Nationalism and Europeanism in Education: A Critical Analysis of Alternatives

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Abstract. Nationalism is inextricably connected with the modern history of nations and nationstates, and reflects the axiological sets derived from the aspirations of young nations. However, recent political, economic and social developments at the global level have determined the resurgence of nationalism, and signs of the phenomenon are also visible in Europe, although the old continent has enabled principles of cross-border solidarity and cohesion through transnational constructions such as the European Union. Europeanism, European identity and identification with Europe are still fragile, and rather indefinite, and at the same time challenged by new and powerful types of nationalism. The present work argues that national education emerged and developed as a natural response to the formation and affirmation of nationstates, whereas multicultural, respectively intercultural education may answer the needs of contemporary societies, which face pressure to balance complex national and transnational mutations. This paper's contribution is to focus on the European context, and it stresses the necessity of transnational agreement on terms and semantics connected with intercultural education, given its potential role in supporting equity, solidarity and social stability.
Keywords: nationalism, Europeanism, European identity, multicultural and intercultural education

NATIONALISM AND EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO AXIOLOGICAL SEEDS

The development of scientific reasoning before the eighteenth century can be described or defined as pre-science, as one might speak of

preindustry before the industrial revolution (Braudel, 1987). Modernity determined a rupture and a paradigm shift, accompanied by a series of changes at the individual level, in terms of lifestyle, self-image, and connection to the world and to God, as well as at the level of social environment. These transformations were centred on the idea of science, thus fulfilling Bacon's prophecy: for the modern man, knowledge is power. However, the rift cannot be considered complete, as one may trace a thread of axiological continuity, based on the four core values in Greek-Christian classical humanism, revived in Renaissance: the Truth, the Good, the Beautiful and the Sacred. Modernity reconfigured the educational ideal devising the human being as a cultural being, and widened the circle of core values by adding Liberty, Equality, Solidarity and Legality. These four values are not simply additions to the pre-existent axiological set, but constitute a radical change through the discovery of social values thatstem from ideals of revolution that have consecrated the modern paradigm of life and marked fundamental developments in modern society.

The development and affirmation of nations and nationstates – which dominate the political history of the modern era – have overlapped with anincreasing awareness of the role of science and education in achieving progress. According to Burdeau (2002), the nation is an idea and not a concrete reality, and disregards factors such as territory, ethnicity and religion that explain other types of social formations (e.g. clans, tribes or towns). In the Middle Ages, the nation designated the blood ties to a lineage, and the semantics of the term gradually acquired connotations of territorial and spiritual belonging. The nation has acquired its political nature in the modern era. The French Revolution legally consecrated the concept and turned the nation into a matter of law, as the only legitimate power and provider of the main pillar of authority (Burdeau et al., 2002).

The modern concept of nation is inseparably linked with education because

> the nation is not a biological element, but a spiritual one. The individual is not born as a member of a nation, but becomes a real member as the consciousness of historical, geographical, cultural, economical, ethno-psychological solidarity with the members of the nation raises in his soul. (Pârvan, 1919: 17)

The modern era was infused with the spirit of national education, which responded to fundamental historical demands: affirmation of nations as

cultural and spiritual entities, capable of defending the new values (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Legality) and of sustaining economic development with the purpose of ensuring prosperity in young democratic societies.

As Gellner noted (2006: 132), nationalism emerged as a distinctive form of patriotism, which manifests only in certain social conditions, prevalent only in the modern world. As a political principle of the modern era, nationalism states that political and national unity should be congruent, while, as a sentiment, nationalism is the anger caused by the violation of the principle or the satisfaction determined by its fulfilment (Gellner, 2006: 1). Modern history, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, was marked by several forms of violation of this political principle; thus, the rise of nationalistic sentiments mainly had a negative foundation. National education has naturally become the instructional model of modernity, oriented towards defending the national ideal and the accompanying axiological universe.

The origins of national education are to be found in the context of the Reform, with Luther's translation of the Bible into German and the establishment of public education. More than a century before Comenius, Luther advocated compulsory education for all people, but his argument was more theological than pedagogical: every citizen should be able to read the Bible (Gangel and Benson, 2002). However, Fichte (1762–1841) is considered the creator of national education. He proposed a radical change in education, having as its presumed consequence the rebirth of the German nation, in harmony with its inner nature. The idea of national specifics as the foundation of national education is one of the dominant themes in German Romanticism.

Throughout history, the nationalist ideal has assumed different emphases and customisations, and national education reflects and achieves the thrill of consequences. Fichte's nationalism is founded on the concept of race. In the beginning, Fichte supported the rebirth of the German nation through education in order to liberate it from the tyranny of Napoleon I, but ended by stating that education in all public institutions must prepare the German nation for the mission of civilising the world. This idea was laterdeveloped by H. St. Chamberlain (1855–1927) in *Fundamentals of the XIXth century* (1889), and fully exploited by the Nazi doctrine and embodied into criminal practices, but these issues go beyond the scope of the present work. If Fichte's redeeming nationalism, continued by the pan-Germanism tendency, was based on the concept of

race, France experienced a humanist, Christian and open nationalism through the contribution of Ch. Peguy (1873–1914), which can hardly be associated with a political doctrine. Peguy understood nationalism as the will to defend France against the damages of a future war, and rejected both Maurras' excesses in identifying the King with the nation, and Barrès' xenophobia (Braunstein-Silvestre and Pépin, 1993).

The peak of nationalistic practices was reached between the World Wars, and the analysis of this historical period offers a good opportunity to observe the potential and the limits of nationalism and national states (Hobsbawm, 2012). This period of time was characterised by "the murderous *reductio ad absurdum* of nationalim in its territorial version, although this was not fully demonstrated until the 1940s" (Hobsbawm, 2012: 133). The nationalistic sentiment of the period is the expression of frustration and anger provoked by the violation of national principle.

The political context of the post-war world changed nationalism and nationalistic discourses, marking a "profound, and probably permanent, historical change, whose implications are, at the time of writing, entirely obscure" (Hobsbawn, 2012: 163). The break-up of the Soviet Union and the whole system that transformed it into a superpower generated a type of separatist nationalism, considered by some historians to be a late outcome of treaties signed after the First World War and less characteristic of contemporary political evolutions.

Nationalism has lost some of the political and historical force generated after the French Revolution. Beyond the myth, how can nationalism be defined nowadays? Alternative answers may include a certain form of patriotism (Gellner, 2006) fully adjusted to historical, political and economical realities; an aberration, a historical accident, an absurd invention of Western thinkers, a pronounced form of paranoia resulting from individual and collective fear and envy, and the loss of individual consciousness (Kis, 1996); a form of protection or a substitute of integration factors in a world which disintegrates; a dangerous form of populism, which makes nationalism easily assimilated, wherever disorientation and confusion are generated by poverty (Tismăneanu, 1997); a way to recover what is essential and characteristic for a certain stage of a country's history (Paleologu, 1997).

Described as a form of patriotism, as a tool for protecting a confused society, as an avenue for transient recovery of history, as a historical accident or as a dangerous type of populism, nationalism reflects sets of

contradictions and tensions. The image of Janus associated with the two-sided nationalism also applies to the future of the construction. As Hobsbawm noted,

> It is not impossible that nationalism will decline with the decline of the nation-state, without which being English or Irish or Jewish, or a combination of all these, is only the way in which people describe their identity among many others which they use for this purpose, as occasion demands. (Hobsbawm, 2012: 192)

According to Gellner, the nationalist phenomenon, but not the doctrine presented by nationalists, is inherent in certain social conditions, and those conditions are presently fulfilled (Gellner, 2006: 20). This statement is supported by present political and social movements, which are mainly determined by the current global economic crisis and the continuous increase of migratory flows. The rise of radical parties throughout Europe, as well as the alarming levels of chauvinism and xenophobia in some of the most liberal and democratic societies, may be considered relevant "signs" of therevival of nationalism (Mudde, 2004).

Z. Csergo and J. M. Goldgeier (2004: 23) acknowledged available classifications of "nationalisms" (e.g. ethnic versus civic, revolutionary versus counter-revolutionary, official versus protonational), but also develop a new typology reflecting on the European situation; thus, they describe a *traditional type of nationalism* that aims to ensure congruence of political and state cultural boundaries, a *substate nationalism* that strengthens political representation of nations for homeland vis-à-vis state, a *transsovereign nationalism* targeting the creation of institutions to link the nation across state boundaries, and *protectionist nationalism*, which preserves national culture in the face of immigration and social change. According to the authors, all types of nationalism are spread both in Western and Eastern Europe, and are insome respectsin contradiction with an ever more integrated Europe.

Along with the emergence of new types of nationalism across Europe, one may note the stronger nationalist movements within the borders of European states; in a recent analysis of substates' nationalistic attitudes in the European Union, Connolly (2014) argues that Flemish, Catalan or Scottish nationalists use the themes of self-determination and autonomy in an integrating Europe thatis constantly criticised for constraining state sovereignty in multiple ways, although it also provides avenues for pursuing national interest beyond state borders.

Once perceived as a legitimate settlement and positive collective emotion, nationalism "has brought about a style of thinking that is too rigid and out of date in our globalizing world" (Šíp, 2014: 248). The history of recent decades has destroyed old myths and created new ones. Nationalism in its original form can be considered one of the fading myths, even though at a certain time in history it was defined as a "natural, God-given way of classifying men, as inherent though long-delayed political destiny" (Gellner, 2006: 47).

One of the new myths is certainly that of Europeanism and European integration into transnational constructions; a whole "European mythology," with a certain "national specificity" awaits demystification.

EUROPEANISM IN EDUCATION: AXIOLOGICAL TENSIONS AND THE SEARCH FOR BALANCE

In Europe, the demystification of national values and the lucid internalisation of history and culture has led to the arousal of a political and spiritual alternative that isnowadays considered more realistic: Europeanism and the subsequent European integration into the transnational construction of the European Union. Unprecedented technological advancements, including means of communication and themedia, are certainly among the powerful engines driving this important change, which is perceived at first to occupythe political level but which hasclear cultural and spiritual consequences. Developments in information technology, as well as more accessible means of cross-border transportation, have enabled constant communication and interpersonal contacts, at a level hardly anticipated a few decades ago.

As with all essential changes, replacing the nationalist paradigm with the European construct faces resistance caused by ignorance, attachment to established axiological sets and the fear ofa certain loss or dilution of national values, not to mention personal or group interests which have to be silenced. The values that give force to the European model are sometimes opposed to national mentalities. At the end of the twentieth century, Adrian Marino stated that

> The European principle radically contradicts the national principle, fertile in the last century during the time of national states' formation, but increasingly anachronistic today, at the end of the XXth century. (Marino, 1995: 105)

The aim of human life in the new millennium became a "fuller and more thoughtful life" (Šíp, 2014: 254-255), which does not mean anymore the reference to a national framework, but requires conjunction with a transnational axiological space, which for Europeans is represented by the European transnational horizon.

The anti-values included in the European model spread more easily, generating the *kitsch*, as pseudo-cultural products are more accessible than authentic European values – democracy, pluralism, liberty, human rights, free market. Within this axiological space,

> the conflict nationalism/Europeanism is doubled by (and, in fact, is confused with) the conflict democracy / totalitarism, liberty / oppression, federalisation / national sovereignty. Thus, all that is European is also transnational, antitotalitarian, antiracist and against all forms of discrimination. (Marino, 1995: 105)

This view is, however, challenged by other voices, claiming that Europe historically favoured critical thinking, but also powerful contrasts: equality and slavery, religious proselytism and a secular state, tolerance and fanaticism causing religious wars, respect for autonomy and imperialism, liberal democracy and communism are all parts of the European legacy (Todorov, 2008: 6). The plurality of the European tradition enriches and informs current social policies and practices, but also slows down the process of establishing a coherent European identity – a type of postnational identity approached by various scholars with different viewpoints and disciplinary focuses.

As with national identity at the beginning of modernity, European identity is morean ideal than a reality and its exact nature remains largely elusive, but European citizenship is not a sufficient condition to support its development in a globalising world, with societies deeply shaped by consumerism and extensive media influence and greater cosmopolitanism among its citizens (Stevenson, 2006). Framed in parallel with national identities, European identity emerges through civic participation and cultural symbols, but may also be interpreted as an outcome of the secular and enlightened European integration of collective identities or as a container of traditional, religious and cultural foundations (Schilde, 2014).

C. Kantner (2006) argues against the common perception that European identity is a main functional precondition for legitimating the European Union's governance in everyday decision-making. In her view,

collective identities are overestimated, and the internalisation of European identity may be considered crucial only in ethically sensitive policy fields, but "it is necessary that EU citizens discursively agree on an ethical self-understanding of their way of life" (Kantner, 2006: 502).

Axiological tensions caused by the rise of European identity, which also generates social echoes deeply rooted in the history and culture of European nationstates, can be resolved through acceptance of more than one myth, and the reconstruction of identity mainly based on similarities, and true understatement of differences. Ultimately, Europeans have to admit that national uniqueness "could only have emerged through inspiring and creative and non-violent clashes with others" (Šíp, 2014: 255).

Is Europeanism (and integration) a new myth or a reality, a historical fatality or a realistic option for European nations? Does it justify the anguish or the fear of those calling themselves nationalists that European nations may lose their identity, and ultimately their culture? Does it generate the so-called complex of the Western Canon, elegantly and efficiently obscuring the "big values" of "small cultures"?

The answer to these and other similar questions must certainly be sought in a balanced axiological space, in-between nationalistic fury and docile, humble alignment to Western sets of values (Marino, 1995: 77).

With balance, the opposition between the centre and the peripheries may disappear, and creativity, based on originality and communication, may ensure the safety of individuality within diversity. The inclusion of values in an intercultural space may, however, require a shift in mentality. Movement towards balance cannot be achieved while disregarding education; thus, if national education was the necessary educational paradigm for the modern era, intercultural education seems to be the necessary educational paradigm of contemporary societies. In an inspirational text, D. Coulby notes that "If education is not intercultural, it is probably not education, but rather the inculcation of nationalist or religious fundamentalism" (Coulby, 2006: 246).

The whole idea of intercultural education developed in the last century as a tool for addressing the poor adjustment to school of migrant children in the Western European world. However, contemporary intercultural education in Europe is, rather, a positive reconceptualisation of the so-called *Ausländerpädagogik* (pedagogy for foreigners) in Germany or *pédagogie d'accueil* (pedagogy of reception) in France (Faas, 2008; Portera,

2008), which influenced legal frameworks and educational approaches addressing the inclusion of migrants in the Western European educational systems of the 1960s and 1970s. In recent decades (starting with the 1980s), the concept has exceeded these boundaries and lies at the centre of a real intercultural pedagogy that aims to identify and analyse the whole range of issues within diverse communities, taking political, social and cultural contextsinto account. The European promoters of intercultural pedagogy (e.g. M. Rey, M. Abdallah-Pretceille, P. R. Dasen, A. N. Perret-Clermont) agree that intercultural education can contribute substantially to avoidance of social conflicts, respect for diversity, cross-cultural communication and cooperation, as well as to strengthening and enriching cultural identity through acknowledgement and comparison with otherness. Epistemologically, interculturalism may be placed in-between universalism and relativism (Portera, 2008: 485), and refers to interaction, exchange, openness, reciprocity and objective solidarity, as well as acknowledgement of values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations relevant to individuals, communities and societies (Rey-von Allmen, 1984: 13).

The promoters of intercultural education argue that it is not enough to recognise different cultures, and that groups and individuals should also learn from mutual contact and open dialogue. Thus, intercultural education goes beyond acknowledgment and understanding of cultural differences and similarities, and portrays diversity as an opportunity for both majority and minority groups (Cushner, 1998). Intercultural education and intercultural pedagogy are closely related to educational systems, but they can be conceived as educational principlesrather than subjects to be introduced in school curricula.

European intercultural education is dominated by confusing and overlapping terminology: multiculturalism and multicultural, interculturalism and intercultural are easily identified in scholarly texts, but also in policy papers. Additionally, new ways of conceptualising education for diversity emerged during recent decades, such as international or global education, and there is a clear tendency to include them in the terminological debate rather than ignore them. It is not our intention to clarify the roots and the meanings of all these concurrent terms, but to support the paradigm of European intercultural education by contrasting it with the available alternatives.

Multiculturalism is a complex but versatile term, and perspicuously describes the reality of contemporary societies that host diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups – either historical minorities or migrants. Multicultural education developed in the USA in the early 1970s, and its epistemological roots are to be found in Cartesian dualism and the rationalist paradigm. It rapidly gained an academic reputation, and actively informed educational policies and practices. The same type of approach to cultural diversity was introduced in the 1970s in Canada, Australia and New Zeeland, as a response to minority (including indigenous populations') emancipation and migrant communities movements (Portera, 2008). Multiculturalism and multicultural education aim to increase the respect for diversity, and therefore educational interventions subsumed under this paradigm target the recognition of commonalities and differences between two or more cultures. For some theorists (e.g. Gollnick and Chinn, 2012), multiculturalism in education is a simplistic and unrealistic solution for multicultural social environments, and rather impossible to achieve, because culture in itself can include almost any aspect of life.

Particular forms of in-depth and detailed knowledge about cultures represented in a multicultural community or society are practically impossible to attain. This critique is based on the fact that multicultural theories and practices emphasise – sometimes in a very descriptive manner – specific features of cultural subgroups determined bymigration background, ethnicity, mother-language, social class, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation and place of residence. The case against multiculturalism and multicultural education also includes the argument of culture dynamics: cultures are not static and people's identities are constructed through continuous dialogue with others (Werbner and Modood, 1997; Portera, 2008). To some extent, multicultural education remains attached to national values and ignores transnational social spaces and globalising trends, and this issue becomes more obvious when addressing citizenship education within the multicultural paradigm. Thus, J. A. Banks (2009: 106) states that multicultural citizenship education "recognizes and legitimizes the right and need of citizens to maintain commitments both to their cultural communities and to the national civic culture". In other words, giving voice to minorities will determine real commitment to the nationstate and its ideals, in a very

hegemonic manner, in which the majority group wield the power and keep all the privileges.

Multiculturalism still dominates educational discourse, policy and practice in the United States of America, but also in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, although it is criticised for assimilationist outcomes in relation to minorities and for limiting interventions to superficial contact with other cultures. For the fairness of the discourse, we have to mention that critical voices are also raised against interculturalism and intercultural education, a principle which remains a gain for educational theory but cannot be implemented in real-life settings; for some theorists, multiculturalism and multicultural education are far more realistic, as they can be brought into play in schools and classrooms and determine the growth of individual and community respect for diversity.

The semantics of international and global education are less clear, as the concepts are newer and less connected to the history of educational systems, but they are better adjusted to contemporary terminology in social sciences. It is clear that the term "international" refers to relations between nationstates, whereas "intercultural" may cover cultural relations between nationstates, but also addresses diversity within certain national boundaries. However, it should be noted that intercultural education has a weak international dimension, although the principle of interculturalism goes beyond borders and can be considered a European or even a global good (Coulby, 2006). "Global education" is sometimes used as an alternative for "international education," but one can argue that it clearly indicates responsibility for the sharedglobe and the knowledge and skills required in the globalised world. Haywood (2007) argues that "international education" is simply the result of practitioners' confusion, and corresponding educational interventions cover a mix of communication skills, intercultural understanding, global awareness, ecological concerns, and responsibilities involved with national, European and global citizenship. By contrast, global education may be more relevant, because national states are not the only influential actors anymore, and educational systems must take into account the positions of transnational corporations, international agencies and organisations and global civil society. However, global education may not answer appropriately the need to promote meaningful, respectful and creative social interactions in multicultural societies.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Although some theorists (e.g. Castles and Davidson, 2000) argue that globalisation trends and supranational constructs such as the European Union undercut national states, others (e.g. Calhoun, 2007; de Blij, 2009) assert that nationstates as forms of social solidarity and birthplaces of modern democracy play important roles even in a time of globalisation. However, nationalism and nationalistic attitudes, which once expressed national aspirations, are nowadays perceived as aggressive.

As a result of nationstates' formation, and under the pressure of a number of migration flows over the last century, all (at least European) societies have become multicultural, hosting diverse individuals and groups, in terms of ethnicity, mother language and country of origin, and inherently different in terms of shared values, norms, religion and ways of thinking and behaving in social environments. Within this multicultural framework, "Educational interventions, however, should be intended as intercultural: differences and similarities are taken in consideration, brought into contact and bring about interaction" (Portera, 2008: 486).

Although praised by European theorists and embraced by policy-makers and educators, contemporary intercultural education still needs "decolonizing," a catchword which refers to "challenging dominant hegemony, prevailing social hierarchies and inequitable distribution of power and privilege," which cannot be achieved without a "shift of consciousness" in perceiving and reacting to sociopolitical contexts that influence both educational theory and practice (Gorski, 2008: 517).

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