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The looking glass: from the citizen to the migrant in Italians' naïve imagery

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Abstract

The paper discusses the concept of citizenship both from a critical-theoretical point of view and in the light of the findings of a research conducted in Italy on the social representation of citizens and migrants. The research aims to analyze how the thêma of social recognition is objectified in everyday language and to explore the characteristics attributed to the *other* in a plural society. We show how the contemporary foreigner figure that we have come to know as 'the migrant' is a political and legal figure, but is also the result of a symbolic construction which is shaped through a social comparison process between citizens and non-citizens.

Keywords: citizenship, social representations, thêmata, social recognition.

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1. Introduction

The European political space has always implicitly attributed sovereignty to specific

ethno-political groups thanks to the creation of internally homogeneous (or presumed such) national identities, and establishing the necessary criteria in order to define the most exclusive form of belonging, i.e. that of citizenship. This is the reason why it is often difficult to distinguish between forms of citizenship defined according to political and legal criteria, and those based on ethnic or cultural ones. The concept of citizenship refers to a 'shifting boundary' that originates from a process through which groups, rights and the stability of society are constantly shifting and being re-defined. The establishment of in-group boundaries is functional both to membership and to the development of a sense of loyalty towards the institutions. The same boundaries can be regarded as a means of exclusion and social closure, allowing for a clear distinction between *insiders*, who belong to the community of citizens, and *outsiders*. In these terms, the concept of citizenship implies a specific form of the *self-other* relationship: a self that is tied up with the social and juridical identity of citizens, which involves the recognition, or the lack of recognition of non-citizens, i.e., the *other*s. Citizens and immigrants are also part of a mirror-like relation, in which the former, as the dominant group, have the power to determine who can be included in their in-group, and who define the characteristics of those who can be excluded (Deschamps, Lorenzi-Cioldi and Meyer 1982).

The contemporary foreigner figure that we know as 'the migrant' is a political and legal figure, but is also the result of a symbolic construction which is shaped through a social comparison process between citizens and non-citizens. Indeed, the notion of citizenship refers to issues that concern individuals' social identity and social recognition, whilst the immigrant often represents the socially unknown or, in a word, the *other*.

The way in which others are defined depends on a symbolic construction process shaped by language, i.e. through referential and predicational strategies (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). As a result, the experience of contact with the *other* is ascribed in a universe of shared meanings. However, when someone who is regarded as highly different from us joins our familiar universes, this person is no longer fundamentally different, and becomes comparable, or similar, to us. In this opposition lies the paradox of *otherness*: the *other* is at the same time familiar and incomparable. This paradox can be addressed through the notion of identity. The making of the *other* springs from traits that compose 'our' identity; in order to trace the borders between 'us' and 'them', we consider the opposite side of those familiar traits, transforming the *other* into what we are not. In this way, the *other* is represented as our opposite: 'they' can be regarded as

the negative of 'us' and as possessing those qualities that we do not recognize in us or that we reject (Billig 1995, Sanchez-Mazas 2004).

Thanks to this process, as Billig (1995) notes, in the discourses of Western democracies, 'our' tolerance and 'their' intolerance can easily become reasons for excluding foreigners (see also: Barker 1981, Van Dijk 1992, 1993). The social making of a symbolic universe in which the *other* is often defined in a negative way has important practical consequences. Indeed, it enhances a disruptive conception of the *other*, viewed as a burden which has to be removed in order to improve society. At the same time, this is a wider process thanks to which 'we' are separated and considered superior to 'them', bonding solidarity thanks to the creation of a social hierarchy between members who belong to 'us' and those who do not.

The process of recognition is fundamental in order to understand who we are. Following Honneth (1996), we can distinguish between two different forms of recognition in contemporary societies. *Juridical recognition* is inscribed in a legislative framework not depending on individual qualities; *social recognition* means granting a person esteem and respect. While the former kind of recognition is of a yes/no type (a person has or doesn't have rights), the forms of social recognition can be various and refer to a set of values largely shared within a given society. So, the person is evaluated in light of these values and the judgment concerns the personal qualities of the individual. In order to distinguish between social and juridical recognition, let us better define the meaning of *otherness* in modern societies. Indeed, the notion of *other* refers to a collectivity to which even juridical recognition may be conceded, but social recognition is denied, and this denial concerns the whole group (Sanchez-Mazas 2004).

In contemporary discourse on immigration, migrants are viewed as belonging to a category framed as problematic, both because of their perceived large numbers, and because they are represented as a threatening group. In Italy, migrants are specifically represented as causes of criminality and social degradation (see Colombo this issue), and it is often proposed that there is an equivalence between the mere presence of foreigners and the increase of social problems. Quoting Human Right First's *2008 Hate Crime Survey*, Italy has a "legislation that conflated foreigners with criminals and identified the problem of security with specific groups of population" (p. 9). In his 2009 Report, the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe expressed his concern regarding:

> "new legislative measures on immigration and asylum which have been adopted or are under consideration by Italy, such as those criminalizing the letting of accommodation to irregular migrants and the decision to lift the ban on doctors to report irregular migrants who access the health system to the authorities" (p. 2).

Such equivalence is explicitly supported by politicians with important institutional roles, thus producing the effect of legitimating public expression of intolerance towards immigrants. Indeed as Baker *et al.* point out, "because prejudices are not innate, but socially acquired, and because such acquisition is predominantly discursive, the public discourses of the symbolic elites are the primary sources of shared ethnic prejudices and ideologies" (Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravinik, Krzyzanowski, McEnery and Wodak 2008: 280).

The framing of immigration as a problem is relevant for social recognition, which is tied to the realm of esteem, and it becomes particularly salient when migrants represent *otherness from the inside*, i.e. people who are labelled as different because of their physical characteristics (colour, gender, etc.), their different habits (lifestyles, forms of sexuality) or of they belong to specific groups (national, ethnic, communal, religious, etc.) (Jodelet 2005). For these reasons, they may be considered definitely different from other people who compose a given social or cultural entity, and in this social context they may be considered a source of discomfort or threat.

2. Theoretical framework

Social representations theory (Moscovici 1961-76) offers a useful theoretical framework for studying the interdependency between socially and individually shared knowledge. As Markova (2002) suggests, the theory of social representations conceives the dynamics of thought, language and social practices as interdependent socio-cultural and individual phenomena which are co-constructed by means of tension and polarization of antinomies, for instance the self-other antinomy.

In this vein, recent European research has focused on the social representation of citizenship and, specifically, on the content people assign to this notion, in an attempt to ascertain whether identity concerns are associated with this political category. Some of these studies have analyzed the concept of *good* citizen, as opposed to that of *bad* citizen (Sanchez-Mazas, Staerklé and Martin 2003a); others have

focused on the contraposition between the representation of a European citizen and that of the citizen of a specific nation-state (Chryssochoou 2000, Licata 2003, Sanchez-Mazas, Van Humskerken and Casini 2003b).

An interesting contribution of the social representations theory to the study of the self/other relationship can be found in the concept of *thêmata*. Thêmata are taxonomies of opposed nature (e.g., freedom/oppression, justice/injustice, inclusion/exclusion) that lie at the core of the ways of thinking and knowing particular phenomena within specific cultural and historical contexts: the concept of thêmata refers to "culturally shared primitive preconceptions, images and pre-categorizations (…) the concept of thêmata, more than any other, not only shows the socio-cultural embeddedness of social thinking, but also provides a basic starting point for generating social representations" (Markova 2000: 442).

According to this definition, thêmata are shared by the speaker and by his/her linguistic community and they are part of the implicit knowledge of all subjects involved in a communicative process. In these terms, they may be understood as the prototypes of commonsense knowledge that may never be brought to the explicit attention of social thinking (Markova 2000). In certain historical periods and in given societies, some thêmata may become sources of conflict and stress, and may be problematised by becoming the focus of social attention (Markova 2003). This means that under particular social conditions, a taxonomy (for instance moral/immoral) may change its boundaries and may be dialogically reconstructed. The taxonomy itself may give rise to public discussions, disputes, arguments, and it may become a thêma from which the social representations of a phenomenon are generated. In this way, thêmata come to operate as the 'first principles' or 'source ideas' of social representations (Moscovici and Vignaux 2000), and they can be regarded as "underlying 'deep structures' of social representations" in the sense that "they are generative structures (…) and act as the organizing principles of the entire fabric of the representations" (Liu 2004: 253).

Markova (2003) affirms that some thêmata, called *basic thêmata*, exert a crucial role in social life. Among the basic thêmata is social recognition, which is linked to the experience of identity since it implies the antinomy 'recognized self *vs.* unrecognized self', i.e. *otherness*. Markova (2003) identifies two fundamental dynamic tendencies in the Ego-Alter relation. One of these consists in the search for unification of Ego with Alter, i.e. the research of inter-subjectivity and reciprocity; the other tendency refers to the desire of the Self to be independent and separated from the Alter.

As Doise (1984) argues, studying social representations always implies not only the description of shared meaning systems, but also the analysis of inter-personal differences of social positioning in relation to this system, as well as the explanation of these differences. Social positioning is not a mere opinion or a personal belief, but is a "means for articulating the variations between intergroup beliefs and knowledge with the temporary crystallization of a network of meanings in a given public sphere" (Clémence 2001: 87). The analysis of social positioning allows us to understand the relevance of individual differences in social representations. From this perspective, some aspects of social representations (as in the case of the social representation of citizenship) generated from thêmata are shared by different social actors in different ways depending on individuals' social insertion: "Firmly embedded in particular social and historical contexts which evolve and change, a social representation is generated from thêmata on the one hand, and engendered through social actors' framing, and participating in, social, economic and political conflicts on the other hand" (Liu 2004: 260-261).

As a political category, citizenship is a suitable candidate for the study of social positioning that should be analyzed not only through the classical political right-left orientation. Following Sanchez-Mazas and colleagues (2003b), we consider that attitudes toward the social functions of the State should be relevant anchoring variables for the representations of citizenship. Specifically, the social functions of the State concern both social redistribution (Welfare State) and security and crime-related policies (Penal State). Moreover, we consider that the frequency of individuals' engagement in political discussion could be an adequate tool for assessing their involvement in political life, also because the issue of communication plays a key role in the study of social representations (Moscovici 1961-1976). Another relevant dimension is the conception of the nature of intergroup relations in a given society. In this sense, the concept of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius and Pratto 1999) may be helpful: it refers to an individual preference for hierarchical (versus egalitarian) intergroup relations, and reflects the willingness to consider the in-group superior to other groups. Indeed, SDO refers to the acceptance or refusal of a group-based social hierarchy, and implies the tendency to justify (or not) discrimination and domination between groups within any given social system. Social dominance orientation may thus provide an interesting cue to understanding the meaning that members of a state – in both juridical and social recognition terms – attribute to being a citizen and being a migrant. Due to the mirror-like relation implied in the social representations of citizens and migrants that we posit in

this paper, we consider that the same anchoring variables should also be relevant for the analysis of the representation of migrants.

From both a theoretical and methodological point of view, it is important to distinguish between 'thêmata' and 'themes'. Indeed, the former refer to historically embedded presuppositions and culturally shared antinomies, whereas 'themes' usually refers to the list of units of analysis in qualitative research. Unlike thêmata, themes have no overarching generative and normative power and are in a dialogical relation with thêmata. In line with this premise, an empirical study of social representations may involve numerous themes (Liu 2004). We may thus understand themes as "the pragmatic manifestations, or partial reconstruction, of the thêmata in different forms and in the different spheres of everyday life" (Liu 2004: 256). As such, pragmatic manifestations are concerned with the contents and meanings of thêmata in given cultural and historical circumstances. It is within pragmatic manifestations that a thêma converts itself into a set of lexical repertoires and denotes specific social objects (256-57). The phrase "pragmatic manifestations" is equivalent to the concept of "semantic domains" used by Moscovici and Vignaux (2000).

3. Notes on methodology

Social representations theory research has utilized a range of different methods, including surveys, interviews, experiments and ethnography. Indeed, in most research designs, the study of a social representation requires a multi-methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative analytic strategies. Several specific techniques have been adopted in order to explore their content and structure; these techniques allow us to extract the pattern of social representations of an object from corpora in natural language.

A widely used technique for collecting data consists in using free association tasks (What comes to your mind about...?) which yield a corpus of linguistic statements concerning the object of inquiry. According to Kalampalikis (2003:4),

> "When (we) ask subjects to give the words that come to mind from a particular stimulus word, they produce a series of words, often nouns, verbs, sometimes adverbs, less frequently whole sentences. The associated words have a particular semantic status for the researcher (...) we consider them more broadly as more «full» from a semantic point of view (...) The conditions of their spontaneous

production are certainly one reason for this «fullness» effect." (*our translation*)

Moreover, as François Jodelet argued in his paper on free associations (1972: 99), we can regard all these associative connections as a system with structural properties, and as supporting a process of meaning.

In this framework, a lexical repertoire can be regarded as constituting an associative network which emerges from the co-occurrences of words (i.e. they are present together in the same sets of associations). Following Reinert (1998), a lexical repertoire, or "lexical universe" as he defines it, corresponds to a specific vocabulary which is frequently used and to which the speaker attributes relevant meaning. Lexical universes are shared by the speaker with his/her linguistic community, and are part of the implicit knowledge involved in any communicative process. From this viewpoint, Reinert (1993) makes a connection between the statistical study of a text and the study of social representations: they too refer to common sense knowledge shared by individuals through language.

The *Alceste* software developed by Reinert himself can be regarded as a particularly suitable tool for identifying the social representation of an object since: (a) it reveals the thematic cores (or lexical repertoires) typically used to talk about it; and (b) it allows one to differentiate lexical repertoires, by isolating each repertoire's specific dictionary (Reinert 1993, 1998).

This approach is compatible with the 'corpus-driven' paradigm of corpus linguistics (CL) research (Tognini-Bonelli 2001), that is, the analysis started with the examination of relative frequencies and statistically significant lexical patterns emerging from the corpus. In this study an analysis of emerging significant lemmas and lexical patterns was carried out to examine differences among subjects according to their respective social position: the examination of the strongest key words and clusters in the two corpora provided helpful indications of the representations of migrants and of the meanings attributed to the concept of citizenship depending on the subjects' social profile.

A frequent criticism of CL is that it tends to disregard context (Mautner 2007). As Baker and colleagues (2008: 279) argue, "these criticisms seem to stem from restricted conceptions of CL, and would apply more accurately to CL studies that limit themselves to the automatic analysis of corpora, and are of a descriptive rather than an interpretative nature".

In this study, the adopted analytical approach is informed by a distinct theoretical

framework such as the notion of “lexical universe” (Reinert 1993). From this viewpoint, this approach is based on the hypothesis that words that share the same distribution pattern are semantically or pragmatically related.

4. Overview of the present study

In this paper we will focus on the study of the social representation of citizens and migrants with a specific interest in the social dynamics of exclusion and inclusion, and in the characteristics attributed to the *other* in a plural society. We will present a study carried out on a sample of Italian adolescents. This study is the prosecution of a previous research carried out on a sample of adults (Gattino, Miglietta, Ceccarini and Rollero 2008), that highlighted the mirror-like relation between citizen and immigrant, and the relevance of the issue of social recognition (Honneth 1996) in the social construction of the *other*. Indeed, results showed that both representations were organized around contrasting themes. In the representation of the good citizen, two opposite themes emerged. The first referred to a private and individualistic conception of citizenship (*Private Citizen*), whereas the second referred to a more collective idea of citizenship which includes four different conceptions: *Private citizen*, *Social citizen*, *Practical citizen* and *Civic Citizen* [1]. The *thema* of social recognition played a key role in the representation of the migrant, where three themes emerged: *Otherness*, *Acknowledgement of Diversity* and *Empathic Recognition* [2].

The present study focuses on adolescents, because adolescence is a phase of life in which individuals typically undertake a reflection about their relations to society and community. Indeed, adolescence is characterized by a growing awareness of the self being surrounded by, and facing, society. Moreover, unlike Italian adults, contemporary Italian adolescents were born and raised in a plural society in which immigrants are part of their ordinary social life, for example in schools. In line with these premises, we consider that the analysis of their social representation of citizens and migrants will help to understand the meanings attributed to these two social objects.

The main aim of this research is the analysis of the representations of the *good citizen* and of the *immigrant*. In a sense, we consider the good citizen as a sort of ideal model of citizen, whereas the immigrant is a non-citizen to whom recognition is denied, at least in its juridical terms (Honneth 1996). In this study, both representations were considered in the light of the above discussed concept of thêmata, in order to capture

the dynamics of inclusion-exclusion and recognition-unrecognition. The research aims to analyze how the general and abstract notions that derive from the thêma of social recognition were objectified in everyday language. In order to study individual social positioning, representations were analyzed in connection with specific anchoring variables: gender, political orientation, individuals' positioning with regard to the social functions of the state (penal and welfare), frequency of political discussion and finally the type of secondary school [3] that participants attended. This last variable is particularly interesting for the representation of immigrants because a relation has been found between the kind of secondary school that adolescents attend and the individual level of ethnic prejudice, which is higher among students from vocational schools and lower among students from regular high schools (Manganelli, Rattazzi and Volpato 2001). Moreover, a possible indicator of the willingness to legally recognize migrants is attitude regarding their voting rights. Finally, the individuals' orientation with regard to social dominance was also considered (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

We expect representation of migrants to be expressed along the two main guidelines of o*therness* and recognition. Because of the familiarity that adolescents have with people from different nationalities, we expect that the image of migrants among adolescents will focus less on aspects related to ethnic belonging (see note 2) than it does for adults. On the same basis, we expect that when the image is negative, it will focus more on aspects concerning social deviance. In these terms, we expect that the prevailing feature attributed to migrants will be their being 'indigenous foreigners', i.e. *others from the inside*.

As far as the representation of citizenship is concerned, we expect that the issue of recognition will be expressed through antinomic elements and categories that can be traced back both to the macro-distinction between individual and collective (Markova 1999; Markova, Moodie, Farr, Drozda-Senkowska, Erös, Plichtova, Jervais, Hoffmannova, and Mullerova 1998), and to the respect and acknowledgment of rights and duties. Moreover, we expect that the representation of the citizen among adolescents will be less complex than that of adults, because their reflection about social structures, rules, and symbolic products is only just at the beginning.

5. Method

5.1 Participants

A total of 573 students from different secondary schools (High school = 47%; Technical

school = 14%; Vocational training school = 39%) in Piedmont took part, aged from 16 to 23 years (average age = 18.3; S.D. = 1.05; M = 53%; F = 47%)

5.2 Questionnaire

Data was collected using a self-reported questionnaire consisting of two sections that took about 20 minutes to complete. Students were contacted during their lessons and, with their teacher's permission, they filled out the questionnaires in class.

In the first section, participants had to complete two free-association tasks. The provided stimuli were *good citizen* and *immigrant*. Participants had to provide five words or short expressions related to these stimuli. The order of presentation of the stimuli was counterbalanced by randomly changing the order of presentation of the two stimuli. Three hundred and thirty seven participants (236 missing cases) completed the word-association task related to the *good citizen* stimulus. This lexical corpus included 1827 words, among which 337 were different and 231 were used only once (*hapax*). To the 'immigrant' stimulus, 528 participants (45 missing cases) listed 2645 words, among which 653 were different and 390 *hapax*. The word lists supplied by participants composed the two textual corpora on which the analyses were performed.

In the second section of the questionnaire, participants rated items and answered questions on different topics. The following measures were included:

Positioning towards the Penal State. The participants' attitude toward Nation-State security and repressive policies were assessed through the Penal State Scale (8 items; Sanchez-Mazas et al. 2003b) e.g., "The State should increase the presence of the police on the streets and in public places", "The State should forbid begging on the streets". Responses to all items were based on a 5-point scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" (5) "to strongly agree". Responses were summed into a single index (α = .70; M = 28.5, SD = 5.8). In order to establish a Pro/Con positioning on the issues of the Penal State, the item scores were dichotomized on the empirical mean: low scores (46%) corresponded to low support for the penal state concept, high scores (54%) to strong support.

Positioning towards the Welfare State. Seven items of the *Welfare State* scale (Sanchez-Mazas et al. 2003b) measured support for a Welfare State concept, e.g., "The

State should help every distressed person" or "To support the poorest people, the State should do much more than it is currently doing". Participants expressed their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale, (1 = complete disagreement; 5 = complete agreement). As before, an item score was computed (α = .63; M = 20, SD = 4.6) and split on the empirical mean value: low scores (45%) corresponded to low support for welfare policies, high scores (55%) to strong support.

Political communication. Participants had to indicate how often they talked about political issues with friends or relatives (never: 9.3%; sometimes: 54.2%; often: 29.9%; always: 6.6%). The four answers provided were then grouped into two sets: high frequency (*often* and *always*; 36.3%) and low frequency (*never* and *sometimes*; 63.7%).

Attitude towards the extension of voting rights to immigrants. To detect the relative degree of disposition with regard to accepting migrants in the citizens' in-group, respondents answered the following closed-ended question: "Do you think it is right to extend the right to vote to legal immigrants?". Four different answers were provided: not at all (39.4%), only local elections (13.4%), both local and national elections (25.8%), "I don't know" (21.3%).

Political orientation. The political orientation on the left-wing/right-wing axis was assessed by a 10-point gauge (1 = left-wing orientation; 10 = right-wing orientation). The responses were grouped into 3 categories, consistent with the Italian political system (centre-left: 17%, centre: 11.5%, centre-right: 51.5%), complemented by the category "I don't know" (20%).

SDO. Participants responded to seven items from the *Social Dominance Scale* (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) which included items such as "Inferior groups should stay in their own place". Responses to all items were given on a 5-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Given the value of internal consistency of items (α = .83) a single index was calculated (M = 12.7, SD = 5). Participants were then divided into two groups based on the value of the empirical mean (low SDO: 51.5%; high SDO: 48.5%).

Socio-demographics. We collected the following socio-demographic data: age,

gender, type of school attended.

5.3 Data analysis

A textual data analysis using the *Alceste* software (Reinert 1986) was conducted. This statistical procedure lies at the intersection of multiple techniques: segmentation, hierarchical classification, dichotomy following a factorial analysis, and dynamic clustering (see also Reinert 1990: 37). The software performs a descending hierarchical cluster analysis on text fragments that are labelled *elementary units of context* (EUC) [4]; it is an iterative procedure. Results are represented by a dendrogram in which all the words composing the corpus are segmented in two classes which are the most different from one another. The largest class is then split in two, and the larger one emerging from this partition is then itself split in two classes. When the largest class is internally very homogeneous and cannot be split in two classes that are different enough, then *Alceste* also splits the smallest classes. In any case, by default, *Alceste* does not produce more than 10 classes. The resulting *Alceste* classes reveal underlying representations or concepts which are lexicalized through a set of related clusters and a characteristic vocabulary.

For each class, the list of words more significantly present is computed [5]; the coefficient associating each word to a class is the χ^2 (1 degree of freedom) computed on a presence/absence cross table. The presence/absence of the word in an EUC is crossed with the presence/absence of the EUC in the considered class. Words are associated to EUC even where the χ^2 value is greater than 2.7. Because in the present study we analyzed respondents' free associations, each EUC corresponds to a participant.

Before the analysis and for both corpora, terms were aggregated following a semantic criterion, i.e. by reducing the total corpus through the identification of semantic similarities (e.g. poor-poverty or honest-honesty). The two descending hierarchical cluster analyses were performed only on words derived from this reduction.

In addition, the association was assessed between each lexical class and independent variables through independence tests. Gender, political orientation, social dominance orientation, positioning toward the penal and welfare state, engagement in political discussion, attitude towards the extension of voting right to migrants, and typology of school were factored into the analysis.

6. Results

A general view of the most frequent words associated with both stimuli confirmed the mirror-like nature of the relationship between *immigrant* and *good citizen*. While it is not surprising that the most frequent words associated with *citizen* drew a positive frame because we asked about *good* citizen, the frame was very different when referred to *immigrant*. Indeed, in this case the stimulus word was neutral, because it was not qualified by any adjectives. However, as Table 1 shows, the most frequent terms associated with this stimulus are associated to a negative image of migrants. The immigrant is *other* (*foreigner*, *non EU* and *different*) and a deviant person (*illegal*, *criminal*, *thief*). However, some other words refer both to the difficulties that migrants have to face (*needy*, *unemployed*, *poverty*) and to work issues (*worker*, *work*). Conversely, the good citizen is qualified along the lines of social recognition, expressed through the specificities of respect. First, a good citizen *respects laws*, and *other people*, then he/she respects the *environment* and *common property*. Other virtues characterized this social object, among which were the attitude to helping and behaving (*to behave properly*, *polite*), and a reference to participation and issues concerning honesty (*to pay taxes* and *honest*).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The immigrant

Alceste classified 71.78% of EUC. The analysis led to the identification of three lexical classes (see Figure 1) named according to their content: *Sympathetic Complexity*, *Distrust and Otherness*, *Crime and Delegitimisation*.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The first class contained 32.45% of EUC and was named *Sympathetic Complexity.* In terms of χ^2 values, its content was dominated by the following three most significant terms: *work*, *poverty* and *racism.* These three words traced the lines of development of the lexical field, which centred on the everyday problems that migrants have to cope with. Indeed, the list continued with terms such as *diversity*, *difficulties*, *respect* and *integration*. Interestingly, the term *help* showed a high χ^2 value,

immediately followed by *fear*. We cannot say with certainty which was the perspective that respondents assumed when offering these terms. However, when considering the whole content of the class, it may be suggested that the respondents' perspective referred to the migrants' point of view: these people need some help and are probably afraid. The label *Sympathetic Complexity* derived also from some other terms that shaped the lexical field of this class. Indeed, terms such as *drugs*, *troubles*, *discomfort*, *loneliness*, and also *stealing* outlined a complex image of the migrant, who is not considered in a paternalistic view as 'the victim' of indigenous intolerance, but as a potentially problematic social subject to whom social recognition (*respect*) is due in any case. Respondents in this class shared an egalitarian conception of intergroup relations and they generally agreed with the idea of extending the right to vote to ordinary immigrants, even in general elections. In accordance with the universalistic conception of social relations, they did not support penal policies but agreed with a welfare conception of state functions; their political positioning was uncertain ("I don't know" answers) or left-wing, and they attended regular high schools *(liceo)*.

The two other classes that emerged from the analysis were more similar to each other than with the *Sympathetic Complexity* class. *Distrust and Otherness* was the largest class, with 42.22% of EUC. This class drew an ambiguous image of migrants. The key words were: *needy* person, *illegal* and a *non EU* immigrant. These last two terms need some clarification to understand how they are used in the Italian context. The term *illegal* (clandestine, in Italian) is widely used in Italy to refer both to people who cross the national border and stay in the country without legal permission, and to people who have lost the right to reside legally because their residence permit has expired (for a discussion of these terms, see Quassoli, this issue). The expression *non EU immigrant* in everyday speech is almost synonymous with *immigrant* and has a subtly derogatory meaning. It is often used to refer to Arab or African people, as well as immigrants from Eastern Europe, including Romania, even though this country has been an EU member since January 2007. The list of words continued with terms such as *different*, *unemployed*, *social outcast*, which evoke a negative and generally rejecting stereotypical image. However, expressions such as *like us*, *worker*, and *desperate* referred to a positive and not exclusive conception of the immigrant. People who shared this image were uncertain about the possibility of extending political voting rights to migrants, they seldom engaged in political discussion, and they attended a regular high school.

Finally, the *Crime and Delegitimisation* class contained 25.33% of EUC The vocabulary in this class was blatantly derogatory and xenophobic. The immigrant is a *thief*, a *criminal*, has *no laws*, is *cursed*, is a *killer*, is *disrespectful*, *violent*, *arrogant*, and so on. Many of these terms described immigrants in terms of negative personal traits and alluded to their social exclusion. No positive traits emerged in this class, and it was underlined that there are *too many* immigrants. Explanatory variables associated with this class described a specific portrait of these respondents: they rejected the extension of voting rights, they had a hierarchical conception of intergroup relations, and a right-wing political orientation. Coherently, the conception of State functions favoured the penal over the welfare state. Moreover, people in this class attended vocational training schools and had a high frequency of political discourse.

The good citizen

The *Alceste* analysis classified 69% of EUC and isolated three semantic classes (see Figure 2).

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The first class that emerged was classified with 34.31% EUC It expressed a representation that we labelled *Private Citizen.* The two main themes that emerged from the most representative words in terms of χ^2 referred to the personal qualities of the citizen as they manifest themselves in interpersonal relations. The good citizen is most of all *respectful* and *polite;* he or she *collaborates* with other citizens, recognizes his or her *responsibilities*, he or she *works* and is a *clean* person. This list of individual virtues anticipates the second line of development of the image of the citizen, and is clearly related to the issue of social cohesion and justice. The terms *justice*, *law* and *loyalty*, which share the same χ^2, refer to cardinal points, the pillars of the idea of belonging to a common group, and the use of the term *commitment* seem to confirm this interpretation. Thus, the qualities of the individuals interlock with the basic needs of social life, reflecting an image of the citizen as individualistic but not egotistic. Explanatory variables highlight that this representation is primarily shared by male respondents who do not subscribe to a welfare conception of the state, and by students of technical schools.

The other two classes were labelled *Active Citizen* (28.47% of EUC) and

Practical Citizen (37.23% of EUC). *Active Citizen* reflected a very different idea of citizenship compared to *Private Citizen*. Here again, the main key word referred to respect; however, unlike the former class in which the term was evoked in its abstract form, here it was clearly targeted. At first, a good citizen *respects common property*, and *respects others*. Besides the two forms of respect, other themes emerged. *Participation* and *being helpful*, *commitment to social life* and a general reference to *helping behaviours* seemed to describe a conception of the citizen as active and sympathetic, and suggested a willingness to enter into the socio-political debate, where the term 'political' means active participation in the life of the *polis*. In other words, the representation that emerged from this class seemed to express the idea that citizenship passes through the sharing of a public social space, and the sense of belonging to the in-group was expressed through a political relationship, which invests rights and presumes duties (e.g. *to respect laws*). Anchoring variables showed that this class mainly included people who subscribed to a welfare conception of the State and did not agree with a penal one. Female respondents and regular high-school students fell into this class.

The analysis of the lexical field of *Practical Citizen* led to a conception of citizenship based on the right to exist in a legal system. Concerns about the rules and norms of social living emerged clearly from the expressions *to behave properly* and *respect for laws*. However, this class seemed to be characterized more than the others by the theme of respect. Three different expressions associated with this general issue formed the core of the class: besides respect for laws and rules, it contained phrases such as *to respect the environment* and *to respect others*. Other significant words in this class are*: to work, to live together, to vote* and to *pay tax*. Significantly, the issue of voting, which represents the fundamental right and duty of contemporary citizens, fell only into this class. People in this class were characterized by the following anchoring variables: a penal conception of the State functions, right-wing political orientation and attending vocational training schools.

7. Discussion

The study discussed in this paper highlights the relevance of the thêma of social recognition (Honneth 1996) in the construction of the *other* and the mirror-like relationship between the representations of citizens and migrants. Results show that both representations are anchored to social recognition. This thêma is objectified in

different ways, depending on which social object is considered. In the case of the representation of the citizen, social recognition objectification passes through the general individual-collective opposition. The presence of both dimensions is not surprising. Indeed, individuals in contemporary societies often define themselves on the basis of the potentially conflicting relationship between rights, freedom and individual abilities on the one hand, and social rights and duties tied to collective membership on the other hand (Markova 1999; Markova et al. 1998). Therefore, we may affirm, together with Markova, that both dimensions participate in the definition of the self in modern societies.

From a content point of view, three main representations of the good citizen may be found: the *Private Citizen*, the *Active Citizen* and the *Practical Citizen*. As discussed earlier, the *Private Citizen* reflects an individualistic conception of the relation between the citizen and the State. In the adolescents' perspective, the individualistic orientation is toned down by references to social justice and cohesion (*justice, law, loyalty*), terms that could be read as evidence of their ongoing reflection regarding the relationship between individuals and society, which is typical of this age group. An interesting cue came from individuals' social positioning about state conceptions. Respondents did not support a welfare state conception, suggesting a selfish perspective on social relations. The *Active Citizen* focuses on commitment and participation in social life, underlying the issue of respect for common property and for others, i.e. the human/collective side of social context. The focus on *respect* for the social context may be considered a way to express social recognition, and its presence here is not surprising. Indeed, as we said earlier, the desire for social recognition is a fundamental tendency of the self in relation to others, and this topic can be understood as an outcome of the more general reflection on societal issues that adolescents undertake in this period of life. People holding these representations of the citizen share a solidaristic conception of the State function and social relations, expressed through strong support for the welfare state concept. This conception of society is in clear opposition to the selfish one proposed by the *Private Citizen*. Finally, the *Practical Citizen* class focuses on citizens' virtues and good practices (*to behave properly, to vote, to respect laws*). Undoubtedly, at the core of these representations are the pillars of the contract between the individual and the state. However, the *Practical Citizen* seems to refer to a simplified image of the good citizen tied to rights and duties. Interestingly, these basic images are shared by people with a

lower education level (vocational training school).

The case of the representation of the immigrant is quite different. The thêma of social recognition appears in these representations as well, developing along the underlying antinomy between recognized or unrecognized *other*. This fundamental opposition stems from the opposition between the known self (Ego), and the potentially threatening unknown other (Alter). In general terms, we may observe that adolescents acknowledge migrants' everyday difficulties without expressing any emotional proximity. These results highlight an interesting difference from those emerged from the study conducted on the adult sample (Gattino et al. 2008), because adults placed greater emphasis on cultural diversity and empathy toward migrants. Moreover, in general terms, we may observe that, when switching from adults to adolescents, the representation of migrants shifted to an overall negative and distrusting image.

With regard to individual social positioning, two opposite profiles emerge. The first profile includes individuals with a progressive and egalitarian view of intergroup relations: low SDO, left-wing political orientation, support for the welfare state and general good disposition towards extending entitlements to immigrants. This profile is associated with a disenchanted view (*Sympathetic complexity*), dealing both with migrants' daily life difficulties and acknowledging the problems that migrants supposedly create by their mere presence. The opposite profile is conservative and pro-hierarchical: high SDO, right-wing political orientation, and a disengagement from a welfare state conception. The representation associated to this profile (*Crime and Delegitimization*) conveys a negative and threatening image of migrants and implicitly evokes social exclusion. This negative vision of migrants was shared by a smaller percentage of adolescents. However, the migrants' ethnic origin (*non EU immigrant, Moroccan, Albanian, Arab*), which was central in the adults' representation of the un-recognized Alter (Gattino et al. 2008), does not have the same relevance for adolescents, who refer to migrants in terms of social deviance (*thief, criminal, violent, killer*). We may be able to explain this difference in content by observing that the exotic traits that migrants still hold in adults' representation reflect the basic un-familiarity that an adult population may feel with respect to such 'new' next-door neighbours. Conversely, adolescents have lived in a multiethnic society since birth, and they tend to associate the idea of threatening *otherness* to the more usual concept of social deviance. Finally, a more attenuate negative image of migrants emerges from the largest class (*Distrust and Otherness*). On the one hand migrants are recognized as needy, but their

alterity emerges from the emphasis on their extraneousness to our social context. The ambiguity of the themes emerging from this class find substantiation in anchoring variables that describe individuals who are not particularly engaged in social and political life.

In the opposition between the positive image of the citizen and the threatening and problematic conception of the immigrant, we find a mirror-like relationship that links these two social objects, as actively interacting in a plural society. As in the Snow White fairy tale, the magical mirror of social representations tells us who is 'the fairest of them all' and who, conversely, should be excluded from royal chambers.

Notes

1. *Private citizen* is mainly based on personal qualities (e.g.: *unselfish, polite, helpful*) and reflects an idea of citizen understood more in terms of personal traits then as a form of collective identity. In *Social citizen* the collective dimension prevails on the individual one, and the focus is on the civic virtues of the citizen (*to take care of the common good* or *to participate in the political* and *social public life). Practical citizen* defines the concrete and juridical forms in which citizens are called to participate in social life (e.g.: *to pay taxes, to vote, to recycle waste*). In *Civic citizen* the forms of participation are expressed in abstract form, evoking citizens' *rights* and *duties*.

2. *Otherness* defines the conditions of illegality and social deviance (e.g.: *illegal, criminal, violent person*) attributed to migrants. This negative image contains several references to the most frequent nationalities and ethnic groups: *Albanian*, *Moroccan*, and *Arab*. These terms may seem purely descriptive of ethnic belonging, but in Italy they hold a derogatory meaning and they usually refer to foreign people living in conditions of social deviance and marginality, quite apart from their real ethnic belonging. *Acknowledgement of Diversity* represents the migrant as a person who is different for his or her religion and culture, but the openness to social recognition emerges from terms such as *integration*, *respect* and *tolerance*. *Empathic Recognition* focuses on problems and difficulties in the migrants' lives (e.g.: *poverty, loneliness, sadness*) and seems highly connoted by emotional empathy.

3. The Italian high school system includes three kinds of schools: a) regular *High schools (liceo)*, which are a prerequisite to academic studies; b) *Technical schools*, where middle management and professional figures such as surveyors, accountants, technicians, agronomists, etc. are trained; and c) *Vocational training schools*, which offer a more practical and work-oriented education.

4. The acronym EUC means elementary context unit, i.e. text fragments analyzed through the *Alceste* software.

5. To be included in the analysis the word must appear on at least four occurrences.

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