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**TOWARDS A SCHOOL OF STRANGERS? A ROMANIAN  
CARTOGRAPHY OF GLOBAL EDUCATION CITIZENSHIP**

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*Abstract*

The article aims to examine the moral agency of citizenship and to identify ways of teaching global education citizenship (GEC) in the contemporary political arena. A qualitative research conducted at the University of Bucharest explores the interface between national and global education citizenship. An excerpt from Ana Blandiana's novel becomes an interesting case study or a problem solving in order to identify the ethical concern for social justice and the dignity of humankind. The target population (236 students) is invited to read the text and to identify its meaning. Data collected by the semi-structured interview is analysed from the vantage point of communication and human agency. The meaning of the text is universal because the values within are common for both global and national education citizenship: the sense of civic duty is explored by the author in multiple ways – ethical, political, cultural, civil, social, and so on. This research found the following categories analysis: freedom, moral rights, democracy, pro-social behaviors. The results contribute to the research in the fieldwork by engaging two questions: clarifying the dilemmas of cultural democracy and discussing the effects of globalisation in the classroom. The data strongly supports civic engagement and the need to manage behaviours within micro, meso and macrosystems. As a result, each of these outcomes sustains an innovative perspective on the teacher's role: transforming the teacher from manager into an 'insider' of the students' culture and a challenger of the symbolic construction of classroom community through reflective and transformative classroom management.

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**Keywords:** Citizenship, moral rights, communication, social learning, social dissonance.



## 1. Introduction

This paper analyses the theoretical and empirical dimensions of global education citizenship. The conceptual apparatus illustrates a complex literature, demonstrating that it is a multiplicity of wordings and discourses on globalization, which are important for educational thinking and practice, in terms of both education sciences (Myers, 2006) and of various texts (Trif, 2014). This contrasts with distinct typologies of citizenship: critical, cultural, practical, theoretical, empirical, active, passive, political, legal, minimal, active and transformative citizenship, ethno-nationalist, communitarian and so on.

Semantically, education citizenship is associated with peace education, multicultural education, education for democracy, peace education, political education, moral education, moral rights education, economic education, conflict resolution, social education, etc. The Romanian framework conceptualizes education citizenship as education for integration in EU, not only global education citizenship or transnational education. Theoretical and practical discussions prove that there are various tensions between moral rights, legal rights and international rights conventions, between corruption and extravagant integrity, national and global citizenship, responsibilities and conventional practices. The scientific knowledge in the area identifies some pre-established outcomes based on multicultural ethics. Global control, global environment, global economy, global socialism, global market, global poverty, global obligations are concepts that illustrate the interconnectedness involved within asymmetrical process as well as the variety of diverse writing styles promoted by researchers. This result of the meta-analysis deals with the contemporary global political context and constitutes a system of data - theoretical materials, video data, records, categorisations, experiences and so on. The amount of verbal, physical, visual, conceptual outcomes develops conventions, knowledge and counter statements confronted by multiple argumentations, questioning and effects in the classroom. As reported in the literature, the 'globalization' concept in terms of Romanian and British meanings imply making the distinction between global socialism and contemporary globalization. As a result of critical exegesis of scientific studies or models of writing (Trif, 2014), there are tensions (Myers, 2006) between the Americanization or the world globalization and the EU globalization, which have all impacted education throughout time. The qualitative analysis of products infer the fact that beyond the ideological contrasts, under the evaluated texts, the variety of narratives constitutes a summarisation of elegant explanations or specific knowledge associated with qualities of good writing – clarity, simplicity, etc., not simply work done to solve problems.

A review of the literature indicates that there is not one accepted meaning of citizenship (Noddings, 2005) or of global citizenship, but rather a lack of consensus on education issues (Noddings, 2005; Wood, 2008), as well as conflicts between Western and Non-Western cultures. There are various tensions between moral rights, legal rights and international rights conventions, between corruption and 'exotic' integrity, national and global citizenship, responsibilities and conventional practices that allow scholarly sensibilities.

## 2. Problem Statement

Understanding the facts of the educational environment implies establishing local and global assumptions; making ethical choices requires identifying the logic of fixed identities and the interactions of the dynamic and unpredictable global experiences. The disparity of this knowledge is important for the features of the empirical part inserted in this article because the items (two texts from Ana Blandiana's

novel) (Blandiana, 1992) express the Romanian national identity within world politics. As a consequence, in this article European citizenship could be associated with the characteristics of an organism that has diverse structures and patterns and that allows semantic and social dissonances (Trif, 2017). In fact, there are two groups: the former Socialist countries and the Western cultures. Thus, understanding citizenship generates various problems.

### 3. Research Questions

Qualitative analysis in this paper is related to the following research question: to examine the identity of the text ("What is Ana Blandiana's text about?")

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The article aims to explore the moral agency of citizenship and to investigate ways of teaching global education citizenship in the super-complex contemporary political arena.

### 5. Research Methods

A qualitative research conducted at the University of Bucharest explores the interface between national and global education citizenship. An excerpt from Ana Blandiana's novel becomes an interesting case study (Trif, 2018) or a problem solving task in order to identify the ethical concern for social justice and the dignity of humankind:

"And yet I find it natural to close by shifting from reality not into literature, but straight into history. These recordings were made around the early 80s and were probably used even then to retouch reality, unobservedly. However, towards the end, in 1988, 1989, nothing was more fascinating and disturbing than to watch the daily two-hour TV programme, to watch those crowds that had been forcibly brought in, listening quietly, with petrified looks on their faces, to the endless speeches which they probably couldn't even hear anymore...Once or twice a year, hundreds of soldiers were brought in to replenish the supply of applause and cheering recordings which were used during the broadcasting of communist meetings and events. The National Radio Hall, the concert venue with the highest quality recording equipment, was the place where these soldiers rehearsed their applause, where they received professional training, which would allow a mechanical gesture turn into a piece of art, under the diligent supervision of a veritable conductor. This end product was then recorded: enthusiastic applause, applause and cheering, rhythmic applause, frenzied applause. The recordings were then indexed, placed in cases that were convenient to choose from and used whenever necessary. However unbelievable, this story is entirely real, up to this point. From this point on, it's *The Drawerful of Applause*."

The target population (236 male and female students aged 19-22) was invited to read the text and to identify its meaning. This article is divided into two parts. The first part is based on an empirical investigation in terms of characteristics of Romanian culture and society. The second part examines the nature of the problem taking into account the potential effects on education in university environments or in the classroom and discusses the inferences in order to evidence contingency, constraints, intellectual engagements or logical interpretations of the findings. Data collected by the semi-structured interview is analysed from the vantage point of communication and human agency. The meaning of the text (Powell,

Boomgaarden, De Swert, & De Vreese, 2018) is universal because the values within are common for both global and national education citizenship: the sense of civic duty is explored by the author in multiple ways – ethical, political, cultural, civil, social, and so on. The deconstruction of Romanian identity within global socialism is based on this normative behavior; the communication theory and the linguistic borderlands are reproduced in the ethical principle of the text.

## 6. Findings

From the vantage point of higher education, the investigation is focused on the perennial explanation of 'disaster' or 'crisis' in academia. Immigration, migration, globalisation, internationalisation continue to press for a more integrate knowledge and for nontraditional curriculum. Thus, the narratives are considered cognitive proof of the Romanian students' representations of citizenship, communication and social dissonance. The empirical data collected reveals a pessimistic attitude towards political correctness. This implies the fact that the predominant patterns of the local and global education citizenship are multifaceted and that people are becoming strangers in their respective societies.

The thematic analysis of findings according to the first item indicates a three-category analysis:

- Firstly, the narratives are retellings of the description from the text maintaining the central words; from a psychological point of view the results could be considered a memory test passed by the target population.
- Secondly, the answers evoke experiences about Romanian citizenship, based on collective memory and oral history. Inevitable dissimulated types of behavior and artificial human attitudes are presented, that emphasize the cruelty of this global experiment.
- Thirdly, the comments evidence the culture's frauds in democracy during globalized socialist times. It is about the lack of aesthetic function, about the use of art for propaganda in the totalitarian regime, the interference of political issues in the aesthetic fieldwork.

The three-category analysis demonstrates the anticipated high level of effort involved in the manipulation of the masses and the tools, the techniques and the strategies of social psychology.

The rhythm obtained through the repetition of words such as 'applause' - as in the sentence 'enthusiastic applause, applause and cheering, rhythmic applause, frenzied applause' becomes the most familiar way used by the respondents to put into context the dilemmas of cultural democracy. The rhythm is mentioned in 80% of the responses, which indicates the validity and credibility of the research. The applauses transform the day by day reality into a super-complex force machinery.

In terms of the theory of A. Bandura, words such as 'totalitarian', 'dictatorial', 'authoritative', etc. lead to the emergence of schizophrenia in global socialism. The natural behaviors are neutralized and the negative behaviors are imitated. In this negative moral agency (Trif, 2017) contrasts the comfort of the leaders with the stress of the people, the illusion of the leaders that they are loved by the citizens and the Spartan faces of the audience. The antinomy between the illusion of the actors that play the role perfectly and the austere faces abused by the cruel decision of the director is inserted in the show. The comedians are part of force's machinery and criminal game. The amusement is not a human reaction, it is commanded by those who have power; it is indoor or in frontiers entertainment which produces daily traumatic behaviors. The lucid planning is painfully transparent - morally and physically painful - for the ordinary

citizen, who is isolated because of the duplicitous pleasure of the show director. The representation pays attention to the details of punishment based on negative surveillance. These inferior types of behaviors reported in the narratives are common for communism. The joy of entertainment is delusively internalised only for the managers. For the ordinary citizen, the frivolous show means suppressing rights, silence, hostility, fear, pain. The comedians perceive the cultural malnutrition in their fabricated identity superficially; the citizens perceive the absurd humour of situations humourlessly. This hypnotic situation transforms the Romanians into a hard-hearted participant.

The unenthusiastic atmosphere is depicted both through the vocabulary of the author and the language of the target population. The words suggest that the citizens are turned to stone morally and physically, describing the immobility of faces, ironic representations and the hysteria of the totalitarian regime. The social semiotics is an epidemic covering the apathetic state of the oppressed: 'dictator', 'repulsion', 'false image', 'misbehaviour / misconduct', 'tyranny', 'intimidation', 'robots', 'imposed norms', 'mimic behavior', 'negative feelings', 'sorrow', 'nocive / bad ideology', 'marionettes', 'perverted morality', 'deviation', etc. Similarly to British and international studies on citizenship, the incongruity between the delight of the leaders' satisfaction and the saddened / disappointed citizens, these findings highlight the distinction between the formal citizenship and the critical or transformative citizenship.

Discussion of citizenship is part of the ethical dialogue (Cristian, 2015), because the fragment conveys aesthetical, moral, patriotic meaning. Because of the disadvantages involved in ethical research methodologies (e. g. potential psychological effects, contamination of recent oral history), the tasks are simply designed in order to stimulate the target population to communicate successfully. The clear and natural question of the research in written form confers objectivity to the approach. The findings prove that the vocabulary from the first fragment is similar to the vocabulary of the data collected: there are no separate meanings or false interpretations. The language of the narratives is logically constructed around nouns from the active vocabulary. Terms such as 'manipulation (of people)', 'ethics', '(lack of) communication', 'lies', 'untruth', 'fabrication', 'lack of freedom', 'dishonesty', 'abuse', etc. are used frequently (80%). The common denominator of these powerful words is the phenomenon of counterfeit. The semantic network reduces the psychological complexity of manipulation to simplified reflexes of the citizens. There are interrelated attitudes and behaviors consistent with moral fraud, indignity, unscrupulousness, in a despotic and programmed negative contamination of the Romanian mental. In relation to the internal dynamic of the phenomenon, the data maintains the antagonism between the bright meetings and the perfect manipulation of the entire society.

The content analysis proves that the following words are the most powerful in the narratives collected:

- Soldiers
- Manipulation
- Communism
- Freedom of expression
- Mechanical actions

This semiotics points to the gap between the symbolic construction of the Romanian community in past communism and the authentic cartography of citizenship based on cultural democracy. Contemporary expectancies in the university are expressed by keyterms such as ethics, consciousness, religious condition

of humans (Lemeni & Mihalache, 2011), communication without borders, intellectual diversity. This inherently implies limits of the discourses, inadequate teacher training, relativistic interpretations of classroom experiences and different background information. Beyond the ambiguity of the global citizenship paradigm, beyond the war between patriotic and unpatriotic fears concerning global citizenship education, beyond the linguistic dissonances and philosophical preferences of the authors, the Romanian paradigm reconsiders the dilemma of citizenship education introducing additional explanations. The particular history of Romania is considered relevant for the problematic understanding of the links between national and global citizenship. Firstly, citizenship education is influenced by Global socialism, but Global socialism is not to be mistaken for patriotism even if the moral equality of the pupils was its prominent feature. Secondly, the UE globalisation stemming from the Western Cultures is in antinomy with Global Socialism; there are gaps between cultural democracy and citizenship between Eastern and Western Europe. Thirdly, global education citizenship integrates constant criticism concerning ecological problems; despite the fact that there are standards (Kelley, 2008), there is no consensus on global environment (e. g. weather problems require more efforts).

There are explicit references to multiple difficult questions regarding university courses and citizenship as follows:

- Massification versus individualisation
- Hybridisation versus identity
- Cultural and intellectual diversity versus cultural loyalty
- Socialist globalism (as sick state of human) versus patriotic DNA (genetic patriotism)
- Discourse of the political leaders (as a symbol of the legal system) versus the moral right of marginalized people
- Global market versus national history and values.

In terms of the educational potential of the findings, the answers contain elements that could be used in rethinking citizenship:

1. Reconsidering relationship in the classroom
2. Using comparative methods in order to solve global problems (comparing opinions, arguments, values, historical sources)
3. Listing advantages and disadvantages of immigration
4. Accepting common values (e. g. loyalty, sincerity)
5. Taking into account the variety of lifestyles
6. Promoting respect

The critical exegesis of the titles of the projects inserted into narratives confirms the interdependences: ‘immigration in Romania from the vantage point of integrating foreigners in Romanian society’, ‘im/migrations today’, ‘the interdependence between equality of chances, immigration and the students’ identities’, ‘traveling towards a global town’, ‘migrants and cultural diversity’. There are titles that touch upon some substantively relevant problems: ‘changes in communication’, ‘school and globalisation’, ‘education for democratic citizenship’ and so on. The language illustrates that there are linkages between the politics of knowledge and the civic participation in terms of official wordings in the curriculum. There are no emotional terms or conceptual errors.

There is no doubt that the general phenomena of global citizenship education includes repercussions on academic accountability: a challenge of the cognitive representation of success in higher education, of administration practices, of workloads, of teacher training programme, etc. This article does not pertain to prototypic knowledge and process because the ideological social context in Romania is mediated by a case study or a written text in interaction. As a consequence, the investigation provides an overview for learning in contemporary higher education according to the new social context of excellence. Certain specific characteristics of narratives collected could be recognized within such a 'storm' of an academic framework, as it can be observed in the following table 01:

**Table 01.** Evidences of social dissonance in narratives

Categories
Barrage of practices
Gaps or fractures between the members of society
Critical rejections of logical practices in everyday society
Polarized responses to the formal tasks
Errors mechanistically applied, replacing natural behaviours
Cognitive experimentation in Romanian society

As can be seen in table 1, the themes identified are opposed to reflection, flexibility, curriculum of transferability or creative potential of professional accountability.

## 7. Conclusion

The results are similar to the international studies on global education citizenship: the immigrants are voluntary members of the society in which they live and essential parts of an increasing racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. The narratives are possible answers to immigration and to identity from the perspectives of both nation-states and globalization. On the other hand, human rights and the human condition, cultural rights, ethics, religious identity, social justice contribute to the development of moral agency (Trif, 2017).

The data strongly supports civic engagement; the need to manage behaviors within micro, meso and macrosystems; and transformative citizenship (moral principles and values, as well as social justice) are important for education. The outcomes strongly support the worldwide studies that legitimate the 'discrepant identities': in past communism, Romanian citizens were oppressed within borders. The dominant mental in the text - as a testimony about lived experiences - was perceived by the respondents in terms of experiencing im/migration or diaspora in their own country. For the epistemological purpose of the research, the findings require consolidation of morale and civic instruction. The fragment could be considered a document on historical events before 1990 in Romania. The hostile human agency in Romania is confronted with stereotypical demonstrations from the past history: 'political correctness' is linked to the idea of 'scientific periphery'.

Some authors support Global socialism while others focus their attention on Global capitalism. Going beyond these different views, it is a mistake to assume a demarcation line between the two perspectives or to demonstrate the superiority of one type of globalisation. After the fall of socialism,

globalisation integrated the conflicts / tensions, the common points as well as the difficult questions concerning the future of citizenship.

The university as well as the pre-university education are inevitably fuelled with a sophisticated mixture (Trif, 2014; Teacher Training Agency, 1999) between global capitalism, residues of global socialism and national values. These press for new battles between ideologies, knowledge and powershift. The curriculum is in the face of an exotic transnationalism and of an altered patriotism. There are new social cohesions within universities, new cultures in the classrooms, new geopolitics and new enemies of democracy. To conclude, the intellectual independence of the university as well as the homogenisation of knowledge might be diminished by social dissonances (global versus national, cultural versus formal borders, process versus outcomes, etc.) because of the global political context. These exchanges are seen to be consistent with new epistemology that does not solve the classical division between empiricism and the hermeneutical approach: it is about a different branch of epistemology, the 'epistemology of social dissonance'. This new paradoxical epistemology is situated on the edge of transition between Global socialism, Global capitalism and post-globalisation and requires re-creating the dominant enculturation form of higher education (thinking in terms of discipline).

The article concludes that the sets of behaviours, experiences, attitudes, expectations, cognitive representations about integrity and justice collected are important for global education citizenship and for policies on excellence.

Three questions are important for future studies:

- Globalisation - cloning mediocrity or establishing neural networks of geopolitical space?
- Towards a unique nation as a result of globalisation process?
- Making minds - through political interests or by scientific paradigms?

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