



This paper is taken from

*The Experience of Citizenship
Proceedings of the sixth Conference of the Children's
Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network*

London: CiCe 2004

edited by Alistair Ross, published in London by CiCe, ISBN 1 85377 378 6

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Pintassilgo, J. and Mogarro, M J. (2004) Citizenship education within the process of Portuguese social democratisation, in Ross, A. (ed) The Experience of Citizenship. London: CiCe, pp 481 - 486

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This paper does not necessarily represent the views of the CiCe Network.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

Acknowledgements:

This is taken from the book that is a collection of papers given at the annual CiCe Conference indicated. The CiCe Steering Group and the editor would like to thank

- All those who contributed to the Conference
- Cass Mitchell-Riddle, head of the CiCe Coordination Unit
- London Metropolitan University, for financial and other support for the programme, conference and publication
- The SOCRATES programme and the personnel of the Department of Education and Culture of the European Commission for their support and encouragement.

Citizenship education within the process of Portuguese social democratisation

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In this paper we propose to discuss paths towards the educational ideal of citizenship (albeit not expressed in such specific terms) in pedagogical debate and thought in Portugal from the later 1960s and through the 1970s. This context was of a country dominated by the final breaths of a dying dictatorship, and the political turmoil surrounding the construction of a democratic society; and this implies the need to educate the Portuguese people in their role as conscientious citizens, and to have a critical and active participation in social affairs.

The post-revolutionary era (following the revolution on the 25th of April 1974) was particularly when the issues of democratising education and teaching for a democratic life were placed in the centre of the agenda. At that time the influence of the thoughts and actions of the author Rui Grácio (1921 – 1991) was of paramount importance. He constantly reflected on the relationship between education, democracy, and citizenship in work as a pedagogue. The generation that governed educational policies in the transition to democracy turned him into a cardinal and pivotal reference.

Rui Grácio: a biographical overview

Rui Grácio was born in Lourenço Marques (now known as Maputo) in the former Portuguese colony of Mozambique. Having concluded his final thesis at the University of Coimbra, in Portugal, he attained his degree in Philosophy / History from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Lisbon (1947). He participated in movements opposing Salazar's dictatorship, which eventually led to a period of incarceration. He taught History and Philosophy from 1947 to 1972, at the French High-School – Charles Lepierre (in Lisbon). From 1960 he was an active investigator for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, to which he dedicated himself full-time from 1972. He participated in the preparatory reunions for the founding of the Socialist Party in Portugal, but later disconnect himself from this party in 1976. Between July 1974 and July 1975, he was Secretary of State for Pedagogical Orientation, through the three provisional governments following the April 25th revolution. He was author of an abundant bibliography, which included vast references to various areas of Pedagogical Science. At first his sources came from the realm of the New Education; later, they mirrored aspects of other currents in vogue throughout the remainder of his life, such as Non-Directive Pedagogy and Institutional Pedagogy (Fernandes, 1995).

Education, a form of provocation, promotion, and emancipation

The word citizenship scarcely appears in works written by Rui Grácio. The term citizen(s) is more readily found. This also happens with the word civic, which is often used. One of the innovating areas particularly pleasing to Rui Grácio in the curriculum of the new *Unified Secondary School* was called *Civic Polytechnic Education*. The actual phrase *Citizenship Education* had not yet entered into the specialised discourse regarding Education. Nevertheless, it was ever-present in Rui Grácio's pedagogic ideology, at least in terms of some of its presently defined meanings. He defends the maxim of participation as a right and an non-declinable duty of citizenship. Only through the participation of citizens would it become possible to achieve the project of 'a democratic and socialist society' (Rui Grácio, 1978/1995b, I, p 373), in keeping with the spirit of the era in Portuguese history.

In a work written in 1963, with the title *To Educate: to promote, to emancipate*, he questions himself on what the school's role should be. The most obvious answer is that it serves to teach younger generations 'to assimilate a certain number of intellectual techniques' and 'certain degree of knowledge on matters of a varied nature'. But that not being sufficient, he goes on to hope that schooling would principally contribute to 'spiritual development', and to mobilising 'the totality of the person'. He continues that teaching 'working methods' should create 'habits of autonomous thinking', and the awakening of 'intelligence along with the capability of being sensitive to cultural values' (Grácio, 1963/1995, I, p 120).

From the example of moments in the 'orchestrated insubordination' by students, along with the roles played by the young *leaders*, whom were subsequently punished, Rui Grácio finds himself questioning whether they were not in fact personifying 'an exercise in emancipation; a moment promoting a path towards maturity and autonomy'. To him this is the 'ultimate objective of Education', insofar as it should promote 'an opportune transfer of initiatives and responsibilities unto the student, considering the student to be 'the totality of the person' (Grácio, 1963/1995, I, p. 123). As noted by Fernandes (1995), Rui Grácio's pedagogy 'is in truth a pedagogy of emancipation' (p 46). The school has the role of a potential liberator, in contrast to its ability to reproduce (emphasised by the author), his writings also show us a characteristic humanist quality in Rui Grácio's pedagogic thought. It shines a spotlight on the dignity attributed to a human person, making it central.

In a public gathering in 1978 Rui Grácio adds to the formula he developed 15 years earlier, and makes explicit the issues:

To promote means to move ahead. To emancipate means to remove out from under our hand. The practice or rather, my own teaching practice has led me to alter this enunciation. It adds something to it. Not only does educating serve to promote and emancipate, it serves to provoke, to promote, and to emancipate . . .

By provocation I refer to what is appealed to in a person, to somewhat shake him/her up and might I add, slightly disrupt the person by removing him/her from his/her usual conditioning habits. By habits, I refer to those in which one chooses to anchor oneself upon, a safe haven. To me, all these previously mentioned issues seem to give the necessary means for awakening their consciences unto a certain number of things, thus empowering the teacher to promote and emancipate them. (Grácio, 1978/1996, III, p.221)

During the debate after this conference, a participant asked Rui Grácio to clarify his concept and usage of promotion: promotion in what sense, to what gain? He replied 'This is a question that any and all educators, not only those that are conscientious, but those with conscience, should make'. He then seized the moment to address one of the classic paradoxes in Education. That the teacher ought to educate with 'a particular objective in mind', founded on his/her own 'set of values'. This necessity comes from the authenticity – well within a *Rogerian* context – that should characterise pedagogic activity. If the teacher 'does not conduct his teaching within the realm of his own authenticity', or in other words 'if the teacher's purpose isn't, other than developing children, one of developing himself; then he is not teaching. Moreover, a person teaches only to the degree of that person's *being* in terms of his *authenticity*' (Grácio, 1978/1996, III, p.253).

This does not mean that the teacher has the legitimacy to turn his pupils into 'people subdued by the alleged model of what their teacher ought to be'. The teacher should promote, and through heeding his own axioms should 'respect the person along with their personal path in life'. Only through respect is it possible to emancipate a student. Thus the pertinence in combining the two elements of promoting and emancipating. The author goes on: 'Masters are those that nurture, or set free their disciples' autonomous nature' (Grácio, 1982/1996, III, p.297). Pacheco (1999) asserted that 'his trilogy: to provoke, to promote, and to emancipate – signifies *an education in and for citizenship*' (p.179)

Civic participation and opening the school to the community

The revolution 1974 profoundly transformed Portuguese society. Major changes could be seen in Education. The reinstating of fundamental rights, for the individual and the citizen, was exuberantly celebrated in all public and private locations: the revolution was in the streets and in the schools.

During the complex situation between 1974 and 1976 two projects for models of society were drafted: a collectivist model, rising from revolutionary legitimacy, and a democratic model, based on electoral legitimacy. In political and educational debates, the priority was to democratise the System and destroy the structures of the Salazar regime.

Seen in this light, Rui Grácio's performance is of paramount importance. The influence of his thoughts and actions goes beyond this period, leaving its imprint on the process of Portuguese social and educational democratisation.

The emphasis he gives to political objectives in the relationship between school and society demonstrates the priority of democratising the country, a project encompassing the future (with a Socialist outlook); it also reveals the position of Education and pedagogical practice within this context. Democratising Education is feasible only through the democratising of Portuguese society: moreover, students should be taught in school to participate in the task of democratisation and to consciously exercise their citizenry. It is in this sense that Grácio perceives civic participation by citizens. He acknowledges it to be 'voluntary and active participation in one or in a multiple of organs that interpret, represent, and promote their aspirations and interests' (Grácio, 1968/1995, I, p.243).

The civic dimension and its scope was one of the fundamental concerns in the transformations in the two years of post-revolutionary Portugal. They were to contribute to 'the educating of youths in schools by implication, inferred through transformational intervention upon the community at hand, applying the creative juices therein in a generous and open fashion' (Grácio, 1977/1995, II, p.445). The dimension and scope are clearly present in *Civic Polytechnic Education*, and were also incorporated into other pedagogic innovations and experiments. The list of such innovations and experimentation includes the *Student Civic Service*, *Contact Activities*, and the democratic management of schools. These initiatives were emblematic, promoting ties between school and society and opening schools up to the community.

The creating of a unified, secondary school education in 1975 was 'the cardinal rupture to be seen in the Educational System's structure' (Gaspar, 2001, p 47). The main architect of the breach was Rui Grácio. The project was to break 'the pedagogic configurations and social functions' of the two forms of schools existent up to then - the High School (for 'academic and encyclopaedic knowledge divorced from its society - hence lacking in social function') and the Technical Schools (to teach 'utilitarian know-how - thus in want of proper scientific and theoretic background'). These school types were to converge and become one. One of the main instruments in the democratising of the educational system was the creation of a single and common Secondary School Educational, by which 'the hereto existing parallel school types, high schools and technical schools, of unequal social acceptance and prestige were extinguished' (Grácio, 1975/1995, II, pp.408-409).

In a unified Secondary School Education, schools opened to their community, and their contextual environment was achieved through the curricula for a *Civic Polytechnic Education*. For Rui Grácio 'the intertwining of the two worlds (scholastic and communal) initially depends on conjoint initiatives performed by both'. The school system seemed to have 'a special vocation in exercising initiatives and activities for Civic Polytechnic Education (II, p.501). Grácio presents a new interdisciplinary mode as a substantial factor for transforming education at this level. It implied carrying out

productive work and making close ties between schools and their respective communities. Implicit to this new mode were:

Four explicit objectives, that I believe to be capable of being grouped and organised with basis on two governing principals. – One being regional/communal insertion of schools. (With hopes of winning youths over to the cause of solving problems of national interest by use of their active participation and answering to the problems and worries of their communities at hand). The other being – partnership between studies and productive work, and thus reinforcing the school's social function. (Grácio, 1977/1995, II, p.444)

Occupying only half a day a week, the *Civic Polytechnic Education* did not have a predefined program or curricula, but provided an orientation for teachers to develop activities with their pupils. The learning process would come through certain situations, problems, and the elaboration of projects. Its potential is revealed through evaluating these experiences. How such innovation was accomplished and maintained was more in terms of content than of methodology, showing thus the difficulties in adapting new models to educational work (Bettencourt, 2001).

The *Civic Polytechnic Education* carried out only within the 7th year of *The Unified Secondary School* education during 1975/76, and was suspended in September 1976. This short experience was varied according to the particular characteristics and capabilities of each school. The *Civic Polytechnic Education's* set out components for school programmes in the years that followed (i.e. *Área Escola* and *Área do Projecto*). Also notable was the fact that Education for A Democratic Citizenship was taught. The *Civic Polytechnic Education* clearly possessed the dimension and scope of *Citizenship Education*, as thought of by today's standard; it helped students improve their capacity in problem making, their critical interpreting, and to intervene responsibly in social and cultural spheres.

Concern for *Educating for a Democracy* (or *Citizenship Education*) was also present in the *Student Civic Service*. This was where students in between Secondary Education and University carried out activities in the communities. Within the community's workforces activities, such as healthcare institutions, and in social, cultural, and educational realms, they came into contact with the country's problems and collaborated in the tasks of building a democracy.

The democratic management of School Institutions was also emblematic of the principles behind the democratisation of the society. Schools were the places where the interests of three communities (scholastic, local, and national) converged. There was a desire to establish an equilibrium between the three and to find ways for 'the social managing of schools' (Grácio, 1975/1995, II, p.417) by using teacher, pupil, parent, and worker. Rui Grácio (1982/1996), co-author to the legal diploma on the democratic management of public learning institutions in Portugal, gave great importance to this. It consolidated democratic life within schools. Democratic management impressed a strong sense of autonomy in educational institutions and in the teachers, a necessary

condition for the development of personally autonomous and socially intervening students.

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