Curricular, Pedagogical and Didactic Questions about Participative Citizenship in Lower Secondary Schools: A comparison of two European countries

Research project under the responsibility of Maria Pagoni.

Final Report

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Introduction

The concept of participation is closely linked to citizenship since a citizen as a member of the "cité" has the right to participate in the decision-making process either directly or through his representative(s). In the political sphere, citizen participation in the processes of reflection and decision-making mechanisms continues to grow. Since the 1990s one observes in France, in Europe, and in many parts of the world an increase in participatory "experiences", often initiated at the local but also national and international level: participatory budgets, referendum, public discussion boards, public conferences, etc. Their common point is to include in deliberation procedures "ordinary people" described or designated, according to the situations, as citizens or users of services. If this is the case, then, why speak about participative democracy since representative democracy as it exists today is based on the participation of citizens in public debate, voting and public affairs? Most researchers in political philosophy question three main factors that appear to be related to the development of public participation in decision-making procedures[1]:

- The increasing difficulty of institutions to make people accept their decisions, the absence of involvement of citizens in political and public affairs and the weakening of the social link, phenomena that have led to what is referred to as a "crisis of democracy" and which is accentuated in the discourse since the 1980s[2].

- The fact that certain categories of citizens such as women, youth, ethnic or other minorities are not well represented in institutions, hence the need to increase equality and justice in the political functioning.

- The development of a theoretical basis on which to consider participation and, more particularly, the deliberative paradigm shift in political philosophy. This does not mean that the concept of deliberation is new (since it was at the centre of Greek democracy, the Roman Republic and the medieval cités-Etats) but it is especially developed as a theory in the Anglo-Saxon world with reference to the work of the American philosopher John Rawls (1971/1987, 1993/1995) and the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1997). According to this paradigm "norm is legitimate only if it is based on public reasons arising from an inclusive and equitable deliberation process, to which all citizens can participate and in which they are able to freely cooperate" (Blondiaux and Sintomer, 2002, p.18).

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[1] See the study by Cédric Polère in « Synthèses Millénaire 3 » about the theme of participative democracy : La «démocratie participative » : état des lieux et premiers éléments de bilan, DPSA – 2007. http://www.millenaire3.com/fileadmin/user_upload/syntheses/Polere_democratie_particicipative.pdf, July 2009.

[2] See Gauchet, M. (2007), *La Démocratie d'une crise à l'autre*, éd. Cécile Defaut, Mendel G (2003), *Pourquoi la démocratie est en panne ? Construire la démocratie participative,* Paris : La Découverte.

Thus, both at a theoretical and a political level, the increase of interest with respect to participative systems is linked to the intention to improve social equality and democracy of institutions. This concern also affects school where students' participation in managing social and educational school life is increasingly encouraged.

Thus, the objective of this project was to actualize an exploratory research study on students' participation in school life and its role with regard to students' citizenship education. Research was centred on the first part of secondary school (lower secondary school) for two reasons: firstly, as a point of transition between primary school and upper secondary school, it is important for students' socialization at the secondary school level; secondly, there is very little research on students' participation in lower secondary school, as is documented by the paucity of information found in the search field.

The project included a comparison between two European countries, France and Greece. The comparison between these two countries was not a goal in itself but aims to introduce a theoretical and methodological reflection on cultural, political and educational factors that influence the effectiveness of "participatory democracy" in lower secondary schools.

The project was executed in three stages:
-    Analysis of official instructions which fit educational policy in Europe and in the two countries (France and Greece).
-    Presentation of research results and questions concerning students' participation, in Europe.
-    Field research.

Chapter 1

"Active" citizenship in European policy

1.1. Political and social issues of European citizenship

With its foundation, the principal objective of European Economic Community (EEC) was to create a European economic space. After its transformation into the European Union (EU) (Treaty of Maastricht, 1992), a social dimension was added to its purposes and investigations. This dimension appears to have, until now, two characteristics: on the one hand, it remains weak, marginal and sometimes theoretical (difficult to implement), and on the other hand, it is interpreted as a tool of economic achievement. However, the transformation of the EEC into the EU is very important because it legitimatized the discourse concerning the social dimension of Europe and justified the realization of a true social policy. The concept of "citizenship of the Union" appears as the result of this transformation and becomes the object of certain European programs and reflections.

The concept of "citizenship" is both crucial and complicated. Crucial, because without its existence, the EU would remain the matter of a few bureaucrats isolated in their Brussels ivory tower and would be far from European people. Complicated, because it is related, either explicitly or implicitly, with the controversial existence of European identity and, subsequently, to its relationship with national identity. In this report, we do dwell on this controversy, but we do keep in mind that it exists and influences the positions taken in the debate concerning "citizenship".

The formal existence of a European "citizenship" parallel to that of a national citizenship was formally introduced with its placement in the Maastricht Treaty (1992). This existence is also asserted in the European Constitutional Treaty (2002).

It is true that, apart from the issue concerning relations between 'national citizenship' and 'European citizenship', which is related with the existence, the role and the place of nation-states in modernity and post-modernity discourse, there is also another issue: what rights and what obligations arise from the introduction of a second citizenship alongside national citizenship? Additionally, if the two citizenships do not have the same content, which citizenship' content dominates?

The question is important because in European history, one can note an enlargement of the rights of citizens within the nation-state. Thus, initial political rights have been enlarged in order to also incorporate economic, social and cultural rights (social assistance, minimum income guarantee, social security, etc). To be exact, a social citizenship has been added next to political citizenship. In contrast, in the un-ratified European constitutional treaty text, rights ensured by European citizenship were more restricted than rights ensured by national citizenship. Therefore, a crucial question is posed: Will an eventual approval of European citizenship lead to the abolition of social rights in member countries? The question is central as the possible existence of a European constitution would take precedence over national constitutions.

1.2. « Active » citizenship of youth

The debate on European citizenship is necessary, but it is still remains quite theoretical and distant from the daily problems people face in Europe. In order to respond to these problems, the EU began to use the concept of "active citizenship" and mainly with respect to young people and their specific problems.

The definition advanced by the EU is as follows: "*notion of active citizenship of young people returns directly to a full participation of young people in life in society, to their commitment, but also to their ability to exercise citizenship*" (Commission of the European Communities, 2003: 5).

Concerning social issues of active citizenship one can note the concern that has developed, among other things, about the fact that the gap widened between segments of the youth and political and social affairs. To give an example, the European Union tries to identify a new social phenomenon: "Neets" (young people *N*ot in *E*ducation, *E*mployment or *t*raining), that means the young people "absent", who do not participate in education, nor training, or employment. Their designations vary and include: "quitters", "escapists", "settlers" or "rebels". It appears that their number is around 10% in the United Kingdom according to the Statistical First Release (SFR) of the Department for Children, Schools and Families[3].

The place youth "active" citizenship holds in the current policy of Europe concerning the economy, development and employment is based on Lisbon Process or the Lisbon Agenda (2000). This process is known by the now famous phrase emanating from the European Council, which set an ambitious objective for the EU by 2010: "*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*" (Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, 23-24 March 2000, point 5 : 3).

In this context, it appears that the concept of "active citizenship" is one of the tools promoted by European policy for education and training to accomplish the main goal of European Union: the construction of a European economic area. It is stressed that the future of Europe depends on its ability to promote cooperative and friendly societies for children and youth. Four major themes emerge from this objective:

➢ The vulnerability of youth
➢ The necessity of an intergenerational solidarity in an ageing society
➢ The need to improve young people skills through education and training
➢ The need to assure a greater coherence in all policy areas affecting youth
(Commission of the European communities, 2005: 3).

Based on previous themes, the priorities of the Union have been formulated in three words:
➢ Participation

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[3] DfES (2008). *Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2007/08.* SFR32/2008. http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000822/index.shtml, September 2009

➢ Information
➢ Youth volunteers (Commission of the European Communities, 2005 : 9-10).
    These priorities resulted in the implementation of programs such as 'Youth in action (2007-2013)'[4] which offers five main objectives:
➢ Promoting the active citizenship of young people
➢ Developing youth solidarity
➢ Promoting mutual understanding of young people from different countries
➢ Improving the quality of systems that support youth activities and the organization capacity of civil society in the youth field
➢ Promoting European cooperation in the youth field

1.3. Education for Participation in school: What skills to construct?

In the framework of European policy for youth described above, the concept of "education for participation" becomes important and is in development. According to a Commission working document, the EU should pay attention to the following items (European Commission working paper, 2003: 11):

➢ Participation is linked to individual learning processes.
➢ These learning processes must be developed in the framework of formal, non formal and informal education which plays a fundamental role for the acquisition of social skills.
➢ Links and complementarities between formal and non-formal education must be strengthened.
➢ Experiences and projects of young people active participation must be better known and validated in each country.
➢ Particular attention must be given to young people in difficulty.

These axes are related to role schools play in the process of "education for participation". Thus, in the same document, it is well noted that: "*School is a privileged place of participation learning. Citizen participation should be part of the curricula. But the school must also be a place of citizenship experience. Students can be involved in decisions concerning school life. This is an opportunity for them to be in a position of responsibility and develop self-confidence. They can use their potential and promote innovative approaches*".

In this context, the Council of Europe assigns special importance to the democratic management of the school and its role with respect to the recognition and preservation of human rights. Several resolutions have been allocated to school democratic functioning as well as to teacher training that are necessary for making them able to contribute in this democratic functioning. We may in particular refer Recommendation 1849 (2008) for the *Promotion of democratic culture through teachers training* as well as the decisions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe addressed to all member states regarding *Education in democracy* (2002).

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[4] http://europa.eu/legislationsummaries/education training youth/youth/c11080fr.htm, September 2009.

During the meeting of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe which took place in Athens in 2004, it was stressed that if schools want to educate students to democratic citizenship, the first step is to create a democratic school. The Council of Europe undertook several actions in this regard and created a manual for the Democratic Governance of Schools (Backman, Trafford 2007). Emphasized in this manual is the need for teacher training in order to make teachers able to allow the expression of students' opinions as participants in educational procedures as well as to promote participation, communication and dialogue, collaboration and conflict resolution.

Another noteworthy effort was the development of the programme in 2004 aiming at the creation of a *European Charter for democratic schools without violence*. 120 schools across Europe have applied for a participation in this program and 29 schools have been chosen from 19 Council of Europe member-countries. 50 students from these schools have met in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg to create a document that presents the general principles which are necessary for the existence of a school of peace and security in which "*all are responsible for creating a positive environment that promotes learning and personal development*".

According to research published by Eurydice in about 30 countries of the European Union, active participation of citizens in social and political life is at the heart of European educational policies. The European Commission has initiated the establishment of a network of research for the development of indicators related to education on citizenship which must be performed by 2010. This project is conducted by the Centre of the Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL) in collaboration with the Council of Europe[5].

The research conducted by Eurydice in 2005 concerns the objectives and recommendations of official programs concerning citizenship education. The report indicates that there are three main objectives that appear: equip European students with a political culture including knowledge of citizens rights and obligations and of democratic functioning ; transmit attitudes and values necessary for life in society ; make them able to participate actively in the management of collective life, starting with the school or the municipality: "*In many countries, schools are formally invited to involve students in the development of democratic projects, to encourage them to actively participate in internal decisions and to elect their representatives. School Councils as places of discussion and expression of students' interest are popular as from primary level. Students' representation in a Council/Parliament of the institution or in some management bodies is especially practiced in high school. However, in seven countries, students are represented in these bodies even in the primary level (French community of Belgium, Denmark, Cyprus, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Finland)*"[6].

By participating in school management authorities and activities, students are given the opportunity to contribute to the processing of a series of materials related to their daily school life. Thus, they may be involved in some or all of the following actions (Eurydice 2005, p.31):

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[5] See also the Council of Europe's *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC) project (*1997*-2000) in Strasbourg as well as the designation by the Council of Europe that 2005 would be the European year of Citizenship through Education (EYCE).
[6] See *Eurydice en bref* juin 2006, pages 2-3, www.eurydice.orget and the report published by Eurydice : *L'éducation à la citoyenneté à l'école en Europe,* 2005, European Commission.

- general organization of life school (decisions regarding school regulations, transports, uniforms, or menus of the cafeteria/canteen);
- preparation of the school curriculum and expression of students' opinions about the objectives, content and requirements related to the curriculum;
- cooperation with other schools at a national and international level;
- promotion of a positive behaviour and combating bullying and racism;
- maintenance of discipline and support of students with behavioural difficulties;
- edition and publication of a school journal;
- organization of some cultural projects, pedagogical and sportive activities under school supervision.

We note the wide diversity of these actions and the absence of reference to skills and/or the knowledge that each involves. How are these objectives and institutional decisions that come from a general political level organization and are specified to each country curricula realized? What are the tensions that accompany their establishment? Before answering these questions, we will look at how educational policy on student participation in school life is organized in Greece and France.

Chapter 2

Institutional and political frame in Greece

Generally, the history of the Greek educational system is strongly highlighted by a central objective of building a solid national and religious identity. The Constitution provides that the priority objectives of education are the physical, moral, intellectual and professional development of the Greek people, the elaboration of their national and religious consciousness as well as their training as free and responsible citizens. The importance accorded to national identity has been studied from a sociological perspective (Frangoudaki and Dragona 1997) and in relation to difficulties of cultural minorities' integration into the Greek education system (Askouni 2006; Stamelos 2004; Spinthourakis 2007). Thus, it can be argued that education policy about participatory democracy and accompanying tensions are part of certain efforts to transform the "school *habitus*" of the Greek educational system, to extend the boundaries of citizenship and to recognize the same rights and obligations for all members of the educational community.

2.1. Students' participation: educational and political purposes

Law 1566 / 1985 which sets out the dimensions of the Greek education system offers the following objectives: development of students' personality, development of a critical, creative and accountable mind, recognition of collective work and collaboration in order to make students able to take initiatives and to contribute, through their responsible participation, in the progress of society. Recognition of democratic dialogue and participation in collective action is particularly underlined for secondary education (articles 1, 5 and 6). The law provides that these objectives will be achieved by the following means: staff training, creation of a positive educational environment by developing harmonious interpersonal relations and friendly personality of each student. Article 45 also foresees the establishment of school councils and highlights their importance for the development of students' accountability and their citizenship education.

The functioning of school communities (school and class councils) is defined by a specific decree (Ministerial Decision 23.613/6/Γ2/4094/86, ΦΕΚ - 619 beta/25-9-86). This decree emphasizes that school is a living institution that helps shape children for a creative and productive life and prepares them for their integration in a free and democratic society after school. Towards that purpose, dialogue and cooperation must be established between teachers and students in order to deliberate and strengthen students' initiative. School structure and functioning determine the students' vision and design about life and society.

With this approach, school and class councils appear as purely educational institutions. Strongly related to the educational process, they constitute a place of development of students' initiative in school, a place where students have the experience of cooperative and democratic life through dialogue and participation. Thus, school councils contribute to the dual mission of secondary education: learning and education ("paideia").

Yet, no reference is made to specific rights and obligations of students, neither to tasks that they are invited to assume in these decision-making processes. Procedures for

establishing rules that are necessary to regulate all these actions are not specified. This regulatory framework is supplemented by a document drafted by the Ministry of National Education in 2002 about the *General principles of school regulation* which has not been finally voted upon. However, parts of it are used in some secondary schools as a frame of reference for the drafting of school rules.

Finally, we would argue that while the existing institutional framework recognizes the importance of student participation in decision making as well as the role of the school councils in this participation, this participation acquires a pedagogical sense (let students express their ideas and opinions …) and not a political one setting the school as an area of law. In this context, several difficulties are noted that serve as impediments to making this participation effective and operational.

2.2. Difficulties of school councils functioning, and proposals for improvement

A first difficulty of school councils functioning is due to the fact that there is no legal framework concerning the obligation of an internal regulation in secondary schools (while there is a law for private schools N 682/77, article 11). Schools wishing to establish an internal regulation refer to the 2002 document mentioned above. But these regulations often only define pupils' obligations and do not mention their rights nor the rights and obligations of other members of the educational community (parents and teachers). This situation becomes a source of injustice and increases student feelings that decisions, especially those relating to sanctions, are arbitrary and unfair. Teachers use rules to justify decisions taken and not to ensure equality of everyone before the law: thus, internal regulation is used as a tool of repression and discipline and not as a tool of protection. How can the participation of school community members be assured in the absence of a text which defines the rights and obligations of each member?

Thus, we can make the hypothesis that students and parents are rarely consulted on important decisions concerning the school. Student delegates participate in school councils, but their presence appears to be a formality and their opinion on key issues of school life is not taken into account. There is also no training or orientation explaining to delegates the tasks and competencies that they are invited to develop.

Concerning this issue the Children's Ombudsman[7] organized in 2007 and 2008 the "Days of dialogue" with students from different secondary schools (34 students from Athens and 47 students from Thessalonica) on the theme "I am heart, I express myself, I participate in a school that respects us and takes our opinion into account". The question of student's expression and their participation in school life has clearly been discussed by a team of youth consultants that was created to make certain proposals. Some of their proposals are as follows:

➢ **Concerning text of school rules :**

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[7] It's an instance as part of the Ombudsman Citizen, created by statute 2477 1997 and began its functions from 1998. Its function is to circulate information on the rights of children but also to protect the rights of children in public places.

- It is a form of a school life constitution; it must be the product of a school community dialogue and known by all members of that community (students, parents, and teachers). It should refer as well to their rights and to their obligations.
- It must protect school life and promote the principles of justice, collaboration, mutual respect and observance of laws and not be a tool of discipline and punishment.
- Rules must be clear and applied with justice according to the specific characteristics of each situation. They should not be applied in an authoritarian and arbitrary way.
- These rules must be discussed with students delegates at the beginning of each school year and be adapted to the specific situation of each school. They must also be able to evolve from one year to the other depending on the needs of the educational community. They must also be applied by students as well as by teachers.
- That is why Children's Ombudsman proposes that the existence of school rules is required and that the drafting modalities of these rules are provided by a specific law. This law must ensure the democratic character of rule elaboration, of their content and their application. These rules must also be visible and displayed in order to facilitate their use and consultation at any time of school life. Rules must be a true tool of regulation of school life.
- It is recommended to the Ministry of National Education that they provide a guide about the principles governing school life, rights and obligations of each student, participation in conflict resolution, reciprocity and equal respect that must govern collective life.
- It is also recommended to provide teachers training on active pedagogy and the democratic operation of school.
- It is finally recommended that collective, sport, artistic and cultural activities be provided in the curricula, in order to motivate students and encourage them to participate in the life of their institution.

➢ **Concerning school councils:**
- To convene regularly school councils and class councils, train students' delegates on democratic functioning and define their tasks and responsibilities.

➢ **Concerning dialogue in school :**
- To establish dialogue and communication about school life problems.

It is of interest to see if these difficulties and tensions concerning democratic functioning of school are also taken into account in official programs concerning civic education. How is this teaching organized? How are principles of low and students experience in school life presented in these programs?

2.3. Civic education in the official programs

During the period 1997-2003, official programs were radically modified through the accentuation of the following principles: base learning on experience and personal research rather than on the accumulation of knowledge; establish links between school disciplines by constructing cross-thematic projects; assure continuity of learning and encourage student autonomy; help students concerning "learning to learn"; promote the use of new technologies of communication; base learning on the conceptualization of central concepts of each discipline through problem solving methods; foster collaborative learning and

cooperation; promote lateral projects, role-playing and theatre; foster self-evaluation and meta-cognitive skills (Karakatsani, 2004).

Concerning lower secondary school (gymnasium in Greece), the objectives of civic education are as follows: to develop a reflection and a political and social consciousness necessary to understand situations and events which challenge Greece, Europe and the world; acquire values necessary for social communication and personal development; be aware of peoples interdependence and of the need to defend human rights and universal values; recognize the importance of participation in political and social decision-making; define themselves as citizens of Greece, of Europe and of the world, and know their rights and responsibilities; learn to discuss and express their points of view and accept the difference of other views; learn to make questions about current social and political problems.

These programs are very flexible and provide an active design of knowledge adapted to current social needs. Yet, their implementation faces difficulties due to the current daily educational practices (lack of time, traditional evaluation system, lack of financial resources, heavy administrative procedures …) and the absence of initial and continuous teacher training, which cannot easily change their representations concerning learning and teaching situations.

2.4. Optional educational projects and their role in cooperation.

In the context of modernisation of the Greek education system, educational policy introduced certain innovative measures in schools: the "optional educational projects". These projects aim to help motivated teachers to conduct innovative actions in one area of their interest.

The content of these projects can be very diverse: citizenship, health, sustainable development education, artistic and cultural education, cooperation between schools via participation in COMENIUS, intercultural education, etc. Most of them take place outside scheduled school time and are funded by the Minister of Education or by the European Community. These practices are based on the project pedagogical method, the method of problems resolving (Kosivaki, 2003), or experiential method (Chrysafidis, 2000) and as funded efforts can benefit from important technical and financial support (in order to organize visits, outings, and educational partnerships, to use new technologies, etc.) not necessarily nor readably available to schools not participating in these projects.

These programs appear to introduce the foundations for development of what Hargreaves calls "spirit of cooperation" (1994) which, however, is not encouraged by "school *habitus*" and the daily school routine and functioning. This change in teachers' mentality is the basis for the growth of innovations and can lead to awareness of the fact that teacher training is an integral part of their professional obligations, and that it is related to a coordinated collective action. In this sense, collaboration constitutes the necessary bridge between teachers' development and school development (Hargreaves, 1994).

The review of the institutional framework of the programs of innovative actions, identified that the teacher must implement a series of cooperation's necessary for the actions to succeed. Firstly, programs can be carried out by a maximum of three teachers. This means that teachers must collaborate directly among themselves to determine the organization of the group of students that will participate in the project, the choice of subject, the project planning, and the method of putting in place. There are advantages for speciality teachers (foreign language, art, physical education, etc) to participate in these programmes, which promote multidisciplinary (Koysoylas and Kosmidis, 2000). Finally, teachers who have undertaken these programs should communicate frequently with the principal/headmaster/headmistress of the school with the designated Education Program Manager Office. This string of collaborations promotes communication between the school and its environment, which is not common in the operation of the school (Everard and Morris, 1999).

Finally, with respect to the Greek educational system, it appears that there is a rigid tradition which puts the construction of a national identity in the centre of the education system. However, recently, in an effort towards school modernization, there is a tendency to introduce active methods in teaching and learning. This innovation also concerns civic education in lower secondary school programs. Within this framework, optional pedagogical innovation projects are introduced in schools in order to foster cooperation and participation, for students and teachers. At the same time, the institutional framework regarding school communities is almost nonexistent and students frequently express criticism about a climate of injustice in schools. Thus, we can posit some questions: Have students and teachers made a link between "informal" forms of participation and students political involvement in instances of representations such as school councils? Are these experiences related to civic education in the lower secondary school? Which tensions accompany students' experience of participation and collective life in the lower secondary school?

Chapter 3

Institutional and political frame in France

The term "participation" is not specifically defined in the French dictionaries of education and training (Buisson, 1887 & 1911; Champy and Étévé, 1994). However, a targeted search returns some expressions (student rights, civic education, student councils, councils of students' life, commission of education to health and to citizenship, etc.) that help to define the difficulty of this concept to create a path in national history and to understand its dual movement of isolation and of progressive ramp. In this chapter, we study the participation of students in relation to the overall development of French society towards a "third way" as proposed by General de Gaulle (1969) and with the *participatory management* of the 1990s. Then we examine how the post-modernity years (1970 to the present) contributed to an important development of prescribed participation at the cost of a nearly complete disappearance of observed participation, particularly in the lower secondary school (*collège* in France).

3.1. Institutional autonomy and instances of pupils' participation

In the early 1980s secondary education remained the object of a centralized administration management as a result of Napoleons influence. The head of the institution (Abadie, 2006) is charged with ensuring discipline and morality in his/her institution which is directly attached to the central authority. Students are placed under the control of supervisors which within the educational hierarchy are administratively under some General Supervisors, according to the Napoleonic design of Public State function. General Inspectors are the *missi dominici* of this centralized architecture which were concerned, originally, with only some 30 structures across the nation; whereas today there are more than 2500 and which exist in a "bi-secular cohabitation", as Lelièvre considers (1994), with a local system that is less elitist. The years following 1945 offer the opportunity for the first tremors in this system with the Langevin-Walloon Plan[8] which in actuality though, has been applied very little (Roudet, 2002).

The 1960s began to undermine this edifice which considered the student more as a soldier to submit to military rules rather than as Socrates' disciple trying to find his way through the radical critique of institutions. The Symposium of Amiens (Obin, 1993) organized by the Ministry of National Education in March 1968 had as its title: "For a new school". Sponsored by Minister Peyrefitte who promised to apply its principal conclusions, this conference's first result was to finally recognize the existence of the school as an institution and to highlight its differentiated aspects.

The arrival in power of the socialists in 1981 corresponds with a period of reform of the educational system: inspectors are banned from inspection for one year and various reports are commissioned such as that of Luc Soubré (1982) which proposes the decentralization and democratization of educational institutions. For the first time, the expression of an

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[8] This is a project of school reform that was proposed after the liberation by the "Ministerial Commission for the Study of Education Reform" formed in 1944. But the work of the committee took too long (31 months) and the project while it has been published has never been presented before Parliament. Its principles, however, have inspired subsequent reforms.

"institution's project" is used and that of *participatory management* tends to rest with the modernization of the public service domain (Obin and Cros, 1991) and on the participation of its users who are presented as actors that must be consulted. The notion of *school life* appears (although the designation exists since 1890) and it is managed by the Education Adviser (Circular of 1982).

The *social-educating clubs* are increased after 1969, and allow for a students' first participation in some cultural or leisure activities. The Guidance Law of July 1989, notably its first article, changes the educational pyramid by putting student in the centre of the system. For the first time, the law recognizes the students' right to take some initiatives in the "educational community". Even if this right is not immediately implemented because of its contradiction in terms of the hierarchical vision of the institutional organization, the founding principles of human and citizen rights starting to be applied in a system that until then followed a single hierarchical line. Indeed, Article L511-2 of the *Code of Education* states:

> *In colleges and lycées, students have the freedom of information and of expression, according to the respect of principles of pluralism and neutrality. Exercise of these freedoms cannot interfere with teaching activities.*

Since the passage of the new Guidance Law of 2005 (OJ n ° 96 24 April 2005) the autonomy of institutions is strengthened as well as that of their relationship with the local authorities. This development is at the same time linked to the proliferation of different educational projects aimed at creating a dynamic in relation to students' participation in collective actions. But before questioning these projects, it is interesting to consider the involvement of students in some instances of representation inside the school.

3.2. Absence of students' involvement in some instances of political representation in school.

In lower secondary school, the class council constitutes a symbolic place particularly important for the evaluation of the student. As noted by the Decree of 30 August 1985, class councils in lower secondary school meet once a quarter, under the chairmanship of the head of the institution, and consists of class teachers, two delegates of the parents of students, two delegates of the class, the Principal Education Adviser, the Guidance Adviser and, where appropriate, the school doctor, the social worker and the school nurse. Its role is to examine educational questions in relation with class life, including rules for the organization of students personal work and results.

With respect to the aforementioned, we note two important studies of Patrick Boumard. The first, published in 1978 with the title "*An ordinary class council*" analyzed a baccalaureate class council. The other, published in 1997 with the title "Class council, institution and citizenship", traces the author's reflection regarding this issue. In the latter, the author reports that in twenty years nothing has profoundly changed in the class council functioning and that it is still characterized by an authority phenomenon which persists over time[9]. This phenomenon has the following characteristics: it relies on an indisputable

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[9] About the history of the class council in the second degree see Prost Antoine: "Conseil de classe: le lien collège-familles", in *Le Monde de l'Education,* n°363, November 2007.

legitimacy, it supposes the transcendence, it requires a certain mystery, it is rooted in the hierarchy, it relies on a manifest domination in order to obtain the submission of the children. This second book traces the history of class councils, from the Circular of 27 May 1890 which provides a collective description of the responsibilities of class professors and of the head of the institution with respect to the evaluation of each student in the lower secondary school (college), up to the 1990s. It shows how the class council passed gradually from a rewards and sanctions function very tied to the authority of the School Director, to serving the function of providing student's guidance which became very important at the end of the 1960s. Finally the class council acquires a function of evaluation that is actually defined around the *educational team* concept "*considering school as a company that must optimize its production, i.e. the educational process.*" (Boumard, 1997 : 123).

This analysis shows that the class council has lost its power of decision making when parents and school users, can appeal and be involved in the real decision-making about their child, , which is experienced as a loss of power very significant for most teachers. Indeed, teachers actually give only an opinion about each student; whereas the head of the school is invested with a mediator and conciliator role towards parents. However, school still keeps this symbol of authority, whose creation represents a moment historically situated, despite the fact that it lost its real power of decision and passes through a time of crisis which obliges it to "save face" and to be self-justified.

Several years later Calicchio and Mabilon-Bonfils (2004) arrive at conclusions that are in the same direction, highlighting: the role of the authority of the head of school in decision-making; the ritual aspect of the class council; the "unspoken" and implicit messages that determine its functioning; the game of identities that occurs between status hierarchy and disciplines hierarchy, as well as between students representatives, teachers and the head of school; the lack of transparency characterizing the process of decision-making that allows local arrangements and the relief of the council members of any specific responsibility.

Regarding the upper secondary school (lycée), the mechanisms of student participation in school life have been the result of a process of gradual democratization in France. Following the Guidance Law of 1989 and the students' movement of 1990, students have gradually acquired a number of rights which are, for the most part, incentives for participation. The students can take responsibility in their schools on several levels, and legislation concerning the organization of these bodies is increasing. These include: class delegate, delegate to the Administration Council, delegate to the Student Council of high school life, student representative in the Social Fund which provides financial aid to the poorest students, student representative in the Committee of Health Education and Citizenship, which deals with the prevention of risk behaviours, participation in social and educational activities that are offered by the Socio-Educational Foyer or by the House of Secondary school[10].

However, this "democratic" functioning has shown to have failed and research shows the difficulty of students to be recognized as "political partners" or meet the responsibilities that the role of representing students involved (Rayou, 1998; Ballion, 1993). As for the rights of students to free expression also put forward in the early 1990s, they do not seem

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[10] About the laws regarding these various bodies of participation see Condette 2003.

to be really integrated. When they are interviewed, the students put more emphasis on obligations rather than rights (Merle, 2001; Robert, 1999) and when they sense their rights, as the right of expression through the creation of a newspaper, they have some difficulties to exercise them (Becquet 2003). One can cite the research of Pierre Merle (2003) who studied the internal rules proposed and implemented resulting from various decrees of 2000 relating to the administrative organization of lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools. The author shows the limits of regulatory power and the inertia of local actors to implement the legal provisions established at the national level. He emphasizes in this context that social change cannot come solely by the introduction of regulatory texts but by a painstaking and time consuming change in attitudes and perceptions of actors (Merle, 2003). These conclusions are valid for both upper secondary school and for lower secondary school.

3.3. Civic education in lower secondary school

The teaching of civic education in both lower and upper secondary schools has long been dominated by the objective of acquiring a civic culture based primarily on knowledge of the institutions and values of the Republic. From 1985 where civic education is reinstated in the curriculum of secondary education, we observe a progressive transformation of the paradigm of education for citizenship which crystallizes with the reform of 1996 in lower secondary school providing the introduction of theory of law as a reference framework of civic education. This theory is considered a learning object providing a set of concepts to build using case studies as well as a tool for regulating school life and accompanying students' participation in class and school management (Audigier and Lagélée dir. 1996). The main points of this reform are as follows:

- *Use of theory of law as reference knowledge of civic education*. In this perspective, education for citizenship is an introduction to the theory of law.
- *Organization of programs around the fundamental notions of human and citizen rights*, in a progression that takes into account the age and developmental level of students.
- *Connection between civic education and school life experience*. A quarter of the program is devoted to the analysis of situations of everyday life and their issues, with mobilization and utilization of acquired knowledge. The lower secondary school is seen as a place of learning in society. Each student has the right to participate in school life, to assume their responsibility and make decisions on problems by open and argumentative discussion with his/her schoolmates.
- *Interdisciplinarity*. The teaching of civic education is, in part, the responsibility of teachers of history and geography but also the responsibility of all teaching staff (and more specifically, in 6th class, the teacher of the life and earth sciences). The members of teaching staff are associated with specific activities.

The principles of these programs are still in effect for the lower secondary school but some changes have been made in recent years. In the general introduction of the latest official programs concerning the lower secondary school the link between school life and the course of civic education is emphasized:

"Civic education should be linked to school life. It encourages interdisciplinary projects; it allows access to external citizen initiatives. School life and civic education strengthen the

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possibility to implement a dynamic education for civic responsibility by concrete actions with students "(B.O. n° 6 of August 28th, 2008 p.4).

Furthermore, three main attitudes are expected by students:

- Develop a responsible attitude in the classroom and the institution more generally in everyday life,
-Exercise their judgments and critical thinking in civic life,
- Acquire the elements of a *legal culture*.

However, the relationship between school life and civic education is specifically mentioned only in the program of 6th class[11] concerning the status of "pupil", where students are asked to understand the missions and organization of the college through the election of delegates: "*The election of delegates is the opportunity to study the rules of democratic life (the principle of representation, universal suffrage, secret voting) in practice. Teachers start from the Regulation within the college to show that secularism is both a value and a practice*" (Ibid.: 14). In the other lower secondary school classes, this relationship disappears.

We note that programs are built on a progression from inside the school to the outside the school and from the concrete environment of the student to the wider social environment including the municipality and/or the city, the state, and the Europe. Thus, as one moves up classes, the concepts discussed are correlated neither with school life nor with the place of students in the classroom and school management. The notion of participation reappears in the last class of lower secondary school (3d class) when the whole program revolves around the notion of democratic citizenship. Then participation is related with democracy as an object of learning and reflection, but no reference is made to the school democracy:

"*Political participation should be described and explained: political participation in its various forms, especially the right to vote and to express son opinion about event views, the relations between national citizenship and European citizenship. Teacher must also present the nature and role of political parties, of unions and of associations that drive the democratic life* "(ibid. : 54).

The program stresses that two major sets of abilities should be privileged in the students' work:

- Be able to use the key concepts of politics that they encounter in the news; and
- Put into practice their ability to make judgments and critical thinking with regard to different forms of information and discussions that take shape in a political democracy.

Therefore the link between civic education and school life is recommended but not necessarily built in the formal curriculum. At the same time, education for citizenship is part of a multidisciplinary perspective, both in the new Guidance Law of 2005 and in the

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[11] First class of lower secondary school (students are 11-12 years old).

promotion of educational projects provided by different decree and decisions, as shown in the following chapter.

3.4. Transversal skills and multidisciplinary projects

According to the Guidance Law of 2005, education for citizenship (from primary to high school) is part of the common set of skills that includes five basic categories of skills:

- The control of French language;
- The control of key elements of mathematics;
- A humanistic and scientific culture allowing the free exercise of citizenship;
- The use of at least one foreign language;
-The control of common tools and techniques of information and communication.

In parallel, one can identify the appearance of several devices or mechanisms concerning students' participation in humanitarian, civic and cultural action projects in a multidisciplinary perspective. These include:

- Committees of health education and citizenship (CESC), whose tasks are redefined and focused on citizenship and are integrated within the school plan. CESC is chaired by the head of the school and includes: the staff of education, health and social work of the institution, representatives of teachers, parents and students appointed by the head of the school after proposals of the Administration Council members by their respective categories, the representatives of the municipality and community attached in these committees. It may involve in its work relevant partners that could contribute meaningfully to the educational policy of the institution. The CESC may have the following tasks:

  - To contribute to education for citizenship;
  - To prepare the plan for violence prevention;
  - To propose some measures to assist parents in trouble and fight against exclusion;
  - To define a program of health education and sexuality and prevention of risky behaviours;

- The civic ways (BO n °43, 25 November 2004)
- The Children's Parliament (BO n°42, 18 November 2004)
- The education for Sustainable development (BO n°28, 15 July 2004)
- Various prizes and competitions :

  - The prize of Rene Cassin of Human Rights for students of lower and upper secondary school (BO 16, 21 April 2005)
  - Updating of the National Competition concerning the Resistance and Deportation, which was created in 1961 by the Minister of National Education;
  - Updating of the prize of Education for the High School which was established in 1975 at the initiative of the Sports Academy and which is, since 1987, under the patronage of the Ministry of Education. Its objective is to

recognize the capabilities of youth engagement in physical activities and sports or other activities: *"Specific situations of discovery and application of the sporting rule encourage young people to adopt a more responsible attitude and give them another opportunity to access social and moral values."*

- In the context of regions "Educational Activities" are also in development. They are within the legal framework of the Education Code, which allows local communities to organize *"educational, sport and cultural complementary voluntary activities that cannot replace or undermine the teaching or training activities set by the state"*. For guidance, there is the development of educational activities in a Department of Paris region (92): educational actions (related to humanitarian, artistic or cultural values), the Program for Success in School and for a Better Integration School (PREMIS) and the Program of Assistance in Reading (PAL).

This brief analysis of the role of civic education (as an academic discipline) and citizenship education (as a construction of moral, civic and social skills) in official documents in France raises questions about the links between them and students experience of their "involvement" in institution management. Questions also arise about the relationship between "political representation" of pupils in school councils and their involvement in projects, either cultural or humanitarian. As we will see these issues are also raised by research existing in this field in other parts of Europe.

Chapter 4

Results of selected European Research

Students' participation in the life of their institution is recommended but not required by specific legislation in several European countries (Huddleston, 2007). Therefore, the question arises of how teachers choose these devices or mechanisms, what skills they value and what training they need to perform in order to accompany students in this participation. We will present the results of some research that address the participation from two perspectives: the objectives of educational actors and the functioning of democracy in school.

4.1. Tensions observed in the finalities and objectives

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory (Kohlberg, 1981; Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg, 1989), has inspired some researchers to study the impact of pupil participation in school life to their socio-moral development and, more generally, the role of an ethical reflection in the study of school management. The studies of Don Rowe are rooted in this question. In a research published in 2003 on school councils in England, he distinguishes between three types of justification that teachers propose concerning students' participation in the management of school life (Rowe 2003):

- *Normative*, based on moral or social standards, such as : defend the rights of children, treat them in a democratic way as active and responsible citizens and respect them as individuals;
- *Instrumental*, that takes into account the consequences of students participation in school life on the easing of teacher-student relationships, the increasing of student motivation for learning and the decreasing of discipline problems and violence;
- *Educational*, which considers the impact of such practices on the student's personal development and learning of democracy and skills related to it (responsibility, critical thinking, cooperation...).

It appears that considering participation as education for democracy means making the choice between different kinds of participation that are relevant and others that are not because they can have negative effects on students socio-moral development and their attitudes towards democratic institutions (Taylor, 2002). Furthermore, research highlights the ignorance of teachers regarding the conditions of moral and civic development of children and adolescents, which are however important to consider in order to correctly support them in the delegate function (Rowe, 2003).

The issue of education-oriented features of participation is also linked to the offset and/or interactions between the school and the exercise of citizenship in today's society, issues that are already stressed by authors who study citizenship education (Audigier, 2000, 2001). What are the values but also the skills that are aimed for? Are these devices or mechanisms based on an idealistic vision of the school that aims to values of cooperation, justice and responsibility or on a pragmatic vision of it that emphasizes competition and instrumental strategies?

In another publication, Rowe (2005) shows that youth involvement in decision-making procedures in England has often an instrumental and managerial character. He suggests that the main concern of these devices is to supervise students in the development of school rules and procedures of decision making by emphasizing the principles of rights, responsibilities and justice. In this context, education of students to democracy and participation in decision-making is linked to important ethical questions such as: What is the public interest? Does the end justify the means? and so on.

Other theorists insist on the fact that the devices for student participation in school life can function effectively provided that they are linked to a political-ideological project of changing society through the school and education than is supposed to convey this to students (Wyse, 2001), as was suggested by the currents of Active Education which introduced this mode of democratic functioning.

Some researchers point to the observed resistance of adults and the educational team in particular, to consider these devices as tools to both control school life and learning. Rossi and Baraldi (2008) refer to the tensions described by several studies which on the one hand have to do with the need to identify young students as individuals with a full capacity for reflection and decision making about problems that they are concerned about, , and on the other hand as children that need protection and assistance to adulthood. To study the mechanisms of student participation in school life between two countries, Italy and Scotland, the authors distinguish between three types of involvement depending on the task that students are asked to complete: participation in designing and planning projects; participation in decision making on projects or issues raised by adults; free expression of opinions and thoughts in the forums of debate and discussion. They conclude that in both countries the students' need to learn and to enjoy a relevant framework is more important than the need to enhance their personal autonomy and active participation in decision making, but this trend is a little stronger in Scotland than in Italy. In Italy the practice seems to be oriented towards organizing moments that give students the opportunity to discuss their concerns and their needs and defend their rights while in Scotland the focus is on the two other forms of participation including planning and designing projects and decision-making.

How these issues are specifically addressed in the analysis of the functioning of school councils?

4.2. Representation of students and 'school democracy'

In the Anglo-Saxon literature, the term 'school councils' is used for both the primary and secondary schools. The charity association *School Councils UK* which aims to promote and facilitate effective structures for pupil participation in every school[12], defines school councils as "*an elected body of students whose goal is to represent their classes and provide a forum for debate for an active and constructive integration of students into the daily life of the school community* "(Veitch, 2009, p.2).

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[12] For more information see the site of the association: www.schoolcouncils.org/

Student participation in the management of school life is a concept widely used today in British research, along with those of *student voice* and *pupil consultation*. The government's education policy has focused on education for citizenship. Bernard Crick's report in 1998[13] (known as the Crick Report) suggested that school councils could contribute to the development of social and moral responsibility of students, community involvement and political literacy[14], the three major axes of citizenship education proposed by the report. These suggestions have led to the school council's establishment and functioning over the last decade. Since then, other official guidelines - prepared by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES: Department for Education and Skills) - have emerged to define the best possible actions and to promote these actions of student participation in the school life (DfES, 2004; DfES/NHSs 2004).

In this context, several research reports and studies were conducted to analyze the extent of this phenomenon and its possible integration in school practices. In the late 1990s the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children funded a study on school councils in collaboration with the Advisory Centre for Education in the United Kingdom. A questionnaire was sent to 200 primary schools and 600 secondary schools in England and Wales and responses were received from 89 primary schools and 294 secondary schools (Baginsky and Hannam, 1999), 50% of schools surveyed who practiced school councils. The report revealed that there is a wide variety of practices concerning: the frequency of school councils which varies from once a week to twice per quarter; the moment when the board takes place, which may be in class during lunchtime, before or after school; the modalities of delegates election; the work of students and teachers who chair the council. However, it also showed that there is uniformity on the topics discussed, centred on restroom, dress and canteen problems. Moreover, the report stated that two weaknesses of the system were highlighted by the students, which are likely to be improved: the first was that these meetings would deal more thoroughly and make decisions on important issues of school life such as violence and discipline; the second that students would receive training enabling them to become more effective political partners. A similar outcome was found by in Alderson research conducted during the year 1997-1998 with 2272 students from 7 to 17 years (Alderson, 2000).

A more recent survey, published in 2007 involved 999 teachers and 2417 students from primary and secondary schools in England and Wales (Whitty and Wisby, 2007). The questionnaire survey was complemented by a case study of some schools. The authors report that the proportion of schools that advice has increased by 50% since the mid-90s[15]. Indeed, the report reveals that 95% of teachers surveyed work in a school where school councils take place. 62% of them and 55% of the students surveyed reported that the school council should be formalized and generalized in all schools. Almost ten years later, some of the critiques that were expressed in the previous report concerning the training of

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[13] Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998), *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools,* London, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

[14] The term "political literacy" is broader than that of "political knowledge" and means that learning makes the students able to use their knowledge, skills and values to understand everyday "public life" and participate actively and effectively in the development of the common good. The term "public life" is used broadly by the author to mean all sorts of conflict resolution or decision-making processes relating to economic, political and social aspects of daily life. These problems can occur locally, nationally or internationally, in political institutions or other formal or informal groups (see Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998, p. 13).

[15] On this point, see the longitudinal studies: Kerr et al., 2003 and Cleaver and al., 2005.

student representatives or the establishment of more detailed policy proposals concerning the real problems of the school, still exist in this report. The authors report that councils' functioning is not very clear because there is a lack of some specific targets that could be used as the criteria for their evaluation.

It thus appears that despite the fact that the frequency of school councils has increased in the United Kingdom, the notion of participation is still not clearly defined in schools neither in terms of specific tasks undertaken by students nor in terms of distribution of rights and obligations between students and teachers. Some studies suggest distinguishing different degrees of student participation in school life. Hart (1992) distinguished eight levels of participation depended on recognition of students' rights in these devices, ranging from students' manipulation to the decisions initiated by youth and shared with adults. In a more recent research Durr (2004) add to the above criteria the degree of involvement of students in the proposing of activities undertaken and in the evaluation of their consequences.

But questioning of the meaning of participation is simultaneously accompanied by a questioning of the methods of investigation of these situations and highlights ethnographic or participatory methods likely to study the participatory experience of the actors and their achievements. The studies of Morrow (2000, 2001, 2005) which adopt a sociology of childhood approach, use these methods. She distinguishes between latent participation (being part of the group), and active participation (being involved at all levels of decision-making) (Morrow, 2000). In a more recent research (Morrow, 2005) she interviewed 102 boys and girls from 12 to 15 years of age attending two socially disadvantaged schools in a north-east town of England. Three qualitative methods are used (Morrow, 2001) to study the experience of youth and the networks of communication they establish within the family, school and neighbourhood: photos and comments from young people about the plays and people they visit, individual interviews and focus groups with the aim of promoting the discourse of young people on their own social and educational experience are used. Regarding school life, research shows that, first, students' participation in school councils is passive and, second, that the form of participation that they develop in these meetings is not only elaborated within them but also and above all, outside of them in the interpersonal relationship that is built every day with teachers.

Also found in the sociology of childhood study Veitch (2009) criticizes the lack of a precise definition of students' participation in school councils in primary school and offers a study which aims at its clarifying. It is a participative study which involves students in collecting data and includes a mini-research project elaborated upon by the students themselves. The research was conducted in a primary school in England during a period of seven months in 2007. Sixteen students (one boy and one girl from each class), and two teachers, all members of the school council, participated in the research. The methodological tools used included: observation and analysis of eight school councils followed by two focus group discussions with students to reflect about the particularity of the school council discussion in relation to other group discussion within the class; semi-structured interviews with teachers; and focus group interviews with students. Observations show that the agenda is essentially based on a list of complaints made by students about the school equipment, the canteen menu and the restrooms. The teacher who chairs the council has the final word on decisions taken and the board members are

informed of the decision at almost the same time as the other members of the school. The decisions are therefore not accompanied either by the exchange of arguments and points of view nor by the transparency of procedures.

The author concludes that observed councils do not constitute a participatory environment for students and that the boards are governed by an inherent tension between a participative ethos focused on children's empowerment development and a current educational ethos focused on the management of adults. Following this observation the researcher encourages the students to build a small research project on a topic chosen by them: the equipment and class organization. Students were videotaped and focus-group discussions were analyzed with their peers and presented their results to the school. According to the interviews that followed, this approach has helped them to discuss with other members of the class a common problem and to feel a sense of responsibility concerning this problem. Other research has also examined the students' methodological and organizational skills not only in the structuring of school councils but also in their evaluation in a participatory way (Alderson, 2000a; Cotmore, 2004).

Thus we see that the meaning of the concept of participation is widening, not only theoretically but also empirically, and it generates new research objects. The interest of research moves from representative bodies towards young peoples' involvement in less formal forms of participation, linked to youth needs, values and culture. Similar trends are observed in research concerning francophone secondary school students, as we have seen above.

Chapter 5

The fieldwork

5.1. Questioning

The analysis of the institutional framework that exists in Europe, Greece and France, shows that the official documents (laws, ministerial decisions, official programs ...) tend to encourage students' participation in school life. One can also observe that while in France, the regulatory framework concerning participation is sufficiently developed (explicit definition of standards concerning rules construction, rights and obligations of educational actors), in Greece it does not yet exist but it is claimed by students and teachers. Meanwhile, several devices are developed at the margins of the educational institution in both countries to promote the emergence of various cultural projects: humanitarian projects, projects on health and citizenship, projects concerning music, media or sports.

Thus we can hypothesize that there are two forms of students' participation in school life:

- A political and formal form of participation, which consists of the election of students' representatives in school councils or other boards or committees (Class Councils, Administration Council, Committee of Education for Health and Citizenship etc.). This form of participation seems to be in crisis because research has shown the difficulties of students' commitment to these places of decision-making.
- A more informal form of participation which is manifested by the development of collective projects that are supposedly motivating students. This form of participation aims to create a cooperation "experience" in school, while creating links between school and its local or regional environment.

This assumption leads us to the following questions:

- What are the "effects" of these two forms of students' participation in school life on the acquisition of skills and knowledge related to citizenship?[16]
- What is the relationship between these two forms of participation?
- How do the teacher factor and the institution factor influence the success and effectiveness of students' participation in school life?
- What are the similarities and/or differences between the two countries with respect to the previous questions?

5.2. The choice of schools

We selected three schools in each country (6 in all): a public regular/ordinary school in a large city, a public school in a provincial town with a mixed population and an experimental

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[16] We define citizenship as a set of knowledge and skills that refers to three fields: legal (basic rights, duties, legislation, nationality, identity, democracy ...), moral (notions of justice, equality, respect for difference etc.) and social (cooperation, responsibility, solidarity ...) (Audigier, 2006; Pagoni-Andreani 1999).

school which claims to use an active or innovative pedagogy or which is favourite to the development of a large number of projects.

In France selected the following schools (for the projects of each school see in Annexe):

School in Courbevoie (Paris suburb)

This college is situated in a suburb northwest of Paris, and it serves students from privileged social classes. It is a recently opened college, established five years ago. It has 29 classrooms, 56 teachers and 800 students, because the college also accepts a number of pupils from the town bordering Courbevoie (a new college was created in this town from September 2009). There is only one Education Advisor (CPE) in this school. He says that he's overwhelmed because of the large number of students and he does not have time to organize the delegates' training. He is assisted in the management of school life by two mediators.

Twenty-one (21) projects have taken place in the college, this is one of the primary reasons it was chosen to be part of our study, despite the fact that it is neither experimental nor particularly innovative. Most of these projects are funded by the General Council as "Educational Activities - Educational workshops".

The director of the school encourages the monitoring of these projects which are grouped around four topics:

- Pedagogical supporting of students in difficulty
- Management of students' diversity
- Students' career education and guidance
- Social life Learning

However, because of the large number of students, each teacher manages his/her own project and there is no special link between the projects or consultation of the teaching team. Our research has focused on one such project: the "Race against hunger" led by a teacher of physical education and sports in one class (second class of lower secondary school).

School in Genevilliers (Paris suburb):

It is an institution built during the 1970s, so it is quite old. It has 700 pupils and 32 classes. It is classified as a ZEP (Zone of Educational Priority). Eighty percent of its pupils are from immigrant families, and 60% of its pupils belong to lower socio-economic categories. The college has several educational activities funded by the General Council and many of them support students in difficulty, given the fact that 29% of students that comprise the 6th grade (first class of lower secondary school) have at least a year's delay in their studies and that the Collège has 15 points of deviation from the national evaluation average in 6th grade.

Therefore, the educational activities in place have three main objectives to:

- Strengthen the command of the French language and basic skills.
- Strengthen the continuity of learning from kindergarten to college by promoting inter-degree and inter-class trade and educational projects.
- Strengthen school codes, rules and responsibilities.

The last objective particularly caught our attention. It is realized through a project of "Education for Citizenship" and is concerned with students' delegate training. This project, which started in 2007-2008, is conducted in collaboration with two cultural associations which are housed very near to the school, the 11/14 Club and the Tamanoir Club. The final project is to produce a film, accompanied by songs and music concerning citizenship and relate it with the work of the students' delegates in school councils.

School in Saint Mathieu of Tréviers (region of Montpellier):

The Alain Savary College in St. Matthew of Tréviers just celebrated its twentieth anniversary, in June 2009. It comes from an original draft of college networks spread over several rural communities located about ten kilometres north of Montpellier, it has 400 000 inhabitants, without industry but oriented towards research and the tertiary sector with two major employers (IBM and Dell).

The public sector (universities and agricultural research) provides most of the jobs in a region that holds the dubious distinction of combining the highest job creation rate and the highest unemployment in France. A director, a former instructor of the teacher training institute in Montpellier, and his assistant, took over this school in September 2007. The college has 658 students divided into 25 classes with nearly two thirds of families of favoured social and professional categories and only 16% of disadvantaged categories, a percentage which is 25 points below the average academic marked by population groups of North Africa (Montpellier, Nimes, Perpignan, Carcassonne, Narbonne). The school's management team believes that the academic life of the school was "devastated" until September 2008 when the creation of a full time assignment of a young person was made leading to restoration of satisfactory conditions. Thus the school director has been engaged in CESC actions (Committee of Education for Health and Citizenship), on which our investigation has focused.

In Greece we selected the following schools:

Experimental school in Athens

This school was created by a Greek donor who gave much of his property for the creation, initially, for a high school. This whole school group (elementary, lower and upper secondary high school) is funded by an institute that has the donor's name. The lower secondary school (gymnasium) is an experimental public school (see Law 1566/85) which is supposed to implement innovative practices and work in interaction with university projects. It has 310 pupils and 43 teachers. The students who attend, have applied for admission along with others and are chosen through a lottery system ensuring that everyone has an equal chance of being selected and come from middle social class. However, given the good reputation of the institution and its requirements with respect to

monitoring of students, parents who choose this school for their children come from higher socio-economic categories.

Several educational projects are taking place in this institution and it appears that these projects are supported by a dynamic and motivated educational team. The director, who has a PhD in History of Education, also promotes innovative and participatory educational activities. There are, more specifically, the following projects:

- Cultural projects (dance, theatre, cinema, music)
- Sport projects
- Project on health education in collaboration with Action Aid Association
- School Magazine and online journal
- Project concerning environmental education.

School communities (class council and school council) function in parallel. The interviews we conducted relate three actions: school councils, School Magazine and online journal and action on environmental education.

School in Patras suburb (Peloponnese)

The college is located in a suburb southwest of Patras. It is situated in a neighbourhood characterized by a series of block flats of the 1960s and 1970s designed to accommodate internal migration, from rural areas to the outskirts of large cities.

During the last few years, the district has been affected by unemployment because of the massive relocation of industries to neighbouring countries. The poverty is visible in the condition of the exterior walls of blocks of flats and on the environment all around. However, the district has not been influenced by the influx of immigrants because it is far from the coastline of the city.

The school has 290 pupils and 37 teachers. The majority of the teachers are experienced but older. A lot of students have learning difficulties. Indeed, one reason why the school has taken part in so many projects was precisely in an effort to seek alternative learning strategies to address the growing learning problems of the students. The problems were of two types: dropout problems and acts of incivility. Therefore, the projects were designed in part as an alternative pedagogical method to consolidate formal teaching, and secondly, as a mechanism of socialization (or rather a schooling support).

The lower secondary school has progressively enhanced its reputation and is regarded as an active school because of the development of such projects. Its director has played an important role in this development. Meanwhile, a team of 5 to 8 teachers has become quite active (there are 2-3 leaders, two of them are in this school for 17 years and one of them is in this school for 23 years).

The stability of the staff also played a decisive role in the success of the programs. The critical juncture was the change of School director in 2007, but fortunately the new management has continued the same policy. The 2008-2009 school year was very important because two of the three teachers most motivated mentioned below had to leave the school.

School in Corinth centre town (Peloponnese)

This is a public lower secondary school located in the centre of the city. It is a school that brings together two lower secondary schools and two upper secondary schools. It has 400 pupils and 40 teachers. The director seems to be very active and many projects are implemented in the lower secondary school. He attaches great importance to the school's reputation in the region but he does not seem to be very interested in the effects of these actions on students and school democracy.

He is quite authoritarian and he wants to control all the actions implemented by teachers. He is not interested in the functioning of school councils which, in his view, lead to the politicization of students and are detrimental "to the good functioning" of the school. Several projects have been implemented in this school during the year 2008-2009:

- A project on environmental education (solar energy).
- Two projects on health education: school violence and emotional management; health and nutrition.
- Cultural projects on following topics: 'I know my region as a part of Europe' (exchanges provided between the school and the Greek community in Munich); construction of a tourist guide on the lakes and the Alps of Austria; preparation of a play theatre.

Our research is primarily interested in the last project.

5.3. Interview guide used, both with teachers and with students

The survey was based on interviews conducted with 9-10 students in each school as well as with the director and the teacher or teachers who are responsible for the project chosen by the research team. Students were interviewed in small groups to promote exchanges between them. The interview guide is the same for teachers and students even if the issues can be adapted to the context of each interview. Topics covered in this guide are as follows:

1) **Objectives or purposes of the project**: What is this project? Can you describe it? What were its aims?
2) **Personal Motivation**: Why you got involved in this project? What were your expectations and/or your fears about it?
3) **Tools and materials used**: Are there any tools (documents, rules, procedures ...) that have been used during the project? How they have been made? How have they evolved during the projects development? What do you think about these tools (have they been effective/ineffective, adapted ...)?
4) **Difficulties:** Have you experienced difficulties during the project? What caused these problems in your opinion? How did you resolve them?
5) **Review:** What experience have you gained? What knowledge and skills you have acquired?
6) **Links with civic education** (and possibly other courses): Did you have some collaboration with the teacher of civics or with other teachers? Do you think this

project is related to the education of students for citizenship? Can you explain this relationship?

Chapter 6

Analysis and interpretation of data

6.1. Global outlook: School and teacher effectiveness in starting projects and pupils and teachers' commitment

Generally speaking, we observed that starting projects and their management but also pupils and teachers' commitment are linked with school and teacher effectiveness. We present two cases.

In the first case, the director of the school is involved in projects and believes that projects have an important role to play in learning and socialising pupils. So, he manages the staff and finds people who are also involved and can support starting projects. He is ready to devote time for these projects, to build links and to communicate with teachers. He is also ready to change and adjust school organisation so that pupils and teachers learn from projects, taking into account: travel, frequent meetings, links with families, new time organisation in school, more freedom for pupils and new rights to initiate activities with more risks. These projects seem to be successful and draw the pupils' attention while fostering a dynamic attitude for the school at large. This is the case for the public school of Patras in Greece and of the experimental school in Athens.

In the second case, the principal agrees to the implementation of the projects but he is not willing to modify the working practices of neither staff nor building links nor cohesion which are necessary for success. Projects are not the key to transform the "school *habitus*". Three indicators show this situation well:

- The projects remain related to the teacher who promotes them (or anyone working in the school) but if the teacher withdraws as a result of health difficulties or for any other reason, the project ceases. Thus, we can observe that when the Education Advisor who had organised the training of pupils' representatives through shooting a film in the secondary school of Gennevilliers left on maternity leave the project failed, even though during the following year she was replaced by another Education Advisor who had been involved in the same project.

- In this kind of secondary schools, projects are one-person-tasks, which is felt by the teachers and the pupils as disappointing. The project "*race against hunger project*" which took place in the secondary school of Courbevoie, is an example of this type of project. Likewise, a Corinth secondary school teacher points out that she dropped the school magazine she had been running for six years because she was tired of having to cope with all the work without her colleagues' support; not only had they not participated to the project but they had also questioned the opportunity of the action; nor were they willing to share in the costs needed to actualize the project.

- It seems, at least in France, that teachers' involvement in these projects is not as representative as that of other members of staff, namely the Education Advisor and the instructors. What's more, school partnerships and outside instructors play a great part as well. Thus in the secondary school of Saint Mathieu de Treviers (France), the CESC, "*Comité d'éducation à la santé et à la citoyenneté*" (Health and

citizenship committee of education), there is a reliance mainly on the leadership of the school nurse's responsibility and the librarian's who promote various partnerships with the police, hospitals dealing with cancer and addictive attitude and local authorities. Yet the teachers' involvement is limited except for two of them who teach biology and French; they are involved in two out of ten projects. Sometimes there are even some tensions between teachers and other staff members. In the secondary school of Genevilliers (France) the Education Advisor[17] who was interviewed often complained about the teachers misunderstandings related to the pupils' representatives' training during class meetings, the lack of respect shown for his job and his efforts to promote school democracy.

6.2. The objectives aimed to

These project objectives presented by the adults who were interviewed can be divided into three categories.

a. Socialisation, autonomy and teamwork

Some project content is only a pretext to encourage pupils' socialisation and motivation to school. This is the case of the "*healthy eating*" project in Patras (Greece). For the school director, projects are the key to socialisation and teamwork:

"*The children's background is mainly factory working families with a low income and some families with serious difficulties. Consequently, the school level in these classes is not high. It is true that some of the pupils have difficulties to complete compulsory education (...). Projects are an alternative way of learning, of active learning that goes beyond the formal class. The pupils are active and autonomous and they learn better and with more pleasure things they would not learn. They socialise better in this process. They learn to work in a team. They learn how to work through "projects". I consider this process as a start of a dramatic change in tomorrow's education*".

Regarding the "*healthy eating*" project, what follows is the description given by the teacher in charge:

"*Generally speaking, my aim above all was to make pupils work together. It means, my main objective was to have them discuss, argue, share opinions, listen to each other and at last form a team. Thus, we could build a small community and the pupils would be in a position to face the bigger society when they leave school afterwards. That is the main goal. Then I will speak about the theme because I do know what it means to "make a project" together with setting up a team, I cannot imagine education without a project*".

Within the framework of this objective of socialisation, we can note that for some teachers projects are a means to integrate pupils who have some learning problems. One teacher of the secondary school of Patras points out that project work is the only

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[17] In French school system the Education Advisor has the responsibility of school life organization and of the training of students' delegates which participate in school councils.

possibility to motivate the students for learning, and above all for those from underprivileged background as is the case in this school:

"H*ere, some cases show that the father has no right to see his child... that the grandmother is in charge because the parents are unable to cope... It means children are not wanted and... if you do not involve these children in a project... some of them we call them "come here you... and you too... otherwise you are helpless" that is if you do not care for them... as he is a bad pupil anyway... if you do not integrate him anywhere you cannot do anything (...) This school does need another kind of education beyond the traditional education given by the Ministry of education".*

In this general outlook, the projects come from the teachers themselves but also from some teachers who are closer to their pupils and ask for their advice in the implementation of a project. Thus we see a teacher from the Corinth school in Greece who is used to building projects with the pupils (school magazine, drama, etc.) point out that she has run for some time a break-dance workshop at her pupils' request because she saw that they were motivated by this activity.

d. Promoting interest and involvement in cultural education

There are projects where the reverse can be observed; a teacher's passion for cultural activity plays a leveraging role to promote cooperation between pupils. The two Greek school drama projects follow this principle. Teachers have suggested them to motivate the pupils' knowledge and love of drama:

"*But I also want to insist on another aspect: children this age have not seen plays, they do not know that it is drama and yet they think they know about drama and even that they do not like drama. They mix drama and TV series or sometimes they have seen bad plays... so one of the objectives is that they learn about drama and that they see real drama".*

The Physical Training Teacher of secondary school in Courbevoie has the same type of objectives. She has set up the project *"Race against hunger"* for Afghani children with a double aim: on the one hand helping Afghani children and on the other hand sensitizing the pupils about charity and solidarity projects:

"A*nyway for me the goal is that children manage to carry out their charity project that is to say they have an idea, and well... they want to help the others and even as teenagers or young people how they can help the others really. This is quite interesting for me, notwithstanding the financial aspect, setting up a project allows for helping others. For me this is the true priority."*

This objective is also mentioned by the deputy director of secondary school in Genevilliers regarding the shooting of a film on citizenship: pupils are led to ask themselves questions about citizen commitment through the shooting of the film, the directing and development and execution of the music of the film.

c. Passing over messages of prevention

Lastly there are some projects whose objective is more about transmission of information and knowledge building. The pupils' commitment is not considered as a priority for the people in charge of the project and nothing is done to encourage it. This is the case of CESC implemented by secondary school in Saint-Mathieu de Tréviers (France) where the school director points out that *"the CESC implements a policy of prevention, of information on health problems and develops citizenship learning"*.

In these committees, pupils have representatives who participate but they have not received any training to encourage their involvement and commitment. The 10 actions that have taken place within the framework of these committees work in a formal way but not on an experience basis.

And yet there are other cases in which some messages can be transmitted thanks to some participative projects. For example, a play set up by two teachers in the Corinth secondary school: assert that this play has been set up in the process of a project against violence. The book from which the play is drawn could transmit some messages about this theme. At first, they intended to debate this book and then they decided to write a play from it.

6.3. Implementing the project

a. Negociating the involvement

Depending on the projects and their place in the curricula, the pupils can participate willingly or not, knowing about the project or not. For example the project *"Race against hunger"* (whose title was *"solidarity"*) is part of the choices for the 2nd year (*"5ème"*) of secondary school in Courbevoie besides two others: sport and movie studies. For the CESCs, the pupils have representatives who are elected. For media projects (magazine editing), cultural projects (drama), health education (healthy eating), the projects are optional but the teachers encourage some pupils participation either because they have the necessary skills or conversely because they think they can have the opportunity to develop the skills they lack.

To sum up, what comes forth from our interviews is that at least 30% of the students have registered in these projects without knowing exactly what it was about but they eventually enjoyed the project afterwards. They seem to discover little by little the main interest of these projects that are different from the usual functioning of the school. Thus, for example, in the secondary school of Courbevoie some pupils have chosen the project because they have seen their Physical Training Teachers' name and that they have believed that it would mean joining in a race to collect money for Afghani children whereas the project was actually meant to organise the race (looking for sponsors, loading a blog, organising sessions to sensitize other pupils, etc.). Thus, at the beginning, they have been disappointed to see that this organisation had nothing to do with some sport activity but rather, in order to set it up they had to sacrifice sport lessons. Similarly, a pupil who participated to the *"drama group"* in the country secondary school in Greece expresses his *"motivation"*:

"At the very start, I didn't choose it! Actually, I took part in the play for October 28th, National Holiday in Greece, and this is when the teachers saw me and that they said: "Come to the drama group!" I answered: "No way, this isn't my place"... At the same time, I thought "Rehearsing every Saturday, it's out of the question". But they insisted. "Yes, you have to come!" and here I am! At the beginning, it was very boring, learning all the roles, that kind of stuff (...) but in the end when we started acting and we could see the audience and we were successful and I said to myself "actually, it is good".

Like true "*school consumers*", the pupils wonder why "*add an activity to the curriculum which is already full*". This question is the main source of the difficulties they encountered with, pupils and teachers altogether, as we will develop further down.

There are however pupils who choose the activity because they are interested in the subject. This is the case of some cultural projects or of the online magazine that attracts the attention of pupils who love computers. Students also choose this activity because it is not very restrictive and at the same time it allows them to express themselves. Two to three students report that they also chose the magazine because they like to write and express their opinions freely:

"I like that each one says his opinion and expresses what he wants, with some limits naturally. And this printed magazine but also the electronic one, they give the occasion to each child to say his own opinion about things in the school and outside of the school, and to talk about some problems (Lower secondary school in Athens)."

Finally, we must not neglect the emotional and relational factor in these choices. Some students choose an activity to be with their friends, which is quite common for students of this age.

In general we notice that there is a negotiation between teachers and students who navigate between interest for the subject and social or institutional "benefits" that they can acquire. Thus, we see that in the Patras school students are primarily motivated by a sort of "reward" that accompanies the project: a free trip for students. This first objective motivates them to choose the activity and explore its interest, institutional motivation gradually giving way to a personal motivation, at least for some of them, as reported by the teachers and the headmaster:

"Last year, the Department has proposed the program "Kalystau" and participating teams could take a trip of five days (...) and everything was paid for. After that, there was a panic, all the students wanted to participate. In order to find a solution we distributed questionnaires concerning their expectations. What do they expect from these projects? Which are their goals? We asked a series of questions to see their true interests. ... Because a lot of them realize that it is not so simple, it's not just the trip, they have to work, and then they drop out. Some of them like this procedure and remain ... and they learn a lot of things (...) I think even, after consultation with the teachers, that we must put a rule according to which each student must participate at least once (...)".

These observations recall the position of Vygotsky, taken by Clot (1999) concerning efficiency and sense. He says, in effect, that the involvement of the learner in an activity depends on their expertise on the subject (efficiency) and the importance that it acquires for his social and personal level (sense). When teachers really care about the success of these projects, they take into account these two factors and work with students to develop motivation for an activity that is not obligatory, which is outside the usual constraints of the institution.

c. Some difficulties

- Difficulties with the hierarchy, lack of recognition.

Some teachers point to the lack of recognition of these projects and of the work that their implementation requires either from the head of the institution (when he/she is not interested in this method of learning) or from inspectors. This is the case especially in Greece where, as we have seen, these projects are less well managed in institutional terms. Thus, a teacher who is in the lower secondary school in Patras points out:

"Difficulties are a reality! There are biases in the school hierarchy ... that projects are a waste of time ... they do nothing ... it's an excuse for the teachers to receive overtime pay. This is not true. If you see closely the work provided by teachers for these projects, it is a second job! A lot of hours after school, weekends ..."

- Several institutional difficulties

Students and teachers consider that the implementation of these projects is difficult because of the lack of time and availability: difficulty of finding available slots for everyone, difficulty of not encroaching on other classes and school activities. In Greece, students are overloaded with extra-curricular activities (some projects preparations took place on Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon, which is clearly not the case in France where these activities take place on Wednesday afternoons). We see these referenced in interviews with the students:

- *"Yes, all the students were involved, but sometimes some of them could not come because of extra-curricular activities"* (Lower secondary school in Patras)
- *"Yes, he had to study for the next day, we also had tutoring ... some children could not come after school Friday because they had either a computer or a review exam in extra-curricular English and they were always absent"* (Lower secondary school in Corinth).
- *"There were those who took part and after they said" we cannot come every Saturday, is too much "and they abandoned the project. Thus, after the distribution of 29 roles half of roles remained without actors! Suddenly, it was necessary that we assume both roles at once! "(Lower secondary school in Athens).*

To avoid institutional constraints, some teachers and some schools decided to promote partnerships with organizations outside the school. We therefore note that there is also a need to sometimes leave the school setting in order to implement these projects.

Thus, in the secondary school of Genevilliers delegates training is organized in partnership with two cultural associations of the city of Genevilliers that are adjacent to the school. They organized debates around the concept of citizenship, rights and duties related to current events. At the same time, they helped students to make a film about citizenship and compose its music and songs. The problem in this case is that the project must be redefined in accordance with these outside partners, which requires time and energy for both the teachers and students.

But this collaborative partnership is not always possible. If for the school in Genevilliers this collaboration is accessible because of the proximity of the two associations with the school, trips are not easily allowed in other structures. Thus, while the teacher who organized the project of "Race against hunger" signals that she would like to go out when necessary, such as going to meet with representatives of NGOs or go to the mayor asking for his support, this however becomes too complex. At the same time, contacts with the companies or the media must not be done outside of school, so students are forced to phone them during school hours.

6.4.   Students' participation

a.   Mentoring negotiated, autonomy and involvement to develop

Teachers and students when asked believe these activities help students to develop their independence and take initiatives. But this learning, which functions in a different way than the usual school learning, is not easy either for one or for the other. Some teachers believe that students are not very active and do not take enough initiatives. They consider that students have some difficulties in assuming responsibilities necessary for these projects because they are not accustomed to it, as pointed out by one teacher's Athens lower secondary school:

"I would want that children be more active. They are very hesitant, maybe because they haven't enough experience concerning new technologies and computers. We think that they have this experience but it is not very developed. But... I feel that even this type of technology does not fall within the interests of children because it requires an effort to write correctly in Greek. For me this is a big question to be discussed in school council. All delegates of school council have a user name and have the possibility to make comments in the forum that we have created but they don't use it very frequently. There is no discussion, there is no debate, I don't know why. Students maybe feel our control and they haven't the impression of really being free. We must evaluate these difficulties and see what we can improve on next year in order to have a more dynamic participation of students".

It is interesting that students also have this feeling of lack of mobilization which they cannot explain:

"In school councils we have some discussions about things that can be improved in school. I want to change some things but I think I would be more motivated if more students were involved. I'm not motivated enough to propose ideas and realize them on my own." (Lower secondary school of Athens).

b. Difficulties in communication with others

Some of these projects, such as humanitarian projects, require a large mobilization of students to contact organizations or individuals outside the school and try to convince them to support the project undertaken. Students therefore reported that they encountered difficulties in reaching out to others and in communicating. This applies to students of Courbevoie who organized some information sessions concerning their project for other classes and had to contact companies or celebrities by phone. Students have to overcome their shyness and learn to assume responsibilities concerning their project.

As we shall see later, this difficulty leads to the acquisition of certain social skills. For humanitarian projects such communication difficulties are reinforced by the indifference of other students (mockery, insults, aggression ...) and of some people contacted outside the college (media, celebrities, companies ...) due, according to students interviewed, to two reasons: the fact that the project is carried out by students (difficulty to take it seriously), the fact that the project concerns a foreign country (lack of interest for other countries and their problems).

c. Difficulties in cooperation between students

There are some disputes between students regarding the choice of tasks, the distribution of tasks and responsibilities because there are many students who make the same choice. But as we shall see later in this text, students think that these difficulties help them to understand what cooperation is all about.

6.5.   Evaluation of the experience, skills and knowledge acquired

Learning acquired from this experience can be differentiated into five main categories: personal and social skills; civic and ethical skills; valorisation of learning, school and teachers; acquisition of knowledge.

a. Personal and social skills

- **Awareness of its capabilities, self-confidence**
  Several students said they became aware of their ability to speak, communicate, and take initiatives according to the situation. This is the case of some students in Courbevoie college:

  "So I think we realized we could do certain things that we didn't know or believe that we could do them… for example… I am still shy but at the beginning when we called celebrities we were very stressed and then I realized that I could call celebrities

without being stressed… In fact I gained confidence in myself - When you've done it several times after a while it's easier."

- **Acquisition of communication strategies**
  - Taking notes on paper before calling someone,
  - or, before a speech or a debate, note only some keywords and speak freely:
  - *"We wrote our ideas, some keywords for example, before awareness sessions concerning humanitarian projects … instead of reading my text, to go faster, I just noted some keywords and after I imagined sentences".*
  - Speak directly to people instead of just talking on the phone
  - Take the email addresses of contacts for sending messages

- **Cooperation skills**
  Most students surveyed noted that they liked participating in these projects because there was a real team effort, everybody competed and nobody was left out. Students have learned to communicate, both within school and outside it: "*We learned to speak to people, to approach people, to want to know more things about them*" (secondary school in Genevilliers). Some students also emphasized the acquisition of certain strategies of cooperation (to share the tasks, to define the roles, to organize the work …).

b. **Ethical and civic skills**
   These skills refer to the awareness of a certain responsibility towards oneself and others in respect to some values or rights. We can specifically note the following skills:

- **Empathy for others**: Being interested in other people and make some efforts to understand their problems. One student involved in the project "Race against hunger" for the children of Afghanistan says that he realized what "cruelty" means :

"There was a boy in our age who lived in Afghanistan / He wrote a letter and it was very touching because he told us what he did … There were roofs exploding on their own, bombs exploding at every moment… for example his friend lost her leg while running and that's all … we were very touched - He also explained what cruelty is there .. for example if you just run over there, soldiers can shoot at you."

This empathy may also be learned by the way they understand the 'us-them' paradigm:

"they have to walk eight kilometres to fetch water … Sometimes this water cannot be drunk or there may be bugs in it … while me …during the race I ran seven kilometres and I was breathless, I was exhausted".

But the skill of empathy can sometimes be used to understand even the lack of involvement of some students during educational sessions:

"Sometimes students bored for two hours during educational sessions and I think it's normal … We must put ourselves in their place because it is not their project, they are not involved in it, they have not the responsibility of the project. For us it's different, it is our project, we organize it and we think it's perfect…"

- **Awareness and self-control:** Learn to persevere, not give up and acquire some responsibility in relation to social situations:

"We had to be motivated. If we gave up too quickly we could not succeed… Well, let's say we could have lives in our hands …well, not really, but if we did not do things well people would die so we should have a minimum of responsibility". (Lower secondary school in Courbevoie). "In this project (creation of a site) I learned to put some limits on myself, have a discipline" (Lower secondary school in Athens).

- **Development of political judgment and questioning :** This experience led students involved in the project 'Race against hunger' to differentiate the social situation of a population from the political situation of its country:

"We sometimes see in newscasts on Afghanistan and they tell us they place bombs and people say "Afghans throw bombs at us while we help them" but it isn't children who do this … Children are starving and they know what a bomb is because every day they see bombs exploding. People think that Afghans are very bad while they are starving".

c.   **Valorisation of learning, school and teachers**

Several students interviewed stressed that they have learned to mobilize for a value or a cause. This is what a student of the experimental school in Athens said about the music group in which he participated:

"In the beginning, I was writing my own songs and if I had something to read I told myself 'Well let it go now, let's go to work on the song, to play'. I preferred to play the guitar even if I was obliged to stay late after this in order to finish my homework. But when I was playing and writing and singing it was nice and pleasant for me. I liked it very much."

Another student in the same school explained what an impact the participation in an environmental project had on him:

"Ok I gained some knowledge but I think we all know it and we all say in theory that the earth is dying, that factories pollute the atmosphere and that waste contaminate the seas, that there are too many cars and that we don't protect trees and forests, but we say it theoretically. I believe that with this project I realized these problems more deeply and I don't say it in a superficial way anymore … and I said it to my cousin which is 8 years old … she threw a plastic bin and she did not put it in recycling and I told her: "Go and put it to recycling" and she said "Why should I do?" and I showed

him some videos on YouTube concerning reducing water, pollution and lack of oxygen and she understood. And as I made a Power Point on this topic I showed her and she was impressed and she brought it in her school and showed it to her class. And when it was the international day of "lighting" she urged her parents to turn off the lights".

The impact of these projects on students' values and habits, often found in the long-term, is also highlighted by teachers who seem to be very proud of their results. Here is a characteristic example from a Patras school teacher concerning the impact of the nutrition project to some students:

(P1): "A student said she would never forget me and she started crying because she has finally learned how to take a breakfast! Now she became a nurse ... then I also cried too. I think these moments are the most important ... another student became a teacher ... I saw him after many years ... he said "Madame, do you remember the bread that we made in school? That was hard!" So there are things that emerge in time ... they [the students] change their behaviours, attitudes ... and this is the most important!"

Another teacher of the same school explains how a project helped students to be interested to mathematics:

"I can give you an example. I am a mathematician and I had students who were not interested when I made a graph on the blackboard. Yet, for a project which concerned the Port of Patras, it was necessary to build ships of various sizes to travel different distances, we called this project "The boats travelling", and thus ... they understood the graph's meaning. Some years later I met a student who had participated in this project and he said "Madame, even the graph paper can talk to you!"

Teachers and students also highlight that projects change their relationship not only with respect to school and knowledge but also towards teachers. They laugh together, they seek solutions together, and they work in a cooperative framework that is nice for everyone. Students also emphasized in the interviews that the project-based learning is much more interesting and less boring than traditional courses.

d. Acquiring knowledge and conceptualizing experience

Students often reported having understood a notion that they use every day without really knowing what it means, such as for the concept of citizenship in the school of Genevilliers:

"Because you know we are citizens but do not really know what that means ... because there are words we say but we do not really know what they are, what they mean exactly".

In the college of Courbevoie students said they understood the concepts of health and nutrition, learned things concerning the geographic, social and political situation of Afghanistan (some students did not even know where this country is):

"With Baptist, Maxim and Lorenzo we wrote a paragraph on women in Afghanistan who may be executed if they do not respect the rules".

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They also learned what is an NGO's work (Non Governmental Organization) and acquired experience in humanitarian projects:

"If we want to work for humanitarian projects later this experience can help us too".

Regarding links with civic education, most students interviewed, especially in France, reported having very little civics courses during the year but they see a link between the projects and this area of education. These links can be situated in different approaches:

a. Identity approach: *"these projects open us up to us"(Lower secondary school in Genevilliers)*
b. *Legal and political approach: some projects teach rights to students: "Because we are told that the Afghans have the right to have the same things than we have …they really do not have all the rights that they should have actually! They have less freedom than us."(Lower secondary school in Courbevoie)*
c. Cultural approach: *"it gives us more culture." (Lower secondary school in Athens)*
d. Ethical Approach: *"Civic education is the education of life, being human, helping others."(Lower secondary school in Courbevoie)*

Finally, it should not be overlooked that when the whole school is involved in the project in order to build a true "culture" of the institution, the headmaster and teachers stress the benefits that are derived for both the school's reputation and for the institutional means that have been offered to the school. This applies to the school in Patras, where this form of recognition is highlighted by the teachers:

"I think that a benefit for the school is having changed its image … people have changed their opinion about this school. Previously, they said "stay far away from this school". Now, in the last years, people think we're a well organized school… we maybe have some low-level students but we do many projects, many teachers are active … well … comparatively to other schools. "
"The school has taken advantage of these projects. We are now really well equipped following the success of some projects. Some project budgets, like the budget of "Kalystau, allowed us to buy cameras and other equipment that we need, the theatre's budget allowed us to make costumes, etc."

6.6. Students' delegates in School councils

In general student representatives reported in both countries that their involvement in school councils is superficial and that they do not essentially participate in decision making. These results concur with some research results presented in the theoretical part of this report.

a. The non-recognition of delegates' speech

Thus, for the Education Advisor of the Lower secondary school in Gennevilliers, the class council is a place where teachers settle accounts among themselves as well as between them and the students. There is no cohesion within the educational team. Teachers also consider that the Education Advisor has no place in these decision-making situations concerning students' evaluation.

The Class Council also has a large functioning problem because there are some "customs/traditions" very difficult to overcome. For example, a very good student could not get the congratulations because he had a very low grade in Physical Education (while the average of other grates was around of 17). For the Education Advisor, an important function of the Class Council is to enhance students, especially in an environment of Zone of Educational Priority:

"We are in a context of Zone of Educational Priority and I believe it is important to value the students who do better and have good results because they are not especially recognized by their peers. If they haven't even adult support and recognition of teachers, I think it's extremely hard for them to live their success. They are still teenagers." (Lower secondary school in Genevilliers).

As delegates, the students surveyed also reported several difficulties to:

- Convince teachers to be interested in class problems. There are teachers who take these problems into account and others that do not take them into account. For students of Genevilliers, the overall level of the class plays an important role in that teachers' interest: teachers show more interest for classes that have a low general level. They are less attentive when difficulties concern only some students.
- Show to the teachers that their unjust behaviour discourages students in their work.
- Manage the inconsistency between the classes work and the class councils' decisions. For example, in Genevilliers lower secondary school, teachers had established, following the Education Advisor proposal, a monitoring system of students' work and performance that had not been taken into account in the class council.
- Difficulty of restitution of speech: Delegates announce the decisions of class councils to students and as students sometimes transform theses decisions, teachers consider that delegates are responsible for these transformations. The delegate has to assume responsibilities towards both teachers and students.
- Difficulties to speak in the class council. Teachers do not really talk about students. That's how students of college in Montepellier describe these meetings:

    "Five and a half hours, it sounds. We go to the forum. We stay in the forum and then all the teachers arrive. They settle their selves. We wait outside for five to six minutes. They make us go. They leave us two places to sit. We sit. Often, there is the principal that starts to say a lot of things about the students and we are writing. Often, I find it useless because these comments are marked in the transcript ... And after there is a discussion on students. We can say things concerning students: they must work, they must catch up. We see those who have not worked. And then there

is a painting that unfolds. We see the average of students' scores in a diagram; for example, one fourteen and a half of average. And then we must go to see the pupil, we cannot say "this sucks", we have to say "you must catch up."

- The role of the delegate is very superficial in reality. He is used to monitor the class (to police the class); to accompany students to the Education Advisor or to the infirmary; to take stock of the class in the class council. He does not participate in decision making.

Some of the students interviewed, however, underline the fact that the experience of class representative has given them some skills to:

- Be patient, listen to students and try to find solutions to their problems.
- Learn to argue, to defend his/her opinion, overcome his/her shyness and speak to several people. A student in college of Courbevoie reported to have understood how to speak in order to be heard:

"Articulate well, speak loudly, you must be dynamic and make promises you can keep. Between the sessions we tell ourselves that if we move they will perhaps listen".

b. An attempt of delegates training by Civic Engagement

Among the six schools that participated in this survey, only one college, the secondary school in Genevilliers has established a major project of delegates training, under the responsibility of two Education Advisors. The objective of this training was to educate students on "civic engagement" because it has observed that students' motivation to be elected as delegate decreases with age: in the first class of the college there were many candidates who presented themselves for election, in the second class the candidates there were slightly less, in the third class it was hard to find some delegates, and in the fourth class it was even difficult to find even two candidates. In terms of motivation, the Educator Advisors consider that students "civic engagement" can be created in relation to two other objectives:

- Educate youth about citizenship in general, in the city and in their daily lives.
- Make links with youth culture and, more specifically, ask to student's delegates to participate in the creation of a film concerning citizenship, of its music and songs.

For these Education Advisors delegates training aims to build two main skills to:

- Become neutral and objective in relation to teachers and peers; take his/her position as a student representative. They think it is important to avoid attitudes of some students who want to be delegate only because of the image and the power they will have in the class and not because they are interested in defending students rights and projects. They therefore adopted a first criterion concerning delegates' candidatures: in order to imitate the political representation, a student can be a candidate only if his criminal record is spotless. For them, the issue of a "good

representative" is to overcome his/her personal preferences and friendships, to take into account its function and get to have a neutral and just attitude towards his/her classmates. He/she must distance themselves from their own friendships, which already appears in the way students recreate with their peers what has been said in the class council.

- Develop a sense of belonging in a class: create cohesion in the classroom and ensure that the class is self-regulated.

- Acquire some intervention strategies in the class council in order to "take his place" against the teachers. The skills of a "good delegate" rely heavily on public speaking but also on the development of judgment and critical sense:

   "It's interesting that they use the word ''defend' 'their peers that means that they feel attacked. This is pretty disconcerting because school should not be a place where they feel their personality is being attacked. On the contrary school is a place where one must learn to build things and to develop its potentialities. I think that the fact that delegates insist on the way to ''defend'' their peers means something …".

This conception of delegates training urged the Education Advisors of this college to create a film, with delegates' participation, that raises questions about the concept of citizenship and ties with the experience and cultural identity of students in a very disadvantaged environment. As we have seen, this experience was very positive for students but it remained marginal in respect to the overall operation of the school.

Conclusion

A first conclusion of this research provides us with the fact that the political participation of students in the class and school councils encounters difficulties that are related to the recognition of the rights of students within the school and the questioning of the hierarchy that characterizes relations between teachers and students. The proliferation of participatory modalities in schools, the intentions expressed in official documents of the European Community and national programmes do not seem sufficient to establish a democratic dialogue among school actors, to promote the recognition and empowerment of students and encourage their involvement in school life.

The empowerment of students seems to come through their involvement in actions that affect their social and cultural interests. These actions refer to values that would make the connection between students' culture and school culture. Thus, we would agree with the comment of Michel Hervé, who says, analyzing his work as mayor of Parthenay in favour of youth investment in cultural, sporting and political activities, that :*"In short, for young people, active citizenship is primarily cultural. They become agents of their culture"* (Hervé, 1997). You can also put it differently: young people's participation in the life and management of their institution cannot pass only through representation mandates, especially since theses mandates do not seem to be accompanied by a theoretical, and explicit reflection concerning law principles that govern their functioning.

This raises the question of extending the concept of participation concerning all grades and all levels of development, from childhood to adulthood. Some theoretical approaches define learning itself as participation in opposition to the model of learning as acquisition of knowledge. In addition to the classical work of active learning and psychological theories regarding the role of experience in learning (Dewey, 1938, 1997; Kolb, 1984), these theoretical approaches consider informal learning as a process of participation in cultural practices. Thus, according to Lave and Wenger (1991)[18], learning is not accumulation but participation: one cannot separate the learning from the commitment to practice within a situation. The authors develop a theory of social learning always situated, defined as the shift from a peripheral participation to full participation "Learning is this movement in participation, a transformation of status, identity and responsibilities" (Brougère and Bézille, 2007 : 152). This theory emphasizes the social dimension of learning by integrating a culture of practices.

The cultural, humanitarian, health-related and citizenship-related projects seem to support this learning by participation. This research shows that their main impacts on students' development are as follows:

- Transforming the relation of students with school, learning and teachers
- Promoting cooperation and socialization
- Encouraging participation skills and communication
- Promoting self-confidence and self-efficacy

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[18] Lave J et Wenger E.(1991), *Situated Learning : Legitimate Peripherical Participation,* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press

However, the implementation of these projects is outside of the educational institution standards and requires negotiation and compromise by the educational actors. Thus, the sustainability of these projects depends on the willingness of the head teacher to modify the operating system of his/her school. If this decision is taken, the school succeeds in building a specific "culture" that marks its reputation. The suburban school of Patras, in Greece, is the only one that seems to have built this image. The profile of that school is interesting because it shows that the efforts of the school staff to address students' difficulties, led him to develop projects that have finally transformed the school identity. We can also quote the experimental school in Athens, but its profile is quite different: enhanced by an outstanding educational and cultural history, this school serves students who belong to socially advantaged families and works with a very well qualified team.

In the other schools surveyed in both countries, the implementation of these projects is traversed by tensions that are related to the constraints of educational institutions. This situation causes students distrust concerning these innovations and their difficulty to develop the skills of "autonomy" and "responsibility" that teachers ask of them and to which they are unaccustomed.

Note also that in one of the schools surveyed, the school of Gennevilliers (France), the Education Advisor interviewed showed a good example of links that can be built between the political participation of students in class councils and participation in cultural projects. It thus appears that the relationship between these two forms of participation (political/formal and cultural/informal) is possible, but fragile because its strength depends, among other things, on the political will of the institution to promote such projects and raise the educational team about their achievement.

Regarding the comparison between the two countries, the small number of institutions chosen does not allow us to reach conclusions that can be generalized. We believe that the observed results are valid for both countries. However, we can remark not only from empirical but also from the theoretical and curricular research. The fact is that the framework that exists in France regarding the political and cultural participation of pupils in school life is much more structured than in Greece, and this fact seems to produce different behaviours in two countries. The existence of a regulatory framework is undoubtedly important because it explicitly defines the rights and obligations of the educational actors. But at the same time this framework can reduce educational activities in the prescribed work without an accompanying transformation of the actors' representations and their normal functioning. Thus, despite the fact that this framework is quite advanced in France and promotes the rights of students, it is not accompanied by a change in actual and effective practices. This situation leads to students' disengagement and to a lack of interest of some teachers for participatory practices.

In Greece, this framework is almost nonexistent and educational actors claim it as intensely as we have seen in the theoretical part of this work (regarding for example the existence of internal school rules). At the same time the lack of regulatory framework encourages the development of innovative initiatives when conditions are met and when teachers and school directors are motivated to do so. An indicator indicative of the difference between the two countries regarding the flexibility of the school system is that, in Greece, project preparation is often outside of school hours (Saturdays and Sundays),

which seems not be very shocking either for the students or for the teachers because students are accustomed to participate in several sports and cultural activities outside of school.

In France, teachers seem to want to integrate the preparation of these projects within the school hours or at least, on Wednesday afternoon which is a kind of "extension" of the regular school time[19]. The example of the teacher of Physical Education who agrees to lend his mobile phone to students in order to phone to the sponsors and businesses during school time is very characteristic in this regard.

These assumptions must be studied using a larger research sample. But it should be noted that these assumptions pose the question of the school opening to its environment and the more general question of conditions that determine the construction of a "school culture", its functioning standards and their possible evolution. This question refers to the relationship between prescribed speech on education for citizenship and democracy (regulations proposed by each country or by the European Union, official programs, etc.) and principles that determine actual and effective practices of participation in the classroom or the school. How can we ensure that the experience of students within the school community helps to develop knowledge and skills related to citizenship? (Maubant, 2006; Audigier, 2006).

Considering school as a community of practices, values, and communication tools, may be an interesting way to study the relationship between experience and knowledge. The concept of community has often been used in science education to describe cooperative experiments aimed at educating students to certain civic and moral values. More recently, the term "learning community" can be found in Anglo-Saxon research referring to a group of people who share the same values and whose members interact with each other to pursue some common goals[20].

Therefore, designing participatory practices within a community, especially the school community, means questioning the principles and objectives that currently exist behind these practices. This is a questioning concerning the "school *habitus*", that is to say about the educational and political functioning of school, as a product of a long history, which is structured around a strong disciplinary organization concerning teaching materials and maintenance of school order. This organization cannot easily integrate educational practices that have no explicit disciplinary anchor nor a definite place in the existing curriculum organization.

It appears that there is a need to define a framework for organizing these practices differently than is currently done. The theory of law both as a learning object and as a tool for regulation of collective life may provide the framework necessary to make this change and question its underlying values. Such a framework can make the link between the procedural and conceptual aspects of participation as well as between the political and

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[19] In France there are no college classes on Wednesday afternoon.

[20] See about it : Graves, L. (1992). Cooperative learning communities: Context for a new vision of education and society. *Journal of Education, 174*(2), 57-79 ; Calderwood, P. E. (2000). *Learning community: Finding common ground in difference*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

educational aspects of it, by clarifying concepts, aims, tasks and situations which are the basis of any democratic system as shown by the research conducted in France by 1995 (Robert, 1999; Audigier and Lagélée, 1996; Pagoni-Andreani, 1999). This work emphasized that the "implementation" of the principles of law in school is complex but equally necessary to give practical meaning to education for citizenship and encourage students and teachers to reflect on the relationship between the legal, political and ethical spheres of community life.

We can therefore assume that the absence of a unifying framework causes the great disparity of participation practices, the lack of clear criteria for evaluating students learning and the teacher resistance to behavioural and conceptual changes that these devices imply, as the research presented here have shown. Found at the centre of other current social and educational concerns (in relation to skills and knowledge in official programs), teachers training is therefore once again asked to clarify the role of a law theory in the conceptualization of participation practices in schools with a view to educating students for democratic citizenship.

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Annexe 1
Projects observed in French secondary schools

School / Project dimensions	Secondary school in Courbevoie	Secondary school in Montpellier	Secondary school in Genevilliers
Project Type	Humanitarian : "Race against hunger" (for Afghanistan)	CESC: Preventive actions concerning health and citizenship	Cultural and Citizens: Making a movie in relation with citizenship
Number of pupils and classes	One class (second class of middle school)	All classes of middle school	20 pupils from all classes
Description	- Organize a race with the largest possible number of participants - Each participant must find a mentor who gives money (from a euro) for each kilometer traveled - The money raised is used to support health and healthy eating in Afghanistan The project entitled "solidarity" is one of the options proposed at the end of the first class of middle school	- Road Safety - Brigade Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency - Exhibition "Me young citizen" where the theme put forward is that of respect Action "Epidaurus" (Center for Prevention and Treatment of Cancer) - Blood Drive - College Days-clean and sustainable development - Exhibition "respect" in a partnership between French teacher and the documentalist in a theatrical form. - Debate on the weight of schoolbags	Debates educating pupils on citizenship. Teachers offer them some themes, as images or articles of newspapers and pupils choose those they prefer to discuss. Making a film about citizenship with interviews with pupil representatives. Work in groups to produce the music, songs and movie recording
Frequency and place of meetings	Once every two weeks on Wednesday morning and a few sessions on Friday during the course of the EPS	Hours vary according to projects. Efforts to integrate the projects in the school hours or on Wednesday afternoon	Once every fortnight on Wednesday afternoon

Annexe 2
Projects observed in Greek secondary schools

School Project dimensions	Secondary school in Patras	Secondary school in Athens	Secondary school in Corinth
Project Type	a. Health : Food and Health Eating b. Cultural: drama	a. Communication: Creating a journal (online and paper) b. Civic : respect of the environment	Cultural : drama
Number of pupils and classes	For both projects : pupils from all classes	a. 40 pupils from all classes b. 20 pupils from all classes	15 pupils from all classes
Description	a. Search the web, make a poster, make bread, questionnaire survey b. Mounting a play: making costumes, scenery	a. Teams' work (team of music, news, school life, environment, fashion, sports, etc.). Each team organizes its work independently b. Prepare a musical film about the environment. Each team carries a part of the film	The pupils prepare play from the book: "The seagull Jonathan" R. Bach. The play was set up as part of a project against violence to try to convey some messages to pupils.
Frequency and place of meetings	For both projects, meetings are held outside school (Saturday morning or afternoon)	a. During school hours. Library work b. Meetings outside school (Sunday afternoon)	Meetings outside school (Sunday afternoon)