. And, in any case, civil society actors influence state policies, while the institutional and political contexts provided by the state shape the strategies and choices of civil society actors. Moreover, I explained that some commentators argue that civil societies need states as a condition for their existence. This elasticity has to be taken into account in the conceptual framework.

A second set of concepts has to be introduced to develop this framework; I refer to them as *arenas* and *dimensions*. They are artificial categories I have developed in order to refer to different aspects underpinning the notion of ecological citizenship or to the various forms it can adopt. Each particular conception of ecological/environmental citizenship, regardless of its promotion by the state, the green state or civil society, has or should have a view of arenas and dimensions. Some of these refer to normative issues influencing the understanding of ecological citizenship that each agent of transformation holds to – such as the conception of environmental sustainability, the vision of democracy or the ethical presuppositions. Others are places where ecological citizenship can be performed, arenas for its practice – like the political economy or the learning processes that citizenship involves – and, in some cases, they are practical activities ecological citizenship can consist in, namely work. All these categories are not

closed, but permeable. This fluidity has to be acknowledged, since it might point toward cooperation between states and civil societies; as indicated in the previous section, some ways to encourage ecological citizenship might be proposals of a hybrid nature, partnerships involving various public-private led initiatives.

A path built with all these complex interrelationships could lead to a rich and comprehensive view of the ecological citizenship issue from diverse angles, which is what research on the possibilities for the promotion of ecological citizenship should aim at. This framework can be advanced as a point of departure to start thinking about whether the promotion of ecological citizenship requires a choice between the state, the green state and civil society, or whether cooperation between states, green states and civil society appears to be possible and desirable for the *effective* encouragement of ecological citizenship.

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