RESEARCH ARTICLE

RE-EMBEDDING EUROPEAN SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH COSMOPOLITANISM

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ABSTRACT: This article tackles the issue of social citizenship in Europe, beyond its legal and political defini-
tion, as the result of social mechanisms and practices, and it assumes the cosmopolitan perspective as a
conceptual tool for the interpretation of changes in its principles and structure as related to Europeaniza-
tion and globalisation. It starts from the heuristic value of the concept, grounded in modern industrial so-
cieties and built on its institutions and forms of social solidarity. Then it draws on the debate about the
challenges of the welfare state and capitalism's transformations, as well as on the impact on social citizen-
ship of the European integration process. It proposes cosmopolitanism as a lens for catching cosmopolitan
ideas, narratives and values that contribute to creating new practices of solidarity and mutual recognition,
which are the basis for the construction of new kinds of sustainable social citizenship in Europe. The Euro-
pean social forum of 2012 has been considered a significant case study for an empirical exploration of the
cosmopolitan imagination as a factual process. A cosmopolitan epistemology takes shape, based on the
values of commons and global public goods. Meanings, actions and practices enhanced by social actors,
building solidarity in diversity and following global-local logics, show forms of recognition of otherness and
of sharing global responsibilities representing a tendency towards a new conception of European social
citizenship. Social rights and recognition beyond territorial boundaries are at the core of the construction
of a cosmopolitan citizenship in Europe.

KEYWORDS: Social citizenship, Europeanisation, Cosmopolitanism, civil society, transnational solidarity

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1. Introduction: is there a social ground for a 'cosmopolitan social citizenship' in Europe?

Social citizenship has become again one of the crucial issues in sociology. Although in the last twenty years extensive literature has addressed the topic of European citizenship (Kymlicka and Norman 2001; Benhabib 2002; Kivisto and Faist 2007; Young 2002; Turner 1993; Olsen 2008, 2012), the endemic weakness of the social dimension in the European integration process has relegated the social component of citizenship to the edge of the debate. A new impulse to tackle the issue of social citizenship grounded in the European space comes from the latest facts regarding the Greek crisis, the unresolved problem of the immigration flows to Europe, as well as the consequent rise of anti-European and xenophobic populism in some EU member states. Solidarity and mutual recognition among Europeans has become the most urgent question in the EU. There are tensions between the pursuit of national interests and the dynamics of European integration. The 'social malaise of Europe' dramatically comes to light, due to the fact that the EU has little to say on questions of solidarity and social justice, and social rights are still confined within the national state.

Citizenship is not only a political and legal status, but it is also the result of social mechanisms and practices (Turner 1993). Indeed, citizenship entails both the personal and cognitive dimensions because concerns identity and action: "the subjective dimension of citizenship involves the capacity to take on the point of view of the Other" (Delanty 2009, 129). The sociological approach consider citizenship as a result of belonging, of social ties and social compromises between conflicting interests, values and identities that characterize different social contexts. Citizenship marks areas of equality/inequality because it defines borders within society, through the distinction between those persons and social groups who are 'recognized' as peers in the community, with full access to rights and duties, and those who are partially or wholly excluded from them. The notion of citizenship is processual, and changes from one temporal and spatial context to another.

Political, economic, cultural and social phenomena related to globalization and Europeanization are changing the conditions under which citizenship is strictly linked to the nation state. These processes, by altering geographical boundaries, institutions and pervading social relations, also influence identities, norms, and affect the functions of citizenship in regulating social inclusion through redistribution of material and symbolic resources.

Against this background, in this paper we see cosmopolitanism as a useful conceptual tool for interpreting changes in the principles and structure of social citizenship in

Europe, since there is an urgent need for an empirical exploration of "the increased degree to which people identify with and express solidarity towards, people beyond the local and the national to the wider world; changes in rights as the result of a demand of recognition of others; the impact of cosmopolitan values of care and hospitality on national politics; the impact of global events on national politics; the expansion of the global civil society movement and movements towards global cooperation" (Delanty 2009, 200-201).

The ideas of cosmopolitanism and citizenship, the latter related to the nation and to the state, can appear to stand in a contradictory relationship: whereas cosmopolitanism implies a sense of belonging that transcends the immediate and local, the idea of citizenship most commonly indicates a formal tie with a specific community (Skribs and Woodward 2013). Nevertheless, national citizenship, in the context of global interdependence and European integration, shows its limits, and a shift away from nationality and from territorial boundaries arises. Does Europeanization contribute to disembedding social citizenship from the national context, transforming it into a cosmopolitan issue? Are there social actors striving for a 'cosmopolitan European social citizenship'? And, if so, who are they? These are the key questions inspiring our research.

The cosmopolitan approach shows the transformation of the four components of citizenship: rights, duties, participation and identity. Rights are no longer confined to rights acquired by birth and the duties are extended to cosmopolitan responsibilities beyond the national community; participation covers a wider sphere than national civil society and extends to global civil society; identity are multicultural and loyalties are reshaped by concern to global justice (Delanty 2009, 128). In this article, both citizenship and cosmopolitanism are operationalized for empirical research and their relationship is investigated. The aim is to define the way in which cosmopolitan ideas, narratives and values are shaping everyday life (Cicchelli 2014) and contributing to create new forms of practices, solidarity and mutual recognition, which are the very bases for the construction of new forms of sustainable citizenship in Europe.

This paper is organized in three parts. Part one begins with the analysis of the concept of social citizenship and its heuristic value. The starting point is Marshall's concept related to modern industrial societies and built on its forms of social solidarity and its institutions, challenged by the transformations of both the welfare state and capitalism. Then it focuses on the impact of the European integration process on social citizenship, in the light of the economic crisis and the neo-liberal political regulation, which have contributed to 'de-socialize' citizenship (Touraine 1998). Finally, we introduce the concept of cosmopolitan social citizenship inspired to the theory of 'cosmopolitan imagination'. Four constitutive social dimensions of cosmopolitanism, as con-

ceived by Delanty (2009), are adopted as a useful conceptual tool for understanding the new forms of identity, action and demand of recognition, in order to catch the social mechanisms providing the ground in which cosmopolitan social citizenship could be rooted.

Part two focuses on the analysis of results of an empirical research carried out during the European Social Forum 2012 (ESF), which took place in the immediate aftermath of the great financial and economic crisis . We have considered the Social Forum, a significant field of observation of cosmopolitan dynamics, a space of encounters and dialogue where global challenges are problematized and identities are reshaped. This is an emblematic place where it is possible to describe the features of a 'cosmopolitan socialization' process referring to its aesthetic, cultural, ethic and political pillars (Cicchelli 2014, 231). By interacting with and relate to one another, despite their origins and their nationality within or outside Europe, the ESF participants experience and interpret the world incorporing the cosmopolitan logic. Our analysis gives particular emphasis to any form of discourse, action and social practice that can be comprised in the framework of cosmopolitanism. Meanings, orientations and values enhanced by ESF participants, building new forms of solidarity in diversity, are considered 'impulses' towards an active cosmopolitanism (McGrew 2004).

The third part of the paper concerns some final reflections on the social components of cosmopolitanism, related to this specific social space of the ESF, which suggest that there are new forms of recognition of otherness, of values, practices and social action pointing towards cosmopolitanism. A new conception of social citizenship, reinterpreted in a cosmopolitan perspective, is taking shape in Europe.

2. The rise and decline of the traditional concept of social citizenship in Europe

Social citizenship is considered the distinguishing feature of the European social model. The concept was introduced by Thomas Marshall (1950) in his analysis of the peculiar citizenship status in twentieth-century industrial society, characterized by the Keynesian welfare state. This model of citizenship was the outcome of the "middle century social compromise" (Crouch 1999) between social actors in typical Fordist societies marked by the so-called organized capitalism. For the very first time, social citizenship bundled and guaranteed civil, political and social rights into a single 'package' whose sum exceeded the effectiveness of its component parts. In its conception as a potential of decommodification and 'antidote' to the class inequalities generated by the market, social citizenship enabled each individual subject, regardless of his/her

market value, to gain access to provisions guaranteeing protection, social security, in short the possibility for everyone to lead a civil life. This process involves the redistribution of resources based on shared principles of equality, solidarity and social justice. Social citizenship is based on the dual assumption that each individual shares responsibility for society as a whole, and that he/she is endowed with a willingness to donate, whose motivation is linked to forms of solidarity and cooperation in the production of public goods (Offe 1993).

This concept was incorporated in the idea of a 'European social model' born in the early 1980s. Based on a commitment to social justice (Ross 1995; Therborn 2011; Giddens 2007, 2014) and redistributive policies, it aimed at reducing disparities among citizens by ensuring social protection and security. The model was constructed on the expectation of such stable prerequisites as economic growth, low unemployment, low inequality and universal welfare provisions that have been placed in serious doubt by the current trends of European societies.

Immigration, the severe rise in public spending, increased life expectancy, high rates of unemployment, unsustainable economic growth, globalization and many other phenomena have radically changed the conditions in which social citizenship was supposed to play its role. In addition, the welfare state and social policy, which comprise the very underpinning of social citizenship, have been eroded by the progressive neoliberal 'streamlining' of the last decades.

The current economic crisis has exposed the negative impact of economic and financial concentration of power and lack of political control over the conditions of life and well-being of European citizens; the drastic cuts in public spending, especially in the social sector, have resulted in high social costs. There seems to be some validity to the thesis that "European integration is not leading to more cohesion but to increased opportunities for contentious action on the one side, and on the other to new forms of exclusion and polarization" (Delanty 2000, 116). However, this situation is also a proving ground for expressing new demands for rights and a ground for a new concept of European citizenship defined in terms of 'social citizenship'.

The affirmation of social citizenship in the mid-twentieth century was made possible thanks to the pressure of class conflict (Dahrendorf 1989; Giddens 2007). Today this would be considered an unlikely scenario, in a fragmented and individualized society, where there is a lack of social categories which could be properly defined as social classes and a lack of collective actors whose members share a common position within the social relations of production and authority, which can mobilize and organize themselves in order to change the balance of power through an awareness of common interests. According to Ulrich Beck (2007) 'Classless class relations' characterize contem-

porary capitalism, and this is the result of a deep change in the structure of inequalities affecting contemporary societies. The inequalities are individualized and the cultural dimension becomes an increasingly important factor in their structure. The language of identity and 'ways of life' discourses are among the major vehicles for the expression of social discontent. The rebellious masses include the middle class, whose political dissatisfaction has increased due to the precariousness of their social situation and the experience of "social disqualification" (Paugam 2013).

In this altered scenario, the process of European integration on the one hand threatens traditional forms of social citizenship, on the other it emphasizes differentiation and diversity. In contemporary European societies identities are constructed by a multiplicity of cultural practices and experiences which can be freely chosen, discarded or built into an eclectic ensemble. Immigration and growing pluralisation are the main phenomena which can be considered as factors of a new relationship between citizenship and social identity. Consequently, the request of rights supersedes the confines of a state-led project and are no longer just about the struggle for equality: "Citizenship is about reconciling the pursuit of equality with the recognition of difference" (Delanty 2000, 132).

An attempt to realize a non-national citizenship is the affirmation of the European citizenship, codified by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Eder and Giesen 2001; Roche 2009) and by new freedoms and principles, introduced by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, capable of challenging national sovereignty. The abstract concept of equality of citizens, as a universal ideal, is called into question by the principle of difference, conceptions of personhood and human rights – highly contextualized around criteria of gender, ethnicity, religion and geography. The process of European integration, in advancing the structural integration which allows all citizens of Europe to move, settle and work in any EU member state, has contributed implicitly to redefining the principle of equality within the European social space (Beck and Grande 2004; Bartolini 2005), interfering with national rules and causing a partial disjunction between social rights and national territory (Ferrera 2003, 2005). However, this freedom of movement that European citizens now enjoy does not entail the acquisition of social rights (i.e. entitlements to social security and tax benefits) which at the moment can be guaranteed only at the national level. This is the endemic contradiction of European citizenship: welfare provision still limits the unconditioned equal treatment of European citizens[1].

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[1]See the emblematic case of Silvia Guerra, an Italian woman legally resident in Belgium but unemployed, who was expelled because she was considered a burden for the national welfare state (Margiotta 2015).

The still marked economic and social inequalities among the European citizenry highlight the continued relevance of redistributing wealth. The major pattern of inequalities occurs within different social contexts, affecting above all people with low-skilled and precarious jobs, low education levels, living in single income households with dependent children and/or living in slum environments. These people to a significant extent comprise the young, immigrants and women, although each national and local European reality is somewhat different with regard to these structural aspects (Saraceno 2015; OECD 2011, 2014). Social citizenship, in its actual configuration both at the national and at the European levels, fails to guarantee social inclusion and to limit social inequalities.

3. The cosmopolitan approach. A lens for looking at social citizenship beyond the limits of the nation-state

The social and cultural dimensions in Europe play a role beyond the economic form of integration, which place emphasis on diversity. The notion of unity is challenged by increasing pluralization. If we look at Europe as a field of social relations in which conflicting orientations are played out, the cosmopolitan approach can be considered as a fitting response to "the exigency of learning to live in a globalised world, where the intersections of divergent beliefs and ways of life become an everyday occurrence" (Giddens 2014, 122). As a scientific concept, Beck and Grande (2007) propose to use cosmopolitanism as a specific way of dealing socially with cultural differences, by avoiding essentialism and dualism: hierarchy vs. subordination, universalism vs. nationalism, and sameness vs. postmodern particularism.

The cosmopolitan perspective assumes as a starting point that Europe's heterogeneity cannot be eliminated, but it can be mediated first of all by social actors able to bridge its differences: "It is impossible to represent Europe's history as a story of pure identities, running the danger of becoming progressively alienated. Its history can be represented only in terms of constructed identities, dependent on a series of successive encounters between `civilizations' (if one wants to keep the word), which keep taking place within the European space, enclosing populations and cultural patterns from the whole world. Just as it is necessary to acknowledge that in each of its regions Europe always remains heterogeneous and differs from itself as much as it differs from others" (Balibar 2009, 200). The sociological approach to cosmopolitanism (Beck and Grande 2007; Delanty 2009) is also a useful theoretical framework in which to contextualize the new forms of identity, action and demand of recognition that underlie the

construction of new forms of social citizenship in Europe. As conceptual tool, it is anchored to the 'cosmopolitan imagination', which is "a way to viewing the world in terms of its immanent possibilities for self-transformation and which can be realized only by taking the cosmopolitan perspective of the Other as well as a global principle of justice" (Delanty 2009, 3).

Europe is an open and overlapping space which inevitably intersects with its component territories. It changes with the emergence and enlargement of supranational borders and, at the same time, it is affected by a progressive internal weakening of the multiple functions of its national borders. European society can be considered a "regional and historically particular case of global interdependencies" (Beck and Grande 2007, 14).

New expressions of interactions and communities of people, which are aware of and do not neglect their different cultures and local and national belonging – but enhance these differences – are emerging across borders, challenging the traditional forms of creating identity and affecting the boundaries of social action. These social actors, involved in particularized political projects, such as human rights and environmental struggles, and unwilling to automatically identify with a nation as represented by the state, are engendering alternative notions of community membership creating de facto the basis of forms of 'de-nationalized' (Sassen 2002; Somers 2010) and 'cosmopolitan' citizenship (Delanty 2007). At the same time, those same social actors participate to the 're-embedding' processes of the social life (Giddens 2007) and they act globally within the local contexts, the site where everyday citizenship practices take place. Local communities become the place where re-establishing strong social ties and engage with institutions, public services, markets, political and social citizenship in an open global perspective rather than in a particularistic closure.

Cosmopolitanism, in various guises, today finds expression amongst diverse groups and movements, across continents and cultures, seeking to advance justice and the conditions for human flourishing (McGrew 2004). The reorientation of institutions and practices, both private and public, collective and individual, towards global logics, are processes which take place deep inside national territories and institutional domains. There are cross-border networks of activists engaged in specific localized struggles with a global agenda. These processes can be interpreted through the cosmopolitan lens and relocated in a new conceptual framework.

Delanty (2009, 7) suggests four constitutive social dimensions of the cosmopolitan imagination: a) the reinvention of political community, grounded on the "cosmopolitan epistemology of a shared reality" (Turner 2006, 140 in Delanty 2009), and based on the awareness that "national interests have to be balanced with other kinds of interests.

Foregrounded in this are notions of care, rights and hospitality" as the shaping principle of social action; b) cultural difference and heterogeneity, which characterize the European mixed, non-homogeneous and overlapping societies. Emphasis is placed on the relationship to otherness, on plurality and the embracing of difference in the creation of transnational social communities (Calhoun 2003); c) the negotiation of borders. "Territorial space has been displaced by new kinds of space, of which transnational space is the most significant". There is a reconfiguration of borders, which lose or change their significance, so that no clear lines exist between inside and outside; d) global-local relations, which refer to the interaction of global forces with local contexts, and movements of the global civil society are an example of such dynamics.

We adopt Delanty's framework as a particularly useful tool of empirical analysis for our purpose of catching the renewed and sustainable social citizenship emanating from European and non-European civil societies. In particular, we refer to a 'civic cosmopolitanism' which suggests a "politics of autonomy that preserves civil society against the new fragmentations, be it that of capitalism or nationalism, the rule of profit or the rule of the self!" (Delanty 2000, 6). This approach is a significant heuristic tool for investigating the concrete civil society comprising interest groups, non-governmental organizations and citizens' initiatives and movements, which consider conflict and change as an important mechanism for the emergence of new forms of social citizenship. Lastly, civic cosmopolitanism stresses the importance of a shift towards post-conventional values and forms of solidarity: i.e. the emergence of a new kind of social co-responsibility in the face of the retreat of state responsibility for society (Habermas 1987).

The analysis based on the European Social Forum 2012 (ESF) case-study, outlined in the following section, is a preliminary attempt to move beyond the normative political theory of cosmopolitanism as related to world citizenship and global governance (Held 2010, Archibugi 2008), which has been the most developed in political theory and philosophy, and to adopt it as a methodological approach for empirical social sciences, in response to the challenge of globalization and with the aim of achieving a far-reaching level of analysis which moves beyond national frames of reference (Beck 2007).

4. The Cosmopolitan public space and social actors claiming for new forms of social citizenship in Europe

Why do we consider the ESF 2012 a worthy field of investigation? Although we are aware that it is only a partial representation of the civil society, we consider it an inter-

esting case study because ESF participants embody an active global civil society that thinks and acts in a cosmopolitan perspective. In fact, the ESF can be considered an example of a cosmopolitan public sphere structured as a multilevel and multilingual transnational space for negotiation and dialogue which crosses and transforms supranational, national and subnational public spheres (Delanty 2000). The way to deal with linguistic plurality is one of the most interesting aspects of the EFS[2].Linguistic plurality among European citizens is one of the biggest obstacles in constructing a transnational public sphere within the EU (Scalise 2013). The role of translation, as a process which mobilizes one's whole relationship to the other (Bielsa 2014), making it possible to negotiate difference and to understand the perspective of the other, is a central condition for experiencing concrete practices of cosmopolitanism (Balibar 2009) [3]. This is, for instance, the case of Zygmunt Bauman (1997, 17): "Translating is not an idle occupation for a limited circle of specialists, it is the texture of everyday life, the work that we perform each day and each hour of the day. We are all translators, since translation is the property common to all forms of life".

Secondly, we identified the ESF as a place in which people express solidarity beyond the local and the national, where cross-border patterns of actions take place and a critical reorientation in values emerges. Transnational networks of people taking part to the ESF care of global tensions and engage together in common activities, interests and experiences, which entail the elaboration of new meanings and a shift in self-understanding, that are important prerequisite for the emergence of a cosmopolitan citizenship in Europe. ESF participants – who define themselves as the 'global civil society', "social and citizenry movements from different regions of Europe", and "social forces from around the world that have gathered together: women, men, farmers, workers, unemployed, professionals, students, black and indigenous peoples, coming from the South and from the North"[4] - are multifaceted and heterogeneous members of organizations which incorporate many social, cultural, ethnic, generational and ideological groups that cut across various countries and encourage understanding and mutual recognition, placing special value on exchange, mediation of conflicting visions and conciliation of differences. The ESF is a plural, diversified and multi-lingual context that

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[2] During the 2012 ESF dialogue between different languages has been made possible thanks to up to 400 interpreters who worked without pay to ensure simultaneous translation.

[3]Some scholars affirm that there could and should be a universalized regime of translations in Europe and Umberto Eco (1995) proposes the `translation' as the common language of Europe.Several contemporary sociologists and cultural critics have insisted on the importance of translation as a social practice.

[4] World Social Forum Charter of principles. Most social forums, the ESF included, adhere to this charter drawn up by the World Social Forum in 2001.

gathers together different types of local, national and transnational organizations and networks which do not identify themselves with a nation state or a cultural commonality and debate about global transformations, recognizing global-local interconnections and engaging in concrete action at territorial levels[5]. Their plurality and diversity is a value at the basis of their transversal unity. Although they do not share all the same beliefs or one vision of reality, they join and mobilize for common purposes and universal rights. They foster a "globalization based on solidarity and respect for universal human rights: those of all citizens, all nations and the environment, and posited on international democratic systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples"[6]. Their firm commitment to global justice enables them to converge and create a collective cross-border solidarity, while accepting individual diversities. This type of 'cosmopolitan engagement', based on a complex logic of universalism and particularism, emerges from their inclusive approach that encompasses differences. They express pluralistic, nonexclusive ideas, maintain their own identities and at the same time infusing them with other meanings, cultures and symbols, through negotiation and dialogue.

Our study, conducted during the ESF organized in Florence, was founded on a twofold methodology. First, a collection of data at the individual level, based on a survey on 175 randomly selected participants, by way of questionnaires answered face-to-face. Secondly, a systematic content analysis was conducted on both the open space for comments present at the end of the questionnaire and on the documents, calls for action and outcome reports jointly created by activists during the ESF and published on its website. These documents were the result of a collective exchange, reflection and debate by all organizations participating to the ESF.

According to the list of participants in the 2012 ESF, about 4,200 people and 300 networks and organizations from 28 countries from all over Europe and beyond took part in the event[7]. Almost half of the participants (52%) were Italians[8]; 45.5% came

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[5]A broad spectrum of civil society organizations were represented at the ESF held in Florence in 2012, which comprised human rights and peace associations; transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and transnational advocacy networks (TANs); international solidarity organizations, global justice, alter mondialists and pro-migrant organizations; feminist movements, ecologist and animal-rights groups; European, national and territorial trade union confederations, students collectives, social voluntary associations, and citizens and neighborhood committees from different regions of Europe.

[6]World Social Forum Charter of principle, 2001.

[7]More than 60,000 people took place to the first ESF held in Florence in 2002 and the following ESFs, organized in different European cities about every two years, have confirmed the high level of participation (Della Porta 2009). Something different happened in 2012. On the one hand, organizers decided to adopt a different format using this meeting as place of convergence among only those organisations which

from other EU countries - those most represented being France, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Spain, UK, Norway, Austria, Portugal, The Netherlands, Greece; and 2.5% came from non-EU countries. Our sample consisted of 72.4% Italians, 22.9% other Europeans and 4.7% non-EU citizens. It was formed mostly by young and adult people: 32 was the average age; 49.5% were between age 19 and 29; 27.1% between age 30 and 39; 18.2% age 40 or older; and 5.3% age 18 or younger. The sample was well-balanced in terms of gender (45.2% women and 51.4% men; 3.4% unspecified). The activists in our sample were well-educated (67.8% holding a bachelors, masters or Ph.D. degree; 32.2% holding a secondary school diploma) and were distributed according to the following professions: university students (36.7%), researchers or teachers (21.3%), professionals/self-employed (18%), NGOs and human rights workers (6.7%), public employees (7.3%), retired (2.7%) and unemployed (7.3%).

What is especially interesting is that among the professional categories to which the activists of the sample belong, in particular the public sector – education, university and research – but also self-employees and young newcomers to employment, there is a high percentage of non-standard, poorly paid, insecure and unprotected employment. In the last decade a re-emergence of conflict on social and labour issues have been identified (Della Porta 2009) and the role of the 'precariat' has been underlined (Standing 2014). With the increase of internal and geographically interrelated inequalities due to the economic and financial European crisis, the decrease in job security and the increase of unemployment and precarious working conditions in many European countries, especially in the Southern ones, trade union mobilization and citizen protest against austerity have become widespread. As described below, ESF participants focus on labour and social rights as key issues in the settlement of the European social citizenship.

Finally, as expected the vast majority of the sample declared a leftist political orientation (62.8%) or radical leftist one (30.2%) and 7% declined to state any political attitude or criticism of the political system, except that they did not recognize themselves in any political party.

were already active in local, national and transnational campaigns. On the other, the deep political and economic European crisis under way and the neo-liberal approach promoted by the EU, may have had an impact on forum participation and caused embitterment among activists towards the EU.

[8]This is a general limitation of surveys carried out at social movements events or protests in terms of representativeness and generalisation. Given the high material and psychological costs of travelling, national and local activists are usually largely overrepresented (Della Porta 2009).

5. The reinvention of political community and the construction of a cosmopolitan epistemology

During the ESF, several expressions of cosmopolitanism can be noted in debates, narratives, principles and processes of creating new ways of thinking and acting (Delanty 2009: 252). Cosmopolitan orientations emerge from the imagination of another Europe in which national and European economic interests are balanced with other social, political and cultural interests, and which is "based on the solidarity and participation of people in the decisions that determine our future" (ESF report, Florence, November 2012). A process of reinvention of political community replies to the dynamics which are attacking, according to activists, social, economic, environmental, and democratic rights in Europe, and social cohesion among Europeans. Activists propose a "democratic pact of citizenship for Europe" based on "respect for the dignity of every person, native and non-native, and on the guarantee of individual and collective rights, labor rights and social issues" (ESF report, Florence, November 2012). Against the mechanisms of concentration of political and economic decision-making powers, they affirm the right to decide on public and collective choice - at the local, national and European levels - by all people, citizens and non-citizens alike. This model of 'enlarged citizenship', which crosses national borders and does not refer to any pattern of homogeneity, includes immigrants and addresses the issue of citizenship of residence.

Activists denounce the exclusion of European people from having a say in the current debate about the reorganization of Europe in a context of economic and political crisis. Europeans have little opportunity to exercise their citizens' rights and articulate their priorities or alternatives at a European level.

> Citizens […] are given the option of supporting deeper integration of the EU on the basis of competition, deregulation and liberalization with no increase in democracy. On the other hand there are rightwing populists calling for a strengthening of the nation state […]. The need to open up a third space exists, as well as the need to struggle for the construction of another Europe where citizens, social forces, movements and associations return to have a say over their collective future (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

The current democratic functioning of the EU is considered by far inadequate. Besides defending democratic achievements via resistance struggles, many activists express the need to start a bottom up process to develop concrete alternative visions for a different Europe and develop democratic structures and processes at all territorial levels, for a bottom up and cross-border citizen-driven constituent process.

The reshaping of the notion of political community is developed in accordance with a reformulation of the principles of solidarity, equality and social rights in a cosmopolitan perspective. The analysis of the most frequently used words in the 2012 ESF reports, roadmaps and calls for action shows that ESF's founding values - social justice, solidarity, human rights, democracy, participation, equity, security, sustainable development, common goods – match cosmopolitan principles of openness, pluralism, responsibility to others, and 'social citizenship' finds a central place, usually connoted by the adjectives 'global', 'cosmopolitan', 'ecological', 'civic' or 'planetary', as mentioned in the World Social Forum's (WSF) charter of principles:

> The WSF is a process that encourages its participant organizations and movements to situate their actions, from the local level to the national level, and seeking active participation in international contexts, as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world in solidarity (Art. 14, World social forum charter of principles, 2001).

What does a 'planetary citizenship' imply in European contexts? Activists refer to a citizenship that encompasses rights and social responsibilities, duties and entitlements and an active role for people. It focuses on social justice and engagement with culture and cultural conflicts. Their conception entails envisions of citizen who is not merely aware of his/her rights but also able and eager to act upon them by contributing to the commonweal, the public welfare, with a sense of duty to global society, linking the feelings of national, transnational, local and global belonging.

Solidarity as the only way to construct a different Europe was the message that the ESF wanted to spread: a Greek, a German and a migrant, together, were in charge of the inauguration of the meeting through the slogans 'Joining forces for a common Europe' and 'Our Democracy instead of Their Austerity'.

Europe is sorely wanting in its fulfilment of the need for solidarity, social justice and welfare. According to our survey, only 8.3% of activists associate with Europe values of 'social justice' and 6.4% of 'solidarity', while 21.2% declares that 'individualism' was the value which best represents the actual configuration of Europe. This last response reaches a very high percentage among activists from the South of Italy (50%) – where social and economic inequality is higher than the national and European average - while it is not present at all among non-European activists. The point of view of non-European participants is particularly in contrast with that of European participants: from outside, they still consider Europe to be based on 'economic wealth' (62.5%).

The 98% of the European activists maintains that there are too many inequalities among European citizens, while 75% of the non-European activists are of the same

opinion. Asked about the causes of inequalities, 64.6% of the sample attributes responsibility to 'neoliberal policies and labour market flexibility' and 24.8% accuses 'national policies of welfare and public spending cuts'.

> What should be under discussion here is [...] the failure of an economic model based on public and private indebtedness that, in the last thirty years, has only served as last resort source while our welfare state and economic and social rights had been dismantled for the benefits of private investors and markets (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

The European economic and debt crisis is not perceived as a consequence of the financial indiscipline of some European States or as a lack of a strong coordination among member states and their economic policies. These explanations are used, according to activists, to cover up structural problems stemming from the implementation of neoliberal and pro-market policies.

The consequences of neoliberal reforms and austerity policies imposed by national governments and recommended by the EU are defined as the growing poverty and inequality, the dismantling of labour rights - such as the right to collective bargaining - cuts in health care and education.

Asked in which sectors Europeans are most unequal, the sample indicates first income and the labour market (67.6%), then welfare systems and education (17.9%) and rights and equal opportunities (14.5%). Activists do not separate labour rights from social rights in general, because of the growing 'grey zone' of precarious workers and the working poor. They highlight:

> The impossibility of defending poor people when the impoverishment processes through lack of labour rights continue, the impossibility of defending labour rights when masses of poor people are ready to accept any job at any wage [...] and the relevance of social rights in order to directly speak to people who suffer from austerity policies in their daily lives (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

A turning point toward a new cosmopolitan epistemology for Europe can be found in the idea of 'social justice' conceived as a 'global public good' for which the international community is responsible, while national governments remain the major actors in the concrete organization of social protection. That is why social forum activists promote the redistribution of resources both at the European and global levels, and the development of more inclusive social policies based on the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural rights, as well as the Right to Development.

The strong emerging commitment in favor of common goods can be considered a meaningful step towards the construction of a shared cosmopolitan epistemology. Natural, social, digital commons and public services, such as land, food, water, energy but also social rights, education, knowledge belong to everyone and strengthen social bonds and cohesion of people against individualism, "financialization of nature and unnecessary large-scale infrastructures which are supposed to help us out of the crisis" (ESF report, Florence, November 2012). Common goods are expression of a cosmopolitan non-hierarchical universalism against particularism.

Networks and social actors at the local, national and European levels work on different issues in relation to the commons, for the purpose of finding mutual ground and undertaking joint strategic actions, as well as reaching concrete solidarity solutions to protect public services and commons from privatization and commodification, linking local and global actions.

They also debate on defining more sustainable patterns of production and consumption and determining what 'enough' can mean in a globalized world. Reclaiming commons also implies addressing the fundamental issue of re-thinking the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bringing a better quality of life, minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants. It means re-thinking social and political institutions and increasing citizens' collective sovereignty, autonomy and resilience by re-appropriating and opening up new commons, locally and on larger scales.

Actions for fighting against austerity policies, defending welfare, work and wages and rejecting the conflict between the young and the elderly have been put in place during the forum, and proposals to "socialize a European pension fund" and establish an "unconditional basic income" have also been launched, "by which the welfare states shall be completed and be transformed from a compensatory one into an emancipatory one. It is another way of thinking, opening the door to more solidarity and equality" (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

The fight against austerity policies and financial crisis, the struggle for social and natural commons and for a participatory democracy are interlinked:

> Defending our commons and developing alternatives is making a qualitative leap into a new logic based on mutuality, social relations, collaboration and participatory processes. It opens up many possibilities for all forms of grassroots activities at local levels and so that many citizens can take up actions wherever they happen to be (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

5.1 The relationship to the otherness: the xenophobic threat and migrants' rights as a test bench

Cosmopolitanism relies on empirical evidence in the context of the ESF: openness towards others, hospitality, cultural encounters and interest in others' care become concrete objectives of everyday engagement. Asked about people affected by inequalities in Europe, respondents consider that immigrants (54.1%) are the most disadvantaged group, followed by young people (19.5%), the unemployed (15.9%), and women (9.2%). Activists denounce that as a consequence of the crisis and the austerity policies adopted by national governments and EU institutions, xenophobic and populist parties are gaining popularity in some countries. Some parties take advantage of the widespread sense of uncertainty and respond to social suffering, poverty and unemployment with xenophobia and the marginalization of migrants and minorities, in a framework of neo-nationalist rhetoric that undermines solidaristic social values.

The ESF asks all European countries to adopt the International Convention on the human rights of migrant workers and members of their families[9]. The shared point of view on rights, suggesting a re-shaping of social citizenship in a cosmopolitan direction, gathers migrants' rights, human rights and workers' rights in a same package and regulated by supranational institutions, in accordance with the principles promoted by the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the EU conventions. NGOs and migrant solidarity networks form a pan European alliance which monitors and denounces human rights violations, asking the EU to protect and advance the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons. They promote the establishment of fair and humane European asylum policies and practices in accordance with international human rights law.

> Instead of facilitating legal ways for refugees to travel safely, the EU increasingly expects its neighbours to prevent people from reaching its borders, leaving many in a state of limbo. While the EU has the right to control its borders, its security imperatives should not override the human rights commitments which are funding principles of the EU (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

Given the huge differences existing between national asylum systems in Europe, EU countries are asked to develop a common European asylum system, in order that any

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[9]The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a UN multilateral treaty entered into force in July 2003. Its primary objective is to protect migrant workers and their families from exploitation and the violation of their human rights. No migrant-receiving state in Western Europe has ratified it yet.

person seeking protection will be treated according to the same standards, wherever they apply for asylum. The EU is called to act as political global entity with greater responsibilities compared to single nations and to safeguard the cosmopolitan European heritage: human rights, pluralism, tolerance. It is asked to play an active role in augmenting the protection of refugees and migrants in their regions of origin and transit, and to support their integration in the host countries, guaranteeing them the right to equal treatment with nationals concerning access to employment, education, social security and social assistance.

5.2 Negotiation of borders and interactions between local and global: how social practices reflect cosmopolitan solidarities

The necessary plurality and inclusiveness of Europe, the responsibility of the EU towards the people of the world, starting with the Mediterranean area, defined as a crossroads of cultures and identities, are part of the ESF agenda. Saying 'another Europe' means shifting territorial and cultural borders between inside and outside, considering as a priority peace and solidarity among populations and supporting those who struggle for democracy, freedom and human rights. Activists refer to the territories of the 'Arab revolutions', to the occupied zones in the African continent and Middle-East (Palestinian territories, Western Sahara) and to the rights of minorities in some countries (such as the Kurds in Turkey).

The governments of European countries, and the EU as a whole, are accused of having supported, through the years, illegal military occupations and human rights violations in the Mediterranean region. Today, the Mediterranean area is looked at as a place where borders are loosing their significance, a laboratory for democracy and civil societies of all Mediterranean countries, based on equal relationships and global citizenship, perceived as having a role to play in fostering peace and democracy and promoting human rights and social justice. Freedom of association, freedom of opinion and expression, gender equality, transparency and accountability are the baseline allowing civil society to play its role.

> Experience shows that civil society mobilizations may have a huge impact. We are committed to advocate for a coherent European policy, to demand accountability and to denounce our governments' responsibilities […]. We therefore need a strong alliance aimed at reinforcing civil societies from Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries together, in order to build sound democracies, grant the respect of universal human

rights, and tackle ongoing conflicts with non-violent means (ESF report, Florence, November 2012).

ESF activists advocate the end of the external provision of weapons in war zones, support reconciliation initiatives and open channels of dialogue with newborn civil societies struggling for human rights and democracy. They propose building up a structure for monitoring and preventing violent degeneration of conflicts, in Europe and the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean basin, and to set up an observatory on European policy which demands accountability and fosters civil society's political input and advocacy action of the civil society.

Another important issue concerns international fair trade, a possible means of supporting independent and sustainable development. ESF participants petition the EU to counter the policy which allows multinational corporations to dispossess and exploit the poorest countries.

The 2012 ESF has promoted mobilizations and actions including both convergence and decentralized activities[10], as well as concrete solidarity actions in support of populations affected by austerity policies and of victims of racist violence and abuse.

We refer here to just a few examples of the activities planned and put into practice by the ESF, activities that are emblematic of a sense of solidarity, which implies a cosmopolitan openness to alterity. An international campaign of solidarity toward people living in Greece was launched by different movements through the 'Solidarity4all' program[11]. In Greece the high rate of unemployment in general, and especially the long-term youth unemployment, almost tripled between 2009 and 2012, and the sharp decrease in salaries and pensions, along with the dissolution of workers' rights and social security, caused a dramatic increase in poverty. In 2012, according to Eurostat, 34.6% of the population risked poverty or social exclusion.

Through the coordination between local and global organizations, various activities of social solidarity and self-organized collective initiatives have been undertaken in different fields.

In the health sector, where radical budget cuts have led to drastic reductions in personnel, infrastructures and public services, undermining the range and quality of health services, while the imposition of service fees has determined the total exclusion of hundreds of thousands of people, a network of social clinics and pharmacies has been set up by volunteers to aid uninsured and unemployed people.

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[10] Among the unifying initiatives organized for a European-wide convergence there were the general strikes and mobilizations against austerity in many countries.

[11] See http://www.solidarity4all.gr/

To cover nutrition needs, social kitchens have been set up to distribute food to the homeless, the unemployed, strikers and generally people in need, and social grocery shops have been organized to connect farmers directly with consumers in urban areas.

Forms of economic solidarity and local alternative money initiatives such as direct barter services have been also set up, and co-operatives of unemployed women and social enterprises have been established.

Lessons in solidarity, evening classes for the educational support of children of needy families, and free legal support around labour issues, pensions, and taxation have been organized. Support structures that had been created for immigrants entering Greece, offering legal aid, basic health provisions and language classes, have been extended to Greek citizens themselves.

Doctors of the World, a chapter of the global Médecins du Monde network, has launched a project called 'Enough!' to react against the rise of xenophobia in Greece with a specific focus on young people, who are directly targeted by right-wing extremists. Activists visit secondary schools in the areas that are most affected by racist violence, to raise awareness about xenophobia.

Examples of a tendency to re-establish social citizenship at the local level, and to intervene through citizens' practices to cover needs which should be guaranteed by national social citizenship, also originate from other countries. In Italy the NGO Emergency, which usually provides free medical and surgical treatment to war zone victims, has decided in the last years to set up clinics in Italy as well – mainly in South but also in the North (i.e. Milan and Marghera) to guarantee free emergency medical assistance in areas with a strong immigrant presence, such as agricultural areas and nomad or refugee camps. In latter years, since the onset of the economic crisis, more and more residents in need, unemployed, homeless, pensioners, and in general persons in precarious social circumstances, have become their patients.

In 2012 in Spain medical associations, lawyers' organizations and numerous civil society actors protested against the decision of the Spanish government to exclude undocumented adult migrants from public health care services. A general practitioners' organization called for a movement of conscientious objection against the law regulating the activity of over 2000 health professionals.

Doctors of the World is also engaged in those countries, such as Sweden, whose state-run welfare model is supposed to be more universalistic, but where undocumented migrants and asylum seekers have access only to emergency care, while patients with serious chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, cardiovascular problems, HIV or hepatitis, are completely excluded. In Switzerland too, where health insurance is compulsory for all residents – including undocumented migrants –high insurance costs

make health care prohibitive for vulnerable groups, and undocumented migrants prefer not to start paying insurance fees for fear of being reported.[12]

In light of the lack of access to fundamental rights in Europe, civil society organizations are asking national governments to protect the whole population living within their boundaries, especially the most vulnerable, by putting into practice the EU recommendations concerning equal access to health care. Although health is formally a member state competence, these organizations recognize the central role played by the EU, and their demands also imply a request that EU bodies and institutions take the initiative to reinforce programs that aid vulnerable people.

6. Conclusion

Given our awareness of the specific group of social actors represented in this research, and without any intention to generalize, the results of our study highlight some signs of a project for a European-wide cosmopolitan social citizenship which is shared among the ESF activists. Looking for a cosmopolitan imagination, we found several key elements. First, the reinvention of political community is grounded in a concept of enlarged and inclusive citizenship, and a cosmopolitan epistemology is built through the concepts of global public good and common good, not only as an abstract concept but in the context of a concrete program of action.

Although the prevailing political orientation of the ESF participants is leftist, criticism of neoliberalism is not based on a mere ideological antagonism but is rather the result of a reflexive awareness of the consequences of market-oriented and austerity policies on people's everyday lives. This reflexive process entails the reformulation of the values of solidarity, equality and social rights conceived in a cosmopolitan perspective.

Second, the issue of inclusion and the rights of immigrants and minorities, is at the core of the relationship with the otherness. The notions of care, rights and hospitality become concrete objectives of everyday engagement. These same values also characterize the new local-global practices inspired by the cosmopolitan solidarities, of which cultural encounter and openness to others are fundamental components. This is the terrain on which Europe is called to act as a political global entity with greater responsibilities in order to safeguard human rights, pluralism and tolerance.

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[12]See Doctors of the world (2013), Access to healthcare in Europe in times of crisis and rising xenophobia
http://www.medicosdelmundo.org/index.php/mod.documentos/mem.descargar/fichero.documentos_MdM_Report_access_healthcare_times_crisis_and_rising_xenophobia_edcfd8a3%232E%23pdf

Third, negotiation of borders and interaction between local and global mean sharing responsibilities towards people of different regions and continents. Local-global practices reflect cosmopolitan and cross-border solidarities that look to re-establish the conditions for integrating excluded groups.

The cosmopolitan imagination as such enables social actors to conceive and practice social citizenship simultaneously from a European and a cosmopolitan perspective, whose its meaning can be found in the pursuit of equality and the recognition of difference beyond the confines of the nation state. Redistributive issues are at the core of the cosmopolitan perspective on citizenship, particularly after the recent economic crisis and the sharp rise in inequalities. The area of inequality cannot be related, as in the past, to the traditional notions of social classes or national territories. The material and cultural factors that influence the conditions of individual and collective life have changed, and with the result that the mix of criteria for European and national citizenship imposes on some categories of citizens the discriminating status of exclusion. Some social actors perceive their material conditions of life and work as the most tangible consequences of the lack of a de-nationalized social policy at the European level. Redistributive issues are not only evoked and debated, but are also put into practice. The non-homogeneous internal composition of social actors does not impede the formation of a mechanism of solidarity which cuts across national and social identities and territories. Both cultural and economic conditions emerge as relevant for re-thinking the structure of citizenship in Europe. According to Kivisto and Faist, "the politics of recognition doesn't substitute a policy of redistribution. The politics of multiculturalism are far more connected to the debate on and the erosion of social rights than is often appreciated" (2007, 136).

Transnational practices that have been achieved within local contexts in different territories demonstrate the coexistence of diversity and social cohesion and respond to the substantial weakening of social citizenship in the national contexts. These practices compensate for a lack of resources that prevents European and non-European citizens from enjoying their rights and provide public goods and services unavailable at either the national or the European level. They testify to the emergence of a post-national, grassroots citizenship that reaffirms values founded on the principle of social justice regardless of diversity, on the contrary evincing a will to share social responsibilities and advantages with others, beyond national boundaries. This phenomenon goes against the thesis that heterogeneous populations inevitably dilute feelings of solidarity, and that there is no empathy among people who have different interests. This truth at the micro level becomes meaningful at the macro level when social practices transcend national borders and find a place in the European context, contributing to create

and foster horizontal cross-border cosmopolitan solidarity through an updated and reinforced concept of European social citizenship.

Although citizenship rights are still far from being 'cosmopolitan rights', since they are still rooted in one's place of residence and dependent on the national state, this study highlights a request coming from civil society for social protection and social security, political and civil rights addressed to the different political centers which regulate social life within and outside the European space. The principles of social justice that define social citizenship envision a redistribution of resources in a transnational and cross-border framework.

Although social actors bearer of a civic cosmopolitanism express a high level of criticism towards EU governance and the neo-liberal regulation, they identify the EU as the institutional actor that should intervene more than others in the field of social policies and regulate redistribution in order to reduce the unsustainable disparities among people. In spite of the institutional inflexibility of government officials and political elites, both at the national and European levels, the exponents of the cosmopolitan civil society are constructing weaving new ties of solidarity and devolving material resources to restore public goods and equable well-being. The values related to a European cosmopolitan social citizenship are embedded in social practices, founded on complex mechanisms of solidarity encompassing diversity, creating a barrier against social disintegration. Hence the demand for a new political and legal framework inspired by cosmopolitan principles.

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