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### Rethinking Citizenship

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## **Key Competencies: Is the OECD Setting the European Citizenship Discourse?**

*Juuso Hermanni Tiihonen*

### **Abstract**

The European Union (EU) is struggling to build a common European identity to address cultural conflicts induced by its enlargement and integration processes, as well as the challenges posed by global, political and economic reorganization. European citizenship is an important concept in this process and is being discussed on the public and academic levels. Citizenship debates usually concentrate on the wide range of rights and privileges. This paper, however, approaches the theme from a standpoint of duties and features a person is expected to have, in order to fulfil the criteria of a desired European citizenship. The broad and developing, yet problematic concept of cultural citizenship is the starting point of this paper. Through a selected and case related definition a canvas of citizenship conceptions is drawn. The depicted elements are then being analysed with the “key competencies” defined by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and adopted in the European political discourse. The repertory of key competencies is created according to the idea of certain essential skills and qualities ensuring well-being in the competitive knowledge society and enabling flexible labour force for an increasingly globalised world. Using the critical discourse analytical method (CDA: Fairclough/Wodak/Meyer), an analysis of the linguistic features of the text is conducted and examined in relation to the political construction of the citizenship discussions. The goal is to work as a cartographer mapping the economic discourse in the “key competencies” and the multiple citizenship conceptions, and explore where they contradict and concur, and what implementations do both discussions call for. The main research question is the following: How are the economic discourse, genre and style presented in the definition of the “key competencies”? Three sub-questions delineate the focus of the study further: What are the official key competencies that a European citizen should have? How are they being constructed and represented in the text? How do the concepts of citizenship and cultural citizenship perform in relation to the definitions of the key competencies? This paper provides a limited but a fresh and critical angle into the current political discourse

that gathers its momentum from the neoliberal ethos positioning markets and competitiveness in the fore front of societal development at the expense of cultural pluralism and human rights.

**Keywords:** citizenship, cultural citizenship, key competencies, critical discourse analysis, OECD

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) is struggling to build a common European identity to address cultural conflicts induced by its enlargement and integration processes, as well as the challenges posed by global political and economic reorganization. Citizenship is an important concept in this process and should be at the core of the ongoing comparative debate.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, citizenship discussions concentrated on the wide range of rights and privileges a person should possess. This paper, however, approaches the theme from a standpoint of obligations and competences a person is expected to fulfil and obtain, in order to fulfil the criteria of a desired European citizenship. Through the examination of the citizenship and cultural citizenship concepts, a multifaceted canvas of definitions is drawn. These elements of citizenship are then compared within the discourse analysis of “key competencies”<sup>2</sup> selected and defined in a brochure (2005) by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) which serves as the research data. The ideological dominance of the neoliberal order moulds the language used in public and academic discourses.<sup>3</sup> The linguistic code is penetrated by economic terms and phrases.

This study therefore explores the interdiscursivity of the economic discourse (genre and style) in the text defining desired competencies for a European citizen in the political context. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the methodological approach for this study because its main objective is to make visible the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination,<sup>4</sup> and that is precisely what this study thrives to accomplish through the main research question: How is the economic discourse genre and style presented in the definition of the “key competencies”? Three sub-questions delineate the focus of the study further: What are the official key competencies that a European citizen should have? How are they being constructed and represented in the text? How do the concepts of citizenship and cultural citizenship perform in relation to the definitions of the key competencies?

This study provides a limited, but fresh and critical point of view on to the current citizenship debate and ideological political discussion. It reveals how the contemporary discourse is dominated by a neoliberal ethos, positioning markets and competitiveness at

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Morjé Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2009), 194.

<sup>2</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary*,” (OECD, 2005). <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf> (accessed 5 December 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Norman Fairclough, “Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2006), 127-128.

<sup>4</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, “Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity,” In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2006), 96.

the fore front of societal development at the expense of cultural pluralism and human rights. Cultural citizenship is a concept attempting to innovate and reshape the discussion regarding globalisation and societal changes taking place in the European context. It is important that this discussion is further cultivated. The structure of his study continues with an examination of the citizenship and cultural citizenship concepts, followed by a section explaining the methodological choices and the research data. After these, the analysis section dives into the discourse analysis, before finishing with the conclusion.

## I. Citizenship and Cultural Citizenship

The concept of citizenship used to be fairly easy to approach and to some extent benevolent. However, since the developments through integration and new legislation in the European societies its definition, from specifying the nation-state confined institutions,<sup>5</sup> to post-national, blurred and cosmopolitan ones<sup>6</sup>, has raised multiple discussions and debates. Especially in the European context, the idea of citizenship seems to be in the eye of a hurricane, observing the confusing political, academic and public turmoil spinning around it, and it seems to be unable to escape from this upheaval soon. This section brings forth the main topics in the citizenship debate, and examines the popular concept of cultural citizenship.

As mentioned above, citizenship used to be about basic rights obtained by a person born in a certain country. Since the Maastricht Treaty codified a European citizenship, a new post-national direction of the conception of citizenship has been developing as a result of nation-states losing importance in determining a citizen's rights and obligations in terms of individual culture and duties, raising the idea of a cosmopolitan citizenship.<sup>7</sup> The European citizenship being structural, non-identical, multilevelled, and cooperative<sup>8</sup> certainly approaches the idea of Gerard Delanty's cosmopolitan citizenship, rooted in the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism, because it takes into account the demands for citizenship to incorporate culture and globalisation. Cultural pluralism, ethnic mixing, global consumerism and new information technologies create new ways of participation in the global system, and are in the heart of this cosmopolitan development.<sup>9</sup>

In this rapid accumulation of demands towards the broadening of the citizenship concept an important question is raised by Andreas Follesdal: "What should be required of citizens and on what grounds?"<sup>10</sup> He elaborates on the dilemma by pointing to the problematic requirements of this new form of citizenship that requires the sharing of

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<sup>5</sup> Saskia Sassen, "Towards Post-National and Denationalized Citizenship," In *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 277.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Delanty, "Cosmopolitanism and European Post-National Citizenship: Rethinking the European Political Tradition," In *European Citizenship: Theories, Arenas, Levels*, ed. Paolo Foradori, Simona Piattoni and Riccardo Scartezzini (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 177-178.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-179.

<sup>8</sup> Julian Nida-Rümelin, "A Structural - Non-Identical, Multi-Level, Cooperative and Institutional - Approach to European Citizenship," In *European Citizenship: Theories, Arenas, Levels*, ed. Paolo Foradori, Simona Piattoni and Riccardo Scartezzini (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 69.

<sup>9</sup> Delanty, "Cosmopolitanism and European Post-National Citizenship: Rethinking the European Political Tradition," 184.

<sup>10</sup> Andreas Follesdal, "Duties of Union Citizenship in a Stable, More Democratic European Union - A Liberal Contractualist Defence," In *European Citizenship: Theories, Arenas, Levels*, ed. Paolo Foradori, Simona Piattoni and Riccardo Scartezzini (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 36.

European values and goals, and respecting the diverse national values and histories, as well as to learn about the 'national culture'.<sup>11</sup> The EU is struggling to answer this question which is very understandable considering the current structure of the Union and the current political situation in the Union. However, this just might be the key question to answer in order to hoist the European project from the current, exclusivist renationalization ditch onto a politically constructive and culturally inclusive track. To broaden the discussion, the concept of cultural citizenship will now be examined.

Cultural citizenship shares many similarities with the cosmopolitan citizenship concept. However its definitions are fairly scattered, with several individual, scholarly starting points. Amongst growing number of perspectives two scholarly views were chosen due to their central influence to the theme and suitability for the purpose of this paper. Toby Miller, for example, states that: "Cultural citizenship concerns the maintenance and development of cultural lineage via education, custom, language and religion, and the positive acknowledgement of difference in and by the mainstream."<sup>12</sup> He sees it as a discourse responding to the major changes in the world since the 1960s with the growing middle class in the crossfire of the new global arrangement of cultural labour. He uses the concept of new international division of cultural labour (NIDCL) which "favours North over South and capital over labour".<sup>13</sup> This process creates a situation where investments are made where they are most lucrative, and citizens attempt to avoid responsibilities when possible. This leads to the marginalization of the traditional nation-state citizenship and 'non-citizen' immigrants are often used for labour intense work. A new post-modern deal has been made between the state and the citizen. Earlier, the state provided the citizen with the minimum standard of living in change of loyalty, whereas today, consumer-citizens demand access to technologies of communication from the state with contradicting loyalties.<sup>14</sup> These ideas move parallel to the ideological perspectives presented by the sociologist, Nick Stevenson.

Stevenson approaches the notion of cultural citizenship from a cosmopolitan perspective, and problematizes the clashes regarding the inclusion-exclusion axis in relation to national and global cultural developments. He does not assume that national cultures have disappeared altogether, but observes that the tensions between inclusive, national cultural policies in a homogenous civil society and the constantly broadening, culturally plural, global community are plentiful.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it is important that the traditional three layered citizenship model (civil, political, and social) should be expanded with the dimension of cultural rights and obligations.<sup>16</sup> He points out that the paradox of modernity attempting to implant the notion of obligation into citizens has resulted in a lack of trust and shared morality.<sup>17</sup>

Very relevant for this study are Stevenson's two major concerns. Firstly, he points out that the global "moral consensus" is "more often the result of repression and power than the recognition of difference and open forms of communication".<sup>18</sup> And secondly, he indicates that global capital through centralization of cultural policies is able to control and "pulverize" culture for economic reasons.<sup>19</sup> He shares these arguments with Miller, even

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Toby Miller, "Cultural Citizenship," In *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 230.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 230-232.

<sup>15</sup> Nick Stevenson, "Globalization, National Cultures and Cultural Citizenship," *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1997): 41-43.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

though the latter sees the world developments (NIDCL) from an even broader perspective: a whole society penetrating level of inspection.<sup>20</sup> These brief examinations provide a glance at the citizenship and cultural citizenship concepts. Each of them with strong arguments, but as a whole they fail to cement a clear and coherent foundation that could be effectively applied in the European cultural debate context. However, in relation to the ideological subordination of culture and citizenship obligations under capital, these descriptions that clearly illuminate the examined tension between economic and cultural discourse, will serve as a major element in the critical discourse analysis in section 5. Now it is time to turn the focus to the methodological choices and research data that have been made to carry out this project.

## II. Methodology and research data

This study brings forth and takes part in the critical discussion<sup>21</sup> regarding the dominant status of the economic genre in public and academic discourses. The concept of economic genre is used in this study to simplify the certain lingual style and habitus with its typical terminology and phrases, in order to help to analyse the ideological choices in a certain context. Particularly topics related to human and social development are being occupied by economic thematic content, lingual style, and terminology. Therefore, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the most suitable methodological approach for this study.

CDA is a multidisciplinary research approach that is especially interested in language and power, and the relation between them.<sup>22</sup> This relation is being examined in political, institutional, gender and mass media contexts where conflict and struggle is less apparent and visible. The complexity of linguistic relationships in society embedded in the structures and processes are so vast that the research needs to be interdisciplinary.<sup>23</sup> Only through broad interdisciplinary approach can the relationship between language and power be observed with an adequate and critical perspective. According to Ruth Wodak, three main concepts, namely power, history, and ideology, are the guiding factors when implementing critical research. These concepts become indispensable when examining the discourse, not only within the linguistic paradigm, but with a 'critical' description of complex social processes and structures.<sup>24</sup> The 'critical' in this approach means that through an explicit political stance the researcher takes distance to the data, analysing it in its social context, and at the same time focusing on effective self-reflection. The goal is always to achieve social and political engagement by analysing manifestations of power, control, discrimination, and dominance in language.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Miller, "Cultural Citizenship," 234-235.

<sup>21</sup> Fairclough, Norman; Cortese, Giuseppina ; Ardizzone, Patrizia, ed., *Discourse and contemporary social change* (Bern: Lang, 2007). One example representing the same methodological approach.

<sup>22</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (Harlow: Longman, 2007), 23-24.

<sup>23</sup> Ruth Wodak, "What CDA is about - a Summary of its History, Important Concepts and its Developments," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2006), 1-2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Michael Meyer emphasises the context relatedness of CDA.<sup>26</sup> Discourses are always historical and can therefore be understood only with reference to their specific context. These extra-linguistic factors, namely culture, society, and ideology, are always present and thus crucial for the conducted interdisciplinary research procedure.<sup>27</sup> This issue of context-relatedness and interdisciplinary focus gives CDA the distinct character of looseness that could be seen as a methodological weakness. Mayer, however, sees CDA as no single method but as an approach, which equips the researcher with responsibility for important selections and assumptions, and accordingly demands theoretical explanations legitimizing the chosen methods.<sup>28</sup>

The research data and its collection is an important phase that needs to be sufficiently reported. When conducting a CDA research, the collection of data is part of the analysis and does not need to be finished before analysis is started. Moreover, the exercise of data collection serves as an important part in the analysis process, provoking new questions and expanding concepts.<sup>29</sup> CDA explicates no clear statistical or theoretical representativeness statements about data collection, but instead focuses on the linguistic concepts and their operationalization for each specific research question.<sup>30</sup> The linguistic basis is the point of departure for all CDA research whatever the broader field of current phenomena under examination is. As a form of discourse analysis, a certain structure, strategy, or function of the text, whether dealing with grammatical, semiotic, rhetoric or stylistic elements, must be the point of interest.<sup>31</sup> The stylistic and rhetorical elements of the economic discourse genre are the methodological tools that will be used to analyse the data in this study. Therefore it is now time to present the data and explain why it was chosen.

## Data

The research data of this study is a text: “The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary”, provided by the OECD.<sup>32</sup> The OECD is an international organisation concerned with the economic and social well-being of people around the world.<sup>33</sup> However, its 34 member states are the richest countries in the world, and thus OECD is considered to represent the voices of capital markets and private businesses through policy promotion among the world elites.<sup>34</sup> The text is a summary brochure of an OECD’s Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) Project. The main aim of this project, started in 1997, is “to bring a wide range of expert and stakeholder opinion together, to produce a coherent and widely shared analysis of which key competencies are necessary for the modern world.”<sup>35</sup> The DeSeCo Project resulted in several publications which are summarised in this brochure. The fact that a 20 page

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Meyer, "Between Method, Theory, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-25.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> van Dijk, "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity," 97.

<sup>32</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies.*”

<sup>33</sup> OECD, “About us,” [http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en\\_36734052\\_36734103\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_36734052_36734103_1_1_1_1_1,00.html) (accessed 15 January 2012)

<sup>34</sup> Katerina Ananiadou & Magdalena Claro, "21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millennium Learners in OECD Countries," *OECD Education Working Papers* 41, (2009). 3-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/218525261154> (accessed 5 December 2011)

<sup>35</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies,*” 18.

summary of the project exists, made it possible to select the results of such a long and broad project as research data for this study. The text is comprised of three parts. The first part is an overview and framework section explaining the background and basis for the chosen definitions. The second part divides the 'key competencies' in three "Competency Categories" (using tools interactively, interacting in heterogeneous groups, and acting autonomously) and then opens and explicates each of them accordingly. The last section connects the key competencies with the lifelong learning concept and OECD assessment programs, followed by a brief explanation of the development of the DeSeCo framework. The development and definition of the key competencies in their entirety is explained in the DeSeCo publications by Rychen and Salganik.<sup>36</sup>

The data was chosen because of its suitability for the initial research question. The aim was to examine the linguistic style, rhetoric, and the inherent economic discourse in texts related to the broader discussion on human competencies with a focus on the connections to the citizenship discourse. Conducting a critical discourse analysis about the linguistic features of the neoliberal dominated competence debate was a point of departure, and the selected data provided a perfect possibility to investigate the initial research question. Because Europe forms the academic context of this study, relevant European Union documents were also investigated.<sup>37</sup> The evolution towards a competence based discourse paradigm is taking place in the EU and OECD jointly.<sup>38</sup> The chosen data is therefore part of the European competencies and citizenship debate, and fits the topic under discussion well.

### III. Analysis

The main goal of the analysis section is to bring forth and examine the difficult concept of citizenship when observed from the obligations and qualitative expectancy perspective. Moreover, the analysis provides a clear description of how the human rights and legal fairness aspects of the citizenship conceptions have been strongly *taken over* by the genre of economic discourse. This recontextualisation of discourse is called inter-discursivity, where linguistic style and connotations are transferred from one discourse onto another.<sup>39</sup> The analysis is conducted through examination of different linguistic elements raised from the data. The OECD's DeSeCo document serves as the research data and critical discourse analysis approach will be used to explore its linguistic elements to reveal the economic discourse and its dominance. Parallel to the discourse analysis the diverse elements of citizenship and cultural citizenship concepts are being investigated in relation to the linguistic elements in the data. This entails a linguistic comparison and theoretical analysis of the texts in terms of the underlying economic discourse and conception of diverse forms of citizenship. The study, being based on the principles of CDA, is set up in such a way

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<sup>36</sup> D.S. Rychen & L.H. Salganic, "Key competencies for a successful life and a well-functioning society," (Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe and Huber, 2003); "Defining and selecting key competencies," (Seattle & Toronto, Bern & Göttingen: Hogrefe and Huber, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> EU, "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Summaries of EU Legislation," EU Commission, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11090\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm) (accessed 5 December 2011).

<sup>38</sup> Gábor Halász & Alain Michel, "Key Competences in Europe: interpretation, policy formulation and implementation," *European Journal of Education* 46, no. 3 (2011): 289-290.

<sup>39</sup> Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research," 132-133.



that it maps the economic discourse and the diverse citizenship conceptions, regarding competencies and cultural citizenship. It points out similarities and contradictions within the different discourses by analysing their political nature. Both discourses are very political and have the ultimate goal of defining and implementing a desired and suited citizen for the future Europe and the world. The analysis draws an image of the two discourses simultaneously shaping society and untangles their ideological and political motives. The development of the different citizenship dimensions are also being discussed when diverse conceptions of citizenship are under examination.

The data is comprised of a single text and is analysed by identifying lingual features and connotations through multiple views and perspectives of the discourse analysis as well as the citizenship and cultural citizenship concepts. This critical discourse analysis study is very attached to the researcher's choices, and therefore the elements chosen to represent the texts from the data need to be explained. However, strict objectivity in discourse analysis is impossible, and the beliefs and ideologies of the analyst are always embedded in the process, and must therefore be acknowledged in the research.<sup>40</sup> As explained earlier, the research data is a creation of the OECD and thus represents the perspectives of the wealthy and developed minority. In this analysis the neoliberal economic discourse (as genre and style) is being scrutinised for the purpose of making the vast penetration of this discourse in our everyday discussions and texts visible. Norman Fairclough sees the current neoliberal global order as a social order constituted by social practices being networked in a particular way; this discourse permeates other discourses whereby the potential of meaning is steered in a particular direction.<sup>41</sup> This occurrence of an economic discourse within a non-economic domain is problematic because of its major impact in simplifying human qualities and societal development into a technocratic jargon incomprehensible to sufficiently describe complex social processes. In this study the particular networking becomes apparent through the categories that were identified from the data to effectively analyse the relevant linguistic elements and its connotations.

The three main categories identified from the data are: demands of the modern world; economic imperatives; social responsibility and active citizenship. The identification process consisted of thorough examination of the data focusing on relevant lingual and content features. The categories were not difficult to identify as they are very obviously part of the discourse on citizenship. The content of these three categories can be established through not only content-wise elements, but also through formal elements, such as genre and style. The three categories will be considered in three subparts of the analysis section of this paper. Quotes from the data are used to present the linguistic features of the category and are then analysed in order to explore the contradictions and assimilations to the relevant scholarly citizenship definitions. The used quotes offer a small glimpse of the data, and I have attempted to represent the core attributes of the category at hand by means of selected quotes.

Before advancing to the three subparts an initial analysis of the topic needs to be made, because, as Teun van Dijk explains,

... the topics of discourse play a fundamental role in communication and interaction. [...] topics represent what discourse 'is about' globally speaking, embody most important information of a discourse, and explain overall coherence of text and talk.<sup>42</sup>

What economic discourse 'is about' becomes very clear in this topic and is embodied in the title of the document. Definition and Selection of *Key Competencies* is the

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<sup>40</sup> Meyer, "Between Method, Theory, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA," 30.

<sup>41</sup> Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research," 124.

<sup>42</sup> van Dijk, "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity," 101-102.

title of the OECD report. The genre of this document determines it as a political text for executive administrators (mainly, but available for general public) in the western world. It expresses clearly that the topic of this study are the qualities of a desired citizen in a Western political context. The text defines the competencies that a model citizen within the OECD should obtain, in order to have the desired “successful life and well-functioning society”.<sup>43</sup> The fact that a multinational organisation, the OECD, concentrated primarily on economic development in rich countries, defines *key competencies* for member state citizens is a peculiar matter, yet offers a very interesting research possibility. Economic prosperity being the sole purpose of the organisation it is easy to compare the principles of this endeavour with the ideologically neo-liberal and capitalist tradition of the OECD. To analyse the text for elements of the economic discourse, the phrase ‘key competencies’ from the title works as a brilliant example that needs a closer look.

*Key*, indeed, already sets the reader to affiliate the following with something highly valuable, since a key is mainly used for opening a lock or a door (and in other words: has something of a unique property in relation to that specific door/lock). This fact leads the expectations about the document to be of the most important level and when combined with the word *competencies* the phrase as a title is a very strong and promising one. The word ‘competencies’ derives from such words as competency, competence, competent, compete, etc., and there is interesting etymological ties of this notion to the domain of economy (in the sense of good housekeeping). These lingual features set up the starting point of the analysis with the genre of the discourse clearly formed. Having pointed out the importance of the topic in a CDA research the focus will turn to the analysis of the ‘key’ categories.

#### 1) *Demands of the modern global world*

“*Today’s societies place challenging demands on individuals, who are confronted with complexity in many parts of their lives.*”<sup>44</sup>

The first category is a dominant one, and it is apparent that the whole genre is saturated with this idea. As seen in the initial quote, the words and phrases used clearly define the economic genre of the discourse. With this quoted sentence the overview paragraph of the report opens, and thus the linguistic tone and the neo-liberal ideological background for the whole text is clearly set. *Today’s societies* is a term that depicts the idea of societies today being somehow rapidly changing and very different from the past eras. Survival is under threat unless the *individual* somehow gives answers to *challenging demands*. These words clearly belong to the economic rhetorical genre that perceive human beings (individuals) as simple machines reacting to the *demands* and needs set out by the society.

The citizens are also “confronted with complexity in many parts of their lives”.<sup>45</sup> This notion belongs to the same style of contemporary life constituting scary *challenges* and *confrontations* that are *complex* and need to be, in the semantic field of war, battled in order to survive. This terminology has a very relentless connotation to it: life in *today’s society* is being represented as a constant battle that is to be accepted, which is indeed far from the communal ideals shared around the world in many societies. Furthermore, globalisation is also setting up major demands that become apparent in the following quote:

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<sup>43</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*,” 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

“Globalisation and modernisation are creating an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. To [...] function well in this world individuals need [...]to master challenging technologies and to make sense of large amounts of available information.”<sup>46</sup>

The context is always a crucial point in the CDA approach because texts are written and read within specific contexts, which has important implications for how the meaning is constructed.<sup>47</sup> In this case, the analysed text is directed to decision makers in the OECD countries, which makes it rational to analyse it in the western political and social context. *Globalisation and modernisation* is a duo that has for the last decades been used to explain and represent many on-going processes and changes in the increasingly diverse and interconnected world. However, this ideological “economic growth with environmental sustainability, and prosperity with equity” -chant of neoliberal market led globalisation, promising a better life for everyone, is present in several citizenship development analyses. Aihwa Ong, who defines cultural citizenship as being a process of negotiation between relations with state and hegemonic forms establishing the criteria of belonging, beholds neoliberalism with its celebrated values of freedom, progress, and individualism as the pervasive ideology that the rest of the world associates with western civilization. Neoliberal states also provide security for its citizens for their productivity, and thus set standards for good citizenship.<sup>48</sup> Salvador Giner phrases it, “corporate society”, which through the vast networking of overly powerful interest groups works against the “agile, fluid and open nature of the society” hindering the strengthening of a truly “advanced citizenship.”<sup>49</sup>

In the European citizenship discussion globalisation is often connected with the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship which has its roots in the cosmopolitanism of Kant. Citizenship, viewed from this angle, is expansive and no longer only tied to the state but is facing constant difficulties to thrive with the lack of a denationalized framework and renationalization of policies in powerful democratic states.<sup>50</sup> The tension between the nation state and the global arena with transnational interest groups and NGOs is a major factor in the citizenship discussion. Gerard Delanty highlights the confluence of culture and citizenship through the transformation of the meaning of citizenship from an equality pursuit to a more complex participation concept with broad consumer, political, cultural, and technological implications defining citizenship without relation to the state.<sup>51</sup> In some sense, Delanty uses the same rhetorical style as found in the quote, emphasizing the technological advances that create new possibilities of social action. However, technology is seen as redefining the element of citizenship instead of demanding from the citizen to “master challenging technologies”<sup>52</sup> in order to be adequately competent and skilled to belong and act in the society as depicted in the text.

To “make sense of large amounts of available information” and to “master technologies”<sup>53</sup> seems to be one of the main features of an OECD citizen, because the appearance of such phrases in the text is very frequent. Information technology is presented as a scary entity which: “...is changing rapidly and continuously, [...] requires

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Meyer, "Between Method, Theory, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA," 15.

<sup>48</sup> Aihwa Ong, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States," *Current Anthropology* 37, no. 5 (1996), 739. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2744412?origin=JSTOR-pdf> (accessed 15 January 2012)

<sup>49</sup> Salvador Giner, "Paths to Full Citizenship," in *European Citizenship: Theories, Arenas, Levels*, ed. Paolo Foradori, Simona Piattoni and Riccardo Scartezzini (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 31.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 31-33.

<sup>51</sup> Delanty, "Cosmopolitanism and European Post-National Citizenship: Rethinking the European Political Tradition," 185-185.

<sup>52</sup> OECD, "Definition and Selection of Key Competencies," 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

not just once-off mastery of processes but also adaptability.”<sup>54</sup> This entity needs to be slain, or preferably tamed: “need to go *beyond the basic technical skills* needed to simply use the internet, send e-mails and so on”<sup>55</sup>, by every citizen. At the same time, these technical competences should create a source of economic competitiveness, which will be further discussed in the following section. For the last part of the first category analysis the ideological normative control of values and behaviour will be explored.

“Acting autonomously is particularly important in the modern world where each person’s position is not as well-defined as was the case traditionally. Individuals need to create a personal identity in order to give their lives meaning, to define how they fit in.”<sup>56</sup>

The importance of individualism is very clear on the ideological level and it also is frequently present in the economic discourse genre. The comparison made to *the case traditionally*, creates an assumption that the *modern world* with *individuals* is somehow superior and more valuable compared to the ‘older’ communal cultures and identities. The individualistic, neoliberal culture that is currently going through a major moral crisis seems to be capable to *give lives meaning* for people that *fit in*. Where these people then fit in, is a society whose populations, through cultural policies, have since the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s liberal-capitalism been taught and encouraged how to ‘*be good*’ and have ‘*good taste*’. This knowledge about being good and having good taste was cultivated for the evolvement of better citizens.<sup>57</sup> The control of these individuals’ behaviour is often conducted indirectly by governments’ inspection of their own behaviour control actions. This Foucauldian view of governance, as explained by Barry Hindess emphasises the importance of governance for citizens’ behaviour through self-control, and of informal and non-state actors within a nation state.<sup>58</sup> The importance of individualism crystalizes through the numerous ways in which the individual agency and behaviour in the text is emphasised. Life can be composed as good and valuable only through individualistic identification and behavioural normativity. A fitting quote from the text is illustrative: “[*individuals*]...*need... to make choices, rather than just follow the crowd.*”<sup>59</sup> Individualism belongs also to the core of the next category which will explore the linguistic attributes in the economic discourse of the key competences.

## 2) *Economic imperatives*

“In most OECD countries, value is placed on flexibility, entrepreneurship and personal responsibility. Not only are individuals expected to be adaptive, but also innovative, creative, self-directed and self-motivated.”<sup>60</sup>

Economic development and cooperation being the soul purposes for the existence of the OECD, this category with its ideological style and lingual features is obvious in its analysis. The goal of the analysed text is to be persuasive, and thus especially the economic statements are represented as truisms and timeless. In the opening quote such attributes as *flexibility, entrepreneurship and personal responsibility*, which one connects with terminology used in job advertisements and applications for business and administration, are placed in a context where general qualities of citizens is being defined. The economic characteristics of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>57</sup> Miller, "Cultural Citizenship," 238-239.

<sup>58</sup> Barry Hindess, "The Globalization of Citizenship," In *Challenging Citizenship: Group Membership and Cultural Identity in a Global Age*, edited by Sor-hoon Tan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 64-65.

<sup>59</sup> OECD, "Definition and Selection of Key Competencies," 14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 8.

a citizen are seen as far more important than the social or political characteristics when being part of the Western and European community.<sup>61</sup>

The quote goes on with an interesting negation structure which really emphasises the seriousness of the desired competences that resembles a partial list of the 'needed' human capital. This conception connects cultural citizenship strongly to the neoliberal ideology by making investment in skills the maximal utilisation of individual potential.<sup>62</sup> Through this modern '*economization*' of human potential, where certain qualities become self-evident and an unquestionable norm, the recontextualisation of discourse has really unfolded to its fullest. Human capital as a basic, yet very effective linguistic notion broadly used through public media and many OECD publications in addition to the analysed text.<sup>63</sup>

"...to manage their lives in meaningful and responsible ways by exercising control over their living and working conditions"<sup>64</sup>

As mentioned in part 2, the concept of cultural citizenship attempts to tackle a multifaceted idea of citizenship by broadening its definition into spheres outside the mere listing of legal rights. This perspective of the concept of citizenship growing horizontally and vertically, and thus becoming more organic, has been dealt with in the economic discourse genre by the concept of managerialism. If businesses and organisations can be managed, then surely, human life can be as well. The idea of connecting *meaningful and responsible* with *exercising control* creates an illusion of 'softness' when discussing what within the economic domain. The citizens are obliged to "*interpret life as an organised narrative*", and applying "*project management to individuals*"<sup>65</sup> is proposed as the key to reach this competency. This reduction of human life into a managed project with resources and sets of goals is very present in the text. On the ideological level the debate of culture's positions is also complex with neoliberal policies pressuring privatization, yet promoting multiculturalism.<sup>66</sup> These tensions and obscurities leave the citizenship as a floating dingy on the sea of public managerialism, trapped in the cross-waves of politics, economy and culture. The important task of reconceptualising citizenship should be conducted by interlocking these important elements: political participation, economical development and cultural norms.<sup>67</sup> Political participation and cultural norms play a crucial role when social responsibility and active citizenship competences are defined, but the notion of economic capability remains as the most important goal. The analysis will now explore the last category which indeed attempts to highlight the relationship between conceptions of citizenship and social responsibility in the data.

### 3) *Social responsibility and active citizenship*

The text provides a broad list of "*certain qualities*" that are expected from an individual in order to "*manage interpersonal relationships well both for the benefit of individuals and to build new*

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<sup>61</sup> Lars Magnusson and Bo Strath, "A European Social Citizenship? Preconditions for Future Policies from a Historical Perspective," In *A European Social Citizenship? Preconditions for Future Policies from a Historical Perspective*, edited by Lars Magnusson and Bo Strath (Bruxelles: P.I.E.- Peter Lang, 2004), 11-12.

<sup>62</sup> Miller, "Cultural Citizenship," 233.

<sup>63</sup> OECD, "Human Capital Formation and Foreign Direct Investment in Developing Countries," <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/25/5888700.pdf>; "Measuring What People Know: Human Capital Accounting for the Knowledge Economy," <http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?sf1=identifiers&st1=911996031E1>. (accessed 15 February 2012)

<sup>64</sup> OECD, "*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*," 14.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>66</sup> Miller, "Cultural Citizenship," 240-241.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

*forms of cooperation.*<sup>68</sup> The style used in this category is very faithful to that used for the economic discourse even if one would expect it to use less economic vocabulary and terms because of the social context, and should thus approach a more humanistic style. Indeed, issues regarding social interactions are represented and described through such phrases as: “*social capital*”, “*emotional intelligence*”, “*effective management of emotions*”, “*motivational states*”, “*construct tactical or sustainable alliances*”<sup>69</sup>. These phrases consistently follow the style associated with the economic discourse. However, it gives a rather technical and distant perception of a topic that is very close to the actions of a living human being.

Julian Nida-Rümelin paints an image of desirable citizenship as a form of genuine cooperation where, especially in the European context, diversities of cultural, religious, economic, and other interests are taken seriously, without strategic attitudes, forming multi-level cooperative frames. These frames are empirically established from intimate connections, as well as rarely face-to-face interactions, where citizenship constitutes the politically institutionalized cooperation.<sup>70</sup> The idea of broad cooperation and cooperation skills are clearly the foundations of the OECD key competencies definitions, as well as very present in the citizenship debate. The forms and definitions of cooperation can, however, diverge. This divergence clearly is the result of the underlying motive perceived by the actor. If cooperation is seen as a mere tool used in the economical context of pursuit of maximum benefit, it will lead to a very different presumptions, than when it is used in the context of cultivating the concept of social responsibility and active and cultural citizenship.

“...participate effectively in the development of society”<sup>71</sup>

This quote demands for active participation *in the development of society*, which is an understandable obligation for a citizen. But in order to accomplish this, the text suggests peculiar actions, the phrasing of which will now be considered. “Act within the big picture” which requires to “understand patterns” and “have an idea of the system in which they exist (i.e. ...culture, practices,...rules and expectations,... laws and regulations,... social norms, moral codes, manners and protocol).”<sup>72</sup> This segment in the text providing these requirements comes across as a list which resounds with the immigration discourse. It clearly steers the thoughts into an integration process within “*the big picture*”<sup>73</sup>; the big picture here being the Western cultural context. Conventional traditions of Western culture are the ones to implement and assimilate into, regardless of your cultural background or ‘alien’ heritage.

In the European context of citizenship discussions the topic of immigration is significant. Conflict in Europe emerges through an ambiguity where transnational economy considers immigrants as economically desirable, but culturally and politically unwelcome.<sup>74</sup> This leads to a situation where citizenship is often seen as demanding homogeneity and cultural congruence, which should in turn enable maximal possibilities for diverse people to participate in all levels of society.<sup>75</sup> The citizenship debate needs to elevate its importance and value in the political and legislative spheres in order to tackle this dilemma. Topics regarding cultural differences such as immigration are discussed in contexts with the respective discourse deciding the linguistic style, thus creating ambivalent meanings and value statements. The underlying economic discourse evident in the analysed text is

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<sup>68</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*,” 12.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-15.

<sup>70</sup> Julian Nida-Rümelin, “A Structural - Non-Identical, Multi-Level, Cooperative and Institutional - Approach to European Citizenship,” 68.

<sup>71</sup> OECD, “*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*,” 14.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Magnusson and Strath, “A European Social Citizenship? Preconditions for Future Policies from a Historical Perspective,” 12-13.

<sup>75</sup> Miller, “Cultural Citizenship,” 241.

obviously endorsing the subordination of cultural dimensions into economic advancement and productive capitalism. What needs to be taken into account is that the coexisting discourses of immigration and economic capitalism are very different in their political motivations. In the following conclusion chapter the ideological and political side will be further discussed.

## Conclusion

The point of departure for this study was to bring a new and fresh critical voice to the cultural citizenship discussion. The main idea was to compare elements of the different conceptions of citizenship and cultural citizenship with the OECD created definition of 'key competencies'. The goal was to show the phenomenon of an ideologically penetrating economic discourse dominating public and scholarly discussions through a textual analysis of comparing the theoretical (cultural citizenship) and the pragmatic (OECD) concepts of a desired citizen.

The research questions guided the focus of the analysis and the questions regarding the definition of the 'Key Concepts' and the construction and representation of the economic discourse genre and style were comprehensibly answered. The operationalization of the CDA methodology was appropriate and fitting to conduct the discourse analysis of the selected text and thus allowed exploring its linguistic features and connotations. The linguistic features in the economic discourse (as genre and style) construct together a reality where there seems to be no alternative. The power of style and rhetoric is used to create ahistorical truths and timeless obligations. Demands of the modern neoliberal 'OECD world' become unquestioned.

The final sub-question asking how the concepts of citizenship and cultural citizenship are formulated in relation to the 'key competencies' was not so simply answered. The analysis turned out to be fairly troublesome. Attempting to position the diverse citizenship concepts in relation to the analysed text was difficult and complex. This resulted in the analysis shifting from a proposed ambitious linguistic comparison of the 'key competencies' and cultural citizenship concepts to a more conventional discourse analysis with theoretical referencing and considerations which, however, revealed to be rather interesting and revealing.

The citizenship debate, when trying to manage cultural dispositions within the economic discourse seems rather naive and futile. It is unable to produce the required theoretical discourse elements in order to build leverage to tackle the 'truths' generated by the economic discourse. A more comprehensive and broader concept of cultural citizenship needs to be cultivated to be prepared and linguistically armed to go head-to-head against such a dominating ideological discourse as exposed through the analysis of the text. Still, cultural citizenship as a concept is very innovative and agile in the European context but yet too diverse and scattered in order to gain large acknowledgement in the main debates. The current situation, where re-nationalization and tensions between immigration related standpoints are heated, new openings should certainly be made and heard. This study contributes to the on-going ideological wrestle on the side of cultural pluralism and cosmopolitan values against the dominant neoliberal hydra standing on free markets and global capital.

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