

# In the interstices of citizenship: the inevitable, urgent character of the dimension of civic virtue in education<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article has two central points. The first is to problematize the conceptualization of citizenship according to its moral meaning; the second is to evaluate its respective implications for any educational projects that recognize the relevance of education for citizenship in the school context. Therefore, a few considerations will initially be made regarding the polyhedral dimension of the concept of citizenship. We will particularly emphasize that, besides requiring knowledge and competences, *participatory citizenship* also covers the domains of personal and extra personal resources, as well as the dispositions leading to action. Moreover, there is a bond between each citizen's moral constitution, democracy itself, and the experiencing of democracy. Finally, we will approach *democratic citizenship*, which involves one's capacity to move beyond one's own individual interests in order to be committed to the good of the community. In this perspective, citizenship raises a latent tension that must be wisely settled. The educational process therefore occurs in the slippery border between indoctrination and the respect for free individual choice, thus calling for strict faithfulness to the guiding compass of human rights (UNESCO, 2006), which favors defending people's dignity, the right to the development of personality, and the fighting of all forms of discrimination (ROLDÃO, 1992; SANTOS, 2011).

I- This article is part of a chapter of the Education doctorate thesis A Educação para a cidadania no sistema de ensino básico português no âmbito da formação do caráter: análises e propostas – dois estudos de caso, submitted to Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa in late 2012; the thesis was supported by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) (SFRH/BD/45232/2008). We wish to thank this work's supervisor, Maria Odete Valente, Ph.D., who since the 1980's has indelibly marked the Portuguese education context in the area of personal and social education and citizenship.

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## Keywords

Democracy – Citizenship – Education – Character.

# ***Nos interstícios da cidadania: a inevitabilidade e urgência da dimensão da virtude cívica na educação<sup>I</sup>***

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## **Resumo**

*Este artigo tem dois objetivos centrais. O primeiro é problematizar a conceptualização da cidadania, de acordo com sua aceção moral e o segundo é equacionar as respectivas implicações para qualquer projeto educativo que reconheça a importância da educação para a cidadania em contexto escolar. Assim, primeiramente serão feitas algumas considerações a respeito da dimensão poliédrica do conceito de cidadania. Especificamente, salientaremos que a cidadania participativa, além de requerer conhecimentos e competências, abrange igualmente o domínio de recursos pessoais e extrapessoais, bem como as disposições conducentes à ação. Ademais, existe um vínculo entre a constituição moral de cada cidadão, a democracia e a vivência democrática. Finalmente, abordaremos a cidadania democrática, a qual envolve a capacidade da pessoa de se mover além dos seus próprios interesses individuais, para que possa comprometer-se com o bem da comunidade onde se encontra inserida. A cidadania, nessa perspectiva, origina uma latente tensão que necessita ser prudentemente dirimida. O processo educativo, portanto, desenvolve-se na fronteira escorregadia entre a doutrinação e o respeito pela livre escolha individual, devendo existir uma fidelidade intransigente à bússola balizadora dos direitos humanos (UNESCO, 2006), os quais privilegiam a defesa da dignidade das pessoas, o direito ao desenvolvimento da personalidade e o combate a todas as formas de discriminação (ROLDÃO, 1992; SANTOS, 2011).*

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## **Palavras-chave**

*Democracia – Cidadania – Educação – Carácter.*

## Introduction

This article aims to evaluate and problematize the conceptualization of citizenship in the perspective of its moral meaning and the respective implication for any educational projects that recognize the relevance of education for citizenship in the school context. Citizenship is an ancient notion that we find in both the Greek polis and the Roman *civitas*, where those who were considered citizens had a voice in the town's administration. Today, the breadth, the horizon, the responsibility, and the challenge of being a citizen in the twenty-first century have grown exponentially, taking on a universal sense like never before in the history of humanity.

Citizenship has grown past the national level to reach global scope and form a globalized super-citizenship that, in a condensed way, now gradually comprehends both the local, regional, national, and supranational spheres. According to Freire-Ribeiro (2010, p. 67), "more than being a national citizen, we must be citizens of the world", or, according to Reis-Monteiro (2003), in the context of the Roman Empire, one could proudly say, *civis romanus sum!* (I am a Roman citizen!), but today, every human being should be able to say, *civis humanus sum!* (I am a human citizen!). It is therefore a substantial responsibility of the educational system in its contribution to development in general and to the education of the new generations.

## Conceptualizing and problematizing citizenship

With regard to the concept of citizenship, its limits have grown wider and wider over time. From the emphasis on the exclusionary sense of belonging in a city (classical citizenship) to the conquest of a number of rights, mainly deriving from the axiological model of the French Revolution (modern citizenship), to a dimension designated as socio-liberal, where

each individual fully and sovereignly enjoys a set of rights (FREIRE-RIBEIRO, 2010).

The concept of citizenship is historically indebted to several traditions of political thought. The liberal tradition emphasizes civil and political rights, expressed in the individual freedoms (of thought, expression, participation, and association). Communitarianism, in turn, stresses a sense of community belonging, thus emphasizing social and cultural rights. Finally, citizenship emerges to the democratic tradition as citizens' active participation in society (AFONSO, 2010). With this backdrop, which has characterized the conceptual essence of citizenship as manifested in several aspects, yet stressing the simultaneously individual and gregarious nature of the human being, i.e., as a subject of rights/duties with the power to be a participant actor in the community, it is reasonable to pose this question: to what extent is it possible to dissociate citizenship from moral dimensions? If citizenship requires at least a certain form of character, namely a civic virtue or a civic or democratic character, then education for citizenship should take in the relevant concepts of character as well as practices for character formation (ALTHOF; BERKOWITZ, 2006, p. 511).

But what are the arguments for taking in the moral dimension into the essence of citizenship? The answer will have some evident implications regarding education for citizenship. A few authors have claimed that true *democratic citizenship* necessarily comprehends moral development, therefore requiring moral education, which is one unavoidable aspect of citizenship. The corollary argument to this is that education for citizenship is invariably normative, thus comprehending the moral dimensions inherent to civic membership (CARR, 2006; HOGGE, *apud* ALTHOF; BERKOWITZ, 2006). Subsequently, we will note that these dimensions are of different kinds, and expose the aspects we find most relevant.

## The polyhedral dimension of the concept of citizenship

According to Althof and Berkowitz (2006) and Audigier (2000, *apud* FREIRE-RIBEIRO, 2010), in agreement with what the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century has declared on the concept of education (wholeness of being rather than reductionism), it is now a consensus, particularly in recent academic research and positions adopted by renowned institutions, to conceive a competent, involved and effective citizen as someone possessing certain features that are necessary for fully participating in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. In the Commission's report, education comprehends four pillars that exalt the wholeness of being and oppose any reductionisms. Two of these pillars are closely related with personal and social education, and they help us focus on, rather than neglect, certain human dimensions, namely, learning to live together, and learning to be. In this perspective, understanding others, being able to start common projects, managing and settling potential conflicts, and living autonomously and responsibly are considered educational goals for the human being throughout its education, where it develops holistically as a person in an ongoing dialectics that represents a symbiosis between spirit and body, intelligence and sensitivity, aesthetical sense, personal responsibility, and spirituality (UNESCO 1996).

Such citizenship therefore needs a set of competences (i.e., cognitive, procedural, ethical, and action competences) that encompass the four domains below in a balanced, creative, contextualized way: 1) political and civic knowledge: concepts like democracy, understanding the structure and mechanisms of the legislative process, citizen's rights and duties, contemporary problems and political issues; 2) intellectual skills: the ability to understand, analyze and evaluate the trustworthiness of information about government and public

policies on certain matters; 3) social and participation skills: the ability to think, argue and express opinions in political discussions; conflict solving skills; knowing how to influence policies and decisions through petitions and lobbying, building alliances and cooperating with partner organizations; and 4) having certain values, attitudes and dispositions *with a motivational power*: interest in political and social affairs; a sense of responsibility, tolerance, and recognizing one's own mistakes; an appreciation for the values on which democratic societies are founded, such as democracy, social justice and human rights. In this last aspect, i.e., human rights, which form the core of the adherence to democracy values, their conceptual philosophy stresses the dignity of every human being, as well as respect, freedom, solidarity, tolerance, understanding or the civic courage.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) sets citizenship as a "common ideal to be achieved by every people and every nation". The same document aims for every citizen:

[...] to make efforts, through learning and education, to develop the respect for these rights and freedoms and promote, through national and international progressive measures, their universal recognition and application. (UNESCO, 2006)

Therefore, such expressions, to which education for citizenship must connect itself, are not meant to be invoked only *in extremis* as rights that must be observed at high authority levels, but are also called for in their human expression at the concrete levels of daily life. They are not, therefore, abstract, distant categories, but, rather, operating realities that rearrange interpersonal relationships. This rearrangement brings in references that delimit spaces where plurality, heterogeneous expressions of conduct, and human viewpoints can rightfully coexist, thus causing tolerance to become in itself a virtue in line with other normative criteria (ALTHOF;

BERKOWITZ, 2006; AUDIGIER, 2000, *apud* FIGUEIREDO, 2005, p. 35; LEGRAND, 1991 *apud* FONSECA, 2001, p. 53).

Lately, in the Portuguese context, the concept of citizenship has also been conceptualized as relying on three dimensions: (i) citizenship as a principle of political legitimacy; (ii) citizenship as identity construction; and (iii) citizenship as a set of values (SANTOS, 2011). Citizenship is thus considered in order to also include values, attitudes and behaviors that can be expected from a good citizen and society itself (SANTOS, 2011, p.5). We therefore agree with several authors (AFONSO, 2010; CAETANO, 2010; MENEZES, 2005; PEREIRA, 2007; RODRIGUES, 2008; ROLDÃO, 1992, 1999) who have strongly argued for citizenship not to be conceived in a minimalistic way. In order to be a good citizen, having cognitive and information capacities is clearly a necessary condition, yet not a sufficient one. These authors highlight that, in a democratic context, the functioning of democratic political institutions that include participatory citizenship is vital, as well as “internalizing values associated with individual freedom and respect for others”, developing “attitudes that translate an enlightened, intervening social behavior” (ROLDÃO, 1992, p.105), and following “dispositions to act” (MENEZES, 2005, p. 18) that involve “competences of an ethical, cognitive and affective nature” (AFONSO, 2010, p.128).

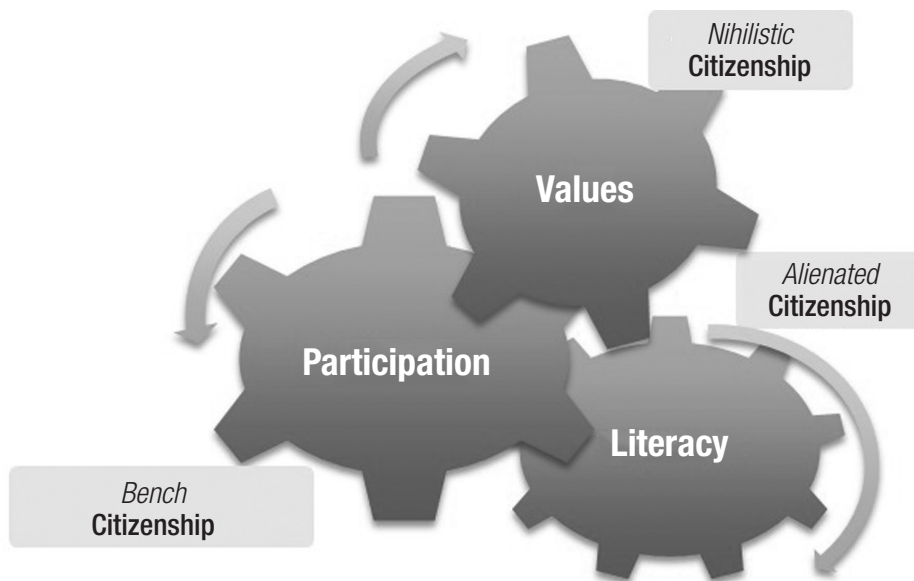
Heater (1999, p.336) thus summarizes the various valences one must incorporate in order to be actually considered a full citizen: “a citizen is a person furnished with knowledge of public affairs, instilled with attitudes of civic virtue, and equipped with skills to participate in the political arena”. This segmentation helps us understand the richness and the multifaceted, holistic character of the concept of citizenship, namely, the interrelation and the identical weight of civic knowledge and competences and dispositions (virtues), thus reflecting what the *Character Education Partnership* called a civic character (ALTHOF; BERKOWITZ, 2006).

Therefore, the civic character results from the interaction of the three components of citizenship: 1) literacy (encompassing political and civic knowledge and intellectual skills), participation, and morality: when any of these is not included, citizenship becomes, respectively, an *alienated* citizenship (lacking the knowledge that enables tangibility in the context of an enlightened, productive participation); 2) a *bench* citizenship: due to much knowledge and civic-moral heritage, it will not enter the real game of social life, thus losing what Aristotle (1998) considered the truly characteristic feature of a citizen – participating in the exercise of a nation’s public power; and 3) a *nihilistic citizenship*: it may also have all the other dimensions highly developed, but lacks an axiological core that enables an enlightened, effective and morally guided intervention (see Figure 1).

We do not intend to neglect the content richness and the questions involved in making education for citizenship real. We agree with Menezes (2005, p.18) when he argues that, besides requiring knowledge and competences, participatory citizenship also comprehends the domain of personal and extra-personal resources, as well as the dispositions leading to action. We therefore reject a minimalist conception of education for citizenship that reduces it to simply offering information and developing competences without considering the morality axis as seriously and with the same concern as the former.

Therefore, the phrase ‘education for citizenship’ holds an implicit recognition of the tension between ethical and civic education, as civic behaviors imply internalizing moral values and expressing them in responsible acts (PEREIRA, p.71). From the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNESCO, 1996, article 13) to the International Commission on Education for the Twentieth-first Century’s (UNESCO, 1996) acclaimed report, to Europe’s *Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights* project, launched

**Figure 1** – Citizenship restrained according to its three main dimensions



Source: the author.

in 1997, the emphasis has always been on the responsibility for educating the new generations so that conditions can exist for harmonious coexistence (regardless of any ethnical, social or religious criteria) and for useful intervention in society. In fact, this last project has so far managed to build a conceptual framework that is expressed in covenants, declarations, political recommendations, and theoretical and applied investigation works in the fields of democracy, human rights, citizenship, pedagogy and teacher training. In these areas, citizenship is understood as proactive, ethical, and responsible, thus detaching itself from the aforementioned minimalist paradigm (SALEMA, 2010).

According to Kerr (2004), the backbone of education for democratic citizenship is an essential core of moral sensitivities that enable the construction (acting, persevering and valuing) of respect, trust, tolerance and self-esteem. Knowledge and competences alone are not enough to lead to practicing a responsible, active citizenship. There must be the desire and will to positively participate in this way in society (SALEMA, 2005).

### **Citizenship and democracy**

There is a bond between each citizen's moral constitution, democracy itself, and the experiencing of democracy. Such concern with individuals' morality was expressed by the first education philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and in the eighteenth century by people like Baron Charles and Montesquieu, who advocated the absolute necessity to watch over people's virtues so the proposed political system, i.e., republic, could subsist. According to a few thinkers, the civic character, or civic virtue, emerges as a major guideline for building a harmonious, consistent citizenship. Precisely for this reason, it is argued that a character does not come into being in social vacuum, but only in the social fabric, reflecting itself on the regular, everyday conduct of members of society (JOHNSON; JOHNSON, 2006).

It is therefore essential for education for citizenship to leave off the idea of a civism that is both outside the subject and detached from a sense of community integration. Without the ethics component, social and political

integration would result in a mere adaptation to dominant tendencies (PEREIRA, 2007, p.71). Ultimately, a democracy that is not founded on its members' actual self-governing condition is not fully democratic. A democratic society where social order and cohesion are legitimately aimed at cannot overlook its members' individual predispositions. Nata and Menezes (2010, p.3397) emphasize this at an interpersonal level in heterogeneous societies, as follows:

The quality of our democracies relies on the political system itself or on citizens' 'virtues'. Democracy needs, among other things, citizens who participate in the political and civic life and who can both tolerate and accept the participation and identity of others, particularly when such others think differently from them and are themselves different from them.

Education philosopher John Covalleskie (1999) argues, moreover, that without the appropriation by citizens of a set of moral dispositions, the alternative way to watch over the maintenance of social order would be a system that would put democracy itself at stake. The author's thinking is expressed as follows:

In a democratic society, character does matter. For democracy to work, the citizens must have a settled predisposition to do the right thing far more often than not. For social order to obtain, either this must be true or the citizenry must be subject to such pervasive surveillance and regulation that their behavior is controlled despite the lack of this predisposition. No society in which supervision is the means of social control can lay legitimate claim to be democratic. Democracy requires citizens who are, literally, self-governing. Therefore, character formation – the fostering of virtue – is the critical role of education in any society, but perhaps

never more than in a society that would be democratic. (COVALESKIE, 1999, p. 181)

Despite the different opinions on the concept of citizenship, a consensus has been currently reached on the conviction that democracies' stability and the development of societies inspired by, and based on, human rights not only depend on a state's organization, but also on its citizen's individual virtues and attitudes of dialogue, respect, participation and responsibility (GONZÁLEZ *apud* VALENZUELA, 2011, p.44). Therefore, paraphrasing Barber (*apud* PACHECO, 2000, p.108), the phrase 'public school' conceives not only a definition of whom this education institution is primarily meant to serve, i.e., the public; it also holds a certain *notoriety* about the school that is deep-rooted in the understanding of what being public is, and in a *national, common civic identity*.

In line with the Comenian metaphor, a school is a citizenship workshop and constitutes nothing less than the foundation of the democratic system, particularly in a context where its protagonism as a socialization agent has increased (early entry into the education system, longer school hours and, finally, compulsory education – in Portugal there is a massification of preschool education, full-time school has become established, and compulsory education has been recently extended to 18 years of age). Moreover, the contemporary conjuncture, marked by the loss of traditional socialization institutions and the disorientation and insecurity of education interveners – due to postmodern thought's axiological plurality and corollaries (uncertainty, fleetingness and relativism) –, also stresses this necessity (CAMPOS, 2004; ESTRELA; CAETANO, 2010, p. 10).

On the trail of Montesquieu's thought, other thinkers such as Benjamin Franklin and, in the nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville, also manifested themselves, showing the need to attend to morality as a crucial factor for freedom and the achievement of prosperity at national level (BROGAN; BROGAN, 1999; MCDONNEL

*apud* RYAN; BOHLIN, 1999). In the same line of argument, denouncements have been made against the ruinous outcomes of not considering moral education as a decisive element, and this not only as a fulfillment of human nature, but due to the resulting implications to the future of individuals and the nation. It is noteworthy, considering the resulting social context, that 19 out of 21 remarkable civilizations have been found to have collapsed not because of their conquest by other peoples, but because of the moral decline that found its way into the heart of these civilizations (JOHNSON; JOHNSON, 2008; LICKONA, 2004; RYAN; LICKONA, 1987).

In this respect, one famous remark by pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus is recurrently invoked: character is destiny (BERKOWITZ; BIER, 2005; JOHNSON; JOHNSON, 2008; RYAN, 1986, 1999; RYAN; BOHLIN, 1999; SCHAPS et al., 2001). This is because living with others in society raises many challenges that each person has to deal with and overcome the best possible way, thus making a public morality real. Therefore, the Greek *polis* consciously fostered particular habits among its citizens, virtues that the Greek perceived as necessary to live in the city, in order to have a civilized life (RYAN; BOHLIN, 1999).

To Althof and Berkowitz (2006) and Johnson and Johnson (2008), solving conflicts and knowing how to deal fairly with differences, whether in an intergroup or an interpersonal perspective, are other aspects of the exercise of citizenship. In fact, these axis have been recently recognized by the *Citizenship Education Policy Study Project*, the goal of which was to identify the demands that contemporary citizenship would require in the twenty-first century. The basic characteristics a citizen should have for the sake global society's very stability would necessarily involve taking responsibility for one's own functions, as well as understanding, accepting and tolerating cultural differences, and solving conflicts in a non-violent, human rights-respecting way (NARVAEZ, 2001, p.4-5).

Therefore, we see the need to cater to the values of responsibility, tolerance and respect for others as the indispensable content of a citizenship that satisfies the demanding local, national and global challenges that the contemporary world holds for mankind. Living together in peace implies, therefore, the existence of a basic set of universal values, an ethics that is common to humanity, revolving around the rights of human beings and democracy. It requires also that the members of a community recognize and share the *soul of their collective identity*, which constitutes the center of gravity of the important education for citizenship (REIS-MONTEIRO, 2003)

Moreover, it is undeniable that an axiological core exists in which a few minimum universal principles underlie the generality of cultural and religious bases, so as to ensure the responsible freedom of human being and enable true intercultural dialogue (ARAÚJO, 2005; CARNEIRO, 1999). Therefore, a common ground of citizenship is necessary, in a soil of quicksands, in order to avoid the distress of ethical apathy and nihilism, and an increasing anomy.

### **Citizenship and social participation**

As a last point, democratic citizenship involves one's capacity to move beyond one's own individual interests in order to be able to commit to the good of the community (ALTHOF; BERKOWITZ, 2006, p. 500-501). In this conception, commitment and action in the civic and political domain cannot be dissociated from people's condition of being concerned with matters and valuing their action as they recognize that their contribution in this sphere is a valid, consequent one (COLBY, 2002). Althof and Berkowitz (2006, p.512) recognize that, by incorporating into the concept of citizenship a pro-social involvement within a democratic political system, this involvement relies heavily on each citizen's character.



In other words, the active citizenship pursued in the educational project is highly demanding, particularly in a society where immediate reward-craving individualism and frenzied consumerism proliferate, undermining the exercise of solidarity, empathy and compassion. Renouncing this huge social pressure and unselfishly giving a tangible contribution to others is truly a challenge nowadays. A wide, important class of moral and social obligations exists that is not reducible to the category of duties that may have become explicit or registered.

A democratic, liberal and responsible citizenship cannot be just a theoretical topic about abstractly conceived rights and obligations (CARR, 2006). Johnson and Johnson (2008) argue that the civic virtue exists when both the spirit and the letter of public obligations are fulfilled. Therefore, it is essential to privilege the development of a solid moral constitution that is informed by different human qualities. This dimension must be firmly fixed in ethical dispositions or character qualities such as honesty, justice, moderation, courage and compassion (CARR, 2006. P.451).

Besides the pro-social character of citizenship, we also need it to be an effective citizenship that values individuality and the personal fulfillment inherent to each person. In a more personal perspective, effective citizens should be able to guide their conduct and pursue their several projects in light of a personal conception of good that is strongly wished or that which is considered humanly worth obtaining. A citizenship so built is also the subject of formation or fostering of significant values and virtues (CARR, 2006, p.444). Therefore, Reis-Monteiro (2003) argues that education for citizenship is always associated, whether formally or not, with moral education, since, as Aristotle (1994) had stressed, the singularity of human beings in comparison with animals is shown in the unique capacity of understanding good and justice, evil and injustice.

## **Citizenship and the civic atmosphere in educational establishments**

Finally, the moral and civic atmosphere in school has always been an important facet of education; therefore, the newness in the Portuguese context is now attached to the levels of regularity and intensity, as well as to a gradual decay (CARVALHO, 2000; RANGEL, 2006). This decay has been more widely studied in Portugal since the 1980's, with researchers warning about this disturbing scenario formed by elements ranging from insults to improper language, to alienation, to drug use, to bullying (JUSTINO, 2005; MARQUES, 1998; WONG, 2011).

While it is sensible not to advocate a perspective of education or a strategy at the level of students' personal and social education solely based on the signs that society is currently showing, on the other hand, it would also be illegitimate not to take into account such calls that stress the need for intervention and can help us understand conspicuous facets of the educational context itself and its most direct interveners, i.e., students and their families. We recognize that a non-harmonious environment within an educational establishment disturbs the nature and purposes of educational acts; it also harms learning itself, the emotional and professional stability of teachers, and the general atmosphere, which is an equally relevant axis for promoting proper moral and civic education.

Whether we start from a pre-theoretical foundation or just follow common sense, it is hard to accept that children and young people can acquire and experience practical wisdom and justice in the absence of some level of control over their inclinations and desires (increase in obesity, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse and violence in its multiple expressions are the corollaries of neglecting moderation and self-control in people's lives) (CARR, 2006). There are obviously other factors contributing to this,

namely: irresponsible parenting, commercial exploitation of violence, sexual culture, easy access to pornography, alcohol and drugs, few, if any, examples considered as role models by the younger generations (CARR, 2006, p.452).

If students do not learn self-discipline and respect for others, they will continue to sexually exploit each other, and neither the number of clinical counseling sessions nor the access to contraceptives will be enough. If they do not have courage and justice habits, they will not end the phenomena of extortion, bullying and violence (KIDDER, 1991; KILPATRICK, 1992; LICKONA, 1993, 2004; RYAN; BOHLIN, 1999).

A democratic regime vitally needs intervention at the educational level, not only because of the aforementioned social violence and school problems, but also because of the worsening in intolerance and xenophobia, the decline in traditional values and authority, the disbelief in the rule of law, and the new ethical problems emerging from scientific-technological progress, particularly in the field of life sciences (REIS-MONTEIRO, 2003). Clearly, the lack of consensus does not lie in diagnosing the seriousness of the social and cultural situation, which is notorious in developed societies, but rather on what should be done, particularly through school as a social institution (CARR, 2006).

In the sphere of strategies related to social and personal development, we believe it is legitimate to consider the assumption that the moral pathology in school institutions is also rooted in the absence of a good character. Therefore, we argue that approaches related with character formation deal with the root of the problem, making them the best course of action to take in order to reverse the situation. This is because such approaches emphasize the emotional and action dimensions. Indeed, Marques (1999) argues that, in the Portuguese context, the civic atmosphere in schools in the last three decades (environment, practices and conducts) have been negatively affected by the devaluation of the affective and behavioral

aspects in the educational efforts for personal and social formation in schools.

## **Conclusion**

To finish, we reaffirm that the concept of citizenship, in the perspective of its multiple facets and implications, requires a moral dimension to be present, particularly in the context of a democracy, since it will have implications for social harmony and the achievement of a society's very prosperity. Public morality is a goal on which depend the cohesion and the quality of relationships among people and among the several groups that form the social fabric. In the complex social foundation, dissents emerge that must soon be overcome in a fair, orderly, sensible way. Now, the inexistence of a civic character overly hinders this intent.

In order to subsist, democracy needs, more than any other political system does, motivation for being virtuous, value sharing, and similar goals. People have to be conscious that they are part of a broader human group, thus caring about society as a whole and having moral bonds with the community (JOHNSON; JOHNSON, 2008, p.224). Another relevant aspect was stressing the necessary character of the phrase 'active and effective citizenship' as a precondition to form values, lest it become just a simulacrum.

In sum, the fostering of virtues must always be present in each and every personal development of a worthy, responsible and intervenient citizenship. Therefore, it does not seem to us exaggerated to assert that education for citizenship actually needs a foundation based on character education, as though a precondition to it- "a precondition of good citizenry is a virtuously ordered character" (CARR, 2006, p. 453). This was also the understanding in the English society, which has determined that education for citizenship become a compulsory discipline, in which the concept of character education clearly stands

out (ARTHUR, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2005; KERR, 2003; KIWANI, 2005).

In the light of what was argued above, education for citizenship should not be limited to transmitting and promoting notions or reflections about values. It is simultaneously relevant to create habits and attitudes through experiences in a process of acquiring and internalizing values, thus characterizing a character formation that breaks free from a solely cognitive paradigm of morality (CUNHA, 1996; FONSECA, 2007).

We recognize, however, that the positioning we have taken is a controversial one, although at no point did we put in question the other components (participation, political literacy, etc.). But simply the fact of marking the virtue component as key for being a citizen certainly triggers ideological and political questions, thus fitting into what Pacheco (2000, p.110-111) mentions as the “political language of character”. This language is used, according to his arguments, by conservative political movements whose framework emphasizes a citizenship associated with *morality projects* that conceive school and other socializing spaces (family and community) as privileged contexts for indoctrinating traditional values. Now this is, in our view, the reflection on the indoctrinating aspect of potentially depending on an ideological agenda, which means, ultimately, forming citizens who are unable to exercise their ethical self-determination.

However, we agree with Caetano’s (2010) lucid and preventive position concerning the possibility of a directive approach with safety and authority, yet without any manipulative traces. Nevertheless, we admit the intrinsic difficulties and tensions, which substantially derive from the complex compatibility between an education committed to maximum didactical persuasion and the development of students’ critical spirit and autonomy, as argued by Savater (2006, p. 165).

Several contemporary scholars (PEREIRA, 2007; ROLDÃO, 1992, 1999;

SANTOS, 2011) argue that education within the school context – by promoting individuals’ personal, social and moral formation based on consistent reference frameworks and claiming to itself principles inherent to the full dignity of the human person that are included in the constitutions of democratic states – translates a tension and a serious problem. Roldão (1992, p.106) interestingly specifies this latent tension, arguing that this educative process “occurs in the slippery border between indoctrination and the respect for free individual choice”, thus calling for strict faithfulness to the guiding compass of human rights (UNESCO, 1996), which favors defending people’s dignity, the right to personality development, and the fighting of all forms of discrimination (SANTOS, 2011).

The goal established in 1986 in Portugal’s Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo (Education System Bases Act) includes two binomials that might be considered as containing internal antinomies (freedom/responsibility and autonomy/solidarity). However, we support this composition and believe that the conception achieved lucidly captures the possibility of joining these dimensions together. Although freedom and autonomy are often considered as bastions of an emancipative, non-heteronomous education, they do not necessarily imply rejecting objective values, which are normative and guiding for delimited, directed conducts – such as responsibility and solidarity. Therefore, we argue that an active, responsible, free, autonomous, and solidary citizenship cannot emerge detached from the reflection and development of personal references and criteria that are conduct-normative. In fact, these guidelines are present in the conceptual framework still in effect in the founding text of the Act of 1986, the content of which laid the foundations for the emergence of education for citizenship in public elementary education in 2001, which remains until the present time as a pressing concern in the Portuguese school system.

We are finishing this reflection about the interstices of citizenship with a general

implication we consider relevant, and, lastly, with the still up-to-date thought of pedagogue Paulo Freire. The implication stems from the fact that, as the inevitability and urgency of the civic dimension of education are openly faced, issues related with the access to teaching – i.e., the initial, continued and specialist training of teachers – will have to be properly considered. In this perspective, Portugal's *Recomendação do Fórum de Educação para a Cidadania* (Recommendation of the Education for Citizenship Forum) says, with regard to human resources qualification, that the initial and continued training of teachers is crucial for the educational efforts in all school situations (FCG, 2008), particularly concerning education for citizenship.

The answer to the question of how to train, qualify and motivate educators for a positive character formation of the younger generations in the school context has to be made real in a serious way, while extracting its due consequences. As Narvaez and Lapsley (2008) correctly argue, it is not about discussing whether or not teachers should teach values, but how well equipped teachers are (and, we would add, how are they selected) to exercise, in the best possible way, their action in this complex, demanding process that is filled with interpersonal challenges and dilemmatic, morally defying issues.

In line with these arguments, Patrício (1995, 1997) has stressed the need for an anthropological competence, the essence of which is rooted in the construction of the human in man. Being an employee to the human, rather than just a public employee (or, according to Baptista (2005), a mere teaching-specialist-employee), requires teachers' training to include dimensions in the sphere of values that comprehend both reflection and the praxeological aspect.

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To close this article, we quote the words of the author of *Pedagogy of Freedom*, who appropriately conceived education in a holistic, integral way. In this perspective, the author emphasizes the ontological and anthropological nature of the human being, and stresses that citizenship derives from the educational process, which is *substantively* formative. A progressive, emancipatory education cannot neglect the dimension of civic virtues, nor can individual freedom and autonomy be confused with licentiousness and a solely science and technique-oriented pedagogy.

As men and women inserted in and formed by a socio-historical context of relations, we become capable of comparing, evaluating, intervening, deciding, taking new directions. And thereby constituting ourselves as ethical beings. It is in our becoming that we constitute our being so. Because the condition of becoming is the condition of being. In addition, it is not possible to imagine the human condition disconnected from the ethical condition. Because to be disconnected from it or to regard it as irrelevant constitutes for us women and men a transgression. For this reason, to transform the experience of educating into a matter of simple technique is to impoverish what is fundamentally human in this experience: namely, its capacity to form the human person. If we have any serious regard for what it means to be human, the teaching of contents cannot be separated from the moral formation of the learners. To educate is essentially to form. (FREIRE, 1998, p.38-9) N.T.: Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom*. (Rowan and Littlefield, 1998).

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