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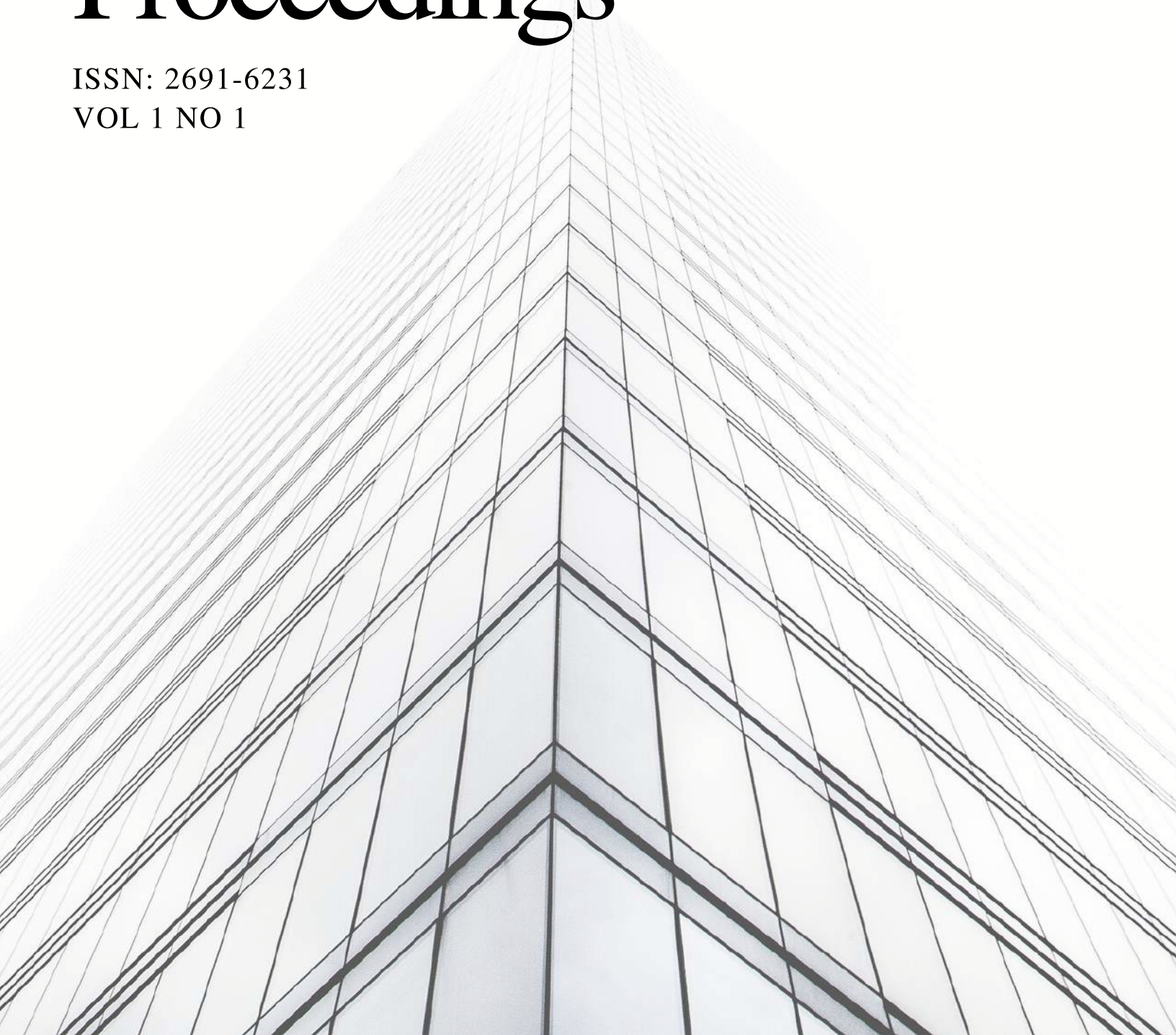
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The Educational Relationship in Age of Covid-19. A Pedagogical Reflection on New Practices of Solidarity and the Sense of Citizenship

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Abstract

The educational relationship, being humanly determined, it is a privileged tool of doing education because it received the difference and recognizes the limit of the individual in the wealth of the other by himself over a time, not too short but not too long, identifying as useful and fundamental, not only to promote the intentional and global growth of educating, but also fostering mutual involvement within the community. This paper, through pedagogical reflection, aims to investigate the new solidarity practices that are developing - or that may in the immediate future manifest itself - in the community affected by the coronavirus emergency. The sense of citizenship, in a similar context, tends to change by transforming and adapting to the sociocultural changes that characterize the evolution of the community. Not just a health issue, so, but a problem of immediate educational interest that embraces diversity and more authentic human relationships. Education, an essential element in the definition of citizenship, referring to man, can't ignore the analysis of thought and actions, theory and practices, society and individual, that is, all micro and macrocosm. This applies to any social status that concerns man: Spinoza and Leibniz, for example, are exemplary, in the interpretation of the individual as a way of being of the substance, or in the necessary postulation of a predetermined harmony as a condition for agreement in and of the different. Acceptance of transformations as an essence for the redefinition of citizenship and for openness, by the educational sciences, to a reform also political in the social, they represent some of the elements behind a social democracy that aims at welfare, the policies of welfare state declined on the citizen. Social and educational emergencies, the demand for dignity and new ideas of well-being aim to redefine the status of the modern citizen within a community, today characterized by the changes imposed by the dissemination of Covid-19.

Keywords: Relationship, Education, Solidarity, Citizenship, Community.

1.   Introduction: affections and emotions in society at the time of Coronavirus

The post-modern society, the one in which we live and relate today, is increasingly connoting as a plurality of elements that on the one hand seduce, with all-powerful promises of globalization and cultural and social integration, and on the other generate perceptions and conditions of insecurity, precariousness, exclusion. A situation of uncertainty, therefore, that sharpens the perception of problems related to the development of a single economic-social and cultural system based on the person, and that undermines in depth the educational relationship, understood just as that interweaving between body and emotions that produces and nourishes affections. A problem, or rather an educational crisis, which is emergency, urgency and polite challenge. Emotions give way to a positive energy when we discover the strategies that feminists, or migrants or also retired men find to question the society in which they live (Ostrouch-Kaminska, Vieira, 2015).

Individualist by vocation, bulimic of sensations and collector of emotions, overexcited yet indifferent, today's man has redesigned his inner world in which he is locked up as in a fort, on the defensive, distrusting or at least looking with suspicion at the bonds that hold him within interpersonal and community dynamics: he is the person who venerates emotion, emotional man, Homo sapiens. The picture that emerges is characterized by a short circuit between affections and bonds, which is one of the typical characteristics of post-modern society: on the one hand, therefore, you emphasize affections, you want them intense and capable of guaranteeing gratification; on the other hand, otherwise, no one wants to hear about ties, in fact we are mainly directed towards relationships that do not engage in long times. The word bond, therefore, is immediately followed by that of freedom (Balzano, 2017), often abstract concept but, in this analysis, fundamental to understand the real meaning of affections, and therefore of emotional bonds, conveyed by those emotions that are the basis of every relationship. A freedom, therefore, that in addition to being freedom to and from is also freedom with and for, therefore freedom for ties useful to define what role can be the bonds innourishing the affections and make free the subjects. On the other hand, the risk is to give the green light to bonds that become forward contracts of mutual emotional consumption, for themselves unable to accommodate real affections, structured then in a form of mutual exterior that is usually reproached to the bonds of a certain past. The incorrect conjugation of affections and bonds leads towards the same outcome: an untied and shattered identity, either because of the low profile of affections or by inconsistency of the bond.

While quality education is a goal in itself, it is important to avoid regarding the 17 SDGs as fragmented work packages. Many of the goals can, in fact, be interpreted as correlating with each other. For example, research on the benefits of educational attainment shows that those with higher skills levels tend to secure better-paid jobs, enjoy better health, be more involved in their communities, and practise more active citizenship. We also know that there is a correlation between education participation rates and governmental investment in industries, innovation and infrastructures. This suggests that education can act as a powerful engine to develop a more cohesive and equal society. Nowadays, educators also pay attention to gender equality, for example through initiatives to encourage more girls and women to enter the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. A highly qualified workforce is a demonstrated driver of decent work and strong economic growth, which in turn contribute to achieving the goals on poverty and hunger. Quality education can also include increasing skills in relation to learning for sustainability, such as care for our planet. The final goal, SDG 17, focuses on the role of partnerships in order to reach the SDGs and makes explicit reference to the need for governments to work together and cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders in the private and non-profit sectors. Education, however, is not mentioned at all in the discussion of SDG 17. This goes against the research evidence on the benefits of education and training, which touch on the domains of all the other SDGs, both at the level of the individual and of society. Further understanding the possibilities for individuals, educational institutions, relevant stakeholders and governments to work together to achieve both SGG 4 and the other Goals might thus increase knowledge of potential routes to progress. This analisys focuses on what these different players can contribute in relation to the ten specific targets of SDG 4 on quality education (Boeren, 2019).

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, the fourth goal (SDG 4) is dedicated to education. Extending the scope beyond the previous agenda's focus on primary education, it aims to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This has led to hopes for a stronger role of adult learning and education in global education agendas and policies. While UN Agendas fall into the category of soft law, they reflect a need for action, and by endorsing them, UN Member States have made commitments towards trying to achieve the targets (Grotlüschen, Nienkemper, Duncker-Euringer, 2020).

This contribution aims to define, through a brief analysis of the educational environments of post-modern society, and the evolution of affections and emotions, how the educational relationship today can be known with new elements while not without the task of caring for and helping the person, which the same pedagogy has been able to cultivate over the years. A society overwhelmed by the covide-19 pandemic which today will necessarily have to deal with a change, perhaps even a positive one, of educational family relations (Kanizsa, Mariani, 2017).

## 2.	The relationship in educational environments: new possible scenarios

In recent years we have seen a real turning point in the definition and training of professionals who inhabit the many and differentiated educational contexts. The normative element, and its evolution, although partial, is followed by a transformation of the spaces of education, educational environments, almost totally declined through the sense of educational work characterized by values, cultural and methodological postures that are – or at least should – be the property of those who work, and therefore of every good educator. The call, here, to a pedagogy crossed by - and crossing - all the tensions and contradictions of the contemporary, globalization/localism, plurality/unique thought, which generate social and cultural environments in which the individualization of life projects, far from being a liberation from different kinds of ties, comes at the expense of the formation of the individual-person. The subject/person as designed, on the epistemic level, [...] tends to be equipped with both existential freedom and intellectual autonomy. Therefore, it is not founded either by subjective (individual) or objective (sociocultural) experience: nor by their mutual integration. [...] It is existentially equipped with only acts of choice. These are personal options that guarantee freedom and that create a real system-of-values: the choice between authentic and inauthentic existence, between the possible and the everyday (Balzano, 2018).

The challenge that, in such an economic, social and cultural context, awaits pedagogy and education is, therefore, to contribute to the realization of a possible welfare system, born from the synergies between the subject and the collective dimensions within which his life history is built (Santerini, 2019). The need for a strong educational tension, an urgent issue today, is felt more strongly in what Bauman calls mature postmodernism, where man too easily loses course in the exhausting search for a recipe for vita. An educational work, therefore, which has as its reference axes the project dimension and the relationship: the task of pedagogy is to acquire the data collected from different points of view in order to put in place processes of change and transformation of educational action that are consistent with the aims that it sets within democratic civilization and, at the same time, open to the discussions of these same purposes, not taking for granted the conceptions of man and his education that he assumes and that determine the idea of good educational practice (Elia, 2016). A design, therefore, that moves from the foreshadowing of a situation adequately modified with respect to its current configuration, with respect to the problems to be faced, in view of the liquidity of interpersonal relationships.

Recent literature suggests that too little attention has been paid to non-formal and informal education relative to formal education in recent decades. The points to a "massive failure in basic skills development" in sub-Saharan Africa, where far greater attention must be given to training in the informal job sector, where most people work. However, most recent development initiatives and bodies have focused on formal education, in particular on schooling for children, such as the Global Partnership for Education, the United Nations' Global Education First initiative and The Learning Generation report prepared by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, which calls for greater attention to secondary and pre-primary education. The report refers to ALE only in terms of vocational training, leading Steven Klees to criticise the report's

complete disregard for adult education and the only cursory attention to education as a human right. The consensus on the expansion of primary education already built up in the post-war years reached its peak during the 1980s and 1990s when the World Bank was influenced by studies showing that investment in primary education yielded the highest rates of return. In a recent report, George Psacharopoulos, who authored many of those World Bank studies, continues to designate increases in pre-school and primary education enrolment, as well as the improvement of school quality, as the "targets with the highest cost-benefit ratios (Elfert, 2019).

The generational divide, within educational places and spaces, is one of the most interesting research strands for pedagogy, especially in the analysis of the crisis of the younger generations and the change of reference points for future citizens. Despite the creation of various centres of aggregation and spaces for young people, in fact, many members of the youth group find themselves in conditions of isolation and solitude; a dimension, this, that makes them feel abandoned, without models or guides, without fathers or teachers, on the margins of political life, exposed to the laws of consumerism, the manipulation of needs, induced behaviors and the dangers of exploitation of the drug market, betrayed by a resigned and ungenerous adult generation. At this stage, it is in general the model of society and the lifestyles proposed by the media that spread false myths and deleterious models (Merrill, Gonzàlez Monteagudo, Nizinska, Galimberti, Ballesteros-Moscosio, 2017).

When addressing the pedagogical issues of the youth worlds, however, it is prudent to lay down conceptual certainties, to build effective and lasting educational proposals. The knowledge and perception of relationships with space-world and with the other subjects who inhabit it, in fact, always refer both to empirical-verified rational experience, and to the subjective experiential experience closely linked to the very concept of existence. Space, therefore, cannot be understood as a structure unto itself, released from the subject that lives it, since it is always, first of all, space for a subject; it spatializes itself receiving meaning from a subject, then it expands or contracts, populates or deserts, shudders or lights up according to the states of mind. These, therefore, do not represent an indifferent and homogeneous, fixed, immutable and neutral scope in which all things are immersed, but it is varied, it is the means that makes possible the connections between things that do not live except by virtue of a subject that describes and supports them. The use of space has always been a fundamental element of any educational method and implies essential educational variables in any pedagogical conceptual operation, yet pedagogy still struggles to develop the most peculiar aspects of educational spatiality on its own. (Merrill, Nizinska, Galimberti, Eneau, Sanojca Samiri Bezzan, 2019). Space exists, and it is good to remember, only because of what fills it, and in education exists thanks to the educational events that happen in it, making it educational. All the more so, therefore, youth educational spaces are everywhere, and all places are potentially educational; every space can become, in certain situations, educational because the processes of training and growth take place wherever there is transmission of knowledge and educational communication. Each educational act is placed in a place that becomes educational precisely on the basis of the relationship that makes it educational, leaving also the emergence of unexpected and unpredictable potentials that expand its extent.

3.   A new life project based on the post-coronavirus educational relationship

The pedagogical perspectives previously followed, about the possibility of recognizing new educational spaces, not only for the younger generations, indicate that the priority lies not so much in building projects for someone, whether young or not, but in fostering opportunities, places, experiences that facilitate the construction of life projects; therefore, spaces of shared planning, full of meaning, able to give back to the person that own ability to be able to hope, to design the future in the difficulty of the present. All this from a different generational perspective, of structuring one's future for the younger generations, and of returning examples, trust and support for adults towards the citizens of tomorrow, conveying educational action towards the principles of responsibility and participation. It's necessary, therefore, to counteract that liquefaction of relations whichis opposed not so much to a concept of relationship, and therefore of society, solid but rather based on the meaning of authenticity: a society that seeks greater authenticity, which we could qualify with the term of

ultramodern, where we mean a society that proceeds beyond modernity, but seeks to resume and bring to fruition instances of humanization that in the context of modernity have remained captiveand.

In our perspective, different scales of community development need to be analysed together, clearly identifying the global and regional/ local dimensions of adult learning processes and social change, and focusing closely on processes of emancipation and on social movements they are part of. The hope was therefore to create a network capable of encouraging research on development in the context of globalization, employing territorial/micro-scale approaches, urban and rural studies, studies of community regeneration, and locating learning places and spaces. Above all, we wish these themes to show the central role of adult learning in processes of community development (Evans, Kurantowicz, Villegas, 2015). The role of adult education in the shaping and fostering of democratic citizens is prevalent in current transnational and national policy discussions; a significance which has been further infused by the past few years' historically high migration flows (Fejes, 2019).

Today, society has rediscovered some of the now dorment dynamics, lost in part or completely, in the family context. The pandemic, which has forced most of the world's citizens to the home, has enticed us – if not forced – to recover the relationships that have long been the foundation of identity building and parent-child and parent-parenting relationships. Coronavirus, according to health experts, will radically change relations even in the immediate stages, the famous phase 2 and phase 3; but in education we know well that this cannot be the case, that visual contact, tangible, remain one of the essential dynamics in the relationship between educator and educator, but above all in the formation of the younger generation in the family context. Educational relationship must resume the long journey of interpersonal relationships (Bholinger, Haake, Helms Jørgensen, Toiviainen, Wallo, 2015), it cannot ignore some fundamental points, such as the person, the context and the community. It's necessary, therefore, to recover the meaning of a life project based on the identity construction of the younger generations. This is the great opportunity we have, and we should not miss it.

A self-project, in fact, cannot be born in isolation or, worse, in marginalization, but in places where it is possible to establish positive relationships with others, both with young people and with significant adults, where they can express their ideas, their vital energies, their cultural, artistic and musical tastes, their own ways of perceiving and expressing social commitment. To build an educational relationship, in the ways and spaces analysed so far, that can be based on the principle of care and help. The educational role in the work of care, in fact, has a long history that unfolds in the field of both health and social care services, but this can only be a strong point for future developments: today, in fact, we no longer look at the subject as a patient, a sick person, but as a person with his own specificities and personal powers, regardless of difficulties. Looking at the person as a characterizing subject in itself is the first and important step to tend to that concept of freedom illustrated in the premise, and it becomes essential in a post-modern key, in reference to the younger generations. The crisis of politics and low participation, especially for young people, also goes through the lack of involvement by the media and, more generally, by the most important social actors; to feel the protagonists of a "lair" or a "shelter", in the words of Iori, represents the foundation of an epochal crisis of values and educational models, especially for the younger generations, not allowing the construction of new educational spaces oriented to the needs and needs of the citizen of the future. This challenge, at times new, is devolved almost exclusively to pedagogy that can no longer defer or pass on to other human sciences but which, appealing to that aspect of adaptability and the design autonomy that most characterizes it, must necessarily open to a critical reflection on "liquid" modernity, on increasingly fragmented relationships, and on the improdability, on several occasions highlighted, of the construction of new and different educational spaces, able to cope with the evolution of society.

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