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## **Educational practices, citizenship education and moral regulation: the example of Greek curriculum**

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### **Introduction**

Both the contents and the practices of education can be viewed as elements of civic, political education and can be analysed in relation to moral regulation. The curricula (both content and orientation), pedagogic discourse and practices, and the hidden curriculum (the whole organisation of school life, including extracurricular activities, school rituals and the students' communities) constitute the basic means by which pupils and students become acquainted with political values and processes, socially approved citizenship characteristics and qualities, civil rights and obligations, and acquire a thorough knowledge of their country's national history, symbols and ideals.

In this paper examines the ways, explicit and implicit, in which political and moral values are used to construct national memory and identity through the different activities and ceremonies inside school and which can be related to history, religion, and citizenship and moral education. I take 'school life' to include what happens in the school: the relations between pupils, teachers and administrators; the common social rules of life; conflicts and their resolution.

For pupils, the school (together with family and friends) is a central experience of social life. School experience contributes in two ways to the formation of the citizen:

- it provides material for study and consideration about relations with others, and
- it offers opportunities for responsibility, dialogue, and confrontation with others within an appropriate setting.

Activities inside the classroom and school have for a long period been the 'black boxes' of the history of education. (Depaepe, 2000). The stability of educational practices and relationships has also been emphasised (Cuban, 1993). Some research points to the gulf between the context in which pedagogical innovations are rooted (the history of ideas) and the frequently conservative socio-historical context in which they have to be implemented. Innovations such as the introduction of a new curriculum invariably seem to clash with the virtual immutability of educational practice.

### **Civic, political, social education and moral regulation**

The object of civic education is the transmission of information about the concepts of Society, State, Nation, Community, Religion, International Community, in order to contribute to the acquisition of moral values, political attitudes and ideas. This is closely related to the socio-political situation of society: for example, in times of socio-political crisis there is a strong demand for political indoctrination and civic education is often used as an ideological and political instrument. However, such demands present some contradictions:

1. it seeks to transmit knowledge about the structure and the function of the State, but also wants the pupils to accept this information. As well as an instructive role. it also has an ideological and symbolic role.
2. the discourse of civic education presents an image of the ideal citizen, which does not correspond to reality but is intended to create the citizen who will live in a future society. Such civic education reflects on the one hand the values of the political and social reality, but on the other it presents what is needed to change this present reality.

Within schools the connection between moral regulation and nation building, state formation and the construction of citizenship can be made visible, but investigation of moral regulation demonstrates that these connections are neither linear nor uniform. Some forms and practices of moral regulation through schooling relate to specific state 'intentions' and 'projects', while also encompassing a series of disciplinary practices, mechanisms, conditions and effects that can be traced only indirectly to any particular political will or function of state rule. The concept of moral regulation provides a lens through which to view the complex social worlds of schools, past and present. A narrow range of behaviours, beliefs and values have come, over time, to be seen as evidence of good teaching and learning. Mobilising such forms of discipline has involved a huge variety of historically and culturally changing apparatus of rules, technologies and practices. Compared with the constraint and control of discipline, moral regulation requires no direct physical contact and may not appear as punishment or as exercise of authority and power. This is because moral regulation entails the disciplining of personal identities and the shaping of conduct and conscience through self-appropriation of morals and beliefs about what is right and wrong, possible and impossible, normal and pathological (Rousmaniere, Dehli, Coninck-Smith, 1997).

### **The place of citizenship education in the Greek educational system**

Examples from the past can help us to understand the role of the educational practices within the school environment and to discover the relationship between the aims and the content of citizenship education and of direct or indirect moral education.

General education in Greece is structured on two levels: primary (Grades 1 to 6) and secondary (Grades 7 to 12). Compulsory education embraces Grades 1 to 9. Primary education is called *Demotico* and lower and compulsory secondary schooling is called *Gymnasio*. The *Lykeion* is the upper secondary school. In Greek schools, a single textbook is used for each subject, and this will be published by the State.

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century civic and political education was not part of the official curriculum: the pedagogical theory of the period - absolutism, new-humanistic character and orientation, moral and spiritual freedom of the individual - held that education should be non-political. 'National instruction' was first mentioned in 1899, along with moral and religious themes. The 'rights and duties of the constitutional citizen' were also proposed as a school subject at that time ("School must prepare the class of workers and educate the future citizens in order to make them conscious of their rights and duties"). During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was much discussion about the content and the role of political education and whether or not it should be integrated into the curriculum as a separate subject. The first attempt to introduce civic education into the secondary school curriculum was in 1931 as a result of educational

reforms in 1929: the moral, political and social crisis after the First World War influenced this, and teaching was oriented as practical preparation for life in society. However, the new curriculum was not taught from 1932 to 1936 because of political events. In 1955 there was a first attempt to introduce civic education into the primary school as 'National Education', which was finally institutionalised in 1957 as 'Education of the Citizen'. The background was a belief that the war and Communist propaganda had weakened the moral resistance of the people and the confidence of the citizen in the State. Educational discourse and practice in Greece, and more particularly civic education discourse, has traditionally been characterised by an anti-Communist, conservative, nationalist and Greek-Orthodox Church ideology, particularly since the Second World War and the 1944-9 Greek Civil War. This tendency was underlined and given a further reactionary and authoritarian character during the 1967-1974 military dictatorship.

The idealisation of the past and an over-reactive nationalism were the characteristics of the post-war era, because during that period the ruling Conservative Party was ideologically weak and used the values of the past to dominate Greek society. 'Education of the Citizen' sought to transmit the basic components of Greek national identity, to reinforce loyalty to the Nation through the presentation of national symbols, national facts and national days. It underlined the life and the action of national heroes, the role of the Greek language in the conservation of national feeling, the beauty of Greece, and the superiority of Greek civilisation and spirit. Greece was presented as the "Mother of Civilisation", as "the great teacher of humanity". It became a supranational moral and cultural model related to the figure of the Mother, which embraced not only the Greeks, but also all the peoples of the world. It was a dogmatic and sacred value demanding love, respect and devotion. The love of Greece, considered the paramount duty of the citizen, was expressed by the fulfilment of military duties, the payment of the taxes and the respect and protection of monuments. The course took on the character of political indoctrination, reinforced by the character of the pedagogic practices adopted. It underlined the importance of the celebration of national days in schools and encouraged pupils to collect images of national symbols and heroes. In the textbooks of the period all social and political organisations were presented as communities (the family, the Greek State, the Orthodox Church), so the individual existed only through his integration into these institutions, having only duties and constrained by the necessity of self-control. Obedience, devotion to the institution of the family and respect of traditions were considered the most important elements of the identity of Greek citizens.

Under the 1964 educational reform, characterised by a progressive and democratic pedagogic discourse, the teaching of 'Education of the Citizens' was abolished in the primary school. The new course 'Elements of democratic regime' attempted to introduce pupils to the reality of social life. The core of the educational policy of the Centre Party, which was in government in this period, was to create a democratic citizen, so the principles of social democracy were emphasised, and the past, the Nation, and the values of Greco-Christian civilisation lost their importance. While religion still constituted a very important element of Greek identity, but the whole interpretation of the world was no longer based on religious values.

'Elements of Democratic Regime' was abolished by the 1967 dictatorship, and a new course, 'The meaning and aims of the Revolution', was introduced in order to underpin the "Greek and national character of this regime" and the necessity of this "Revolution". The protection of the Nation and the national elements against the communist danger,

which was identified with the 'external enemy' (the Slavs and the Bulgarians) was the major justification for the dictatorship. The "New Democracy" could only be guaranteed by this regime and this justified the use of violence. Political education was at the core of all education policy during this period. It prescribed for the pupil behaviour towards the state, the fatherland and the nation as well as towards "the other". Analysis of this 'citizenship' reveals an exaltation of Greek Nation, Greek past and Greek-Christian civilisation, a hostile attitude towards anything different, and an implicit attempt to transmit knowledge and community values. Textbooks attempted to underline the "democratic" beliefs of the regime and to justify violence by the threat of a communist revolution. Discipline, respect, veneration and obedience were the predominant values of political education. The ideal citizen is the one who admired the glorious past and ignored the present and its problems, who assigned his rights to the community. Political education had become an instrument of political propaganda.

In 1977 the aim of the political education changed again: it was to help students to adapt their behaviour to the community to which they belonged. It was prepare them, through education, in direct, practical and particular life-skills to exercise the rights and duties considered the basic elements of a free and democratic citizen.

Citizenship education acquired its present form in the period of the first the socialist party (PASOK) government, which came to power in 1981. New textbooks were introduced: *Social and Political Education* for the primary school and *Elements of Democratic Regime* for the lower secondary school. The aims were:

1. to acquaint students with the organisation and the values of Greek society,
2. to help them understand the role of social and political institutions,
3. to encourage critical thinking and to expand their knowledge of current social and political issues, and
4. to promote social awareness in order to have a responsible and creative social life.

These new textbooks were accompanied by a teacher's guide (for the primary school course) and an attempt to encourage student self-government inside school ('student communities') particularly at the secondary level. One of the three major aims of education as described in the central curriculum for primary and secondary education (besides 'personal development' and 'knowledge acquisition') is social and political education (Law 1566/1985). The central discourse for education in modern Greece conceives the whole of the educational process as a public social and political task, and not just the transmission of particular content, in the undertaking to prepare future citizens. Education for citizenship is the basis on which formal education is conceived of and organised.

An analysis of the ideological content of the civic textbooks of the place of the citizen in different political constructions (State, Nation, Society, International Community) and of the citizen's rights and duties (selection, omissions, and emphases) helps explain the relationship between educational policy, pedagogical discourse and the political system.

## **The role of the school life in the formation of Greek citizens. Perspectives of the past, present and future**

After 1985 there was an attempt in schools to give pupils experiences of democracy, to encourage participation in different democratic ways of making decisions, to allow dialogues on a democratic basis and for pupils to create individual ways of thinking about society and the relation between school and society. Pupils in secondary education participated in school life through the constitution of school communities and other activities (Law 1566/85, article 45). The school year began with school elections, based on democratic principles, in which all the pupils had the right to participate. School associations, which were less common, encouraged pupils to develop mutual understanding and support, co-operation and social responsibility, to cultivate an independent way of thinking and to develop a knowledge of collective forms of economic activities. (1566/85, art. 46). The formation of school associations offered the opportunities for political socialisation, because they were based on principles of self-organisation and democratic procedures.

Other activities within the school environment, such as the organisation of different sport and cultural activities, also contributed to the democratic education of citizens. The celebration of national days also contributed to experiences about different democratic ways of governing, but also to the construction of national identity and the defence of the national independence. Greece celebrates two major national days (25 March and 28 October), but there are also two school festivals, one historical (17 November) and one religious (30 January). However, the celebration of national days and school festivals only has positive outcomes if all the participants from the school community consider these occasions as days of memory and honour, do not use historical or political falsifications and do not stress nationalistic ideologies and ethnocentric point of views.

### **Conclusion**

Socio-political developments during the 1980s had a direct impact on the orientation of political education: the curriculum no longer aims at the enforced adjustment of the student to community life but instead at the student becoming an active, critically thinking citizen who participates in community life. The contemporary curriculum no longer deals with the direct inculcation of values, nor with modelling the values of 'great people' from the past. The organisation of the school provides opportunities for practising democratic ways of thinking and acting. The objective of all these activities, practices and opportunities is to make the students more active, to cultivate their democratic way of thinking and help their political socialisation. Although the curriculum does not provide many chances to participate in the democratic institutions of civil society, school life can have a very important role and become a place of multiple experiences. It can also be a place where difficult situations can be resolved, such as acts of violence or conflicts. Sometimes the dysfunction of the school institution itself leads the students to violent ways of protesting, as the act of occupation of the schools, which some years ago often happened in Greece. The analysis of these situations, and particularly studying possible conflict resolution through democratic concepts, is a useful element in education for citizenship.

Pupils need to appreciate the pluralistic character and the socio-moral relativity of contemporary life. Citizenship education is based on the acquisition of democratic values,

on the understanding of the rules of social and political life, on individual and collective responsibilities, and also on education, which helps the creation of personal judgement through the practice of discussion. The oral and written expression of personal opinion and judgement about a problem, and the expression of personal opinion about common work in a group, can help develop the basic elements of the 'ethics' of discussion (the right to speak and express our own point of view, the necessity of respecting those of others). Discussion about differing points of view in order to achieve a consensus (the resolution of conflict and the foundation of a common structure based on general rules) also contributes to moral and civic education. Affectivity within socio-moral education (listening to the other, communication with and attachment to the other, co-operation and participation in the common life) is also important. The teacher plays the role of the mediator, helping pupils organise their thinking and developing their ideas. A necessary condition for the development of this autonomy of judgement is the narrowing of the gap between personal life and social life: this helps the pupil to understand that social 'rules' play a very important role in interaction with others. Two important elements are the interaction between the affective and cognitive aspects of moral development and the analysis the different aspects of relationships in school life. Equally important approaches to social and moral education are giving pupils the opportunities to speak for themselves, to express their feelings and to discuss the problems they have, inside or outside school.

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