The Citizenship Issue between Education and Politics: Critical Reflections and Constructive Proposals for the Pedagogical Debate*

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Published: December 21, 2020

Abstract

Citizenship education is a core topic of all transformative pedagogies. In this article, we build on the phenomenological and critical schools of pedagogical thought in order to highlight some key theoretical issues that remain unaddressed in both the academic discourse and in the educational practices and policies aimed at fostering a new paradigm of citizenship education that can really fit with the political needs of the twenty-first century globalised society. Even the Intercultural and GCE approaches, in fact, fail to highlight the need to develop a critical awareness of the contradictions and unsustainability of today institutional framework with regards to State sovereignty and the peoples' right to self-determination, two major obstacles to the birth of multiscale citizenship and democracy.

L'educazione alla cittadinanza è un tema chiave per ogni pedagogia trasformativa. In questo articolo, prendiamo spunto dalla pedagogia fenomenologica e critica per evidenziare alcune importanti questioni teoriche che rimangono misconosciute tanto nel discorso accademico quanto nelle pratiche e politiche educative che mirano a sviluppare un nuovo paradigma di educazione alla cittadinanza, realmente adeguato ai bisogni politici della società globalizzata del XXI secolo. Persino gli approcci interculturali e l'Educazione alla Cittadinanza Globale, infatti, non riescono a mettere a fuoco la necessità di formare una specifica consapevolezza critica del contraddittorio e insostenibile assetto ideologico-istituzionale odierno, che facendo ancora perno sui dispositivi della sovranità statuale e della autodeterminazione dei popoli ostacola la maturazione di una cittadinanza democratica realmente multi-scalare.

Keywords: Multiscale Citizenship; Global Citizenship Education; Politics; Critical Pedagogy; European Union.

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1.   Two long-lasting crises

Eighteen years ago, an academic conference on "Education and politics" took place on the initiative of *Encyclopaideia* and its main founder Piero Bertolini, who shortly after published an essay with the same title (Bertolini, 2003). In this article, we take stock of some key concepts Bertolini discussed in that essay with reference to the intertwined "crisis of education" and "crisis of politics", in order to establish a dialogue between the phenomenological approach to pedagogy he initiated and developed in Italy and some relevant issues on citizenship education we have mulled over in fifteen years of studies and practical experience in this field — a manifold experience with artistic, academic, political and educational dimensions — where we had the chance to work with citizens of many EU countries and different ages, particularly students and teachers of the school system.

While Bertolini was writing his essay, the European Convention was still working on a *Draft Constitution* for Europe (2002-2003) the subsequent failure of which is notorious: from the approval and signing of a "Treaty" which failed to convert the primary EU legislation into Constitutional law, to its rejection in the French and Dutch referendums (2005) halting the ratification process, to the recovery of its main contents, at last, through the so-called *Lisbon Treaty* hammered out exclusively by intergovernmental negotiations (2007, entry into force 2009). Ironically enough, this sequence of events immediately preceded the burst of ever more hectic crises (from the financial to the economic and fiscal, from the military to the terroristic, from the migratory to the epidemiological one we are now experiencing) that have been seriously challenging European institutions, highlighting their still unresolved contradictions.

These contradictions directly bear on the institutional framework of citizenship, as Bertolini could distinctly see from the specific perspective of the economic globalisation process — a core subject of contemporary philosophy and the social sciences:

> [Citizenship][1] can no longer avoid dealing with the globalisation processes, for better or for worse. [...] For worse, because, depending on the highly contradictory economic globalisation I mentioned before, most inhabitants of this planet, feeling themselves excluded from a genuine planetary citizenship or having well founded reasons to think it as a further "trap" by those who bear the real (obviously economic) power, can be pushed to — as it is increasingly happening today — close themselves in a 'narrow' which is ever narrower and grounded on the primary rights of blood and territory. (Bertolini, 2003, p. 141)

The connection between Bertolini's reflections and the timespan of the European Convention would have remained implicit if his book had not included as an appendix the speech Romano Prodi, then President of the European Commission, had delivered to the *Encyclopaideia* conference — a speech which just lightly touched on the ongoing "constitutional" attempt (Bertolini, 2003, p. 174) but pointed out very clearly that:

> Europe represents today a dramatic break with traditional politics, it's the first attempt ever to reach to a citizen who works, lives, acts according to multiple loyalties: to his/her country, his/her town and this slowly sprouting European structure that gathers us all. (Bertolini, 2003, pp. 165-166)

Looking at it retrospectively, such a conjunction unveils deep historical meanings. In the first place, it points to an aborted constitutional moment which remains, up until now, the last political effort Europeans made to give an institutional answer to the very same problems Bertolini worried about and called the "crisis of politics" — those problems being ultimately at the core of the European integration process since its origins:

> In the first place, the crisis of politics can arise as soon as it loses its original meaning: i.e. when it is no more an action (or set of actions) aimed at establishing an intersubjective

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1.   We translate all Italian quotations for the English reader of this article. We warmly thank Aoife Beville for her revision of the English version of our article.

practice that, as such, should foster maximal freedom for each member of a social community (for all world citizens, to the limit), but it rather turns into a practice tending to favour just a faction, in fact, no matter what this faction is. (Bertolini, 2003, pp. 29-30)

The reference to "all world citizens" as an ideal target makes it clear that Bertolini, without dwelling on the concept, was well aware of the applicability of his definition on an international and global level, where there are in fact "factions" hindering the development of the intersubjective practice he calls "politics" — on this scale, they currently consist of those organized "particularisms" aimed at favouring specific sub-sets of the human community that we call sovereign States. A main cultural and political result of early modern and modern Europe, we must not forget.

But the historical conjunction we mentioned above also unveils a deep and specific meaning when confronted with the "crisis of education", which Bertolini linked to the first crisis and indeed basically conceived as the crisis of "that positive connection between politics and education" which engendered both his personal discourse and the entire Western tradition of pedagogical reflections and practices (Bertolini, 2003, p. 6). The fact is that the failure of the last attempt at providing a democratic and multi-layered institutional framework for the exercise and conception of citizenship and collective belongings in Europe, further allowed the educational debate and practice to carelessly take for granted today's contradictory institutional framework for the education *of* citizens in the old legal sense. In parallel, it led to the intensification of the efforts aimed at accommodating the new potential meanings the education *to* citizenship was acquiring from the globalisation process and the erosion of the old legal framework based on national sovereignties.

2.   What citizenship? A hidden inconsistency

Of course, political scientists, jurists, philosophers and also pedagogists continually questioned the concept of citizenship throughout the twentieth century. Namely, since the very beginning of the European nation-States system crisis, which in the meantime entailed the decline and definitive loss of Europe's political and cultural supremacy in favour of State actors whose size was directly continental (the US, the USSR with Russia at its core and later China). Setting aside the legacy of nineteenth century internationalism in the wartime tribulations of the first half of the twentieth century, it's worth recalling that in 1949 T.H. Marshall held his famous Cambridge conferences where he investigated the different historical, sociological and juridical dimensions that the concept of citizenship had gained in Anglo-Saxon political culture (Marshall, 2002) — whose hegemony on the so-called Western tradition was then projecting itself to the entire World. In the '90s, Marshall's categories would allow Norberto Bobbio to highlight the shift which had occurred in the meantime from citizenship *duties* to *rights* and the emergence of "third and fourth generation rights" (Bobbio, 1992, pp. XIV-XV) adding to the civic, political and social ones the British scholar had already distinguished.

Wiel Veugelers, a prominent European specialist of citizenship education, recently proposed a quick historical recap of the relationship between, on the one hand, this permanent broadening and deepening of the idea of citizenship from Marshall to the many material processes and relentless changes affecting its conception all over the second half of the twentieth century, and, on the other hand, the development of an autonomous academic field devoted to it within education science. (Veugelers, 2019a, pp. 14-19; Veugelers, 2019b, pp. 30-32). Targeting the Italian education system more specifically, back in 2001 Milena Santerini had already provided a summary of the interdisciplinary and international debate around the concept of citizenship and its consequences for educational theory and practice: her book remained in print until 2010, when she published a new essay on the same subject (Santerini, 2001; Santerini, 2010). Yet no general outline can really encompass such a rich and complex debate, since the very process it tries to master is not just complicated, but it simultaneously unfolds at different territorial scales. Scholars in this field inevitably end up with the need to juggle both international trends and national needs at once, without even noticing this is due to the very power situation that keeps framing legal citizenship today as well as educational policies and the institutionalized school system which must implement them: a power situation where sovereign statehood remains the protagonist and international cooperation ultimately relies on State actors' will. It's no chance, in fact, if international trends

mainly originate from or are disseminated through Anglo-American channels, with a natural bias towards the defence of a hegemonic universalism, its critique or the urge to transcend it in front of its decline (see also Schultz, 2007).

Therefore, it should sound subtly paradoxical that the main thread of argument within the citizenship education debate concerns the globalisation process and the need to conceive citizenship on a different scale from the old nation-State. Silvio Premoli usefully retraced the Anglo-American birth and early development of this view (the Global Education in the US, the World Studies in the UK), which under the label of the "pedagogies of the global" finds its place before or beside a multitude of autonomous pedagogical instances coming from different contexts and experiences but equally relevant for the Western and European education systems at least: peace education, intercultural education, eco-pedagogy, the *éducation planétaire*, social-justice education etc. (Premoli, 2008, p. 101-171).

The focus on the global scale and planetary dimension of citizenship today would seem indeed an ideal precondition for pedagogical reflections that would fully assume the institutional and legal contradiction between the new concept of citizenship and the persistent power situation we are referring to, in contrast to what we described above as the careless action of taking it for granted. The reality is quite different, however, if we concretely examine the scientific literature preceding as well as following the beginning of the twenty-first century — all the more so if we look at the current education policies promoted by institutional decision-makers. Practical results are well documented by the reports the European network *Eurydice* produced on the subject (most recently Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2017) and by the *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study*, whose comparative surveys assess for example "the extent and variation of students' civic knowledge" defining "students working at the highest level" as those who:

> are able to make connections between the processes of social and political organization and influence, and the legal and institutional mechanisms used to control them. They generate accurate hypotheses on the benefit, motivations and likely outcomes of institutional policies and citizens' actions. They integrate, justify and evaluate given positions, policies or laws according to the principles that underpin them. Students also demonstrate familiarity with broad international economic forces and the strategic nature of active participation. (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2018, p. 200)

Such a definition leaves no place for the ability itself *to question* the legal and institutional mechanisms framing the organization and development of social and political life. Note also that an "international" dimension is explicitly contemplated only for economic forces. In the correlated *Assessment framework* of the same study we find a thorough identification of civic and citizenship targeted learning outcomes in the content, cognitive and affective-behavioural domains. "Civic society and systems" - the first content domain - uncritically includes the following definition of *sovereignty* as the key link between the State and international citizenship:

> *Sovereignty* The claim of each individual state/nation to have the ultimate power in making political decisions relevant to that state/nation and recognition that this power underpins the operation and viability of international organizations, agreements, and treaties. (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, & Agrusti, 2016, p. 17)

The intrinsic contradiction highlighted here is already clear enough if we take just the example of the Italian national education system. In its decade of existence, *Cittadinanza e Costituzione* was precisely meant to hold together, without really questioning, well-intentioned incompatibilities — the new law (92/2019 with its official 2020 Guidelines) to reintroduce compulsory *Educazione civica* hours in the classrooms will not change this purpose: the inalienable priority given to national belonging must unthinkingly live side by side with the increasing need to care for other (European, Global) civic belongings. Luciano Corradini is one of the most significant Italian pedagogists who upheld this attempt and tried to give it strong meaning. A great illusion, in our view, the core belief of which is that one can learn to broaden and multiply the scales of civic participation in a basically juridical, peacefully descriptive perspective, with no reference to power issues:

> Citizenship embraces more than the traditional meaning of civic engagement: citizens in the planetary era should be able to know and embody ever richer and problematic rights and duties, relationships, belongings and participations, with reference to local, State, European and planetary legal systems and to globalisation, environmental, peace and developmental issues. (Corradini, 2009)

But if we are to find the most relevant example of this self-deceiving ideological inconsistency lying even behind a true cosmopolitan spirit, we must point to the "Global Citizenship Education" guidelines the UN included in its Agenda 2030 (an institutional history in Torres, 2017, p. 11). We make a critical comparison, for example, between goal 4.7 and the principle "Education is a public good" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 20 e p. 28, italics added):

> 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
>
> [...]
>
> The principles informing this Framework are drawn from international instruments and agreements [...] Those principles include: [...] Education is a public good, of which *the state is the duty bearer*. Education is a shared societal endeavour, which implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and implementation. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realizing the right to quality education. *The role of the state is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms*.

Essentially, the nineteenth century worldview is still evident here, since the realization of universal values and rights is entrusted to the harmonious behaviour of a coordinated plurality of independent collective actors: states, in other words, or the institutional way different peoples self-organize. The State keeps being the keystone mediator between single individuals and the human species (not to say life) as a whole, between particularism and the commons. Consequently, the standard requirement to participate in collective life for each individual citizen continues to be that of belonging to one *main* people — a subset of the species who can organize itself as a State.

This material and ideological situation has even been consolidating ever after the "conjuction" we noted about Bertolini's discourse, who was therefore perfectly right in pointing out that the mutual relationship between the two crises of politics and education is "maybe no less than a fundamental trait of our time" (Bertolini, 2003, p. 4), this "time" patently extending up to our present, since we still lack a clear focus on the specific issue we are trying to raise — perhaps, for some scholars it is rather a matter of disenchantment or of powerlessness in the face of the need to tackle it directly. We can reword the issue by saying that both in the pedagogical and the public contemporary debates everybody generally acknowledges the structural crisis of the old *legal* citizenship, but instead of drawing on it to question the legal framework (and its ideological foundations) and to identify it as the core of the crisis and a subject all citizens should understand and become aware of, everybody strives to stretch the concept of citizenship to the (multiple) consequences of the crisis itself.

Even the different schools of thought directly or indirectly linked to "critical pedagogy" (recent overviews in Darder, Mayo, & Paraskeva, 2017; Pereira, 2019; Muzi, 2009), while they overcome many limitations of the above-mentioned approaches, seem to fall victim to the very same inconsistency — whether or not they are "critical" in the "strong" sense Luigina Mortari, among others, has clearly identified:

> In order to control the inclination to slip into reductive interpretations one needs to trigger the distinction between a *weak* and a *strong* critical thought: while the first amounts to the acquisition of refined logical and argumentation skills, the second constantly puts the development of such skills in relation to the most relevant social, economic and political issues. (Mortari, 2008, p. 38)

Our own idea of citizenship education also endorses the *strong* critical approach, the point of the matter is what are the "most relevant" social, economic and political issues — disagreement on this can arise at three levels of analysis at least, as we will see later on. Before, we shall review more in detail some key voices of the recent pedagogical debate who seem to potentially agree with the way we propose to understand the main contradiction we are all confronted with.

3.   Some resonating voices in the recent pedagogical debate

It is not by chance that, in Italy, the sharpest focus on the problem is provided by the scholar who built on Bertolini's phenomenological teachings to specifically deal with citizenship education. Massimiliano Tarozzi clearly states that "the educational experience, or 'being in training' is a kind of political action in itself. Pedagogy does not *get*, it *is* political" (Tarozzi, 2005, p. 5) and so there can be no doubt, the educational system must play an active role in the much needed redefinition of citizenship as a political and juridical concept: "The whole pedagogical hypothesis I advocate here aims at redefining citizenship in an intercultural way, centred on multiple and plural identities, with still unclear political and juridical meaning, but undoubtedly an object and result of educational action" (Tarozzi, 2005, p. 8, also p. 60) he wrote already in 2005. Still, he just skims over the unavoidable political and juridical dimensions of a "multiple and plural" approach to citizenship redesigning, by way of a parenthetical clause where we don't find any detail about political and juridical realities an intercultural approach to education should decisively contribute to reshape. The point is the same ten years later, in a work piercingly devoted to discussing the failures of an "intercultural" approach devoid of social criticism and justice:

> The challenge is therefore to translate this seemingly unsolvable political contradiction (between multiple identities and citizenship) into a pedagogical project that is politically aware of the role a kind of "intercultural citizenship" can play in the difficult mediation between the strict communitarian sense of belonging and (theoretical and interpersonal) openness toward other people and cultures, inside a pluralist rights system. It goes without saying that such a mediation needs a new planetary and intercultural idea of citizenship well beyond the outdated nation-State conception. (Tarozzi, 2015, p. 71)

The obsolescence of the nation-State concept of citizenship is clearly paired with the need to unlock our sense of belonging and embrace a planetary and intercultural dimension whose indispensable institutional grounds are still in the making and call for political action. Tarozzi makes reference here to the wider horizon of meaning of epistemological reflections about the globalisation process as a complex phenomenon. Gianluca Bocchi and Mauro Ceruti wrote in *Educazione e globalizzazione*:

> The task each citizen, collectivity and authority on Earth needs to accomplish today is to start living and thinking positively about this planetary community: that is, to deem the belonging to a global plot of interdependencies as the only suitable way to guarantee and improve the life quality of individuals, groups, peoples; to change the reality of planetary interdependence into the ethical task of building an Earth "civilization"; to usher in an anthropological change toward cohabitation and peace. [...] developing an unprecedented way to educate and train to cultural and material planetary interdependencies. (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2004, p. 142)

Tarozzi, Bocchi and Ceruti, and even Edgar Morin who pioneered this approach, leave nonetheless a major issue unaddressed: while the outcome an educational action should target is singled out with absolute clarity and abundant detail, the material and institutional facts countering it in the existing power system are vaguely determined. Paradoxically, the obsolescence of the old national citizenship paradigm does not deliver actionable *critical* learning in terms of knowledge and abilities citizens should acquire to partake in the transformation of its specific institutional and ideological setup. Otherwise, how could schools or any other educational act build a society where: "Every citizen on Earth can and must nurture his/her multiple identity, integrating inside him/her the family, local, ethnic, national, religious or philosophical, continental and planetary ones" (Ceruti & Morin, 2013, p. 155), since at

the same time they avoid deconstructing the core ideological and institutional basis that legitimize and perpetuate the former system?

The risk is that even the education to complexity, interculturalism and the "epistemological and ontological levels" of Global Citizenship Education contribution to social change (Pashby, da Costa, Stein, & Andreotti, 2020, pp. 157-160), despite their fundamental reference to the *strongly* critical pedagogy, end up precisely lacking criticism when they need to identify the actual hurdles to implementing their vision — today a participative citizen definitely needs to develop "political virtues", as Tarozzi writes:

> The soundness of modern democracies is increasingly dependent not just on the fairness of institutions or the quality of representatives, but also on the citizens' ability to mobilize knowledge, competencies and actions inspired by political virtues that can support the new forms of governance modern democracies and global governance all the more need. Hence a new focus on citizenship, particularly on active citizenship and citizens' participation. (Tarozzi, 2015, p. 65)

But citizens also need to become aware of and to master political *realities* linked to those virtues, in all their ethical ambiguity and technical complexity: this would require, for example, a more mindful choice of words like *governance*, whose tacit divergence from *government* reveals precisely the real paradigm ruling over the world's fate, a paradigm marked by the ideal of cooperation among the only admitted *governments*, States' ones. Similarly, when Bocchi and Ceruti write that: "As a consequence, the school and university mission changes decisively. It cannot aim at educating an abstract and homologated (whether Italian, European or planetary) citizen any more, it rather foretells the possibility and need to educate an individualized citizen" (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2004, p. 55), their insightful shift toward the individual (or personhood, as suggested by Soysal (1994) and already proposed by French federalist *personnalisme* in the '30s) falls short of specifying the hugely different risks of homologation and abstraction linked to real institutional situations: the national or State level has been extensively acting in that sense for a long time and needs reforming, the European level still struggles for its very institutional existence, the World level is just in its embryonic phase. Despite its being right in principle, the fight against new homologating exorbitance in the old nation-State style inadvertently turns into an alibi for jeopardizing that minimum amount of political unification (explicitly advocated elsewhere by Morin, Bocchi and Ceruti themselves: Bocchi & Ceruti, 2009; Morin & Ceruti, 2013) without which both the European and planetary dimensions of citizenship cannot but remain praised utopian projects.

In the educational sphere we ultimately observe a mirror image of this institutional situation: the obsolescence of the nation-State/citizen, both determined by the powerful and partially intentional development of multiple and complex interdependencies inside the human species and accelerated by a new awareness of our systemic interdependencies with the bio-sphere and the whole planet, does not engender automatically a new political and institutional order (with its new citizenship) that is suited to govern those interdependencies at their different scales. For, as it is normal for self-preservation, while the sovereign State and national citizenship are overwhelmed by actual transformations, they play even more a conservative than creative role in the necessary political and institutional change, that should help the more general principles of statehood and citizenship co-evolving harmoniously with the new historical condition. As much as the extent to which a viable cosmopolitical-communitarian order (that is both supra-national and multi-level) can come to life depends on the extent to which the idea and structures of absolute sovereignty accept limitations (i.e. reject themselves), a new plural and multi-scale citizen will not truly be born until he/she has the tools to intimately and practically reject the distinctive character of the old and outdated national model of citizenship: exclusive identity and its power structures.

A school that does not take part in this task must endlessly feel at the same crossroads Silvio Premoli clearly identified drawing also on Milena Santerini:

> The crisis of learning, from school to universities, seems strongly connected with the nation-States crisis. Faith in the priority of educating citizens, providing them with a homogeneous language inside a nation-State whose identity is well-defined, is wavering. The purpose itself does not disappear, but as one of many entangled aims it needs to acquire a new cultural

and prescriptive meaning that is still lacking at the moment. Its context, on the contrary, is deeply changing, in the shape of an extreme differentiation of individuals, weakened social bonds, globalised multiculturalism locally embodied and reflected, the digital planetary interconnection producing delocalised microcultures and an exponential growth of expectations. In the end, this is due to a missing regulatory and institutional reform of the classical concept of citizenship, since its traditional definition as a collection of reciprocal rights and obligations held by subjects inside a nation-State does not fit with the complexity of reality (Santerini, 2001). (Premoli, 2008, pp. 67-68)

Here we come to the ideological side of the matter and the shortcomings of a second horizon of meaning Tarozzi's approach relies on: social justice and intercultural issues, or strongly critical pedagogy as Mortari puts it. This is indeed a school of thought that grounds the construction of a new paradigm on the ability to reject, that is to become aware of self-mystifications in knowledge and power issues — Paulo Freire's pedagogy and Michel Foucault's thoughts are key references. Tarozzi applies it to the pedagogy of "intercultural citizenship": "Pluralism underlying interculturality, if irrespective of real power relations between groups, is a naivety (or a biased approach) which in fact contributes to reinforce an unfair allocation of resources" (Tarozzi, 2005, p. 57). Without such a critical awareness, he underlines again ten years later in an international research perspective that:

Teachers and school managers end up engaging in lots of activities, without any meaningful political, theoretical or at least pragmatic framework. Hence a conflict between practices and meanings that finally leads to rigid or indifferent attitudes. The main consequence is in both cases that intercultural education cannot live up to its inner radicalism. Its remnant is a fuzzy and dubious form of didactic activity that engenders frustration, disorientation and isolation in its practitioners. (Tarozzi, 2015, p. 30)

Therefore, he underscores further:

in order to fill the gap between public policies, the ideal model and real practices we need to understand, promote and implement intercultural education in a frame that has full ethical and political meaning. That's why talking about intercultural education requires extending our focus beyond didactics and pedagogy, to embrace social and political issues one cannot avoid without emptying and sterilising the intercultural model. (Tarozzi, 2015, pp. 46-47)

This is shared knowledge for all scholars committed to helping education dispose of the inferiority complex Bertolini called "culturally passive attendance" with respect to global current affairs, whose only concern is to "exhibit operational capacity — the ability to 'keep pace with the times' — thus accepting a [...] substantial reduction to mere technical features" (Bertolini, 2003, p. 13). Hence the need to add a *critical* turn to various pedagogical approaches aimed at redefining citizenship education at the international level. We think it relevant, here, to recall three of them, as they prioritize different but equally important values for the post-national debate — we cannot delve here into a fourth, namely the all-encompassing ontological criticism Vanessa Andreotti is particularly inviting to develop beyond post-colonial radicalism and in search for educational and existential "alternative futures" outside the limits of the modern/colonial house where the nation-State is a "carrying wall" (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012; Andreotti, 2019; Amsler, Kerr, & Andreotti, 2020). The flaws of the "Pedagogy of Peace" were recently discussed in a recent contribution to *Studi sulla Formazione*, arguing the case for a "*Critical* Pedagogy of Peace":

Different factors of this peace-making skill have been developed, such as: the ability to change, to manage conflict, to endure frustration and to quarrel, solidarity, tolerance, willingness to communicate etc. These praiseworthy attempts are flawed by an overestimation of constructive factors. The Pedagogy of Peace, in this respect, does not only leave the 'absence of peace' system intact but it further legitimizes it. In a system showing an organized absence of peace, eagerness to nurture individual peace-making skills is a pedagogical illusion. [...] The aim of the Critical Pedagogy of Peace is to allow the detection of the many

kinds of absence of peace and to enable their analysis in terms of economic, social, cultural and ideological roots. (Bernhard, 2019, p. 72 e p. 76)

Justice and solidarity, in direct connection with global citizenship and the problem of multiculturalism, are key to Carlos Alberto Torres, who also worked with Tarozzi (Tarozzi & Torres, 2016). More in general, Torres is committed to develop an overall *critical* version of the UN flagship policy called *Global Citizenship Education* (Torres, 2017). Lastly, we want to mention Wiel Vegeulers and his Utrecht school whose intense research and pedagogical activities in the field of citizenship education (with policy impact at European level) place democracy and tolerance at their core. Their objective is to develop an educational paradigm to teach ethical values without ignoring power issues — Veugelers calls it a *critical-democratic citizenship education* (Veugelers, 2019b, p. 14) and he ascribes it to the "socialpolitical" approach to global citizenship he distinguishes from two other current approaches:

> The concept of global citizenship transcends the nation, but this concept shows differences as well (Oxley & Morris, 2013). In our own theoretical and empirical research on global citizenship, we distinguish an open, a moral, and a social-political global citizenship (Veugelers, 2011b). A socialpolitical orientation stresses the injustice of inequality and seeks more transformation of power relations: it is more political than appealing in general to moral values like in the moral global citizenship. The open global citizenship is presented as neutral, but in fact it is a neo-liberal market orientation. (Veugelers, 2019a, p. 21)

4. What criticism?

Yet fostering critical thinking skills, even with a clear focus on socio-political targets, is not enough. One still has to choose *which* social, economic and political issues "cannot be avoided" as Tarozzi writes or, as did Mortari, are "the most relevant": disagreement on this can arise at three levels of analysis at least, as we already said. The first relates exactly to *which* real elements and phenomena are questioned: we must not take for granted that projects and practices of critical pedagogy *discern* the same factors. The second relates to value judgements, that is the *priority* list and subsequent *interrelation* among the identified issues: despite discerning the same elements and phenomena, there's still the need to share a narrative and accordingly a (blatant or inferable) scale to rate their consequence. This is when, in the third place, an effective dialogue around the means and ways to translate each element into an educational object can really come about.

Concerning the first level of analysis, we can say that all critical pedagogies we mentioned above share the urgency to overcome the traditional concept of national citizenship, yet no one deems the foundational elements that keep it alive still today *in practice* worth discerning for educational purposes: we refer here to the ideas and juridical-political machinery of *State sovereignty* and the peoples' *right to self-determination* as its legitimizing principle — an ideological and institutional compound providing keystone support to the existing order and still nourishing the entire national and international political life (a detailed discussion in Pigozzo & Martinelli, 2019, p. 111 and pp. 122-124). But as all specialists of international organizations know well, "effective governance, national sovereignty, and large-scale membership are prohibitively difficult to have at one and the same time" and this is basically why "many global bads remain ungoverned or governed only by thin agreements that have little or no capacity to adjust to changing conditions" (Hooghe, Lenz, & Marks, 2019, p. 105).

Concerning *priorities* and *interrelations*, it is therefore no surprise if no pedagogical reflections really prioritise the deep critical analysis of such a material and theoretical machinery or compound, as we called it: the nation-State obsolescence remains mainly a factual observation and so the highly objectionable narratives that prevail are the ones that tacitly or overtly trace it back to the process of material globalisation, on the one hand, and to the free-market or neo-liberal cultural hegemony, on the other.

In the pedagogical debate as well as in many other disciplinary fields, in fact, the determining role played by socio-economic and cultural aspects of the market society is paramount to understand contemporary reality: as epitomised by Torres, it's commonplace that "The inception of neoliberalism in the early 1980s and the workings of neoliberal globalization have led to a decline of the state and organized forms of solidarity" (Torres, 2017, p. 40; see also Tarozzi, 2005, about the liberal *koinè* dominating

Western cultures). Currently, *critical pedagogy* is essentially linked to this view, since it shares its intellectual premises which ultimately proceed from Marx. However the crisis of sovereign statehood has much older roots and one can narrate the rise of neoliberalism as determined by, rather than determining, the current global political and institutional situation (for example Montani, 2013, and Montani, 2018): the mismatch between European nation-States' size and the driving forces and economies of scale of the second industrial revolution preceded and went hand in hand with the crisis of the European States system (then at the highest of its World hegemony) which produced both World Wars (Robbins, 1939; Wootton, 1941) and allowed the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to emerge as the new hegemonic States (of continental size!) in the international system. The mismatch between the persisting division of humanity (still of Europe itself) into sovereign States and the driving forces and economies of scale of the third, then fourth industrial revolution preceded and goes hand in hand with the crisis of the World States system pivoting around the American hegemony: the neo-liberal *Washington consensus* is not an inevitable fruit of the liberal thought, it is rather the swansong of a specific power system and entails as such the ideology of a self-governing market, the financial domination of the economy and the free-trade imperative driving globalisation between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Montani, 2018) — it's worth noting that this gives a truly political context to the ecological pitfall we all recognise now, but which we could have started to tackle as of 1972 at least, when clear warnings about the material limits to economic growth (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, & Behrens III, 1972) already disclosed the urgent need to politically manage at the world level a set of shared resources or *commons*.

The crisis of politics and the trite dominance of the economy, in this view, cannot be reduced to ideological trends affecting policy choices inside the States or the global social-cultural *koinè*, they are first and foremost symptoms of the lack of supra-national power structures that fit the need to address problems arising from human interdependencies at scales that are far beyond the scope and boundaries of any existing State actor — a rich social-scientific literature has well detailed the (dubious) practical consequences of this lack: the erosion of the old legal concept of citizenship, of course, but also an emerging global community driven by shared risks (Beck, 1992), mass migrations engendering hybridisation processes and social-cultural conflicts at all territorial levels (Banks, Suárez-Orozco, & Ben-Peretz, 2016), an accelerated fragmentation or liquefaction of societies (Bauman, 2000), an increasing complexity in both the subjective and objective sides of the human experience whose impact reaches the space-time fundamentals of individual and collective life (Morin, Motta, & Ciurana, 2003; Lazzarini & Ceruti, 2019).

As a result, if we look at the educational field of action we cannot find any approach to citizenship education that fully applies critical thinking to the ideological, political and institutional compound linked to State sovereignties; consequently, educational objectives tend to comply with the need to (*uncritically*) adapt to or to (*critically*, yet mistaking symptoms for causes) reject the effects of neo-liberal globalisation; lastly, for what concerns Europe, the cultural and political importance of a growing and disputed European dimension of citizenship is methodically undermined, even if, far from being in its turn a neo-liberal sprout, it originates exactly from the need to provide politics, democracy and the commons of a supra-national scale of action (outside a pedagogical framework, this is crystal-clear to Morin & Ceruti, 2013, p. 14). By the way Bertolini, even if he too treats the fact that 'political power follows economic power' mainly as a cause than a symptom, knew that the European dimension is a must-have milestone toward planetary citizenship, because it gives us the only practical chance to fill the gap between civic participation and real political effectiveness:

> the only way forward is a generalised democratic citizenship, that is suited to restore confidence among individuals (citizens) and their groupings in the actual likelihood of impacting on the political management of the societies they belong to, and is able to combine all three levels at which it tends to materialise: a territorial citizenship, a national citizenship and an international citizenship that, for us, cannot be other than (or start from) a European citizenship. (Bertolini, 2003, p. 142)

5.   Sketching a three-fold approach to system change

Again, we find the meaningful historical connection between the last European constitutional attempt and the crisis of both politics and education. Now, in line with phenomenological pedagogy, that "does not record data, it rather aims at developing opportunities for trained individuals, at broadening their field of experience: it doesn't (just) describe, it steps in and change" (Tarozzi, 2005, pp. 2-3) all educational projects and practices committed to "step in and change" the World should urgently give attention to the issues we discussed — as they can produce practical consequences in terms of both academic research and debate, normative conception and real implementation of curricula and learning outcomes but also policies and the institutional status of the school system.

We shall conclude with some concrete examples. Concerning the latter, we need to question the ultimately exclusive relationship between public education systems and State sovereignties, launching a serious reflection on pros and cons of a possible redistribution of competences among different institutional levels: for some pedagogical problems are in fact the other side of institutional ones and they won't find any structural solution until we don't address the latter. No wonder otherwise if: "Public schools have become a locus of a potential conflict of two citizenship discourses: the [...] national [...] and the [...] global [...]" (Rapoport, 2019, pp. 3-4). Overcoming this (originally European) contradiction should seem possible today, more precisely in a Europe still at work with its unaccomplished task to set up a non-centralized supranational political unity based on a plurality of belongings and levels of government: Eurocentrism would deem it key to change the World itself, but there's no need to exaggerate the role of Europe today — that's simply the best contribution Europe as such could and ought to give to the global community. European divisions and immobilism, by the way, do not help planet Earth and the human beings in it to craft decolonial futures or cooperatively escape the traps of modernity. Yet in the EU too empirical surveys highlight that "While national orientation gets abundant attention in education policy, attention given to the international dimension is not very strong, although it is growing. Teaching about own nations is often susceptible to an uncritical approach" (Veugelers, de Groot, & Stolk, 2017, p. 10). Particularly at the EU level, we think a debate is needed on how to shift from mere coordination/cooperation to a limited and well-defined European competence in the education field — in technical terms, from an exclusively supporting competence in the field of Education and Training to a partially shared one: in order to generalise for example an Erasmus-style (digital or physical) mobility, to provide (and financially support) directions and guidelines in the key domains of multilingualism and indeed civic learning, maybe to directly recruit and bear the cost of teaching personnel devoted to such aims.

With regard to learning outcomes and curricula, we call for an urgent reflection on the ways and means to address the universal and lifelong need (before the right/obligation) to acquire knowledge and critical thinking/acting skills about the institutional framework of one's own existence, to understand it as a historical and therefore modifiable, questionable human construction subject to negotiations and change; particularly the need to enable and empower critical awareness about the ways and extent to which one's own given framework conflicts with his/her potential development as a person whose identity is intrinsically relational, dynamic and plural. We are convinced it's possible to start working on this inside the very national frameworks of educational systems, from preschools up to higher institutions and beyond, as we are trying to do and to explain elsewhere (Martinelli & Pigozzo, 2019-2020; Martinelli & Pigozzo, 2020a; Martinelli & Pigozzo, 2020b).

Concerning academic research and debates, at last, we deem it crucial to foster a theoretical dialogue and joint practical initiatives that directly address the matter we elucidated here as we found it is still considered alien or collateral to the pedagogical discourse, despite some of its striking aspects inevitably emerge in many cases. How far does *methodological nationalism* still structure our agency in the field of knowledge production and transmission? To what extent does the political culture of *exclusive identities* and all kind of methodological *monisms* dominate the implicit curriculum and irreflexive practices in formal, informal and non-formal educational contexts? What impact can these questions have on the contents, methodologies and techniques of learning? Maybe this is really where the sphere of education could gain autonomous "political legitimation" and fully assume responsibilities as a "fourth power", in Tarozzi's terms, that is as an agent of historical-social change, by claiming its indispensable role in

empowering citizens to truly impact on challenges like: "With an empty nation-State, supranational institutions lacking real sovereignty and still unripe new forms of global governance, who governs world policies actually?" (Tarozzi, 2005, p. 10 and pp. 17-18).

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