



## Territorial values and geographical education

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### Abstract

The paper sets out to adopt the geographical concept of territorial value in the context of geographical education. Particular reference is made to the idea of territorial education, which is proposed as a synthesis of the various types of education contextualised in geographical space.

Starting from a recognition of the use of the concept of value in documents on geographical education, to then distinguish the specificity of the concept of territorial value, today used particularly in studies on local development, highlighting the characteristic of this that is most obviously linked to the geographical vision of territory and the relationships between human societies and environmental systems.

Making the role of territorial education in geographical studies central allows the development of a specifically geographical approach, as it highlights the relationship between the knowledge of places, territorial resources and anthropic and physical features of territories with the life project of people and the planning that every community elaborates according to its own resources and vision of the future.

**Keywords:** Territory, Places, Education, Territorial Values, Local Development

### 1. Introduction

The paper deals with the educational perspective of Territorial Education, considering the role that the concept of territorial value can take on in geographical education and on the potential of the recognition and teaching of territorial values in the didactics of geography.

The starting point of the Italian study on Territorial Education was the volume by Giorda and Puttilli (2011), who, with the contributions of twenty-six scholars, developed the hypothesis of reuniting the different perspectives of

geographical education around the concept of territory<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The reflection on Territorial Education started off with the Convegno Nazionale "Educare al territorio, educare il territorio", organised by the AIIG in Turin on 24 September 2011. The main objective of the conference was to develop the dialogue between disciplines and institutional actors at different levels: the meaning of territorial education and the role played by the various actors; the contribution of the different subjects; the inclusion of territorial education in the new school curricula; a comparison

The territory makes it possible to represent the set of relations connecting individuals and the community to the conditions of their living environments and at the same time among them to different scales, from the local one to the planetary one.

Territorial Education sets out to unite the objectives of the various forms of education (citizenship, inter-culture, sustainable development...) in a territorial dimension, rethinking and redefining them on the basis of the diversities of the places and the complexity of the geographical spaces. The attention thus moves from a separate set of educations, generally developed without sufficiently considering the national, ethnic and cultural diversities, to an educational perspective that bases its perspective on the recognition of the cultural, social, environmental, political and economic diversity of territories.

The territory thus becomes the unifying concept to relate education and society, united before the challenges of sustainable development, inclusive and participative practices of citizenship, coexistence and co-evolution of different cultures and ethnic groups, the decrease of inequalities and for the active and democratic participation of citizens in the care of places and planning for their future.

In this perspective the idea of geography as an active social science emerges (Gerber and Williams, 2002), capable of uniting the skills linked to the analysis and interpretation of facts and issues to the capacity to propose solutions and develop projects for the future.

The proposal of Territorial Education has received considerable attention and soon became part of the institutional debate on the Italian school curricula. In the most recent National Curriculum Guidelines for primary school and the first cycle of education<sup>2</sup>, it states that it is necessary to valorise “the territory as resource

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of the values, instruments and methodologies that are at the basis of this; the possible applications in permanent education and in informal training contexts; the integration of territorial education in public policies.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No. 30 of 5 February 2013.

for learning” and that “The point of convergence (of geographical subjects) results in territorial education, understood as an exercise of active citizenship and in environmental and developmental education”.

Territorial values are proposed as a concept making it possible to recognise both natural and cultural patrimonies and the potential resources of places, to assess them and refer to them for the valorisation of the territory in the context of the social construction of sustainable development (Dematteis, 2004), and of the practices of active citizenship and social cohesion of the multi-cultural communities.

The first part of the paper contextualises the subjects of Territorial Education with respect to the international debate on geographical education, in particular identifying the references to the concept of value. The consideration is then developed of the most important subjects, objectives and instruments linked to the unifying perspective of Territorial Education.

The second part links Territorial Education to the subject of territorial values more closely. The educational aspects of this are considered linked to their definition and evaluation, to the problem of territorial identities and that of development, in an attempt to highlight the usefulness of their inclusion in the context of geographical education.

## **2. From geographical education to territorial education**

Even if the considerations made in this paper are concentrated on the geographical debate of recent years, it is important to remember that since the time of its integration as an academic discipline geography has been recognised by numerous authors as an educational instrument to understand the world, to open the mind of the students from particularisms to the plurality of points of view, to contribute to the education of the citizen and to resolve problems linked to the development of the territory and the proper use of natural resources.

The debate on geographical education had a long evolution; in recent years it finds its best

known synthesis in the documents of the International Geographical Union. The International Charter on Geographical Education (IGU, 1992), which has considerably influenced debates and the transformation of the school geography curricula of many countries (Gerber, 2001; Stoltman, 1997), stresses quite specifically the idea that geographical knowledge must be considered in relation to its capacity to educate and deal with the changes and planetary challenges of the years to come through the knowledge and understanding of:

- locations and places in order to set national and international events within a geographical framework and to understand basic spatial relationships;
- major natural systems of the Earth (landforms, soils, water bodies, climate, vegetation) in order to understand the interaction within and between ecosystems;
- major socio-economic systems of the Earth (agriculture, settlement, transport, industry, trade, energy, population and others) in order to achieve a sense of place. This involves understanding the impact of natural conditions on human activities, on the one hand, and the different ways of creating environments according to differing cultural values, religious beliefs, technical, economic and political systems, on the other;
- diversity of peoples and societies on Earth in order to appreciate the cultural richness of humanity;
- structure and processes of the home region and country as daily action space; and
- the challenges of, and opportunities for, global interdependence.

Here a number of references are clearly expressed which then became central in future considerations, like the idea of understanding in values:

- interest in their surroundings and in the variety of natural and human characteristics on the surface of the

Earth;

- appreciation for the beauty of the physical world, on the one hand, and of the different living conditions of people, on the other;
- concern for the quality and planning of the environment and human habitat for future generations;
- understanding the significance of attitudes and values in decision making;
- readiness to use geographical knowledge and skills adequately and responsibly in private, professional and public life;
- respect for the rights of all people to equality;
- dedication to seeking solutions to local, regional, national and international problems on the basis of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

The document then develops the subject of skills<sup>3</sup>, to explain that geographical knowledge can be used to identify and face real issues, linked to the spatial dimension at its different scales.

The capacity of geography to take up the cultural challenges arising in the international debate is mirrored also by the topics developed in the following declarations formulated within the Commission on Geographical Education, dedicated to cultural diversity and sustainable development. This is the International Declaration on Geographical Education for Cultural Diversity, del 2000, and the Lucerne Declaration on Geography Education for Sustainable Development, undersigned in 2007.

In the International Declaration on Geographical Education for Cultural Diversity, presented by Rod Gerber during the 29<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress (IGU, 2000), geographical education is called upon to tackle the issue of globalisation, defined by means of changes caused to the different scales

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<sup>3</sup> The subject of skills is particularly important in the Italian school, where the more recent reforms have given a greater relevance to the programming for skills.

by the rapid development of the new information and communication technologies. Society, politics and economy seem to be increasingly interrelated, and before this complexity our attention is brought back to the usefulness of geographical knowledge in understanding cultural diversities, developing alternative points of view, changing lifestyles and therefore in producing operational answers to the challenges of the global society. In particular the relations are highlighted which are established not only between human and environmental systems, but also at different scales between places and larger and larger regional dimensions<sup>4</sup>, a very important premise to be able to develop the subject of citizenship education as a system of multiple links, referable to territories whose spatial dimension ranges from the local scale, of the community of belonging, to the planetary scale, which the considerations of scholars of other disciplines also refer to, particularly Edgar Morin (Morin, 1999).

This is a further step forward towards the concept of geography as an instrument for the exercise of active citizenship, seen as the conscious action of subjects who are able to recognise the importance of cultural, environmental and social diversities which can be identified at the different territorial scales: local, regional and global.

The rapid growth of the awareness of the risks linked to climate change and environmental degradation explains the need for a further document, the Lucerne Declaration on Geography Education for Sustainable Development (Haubrich, Reinfried and Schleicher, 2007), presented during the IGU symposium "Geographical Views On Education For Sustainable Development" held in Lucerne in 2007. In this complex structured document, which deals with the issues of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) 2005-2014, the authors develop the subject of the contribution of the geography to Education for Sustainable Development, rethinking the very structure of

knowledge and the modalities of its development in the curricula. Even though not making many references to the concepts of place and territory, the Lucerne Declaration has the merit of starting from more important issues and from the establishment, obvious for geographers but not for everyone, of their spatial dimension.

To speak of the geographical dimension of problems however implicitly refers to the concept of territory, which in this paper, following the Italian and French interpretation in particular, we mean in the sense of "Agencement de ressources matérielles et symboliques capable de structurer les conditions pratiques de l'existence d'un individu ou d'un collectif social et d'informer en retour cet individu et ce collectif sur sa propre identité" (Lèvy and Lusualt, 2003, p. 910).

And once again it is the regional and therefore territorial diversity that is highlighted in the statement that there can be no global agreement on how to interpret sustainable development:

"It is a contentious issue since nations, cultures, groups, and individuals interpret the definition to suit their own needs. Thus, some emphasise economic sustainable development as they seek to enhance their consumption levels while others emphasise environmental sustainable development as they seek to conserve threatened species. Sustainable development and consequently education for sustainable development are culturally defined" (Haubrich, Reinfried and Schleicher, 2007, p. 244).

The consequence of this argument is in fact the recognition of the diversity of territorial values, which cannot be standardised (or imposed) at different scales from those at which they are locally. If the relations between economy, nature and society need to be dealt with and rethought from an ecological point of view in the various local territorial systems of the planet, the concept of territory seems to be the one that best expresses the "variable geometries" of these geographical spaces. According to the issues dealt with, they may coincide with different regional areas, unite places to other places or separate them, continuously reshaping new geographical

<sup>4</sup> "The spatial dimension that refers to the need for individuals to see themselves as members of multiple overlapping cultures at local, regional and global scales" (IGU, 2000).

contexts in which to be rethought. In the following paragraphs we will attempt to explain why the recognition and evaluation of territorial values can be considered a key skill of geographical education, also in relation to the goals of sustainable development.

The consideration of geographical education today pinpoints two other very topical questions: citizenship and inter-culture. These subjects, which have become fundamental in the pedagogical agenda owing to their importance also in national and international policies, can be wholly related to the traditional idea, going back to the teaching of Kant, that geography educates the citizen of the world to an open mentality, decentralising perspectives from identity and local-policy narrow-mindedness. The idea is that geography can therefore supply the basis for social transformation (Wellens et al., 2006).

The development of the new geographies of citizenship (Deforges, Jones and Woods, 2005) and more in general of the investigation of the spatial dimension of citizenship and its pedagogical implications (Gerber and Williams, 2002; Butt, 2011) have thus contributed to highlight subjects like the environment (Hayward, 2012), multiculturalism and social cohesion in the history and geography curricula (Faas, 2011).

### 3. Territorial Education and Place-Based Education

If we divert the attention from geographical education to the field of education sciences we find ourselves before an extremely complex situation. On the one hand, as geographers, we can say that most of the studies on education do not consider the role of places in the education of human beings in any important way. On the other, we come across some theories and experiences that give considerable emphasis to the environmental context and insist on the need to personalise education according to the place in which it is carried out.

Among these pedagogical trends, the experience of Place-Based Education is of particular interest, known also as the pedagogy of places and strictly linked to fields of

education through experience, of environmental education and education for sustainable development.

The relationship between a number of considerations on which Territorial Education and Place-Based Education is based is significant<sup>5</sup>. This approach, born in the context of education sciences, focuses on connecting the school environment with the community in which it is situated, considering the regional space where the pupils live as a primary source of learning resources (Smith, 2002). Studies of environmental psychology are referred to and concepts stressed that are used a lot in geography like sense of place (Semken and Freeman, 2008), focussing on the development of skills to resolve local problems, contextualised in the space of the community in which the schools are found. This pedagogical orientation is also referred to as “critical pedagogy”, concentrating the attention on the spatial aspect of the social experience (Gruenewald, 2003).

The first considerations of Territorial Education also stress the role of the emotional experience and the care of places as a form of

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<sup>5</sup> It must be stressed that in the Anglo-Saxon literature the concept of place is in many aspects similar to what in Italy is understood as territory, while the term territory is less used and has a narrower connotation (Elden, 2010). In the traditional idea the territory coincides with a physical limited and controlled space: it thus refers above all to a political-administrative idea that defines the area that is occupied or claimed by an institution or a human community (Sack, 1986). This aspect is important also for territorial education, which is also understood as a social project, as an instrument for governance and therefore for policies concerning social cohesion and sustainable development (educate “the” territory). But the concept has been adopted also in its broader and metaphorical sense, for which reason territoriality and therefore the scale of the territory being considered, can coincide both with very small local systems, with single places (e.g. The classroom, the school, the quarter, the village, the wood, the mountain), and with very big regional areas whose geometry and boundaries vary according to the point of view adopted (e.g. The Mediterranean, the Sahel, Tibet), ending up therefore by including the entire terrestrial space, understood as the territory of the human species.

reappropriation of the living space by the community. In this case the role of the territorial system must however be stressed as a synthesis that combines intuition and rationality, and the recognition of the complexity of the world-system, for which reason the concept of territory cannot be limited to a local dimension only (Dematteis, 2011). Therefore, Territorial Education starts from geographical knowledge to reach active citizenship and thus the government, understood above all as a shared building project of the territory (Magnaghi, 2011). It is in this intentionality that the greatest links of Territorial Education to Place-Based Education are to be found, associated by the idea of fostering a cultural response to the processes that transform places in the era of globalisation, developing one part of children's experiences by means of the local space: "Place-based or place-conscious education introduces children and youth to the skills and dispositions needed to regenerate and sustain communities" (Gruenewald and Smith, 2008, p. xvi).

The distance between geographical education and Place-Based Education is well outlined by the work of Andrei L. Israel (2012). He highlights the risk that from a pedagogical point of view geography is considered uniquely as the context: "while the pedagogy itself is divorced from the geographic content" (p. 76). A place-based education without geographical knowledge, therefore, or one that develops assonances with geographical education without however knowing it and without dialoguing with it.

Israel highlights the possible advantages of the integration between the approaches of Place-Based Education and the geographical perspective directed at the promotion of social justice and sustainability, suggesting how this pedagogical approach can in turn show the ethical and political values implicit in the study of human geography.

The Territorial Education perspective can be considered as a proposal of geographical education that attempts to build a structure for dialogue between education sciences and geography: it expresses the educational intentionality of geographical knowledge, reflects on the educational power of methods

and instruments of geography, and emphasises the role of places and knowledge of places in human education, in people's life project and in the future evolution of the human communities and the planet Earth.

In the vision of geographical education, places take on a fundamental role as educational environments, but this is realised by means of the awareness given by the language of geography, its ability to conceptualise the relations between human and natural systems and to control the transformation of the territory by symbols. It is proposed therefore as an inclusive context in which the territory is at the same time seen as the subject and the object of education: education to the territory, therefore, but also education of the territory, understood as the social construction of the human community (Giorda, 2011).

#### **4. Territorial education and territorial values**

At the basis of Territorial Education is the idea that the different types of education (citizenship, inter-culture, sustainable development, cultural diversities, health) find their spatial contextualisation in the territory. Every portion of the earth's surface inhabited and recognised by a human community can be understood as a territory, at different scales. The most important aspect of the territory consists in its multi-dimensionality made up of a physical basis and one or more communities living in it and developing businesses and cultures, with a recognisable set of images, symbolic values, traditions, histories, products and representations that make it recognisable from the outside and guide foundation processes and identification from the inside.

The geographical contextualisation of education makes it possible to consider the types of education not as separate courses but as integrated aspects in an educational end that finds its distinctive feature in the capacity to spatially contextualise problems, taking them to the most suitable scale in order to tackle them according not only to their diffusion, but also to the social, economic and environmental context in which they are highlighted.

In this way two arguments of geography and pedagogy come together: the one of the diversity of places and the communities living in them, and the one by which every educational project must be developed and reshaped according to the context in which it is carried out. If we match these principles, the need arises to base each educational project on the knowledge of the territory, that is to say, of its resources, economy, social and cultural stratifications, historical evolution, and hence of its values, its critical points and its relations with the rest of the world. The sense of Territorial Education however consists in going beyond the recognition of the specificity of the places and the community living in them, suggesting that the way in which we describe or narrate the territory is already the expression of an intentionality, a project. This leads us to recognise how every geographical curriculum is already a place-based education, which expresses an order of values and meanings.

This is nothing new, as when John Dewey, philosopher and theoretician of education, stated that the role of geography consists in the connection between natural facts and social events and in the study of their outcomes, for which reason the geographical description of the Earth insofar as inhabited by man is the expression of an educational reality, makes people aware of contemporary reality and contributes to cultural growth. In this sense, when the author considers geography as an instrument to reach peace and international cooperation through education, to live in a community, and understand diversity in the world and the right ways to relate with it (Dewey, 1916, 1927, 1958), he touches all the subjects that today we reorder around the concepts of citizenship, inter-culture and sustainability.

The attempt of Territorial Education is therefore to develop pathways and instruments to enact the principles of geographical education, highlighting how important they are in the context of globalised space, but also how far we have still to go for their diffusion in the school curricula and in the broad field of education.

To think of geography from an educational

viewpoint then entails the passage from the geographical observation to the planning, that is to say, to tackle the problems of the territory as modality of citizenship education. This planning can concern the care of places, the protection of the environment, coexistence with other cultures, the decrease of inequalities and, in general, the construction of a more inclusive society and with a better quality of life. Territorial Education thus makes particular reference to active methods, to learning about issues and to on the spot experience.

Geography as active citizenship, expressed by means of the commitment to the care of the places of one's own local community, for example, through commitment in volunteer work (Yarwood, 2005) can be the main basis around which to develop the skills of Territorial Education. Conscious action needs knowledge, but also the capacity to re-elaborate knowledge, to develop original solutions and to know how to reason them and put them into practice.

For this reason we think that we can define the capacity to identify and describe territorial values as one of the most important skills for Territorial Education, evaluating their role as positive or negative, and re-collocating them in a form of active planning for the sustainable development of the territory.

## 5. Recognising territorial values

The book *Marcovaldo* by Italo Calvino is a good introduction to the subject of territorial values. *Marcovaldo* is a rather singular character who lives in a big city and sees it from a different point of view to that of most of his fellow citizens. This permits him to find mushrooms in the flowerbeds, to escape the summer heat sleeping on a bench "like on the brink of a torrent with the wood above him", to see a strip of beach in the pile of sand that the dredge pulls out of the river etc. But on closer inspection *Marcovaldo* is not much different from all the others, every one of whom sees the same things differently. For example, before *Marcovaldo* chose the bench for his summer holiday it was occupied by two sweethearts and certainly during the day it would have hosted pensioners, mothers with children playing in the

garden and so on. This demonstrates that territorial values are above all the many facets of a reality that belongs to the daily life of each one of us. In fact the vision of places varies with the varying of the psychological, social and cultural conditions of whoever experiences them, that is, with the feelings, interests, desires that make part of our relationship with the territory. It is a natural but also dramatic fact since there are many of us, each with his or her own vision, while the territory is only one and – like the mushrooms, the bench or the sand of Marcovaldo – it lends itself to a multiplicity of visions and therefore customs, many of which exclude each other in turn. Marcovaldo experiences this when, having fallen asleep on what for him was a beach, he wakes up “buried on a sand barge, adrift” (Calvino, 1963, 1973 edition, p. 39).

Values reveal the predicament of the territory: something that we absolutely need as individuals, but which at the same time is a common good that we have to share with the society and culture that we are part of. That is, we must find an agreement with others about how to experience the same territory together in a way that is satisfactory for everyone. It is not easy as the stronger viewpoints and interests tend to prevail over the weaker ones, both on a local and world scale (Beck, 2005; Stiglitz, 2012). Therefore, even when the set-up and use of a territory find a stable order – perhaps decided democratically – there is always someone who gains and someone that loses from this, and so a degree of conflict remains, whether it be explicit or latent. And so for example, with a skilful shot of his catapult Marcovaldo’s son puts out the neon advertising which, lighting up every twenty minutes, stops him and his whole family from seeing the moon and the stars from the loft window. But the territorial conquest is not to last for long because instead of the publicity a rival company will install an even more bothersome one.

It must come as no surprise therefore that there are differing opinions on the definition of the concept of value in general and territorial ones in particular. On the one hand there are people who maintain that there are unchangeable non-negotiable values (cultural, moral, religious). On the other hand people think that

values are usually attributions based on social consensus, which therefore evolve with it and are by and large negotiable. In particular they could be converted into money, that is, into the general equivalent of all negotiable things. In the latter interpretation they would essentially be resources, fixed endowments (natural or historical-cultural) of places, which can be valorised with the right investment of capital and labour. This means that their value is equivalent to however much money one can get from their use. This reasoning can be translated in more or less rough or refined ways. Rough is building speculation which compromises a beautiful landscape, refined is the protection of the beautiful landscape to attract tourists. Rough is the motorway that crosses a territory, limiting its use and bringing no advantage, refined is the same work that foresees certain compensation for the local communities. And so on.

This is true in rich democratic countries but in other countries territorial “valorization” takes place through a more or less legalised hoarding of resources by the big public or private economic organisations to the detriment of local defenceless communities. The destruction of environmental conditions (woods, waterways, agricultural land) comes into this category, and are vital for the survival of the indigenous populations, with the aim of exploiting mineral or hydroelectric resources, setting up breeding ground and cash crops. This abuse of power is frequent in the Amazon, central-eastern India, in a great part of inter-tropical Africa and in other poor countries in the south of the world. Besides being often accompanied by violence aimed at the inhabitants, these are tantamount to real breaches of human rights, insofar as they reduce the populations to famine, destroy their culture, oblige them to emigrate to towns or other countries (Shiva, 1993). In many cases similar consequences derive from the hoarding of cultivatable land – land grabbing – by the big financial or agro-industrial companies, which even operate legally.

These examples demonstrate that not all the territorial values can be considered only as “resources” (Magnaghi, 2010), that is, as simple means to make money directly or indirectly. They are not when they correspond to means of the biological livelihood of the populations, nor



when they are conditions that guarantee the reproduction of the material and spiritual culture. For example when they are at the basis of livelihoods based on hunting and harvesting or biodiversity of crops. Or when the fundamental elements of the local culture are attributed to certain elements (mountains, waterways, plants etc.) of the territory.

In the more economically developed countries there are also non-negotiable territorial values, possible sources of conflicts. A first category includes the so-called patrimonial values, like monuments, landscapes, historical sites, environments of naturalistic value. As far as concerns geography the protection of the landscape takes on particular importance, which since 2000 has had legal force in the European Landscape Convention, adopted by the Italian Code of cultural and landscape heritage in 2004.

The protection of these values entails limitations in the use of the territory by private individuals (the owners included) and therefore of their intrinsic commercial value. But this does not exclude the fact that the restraints aimed at conservation are functional for a commercial valorisation of another type, for example that of tourism or property in the places near the area or the protected heritage.

Another highly conflictual category includes certain uses of the territory considered harmful to health, like in the case of the big rubbish tips, nuclear power stations, etc. Another increasingly conflictual category is that of the places and traditional customs of the territories that foster a strong sense of belonging of the inhabitants, to the extent of being part of the individual or collective identities. This is the case for example of Mount Graham in Arizona, considered a sacred mountain by the Apaches and the foundation of their identity. For this reason they opposed the building of seven huge telescopes on it. Another example is that of the victorious battle of the Donria Kondh tribe in the Indian state of Orissa, against the multinational Vedanta that wanted to extract bauxite from the sacred mountain Niyamgiri

In general it can be said that territorial values are non-negotiable every time that they are ascribed to the category of being – identity – when this is opposed to that of having, that is in

the economic interest and power. Identity therefore concerns values like life (biological survival) culture as symbol and as authentic memory (non-reproducible) of a common past, or a simple sense of belonging, even individual belonging. Nevertheless, identity is something that must be considered very carefully as it can take on a negative meaning when it leads to shutting oneself off from others, refusing any exchange and dialogue with others to the point of considering them enemies (Aime, 2004; Remotti, 2007)

## 6. Territorial identities and development

Each individual and every society tends to give an existential meaning to one or more places, to a territory of belonging. When we say for example: I'm Neapolitan, I'm Italian, I'm European, or even, I'm a citizen of the world, we recognise that a certain place or a certain geographical space is part of our personal identity. These identity references are often more than one: they can be at the same time the town or country where I was born, where I work, the places where I most like to spend my holidays, etc. This feeling for places as part of ourselves derives from the fact that we cannot live without some kind of relationship with them: even only the emotional one for which the space in which we live or have lived is a source of affection and aesthetic feelings and memories.

Like all components of identity this one too has two faces: one that looks to the past, the other that looks to the future. The first one derives from the interweaving of our personal history with the places in which we have lived, the second tells us that this consolidated identity relationship can change into good or bad with the changing of the places themselves. The first is a source of certainty and stability, the second obliges us to take care of the fate of places, trying for example to preserve those values that make them feel part of ourselves.

Just as there is an individual identity linked to places, there is also a collective territorial identity that concerns more or less vast groups: from the family to the small community of the neighbourhood, to the urban, regional, national, super-national ones. Each one of these

communities has its territory of reference: the home, the quarter or the village, the town, valley, region, state, other big geographical aggregates (the Mediterranean region, Europe, etc.)

This collective identity also refers to the history of the group in its relationship with a certain space. For example for the Italians this space is the national territory from its first linguistic-literary unification by Dante and Petrarca to political Unity and then the Republic. But looking back at the past is only a part of territorial identity, completely insufficient to guarantee continuity in time, even if necessary to understand the present and project it into the future. But whoever stops at the past thinks of an immobile future, where society and territory should never change: any transformation is seen as a threat for the very fact that something changes. For example the entry into the European Union can become such, along with the arrival of immigrants, the construction of a building opposite our house, a new town plan, the making of a road in the city centre into a pedestrian precinct. Territorial identities of this type are shut off in themselves, nostalgic of the past, defensive towards any novelty considered threatening in itself (Debarbieux, 2006). Eluding themselves to be able to stop time they are trampled by it. Refusing to cast oneself in the change, they will nonetheless be subject to it and often this will jeopardise those very traditional values that they set out to defend.

On the contrary the true collective territorial identity is the one that is expressed in the capacity of a community to maintain itself and reproduce itself in time, as a consequence modifying the relations with its living space and with other spaces and other communities, near and far. This means not only tolerating the diversity of others and their practices, but appreciating what good they can offer in terms of ideas, capacities, productions, cultural values. It also means being able to welcome them into one's own living spaces, insofar as the bearers of something that the people living there lack, offering them what they lack. In other words one can speak of territorial identity when a community manages to think and plan its evolution in relation to that of a territory, that

from being local extends to all geographical scales. For example at planetary scale, today the whole human community must face problems like climate change, the using-up of fossil fuels sources, the scarcity of food resources, the uncontrolled growth of the cities, migratory movements in continuous increase and extension. At the continental scale, besides these problems, the European community also has those of territorial cohesion (infrastructures, support of disadvantaged regions etc.) and unequal regional development, of migratory flows from the south of the world. At national scale we have countries like France that has been elaborating views of the whole of their territorial development for some time now and others like Italy whose central government only recently began to take this on board, with the creation of the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion.

Also at intermediate scales (regional, provincial) territorial plans and projects are being formulated to reach a sort of basic level of territorial planning. This is fundamental not because it is sufficient to itself (Purcell, 2006), but, on the contrary, because only by starting from the territorial experience of local subjects (individuals, families, firms, associations, institutions) can the evolution of the society-territory relationship be planned at higher scales. For example the problem of rubbish disposal, which is posed dramatically at a regional scale, is resolved with the separate rubbish collection in the single houses. The national problem of the excessive consumption of farm land needs above all a commitment on the part of the local authorities. The world problem of global warming can be reduced only if the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are limited locally. The migratory flows, which are also a global phenomenon, require local management and reception capacity, training courses aimed at the social, economic and cultural inclusion of the new inhabitants. And so on.

## **7. Local territorial development and global development**

But what exactly is local territorial development and how can it be achieved? The meaning of these three words needs to be clarified.

Development is a term borrowed from biology where it means the growth of living organisms according to a programme inherent in their genetic code. To apply this concept to territorial systems means to consider them similar, in certain respects, to living organisms. This is of course a metaphor, as the identity of the territorial system is, as we have seen, something that changes much more quickly than the genetic patrimony of single organisms, even though it also has the function of being a go-between in the evolutionary process of past and future.

One feature of biological development that instead can be taken almost to the letter is one of limitation: just as any organism does not grow infinitely, but at a certain point stops, also the development of territorial systems, in terms of exploitation of natural resources, population growth and economic wealth has limits, mostly dictated by the dimensions and characteristics of the territories. The planet itself presents these limits, as was highlighted in 1972 by the study "The limits to growth" carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for the Club of Rome, which unfortunately did not stop the race towards the overtaking of these limits in the following decades (Turner, 2008). Technological and organisational innovations can move these limits forward, but only to a certain point, beyond which human beings notice that their world (cultural, social, technological, economic, institutional) must adapt to certain natural laws that they are not able to change, if it wants to survive.

Today this condition takes on a particular ecological meaning: the limitation of the application of technology is also linked to environmental, social and economic costs that each innovation produces. Vice versa, the adaptation of technology to the conditions and differences of each territory should have as first reference that of the limit beyond which the advantages of the innovation are overtaken by the disadvantages measured in loss of territorial value.

Another feature of organic development is that of being extremely diversified in geographical space: the species and their ecosystems have their own and thus very varied

features and modalities of development. The word biodiversity expresses the characteristic very well. From this point of view the analogy of organisms with territorial systems is significant, but very problematic. In fact it is true that every territorial system tends to reproduce itself in time maintaining its own identity, nonetheless, especially in this phase of globalisation in which we live, it is also subject to strong pressures that tend to standardise its development to general models, valid for the whole planet (Hannerz, 1996). The various specialised local systems for example in fishing, wine-growing, furniture making, computers or in any other production, if they do not want to end up without work and income, they must adopt new technical and organisational modalities that do not derive from their local traditions but from innovations that assert themselves at planetary scale. This necessarily modifies the relationship of human groups with their territory and with their lifestyles and the territories themselves (Massey and Jess, 1995). Nevertheless, if there is a levelling out on standardised development models, the local system will differentiate it even less from other similar ones scattered around the world, with the result that on a world scale the cultural, social, environmental and landscape variety, which UNESCO considers world heritage, will tend to be reduced.

Unfortunately this common heritage is today seriously threatened by the fact that global economic competition ensures that the courses of development of the different human societies tend to converge in one single direction. In it the original diversities are substituted by the inequalities between those who are more advanced in this obligatory race towards the uniform and those who get left behind, between the localities, the regions and the "advanced" and "backward" countries, that is, in short between the rich and the poor.

Returning to our biological metaphor, it would be as if the big differences of constitution and organic development that life presents on Earth tended to be reduced to the advantage of a sort of single model that with few variations were valid for all living organisms. Something that is clearly absurd but which in part is already happening with the reduction of biodiversity due to those very negative impacts of the single

model of global development on the environmental variety of territories.

Is it possible to counter this alarming tendency? Yes, if the development manages to be territorial starting from the local, that is to say founded on the recognition and reproduction of the values of the territory as a space that is lived in (Dematteis and Governa, 2005).

Development is territorial if it concerns the set of values, resources and common heritage belonging to each territory. These are the characteristics that it has acquired during its natural and human history: environmental features, natural resources, cultural settlements, both tangible ones like architectural and landscape heritage, and intangible ones like languages, dialects and musical traditions, without forgetting works to the land, land-reclamation and infrastructures, etc. whereby past generations made a territory liveable and productive. Besides these passive features so as to say, each territory is different by way of its active components characterising it. Some of these concern natural cycles like those of water, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, etc., or the “services” given free by the ecosystems. Others pertain to the inhabitants: they are their knowledge and specific skills (cognitive capital), the relations of trust and cooperation among them (social capital), the organisational and regulatory capacities of their institutions.

To say that territorial development starts from the local, means to affirm that it derives from the capacity of local actors to produce material wellbeing, knowledge, beauty, organisations and quality of life beginning with the values and specific resources of the territory that they know from direct experience. For example there is local development in agriculture if, instead of homogenising cultivation, lands and agrarian landscape to standardised commercial produce, certain features of climate and soil, local traditional knowledge and skills, the variety of seeds and food-producing plants are valorised, to obtain products that could not be produced elsewhere with the same qualitative features. This is for example the programme carried out by Terra Madre, a world network of food communities, that unites over a thousand communities that are

part of the food production chain and with the aim to defend sustainable agriculture, fishing and animal breeding, to keep the taste and biodiversity of food (Terra Madre, 2004). The same goes for the food industry, for example in Italy, as far as concerns the local specialised production systems in one of the many alternatives of Made in Italy (Becattini, 1998). In this case the local is included in a scale of national symbolic recognition, in turn used as a seal of recognition in global scale markets.

Obviously all this would not be possible if the local systems were not linked together and not open to inputs of knowledge, services, capital and labour coming from outside (Governa, 2007). While in the past these external inputs were very limited and diluted over time, today they are more and more numerous and frequent, so that the role of the local actors is to mediate between the specific potential of their territories and what goes around in the global networks of knowledge, finance, services, migratory flows, professionalism. If this mediation is missing the local systems cannot preserve their identity in the change, they are standardised and on a global scale the socio-cultural diversity of the planet is reduced in favour of a single development model. But this can be avoided if the local actors are able to combine the new of external origin with material and immaterial resources and the specific self-organisational skills of their territories.

This requires the relationship of the citizens with the territory to obey three conditions. The first regards the knowledge of the territory itself by those living and working in it. This knowledge is not neutral, but by and large part of a plan. It must, that is, indicate the material and symbolic potential of the territory itself, the meanings and its possible uses in a perspective of local development like the one outlined above. It is knowledge that cannot be left only to those living outside the territory or to a small group of “experts” or decision-makers informed by them, insofar that – and here the second condition comes into play – local development must above all tend to satisfy the aspirations and needs of those living there. We have already seen that each of us can attribute different values to the territory in which we live and it is not easy

to relate this polyphony of contrasting viewpoints to a single design of valorisation, able to satisfy all expectations. In order to approach this result there needs to be considerable active participation by the populations. In fact there are many ways to do local development: from those where the decisions are taken by a few “strong” actors who control the economy, society and local politics to those in which the citizens are organised in associations and movements that are able to represent the different needs and aspirations.

Lastly, the third condition concerns the capacity of the inhabitants to be open to whatever good can come from the outside, even though maintaining their local territorial identity. This means being able to combine the new with tradition, to accept the different as a neighbour, to feel oneself part both of society and the places where one lives at the same time, and of the vaster territorial systems including them: from the region, to nation, to the big aggregates like the European Union and the entire world. In fact, only being able to see our territory within more vast geographical spaces and social sets will we be able to understand what the limitations and possibility of our local development are.

## **8. Conclusions. Territorial education through territorial values**

We have seen how the standpoints of international literature on the subject of geographical education converge on a number of key questions that can be efficiently developed starting from the study of the relations that each human community has with the territory in which it lives. We have also clarified how this relationship must be seen not only in relation to the physical space surrounding it, but also in the relations that through it we have with other persons and communities belonging to different territorial scales, up to the planetary one, with which the daily actions of each one of us interact more and more. This trans-scalarity of our relations with the different terrestrial environments, their inhabitants, economies, societies, cultures and institutions end up embracing the whole range of geographical

knowledge, and therefore territorial education can be considered as a synonym of geographical education. Not only but it is also a particularly efficient means to practise it, insofar as it is a moment of reflection that connects the experiences of our daily experience to the issues of place, region, country to those of the planet. In such a way it makes us aware of and participant and to some extent co-responsible in the destinies of the various communities that we are part of.

Territorial education is above all founded on its knowledge at the different scales. This knowledge cannot be limited to an inventory of localised objects, but must concern the relations that are entertained among these objects, both those that depend on natural laws and those brought about by human actors. The geography of the territory is therefore one of territorial action. It particularly concerns the ways and ends for which human subjects, acting on things, develop their economic, social, cultural and political relations. As we have attempted to outline in this paper, it is a geography that has territorial values as its starting point. This makes it implicitly customisable and even normative, at least at the ethical level (Popke, 2009), in any case a gymnasium of citizen education. In fact it is from the awareness of values that the care of places, the protection of the environment, the decrease of inequalities and the construction of a more inclusive society are achieved.

The concept of territorial value goes beyond the more general one of value, identifying a specific geographical view of the relations between persons and their own living space. Even though territorial values can have different definitions at the different scales, many of which are justified and legitimate, the vision of those living in places and recognising in the experienced space a set of features and specific localised resources must not be ignored, which in turn are the expression of intentionality, project-making, ideas on the development of a territory and the social groups living in it and using it.

The observation of the processes taking place help us to understand the importance of territorial values when they are not recognised or when the territorial community is not able to

defend, valorise or use them as a resource for its own cohesion and development. They are then substituted by exogenous visions, that tend to consider the territory only by function of external interests, mostly of economic exploitation, with the result of further weakening the territoriality and the territorial heritage, both material and immaterial.

Territorial values in fact are not important only for the economy: they carry out or can carry out a significant role in social cohesion processes too, in the reproduction of cultural identities and in the relations among communities and places at different scales. To reason (and educate) in terms of territorial development in fact entails a development model that sustainably links the environmental aspects with the social, economic and cultural ones.

Territorial education by means of territorial values therefore requires three conditions:

- to know the territory, elaborating a planning vision to the future;
- to identify and elaborate the territorial values collectively, building a representation of the territory that expresses also the aspirations and needs of its inhabitants;
- to recognise the relations that each territory and its inhabitants entertain with far and nearby places, and with wider or smaller regional areas comprising it.

Territorial values therefore also take on the function of mediators, of relational goods: by openly representing the places and human communities living in them, like communication facilities of a localised knowledge indispensable to develop new relations, welcome new inhabitants, plan the future of places.

The concept of territorial value is one that is different from the more general one of value, taking on a connotation that is specifically linked to geographical research and the epistemological reflection of the discipline. For this reason, we consider that it is important to use it even in the geographical reflection on education and in the didactics of geography. It can represent a more specifically geographical

contribution to the general reflection on education, identifying the educational role of the territory, the pedagogical importance of the recognition of local resources and the function of places and their specificity in the development of the life project of persons.

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