

*To Re-educate oneself to Citizenship
within the Cultural Pluralism*

Elvira Martini & Francesco Vespasiano

How to cite

Martini, E. & Vespasiano, F. (2016). To Re-educate oneself to Citizenship within the Cultural Pluralism. *Journal of Mediterranean Knowledge-JMK*, 1(1), 79-90.

Retrieved from

<http://www.mediterraneanknowledge.org/publications/index.php/journal/issue/archive>

1. Authors' information

DEMM Department - University of Sannio, Italy

2. Authors' contact

Elvira Martini: elmartin@unisannio.it

Francesco Vespasiano: vespasiano@unisannio.it

Article first published online: June 2016



- Peer Reviewed Journal

Additional information about [Journal of Mediterranean Knowledge-JMK](#)
can be found at: [About the Journal-Board-On line submission](#)

To Re-educate oneself to Citizenship within the Cultural Pluralism

ELVIRA MARTINI & FRANCESCO VESPASIANO
University of Sannio, Italy

Abstract

In a world dominated by pluralism and where 'diversity is reality', the extension of citizenship becomes a hot topic of the conflict of modernity, so much so that many have discussed the possibility of a primacy of *human rights* on the *citizen rights* (Walzer, 2014). This theme arouses reflection on the conditioning that the physical and social borders have on processes of identification. If, then, the current political situation is marked by fear, humiliation, hope (Moïsi, 2009), the question that arises is this: how is it possible to promote the value of otherness for every human face, recognized as *identical* and at the same time to pursue the defence of its boundary beyond which the *difference* arises? To answer may be useful to educate oneself to a practice *to emotions*, "rediscovering the pervasiveness of different cultural processes [...] and the power that these have to model individual interests expressed in social actions" (Colafato, 1998, p. 10 – our translation).

Keywords: Globalization, Borders, Citizenship, Emotions, Pluralisms.

"In life matters not what happens inside,
but what happens on the *border* of own
and others' consciousness, on the threshold"
(Bachtin, 1988, p. 100)

1. In the Beginning it Was ... Globalization

Globalization is presented as a set of material and symbolic processes and is defined by Bauman as the "compression of space and time" (1998, p. 4). With its economic, technological, ecological, political changes it creates endless cross-connections and requires a broader view of own local community.

However people sense its direct effects, especially on the cultural level, due to the enormous extension of communication, the mixture of lifestyles, the encounter of different cultures as a result of migration or the speed of

transport, and with the hybridized forms of music, literature and art. Despite the myth of globalization as a religion, which would tend inexorably towards the unification of the world, we are actually facing a “ubiquitous patchwork”: global processes do not tend to unity or uniformity, but if left to themselves, they help move away the ideal of community, producing serious imbalances and inequalities.

Just this last affirmation justifies the fact that the demand for a more liveable community among men is becoming more pressing. However it seems that we must content ourselves with the *community surrogates*, as communities are no longer natural (the “warm circle” as mentioned by G. Rosenberg, 2001). Contrary to natural communities, these surrogates do not know how to solve the dichotomy freedom/security, indeed they exacerbate it. It is precisely on this relationship, for example, that Bauman focuses his analysis: “if it is true that community gives security, it always requires some sacrifice of freedom” (Bauman, 2001, p. 6).

Modern individualism makes us more insecure, because it offers (and not to everybody) freedom in exchange for security. And the same insecurity that afflicts the individual in the age of globalization generates the absence of community. “At a time when community collapses, the notion of identity is invented” (Young, 1994, p. 164). Identity means going out of the pack; it means to be different and, as such, unique; and therefore, the search for identity can only divide and separate. However, the vulnerability of individual identity leads us to look for “community-hangers” on which people hang their fears otherwise lived individually (Bauman, 2001, p. 17).

Therefore, not surprisingly, in our increasingly globalized world, “something that is not happening is the disappearance of borders”. On the contrary it seems that more and new ones arise at every street corner of any dilapidated neighbourhood of our planet” (Friedman, 1999, p. 241).

As a matter of fact a social, *stable* environment no longer exists and the tendency not to put down roots anywhere advances: a strange modern form of cosmopolitanism that denies an *a priori* community and produces the *global élite*, a phenomenon generated as a result of what Reich (1992) calls the “secession of the successful man”. According to Bauman, also the new cosmopolitans feel the need for “community”, but, of course, they

tend to create flexible communities and “on time”, which can be removed easily and that leverage only on their dreams and desires. The result is a frantic search for a social environment, safely and overprotected, and community becomes the favourite tool, the preferred method of those who believe that “sameness” means only the exclusion of foreigners. The “safe community” thus becomes a “voluntary ghetto”. This situation favours mechanisms of segregation and exclusion which are self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing¹.

The search for a safe space emphasizes the importance of the emotional dimension of globalization. The “safety indicators of self”, as Moisi calls them (2009, p. 22), scientifically measure the level of confidence of the population in their future, the ability to capitalize on their skills and even transcend them. And the level of self-confidence is well expressed by three primary emotions: fear, hope and humiliation (Ibid, p. 22)².

The rediscovery of emotions is necessary where States like those in the West, can no longer rely on historical ideals or economies and become too evanescent; therefore in these scenarios a distress attitude arises together with a desire to protect themselves from hostile forces. “But the main reason why today’s globalized world is a fertile ground for the blossoming or even the explosion of emotions is that globalization causes insecurity and raises the problem of identity. [...] Identity is closely linked to self-confidence and in turn self-confidence, or its absence, is expressed in emotions, particularly fear, hope and humiliation” (Ibid, p. 29). The intertwining of these emotions is the key to understand the other and discover the identity of themselves.

But emotions, sometimes, can generate errors and the resulting emotional distress can elicit situations of non-recognition of the other’s face, of indifference. That is what happens when people, crossing the border, become for us *radically others*, not referable to our world and towards whom it will not be possible to activate any action of “solicitude” (Ricoeur, 1997).

¹ The same multi-culturalism seems to be, in the eyes of Bauman, a “solution non-solution” to all these problems; a kind of resignation and indifference that has hit the educated classes who strive only to keep redefining inequalities so expounding an essentially conservative force (Belloni, 2005).

² Fear is the lack of self-confidence [...]; hope is, on the contrary, expression of self-confidence [...]; humiliation, finally, is the injured self-confidence of those who have lost hope in the future [...] (Moisi, 2009, pp. 20-21).

2. *The Border and the Stranger*

“What looks like a conquest of globalization for some people, represents a reduction of the local dimension to others; for some people globalization signals new freedoms, for many others it descends as an unwanted and cruel fate. Mobility rises to the highest rank among the values that give prestige and the freedom of movement itself quickly becomes the main factor of social stratification in our times” (Bauman, 1998, p. 4). On these assertions by Bauman the sensitive issue of migration triggers, a phenomenon with an increasingly broad spectrum . that is transforming the western societies in pluralistic and multicultural places. Immigrants express a demand for the recognition of the special rights on the cultural level that prompts us to revise and re-read the connotations and the identity of the modern state. Not surprisingly, one of the most heartfelt problems in this field is represented by the type of space given to particular cultural rights within the framework of a unified society (Santerini, 2009, our translation).

The matter of the border stands as the matter of the space to occupy.

“The important thing in order to claim any right within an unlimited space is to enter it, to settle there, to sneak inside, taking possession of an area of interest, to occupy an area that, each time, may be social, political, sexual, mental, economic. Only after occupying this space, if you want, you can trace the outline, close it within a boundary, delimit it. The experience of the border starts, therefore, always from the inside” (Zanini, 1997, pp. 30-31)³. Therefore, “it is hard to think that someone belongs to something (to a community, a political organization) without imagining, at the same time, a policy of separation, the definition of boundaries (Costa, 1999, p. 43)⁴. It is, therefore, the function that the border plays in defining an “inside” and “outside”, with respect to the reference community, to give it the character of “establishment of institutions” (Balibar, 2010, p. 315).

According to an interesting perspective on the origin of the concept of border it can be understood as: *limen* or *limes* (Cacciari, 2000, pp. 73-79)⁵. *Limen* is the threshold, the pass through which one enters a domain or

³ Our translation by Zanini, 1997.

⁴ Our translation by Costa, 1999.

⁵ Our translation by Cacciari, 2000.

comes out of it and *limes* is, instead, the path that surrounds a territory, which contains its form.

Based on this etymological suggestion, Gomarasca supposes a boundary model organized according to two fundamental theses. "The first thesis (T1) concerns the structure of the border, its essential duality: there is no boundary that is not *limen* and *limes* together. In fact, the border is never rigid. It indicates the line along which the two men are touching (*cum-finis*)⁶. The second argument (T2) concerns the writing of the border: we can live (and therefore build) a space only if we draw boundaries. Here, above all, the anthropological significance of the concept is at stake : each of us constantly establishes borders while acting and interpreting the world (Mezzadra, 2000, p. 149). In other words, men are beings who produce, wherever they live, guarded spaces" (Gomarasca, 2004, p. 18)⁷.

The correlation of these two theses leads us to affirm that the boundary makes distinctions while uniting and therefore "no border can eliminate or leave out another one, because it implies it in its very being" (Ibid, p. 19). However, only rarely it happens that solidarity mechanisms activate processes of concern to the other; in most cases it is the opposite to occur, with episodes of hostility, fear and indifference, evoking ethnocentrism as a universal feature of human groups. "A natural consequence related to the construction of the border is to throw out, to expel from the area that has been created s/he-what is considered as an intruder. Exclusion leads someone or something to the edge of an area, away from the centre: this is where the outcast is (Geremek, 2012, 391-421). And sometimes this can also be pushed over the border until it becomes a foreigner, that is something other than what you want to contain within the boundary" (Zanini, 1997, p. 55)⁸.

This attitude towards the other has a strong correlation with the social structure and cultural environment. "The attitude towards the foreigner depends on the way of feeling and being of the community, social groups and individuals. The individual and, above all, the community identity, de-

⁶ Simmel's picture of the frame metaphorically describes very well this thesis: "for the social group, the frame assumes a function very similar to that which it has for a work of art. In this one it exerts the two functions, which are exactly the two aspects of a single function: to mark the boundary of the work of art as to the surrounding environment and to close it in itself" (Simmel, 1989, p. 529).

⁷ Our translation by Gomarasca, 2004.

⁸ Our translation by Zanini, 1997.

termines the attitudes and strategies of action” (Cotesta, 2002, p. 5)⁹. In other words, the exclusion mechanism arises from the inability to be able to classify, by their own cultural categories, the peripheral elements, seen as deviant, dangerous anyway. This is how “the stranger becomes someone who is not a member of our own field from the beginning; then when s/he gets there, s/he imports a set of special features, qualities, which, in the long run, can modify, more or less in depth, its character” (Zanini, 1997, p. 60)¹⁰.

The stranger disrupts the familiarity of the space of belonging and requires, in any case, to rearrange this space and to revise the limits¹¹. This reorganization depends on the ability to integrate other individuals in own environment; when there is no such ability, we add a little self-confidence, then we tend to assume basically suspicious and hostile attitudes.” (Simmel, 1989, p. 580).

In short, “on the border and across the border differences are structured: the symbolic, the legal and the political ones. Differences having other differences, between those who have rights and those without; between those who belong to a particular community and those who are excluded” (Nuzzo 2006, p. 129)¹². Thus, the boundary builds its own citizens according to approval and uniformity criteria (inward), becoming a “necessary condition and, at the same time, ‘non-democratic’ of democracy” (Rigo, 2015 pp. 10-14)¹³.

3. *Education for a Global Citizenship*

The problem of the border, its physical geometry and its value in the setting up of the citizen and of the foreigner sets up the basis for the issue

⁹ Our translation by Cotesta, 2002

¹⁰ Our translation by Zanini, 1997.

¹¹ Being a foreigner, for Simmel, means that “the distant subject is near” (1989 p. 582) and that the difference is close to our environments and insists to enter and remain there; the stranger is not exactly “the traveler who today comes and tomorrow goes, but [...] the one who today comes, and tomorrow stays - so to say the potential traveler who, not having continued to move, has not entirely overcome the absence of ties of going and coming” (Simmel, 1989, p. 580).

¹² Our translation by Nuzzo, 2006.

¹³ Our translation by Rigo, 2015.

of citizenship and, therefore, of the strategies for the recognition of the identity of a subject.

However, the complexity of modern society is gradually undermining the role of the territorial boundaries as mechanisms of understanding and reducing complexity, positioning them along non-linear trajectories (Luhmann, 1982, pp. 238-240). Distance does not seem to count much and space has ceased to be an obstacle; “the very meaning of geography starts

to be questioned at any level. We have become all nomads but still in touch with each other” (Benedikt, 1995, p.42)

This situation directs the reflection on the meaning of citizenship and the need to educate ourselves to new forms of coexistence among different identities. It is no coincidence that there is an ongoing major debate on the extension of citizenship rights, which involves the review of the issue of national identity. Has the collective profile of the nation-state to remain linked to that of religious or national origin, or transformed itself, including new items, brought by different ethnic and cultural groups?

The solution is not unique. You could untie the political culture of the ethnic one or “strengthen the real citizenship, rather than imaginary, ensuring more security rights and solidarity enshrined in the Constitution” (Schnapper, 1994, p.78).

As we have previously anticipated when you extend more rights to non-citizens the word ‘citizenship’ gives way to the broader concept of *global citizenship*.

However to internalize this new vision (of spaces, places, costumes) implies a pedagogical reflection on the concept of border, not as a division but as opportunities for contacts.

To think of a global citizenship is possible if you become aware of belonging to an increasingly complex world, in which phenomena and events have close connections and interdependencies. It is to perceive the world, as in Luhmann’s vision, as a set of autonomous systems able to auto-generate their own borders (Luhmann, 2001, p. 101) and independent from the observation of others. Understood in this way, they are subject to a multi-establishment and co-penetrability, that is to the interweaving of intra and extra-systemic relationships.

“In order to respect each other you need to engage in the difficult task to understand it, to change perspective, knowing that it is impossible to com-

pletely overcome egocentrism. Conversion is very difficult and even more difficult is the fusion of cultural horizons" (Tabboni, 2006, p. 12)¹⁴. Cassano would say that the ideal condition would be to put oneself in a situation of listening and proximity that would allow to "creep into the place of the other through imagination" (1989, p. 9)¹⁵.

However, this broadening of perspective does not mean the loss of national placement and the indispensable reference to the state. It should rather be understood as a multiplication of belongings, without cancelling the local dimension but accompanying it. The construction of the global citizenship implies that every person lives a plurality of identities and memberships (social, religious, cultural, ethnic, professional, etc.); consequently, the national bond will not be exhaustive. The *global citizen* is s/he who will also be able to exercise her/his rights as a simple person, and not only as the citizen of a state and s/he will depend on ties that go beyond the state membership (Sen, 2000).

It is evident that the training/educational matter is in terms of understanding how to learn and live that freedom of belonging, conceived as an additional and not subtractive one. "Education will help train people free to decide what priority to give to their identity; people aware of the interdependence of groups and peoples also distant from each other and aware of the responsibility of the bonds that unite individuals on the planet. In addition, education will have to fight against all forms of resurgent nationalism, ethnicity and racism, but it should not deprive individuals of that particular and 'hot' form of identity lived within their own culture" (Santerini, 2009)¹⁶.

Conclusions

Globalization has undermined the solidity of this conviction, generating a twofold situation: on the one hand, disorientation and disintegration that promote neo-tribalisms and phenomena of fundamentalism both in West-

¹⁴ Our translation by Tabboni, 2006.

¹⁵ Our translation by Cassano, 1989.

¹⁶ Our translation by Santerini, 2009.

ern and Eastern Countries; on the other hand, increased communications' networks that have made the world infinitely small.

In addition, the rapid technological revolution in the field of media has transformed the times and modes of communication, eliminating the space-time dimension in favour of a *mobile* vision of the people's lives (Elliott, Urry, 2013)¹⁷.

In any case, this change of spatial relations has challenged the idea of a citizenship only linked to a specific place and it seems to suggest a model in which the spatial dimension replaces the territorial one. To the social, cultural, economic implications and transformations corresponds a more complex and multidimensional concept of citizenship. Being a citizen does it mean to fulfil town electoral duties, to actively participate in the management of territorial issues, to know the laws of the State, or to express a sense of national identity? Do civic behaviours relate more to the private sphere or to the public one? What relationship is created between rights and duties within the society of multiple citizenships?

In order to attempt an answer to these questions the framework developed by Gagnon and Pagé can be useful also to analyze and describe what is inside the 'black box of citizenship' and to identify the different ways in which societies are facing social pluralism. In this perspective, citizenship is on two axes: on the vertical axis of identity, there are the macro-concepts of national identity and social, cultural and supranational belonging; on the horizontal axis of equality, there are, instead, the poles of the system of rights and of the political and civic participation. The individual elements must be considered in close connection with each other. In other words, each Country will choose how to configure identity, how to manage memberships, the regime of rights and the rules of participation (Gagnon, Pagé, 1999).

Through such an image-picture it emerges that the town is made of civic culture, as expressed in the Constitution, and it is based on the complex balance that regulates the integration of differences, the effective rights re-

¹⁷ Urry argues "Society is no longer based on relationships among individuals who are physically close: technology has shattered all territorial boundaries. Mobility is the paradigm of our existence now: our identities are no longer rooted in a place that gives them meaning, but they roam the world without limits and activate relationships that movement immediately transforms into bonds and remote intimacy, as those allowed by email, sms and skype" (Aluffi, 2013).

game, the degree of participation, etc; this social, civil, political, historical and cultural process must be analyzed in its becoming. Citizenship is the past, rules, institutions but also a political project for the future of a Country. "Despite the inconsistent parts of which every culture is made and despite the great social and cultural diversity that characterizes contemporary societies, to meet with the other remains an exciting experience, the drafting of which can cause different results" (Tabboni, 2006, p. 15)¹⁸.

Based on these statements, citizenship becomes a field characterized by heterogeneity, which can be analyzed from different points of view: legal, historical, of values, intercultural, etc.

To bring unity to the different souls of citizenship education may look like an impossible task, or simply useless. However, the multicultural challenge of integration still has to be collected. It is investing in training programs which discover and rediscover the meaning of citizenship in its multi-dimension of openness, equality and social cohesion. In other words, you need to create a balance between the acquisition of intercultural education as an up-to-date understanding (ability to know and appreciate the differences) and to orient it not only to the defence of particularism but also to convergence and social cohesion. This task becomes essential if you want to avoid a reified and reductive vision of individual cultures, and increase their capacity for dialogue and mutual understanding by supporting the centripetal forces of socio-cultural movements rather than the centrifugal ones (Santerini, 2001, 2005)¹⁹. We must learn to understand the emotions coming from other cultures. "The other will become more and more part of us, in our multicultural society. The emotional boundaries of the world have become as important as its geographical borders" (Moisi, 2009, p. 228).

References

Aluffi, G. (2013). *Nell'era del Web diventa portatile anche l'identità*. Available at <http://ilmiolibro.kataweb.it/recensione/catalogo/1924/nellera-del-web-diventa-portatile-anche-lidentita/>

¹⁸ Our translation by Tabboni, 2006.

¹⁹ Our translation by Santerini, 2001, 2005.

- Bachtin, M. (1988). *L'autore e l'eroe. Teoria letteraria e scienze umane*. Turin : Einaudi.
- Balibar, É. (2010). At the Borders of Citizenship: A Democracy in Translation?, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13(3), 315-322.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Voglia di comunità*. Rome-Bari : Editori Laterza.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Dentro la globalizzazione. Le conseguenze sulle persone*. Rome-Bari : Editori Laterza.
- Belloni, I. (2005). Zgumt Bauman, Voglia di comunità. *Recensione*. Available at <http://www.juragentium.org/books/it/voglia.htm>
- Benedikt, M. (1995). On Cyberspace and Virtual Reality. *Man and Information Technology*, Stockholm : IVA.
- Cacciari, M. (2000). Nomi di luogo: confine. *Aut aut*, 299-300, 73-79.
- Colafato, M. (1998). *Emozioni e confini. Per una sociologia delle relazioni etniche*. Milan : Booklet.
- Cassano, F. (1989). *Approssimazione. Esercizi di esperienza dell'altro*. Bologna : il Mulino.
- Costa, P. (1999). *Civitas. Storia della cittadinanza in Europa. Vol. 1. Dalla civiltà comunale al Settecento*. Rome-Bari : Editori Laterza.
- Cotesta, V. (2002). *Lo straniero. Pluralismo culturale e immagini dell'Altro nella società globale*. Rome-Bari : Editori Laterza.
- Elliott, A. & Urry, J. (2013). *Vite mobili*. Bologna : il Mulino.
- Friedman, J. (1999). The Hybridization of Roots and the Abhorrence of the Bush. In M. Featherstone & S. Lash (Eds.), *Space of culture: City-Nation-World* (230-255). London : Routledge.
- Gagnon, F. & Pagé, M. (1999). *Cadre conceptuel d'analyse de la citoyenneté dans les démocraties libérales. Volume I: Cadre conceptuel et analyse*. Rapport pour Direction du Multiculturalisme et Recherche et analyse stratégiques, Ministère du Patrimoine canadien, Ottawa.
- Geremek, B. (2012). L'emarginato. J. In Le Goff (Ed.), *L'uomo medioevale* (391-421). Rome-Bari : Editori Laterza.
- Gomasasca, P. (2004). *I confini dell'altro. Etica dello spazio multiculturale*. Milan : Vita e pensiero.
- Koselleck, R. (1986). *Futuro passato. Per una semantica dei tempi storici*. Genoa : Marietti.
- Luhmann, N. (1982). Territorial Borders as System Boundaries. In R. Strassoldo & G. Delli Zotti (Eds.), *Cooperation and Conflict in Border Areas* (238-240). Milan : FrancoAngeli.
- Luhmann, N. (2001). *Sistemi sociali. Fondamenti di una teoria generale*. Bologna : il Mulino.
- Mezzadra, S. (2000). Cittadini della frontiera e confini della cittadinanza. Per una lettura politica delle migrazioni contemporanee. *Aut aut*, 298, 133-153.
- Moisi, D. (2009). *Geopolitica delle emozioni. Le culture della paura, dell'umiliazione e della speranza stanno cambiando il mondo*. Milan : Garzanti Libri.
- Nuzzo, L. (2006). Cittadinanza: Un percorso di lettura. *Rechtsgeschichte*, 8, 129-147.
- Reich, R. (1992). *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*. New York : First Vintage Books.
- Rigo, E. (2015). Confini e cittadinanza. *Rivista di Storia delle Idee*, 4(2), 10-14.
- Rosenberg, G. (2001). A pluralist democracy. Available at <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2001-11-27-rosenberg-en.html>.
- Santerini, M. (2001). *Educare alla cittadinanza. La pedagogia e le sfide della globalizzazione*. Rome : Carocci.

- Santerini, M. (2005). *Antisemitismo senza memoria. Insegnare la Shoah nelle società multiculturali*. Rome : Carocci.
- Santerini, M. (2009). *Vivere nel pluralismo. L'educazione alla cittadinanza in prospettiva interculturale*. Available at <http://for.indire.it/esteri4/risorse/pdf/santerini.pdf>
- Schnapper, D. (1994). *La communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Sen, A. (2002). *Globalizzazione e libertà*. Milan : Mondadori.
- Simmel, G. (1989). *Sociologia*. Milan : Edizioni di Comunità.
- Tabboni, E. (2006). *Lo straniero e l'altro*. Naples : Liguori Editore.
- Walzer, M. (2014). *Gli effetti del pluralismo culturale sulla cittadinanza e sulla politica*. Available at <http://www.reset.it/>
- Young, J. (1999). *The Exclusive Society. Crime and Difference in Late Modernity*. London Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications.
- Zanini, P. (1997). *Significati del confine. I limiti naturali, storici, mentali*. Milan : Bruno Mondadori.