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Proceedings of the 1st International Conference of the Journal Scuola Democratica

EDUCATION AND POST-DEMOCRACY

5-8 June 2019 Cagliari Italy

VOLUME I

Politics, Citizenship, Diversity and Inclusion

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ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA
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Title **Proceedings of the First International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" - Education and Post-Democracy**
VOLUME I Politics, Citizenship, Diversity and Inclusion

This volume contains papers presented in the First International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" which took place at the University of Cagliari on 5-8 June 2019. The aim of the Conference was to bring together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate the concepts of "education" in a "post-democracy" era, the latter being a set of conditions under which scholars are called to face and counteract new forms of authoritarian democracy.

Populisms, racisms, discriminations and nationalisms have burst and spread on the international scene, translated and mobilized by sovereigntist political movements. Nourished by neo-liberalism and inflated by technocratic systems of governance these regressive forms of post-democracy are shaping historical challenges to the realms of education and culture: it is on this ground, and not only on the political and economic spheres, that decisive issues are at stake. These challenges are both tangible and intangible, and call into question the modern ideas of justice, equality and democracy, throughout four key dimensions of the educational function, all of which intersected by antinomies and uncertainties: ethical-political socialization, differences, inclusion, innovation.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and interdisciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners' mainstreams; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for

debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 600 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on researches, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

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Premise

In the European space of liberal democracies, the post-economic crisis era has seen the appearance of populist movements, sometimes anti-democratic (to the extent that they deny citizenship rights, ethical-cultural differences, individual life choices), sometimes anti-scientific and anti-modernist. Those phenomena may erode democratic values and make the pluralistic context slip into the risky and ambiguous territories of post-democracy.

The democratization of basic and higher education stands as a solid defence against populist tendencies. Ethical-political socialization, acquisition and development of civic, social, citizenship and character skills may be a precious resource to hold democratic life on together. Democratic life, political participation and active citizenship needs to be rearticulated, reshaped and reinforced as fundamental educational pivots in our overchanging societies.

Throughout the world, there have been continuous attempts to reform education at all levels. With different causes that are deeply rooted in history, society, and culture, inequalities are difficult to eradicate. Nonetheless, although difficult, education is vital to society's movement forward. It should promote citizenship, identity, equality of opportunity and social inclusion, social cohesion as well as economic growth and employment. Unequal educational outcomes are attributed to several variables, including family of origin, gender, and social class. Achievement, earnings, health status, and political participation also contribute to educational inequality within Western countries as well as or deeper within other world countries. Diversity applies to a number of aspects of student identity, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and political and religious beliefs. Even if there are no official educational policies aiming at reproducing inequalities, teaching and learning practices are still unable to protect diversity and be effectively inclusive of student identities. This would imply giving thought to the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of students as individuals, and considering how these influences their approaches to learning and their interactions with teachers and with peers in the design of curricula, in the translation of curricula into day-to-day teaching and learning, and in the assessment of learning. Therefore, inequalities in educational opportunity, in educational access, in educational attainments are still the main dilemma nowadays. Several and differentiated tracks of research and conversation are packed into this stream in order to face the multidimensional dynamics of inclusion, integration, equal opportunities a diversity valorisation in both the educational spaces and knowledge society at large.

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The Educational Action of Transculturality to Decolonize Minds, Deterritorialize Culture and Democracy, Creolize the World.

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Keywords: *Anthropology, Educational practices, Intercultural pedagogy, Pedagogy of narration, Transculturality.*

Premise

The crucial step to choose in inclusion practices is to accept the substantial multicultural and mixed building of our identities. By referring to transactional anthropology and migratory ethnography, transcultural psychiatry and postcolonial studies, this paper aims at drawing attention to the need to abandon a monocultural model in the direction of a transcultural one, conceiving the culture as deeply permeated by intertwining and hybridization (Ortiz, 2007; Welsch, 2000, 2003; Goussot, 2014). We have to accept the transcultural challenge that conceives identity as a 'migrant identity', generating discursive and relational inclusion practices that allow the creation of new and shared social spaces. De-colonizing the mind; de-territorializing culture and democracy; dis-westernize our vision of the world: it is a difficult educational challenge but necessary to offer a constructive response to the 'homogenization' and to the growing 'diasporas' produced by liberal economic globalization.

1. To mix identities.

Maalouf (2005) writes: «In every man and woman we meet multiple belongings [...] If each of these elements, so-called identities, can be found in a large number of individuals, we never find the same combination in two different people. And this is precisely what makes every being unique and irreplaceable». This testimony is by an immigrant and tells us that we are all composite identities, especially today, in a society increasingly characterized by hybridization. Also, for the philosopher Bodei (1992) the nature of identity is not that one of a single thread, but rather of a rope slowly and patiently intertwined.

We can talk about a cross-fertilization, therefore, as the coexistence of different cultural identities, not only on the 'external' side, but also on the 'internal' one, that is to say as a work of listening and integration of the different selves. Listening to internal alterity represents a training process that helps the building of a richer and more articulated identity, capable of integration, and not of exclusion, of the different visions of humanity elaborated by the various cultures. In this sense, the educational value of 'transculturality' lies in challenging each monolithic tendency of identity by inviting it to accept the other, performing an equal job of welcoming the other interiors. For Lévinas (1980), it is necessary to start from the Other, conceived as never appropriated or reducible to the self. It is the Other who «speaks to me and so invites me to a relationship», it is not me who invites the Other. The attitude to take towards the other is therefore that one of hospitality, of hospitality. This requires finding the space to listen to and welcome the presence of the other.

But to what extent are we willing to recognize the other, especially the non-Western (the migrant, the asylum seeker, the refugee, the foreigner), and his fundamental rights in the practice of our democracy? Are we really willing to renegotiate our Western view on 'culture', 'rights', 'citizenship', 'democracy'? Can we hope for a new Universal Declaration of Human Rights including and recognizing the 'foreigner' that we identify with the migrant, the refugee, the asylum seeker (Benhabib, 2004; 2006)?

2. The inadequacy of the model of inclusion in the intercultural paradigm.

If we pay attention to the new behaviors the adaptation to globalization requires and education is asked to acquire, we can get the impression that the needs of the Western world prevail, and that it is foreign to the values founding the originality of other regions and other world cultures.

Marcien A Towa, to whom we owe valuable studies on European administrative immigration practices in which he points out that the only possibility granted to other cultures to survive the encounter with the Western Pantagruel is through the self-denial: «denying oneself, questioning the very being of the self, profoundly Europeanising [...], denying our inner being to become the Other [...], expressly aiming to become like the Other, similar to the Other, and that cannot be colonized by the Other» (Towa, 2007).

The experimentation carried out by European countries in search of the best possible form of coexistence with 'diversity' seems to highlight the limits of solutions considered desirable and encouraged in the past. Once the models of assimilation and integration have fallen (Demetrio, Favaro, 1992) revealing the arduous multicultural melting pot (Sleeter, Grant, 1987; Banks, 1993), the intercultural way remains the one to follow to face the new cosmopolitanism documented by migrations and contacts and by the cultural exchanges they activate. But after almost thirty years from the formulation of interculturality in the programs of the European Community (Rey, 1986), the many experiments carried out show us that the phenomena of hardship and exclusion are still present among immigrants. To these ones we can add the difficulties of adaptation of the successive generations which are faced with the contradiction of changing to adapt to the contingent reality and, at the same time, to preserve the traditional values so as not to lose the language and customs binding them to the family (Tarozzi, 2015).

Demetrio wonders about this: «How many thousands and thousands of immigrant citizens are in fact unaware of traditions, art forms, philosophies of their native country as a national entity? [...], How many times [...], did immigrant children, boys and girls learn about their country of origin things they would not have learned in their schools?» (Demetrio, 2003). This does not happen and will not happen until our curricula are centered on the Judeo-Hellenic-Christian tradition (philosophical, cultural, aesthetic). This poses the difficult, but not impossible, task of the 'translation' and the 'translatability' of other visions of the world.

The weakness of interculturality consists in the fact that it has not succeeded in dissolving a Gordian knot: what is the image of 'culture' supporting an idea, a research, a project, a proposal that is defined as intercultural? It is not pleonastic to remember that the roots of 'intercultural pedagogy' are rooted in Europe and the image of 'culture' (and its transmission) is that one of the West. Its range of action, Demorgon (2003) points out sharply, is still western, local; relations involve the interpersonal rather than social responsibility, they direct themselves

towards cooperating pragmatism rather than towards the redefinition of relationships.

From different fronts, again, the deterministic and strongly identifying matrix of the concept of culture underlying interculturality has been detected. The traditional concept of culture, characterized by social homogenization, ethnic consolidation and cross-cultural delimitation (Hannerz, 1996; 1997; Welsch, 1999) is inadequate in the face of the multiplicity of cultural interconnections always denser and more complex than the globalization and transnationalization process. In a multicultural context that involves the entire ecumenism, loans, meetings, conflicts and contaminations between people, peoples and cultures are multiplying and today more than ever the closed conception of cultural systems, which have always been fed on hybrids and exchanges.

Is it possible today to offer a solution to intercultural conflicts by tools that are congruent with the multiple treatment needs advanced in the name of cultural difference? In which apparatuses (normative-political-institutional) can these solutions be traced? And again: what educational / training devices can be put in place in order to recognize that cultural riches do not derive from purity but from mixture (Le Goff, 2000)? This wealth is then the 'source' of democracy.

Before formulating our hypothetical solutions, we want to give an adequate historical collocation of transculturality. It was first used as a transculturation in the 1940s by the Cuban sociologist Ortiz, in his sociological study *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar* to describe the process of selection and inventive reworking of a dominant culture by a subordinate or marginal group, including in this way the creolization processes that are studied in the comparative studies of contemporary literatures (Ortiz, 2007). Subsequently the term reappears in various academic disciplines in the nineties, mainly in the German and Francophone areas.

3. Transculturality: definition and educational implications.

Welsch puts the emphasis in cultural fertilization at multiple levels from the micro-level to the macro-level of societies - whose cultural forms are characterized today increasingly by internal differentiation, complexity and hybridization - where personal and cultural identity almost never corresponds or almost no longer to the civic and national one and is instead increasingly evidently marked by multiple cultural connections. Transculturality aims at an intersected and inclusive view of culture: «It intends to culture and society whose pragmatic feats exist not only in delimitation, but in the ability to link and undergo transition» (Welsch, 1999). Transculturality is therefore to be understood not only as a model of analysis of modern reality, but also as an ideal to tend towards the daily practice of cultural interaction: «It is a matter of readjusting our inner compass: away from the concentration on the polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness to what might be common and connective wherever we encounter things foreign» (Welsch, 1999).

The idea of dense interconnection and continuous transformation generated by the concepts of transculturality and transculturalism open new avenues of research, facilitating our effort to overcome the limits of pedagogies still conceived in 'national' terms. A new theoretical framework based on transculturality allows us to better frame phenomena such as migration cultures and to better understand the cultural identities they contain.

Another no less important aspect, related to this condition of transculturality, is Welsch's proposal of a homeland that can be chosen individually. In Welsch's definition of transculturality, the 'homeland' must support individual decisions

concerning multiple membership; therefore, the notion of homeland in the traditional sense of a nation linked to space is obsolete. It is becoming the case that more and more people are choosing their membership. People can find their true homeland far from where they were born. In the words of Horkheimer and Adorno: «The homeland is a state of escape [...] Therefore homeland is not a naturally innate or immutable categorization, but rather a cultural and human choice» (Welsch, 2002). Regarding the freedom of belonging to a homeland, we find an affinity that recalls the legal thought of Ferrajoli (2001); for him the goal to strive for is that one of the «definitive de-nationalization of fundamental rights and the correlative de-statalisation of nationalities».

Transculturality acquires a particular political, and therefore educational, relevance. In fact, the need for a reconstruction of democracy from the bottom is felt in Benhabib (2006). The scholar, not at all fasting in the literature of cultural studies, very close to the positions of transculturalism, introduces the concept of 'democratic iterations': «complex public processes of argumentation, deliberation and exchange' that allow to identify a possible point of equilibrium between the universalistic principles of law and particularistic claims that aim at 'just belonging' in order to find an ethical-political compromise in the norms that allow access to citizenship and the political community» (Benhabib, 2006). In this perspective, the invitation to make the transition, never completely completed, on the other general to the concrete one (Benhabib, 2004), acquires a particular relevance (especially for the educator). Because the other from us, remember, has a body, a history, a culture, a name. Instead, of the millions of «migrants, refugees, asylum seekers» (Benhabib, 2004) we are not even aware of the names. Nevertheless, they claim their right to exist, the right to a better life, to be persons.

Transculturality rejects the homogeneity, rigidity and coherence of cultures and genres, highlighting the process of hybridization between cultures, in turn generating new Creole and unpredictable forms. The varied lifestyle of individuals, their daily routine, their behavior as architects of their biographies, their self-invention and their methods of social interaction constitute the embodiment of a new understanding of cultures. A natural hermeneutic capable of revealing the conditionings, but also the possibility of reappropriation of personal history. It is no coincidence that transculturality has its roots in anthropology, in ethno-psychiatry and in cross-cultural psychiatry, or those sciences centered on the nexus between culture, personality and psychological development (Devereux, 1975; Inghilleri, 1994; Moro, De La Noe, 2009; Beneduce, 1998; 2007; Mazzetti, 2003).

It is necessary to abandon a univocal idea of identity by embracing a pedagogical paradigm centered on narration and emerged with sufficient clarity from the migrant and post-colonial literature. The space of the story is the only one, the most true and affective educational place of acceptance and recognition. There are three requisites that make any occasion to meet women and men who are lost, with and for their children, a significant place: 1. the possibility of telling or writing about oneself in absolute freedom and spontaneity; 2. the possibility of being able to develop, expand and enrich the story; 3. the possibility of leaving a message to yourself and others known or unknown that can be collected and disseminated.

In this way, an ideal triangularity is established, an inhabited place of words invented or found to describe the world and describe itself, in the hope of being later re-described by those who have listened or read. Thus, we build what Demetrio calls an «autobiographical space» (Demetrio, 1996) reassuring, restructuring. Speaking and speaking to each other alone or with others, in fact, encourages us not to fear the judgment of others and allows everyone, regardless

of origin and language, to reweave the envelope of his wounded, offended, dispersed identity, from migration, disorientation, renunciation of story in places where one's language is not understood. The story, in the form of a diary, autobiography, life stories (Demetrio, 2008), the literature of migration, with which I began, the aesthetic dimension, in the infinite forms of representation of the self and of the others, of the relationships between the self and others (from literature to music, to the cinema), can offer the possibility of better understanding the cultural hybridization that weaves the existential plots of all the individualities and define each time our practices of inclusion (Santerini, 2008; Cuconato, 2017; Wulf, 2018; Tumino, 2016).

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