

Between Inclusion and Marginality: The Role of Education in Migrant Children

Luisa Ribolzi

Policies aimed at keeping or encouraging a harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups should be planned with the utmost care, and should be skilfully and attentively implemented. Intercultural education programmes are only one aspect of these policies, and if well devised, may contribute to their success. However, we run the risk of being too ambitious... and we must pay attention to the fact that, despite the value of the principles of a school attendance suitable to cultural and linguistic pluralism, multicultural education programmes will remain, in practice, dominated by educational and cultural traditions strong enough to keep them under control (CERI, *One school, many cultures*, OCSE, Paris, 1989, 78).

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Abstract:

Creating and transmitting a common idea of European citizenship, based on values as individual freedom, equality, tolerance, dignity of individuals independently from gender, religion, race or social class is possibly the main task for educational policies in school and in permanent education. This is a difficult task, because European Union is becoming more and more heterogeneous in its composition, but also because migrations have to be considered as one of the social megatrends affecting Europe, increasing the community's complexity. The rate of migrants students is growing also in Italy by number, native country and level of education: in this varied population school attendance could be both a source of marginalisation or a tool for inclusion and social mobility. The concept of *citizenship*, including participation, cooperation, and tolerance, becomes then crucial, and the socialisation processes and agencies have to cooperate organizing education to support civiness, and mediating between ethnic origin and culture and the values of the host countries.

Le plus important des objectives de la politique de l'éducation et de la formation permanente est probablement celui de la création et de la transmission d'une idée commune de citoyenneté européenne, à partir de valeurs comme la liberté, l'égalité, la tolérance, la dignité de la personne quel que soit son sexe, sa religion, race ou classe sociale. C'est une tâche très difficile, parce que la composition de l'Union Européenne est en train de devenir de plus en plus hétérogène, mais aussi parce que les migrations doivent être considérées comme l'un des *megatrends* qui changent la face de l'Europe, en augmentant sa complexité. Même en Italie, le nombre des étudiants d'origine étrangère croit constamment, comme par ailleurs les nationalités d'origine représentées et les niveaux d'instruction: pour ces jeunes, la scolarisation peut constituer soit une source de marginalisation, soit une possibilité de mobilité sociale. Le concept de citoyenneté au sens large, incluant aussi bien la participation, la coopération, la tolérance, devient alors un facteur crucial. Les institutions qui interviennent dans le processus de socialisation et d'éducation doivent collaborer à l'organisation d'un dispositif d'éducation capable de favoriser le développement du sens civique, et de jouer le rôle d'intermédiaire entre culture d'origine et valeurs du pays d'accueil.

Within a comprehensive reflection on Europe as a cultural context, two different dimensions, which may be either read as opposed or as integrable (and have been treated as such over time), unavoidably cross: the dimension of identity, and the dimension of tolerance, or – if we like it better – the construction of a common context in which one's diversity may be exerted. In sociological terms, this is a new way of re-proposing the basic dilemma tackled by Durkheim, which aims at understanding how it is possible to reconcile personal variability with the existence of a society. His answer, which „may be defined as a theory explaining how social order is possible, grounding it on individuals' cohesion and solidarity, and hence, on shared common values" (Besozzi 2006, 52), and analyzes the mechanisms of social solidarity starting from a declared superiority of the social on the individual – and consequently, on individuals' groups – is debatable and has been debated. However, discussing on the answer does not mean ignoring the question, which instead becomes the more crucial, the most social fragmentation and conflict radicalization grow.

The centrality of the relation between commonality and differences must reckon that the agreement on Europe's common cultural origins has been overcome, both because not all agree on what these common origins actually are, such as it recently emerged in France and Holland, and particularly because EU enlargement to new member countries, on the one hand, and a growing presence of non-EU citizens, on the other hand, underline that this confrontation shifts to systems of values that do not have, and do not want to have, any common roots. The „all of us" of Europe is an aggregate of different interests, in which the „good" for some people is considered as an „evil" by some other ones. The concept of *citizenship* becomes then the litmus paper, as well as, from my personal point of view as an education sociologist, the ways and places in which the acquisition process of citizenship values takes place among those who originate from other cultures, particularly referring to the school.

I intend to analyze, through my contribution, the educational demand and offer for the young of foreign origin, focusing on the themes of citizenship and identity, as well as their relation. In addition, I aim at pointing out some consequences of those issues on the global process of socialization and inter-generational transmission.

1.1 Immigrants: a Growing Community

The first datum to be considered refers to quantities, and is connected to the different demographic trends. Imbalances in the growth rates of the population old enough to work (whose excess is one of the most powerful boosts to emigration) seem to be a structural element in the relations between some countries, particularly those of sub-Saharan Africa, which report positive yearly rates by +2/3% in the 20-40 year old population, and West- and South-Europe, reporting a -0.5/-1% credit balance. This demographic factor, seen in connection with the labour markets of the countries of origin and those of the countries of destination, is one of the basic elements in great migrations, even though at a personal level, the perception of one's situation/job perspective in the country of origin compared to the prospect one in the host country becomes decisive. In drawing up this balance, a great number of non-economic (psychological, human, etc.) costs come into play. Otherwise, we could not explain why migration flows, perceived as huge and sometimes threatening, are actually extremely reduced¹.

By comparing the late 19th century/early 20th century great migrations (which were proportionally much heavier) with the present ones, we find ourselves in front of two symmetric situations. In those times, there was globalization in persons' but not in good circulation; nowadays, it is just the opposite. There are no longer the vast depopulated areas that in the past would give hospitality to migrants, and the current imbalance between demographic growth and economic growth makes it extremely difficult to reabsorb the offer surplus on labour demand, which is also determined by the entry of growing shares of women in the labour market even in developing countries, and by the agriculture downsizing process. In the Sixties, Blau and Duncan described the mechanisms of the so called „selective migration", seen as an opportunity for achievement. This selective migration manifests an extension of universalism in our occupational structure" (Blau, Duncan 1967, 275). But at the moment, moves are not a free choice: there is a number of „reluctant movers" and some moves that appear to offer opportunities to the fathers now can be seen as posing risks for children: the number of moves has a negative effect on school achievement and high school completion.

The major factors that come into play in determining migration flows are eight, according to Golini (2006), and in such a complex framework it is illusory to think that a single country, or a single area, may effectively manage those flows:

¹ In order to make a comparison, we should consider that over three decades, from 1876 to 1915, more than 14 million Italians emigrated, out of an overall population that in 1871 totalled 27.3 million inhabitants, and in 1911, 35.8 millions. Over one century (1876-1976) Italian migrants totalled 23 million units, a little more than the overall resident population at the unity of the nation (22.1 millions).

- The country of destination, with its direct and indirect (visas) migration policies;
- The neighbouring destination countries, which indirectly act through their migration policies;
- The prospect migrant;
- The prospect migrant's family and community of origin;
- The country of origin, with its body of policies;
- The immigrants' community already settled in the country of destination;
- The transit countries, through their control policies on incoming and departing flows;
- The labour traffickers.

The demographic composition of migration flows, not only and not so much on departure, but rather through the changes it undergoes in the country of destination (marriages in the host country and consequent births of children who are in all respects socialized in an educational process in Italy, family reunifications through the arrival of children who are old enough to attend the school, or the birth of new children, etc.) deeply affects school attendance among students of foreign origin. This theme is becoming a central issue not only in the general debate on migration, but also on the educational system functioning and purposes in the host countries. This situation develops so quickly that data become obsolete in the space of two-three years. If in the year 2000 the Ministry of Education wrote that

„a propensity among non-Italian by citizenship students to attend infant and primary schools, and their scarce attendance in secondary schools, and particularly upper secondary ones, are confirmed. This datum may likely depend partly on the widespread phenomenon of wastage in the school, and partly on the foreigners' less well-off economic conditions in comparison with the national average values, which clearly lead them to anticipate their entry in the job market" (MPI 2000, 10)

five years later the same source writes that „the novelty in this year's data is a growing presence of foreign students in the upper secondary school, who mostly attend (by 80%) technological and vocational schools"(MIUR 2005, III).

Foreign students' incidence on the overall number of enrolled students has passed in a decade from 0.6% in 1995/96, to 4.2% in 2004/05 and, as we will see more in detail concerning the last seven years.

Table 1 – Non-Italian students by educational levels, 1997/98 – 2004/2005

Level	1997/98	1999/2000	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Infant	21.2	20.1	25.4	20.8	19.4	20.2
Primary	46.3	44.3	40.1	41.0	40.8	40.0
Lower secondary	22.3	24.1	22.7	24.3	23.9	23.3
Upper secondary	10.1	11.5	11.7	13.2	15.9	16.5
TOTALE	63.199	119.679	156.406	181.767	232.683	361.576
	100	189	247	287	368	571

Source: Ministry of Education-MIUR, 2005

Their composition has deeply changed. Against a substantial stability reported among children attending the primary and secondary school, who still total about one fifth of all foreign students, attendance rates in the primary school lower from 46.3% to 40.0%, while the students enrolled in the secondary school rise from 10.1% to 16.5% (in absolute values, from 6,410 to 59,570 units, with a nine time increase). Estimates referring to the year 2009/2010 predict a foreign students' presence by 550-600,000 units, representing a 6.2-6.8% incidence on the total number of students (Ibidem, 13: estimate on Caritas, Migrantes 2005, 508-511).

Foreign students represent 4.6% total students in the infant school, 5.4% in the primary school, 4.8% in the lower secondary school, and 2.3% in the upper secondary school. The ratio between males and females is substantially identical in the infant and primary school, it decreases in the lower secondary school (males 5.1% and females 4.5% out of overall students), while it rises again in the upper secondary school, with 2.2% males and 2.5% females. We can attribute these differences to the fact that males tend to give up the school after the compulsory education period and go to work. This imbalance further worsens if we consider that teachers denounce the tendency of Muslim families to send their daughters back to their country of origin after the end of the compulsory school.

1.2 ... And a Varied One

The second basic datum that allows evaluating the problems connected to the growing number of foreign students in the Italian school system is their great variety, starting from represented nationalities. As Queirolo Palmas argues, quite often „immigrant” is a label used to include and stigmatize a category that is anything but homogeneous, since numberless are the differences from a cultural, ethnic, linguistic, social class, and educational point of view” (Fravega, Queirolo 2003, 33).

In the school year 2004/2005, students originating from 187 different countries have been censused, that is from almost all the countries of the world, considering that the countries censused by ISTAT (the Central Statistics Institute) are 194.

Table 2 – Students by continent of origin, school year 2004/2005

	a.v.	%
European Union	16.983	4.7
Non-EU Europe	155.517	43.0
Africa	91.936	25.4
America	42,985	11.9
Asia	53.479	14.8
Oceania	476	0.2
TOTAL	361.576	100.00

Source: MIUR 2005

At the first place we find students originating from Europe, who total almost one half of the overall student number (47.7%). The enlargement to 25 member countries of May 2004 has brought a considerable increase in students from EU countries, because the ten new members were up to then classified as non-EU countries.

Furthermore, students originating from non-EU European countries have considerably increased, too, passing from 37.6% in 1995/96 to 43.1% in 2004/05, due to the constant flow of students from Romania, Albania, Ukraine and former-Yugoslavia. Albanians still remain the most represented nationality (16.7% out of total foreign students), followed by Romanians (11.5%) and former-Yugoslavians (3.5%), and therefore almost one out of three foreign students originates from non-EU East-European countries (Table 3). The other continents remain steady: except for a quite negligible minority from Oceania, which includes also the stateless, Asia, Africa and America (obviously, Latin-America in particular) remain rather stable over time. Students originating from Africa, which had reached 30% in 1998/99, have then gradually decreased to the current 24.4% rate, while Americans range from 11% to 12%. Asians remain steady by about 15%, and the major countries of origin are China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Table 3 – Students by country of origin, school year 2004/2005

	% out of the total	1995/6=100
Albania	16.7	1460
Morocco	14.4	680
Romania	11.5	4680
China	5.2	630
Former-Yugoslavia	3.5	320
Ecuador	3.3	4140
Tunisia	2.8	
Macedonia	2.6	
Philippines	2.6	
Peru	2.5	

Source: MIUR 2005

Between foreign students, 65.1% belong to the most represented nationalities, and the first three ones (Albania, Morocco and Romania) gather even 42.6% of them. The situation is quickly developing: three out of the first six countries present have relatively scarcely grown, as these countries are reporting more or less consolidated migration rates: considering the school year 1995/96 equal to 100, former-Yugoslavia has passed to 320, China and Morocco respectively to 630 and 680, while Albania has grown by almost fifteen times, Ecuador by 41, and Romania by 47.

The different national groups are irregularly spread on the territory in consequence of the existence of migration chains or particular traditional settlements. Therefore, Chinese are particularly present in Tuscany, Albanians in the regions of the Adriatic coast, and Ecuadorians are concentrated in Genoa, probably because of a sort of historical paradox, as in early 20th century, a strong migration flow from Liguria to Ecuador had taken place. There are also concentrations by „professional areas”, linked to migration chains, too. The most fitting examples are the professions of home helps, old people caretakers, and – to a smaller extent – children caretakers, which are usually entrusted, on the basis of a sort of traditional „reputation”, to Ecuadorian women in Genoa, to Philippine and Peruvian women in Milan, and so on (see i.e. Ambrosini, Queirolo Palmas 2005).

The data reported up to now are not only the simplest level indicators, but also the most immediate ones, of the cultural complexity on which the school is asked to act. If we wanted to work out a *cultural distance* index (a questionable one, like any other indicator in such a delicate matter), we would be able to see that there is a *continuum* going from boys and girls born in Italy from foreign parents, regular, Catholic, with good jobs, medium-high literacy skills, and consolidated migration projects, to lately arrived adolescent boys and girls, lacking of any family support or with irregular or jobless parents who do not belong to the Catholic religion, have scarce literacy skills, no migration projects, and envisage to return to their country of origin. The cultural and socio-political characteristics of the country of origin, along with the personal characteristics of a boy or a girl, are a further complexity factor, also because they determine the existence of an anticipatory socialization and the level of self-identification with the host country. We might also add the levels of ethnocentrism of the host community: if the foreigner is perceived as a competitor for the control of scarce resources, or even as an enemy, inclusion difficulties rise exponentially. The observation that in the global society local identities have strengthened is by now consolidated, though their disappearance had been considered unavoidable by the so-called „paradigm of modernization” (Allardt 1979), which judged ethnic feelings as a survival of the past, an obstacle to transformation of reality in a modern sense, and destined to be replaced by identifications of a functional kind.

2. Towards a Shared Identity?

In the western inter-generational transmission process, such as Robert Putnam (2000) remarks with reference to the American society, young generations have gradually grown away from family, institutions, society. We are facing a turnover from generations marked by strong civiness, driven and in some way compelled by the war to base themselves on cooperation values, to new generations, which appear in general more individualistic and less oriented to a community spirit. This makes the existence of the *common school* impossible or with no sense, since it is based on sharing the same values and the same models within a community, whether they inspire to religious values² or to those that Bellah (1975) calls „civic religion” (a set of ethical precepts vaguely inspiring to the Judaic-Christian morals), and sets forth the problem of identifying, and transmitting to the school the constituent elements of common citizenship, within a fragmented society, in order to „set the rules of the game” and prevent its disintegration.

In this process aimed at developing the sense of belonging to a common society, the greater is the variety of the involved groups and their differentiation, the hardest becomes identifying shared basic values, thus running the risk of increasing conflicts, or constructing low-profile curricula that are scarcely motivating for both students and teachers. The groups that mostly run the risk of cultural marginalization are the young migrants’ ones, in which distance from the host society is added to a high level of frustrated hopes. These groups tend to build their identity through processes that increase the risk of self-exclusion, according to a dynamics already observed during the 1980s by the sociology of resistance with reference to the young English working-class males. Some authors, such as Giroux (1983), Willis (1977), Hall and Jefferson (1976), have pointed out that school rejection and adoption of alternative forms of sociality among those young are not merely dysfunctional behaviours connected to ignorance. On the contrary, these attitudes represents the way in which those young respond to the oppression exerted by the social and educational structures by criticizing them in the attempt to achieve their social and personal emancipation.

Resistance to class-acculturation (but the different authors underline that similar mechanisms start also in presence of gender or ethnic differences) reveals itself through behaviours, language, ways

² Visiting in 1837 the United States, De Tocqueville (1951) remarked that all schools „preach the same moral law in the name of God”, a moral law rigorously inspired by Protestantism, which was at the basis of all the common school teachings.

of clothing, or other symbolic tools. We may imagine that this search for an identity runs also through others ways before passing to deviant behaviours. However, in the opinion of the others, young migrants are subject to prejudice, labelled as different or dangerous (or dangerous because different) persons, or become the victims of an „ethnicization” process that imposes them several peculiar features they do not only reject, but in which they do not recognize themselves (any longer). In the past, the cultural comparison model has dominated the thinking on education and ethnic minorities: there is now a growing opinion that this model threatens to imprison people with their own culture and their own ethnic identity. This has the effect to encourage stigmatisation and it is not appropriate when a second or – in some countries – third generation of immigrants is growing up.

Consequently, integration dynamics among the young foreigners who live in Europe pass through a process that articulates at two different levels. The first one is the construction of one’s personal identity (that may be accepted both by the community to which a person belongs, and by the host community, and hence, complex in itself). The second level consists in placing this identity within a supranational space, Europe, which is likely more abstract for them than for the young natives of the same age living in the host country, and therefore it is not easy to say whether it is lived as an opportunity, or as a risk, or as something completely neutral. This is the space for multicultural education: as Luchtenberg (2005) writes, „there is an astonishing disparity between a multicultural education that emanates from the assumption of a multicultural society with permanent migration and the lack of enabling students – migrants as well as Germans – to understand the political conditions of this multicultural society and – beyond that – its place in Europe and in the world”.

Therefore, the European Union, where the dominant culture of each nation is surrounded by gradually integrated minority cultures, generates the idea of *multiculturalism*, a concept that presumes that there are different cultural identities and that members of one culture constitute a group who can collectively deal with other cultural groups. Participating to a common culture can be seen as an opportunity for stranger children, because it goes through the cultural difference. Better, sharing a European culture means for them both preserve cultural identity and create a common frame with the non-stranger children. Anyway, from a sociologic point of view, the stranger is a construct: organisations or institutions are naturally interested in keeping up their very own orders, creating definitions and categories such as „culture” to establish hierarchies. The idea of Europe as a multicultural society is built on the idea of an open system: cultures are not segregated from each other, but live together in harmony (Baumann 1991).

In the construction of this shared identity, the role of the school is crucial, but likely it has different goals in relation to foreign children and European ones. Today, in Italy, we tend to think whether the basic task of the educational agencies in the host countries may be that of trying to encourage a passage towards a „recomposed” identity, in order to avoid the risk of taking roots in a regressive, fundamentalist-like way. More than focusing on the provisional and wavering nature of the new identities of those young people, which is also shared by the young Europeans of the same age, we should focus on the possibility that society, the school and even their families may enhance their value as a bridge, a connection between „here” and „elsewhere”, between the past and the future. However, this dialogue takes place between two different identities, and accepting the *alter* does not imply diminishing the *ego*, but instead its ability to recognize itself, and obliges it to place the other at the centre of its own identity³. Quite often, this identity, with which it is hard or even impossible to confront oneself, is weak and remissive, and therefore does not help the young foreigners to build a way of life of their own. The models provided by society and school are non-models, which except for consumption, do not present themselves as attractive, desirable, or simply deserving to be imitated. Here, the teachers’ and in general the educators’ ability to make proposals as respectful of differences as clear and faithful to the host country traditions, comes into play again: the future has deep roots.

If we want to educate both Italian and foreign youth to pass from individual strategies (adaptive) to solidarity and reciprocity strategies, promoting a common future, the values have to be not only tolerated, but reciprocally confirmed. Relational sociology points out that it is hard (and probably damaging) to separate *bridging* from *bonding*: moving towards integration to Europe, children must have the possibility to maintain or create strong connections with their families or communities, which in the case of young immigrants have been seriously put to a test, distorted and – as to the family – often destroyed. When *bonding* ties prevail on *bridging* ones, they encourage fragmentation rather than integration, whereas in the opposite case, it becomes much easier integrating persons who make reference to different cultural universes. The appropriate solution might be that of enhancing *hybrid* or *mestizo identities* (Fravega, Queirolo Palmas 2002), which are not a value in themselves, but insofar as they sum up commonality and difference, or perhaps overcome both concepts, developing an autonomous hybrid code as a way to cope with the multiple tasks of the complex society, sometime – not ever – enhancing deviant aspects.

³ „It is my choice whether I approach the Other and open myself towards him or harem myself against the Other and become guilty in ethical terms” (Köpp, 1998, commenting Lévinas).

3. Participation and Cooperation

In building and developing an integrated and pluralistic system, *cooperation* is a basic requirement. By „cooperative behaviour” we mean an action in which the actors decide to act together in order to achieve a common good they would not be able to achieve only by themselves. Cooperative action generates solidarity, but becomes more likely when actors act within a solidarity context. As Williams (1989) writes, it is more likely to establish a cooperative bond „in a situation in which two agents take a common action, whose successful result demands the actions of both of them, and in which a necessary action of one of them is not directly controllable by the other one”. To achieve a goal, it is necessary that either actor of the pact meets the obligations he has taken, even in presence of incentives to defect, being evaluated in the same way. The acknowledgement of equality is essential to cooperation and is one of its preliminary essential requirements. This is a further confirmation of the fact that the construction of a European culture may be an element of greater social equity.

Jon Elster’s considerations (1993) on the role of solidarity groups in the making of cooperation reaffirm what we have previously argued on the importance of enhancing the value of the communities of origin (and those of the host country, at the same time). In this case, too, this discourse may be extended to young people in general, considering the young of foreign origin as a litmus paper. According to Elster, the preliminary essential requirement for developing a cooperative behaviour is one’s belonging to a solidarity group or network. Participation to non-solidarity formal or informal groups seems to have instead smaller influence. When a person learns a „successful” behaviour in relation to a particular aspect of life, tends to transfer it also to other contexts („indirect effects”).

If a boy within the group to which he belongs is continuously exposed to cooperative practices (which condition the group members’ possibilities to achieve their goals, or to receive prizes or punishments), he will tend to integrate them in his cognitive model and reproduce them outside the group in order to avoid making choices in contradiction with his usual behaviours. Consequently, if an individual has learned to cooperate within its group, it will tend to reproduce the same attitude with persons not belonging to the group, expecting to be reciprocated and reacting with hostility to an attitude of defection. Persons who become acquainted with „credible social models” of civic virtue, tend to re-propose them, and the contexts they experienced come close to the definition of *community* as a social context connoted by stable, direct social relations with different contents, which encourage cooperative solutions (Taylor 1987).

One of the essential elements in cooperative behaviour is *trust*, which results from the presence of strong social networks, and generates a sense of belonging by mediating access to social resources. One of the elements to be strengthened, in order to promote the concept of European citizenship, is actually the idea that not only we will not be penalized by our belonging to Europe, but instead, we will draw some advantages from it. The result would be a general trust that makes social cohesion stronger and prevents antisocial behaviours, that will involve the end of any relation. In migrants’ groups a much more complex process must take place: to the circuit „personal identity/national identity/European identity” we have to add the difficulties deriving from the differences between the ascribed national identity and the acquired – or going to be acquired – one, as well as from the abstractness of the European identity concept.

For all adolescents, a strong integration/exclusion element is represented by the atmosphere they live in the peer group. Migrant young people, differently from the other young of their age, live every day, above all in the school, more intensely the experience of confronting themselves with those who are different from them rather than the experience of identifying with those who are similar to them. Residential mobility can disrupt both human capital and the links between social networks: as Coleman (1988) notes, „the lack of strong relations can result from the child’s embeddedness in a youth community”, a strong and structured network, even if alternative to the official culture. The social disorganization theory indicates the loss of parental and community support as a cause of participation to a delinquent subculture during adolescence. In networks, cooperation expectations are increased by behaviour *monitoring*, which derives from observing individuals’ actions, from information availability, and from the possibility to sanction actions not complying with general rules. There is also a multilateral reputation among networks, in which even though persons do not directly interact, the members of a community are informed about one’s behaviours, and consequently, the personal cost of an improper behaviour (which is opportunistic instead of cooperative) grows exponentially. When the social network to which one belongs is weak or, instead, strong but antagonist, the result is a greater chance of deviance from „official” culture, since in one’s group this monitoring activity weakens (or becomes radicalized).

Again, as regards relations between groups, it is advisable to make a distinction among cooperation values based on internal ties, which tend to strengthen mutually exclusive identities and encourage the development of reciprocity relations within a limited group, giving origin to private civiness. By this term we mean a cooperation expectation limited to the members of the group with which one interacts, while by public civiness we mean a generalized cooperation expectation, which may be extended also to persons we do not personally know and contributes to create a society that

encourages cooperative behaviours. However, since in societies segmented on the basis of strong identities (for example, in Northern Ireland), one's belonging to rigorously separate groups generates conflicts and divisions, because their strong internal cooperation inhibits them cooperating with other groups, some people maintain that integration to Europe demands weakening the differences among local identities, similarly to what happens with migrants in acculturation processes (Stolle 2003; Uslaner 2002).

4. Defining Citizenship, Organizing Education to Support Civiness

We have used up to now the term „citizenship” in a general sense, according to its commonly used meaning. According to the well-known definition of this term provided by Marshall (1950), by „citizenship” we mean one's awareness to belong to a community, and in particular, to a political community in which one is legitimated to take part thanks to a democratic process. Belonging to a civil society means accepting its rules, insofar as citizenship is a set of rights and duties (Rovan 1992). Boys and girls are members of the civil society without being members of the political society. All the people who live in Europe belong to the European society, to its history, its culture, its traditions, even though they do not belong to the European Union, and persons' inclusion in civil society is a basic task of education. Therefore, talking about European citizenship immediately involves the need to identify the tasks assigned to the school, and we can say that the education to European citizenship the school has to provide is an education to the shared values and principles that define the European identity.

However, it is not easy to introduce a European dimension in education, because the deconstruction process of the previously existing social systems, particularly in the East-European countries that have recently joined the European Union, has produced as a consequence also a growing uncertainty on cooperation possibilities, a growing hostility towards „foreigners” (within the Union, differentiation has grown and tends to further grow, if we consider, for example, the candidature of Turkey), along with a similar increase in ethnocentrism. The environment offers several contradictory messages to those young, transmitting or generating in teachers some reluctance to deal with controversial themes, so that, for example, the theme of human rights is confined to politics and not to civics, while Lynch (1989:37) points out that education to diversity is strictly connected with education to human rights, and warns against a „folkloristic multicultural education”, which emphasizes the exotic aspects and the differences among the groups, while it underestimates commonalities, and automatically justifies peculiar values and practices only because they belong to a minority.

The substantial principles on which Europe is based are clear and high: freedom, democracy, human right observance, fundamental right safeguard through the law, human dignity observance, social justice, citizens' equality, European identity awareness. However, whether to larger or smaller extents, in the different countries there are minority groups based on prejudice and xenophobia, which protect themselves in order to defend the privileges they feel threatened not only by the arrival of non-EU migrants, but also by the enlargement of the labour market. So, in France, for example, the legendary „Polish plumber” has become a symbol of protectionism.

The basic principle of the modern state subject to the rule of law was equality: all persons were treated in the same way, independently of their ideas. This principle has been seriously affected by the growing differences among individuals, which involve *different levels of access to citizenship*. Therefore, a few authors talk about a passage to „postmodern State”, and

„a growing difficulty to convince all the members belonging to a single political community that there exists a common civic conscience (a civil religion?), which overcomes cultural differences perceived as non-negotiable by those who identify themselves with a religious creed or with a reference ethno-cultural symbolic system... from this point of view, right to difference becomes a principle that disrupts the modern state subject to the rule of law” (Pace 2003).

If this right to difference is seen as an absolute, non-negotiable value, as a principle of unity between the members of a group, and is changed into truth, it has disruptive consequences, because „a good rule valid for a group becomes a juridical principle valid for anybody”, which guarantees the validity of state, incapable to manage the conflicts characterizing pluralistic societies.

Even within everyday life, we must come to an agreement with persons of increasingly different origins on increasingly complex problems. In addition, this agreement involves not only single individuals, but the whole communities to which they make reference, and hence, collective identity. If, on the one hand, collective identity safeguards individuals' identity, on the other hand, it increases the risks of reciprocal prejudice spreading. Fundamentalist movements live any difference as a threat to their own existence and identity, and defend the school as a place in which difference is safeguarded, in which young people are protected from the negative influences of relativism. The fear of losing identity and the uncertainties about the future are so widespread that the most rigorous minorities act in some way as spokesmen of these feelings.

In the school, considered as the place in which identity/identities are built, this rift becomes particularly visible. The nation-States, through school education, used to build the awareness of belonging to civil society, which includes coexisting different ethical and religious points of view. Nowadays, this coexistence is seen by fundamentalist groups as a threat to identity, and „central structural elements of the nation state are affected by process of erosion” (Bommes 2005). The relation between community of origin (family and group) and school is an issue proposed now in different terms, in order to come to the construction of an integrated social system within a heavily fragmented society in which growing sub-system independence is asserting itself, as in the example of the Evangelic fundamentalist movements of the New Right in the United States (Rose 1988, 9). Similarly, the idea that religion may become again the source of social solidarity is emerging, either. The risk of making an excessive symbolic investment in the school will neutralize conflicts not through confrontation, but rather through a group separation system.

In the case of education to citizenship the ties between school and society are particularly strict, and we would say that the values characterizing citizenship underlie the whole curriculum. On the other hand, the teaching of civics involves a great deal of problems, first of all the difficulty to identify the „client” to which it is addressed: students, families, state? What’s the use of education to citizenship? There is an undeniable contrast between the end of stirring up critical independence of thought, and the end of ensuring transmission and permanence of the values on which any society is based, which would become impracticable if the independence of any citizen was total and absolute. It is possible to identify a few models (Rowe 1988; Taylor 1994):

- *Consent model*, in which education to citizenship is aimed at promoting social cohesion, which tends to consider pluralism as a source of confusion for the young, and minimizes conflicts by providing a simplified vision of reality. Citizenship is not seen as a complex and dynamic matter, but rather as a „political condition”, and teaching methods are acquisitive and passive. Because of its relative simplicity, this model is particularly widespread in countries of different political inspiration, and is used especially with children or in the schools attended by the less acculturated students. It tends, however, to have a discriminating effect towards minority groups;
- *Family model*, which accepts the idea that those who are responsible for education are parents above all, and therefore the greatest part of the task of education to citizenship, is assigned to families, or to the schools they choose. Several objections to this model have been raised: migrant students’ families are often incomplete, marginalized or even absent. Their reference cultural environment is more often provided by their community of origin than by the host community and it depends from their migration project. They have short-term goals we may define as mere „survival” goals (the residence permit, a job, and a house). The risk that families adopt a particularistic point of view is certainly high. This model is not particularly widespread, though teachers tend to make reference to families in the case of specific controversial themes with high involvement intensity, such as race or abortion.
- *Patriotic model*: this model considers, in education to citizenship, one’s loyalty to the State or community as a central issue. It is a very rigid model, which limits or suppresses any criticism, considering dissent unacceptable. Social control is seen as a value. Freedom limitation is accepted „for the good” of those who must be educated, and the less harmful aspect is an emphasis placed on the merits of the homeland, leaving out its faults, by providing a sweetened vision of history that, in its most serious forms, generates intolerance. It is however correct to add that this model is never totally absent from education to citizenship.
- *Religious model*: it is a paradoxical label, because by definition civic education does not coincide with religious education. However, many western countries (we do not refer in this case to countries whose religious code inspires the civil one, or even identifies itself with it, such as in the case of *shari’ah* in Islamic countries) deem that religious education is able to promote civil values. This model (which in western countries goes back to the Middle Ages, when there was no distinction between the values of the Church and those of the State, and is at the origin of a fair number of educational systems) is scarcely effective in multicultural societies, as it creates contradictory loyalty problems between the communities to which one belongs.
- *School ethics model*: this model emphasizes the role of school in forming pro-social citizens, thanks to the experience of a community based on shared values, and to the example of teachers whose moral authority is undisputed. School is presented as a community model, disregarding the fact that in the educational process there is a strong and unavoidable component of control. It is however an excellent form of democratic dialogue exercise, and makes the young used to confrontation and to responsible decision acceptance.
- *Conflict of value model*: this model is at the basis of the idea of a „neutral school” and starts from considering debate as the central element of democracy. It aims at educating persons conscious of their own values and in the position to defend them in the case of conflicts, in order to make them become responsible adults. However, it undervalues that the young cannot make decisions in fields on which they do not have any experience. Conflicts are not only

acknowledged but enhanced. According to some authors, this model would undermine solidarity and loyalty towards the state, but this position does not consider that society fragmentation makes it necessary to develop competences aimed at confrontation.

Conclusions

If we want a solid starting point for the construction of a political and economic community, we need to start from the existence of a common education, and from the role of the school. We need to encourage the tendency to overcome nationalism, and place growing emphasis on people's interdependence, and tolerance as a preliminary condition for establishing dialogue. Talking about a „new Europe” involves a kind of education that goes beyond national cultures. In this sense, we talk about a „Euro-curriculum”, or better a European dimension of the curriculum, which may succeed in keeping tensions and tendencies to escape under control, by basically developing *interdependence and tolerance* in order to develop also mutual understanding among different populations.

Interdependence develops on different levels: we might suggest that in this perspective education aims at constructing both a personal identity and a national identity, and underlines the importance of making grow one's self-awareness of being a member of a society – or a group – within a wider society composed by different populations. This is the most appropriate and precise meaning of *multiculturalism*. The first form of international citizenship Italian children experience is surely the European one, which however should be „corrected” by an education that allows focusing also on the wider community of nations and the global environment, in order to escape the risk of Eurocentrism.

I think it is advisable to precise that even though today the term *ethnocentrism* has taken a negative meaning, a persistent reference to the values of the nation to which one belongs, even among the European populations, is still the basic element of personal identity, which is linked to the persons' different forms of belonging (to family, territory, class, religion, ethnic group, gender) and to the fact that the „bureaucratic nation-State – a typical 19th century form – has determined and spread its own values, symbols, myths, traditions and memories, which formed the cultural heritage of the ruling classes” (Smith 1991; 1995). We cannot however neglect that this operation of consent production has enhanced a sense of belonging and solidarity spread in a great part of the population. In addition, traditional pedagogy extensively reproduces the national ideology, and finds it hard to adopt wider-ranging perspectives placing „greater emphasis on the European dimension”, such as demanded by a Community decision of May 1988, later resumed by the Maastricht Treaty in February 1992, which includes education among the matters under the competence of the Union.

Tolerance articulates on different dimensions: the most interesting is possibly the *ambiguity tolerance*: people, and teachers, have to be trained in ambiguity tolerance, because „they meet different cultures daily or, to be more precise, persons with different cultures” (Luchtenberg 2005). A tolerant – or better, an *altruistic* – personality is first of all influenced by both the family and the group of peers, but research emphasizes the importance of school and adults in general, and not only teachers'. The best results are produced by what we might define a „multiple strategy”, that is, agency cooperation, which is far more important than individual actions aimed at developing tolerance, cooperation and altruism.

Therefore, we can imagine that the major task in education to European citizenship for all the young residents in the territory of the Union, independently of their origin, involves all the curriculum areas, aiming „not to create a homogeneous school population, but to educate individuals in a way they become competent to participate in social systems” (Bommes 2005):

„A tentative scenario has been advanced in terms of seven overlapping fields of inquiry: developing personal and national identity, citizenship, education for the global environment, economic and industrial understanding, and intercultural and international education. I have argued that such an interrelationship of themes provides a projective theory of the European dimension in education which can be justified with reference to philosophical and empirical evidence... where multilateral critical communities interact in a structured framework of dialogue and research in order to build an intercultural pedagogy”(Bell 1995, 15).

An active communication process among cultures must then be started. This process should be aimed at providing mutual enrichment, which in the school goes first of all through relations, through teachers' training and a correct use of cultural mediators, through curricula – particularly those referring to history – and text-books, which should be much more respectful of the „point of view of the others” (Pingel 2003, LXI). In the nation-State tradition, and also before, „historical time flows straightforward ... space representation is expansive, including first the region where I live, then my country, the continent, etc...”, while the others are seen in a fragmentary and discontinuous way, and necessarily from the point of view of our culture, which is the only one we know and the only one we can check. Today, instead, and in an ever-accelerated form thanks to the spreading of new communication technologies, we can develop a high number of contacts beyond our territorial and

political borders. The global conception of time and space demands all the „tenants” to be aware of living in the same house, and urges them to promote common aims and common values.

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Author:

Luisa Ribolzi is professor in Sociology of Education at the Faculty of educational Science, University of Genova (Italy): she co-ordinates the research group of Italian Sociologists of education, and for them she has edited a digest of papers (*Formare gli insegnanti. Lineamenti di Sociologia dell'Educazione*, 2002). Her scientific interests are mainly on institutional aspects of education, as organisational models, teachers, and assessment (*Il sistema ingessato. Autonomia, scelta e qualità nella scuola italiana*, 2000 II; *La valutazione nella scuola dell'autonomia*, 2001): she is member of the scientific board of Fondazione per la scuola della Compagnia di San Paolo. She is working on transition from education to job, as a consultant for the Italian Entrepreneurs Association, ISFOL, Unioncamere – as president of the Progetto Excelsior scientific committee – researching on career guidance, *stages*, competencies and industries' educational needs. She is member of the scientific boards of some associations for the study of the family, and studied familial choice, participation to the school governance and public – private relations (*Italy, the impossible choice*, in P.WOLF, S.MACEDO (eds.), *Regulating schools to promote civic values*, Brookings Institution, Washington, 2004)