

A stylized map of Europe with black outlines of countries. Various regions are filled with solid colors: blue, green, red, purple, and orange. The colors are scattered across the map, with some regions having multiple colors. The title is centered over the map.

TERRITORIAL IDENTITY AND VALUES IN GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION

Edited by
Oana-Ramona ILOVAN
and **Maria Eliza DULAMĂ**

Presa Universitară Clujeană

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PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ

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CHAPTER 2: Geographical Education/Territorial Education for Citizenship

Andrea Guaran

It is very noble to assume the task of taking care of creation with small daily actions, and it is wonderful that education is able to motivate us to give shape to a way of life. Education for environmental responsibility can encourage various behaviours that have a direct and important effect in caring for the environment.

(Pope Francesco, 2015, p. 185)

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1. Preliminary remarks

It appears appropriate to begin the discussion with a number of questions. Not with the intent and certainly not the presumption of being able to answer them in a systematic and timely manner, providing accurate and exhaustive feedback, but to present, right from the start, the central issues of what will later be discussed, with

the hope of arousing the right and appropriate expectations in the reader. These are questions relating to the two-pronged approach expressed in the title of this chapter, or more precisely to a three-pronged approach – geography, territory and citizenship education – and their multiple interactions. Can the knowledge and principles acquired through the study of geography affect the elaboration processes regarding citizenship practices? If the answer is “Yes they can”, then how and to what extent does this spatial education and geographical education contribute to citizenship education? Moreover, would it be plausible to consider the idea that the core elements of geographical knowledge, the study of geographical topics and territorial awareness be fundamental, even if they are clearly not exclusive to an educational course whose main aim is citizenship and constant and vital inspiration at the same time?¹ In short, could we affirm that spatial education and geography education are, in fact, essential and fundamental components of citizenship education? And if so, could we argue that the exercise of citizenship necessarily also implies a significant spatial – geographical and territorial awareness?² Alternatively, reversing the factors involved, could we state that a significant spatial and geographical education is needed for citizenship to be developed and appropriately acted out?

From the questions raised above, it should be clear that the following pages will refer to the relationship between the subject

¹ The pedagogue Milena Santerini confirms this connection between geography education and citizenship. She states that: “The teaching of geography, in fact, is connected to citizenship since people’s lives are closely linked to the spaces in which they live” (Santerini, 2010, p. 31).

² The close relationship between space, spatialization, location, representation and practices of citizenship is clearly explained by Stefano Maltesta when he states that: “When individuals and groups within a social group activate practices and representations that work on the following: building a collective image of that place, attributing meaning, defining an area of belonging, stating possible opportunities, both symbolic and concrete, which allow people to ‘do, or not do, something’, then they provide an exercise of citizenship” (Maltesta, 2015, p. 95).

geography, with all its implications, and the role it plays in terms of education and citizenship, which is to be understood primarily as a mental and behavioural approach to the common good. We thus refer to a citizenship which aims at managing the common good, be it an object or an everyday experience, or a common good that represents dimensions and dynamics belonging to contexts of a wider significance. These are in relation to the various fields of an organized social life that endeavours to, and perhaps, does take into account, its universal meaning³.

This chapter will offer various preliminary considerations. First, on the meaning of citizenship, subsequently, on the importance of spatial and geographical knowledge and finally, on their significant interdependence. These will all be contextualized within the framework of different education practices, examining teaching and learning paths. It will then attempt to offer some proposals without following a rigid outline and these proposals will certainly not be structured or complete. However, they will substantiate the role of geography education, and particularly territorial education, as essential to achieve responsibility and the strengthening of citizenship values.

2. Citizenship: meanings, values and characteristics

In its perhaps more classic meaning, principally endorsing the value of a set of principles, rules and practices regarding political thought and action, “*Citizenship* is a term used to focus on the fundamental political relationship and its primary features: expectations and claims, rights and duties, the procedures for membership and criteria for differentiation, as well as inclusion and exclusion strategies. To study these issues from the point of view of *citizenship* implies

³ In certain cases the term “public good” is more appropriate to be contrasted, for example, with private good; however here the expression common good responds to the values of citizenship to be highlighted. Here Pope Francesco’s recent encyclical *Laudato si* (2015) deserves to be mentioned, as it is a worthy tribute to the common good resulting in a significant impetus to the debate on this fundamental value/concept.

accepting them as profiles to be analysed so as to highlight their unity” (Costa, 2005, pp. 3-4).

However, nowadays there is always a more deep-rooted belief that citizenship cannot, and should not encompass a purely political-territorial and/or legal interpretation, but gradually take on multiple meanings related to social, cultural, ethical and relational, psychological and emotional values and take place mainly through processes of belonging and participation (Tarozzi, 2008; Schugurensky, 2010; Malatesta, 2015). It should also be remembered that, “compared to the past, the concept of citizenship has changed profoundly and is now seen as more dynamic, constantly changing and evolving” (Matini & Egisti, 2007, p. 59). As a result, being a citizen and practicing citizenship are closely related to educational aspects; indeed education has the delicate responsibility of designing, promoting, and implementing citizenship education with the fundamental goal of forming citizens, since citizens are not born but made, if adequately educated in that direction (Santerini, 2001; Mancini, 2013).

If the aspect of unity highlighted by Costa is shared and supported, then this work wants to point out how the term citizenship takes on a significant value appropriate to education. It places the emphasis on objectives, forms and tools relating to education courses, preferably useful to the intellectual, ethical and social growth of those belonging to the younger generation⁴.

However, there is the notion that many of the issues and beliefs under consideration also have an important significance for older students. For the most part, this notion of the somewhat all-encompassing concept of citizenship is also true even for adults,

⁴ On this issue, the words of the philosopher and educator John Dewey (1973; 1992) are of great significance. He affirms that “Education also assumes a social and moral value as education is not only a duty towards the individual, but also to the community. In fact, it is through education that society can formulate its objectives, organise its means and resources, shape the present for the future and move in the direction it wants, that is, towards a social progress” (Mancini, 2013, p. 91).

although with some necessary adjustments and modes of development⁵.

In recognizing the wider meaning of the term citizenship which is the result of an ideal and concrete number of different dimensions, it is fundamental to ask oneself right from the start why it is important to promote a good citizen. “Is it a person who knows the functioning of the political and legal mechanisms of the state? Or is it one who observes coexistence rules? Does *knowing what citizenship means* imply observing the rules of the road, respecting the environment or peacefully resolving conflicts? There is always the question whether a good citizen should know the basics of how social and political structures work, or should actively participate in particular occasions in community development, but also the question whether being a good citizen implies paying taxes, knowing the Constitution or being a volunteer” (Mortari, 2010, pp. 16-17).

These questions do not need prompt replies, since in some ways already implicit in their wording, they encourage one to try and assess which education or training could be useful to ensure that what they express can be put into practice: ideals, behaviours, choices, actions and facts, without neglecting the important factor of feelings, since these accompany and give heart to ideas and gestures (Mortari, 2001). Referring to Luigina Mortari’s questions, it should be remembered and noted that it is essential to look for all the ways to “go beyond traditional areas of civic education or civil coexistence education that, not so different from road safety education, simply trains to internalise norms and behaviours set rigidly elsewhere” (Tarozzi, 2008, p. 134).

⁵ Rich ideas for reflection were anticipated on the proclamation in 2005 of the *European Year of Citizenship* through education, with the first definition of three fundamental objectives: to increase the awareness that education can contribute to the development of democratic citizenship; to strengthen the ability of Member States to make education for democratic citizenship a priority in educational programs; to provide concrete tools to promote these results.

Ultimately, it is important to think about how to ensure that not only the norms, but the skills acquired and developed in the school environment can be transferred in a positive and lasting way for the benefit of social practice (Nanni, 2006; Mancini, 2013). On the other hand, only a strong sense of civic responsibility and mature awareness of citizenship can guarantee that a person genuinely takes to heart the many issues affecting life in a community, from the family to a global society. A civic sense and spirit of citizenship which, alas, are not directly proportional to the contents people learn when they are taught the subject civic education⁶.

Obviously, any reflection on the term citizenship can be rich and deep, be our attention focused on the analysis of the concept or the educational implications of the same⁷. However, as previously noted, the focus will be on the educational aspects, particularly around the field of school education. Above all, these will include detailed observation of issues that take into account concepts, factors, methodological principles related to the spatial aspect and more specifically to the geographical and territorial aspect.

Indeed, as to the real geographical centrality,⁸ it should be noted that as far as the Italian context is concerned, the basic

⁶ In relation to the debate and the development of educational proposals at a European level on the central themes of civil coexistence, please refer to the contributions collected in the volume *Cittadinanza e convivenza civile nella scuola europea* (Chistolini, 2006) and to the more recent (2012) European Union report on *Citizenship Education in Europe*.

⁷ Although this study on compulsory Swedish education dates back to fifteen years, it offers interesting insights to understand the characteristics of civic education - thematic choices, ways of working, organizational aspects, criteria for evaluation (Verneresson, 2000).

⁸ The use of the word “real” implies a critical evaluation of the formal dimension. In fact, in a research framework study conducted about ten years ago on what knowledge should be involved in teaching citizenship in the Italian context, there was the belief, which fortunately was not widespread, that the paths of civic literacy should not also be anchored on conceptual issues and themes of a spatial-geographical nature, but should

concepts linked to citizenship education are “peace-interculture-globality-rights-development-environment” (Santerini, 2006, p. 35). On an international level, in relation to the legislative guidelines of a significant number of countries,⁹ the following objectives prevail: to “approach problems as members of a global society; take responsibility; understand and appreciate cultural differences; think critically; be available to non-violent resolution of conflicts; change lifestyle to protect the environment; be sensitive to human rights; politically participate at a local, national and international level” (Santerini, 2006, p. 37). These value-based aspects and behaviours which have been encouraged and developed have evident geographical links, and in order for them to grow and revive, they need to be continuously trained through Spatial Education, Geographical Education and Territorial Education.

As I write I realize that my point of view offered in the following pages is, in fact, only partial and probably not completely in line with the majority’s opinion. However, I am also extremely aware that Spatial and Geographical Education are definitely not unessential in the aim of constructing a *good citizen*. In this regard, it is quite acceptable to agree with those who see geography as a field of knowledge that has been unfortunately neglected and “that has many references to good citizenship. The spatial dimension makes it possible to know both the physical, as well as the social, political and territorial nature of the world in all its parts. Understanding our society now requires learning a way of thinking about local/universal relationships and mutual relations” (Santerini, 2001, p. 89).

relate mainly to economic and legal knowledge, as well as to ethno-anthropological and historical-political knowledge (Lastrucci, 2006).

⁹ Santerini’s results are based on an investigation regarding Education for Citizenship in the 21st century, led by John J. Cogan and Ray Derricott (*Citizenship for the 21st Century. An International Perspective on Education*) published in 1998.

3. Geographical education as territorial education

About forty years ago, an interesting study which explored the French schooling system in particular came up with the fundamental question of the utility of geographical education. It suggested a significant revision of the contents taught and especially in the methods of teaching so as to guarantee efficiency which was at that time considered essential. The issue arose from the fact that “the failure itself of the current methods makes it all the more urgent, and even drastic, to review the teaching of geography. There would be no need to defend the position it holds in schools if it had achieved its goal, that is, to develop in young people the concept of land, essential for our culture” (Debesse-Arviset, 1974, p. 15). The debate around the need to radically revise and renew the teaching of geography in schools not only in France, but everywhere, dates back to a few decades ago. This debate became more intense once it was recognized that overly descriptive teaching based on notional aspects in the long run is inadequate to prepare and equip young people to understand the increasing complexity of the modern world. Moreover, the belief has grown to favour the teaching of geography with a wider perspective. This would ensure a greater vision and a more open mind to be able to look ahead to the future, accompanying and guiding the constant and continuous evolution that characterizes territorial systems (Fitzgerald, 1973).

Within this framework there is the need to simplify two viewpoints: on one hand, there is traditional geographical education, and on the other, the theories and practices that reach out towards change. With this in mind, advancing the idea of a somewhat different organization of the issue becomes stronger; one focused primarily on the intrinsic and structural, and not only terminological differences between geographical education and territorial education. The customary and rather concise way to define the term *geography* is: the study of the planet Earth, together with all its multiple features - and from here, the range of sections and sub-sections that this subject branches out into. *Geographical education* is understood to be the wealth of concepts, knowledge, methodologies, tools and practices that gives life to the teaching of geography and gives it

structure. In contrast, the expression *territorial education* seems to give a wider perspective, probably more interesting and significant with regard to a person's full development, and especially to an individual's relationship with others to form different social, cultural, and political structures.

With the knowledge that territorial education is not synonymous with geographical education, at this stage, pointing out the importance of territorial education is a must, especially for the benefit of the individual as an integral part of different communities which have their own distinct features and characteristics. These are just a few examples that may include the family and the parish community, the class and the employees of a company, the local community and the global community, the latter increasingly relevant to those events linked to processes connected to globalization (Santerini, 2001, 2010).

At this point it is worth emphasizing that reading the term *the study of territory* takes on a much wider significance. That is, it includes taking care of¹⁰ the territory as a whole and all its interrelated elements, creating and shaping the territory itself. In other words, expressed simplistically, but with the intention of giving a clear interpretation, to study the territory corresponds to an educational path for the benefit precisely of the territory, thus providing a positive interpretation and optimistic outlook, at least on the approach to subject design.

With the genuine belief that territorial education identifies “with the aims of initial geographical education, that is, cognitively placing oneself in everyday experiences, which is a great deal more than merely spatial orientation, as it involves immersing oneself culturally in one's local and national community, knowing how to behave correctly with different communities and cultures and

¹⁰ Beginning with Martin Heidegger's reflections, significant literature on issues regarding the ethics of care and its implications in the field of education have all been published, starting from Martin Heidegger's reflections. Please refer to the text *Per una pedagogia ecologica* (Mortari, 2001, pp. 90-96) and *La pratica dell'aver cura* (Mortari, 2006).

knowing how to think as part of a worldwide community, as a species and ecological entity” (Giorda, 2011, p. 14). After all, being able to spatially find one’s place in different inhabited and/or frequented environments, in a careful, respectful, conscious, ecologically and humanely considerate way, is a way of thinking and acting that would definitely guarantee the planet Earth an absolute harmonious balance between humanity and nature and between humans themselves.

Indeed territorial education is something different from geography. Geographical knowledge in fact is fundamental to promote effective territorial education and to create the essential knowledge and epistemic base. It can be argued that geography teachers are rather unfamiliar with the elements, phenomena, issues and information sources and documents that provide the core of geography education: this means that the task of forming territorially able and conscious citizens becomes rather difficult.

If we analyse the issue from within the school system and go beyond a nominalist type of diversification, that can be deceptive and misleading, it is up to the individual teacher to decide whether to teach geographical education or territorial education. To give an example, it is the teacher who can limit himself or herself – even if this should not be seen in negative terms – to illustrate the characteristics of the migration phenomenon, offering a purely geographical interpretation. Alternatively, they can offer their students cognitive, as well as geo-economical and geo-political elements, useful to encourage an interpretation of the dynamics of migration in the wider context of international relations, and above all, develop values essential to engage the cognitive process in the construction of paths of inner growth that respect cultural diversity (Marengo, 2011; Amato, 2011).

Similarly, as a second example, it is possible to say that the teacher can suggest studying the urban environment in order explain what the constituent elements and characteristics of the city include. Or else, they can exploit prior knowledge that has previously been outlined (essential and non-ignorable), to develop one’s understanding and awareness of living in an urban area. They can

also analyse the positive and critical factors, following a proactive and participative approach, in a sustainable urban context (Odermatt & Brundiers, 2007).

Opting for the second alternative would be more significant as it would help learners discover the various situations of housing problems that distinguish particular areas of a town and specific social groups (de Luca, 2011). It would have the goal of trying to develop behaviours and lifestyles characterized by a mature civic spirit aware of diversity, solidarity as well as being witness to a participatory democracy (Sagaris, 2010).

Additionally, the teacher can stop to clarify various unique aspects that characterize and determine a geographical space, listing them, describing them and even placing them in relation to each other, but he or she can also examine these issues by proposing a reading of values that underline the distinct educational implications. If judged as territorial values, it is important to “define them, noting that they represent the qualifying characters of the area, considered both positive, as in the case of the resources an area offers or could offer, or negative, as the case of shortages and critical situations that can harm it” (Rocca, 2011, p. 70). Many examples could be quoted, but the three mentioned adequately clarify the different perspective in the practice of teaching geography and what here is considered geographical education.¹¹

4. Territorial education and active citizenship

At this point it is obvious that if geographical knowledge and skills are the cognitive bases that should support the educational process aimed at achieving territorial awareness, it is this responsibility

¹¹ Please note that the examples shown, as in this case, will not be accompanied with details of who the possible beneficiaries of this educational role could be: very young children attending day nurseries (day-care centres), primary school children or those attending different levels of secondary school. It is for the reader to imagine who the protagonist and main actor of each learning path could be.

towards the territory that is able to determine the ideas and practices of citizenship. If there is lack of a solid knowledge of being an integral part of a territory, or hopefully more territories at different scales, it would be very difficult to facilitate significant signs of citizenship. Being conscious of what territory implies opens a person to active citizenship. In urban areas, this leads to caring and managing public spaces, perhaps with a focus on green areas given over to parks,¹² while in both urban and rural areas it results in preserving and enhancing valuable estates and landscapes. In fact, it is the lack of territorial consciousness, as well as a suitable training of a geographical nature which makes people unable to express an attentive and authoritative opinion in relation to the transformation affecting geographical areas or to leave them helpless in occasions that require intelligent and active forms of resistance and/or a critical redefinition.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding and to avoid the risk of being an unsuspecting promoter of a geographical supremacy I do not support, I would like to emphasize yet again my conviction of the close connection between the promotion of educational programs aimed at acquiring territorial competences and civic awareness, but I am equally convinced that geographical-spatial skills alone are far from sufficient. Any geographical input related to the territory is essential, but it is clearly only a partial contribution. In order to shape a citizen, all fields of knowledge need to work together in synergy. In fact, each field must keep renewing itself and not continue proposing rather ineffective insights. Every field should have a mission with wider perspectives to respond to the more complex challenges presented. Thus “when every field of knowledge has its say in an educational context, it also has to seriously keep in mind the values and the significance of the world that each of its considerations selects and tends to culturally validate and spread” (Giorda, 2011, pp. 46-47).

¹² In this respect, considerations involving children and young people’s real participation in the running of urban areas and ultimately in defining local political issues for the running of towns are rather significant (Tonucci, 2008).

At this point, it is worth suggesting various features related to territorial education which are considered to be most significant in terms of constructing, forging, and promoting areas of territorial citizenship. The aim here is not to outline or highlight in detail any precise teaching or learning paths. Rather, I wish to make some proposals, launch ideas, describe certain issues and/or aspects of geographical knowledge in ways which could help individual and collective growth, concerning territorial knowledge and skills (Guran, 2012a).

Although the issues presented are not directly aimed at any one particular age group, the topics presented are aimed primarily at younger age groups, roughly between the ages of three and ten, and in some cases up to thirteen/fourteen.¹³ What are the reasons for this decision? Having to deal with themes and issues connected to the relationship between geographical area, namely territorial education, and citizenship values, most people would inevitably make the connection between previously established geographical contents (e.g. ethno-linguistic regions) and basic constitutional principles (e.g. the protection of linguistic minorities) or between specific geographical topics (e.g. desertification) and general ethical values (e.g. environmental sustainability). These relationships could all be investigated on different scales. However, it is my conviction that the essential foundations on which to gradually build the framework for an informed, responsible and active citizenship¹⁴ must be laid right from the early years of life and then progressively revived,

¹³ The ages indicated (3-13) are those the writer is familiar with, being part of the Italian schooling system: the first eleven years are known as the first cycle, divided into three years of day nursery (day-care centre), five years of primary schooling and another three years of lower level secondary school.

¹⁴ The expression *active citizenship* “evokes precise attitudes and educational values, such as respect, participation, solidarity, justice, promotion of diversity with the consequent assumption of responsibility that the achievement of these values implies” (Rocca, 2011, p. 69) and the essential attitude needed to promote and to act for them to be implemented in everyday practices.

strengthened, deepened, and enriched. This means that the basics of geographical and spatial education need to be provided right from childcare centres (day nurseries) and nursery school; pre-school areas that clearly cannot provide in-depth courses on the concept of social minorities or on the causes and signs of land degradation processes.

4.1. Space, representation and autonomy: educational prospects for citizenship¹⁵

Proceeding from the assumption that personal autonomy is a very important value in the construction process of citizenship and that the evaluation of the degree of autonomy is only partial since there is also the need to carefully consider the spatial component, spatial education and the concern for spatial orientation takes on an important role (Mason, 2011).

Within this framework, the experiences with, and across physical spaces are very often used by childcare centre (day nursery) teachers and nursery school teachers, as well as those working in the first years of primary school. Although the validity and effectiveness of these experiences regarding the growth of citizenship values are not always clearly understood, they are of fundamental importance, especially if accompanied by careful and systematic reflection activities (Guaran, 2012b).

On the other hand, the ability for spatial orientation is not only a functional value, which allows effective and oriented mobility, but provides significant safety and the independent “management” of everyday spatial dynamics, providing the essential

¹⁵ It should be noted that this and the following three sub-paragraphs are an attempt to organise the section on *Territorial education and active citizenship*. However, they do not take into consideration any individual or detailed differentiated aspect, but the hypothetical overall reasoning embraces them all and develops without following a specific order. Thus, the issues, examples and considerations follow each other and refer to each other, always focusing on the key question conveyed by the interdependence between territorial education and citizenship.

pre-requisite that allows people to read and understand organized spaces, the territory, and interact appropriately with these and with the people within them.

The desire to persuade children to develop their own mental maps, to encourage critical thinking and to promote various forms of representation are all aims that will sharpen their observation, perception, spatial awareness and mastery of language appropriate to geography, laying the foundation for competences related to interpretative reading of symbolic languages, particularly of cartography (Balchin & Coleman, 1973; Bissanti, 1993; Downs & Stea, 2005; Gould, 2005). However, using maps simply as tools when studying geography, that is, using them only in terms of academic learning of geographical content, can be judged as a rather narrow-minded, though adequate approach. Indeed “a map not only serves to symbolically recreate a space, it is more than just a metaphor: it is a metaphor for how we describe the spaces we live in, how we describe the town we live in, but at the same time it is also a metaphor for how we construct the world and how we ‘invent’ time [...] and how we ‘invent’ each day” (Fabbri, 2008, pp. 105-106).

In fact, when evaluating the use of maps or charts, whatever form they are in, citizenship participation in democratic local political decisions, at any level and spatial scale of reference, should also provide an acceptable command of the language of mapping. Indeed, more and more citizens are called to express opinions or make proposals concerning reorganization and land management projects, at a regional level, and in most cases at a local level. The ability to interpret the territorial system and especially the ability to anticipate different designs also requires initial spatial skills as well as the basic elements of the language of geography.¹⁶

¹⁶ An interesting book regarding the Italian context on the topic of reading and interpreting maps in the primary school is: *Disegnare il mondo. Il linguaggio cartografico nella scuola primaria* (De Vecchis & Morri, 2010).

4.2. Lived spaces: knowledge and care

“Space is a significant and integral part of our experience. The perspective gives us a crucial role and a responsibility to try and build meaning into the contexts where we live” (Cilliani, 2015). These words are full of meaning and emphasise the need to know the characteristics and understand the impulses of the places where we live. By doing so we can show the will to take care of the place of experience, expressing an unequivocal responsibility of citizenship. Geographical education is therefore aimed at creating a sense of attention and affection for different living spaces which in turn can activate behaviours and actions that show awareness and respond to the ethics of care (Mortari, 2006). The deteriorating conditions of various spatial contexts, both near and far, generally those exposed to impressive and intense processes of human activity, constantly give out a cry of alarm and bring to mind the value of care that seems at times, in more than one context, not to distinguish the feelings and actions of humanity. Learning geography and the study of territory can play a very important role in strengthening the ethics of care, without which the sustainability of the processes of regionalization is likely to be strongly questioned.

The fact that regular texts, used by teachers to teach spatial skills, pre-geography and geography, instruct or advise teachers merely to direct the younger learners to focus their attention and reflect on issues regarding their close environment, and as they get older, to broaden this field of observation so as to include broader territorial contexts and to consider international scenarios, seems to limit thinking about lived spaces only to the early years of schooling. On the contrary, it should be made clear that a lived space gradually widens on a physical level over the years, considering that students move from primary schools, which are scattered all over the local area, to secondary schools which are usually more concentrated in town centres. Consequently, the significance of the expression lived space surpasses the idea of a restricted spatial context that is almost solely limited to where one lives. Moreover, apart from this physical and experiential growth, which should not be underestimated, the concept of lived space should not be given a narrow interpretation,

but intended as a value that gives human relationships a breath of life regardless of the distances. Only within this framework is it possible to fully understand the term “citizen of the world” or similarly “universal citizenship”, coming to define the planet Earth as a communal home. It is in this context that care and consideration of classroom spaces takes on an important role if we wish to educate students to understand that ultimately the world is nothing more than a large communal classroom that welcomes all humanity, “our common home” (Pope Francesco, 2015).

One realizes, therefore, that the increasingly more frequent vast dramatic environmental emergencies that disrupt different areas of the planet, will not only be able to find possible solutions in acceptable and necessary decisions taken by international politics, but also through a systematic and widespread specific educational policy that has the objective of reaching responsible citizenship. An example is the recent document of agreement approved in Paris on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on climate change (COP21). In this context, geography can give a major contribution by going into specific issues concerning environmental emergencies; from extreme meteorological conditions to soil degradation, particularly in inter-tropical areas, from water shortages to incidents that affect hydroelectric or nuclear energy production plants, and industrial activities that utilize dangerous raw materials or produce harmful substances.

However, dealing with environmental crises merely as a subject of study is definitely a basis, but this is certainly not sufficient. In fact, the cognitive aspects should be accompanied by careful thought on lifestyles, as well as on individual and collective behaviour (Guanar, 2013). Although these topics can be explored from around the age of eight and not earlier, experiences affecting attitudes and ways of thinking can safely involve even younger children and put the necessary bases on which to build effective and efficient paths of citizenship. In fact, teachers’ efforts in the first years of schooling should focus their energy on finding the most appropriate way to set up these foundations and gradually reinforce them. This is possible starting from the children’s place experiences, being acquainted with them, identifying them, developing a positive

attitude towards them; in short, actively participating in their construction and reconstruction. Indeed, “living a place – understood as the place that gives identity – includes, on one hand, the emotional aspect and, on the other, the aspect of responsibility. Place-based education using the place, on one hand, conveys the idea of understanding the place which is equivalent to loving it [...] and on the other, it forces one to draw conclusions from this understanding and therefore leads to taking charge of the place, to protect it and care for it” (Rocca, 2007, pp. 248-249).

4.3. Lived spaces: experience(s), consideration(s) and representation(s)

Experience, consideration and representation are the three cornerstones of any learning path or geographical education, especially regarding the teaching of very young and young learners. Living an experience both at school and out of school, or living together during school hours can spark the process of territorial education, thus, the dedicated reading and re-reading of lived spaces requested from the children – the school building and its grounds, the neighbourhood, the city park, the town or village, etc. – and their representation, using as many different languages as possible, for example, maps. This does not necessarily have to be the case, as they could draw “maps of the heart” or “maps of their neighbourhood”, as mentioned by Cristiano Giorda (2014, pp. 160-164), which are very useful ways of activating and maintaining a positive attitude towards customary places and places of experience.¹⁷ The step from the

¹⁷ In this context, it is essential to report what Roger M. Downs and David Stea in the '70s stated relative to the relationship between cognitive mapping and spatial behaviour, defining that “cognitive mapping is a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in his everyday spatial environment” (2005, p. 9). Moreover, *mapping*, understood as a “system for detecting and displaying or describing relationships between people and places of a particular community by people belonging to that same community” (Brunello & Pierangioli, 2007, p. 197) is also coded in

interest in a playground or in a square a person regularly visits or just passes through during one's life, to caring for an area is, in fact, rather small. This confirms that "experience is transformative when applied to educational practices, preferably within a community, where interaction allows the intelligence to develop in individual and collective situations, in relation to the experiential context in an effort to become familiar with, to understand and interpret it" (Mancini, 2013, p. 82).

Educational planning which focuses on the learners' direct experiences needs to be increasingly developed to enrich educational experiences in open spaces, preferably in natural green spaces which many children seem to lack.¹⁸ However, even the usual every day built-up places should receive attention and consideration, and not seen merely as an exercise carried out in the classroom. Outdoor spaces, acknowledged as excellent decentralised classrooms, have the advantage of ensuring more effective teaching proposals that aim to examine geographical space (Binelli & Lanza, 2011). Immersed in this territorial context, the students have the opportunity to observe its overall features, understand its main dynamics, recognize its character and possibly anticipate its potentially evolutionary path. Territorial education involves all these aspects and offers valuable elements in the context of responsible citizenship.

literature as a tool to encourage participation. The London experience, concerning highly complex and ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhoods, is particularly significant, especially regarding *community mapping*, conducted by the laboratory *Mapping for change*, as part of a spin-off from University College London (UCL). Moreover, the idea and creation of community maps refer back to the British Parish maps and the thirty year Common Ground experience.

¹⁸ With reference to Outdoor education, there are now well established education practices in Scandinavian countries, as well as an increasingly rich literature, especially in the field of pedagogy. For reference, note the book containing the results of an International project: *Outdoor Education. Authentic Learning in the Context of Landscapes* (Higgins & Nicol, 2002).

5. Territorial education for a universal citizenship

“After the ‘imperial’ geographies, which led people from colonizing nations to look at developing countries with a ‘panopticon’ view, and the ‘geography of reconstruction’, where man and nature are considered interdependent and the existing citizen rebuilds its relationship with its territory, there is the need for a geography for the global citizen, which provides a map of his or her reality” (Santerini, 2010, pp. 31-32). But how to respond to this challenge? Is it a daunting task in general and almost impossible for geographical education? This may be so, but this does not mean that we should give up and the only way to go on seems to be to place geographical knowledge at the service of the territories – local and universal at the same time – in view of the fact that trying to understand the complexity of today’s world is almost essential to promote the learning of the dynamics that characterize the relationship between the local and the global and vice versa.¹⁹

In this respect, we should not forget the belief that Edgar Morin supports. Out of the seven key principles essential for future education, he considers the teaching of identity and territorial awareness to be built through the development of a “polycentric thought capable of taking care of a not abstract universalism, but aware of human unity/diversity” (2001, p. 64), capable of governing global interdependence. Morin also highlights the importance of the ethics of the human race, thus identifying a possible fundamental “laboratory for democratic life” in schools that aims to promote the “joint enhancement of individual autonomy, community participation and the awareness of belonging to the human race” (2001, p. 15).

If we consider teaching practices within this framework, we have to admit that the task becomes even more demanding or however difficult to anticipate. This is because we have chosen to

¹⁹ Consider that the same “citizenship is taking on a more global dimension: boundaries expand, communities move bringing with them their cultural practices and religious specificities and we witness a continuous transformation process that crosses cultures, modifying them” (Matini & Egisti, 2007, p. 59).

encourage the teaching of geography as the teaching of territorial education and to consider students from the ages of three to thirteen as the main target or preferably the co-actors of these learning paths. In all probability, the answer to this question and thus the identification of a possible solution is to be found advocating the idea that “citizenship education can provide that ‘geographical imagination’ that allows one to understand the phenomena and geopolitical transformations” (Santerini, 2010, p. 31). As our students are from the ages of three to ten, we can try to anticipate citizenship education as one vast comprehensive educational environment that brings together, integrates and joins together the different strands of educational subjects. So all the specific subjects would give up their autonomy, but we would gain in terms of overall educational effectiveness (Guaran, 2012a). Geography, or better still, territorial education, would then have the role of providing the imaginative capacities which is somewhat not irrelevant.

Evidently, the use of imagination should be supported by sound considerations on the objectives to be achieved, on the thematic issues to be examined and on which learning modality to favour. If, at an international level, official geography has established principles and criteria regarding geographical education by means of fundamental documents approved over the past ten years, especially through the drafting of the *International Charter of Geographical Education* (International Geographical Union, Commission Geographical Education, 1992) and more specifically to the paradigm of sustainability, with the *Lucerne Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development* (IGU-UGI, 2007), it is then the task of the associated bodies working on a national scale and the duty of single teachers to sort out these general indications for the different school situations. Above all, it is for the teacher, individually or better still, as a team with other colleagues, to be able to interpret and adapt the geographically formulated general outlines within educational projects related to territorial education that have as their main objective the formation of responsible, active citizens, who are asked to consider geography as a vehicle “to understand” and “to act” (Brunelli, 2010).

A few years ago, Catia Brunelli, in her book entitled *Geografia amica. Per la formazione di una cittadinanza universale*, met the challenge of modernity, launching the suggestion to revise the geographical educational proposals “through a preliminary deconstructing of stereotypes and clichés to free the subject from the greyness that years of inactive education had, despite itself, endorsed” (Melelli, 2010, p. 5). Its innovative hypothesis is based above all on the values of interculturalism, starting precisely from “a sort of preliminary deconstruction, according to its own logic and particularly congenial to the intercultural perspective” (Brunelli, 2010, p. 21).

The interesting, comprehensive and in-depth study conducted by Italian geography provides the opportunity to revitalize the idea that sustains the whole proposal which is supported in this text. In fact, it is assumed that the teaching of geography should rigorously continue its vital renewal process in order to give adequate answers to the fundamental questions raised by the complexity of the world today, taking advantage of the privileged observation point and interpretative reading which uses the critical lens of spatial analysis.²⁰

²⁰ To be remembered that “for an educator to adopt the perspective of complexity means to develop a specific approach towards education and knowledge, which leads to organising learning environments that focus their attention on finding explanations to unclear issues without risking hasty solutions, and together being willing to remain in uncertainty, which makes one proceed cautiously within the web of changes, discarding the illusion that it is possible to find a definitive answer or a code translator that solves every dark area” (Mortari, 2001, p. 42). This educator’s profile will benefit from a geographical perspective in a positive sense because it acknowledges the plurality and diversity of viewpoints and accustoms him to understanding issues with respect to partial and incomplete observations, analyses and matured conclusions. This is even more so when the role of subjective perception influences the observation and analysis of territorial dynamics, which often undergo important and rapid changes. Territorial and geographical education can thus take on an essential role in schooling/training in order to deal with the uncertainties mentioned by Morin (2001, pp. 81-95).

However, the outlook seems to be different concerning the various types of schools, especially in relation to the level of the school and ultimately, the learners' age. While in the case of the higher school levels, secondary school and higher education (especially in the light of the documents prepared by the International Geographical Union and especially of the ever-changing demands that the dynamic global challenges propose and impose), a constantly updated and regenerated geographical training proposal seems to offer the most adequate answer, one is rather unconvinced that the same analogy can serenely and safely be adopted and be efficient and convincing even at lower levels of schooling. In schools, faced with universal issues and problems or perhaps even for these very reasons, the most appropriate choice could be a geography that abandons the stubborn defence of its specificity, although fully aware of the quality of its epistemic assumptions and explanatory force of its foundations, and humbly integrates harmoniously in the large multi-perspective educational proposal for citizenship education, both local and global (Leiter et al., 2006).

This step is feasible only if there is a shift from geographical education to territorial education, as “the design of the territory, especially when carried out as a form of partnership between different social groups, is an excellent opportunity to implement this inclination and get used to reasoning and deciding, with human values in mind” (Brunelli, 2011, p. 265). And projects concerning the territory, the many and varied territories, can only be the fruit of suitable, serious and convinced teaching and learning paths focused on the educational value of the same territory.

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