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Making Citizenship Education Work:
European and Greek Perspectives

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This paper employs a civic learning approach to discussing recent developments in citizenship education through an analysis of contemporary democratic thinking. By reviving Europe's great democratic tradition in the sense of a liberal republicanist understanding of citizenship, it argues the case for the transformation of democratic norms into policy structures, educational initiatives and school curricula. Central to the analysis is the Council of Europe's EDCHRE programme and the lessons to be drawn from this uniquely observed pan-European project that equips young people to participate actively in society and in daily school life. The paper makes an effort to present and evaluate various aspects of the Greek school curriculum that are relevant to the study. The general conclusion to be drawn is that citizenship education relates to the search for a 'democracy of ideas' in Pettit's sense of the term that can link together two different incentives of civic learning: on the one hand, the notion of a participatory ethos at the traditional state level and, on the other, the practice of active citizenship alongside and even beyond that level.

Keywords: citizenship education; civic learning; republican polity.

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1. Introduction

The issues raised in this paper ultimately come down to a simple question: how do we educate citizens? In answering this diachronical question which, as phrased, implies a causal link between education and democracy –in that citizenship education is central to democratic life–, the paper draws from republican theory and the experience of the Council of Europe's programme 'Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education' (EDC/HRE) to stress the continuing relevance and importance of civic learning to democratic society. The EDC part of the programme aims to promote knowledge about democratic norms, practices and institutions by employing young people to participate actively in society as well as in everyday school life. In doing so, it helps schoolchildren to develop civic skills, democratic attitudes and a participative culture. The HRE component aims to promote respect for human dignity and to raise awareness about human rights norms, mechanisms and procedures at both national and international levels. The argument put forward is that human rights education encourages principled social action which in turn enhances the protection of human rights in society. Overall, this has been the first comprehensive and, at the policy level,

systematically implemented pan-European project designed to encourage young people to play an active part in democratic life at both school and societal levels.

In doing so, it helps schoolchildren from 47 different yet interrelated national educational settings to develop a more profound understanding of democratic rights and duties, while it furthers their civic competences in practicing democratic school governance and in acquainting themselves with novel accounts of 'the political' that, in an ever globalizing, if not already globalized world environment, increasingly transcend pre-existing categories of social and political organization. The Council programme contributes to the internalization of democratic norms, by offering an open public forum, through which members of the educational community learn how to prevent violence, intolerance and discrimination in European society and beyond. Of importance in that regard is also the programme's search for civic solidarity and intercultural toleration: to encourage young people to engage themselves in open and structured public debates about the conditions of their collective symbiosis, and about the merits of participatory democracy – what it is, how it works, why it should be encouraged. It is about the cultivation of discursive, interacting and intercultural skills, through which students are allowed to become constructively engaged in the civic and political aspects of public life. Finally, it is about ways of underlining the merits and opportunities that active democratic citizenship entails for a fair, vibrant and tolerant political society composed of informed and responsible citizens. In these regards, therefore, a

civic learning approach to the study of democratic citizenship and human rights education is instructive of the kind of educational policies Europe needs.

2. A Virtuous Cause

The seismic changes that took place post-1989 offered a platform which facilitated the emergence of a consensus among national and European experts over the importance of civic education for the construction and dissemination of a shared democratic culture. Since then, we have been witnessing a systematic revision and re-evaluation of programmes related, explicitly or less so, to education for democracy. Such attempts have had a positive impact to European civil and civic society with regards to the promotion of new collective responses to emergent demands associated with the teaching and learning of democratic (or active) citizenship and human rights. Today, exactly twenty years since the fall of the Berlin wall, the dynamic interplay between Europe, as an organized collectivity of interlocking institutions of governance, and 'the civic', as an expression of citizens' participation in public affairs, forms part of a rapidly growing democratic discourse, involving multiple actors and institutions at both national and translational levels (Schmidt, 2006; Nanz, 2006). In view of these developments, the Council of Europe has taken the lead to impact on the democratic quality of governance, by advancing the significance of a core set of democratic values related to Europe's civic culture; namely, by investing in the promotion of 'democratic citizenship through

education'. Since 1997 the Council has thus actively promoted a large-scale campaign on civic learning, which was soon linked to the task of human rights education; to an extent that both objectives became a priority for the Council's mission. Among the themes included in these initiatives, central to their implementation have been the notions of civic freedom, intercultural learning, toleration and, especially in view of Europe's multiple co-existing political identities and affiliations, the development of plural citizenship. Such democratic properties are not only linked with Europe's long-standing liberal and republican traditions, but also with efforts to create a transnational civic space comprised of free and equal citizens.

According to the Council, the EDC/HRE programme consists of three core aims: a) to strengthen democratic societies by fostering a vibrant democratic culture, b) to create a sense of belonging and commitment to the maintenance and endurance of democratic society, and c) to raise awareness at the grassroots of shared values as the constitutive basis for a freer, more open and, crucially, more tolerant European society. Gollop and Kraft (2008:5) make the point well: 'An open pluralist society relies on a set of binding rules and strong institutions to enforce these rules, but perhaps even more on a shared set of values among the citizens. These values include tolerance, mutual respect, appreciation of fair compromise, non-violence, and the ability to deal with open situations of disagreement and controversy in which issues have not yet been decided'. Linked to the above is the inclusive nature of the EDC/HRE programme and its intended policy to promoting a lifelong perspective on

strengthening civic competence through the advancement of core democratic skills at all educational levels. In general, the programme's success rests largely on the combined effects of the following pillars: advancing the dynamics of capacity-building, encouraging large-scale networking, instituting dissemination practices, and promoting the symmetrical sharing of information and activities across all age groups and social classes; its emphasis being not only on the educational community, but also on policy-makers, NGOs, regional and international institutions, voluntary and professional bodies as well as youth organisations. The programme calls attention to the role education plays at both formal and informal levels and structures of civic learning, whilst providing the participating countries and institutions with specific educational tools to promote the values of peace education and to take over ownership of a genuinely collective enterprise. The following aims and strategic priorities have been agreed among the agencies involved for the period 2006-09: a) to promote education policy development and implementation for democratic citizenship and social cohesion, b) to advance new roles and new competences of teachers and other members of the educational community, and c) to strengthen democratic governance in schools. Specific objectives of the EDC/HRE programme, as set by the Council's *Learning and Leaving Democracy for All* policy document, include the following:

- Defining and emphasising the programme's role in promoting social cohesion, equality and intercultural dialogue,

- Developing criteria for competencies and assessment in this field,

- Developing and adopting framework policy documents setting out the basic principles, offering guidelines for action and a follow-up mechanism,

- Developing support systems in the field of awareness-raising and training, as well as production and dissemination of pedagogical material,

- Promoting exchange and co-operation in teacher training in EDC/HRE, aiming at creating sustainable mechanisms in this field,

- Strengthening democratic governance in educational institutions,

- Fostering a comprehensive quality assurance system in the field,

- Collecting and sharing good practice in the field.

In addition to the above, the recently published Huddleston Report (2008:2) argued that the Council is well-positioned to promote civic educational partnerships in EDC/HRE at grassroots level with the view to a) exploring different understandings and experiences of such partnerships, b) exploring and disseminating examples of good practice, and c) making recommendations for future action. The idea here is that there exist issues which cannot –and, more importantly perhaps, should not– be solved by state action alone, especially in tackling specific implementation problems: 'In considering the advantages of

partnership working in this field, participants distinguished between three different reasons for bringing together state and non-state action in this field: pragmatic [functional reasons such human or financial resources], educational [participation in civil society enhances skills of active citizenship], and critical [civil society prevents ideological or political bias]' (Huddleston, 2008:7). In considering ways in which the Council could better support civic partnerships in EDC/HRE, the Huddleston Report (2008:17) included some practical suggestions:

- 'to establish a collaborative platform to circulate information between existing networks and communities and help to develop new ones,

- to set up a working party to develop a code of practice for civic partnerships,

- to develop partnership guidelines, possibly in the context of the proposed framework document,

- to achieve a balance of state and non-state organisation representatives at international forums on basis of teams established within each state,

- to develop the newly-established Oslo-based European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship as a hub of research on civic partnerships,

- to recognise the ongoing partnership between the Council and NGOs,

- to develop the notion of a human right to EDC/HRE'.

It is also worth noting that an Evaluation Conference for 2006-09 will be held in 2010 as agreed at the 15th meeting of EDC/HRE National Co-ordinators in March 2009.

Underlying the Council's efforts to promote social cohesion and inclusion at all educational levels is a belief that European societies need to invest in a systematic and innovative way in developing mutually reinforcing understandings of 'citizenhood' –and, in political terms, even 'demos-hood'– which escape the minimal expectations and requirements of the classical citizenship model (or status), consisting in the idea of citizens exercising their political rights by voting in competitive periodic elections. As the Council states: 'Democratic citizenship is not limited to the citizen's legal status and to the voting right this status implies. It includes all aspects of life in a democratic society'. Indeed, the idea of democratic citizenship refers to a process by which the members of a polity are enabled to cultivate their democratic potential with the view to engaging themselves, actively and determinately, in all matters that affect the quality of their collective symbiosis. Such a potential forms the basis not only of making use of citizenship's legal or political rights and entitlements, but also of equipping citizens with specific skills and competences that would help them engage in meaningful debates about cultural

understandings and reciprocities. Hence also the relationship between this wider conception of democratic citizenship and the making of informed public choices by citizens through deliberative outcomes. This also a democratic means for active citizens to gain a sense of democratic civility through their meaningful engagement in the resolution of commonly shared issues, as well as a sense of belonging –or even of multiple co-existing belongings– encouraged by a democratic environment which in turn allows for inclusionary civic practices. More on the above, this notion of citizenship also provides the mechanism to put into question unprincipled policies, intolerant or essentialist identities and, crucially in the present-day liberal times, individualistic attitudes, offering instead ways of reaching public agreements and understandings within a 'democracy of ideas' (Pettit, 2005).

The dramatic changes leading to post-Wall Europe, coupled with the emergent democratic challenges experienced by governments and citizens alike, raise the issue for a new conception of citizenship, both in theory as well as in practice. The events that prompted the departure form the classical citizenship model, as noted by the Council in 2004 in the drafting of an educational tool prepared for teacher training purposes within the thematic content of the EDC/HRE programme, include:

- ethnic conflicts and nationalism,
- global threats and insecurity,
- development of new information and communication technologies,

- environmental problems,

- population movements,

- emergence of new forms of formerly suppressed collective identities,

- demand for increasing personal autonomy and new forms of equality,

- weakening of social cohesion and solidarity among people,

- mistrust of traditional political institutions, forms of governance and political leaders,

- increasing interconnectedness regionally and internationally.

It is apparent that 'new kinds of citizens are required: citizens that are not only informed, but also *active* – able to contribute to the life of their community, their country and the wider world, and *take more responsibility* for it'. It is also stated that traditional citizenship models 'are not equipped to create the kind of active, informed and responsible citizenry that modern democracies require…[as] they are failing to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing…environment – by continuing to:

- deny learners the opportunity to explore and discuss controversial social and political problems by emphasising the teaching of academic knowledge, at a time when they appear to be losing interest in traditional politics and forms of political engagement,

- focus on fragmented disciplinary knowledge and classic 'teacher-textbook-student' learning at a time of rapid advance in new information and communication technologies,

- restrict civic education to factual information about 'ideal' systems at a time when citizens need to be taught practical skills of participation in the democratic process themselves,

- nurture dominant cultures and 'common' national loyalties at a time when political and legal recognition of cultural difference has come to be seen as a source of democratic capital,

- detach education from the personal lives of learners and the interests of the local community at a time when social cohesion and solidarity is declining,

- reinforce the traditional divide between formal and informal and non-formal education at a time when education needs to address the needs of lifelong learning,

- promote state-focused forms of education and training at a time of increasing interconnectedness and interdependence at a regional and international level'.

'What is then required', states the document, 'are new forms of education that prepare learners for *actual involvement* in society … rooted in real life issues affecting learners and their communities, and taught through participation in school life as well as through the formal curriculum'. Through the EDC/HRE programme, new teaching methods have emerged, setting in train novel learning relationships that rest upon a teaching philosophy which stresses the importance of current social and political affairs in understanding and evaluating historical systems, and in investing in critical thinking and teaching

skills related to the conjoint functions knowledge transmission, co-operative working and professional autonomy. In relation to the rapidly changing norms and conditions of civic learning in Europe's educational environment, the document reaches the conclusion that citizenship and human rights education 'requires a change in how we perceive learning, from an idea of learning as teacher-centred to learning through experience, participation, research and sharing'.

3. A Great Democratic Tradition

For all its conceptual richness and interpretative antinomies, democracy constitutes a method for organizing public life that reflects the concerns and articulates the interests of the demos in the political process. More than that, democracy is the only form of government which ensures, both institutionally as well as socio-psychologically, that the legitimate basis of all public authority, political or otherwise, is the demos and no one else. Institutionalized public control, meaningful representation of citizens in the institutions of the polity, respect for individual and collective freedoms through the rule of law, and the setting of civic inclusion mechanisms are democracy's defining properties, with the members of the demos participating in the making of authoritative political decisions that affect their lives. In general terms, two distinctive views of democracy have emerged over time: the first, in line with Schumpeter's (1943) theory, understands democracy, first and foremost, as an

institutional arrangement for arriving at publicly binding decisions, whose legitimacy rests upon the conduct of competitive periodic elections. In that sense, democracy is closer to becoming an end-in-itself, irrespective of the actual content of the decisions produced in the context of a representative assembly. The second view, drawing from a republican understanding of the polity and, hence, from a positive conception of liberty, whereby participation in the affairs of the polity becomes a means of self-realization, takes democracy as a means of maximizing civic freedom through the institution of active citizenship.

The crucial issue, however, at least as reflected in this paper, is not between a value-driven approach to the merits of democratic participation and the competitive democratic design advanced by conventional electoral democracy. Rather, it is about how to involve citizens in the deliberation, formulation as well as the actual taking of authoritative political decisions, instead of being passively submitted to them. This, in many respects, reveals one of the great dilemmas facing contemporary democratic polities: whether or not to pursue a strategy for 'democracy in input', through active civic involvement, or 'democracy in output', by focusing on policy outcomes and, by extension, on an output-oriented form of legitimacy (Scharpf, 1999). Whatever the preferred definition of democracy may be, the term relates both to the safeguarding of a pluralistic form of society and to upgrading the participative potential of the demos in the governing process. As put by Dewey (1916: 87) almost a century ago: "A democracy is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint

communicated experience'. It is thus a synthesis of an ideal and a procedural arrangement, which combines distinctive norms of polity, allows for various forms of political action and contestation, and allows for a participative public sphere, within which citizens engage in meaningful debates about their political constitution. Underlying these definitions, however, rests the idea that in a democracy it is the demos that steers the political process and controls its outcomes, implying that the concentration of political authority in unaccountable hands is incompatible with the idea of democracy, whose 'true' nature, accordingly, can be said to refer both to a set of core political values shared by the community of citizens as well as to the procedural means through which these values are embodied and reflected in the actual workings of public institutions.

Contemporary democratic thinking has focused more on the question of which set of institutions can best ensure the transformation of democratic norms into policy structures. For many of its students, democracy is taken as an interactive and at times reflective process between government and the demos, where ultimate authority to reach a binding decision is located in the demos. But for democracy to exist as such, it should maintain high levels of public accountability over elected representatives and policy-makers. Accountability may then be seen as a dynamic process, by which those who govern are publicly held to account for their actions or lack of action. This can be exercised in practice through parliamentary control, court rulings, discussions in the media, pressure from interest groups and social movements, or from

individual citizens. In a period, however, when transnational forces challenge relations not only among but also within states, there is no reason for democracy to remain confined within state boundaries. Not only does this view contradict the Hobbesian 'realist' doctrine of international politics, in that the latter is not subjected to moral principles; it goes further, taking 'democracy within borders' as equally important to 'democracy across borders'. It thus challenges the conventional view that democracy is exhausted by the institutions of the modern nation-state as the ultimate source of legitimate political authority within a territory. If, then, intrastate democracy is to be sustained and further advanced, it needs to keep pace with the emergence of large-scale regional and international formations, whose decisions should also reflect popular sentiments.

As decision-making is conditioned by a plurality of networks and regimes of transnational interaction, new political uncertainties emerge, contesting the supremacy of the state as the ultimate decision-maker in domestic and external affairs. In the case of the European Union (EU) –taken as an exercise in polity-building that represents a profound locking together of states and demoi– a timely yet acute issue has emerged; that of holding supranational actors and institutions accountable to a nascent demos (Chryssochoou, 1998). This can be achieved by discussing, defending and justifying the respective actions or inaction of the central political authorities on issues vital to the member state demoi. Therefore, the idea of 'transnational democracy' emerges as an alternative to unaccountable and technocratic rule, suggesting ways of pursuing

and enacting a cluster of democratic rights within a multilevel political ordering (Anderson, 2000). The aim is to build legitimate instruments of collective governance, whose outcomes are accountable to a civic-minded demos. Following the systemic changes post-1989, the emergent European order has structurally altered the role of states in determining the duties of their respective citizenries. It follows that, as the quest for common democratic arrangements will grow stronger, the questions that further integration generates for the theory and practice of democracy are far from easy to resolve. In the case of composite polities consisting of historically constituted nations – what could be called a 'synarchy' of entwined sovereignties (Chryssochoou, 2009), or a 'sympolity' of quasi-autonomous units (Tsatsos, 2009)– the embodiment of democratic norms in the common working arrangements is crucial for the political viability of good governance beyond as well as alongside the traditional state level.

But this does not require a constitutional revolution or the making of a postnational entity with a single locus of authority. Rather, it heralds the need for a 'civic contract' among states, peoples and the central institutions (Lavdas and Chryssochoou, 2005). By embedding the democratic qualities of the parts in an 'inclusive' polity composed of free and equal citizens, the idea of a European civic ordering does not threaten the constitutive integrities, cultures or identities, as it aims to strike a mutual agreement about 'the democratic rules of the game' and the limits of acceptable behaviour within a polycentric 'community of communities', where the subunits are well-governed and well-

served by the central arrangements. Accordingly, the power to make publicly binding decisions should be given to distinct domains of authority according to the conjoint principles of democratic pluralism: decisional closeness to the demos, multiple checks and balances, and policy responsiveness.

The promotion of democratic practices in the 'inclusive' polity offers a kind of 'popular power' which demands the articulation of citizens' interests at the larger level of aggregation. Without leading to a diffusion of national democratic autonomy, this view of democracy is suited to better equipping citizens to engage themselves in European processes – it thus aims at transforming their democratic potential from being merely a collection of national voters to becoming an agency of civic change within a 'polycultural' setting (Lavdas and Chryssochoou, 2007). In sketching out a normative perspective on what it means to be a citizen in and of Europe, a first point is that the nationally-determined fix between norms of citizenship and the territorial state is being eroded. A new challenge has emerged, as citizenship establishes a kind of civic solidarity in the sense of a Habermasian public sphere, encouraging democratic will-formation (Habermas, 1996). But perhaps the most celebrated property of citizenship is the actual range and depth of participatory opportunities it offers the members of the demos for them to fulfil their democratic potential. Within this embracing civic space, the notion of civic competence becomes crucial to the very idea of democracy: the institutional capacity of citizens as social equals to enter the realm of political

influence with a view to sustaining a vital public sphere and to creating a sense of civic attachment based on a shared sense of the public good.

From a citizenship education standpoint, the promotion of civic competence embraces a central task of democratic life: active involvement in the affairs of the polity through education. Accordingly, the democratic potential of civic education appears to be threefold: a) it gives access and voice to the demos, b) it motivates greater civic participation, and c) it strengthens the bonds of belonging to an active polity. This means that the distribution of civic competence passes through the capacity of citizens to determine the functions of the polity to which they belong, national or transnational. For what remains vital to the moral ontology of citizenship education as well as to the value spheres of civicness is the endurance of an inclusive civic space, capable of accommodating difference, whilst acting as a meeting point of democratic ideas and commonly shared concerns –that is, a public forum allowing for the emergence of common democratic "grounds"– among diverse citizenries. From a developmental democratic perspective, civic norms may bring about a kind of *civitas Europae* in the form of a 'Republic of Europeans' characterized by shared notions of belonging to an extended (and, by its composition, multilevel and polycultural) public sphere. The making of a European civic space composed of multiple forms of fellowship and non-territorial associative relations aims to harness the participative ethos of a composite citizenry, whose members are in a position –in both institutional and socio-psychological terms– to direct their democratic claims and concerns to, and via, the central

institutions, in ways which reflect a distinctive (and shared) sense of demos-hood as well as a strong normative commitment to democratic empowerment in relation to the larger polity. In that regard also, it is fair to suggest that the relationship between the promotion of civic learning and the social legitimation of Europe becomes a synergetic one, assigning new meaning to citizen-polity relations.

At a macro-level, the triptych symbiosis–synergy–osmosis corresponds best to the three stages in the making of a composite European demos: the first describes the current interplay between Europe, as a compound polity, and the segments, as distinct but constitutive units; the second points to the development of horizontal links among the component demoi and a corresponding strengthening of existing ties among their respective political elites; and the third represents a culmination of the previous stages in a democratic public sphere. In that sense, the strengthening of civic competence through citizenship education can be seen as a call to substantive democratic reforms in advancing the quality of social and political governance. The significance of tying the self-image of political elites to the dialectic between democratic citizenship education and transnational demos-formation is that no common civic identity may come into being unless all major actors in the process see themselves as part of a multilevel political space that has to evolve from the lower level 'upwards' – i.e., the everyday networks of civic learning and engagement. Of importance, here, is for a core set of democratic values to

be identified, acknowledged, debated, challenged and ultimately accommodated through the institutions and practices of civic deliberation.

If democracy is the highest form of civic association that human agency has ever devised –within a community, state, commonwealth or even in a nascent post-statist form of polity– the notion of 'civic Europe' does not refer only to a normative transformation derived from a 'pure' political-sociological approach, but rather points to a participative public process carried through formal and informal instruments of civic learning. What is central, then, to the making of a shared European civicness (as a principled and active form of democratic politicality) is a vibrant civic space to bestow Europe with a distinctive model of democratic citizenship. But the development of a shared civic identity among the constituent publics has not (as yet) met the institutionalisation of civic competence at the larger level. In other words, we have not witnessed the institutionalisation of a European public sphere, within which citizens deliberate through public argument and reasoning over ways of improving the democratic quality of their collective symbiosis. The democratic order envisaged here refers to discourse-centred processes of civic engagement. Whether or not formally instituted, such processes would serve the goal of a polycentric public sphere for diverse citizens to mobilize their democratic energies outside the state framework. But in the absence of a principled public discourse to steer Europe's civic orientation, one cannot expect the transformation of the larger unit into a purposeful *res publica*. This commitment performs a crucial formative function by encouraging

participation and by setting the foundations for a new polity setting, where citizenship amounts to something more than the aggregate of its parts; it becomes a normative quality to guarantee certain core democratic values (Lavdas and Chryssochoou, 2007).

In general, citizenship education in Europe is crucial for the development of a deliberative civic space that captures the imagination of an open, tolerant and fair European society. It is part of an interminable quest for 'the good polity', which in the case of Europe refers to the idea and means of bringing about a shared understanding of civicness among distinct culturally defined and politically organized demoi. Such conceptions are part of a demanding intellectual current: the search for a democratic way of constituting and organising a transnational public space that is capable of capturing the dialectic among the component national public spheres, through the institutionalisation of EDC/HRE policies. This accords with a civic notion of Europe that rests upon input-oriented forms of legitimacy. Since the mid-1990s, a 'normative turn' became evident in the study of Europe as an ordered collective arrangement composed of diverse arenas for social and political action as well as of different sites of democratic contestation: a 'postnational constellation', to recall Habermas (2000), which combines unity and diversity, transcends pre-existing territorial boundaries (and interests) and projects a plurinational configuration of authority (Walker, 2003).

Developing common democratic 'grounds' through citizenship education helps citizens to capture the complexity and pluralism of the European condition, while discursive and input-oriented practices of civic inclusion encourage the conduct of Europe-wide public debates. The discursive outcome of such practices may not necessarily lead to a consensus view of the issues discussed through forms of public reasoned argument and persuasion; it may well reveal the benefits of what has been termed 'a public discourse of disagreement', giving people the opportunity to advance their awareness of the pluralism of views and dispositions within a democratic whole. Citizenship education is, then, a means of bringing the constituent groups of European society into equilibrium with one another, whilst promoting those learning practices and outcomes which can facilitate 'a pedagogy of democratic civility': a critical and at the same time accommodating educational environment which promotes structured ways of generating dialogical encounters within a community of equals. This pluralist depiction brings about a sense of being and belonging to a participative educational setting. At the societal level, the idea accords with a genuine European public process within which diverse people interact in multiple political spaces and civic arenas.

Citizenship education embodies a strong normative commitment around three interrelated pillars: a) to foster civic deliberation with the view to promoting and, where necessary, defending the common good, b) to instil on young people a certain understanding of identity which values the norms of reciprocity and toleration, and c) to make students utilize, in an assertive

manner, the opportunities offered by the setting up of democratic contestatory institutions founded on the notions of republican citizenship and civic freedom. Such a democratic setting is, from a liberal republican angle, is committed to offering citizens 'undominanted' (or quality) choice (Pettit, 1997), as well as to advancing the quality of public controls over all –actually existing or potential, arbitrary or even legally grounded– dangers of domination. Moreover, this neo-republican view takes civic participation not as a democratic end-in-itself, but as a means of ensuring a dispensation of non-domination by others (or non-arbitrary rule). Another variation on the theme of *vita activa* takes participation as a process of constructing a public discourse that promotes civic solidarity among culturally diverse publics and opposes arbitrariness from any external interference or intervention, be it intentional or not. Here, Pettit's instrumental theory of freedom as non-domination strikes a delicate balance between negative and positive forms of liberty, whilst offering a blueprint for democratic action, whose value does not only rest upon the philosophical level, but also concerns the democratic quality of everyday politics and, by extension, official governmental choices. To the extent, therefore, that citizenship education and, more generally, education for democracy, are constitutive of civic freedom itself, one could also imagine the gradual formation of a *res publica composita* composed of informed, interactive and responsive citizens, where multiple normative commitments and democratic aspirations can bring about a shared sense of a collective civicness – or, transferring the debate at school level, an environment free from the ill effects of indoctrinated practices;

a school that embraces a philosophy of critical pedagogy, giving perspective and engagement to learners and teachers alike.

4. A View from Greece

The above discussion revealed particular ways of addressing and responding to Europe's emerging democratic challenges in relation to the continuing relevance and importance of citizenship education. Put differently, it offered a set of ideas, both foundational and developments, about the constitution of a European civic space as a condition for uniting –not unifying– the constituent publics and their respective public spheres into a polycultural and polycentric *res publica*. In doing so, it advanced the thesis of republican citizenship as an appropriate ground for institutionalizing civic competence and fostering an interactive demos, arguing that both tasks are compatible with Europe's character as a multilevel –and plurinational– community not only of states, but also of citizens. Turning to the issue of constructing a European civicness, the point to make is that, by reviving Europe's republican tradition, it is possible to decouple nationhood and demos-hood: to dissociate the issue of diverse people constructing new forms of 'politicality' from (ethno)cultural and emotional aspects of participation or belonging. This notion of shared European civicness bring together –though the elaboration of civic educational policies, strategies and school curricula–different political communities, civic spaces and public spheres. What follows in this section assesses the Greek experience with civic

education and the extent to which the country has faced up to the challenges of democratic citizenship through education.

To start with, the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, in its contribution to a comparative study published by the European Commission in May 2005 in the context of the Eurydice programme on *Citizenship Education in Schools in Europe*, refers to Article 16 of the Greek Constitution in relation to citizens' rights and obligations: 'Educating Greeks to become free and responsible citizens is one of the basic aims of education, which constitutes the main goal of the State'. The study continues to ascertain: 'Greek policy aims to modernise the Greek curriculum. In particular, an educational reform aiming to make education universally available, raise all-round educational attainment and modernise education has been successfully implemented. This reform is contained in Law 1566/85, which has three components, namely "didactic" (practice-oriented), "pedagogic" and one concerned with participation'. Even though no specific definition of what is meant by 'responsible citizenship' exists in the Constitution *per se*, the term derives from various references made in the Constitution to 'individual and social rights' (Articles 4-25), 'civic rights' (Articles 51 and 52), as well as 'civic obligations' (Article 120).

As for the main orientations of Greek educational policy, the paper states with reference to Law 1566/85, Article 1: 'The general aim of primary and secondary education is to contribute to full harmonious and balanced

development of the emotional, psychological and physical capacities of pupils, in order for them to be given the opportunity to fully shape their personalities and be creative in their life irrespective of their origin or sex. One of the special objectives of primary and secondary education is "to help pupils become free, responsible and democratic citizens, as well as citizens capable of fighting for national independence and democracy". Other special objectives are the cultivation of creative and critical thinking and the development of a spirit of friendliness and cooperation with people from all over the world. Freedom of religion is acknowledged as an inviolable right of citizens. Article 28 defines "further education and postgraduate studies" of teachers in such a way that they can be informed and functional within the spirit of contemporary society. Article 37 refers to the establishment of "school professional guidance", which aims to counsel and train pupils so that they can comprehend their skills and their responsibility for developing them and choosing a career, which will ensure their *active participation in the labour market*' (emphasis in the original).

With regard to the Greek approach to citizenship education, as reflected in the curriculum, the paper states: 'In primary education, citizenship education is both a cross-curricular educational topic and a separate compulsory subject in its own right. The separate subject of social and civic education is taught for one period a week in the fifth and sixth years of primary education. In lower and upper secondary education, citizenship education is offered as a separate subject in its own right and also integrated into several subjects (see below) …

In the third year of lower secondary education, the separate subject *social and civic education* is taught in two periods a week. In the second year of upper secondary education, the separate subject of *introduction to the law and civic institutions* is taught in two periods a week' (emphasis in the original). The paper also affirms that compulsory education curricula encompass a cross-curricular dimension. In particular: 'This redesign is centred on an experiential approach to knowledge which, among other things, is also based on "education of the citizen" and aims to develop the social skills of students, namely the ability to acknowledge and accept differences, resolve conflicts without violence, assume civic responsibility, establish positive and creative, rather than oppressive, relations, and take an active part in decision-making and collective forms of democratic shared rule. An attempt is thus made to adopt at school level effective teaching models that focus more on research, co-operation and action. The unified cross-curricular framework of primary education has the following aims for citizenship education: intellectual development through an understanding of the different values of human society; moral development through helping pupils to critically evaluate issues of equality, justice, and individual and other rights and obligations in different societies; and cultural development through helping pupils to acquire a national and cultural identity and understand the nature and role of different groups to which they belong, and the multiple identities they possess'.

With reference to daily life at school, an issue linked with school culture and participation in community life, the paper states: 'Since the approach to

knowledge (which includes the education of a citizen) has been redesigned as an experiential one by Law No. 1566/85 on education, current teaching models focusing on research, cooperation and action are supported by a simultaneous change of ethos at schools. The objectives of citizenship education are served by attempts to make schools a space for collective action and are supported by existing institutions, such as pupil communities and partnerships. Every teacher plays a major role in creating the teaching framework of the class, which may be characterized as "teacher centred"'. Also: 'The choice of teaching methods that, through the development of dialogue, debate, identification of problems and the expression of different opinions, would lead students to take and consciously carry out decisions, depends to some extent on the personality, studies and training of teachers as much as on the context in which they work. Extra-curricular educational activities may raise the social awareness of the students, although initiatives of this kind are marginal in the Greek educational system'. The paper states examples of interdisciplinary and extra-curricular activities relating to EU citizenship, including the exchange of information with neighbouring schools that took part in European programmes, interviews with Greek members of the European Parliament, participation in student exchange programmes, etc.

An *All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies* published by the Council of Europe in 2004 offers some further information regarding the approach developed by Greece. Civic education modules are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes at both

primary and upper secondary educational levels, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, introduction to law and political institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation and its roots, and sociology. To give an example, the module 'European Civilisation and its Roots', taught at the first grade of secondary education (upper level), examines the history and evolution of Europe and its distinctive social and political formations. In particular, it looks at the development of European society, the nature of power and politics in Europe, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the notion of a 'Citizens' Europe' (with reference to parliamentarism and the rule of law), currents in European cultural development and the formation of the EU.

At the second grade of secondary education (upper level), a module under the title 'Introduction to Law and Political Institutions' brings together the disciplines of law and political science, focusing on the nature of politics and the role of political science, the theory and practice of active citizenship, elements of democratic government, the legal and political system of the EU, social norms and the law, the Greek political and judicial system, and issues in international organization. With regard to the international dimension, it is important for students to develop a more profound understanding on how international society is being structured as well as on the workings and role of major international institutions, including the process and dynamics of European integration. The module is expected to be replaced in 2009 by a new module on 'Politics and Law', including such crucial themes as the nature and

organization of a democratic polity; the institution of citizenship at national as well as European contexts; the study of novel forms of individual and collective rights and liberties; an understanding of political (rather than merely or primarily judicial) constitutionalism, and the rule of law (linked to the importance of understanding different legal norms); a comprehensive account of the role and influence of the media in contemporary liberal societies; and various developments in European and international affairs, including the institutional system and policy evolution of the EU, the changing norms and conditions of international law –conventional as well as humanitarian– the nature and structure of international society, etc. Civic education in Greece is also linked with the rich tradition of its ancient history and philosophical movements. A relevant module at the secondary upper level on 'Social and Political Organisation in Ancient Greece' examines the nature and development of the city-state, the classical and Hellenistic periods, social institutions and everyday life in ancient Greek, the road to democracy and the functions of a democratic polity, and the formation of unions of city-states (sympolities) that preceded the confederal systems.

At the third grade of lower level secondary education, students engage themselves in the study of forms of citizenship, the organisation of social institutions and social groups, the understanding of culture, the process of socialisation and social accountability, the democratic process and the constitution, the notion of civil society, the nature of international society, issues in international relations and the EU. Linked with the above are the

themes and concepts examined at the secondary upper level under the heading 'History of the Social Sciences', with emphasis on the relationship between science and the social sciences, leading thinkers in social and political thought, the study of social methods and social behaviour, and the contribution of the social sciences in contemporary Greece and the EU. Through these modules, among others that are currently being taught at the fifth and sixth grade of the primary educational level, it is expected that students cultivate specific educational and social skills that allow them to develop an active interest in public affairs and acquaint themselves with international institutions that are based on norms of power-sharing.

In general, civic education in Greece aims at establishing linkages between national, regional and international frameworks of co-operation, through which students are given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, discursive qualities and analytical skills on a range of issues that fall within the wider domain of civics and, by extension, in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. It is true that the latter aspects of the educational process are only now beginning to take shape in a systematic and, where possible, multidisciplinary manner. Moreover, much is still to be done in terms of teachers training and the evaluation of civic education projects, especially with reference to the implementation of the curriculum, its learning outcomes, and its impact on school culture. And also, much is still desired from the standpoint of translating policy intentions (and actions) into concrete socio-political outcomes. Such an exercise, however, cannot succeed unaided, as

more intellectual capital and public resources should be invested in certain types of skills and competences that would allow students to affect civic educational outcomes and, through the process of developing their influencing capacity, to learn how to become more informed about the political, social and cultural conditions of their living together in a democracy, and more active, as well as more determined and assertive, in empowering their civic capacities with the view to creating change. Put differently, the impact of their voice – whether in school, in the local community or in society–, depends upon the means through which they develop a capacity to influence their civic and political environment; a condition which presupposes that they are in a position to raise issues that affect them most closely and importantly, to design action with the view to responding to new opportunities, and to place specific focus on a wider set of social and cultural values that would allow them to pursue mutual understandings and, through the combined effects of reasonable arguments, tolerant dispositions and democratic persuasion, to seek mutually acceptable compromises. As noted before, there is no easy way to achieve such outcomes, let alone an automatic conversion of democratic values into concrete educational outcomes, for the civic skills and competences upon which the envisaged conversion rests will have to be learned –and, by extension, to be taught–, as they will also have to apply and thus to be tested practically through the 'learning-by-doing' principle in real life situations.

Yet, and despite a considerable number of structural and functional issues that still need to be addressed in a more consistent, elaborate and imaginative

manner or, adversely, through a less formal, bureaucratic or even legalistic framework, there is evidence to suggest that, since the early 2000s, greater emphasis is being placed at the development of cross-country synergies and project/partnership-building schemes which support the aims of civic education. These educational arrangements at formal school settings also reflect the introduction of elements of flexibility in curricular organisation such as the institutionalization of flexible learning zones and innovative school practices, which are designed to meet specific civic learning choices, whilst combining a greater, more coherent and more systematic use as well as application of information and communication technologies at school level. Learning through civic education activities is now elevated to a crucial and fast-growing component of enabling students to become informed and responsible citizens, giving them the opportunity to develop their social skills, knowledge and self-confidence, all of which are required for an open, fair, tolerant and democratic society. Central to the above is a growing and widespread or multiperspectival understanding of the meaning of 'citizenship responsibility' as a civic quality referring to issues of awareness and knowledge not only of democratic rights, but of duties too, including, in line with a polycultural conception of the polity at the formal level, and of society at various informal levels, tolerance of diversity. The importance of this civic norm is crucial especially for a country like Greece that aims to apply democratically acceptable and socially inclusive ways of accommodating a constantly growing number of 'non-citizen pupils' coming from different

immigrant groups in its school structures; pupils who, like their families, have been resident in the country usually for a long period of time, and were even born in it, but who have not been granted its nationality.

At a more general level, there is evidence to suggest that Southern European educational systems have experienced a consistent trend towards decentralisation in recent years –both structural and functional in scope–, combined with greater school autonomy. These parallel processes have led, albeit with varying results in different countries, towards greater participation of students, parents and representatives from the local communities in school life, which in most countries constituted a welcome departure from previous and less inclusionary school practices. This has also been the case of the Greek experience especially over the last decade, although no doubt exists that more is needed, particularly with reference to the involvement of local agencies. The introduction of and continuing investment in participative processes at all formal educational levels are now also considered an important, if not defining, aspect of Greek school life, in terms of tackling organizational among other difficulties related to issues of resources, funding, infrastructure and effective school management. Likewise, throughout the countries of Southern Europe educational policy is being increasingly linked with additional support structures for lifelong learning, a process that already constitutes a policy priority in most European countries. In that regard, a challenge confronting the countries of Southern Europe and is to find new and more imaginative ways of adjusting their policy tools, strategies and institutions, especially those related

to the Council's EDC/HRE programme, into the development of core educational skills and civic competences that would allow students to see themselves as members coexisting in a wider European society, whose educational culture treats citizenship as a participative process that equips young people to make informed and quality choices. Such aims accord with the tradition of the Greek educational system, which has been characterized as open and democratic, contributing to social mobility.

5. Conclusion

This paper has made the point that the Council's EDC/HRE programme can act as a civic learning ground for democratic empowerment through active citizenship and institutionalized participation at all educational and societal levels. It argued the case for a republican understanding of civic learning, where the idea of a *res publica composita* is not just any kind of human association set up 'for narrowly instrumental purposes', but rather a system of virtue-centred practices based on the idea of *caritas republicae* and, hence, on a notion of 'republican partiotism' (Viroli, 2000), which in turn projects (an implicit) metanational social contract, as a condition for sustaining a core set of shared democratic commitments as well as a degree of civic educational –and, by extension, political– motivation. This understanding of democratic citizenship relates to the search for a 'democracy of ideas' linking together two different incentives of civic learning: the notion of a participatory ethos at the

traditional state level, and the practice of active citizenship alongside and even beyond that level. Also linked to the above is the question posed by Ignatieff (2000) whether Europe can act as 'a community united in a common argument about the meaning, extent and scope of liberty'. As no easy answer can be said to exist in today's liberal milieu, this paper has argued that a civic learning approach to citizenship education in Europe entails the virtuous promise of a 'Republic of Europeans' with its own sense of demos-hood.

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