BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Marback (editor), *Generations. Rethinking Age and Citizenship,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015, 353 pages, ISBN 978-0-8143-4080-6

Review by Cristina MATIUTA

Citizenship is one of the most important attributes of the people in a state, by which a person become a full member of that state. The debates on citizenship in recent decades highlights the importance to achieve a balance between rights (civil, political,social) and responsibilities. Thus, there is a need to supplement the passive acceptance of rights with active manifestation of responsiblities and virtues, including civic and political participation, economic independence, politeness. A good citizen is that one who exercises his rights and responsibilities in a blanced way (even if definition of responsiblities is more difficult than that of rights, that are most often established by law).

The book *Generations. Rethinking Age and Citizenship*, edited by Richard Marback, enrolls in debates about citizenship and its aspects related to age, ethnicity, gender, social status, occupation, exploring how citizenship is experienced temporally by age and how membership in a particular generation influences the experience and identity of citizenship. The book is organized into four sections, examining the relationship between generations and citizenship in past and present.

The fisrt section- *Age, Cohort and Generations*-, including four essays,shows that young people do not share equally in their hope for rights and responsiblities of citizenship. Peter Levine, in the first essay (*Civic Renewal. Theory and Practice*), accentuates the benefits of civic engagement as a tool for adressing most serious social problems in our society today, characterized by sclerotic institutions, corrupt government, weak political movements and a polarized public. Civic engagement, as a combination of deliberation, collaboration and relationships (involvement in common actions, developing trust, loyalty and mutual hope for our fellow citizens, reflecting on what we have done together) is a path to reform rules and become influential. In the next chapter, Jane Fiegen Green describes how children of foreign nationals (American

Indians, Armenian and Mexican Americans, Pakistani Britons), in nineteenth-century New England, have a grater expectation of assimilating into a new culture whilehanging on to their familial culture. They do not treat citizenship as a passive status conferred by the state, but as an active participation in the community's ongoing development. Amy Grey, in the third chapter, shows how Presbiterian Church was involved, in the 1850s, in incorporating populations into the American Union, in developing the sense of citizenship among Indians, in establishing stronger connections between Native Americans and the State. John W. Hink Jr., in his essay *He Wants to Take Them to Russia! American Courts and the Battle for Birth Citizens during the Cold War*,
adresses the issue of citizenship as birthright, raising the question whether the rights of a child born in the United States are infringed upon if their undocumented parents are deported to the country of origin.

The seond part of the book- *YoungAge, Globalization, Migration*-, including three essays, broaden the understanding of citizenship in the age of migration and globalization. The first one, written by Saeed A. Khan, examines the notion of citizenship as it relates to Pakistani Muslims in Great Britain and specifically British Pakistani youth for whom Great Britain is their country of birth, domicile and nationality. At the same time, cultural, emotional and familial connections to Pakistan shape their perspectives on identity and belonging. The second essay, of Enzo Colombo, explores how children of immigrants enrolled in high schools in northern Italy conceive and speak about the citizenship. Based on 115 narrative interviews with girls and boys between sixteen and twenty-two-years-old, the article tries to find how they react to the perceived opening and closing of Italian society and how they face the problem of inclusion and participation. Children of immigrants are elaborating a new idea of citizenship that mixes admittance, allegiance and involvement. The last essay in this section, written by Pauline Stoltz, also deals with the issue of children's citizenship, in the context of post-conflict processes, issue that is only very slowly taken seriously and requires much more consideration.

The third section of this book- *Generational Disparities and the Clash of Cultur*es-, comprising three articles, shows us how one generation's experience in relation to another generation contributes to our overall understanding of citizenship. Thus, Yuki Oda, in the first essay, investigates the Mexican American repatriation in the 1930s and the problem of Mexican-born children, showing that US nationality legislation regarding foreign-born children during the 1930s was an "immigration problem", associated with exclusion of Asian immigrants and Mexican American repatriation, affecting the next generations. The second essay in this section refers to the South African experience in the years since the end of apartheid, while the last one

explores the issues of French citizenship from a historical perspective, the distinction between citizenship and nationality, the rooted stereotypes regarding racial inequality and how the younger generations of Arabs in France struggle to assert their identity against the identity of an older generation.

The last section- *Later Life, Civic Engagement, Disenfranchisement*- treats the participation of older people in the civic life of their communities. Using data from a survey of African American elders, the first article examines the influence of traditional predictors of participation, such as socio-economic status and political efficacy, and the influence of several underexamined factors that are more prevalent among elderly, namely health-related factors and mobility, for drawing a picture of what serves to encourage or depress political participation as individuals age. The authors suggest that declining participation in old age is not inevitable. Many traditional predictors of participation affect the elderly population in much the same way that they affect the general population. The elderly still can participate and want to participate, especially in social environments where they are asked to participate. In the second article, Jessica C. Robbins-Ruszkowski investigates "active aging" as citizenship in Poland, based on ethnographic research in two cities in Western Poland. Retired Poles find solace and regain a sense of worth and location within community by cultivating social relationships and taking care of their families. In the last essay, *From Personal Care to Medical Care*, Tamara Mann describes how a political strategy for senior citizens was set up in the United States in the 1950s. The conversation around the problems of old age grew and a policy solution came to dominate the debate ans establish the parameters of civic engagement for seniors.

Taken together, the essays of this volume represent valuable contributions in investigating citizenship issues, through their attention to age, aging and generational differences. As Jessica C. Robbins-Ruszkowski and Richard Marback assert in the concluding chapter, the book makes a phenomenological turn in citizenship studies , advancing the view that "thinking in terms of generational awareness of citizenship best conceives the essence of what it is to be human, what it is to live out our lives from youth to old age in an ongoing process of discovering, asserting, sharing, and at times rejecting and reformulating our civic bonds with each other" (pp. 320). Adressing the study of citizenship from an interdisciplinary perspective, the book broadens our understanding of what it is to be a citizen.