

Participation and Citizenship Education: Is the Citizen Free only during Parliamentary Elections?

David Lefrançois

Abstract

In view of the inevitable confusion brought about by the extreme complexity of the decision-making process, and widespread indifference towards the common weal, what form, and what degree of civic participation are we to expect from citizens? In order to begin to unravel this question, we will proceed in two directions: (1) We will first assert that, in the context of liberal democracies, which evolve continuously and inter-generationally, the promotion of individual rights and interests is not entirely discordant with the growth of certain participatory virtues. (2) Following this, we will bear witness to how improving the depth of the citizen's investment in the political field also means promoting, at school, the establishment of a strong program addressing civic education, and aiming at the enlargement of the future citizen's argumentative and critical capacities. This said, if the school is to socialize students, contribute to their autonomy and encourage dialogue, program designers and researchers will need to know exactly which of democracy's objectives are amenable to different interpretations and can be transformed by subjective, dependent and changing views. It is thus from this particular orientation that we should address, in the future, deficiencies in civic education.

Introduction

J.-J. Rousseau once said that "the people may think it is free, but it is greatly mistaken; its freedom occurs only during the election of the members of parliament, and once done, it falls back into slavery, it is nothing" (*Du Contrat social*, book 3, chap. 15). We know that Rousseau believed that the only remedy to this so-called democratic malaise lay in the full replenishment of a strong conception of citizen engagement, as inspired both by antiquity's and the Renaissance's small city-states. At the same time, we often tend to forget that Rousseau also responded negatively to the possibility of the birth, in a context of the great modern nation-states, of a radically participatory democracy. Could the consequence of the reality of this negativism be an inexorable leading of citizens to the point where they neglect the necessity of their own political investment? We say "This is not inevitable!" Indeed this remains, even today, the highest means by which citizens can protect their own rights, and hence prevent forms of domination between individuals, as well as the abuse of power by leaders. This is where citizens indeed can find the necessary motivation to participate actively in political society; for the majority, this may however present itself as a burden, if a necessary one (Kymlicka, 1992, p. 26, 28).

Citizenship in a complex world cannot be conceived without a certain re-appropriation, by the citizen, of the delegation of power that he had to that point given over to mediators increasingly less capable of upholding their representative duties. The full exercise of individual and public liberties enhances citizenship's value. Rights can be the means of expression of a more conscientious citizenship, when the embrace thereof improves transparencies in administration (legislation on information and liberties, exposure of the motivations behind decision processes, access to administrative documents and archives), or even takes the form of legal recourse against an abuse of power. Civil society now offers a vast diversity of social movements, clubs, associations and political parties, which are less hierarchically organized. Through the diversification of self-chosen combinations of social engagements, and since the choice remains his, the citizen is, therefore, allowed a more flexible structuring of citizenship (Le Pors, 1999, p. 97-98).

In the face of the inevitable confusion brought on by the extreme complexity of the decision-making process, and widespread indifference towards the common weal (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, 1998, p. 15), what form and what degree of civic participation are we to expect from citizens? In order to begin to attempt to answer this question, we will proceed in two directions:

(1) We will first assert that, in the context of liberal democracies, evolving as they do continuously and inter-generationally, the promotion of individual rights and interests is not entirely discordant with the growth of certain participatory virtues (Gutmann, 1999; Macedo, 2000).

(2) Following this, we will explore how improving the quality of the citizen's investment in the political field also means promoting, at school, the establishment of a strong program addressing civic education, and aiming at the enlargement of the future citizen's argumentative and critical capacities.

1. Citizen participation: between rights and virtues.

Citizenship is always accompanied by a juridical content, meaning that "being a citizen" simultaneously implies being attributed the abstract status of a "subject of rights", and linked to an ensemble of political, social and civic rights (Le Pors, 1999, p. 107 ; Schnapper, 2000, p. 10). As we often say, citizenship, as a legal status, entails the right to own rights (Marshall, 1964, p. 78, 92). Of course, the purpose of the exploration of these issues presented here is certainly not to reject this longstanding juridical model, but to reveal its limitations and boundaries. As Kymlicka (1992, p. 28), and as the Quebec Superior Council of Education (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, 1998, p. 14) both observe, many authors have argued correctly against the folly simply of emphasizing exclusively the legal aspect of citizenship, since this can result in too passive a conception of citizenship. This is why, to this inherent juridical character, a political and participatory dimension needs to be added, a notion which was put forth by thinkers such as Rousseau. The citizen is more than just a legal entity:

It is the gathering of citizens, constituted in a political collectivity [...], which chooses, through the election process, its own rulers. It is this consortium that is at the very source of power, justifying the execution of rulers' decisions. It is this gathering of citizens that controls and sanctions the rulers' actions subsequent to elections. The governed acknowledge the legal orders issued as based on rulers' decisions, since those giving orders remain under the citizen's control (Schnapper, 2000, p. 10-11).

This aspect of citizenship, when it entails a certain degree of individual involvement in civic society, is becoming, according to some, one of its central themes. We now encounter frequently the idea that the focus needs to be on the citizen's participation, virtues and responsibilities as much as on his rights (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, 1998, p. 14, 21 ; Kymlicka, 1992, p. 7 ; Macedo, 1990, p. 39). But to what degree might these virtues and responsibilities be capable of countering the inherent passivity arising from a strictly juridical definition? There is not much consensus on this particular issue. In fact, Kymlicka identifies six schools of thought, many of which often offer markedly different interpretations of the concept of "participatory" citizenship : (1) The New Right has questioned the social value of the Welfare State (which is claimed to be responsible for individuals' passivism) and has insisted on "responsible citizenship" and a self-sufficient economy; (2) The New Left and (3) theoreticians promoting the "civil society" have insisted on the importance of voluntary actions in the context of various groups and associations ; (4) the feminist movement has underlined the importance of relieving political participation of its structural obstacles ; (5) proponents of liberal virtue have insisted on the employment of critical capacities to evaluate the work of the elected, as well as democratic debates and public reason ; (6) civic republicans have emphasized direct participation in political life as the highest value of citizenship and community in general.¹ Despite their differences, which even this brief depiction suffices to show, these thinkers, even when claiming to be of one current of thought or another, have all "argued that the will to engage upon the path leading to civic virtue is necessary to obtaining good citizenship, even if this is not a primary requirement on the juridical level. What they all agree on is that passive and apathetic behaviors should be transformed into active and responsible actions; because they believe the healthiness of a democracy strongly relies on a strong existence of a preponderant civic sense" (Kymlicka, 1992, p. 8).

In any event, in what Sandel (1984, p. 81-96) has described as a "procedural republic" (where, as he has stated, the cult of virtues has been replaced by cold, clinical procedures for conflict regulation), it is now legitimate to ask if the citizen, aside from his electoral duties and some other small, impromptu interventions, has the

sufficient energy and time to truly invest in political management, given his daily responsibilities as a parent, student, or professional worker, or simply the burden of his everyday survival needs. In such an environment, it may be that the now-resurgent ideas of “civic republicanism” may be less a rejection of the very principle of private citizenship, and rather a denouncement of its consequences : a self-centered attitude and apathy, characteristic in western societies and generated by a certain hypertrophy of the value of individual self-sufficiency (Sandel, 1996). Yet, for Rousseau, the modern’s difficulties lay exactly here : The expansion of liberties and the growth of individual self-sufficiency, which did not inevitably engender noticeable progress in collective self-determination, nor any increase in citizens’ participation. Because, if this participation presupposes a certain liberty of will, such individual liberty appears also to be able to accommodate itself to non-participative behaviors, (leaving resolutely behind the Aristotelian idea that a happy life is, by definition, a political life). For some, this “civic failure” - what Barber (1996) has qualified as an actual condition of North American societies - generates at the same time its own counterpart: the replenishment of a more democratic idea which certain influential authors have been taking up (such as Barber, 1984) to support this image of civic engagement. Arendt is also cited widely here; we take from her certain of her texts praising the virtues of the active character of citizens, such as the following: “Political liberty, generally speaking, involves the right to be a ‘co-sharer in government’, or signifies nothing at all” (Arendt, 1967, p. 322). Others, such as Pocock (1975, p. 504), say that Rousseau must be seen as the last of the civic republicans. In his “*Du Contrat Social*”, we can read : “As soon as public service loses place of precedence among citizens, and the individual begins to fancy serving his own finances rather than himself , the State is already on the edge of ruin”. Here is a statement that public participation, as a virtue, is much more demanding than has traditionally been suggested by liberals, mainly because it entails an almost complete and unconditional investment in political affairs.

In reality, even Rousseau did not believe in the possibility of the establishment of such a radically participatory democracy in the modernist context (*Du Contrat Social*, book 3, chap. XIII) ; “it is virtually impossible to imagine that the people remain gathered without ceasing so as to deal with public business [...]”, observed Rousseau. He knew in fact that Athenian democracy could not be direct without the systematic exclusion of a majority of residents from the rights to citizenship ; he also knew that it was practically impossible even to attempt to compare and apply the democratic exercise of a small minority of citizens in the ancient Greek city-states and the necessary exercise of representative power in a context of great modern nation-states, where populations reach millions. And, if we were to take to heart the analyses of certain of the modern-day communitarians (Sandel, 1984 ; Walzer, 1990), we would establish roughly the same conclusion.

This being said, does this mean that, for modern citizens, a life immersed in the political sphere is a completely senseless notion? Not necessarily. But members of a political society need to be conscious that their civic and political participation contributes to the diminishment of the injustice which has always remained within institutions which should in fact be upholders of the rights necessary to the full blossoming of private life. To produce and activate a fitting conception of citizenship, one that balances rights and virtue, we need to adopt rather a realistic approach, emphasizing appropriate kinds of involvement, a kind that would be in accordance with the requirements of the value of “public moderation,” rather than simply multiplying opportunities for participation (Kymlicka, 1992, p. 25-26 ; Macedo, 1990). We will discuss this approach further in our second section. It is certainly reasonable to assume that most modern citizens might find their greatest satisfaction in the private or apolitical spheres (family, work, religion, art etc.). Do we need however therefore to conclude that there exists no further space in their lives for the vigorous promotion of political participation? Let us examine this question thoroughly.

Larmore (2001, p. 229), a contemporary liberal thinker, has said that he has observed a “renewal in contemporary republican theories”, but, at the same time, that he has noticed that these theories have been greatly refined in the last years. Some thinkers, self-defined as republicans, have tried to attenuate the original ultra-participationist republican model, born of stereotypes and the nostalgia of Greek democratic ideals, and even denigrating the negative liberties principle, to use Berlin’s taxonomy (1969, p. 118-172). As an example, the republican conceptions of Pettit (1997) are far from a strictly positive vision of liberties, such as are predominant in traditional republicanism. This latter author has expressed the opinion that this traditional vision is too restrictive, and that other aspects of democratic participation and self-governmental exercise should be included in the idea of liberty. Even more than that of Aristotle, Rousseau or Arendt, his work has addressed the issue of

the important, but rather insufficient, role of the need for some negative liberties protecting the autonomous individual sphere. On the one hand, republican authors no longer conceive of a simple reproduction of the original Athenian conceptions of active citizenship – Pettit, to give an example, has made important amendments. On the other hand, a good number of liberals have also rejected purely passive models of citizenship. A certain degree of political investment serves to protect the rights of citizenship which, in turn, prevent many of the common forms of domination between citizens, or the abuse of power by leaders. Contemporary liberals are now emphasizing participative dimensions to the citizenship context, and are hence asking citizens to cultivate political virtues, such as the capacity to question the politician's work, in moderated and tolerant public debates (e.g., Callan, Galston, Kymlicka, Macedo, Rawls). But, in contradistinction to the Greeks, these liberal thinkers also insist on the fact that an undeniable part of the citizen's involvement does not depend on active participation: "[...] if one of the many dimensions of citizenship is deployed in participation in public affairs, we must not forget that another dimension still resides in the uncompromised attribution of individual rights. This last dimension is founded in the sole fact of belonging to the political community, and everything flows from this single state of belonging. It remains valid and impervious no matter what the degree of effective engagement of the individual in the life of the citadel is, be it even minimal" (Roman, 1995, p. 64-65).

Without ever considering the citizen's participation, (a voluntary exercise), as a juridical obligation, or as a prerequisite to the full and complete profits of the citizen's legal status, this participation must be presented as an essential element and value, and be promoted in teaching programs. This means, here, promotion, as a quality and a virtue, on an equal footing with other moral and intellectual values which have always been endorsed by our schools, of qualities such as rigor, honesty and a strong sense of effort, etc. In order to achieve this, two components are crucial here: First, a solid transmission of knowledge of political structures and procedures, and second, a clear presentation of the widest possible spectrum of civil and political modalities of involvement (Pagé, 2001, p. 51-52), which do not always end with the same conclusions, the same views of the exercise of citizenship (e.g., construction of a political and civil national identity, defense of the rights of the individual, promotion of one particular group's interests). As McLaughlin (1992), Kymlicka (1992, p. 26-27 ; 2001, p. 297) or Weinstock (200, p. 18-19) have reminded us, a civil program in political education should not lead to denial of the fact that typical ideals of citizenship often have a tendency to create and confirm the rivalries between maximalistic approaches (e.g., civic republicanism, deliberative democracies) and minimalistic approaches (e.g., liberal individualism) to citizenship involvement, that is to say, an opposition between: (1) a *high* investment from citizens (often on the national scale), participating in a political project and oriented towards the creation of a collective identity (or will) issuing from compromises between different claims coming from the entire community, and (2) a *weaker* or *more specific* involvement that could be associated: (a) with timely interventions which prevent injustices such as oppression or protect certain systems of rights if they are threatened by the State, majorities or fanatics etc., or (b) with "voluntaristic" civil engagements creating spaces of conciliation between the State and the private life sphere as a function of certain particular group activities.

As we face these participative options, and as Pagé's (2001, p. 52) research concludes, will this not be a necessary prerequisite to helping young citizens distinguish between the variety of meanings and modalities of the idea of public involvement? Young people could thus choose the modality, or modalities, which correspond best to the meaning and direction they wish to give to their engagement in public affairs (p. 52), recognizing at the same time that their particular view of the meaning of their own engagement is not the only one, and can be, at any moment, problematized and challenged using other conceptions of participatory citizenship. As we can clearly see, the theme of citizenship education appears to be inherent to any reflection on the means of increasing the quantity, but also the quality of citizens' involvement in the active construction of their own society.

2. The quality of citizens' political involvement: the school's role and citizenship education

So far, we have been able to examine the different methods contemporary authors within political philosophy have utilized to attempt to renew reflection on citizenship: conceptions which emphasize both the individual rights and the virtues necessary to perpetuating our society of rights and liberties for generations to come. All recognize competencies, virtues or aptitudes which, interrelated, form a general point of view, and out of which the individual must be able to exercise his role as a citizen. Kymlicka and Norman (1994, p. 365-366) summarize

liberal education's principal recommendations as follows: cultivation of the capacity to fully exercise the right to choose and elect government's representatives, and ability to critically judge their performance (and denounce illegal or illegitimate acts). It is also essential that citizens show an interest in open political debates, playing an active part in collective reflection on issues fought over in the public sphere by contributing intellectually to the discussion. Civic education's objectives could be erected around these orienting points, crucial as they are for any liberal democracy (Steutel and Spiecker, 2000, p. 248); indeed, few political philosophers would question these fundamentals.

Taking as starting-point authors such as Nozick or Hayek, or, equally, legal liberalism or a libertarian conception (which gives priority to individual rights and to the market), it is undeniable that a certain form of liberalism remains, even if criticized by some (e.g., Macedo and Gutmann), a liberalism which emphasizes subjective liberties only, neglecting other less fundamental values and virtues, but that are, however, vital to a healthy democracy. The training of citizens capable of collective self-criticism, as Kymlicka and Norman have suggested, is one example of this. For instance, the Anglo-American philosophers, who today exert the most influence on liberal political thought - here, it would be hard not to refer to the work of Rawls, which has had such a major influence on so many others (Callan, Macedo, etc.) - have frequently called for an idea of liberal virtue that insists on justice and public reason. Liberal theories often rely on the promotion of rights, but also on other values that, without being superior to that of freedom, remain nevertheless important as conditions of democracy, as Kymlicka (1992, p. 28) argues, and as here summarized by the Quebec *Superior Council for Education* (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, 1998) : "[...] civic virtues are vital to protecting the democratic system and the civic rights which underpin private life" (p. 14). It is in this particular context of continuity that it is appropriate to say that "individual freedom, the rule of law, and constitutionally limited government depend upon profound transformations in systems of belief and culture" (Macedo, 2000, p. 275-276), impregnating them, at least during politically significant conflicts, with reasonableness and a "project of public justification" (p. 279).

This project of public justification is a key constituent of the democratic principle. Said otherwise, a well-known condition of democracy - that is, the power to be able to produce a free society - resides in "public" resolution of conflicts (Frankel, 1962). This condition presupposes a second: the vastest knowledge possible of institutional mechanisms as rendered possible via the open court principle, at all levels of a democracy, including schools. This orientation in favor of an open court requires subjection to public examination of the reasoned principles upon which institutions are based (Rawls, 1995, p. 96-102).² Following Macedo (1990), this nevertheless demands of citizens the acquisition of a virtue of *public reasonableness*, where reasons and arguments in a political discussion are of a public, moral and critical nature. It means that arguments must be pertinent, as well as easily comprehensible, and should not rely on hermetically-sealed formulations; they must show equal respect to any and all persons, be devoid of racism or discriminatory judgments, and also be rational, free from prejudices or premature generalities (Kymlicka, 1992, p. 23). The development of the aptitude of being able to raise this type of an argument is crucial to being able to deliberate rationally, and involves more than just a basic mastering of a language's codes and usages:

in deliberations, leading to decisions, knowing how to communicate not only means being able to express a position, even one expressed in clear and suitable language. It is being able to present the reasons behind one's position. It is also being capable of paying attention to others' reasons. For this, it is necessary to be capable of discussing these justifications without losing one's temper, as well as of seeking for the ways in which differing reasoning may dovetail. But it is also essential to be able to help each other's general mutual understanding by formulating one's reasons in terms of the public interest rather than simply those of private points of view. It is uniquely through this process that we can achieve satisfying compromises. (Pagé, 2004, p. 63).

But how can young citizens learn to deliberate in this way? Could they ever gain knowledge of these processes from frequent practice, even with limited knowledge in argumentative process and a lack of information? How can we introduce such a method of discussion into citizenship education? Such questions seem of importance given that this pedagogical form has been promoted in recent official documents released by Quebec's Ministry of Education; it has been alleged therein that micro-societies such as schools and classes present great opportunities for creative exchanges regarding their own organization, methods of functioning, and in regard to the variegated problems of citizenship which arise on regular bases (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2004, p. 348). Examples of concrete experiments already enacted either within or outside the educational establishment

can be used as a tangible base for experimentation³; from universities and high schools, and from American schools and colleges, different, though empirically quite conclusive, results (Tiven, 2001, p. 59-73) have already been obtained within the framework of activities teaching deliberation, and with the aid of a dialogical method – *inter-group dialogue* – allowing many groups of students (from different ethnic and social backgrounds) to meet and to debate on timely subjects such as racism, violence, sexual orientation, religious discrimination and community engagement. (Hurtado and Schoem, 2001, pp. 39f). It seems that these practices of interactive dialogue between students from heterogeneous social and cultural groups can have – either in the long- or the short term – a positive impact on self-esteem, scholarly performance, civic involvement, decreases in violence, a refinement of transparency of thinking, a positive impact on social-economic insertion and the ability to overcome differences and work in pursuit of common objectives, etc. (Hurtado, 2001, p. 22-36).

Such an approach does not replace classical methods of “knowledge” transmission, accompanied by content, social and cultural references, as well as historical context. Nevertheless, the dialogical approach still demands that civic education leave enough room for the exercise of a form of participatory democracy in school which, by inciting the exchange of ideas and of points of view across argued-out sequences, remains the ideal atmosphere for preparing young people to progressively take on the “participant” point of view in real concrete contexts of discussion and public deliberation. There is every reason to believe that this cooperative process can develop in the rapidest of fashions the capacity for active adaptation of individuals into the heart of a given group; at the least, it is surely more capable of this than a soliloquist approach where a teacher uses his authority to impose sets of rules and prescriptions in a classroom. Only in a collective dialogue can participants fully measure the impact of their own reasoning on others, and, by that, learn how to describe completely and accurately a conflict’s characteristics and therefore be able to confer a sense of engagement with the group onto their own decisions.

Even if we are unable to find within it an explicit analysis as such of argumentative discourse in a democratic context, we are able however to make note of the importance granted by the Superior Council for Education (Conseil Supérieur de l’Éducation, 1998) to the learning of deliberation, within Quebec’s educational system. The capacity to argue and deliberate lucidly in a democratic context appears to be “procedural”: it is moreover no coincidence if the Conseil insists upon notions of “democratic deliberation” and “regulated speech” in educative processes. The goal is to develop, in each student, “the capacity to assess critically one’s own ideas and to debate those of others” (p. 23), via the participation of each student in practices of discussion regarding whatever should be required, permitted or forbidden in their own schools.

The new “*Programme de Formation de l’École Québécoise*” (the educational program for Quebec’s schools, at secondary levels), enunciates the idea that citizenship education should emphasize dialogue and debate, as required central competences in concrete exercise. Unfortunately, as soon as we wish to refer to such citizenship history and education programs in secondary schools as such, we find merely a few rather trivial, abstract and timid references to deliberative practices in the classroom and within society in general (Ministère de l’Éducation, 2004, p. 341, 342, 346, 348) – with no citation of the few strategies already available (class meetings, discussion groups, cooperation boards, etc.), and without giving any precise examples as to what could be debated, and what subjects are appropriate or not in a citizenship class. The necessary “procedural” character appropriate to effective hands-on management of this deliberative practice is not further explained. If we can see a certain emphasis on the value of discussion in regard to some aspects of citizenship as identified by the Ministry of Education (2004, p. 29), and in selected introductory remarks presenting the general outline of the education program (p. 64-65), this deliberative dimension appears sensibly less visible and developed in descriptions of concrete applied teaching strategies available to teachers generally, and specifically as dedicated to citizenship history and programs (p. 350). Beyond this, if the curriculum insists, within the school, on the transmission and promotion of rules of democratic management, it still remains quite shy about the integration into the classroom of real and strong ongoing political debate continuous with those proceeding outside of the school’s walls: such as the current debate concerning Quebec’s particular status in the Canadian federation, or even the specific values and positions orienting the political parties at the different levels of government.⁴ On the other hand, in a society such as Quebec’s where “two instances of state [provincial and federal], are battling for the citizen’s allegiance, can citizenship education, at the risk of taking sides, which is not the school’s purpose, really afford to ignore the debate without losing credibility” (McAndrew, 2004, p. 32-33)? The main question here is how to reconcile the school’s neutrality with citizenship education itself. Between insignificance and indoctrination there is a just

compromise: encouraging a citizenship education based on a deliberative model, allowing discussions, evaluations and revisions of the many conceptions of citizenship at stake in a society.

Even with this orientation, the issue of the school's neutrality still poses problems since, considering the diversity of conceptual beliefs (liberal, communitarian, differentiated, etc.), the natural orientation of any teacher (conscious or not) can influence a whole classroom. In fact, if the school's neutrality really could immunize teachers against the possible forms of contestation available to parents and certain minorities, maintenance of this neutrality also remains, in teachers' day-to-day pedagogical practice, the hardest aspect of any branch of education. To this can be added the fact that the teacher's original and/or continued training does not always cover the entire informational prerequisites for comprehensive transmission of civic formative contents (obligations, rights, charters, law codes and democratic procedures, etc.). Thus, we must deduce that in terms of adequate training programs for civic education, university programs should have a double target: to clearly illustrate the origins and foundations of the principal democratic bodies, and to show in which ways current conceptions of citizenship are influencing ends, methods and normative orientations being privileged within education.

Conclusion

Political theorists, particularly in education, are going to have to consider the question of the nature of school management operation and structure, (notably through education reforms) which will need to be implemented in order to ensure specific contributions from civic education to a more general training for life. Without didactic methods susceptible to concretely developing competence in skills of political deliberation, a deliberative model of citizenship will not be able to overcome criticism regarding its unrealistic character, insofar as this model requires a majority of citizens capable of rational dialogue. Could we, thus, achieve, in society or in a school, a real critical deliberation, if subjects are not already on a completely egalitarian footing (something without doubt not presently the case)? Can schooling, on its own, overcome this problem by "equalizing," for the citizens of the future, the competences required for democratic deliberation? Even if it seems unfair to leave everything to rest on this one institution's shoulders, we can still expect school to greatly contribute to our youth's education in responsible citizenship. This being said, we need to recognize the incredible amount of work still ahead to be done, in theory as well as in practice. If school is to be able to socialize students, contribute to their autonomy and encourage dialogue, program designers and researchers will need to know exactly in what these objectives, which are capable of opening themselves to multiple significations and can be changed by and are dependent on those interpreting them, consist. With the teacher's cooperation, we need to find different didactic means to specifically meet the requirements of "field" situations. It will then be in this direction that we will have to orient ourselves towards addressing, in the future, the deficiencies in civic education programs.

Notes

1. Kymlicka (1992) mentions another conception which arises out of the domain of public opinion: "conservative communitarianism", of which he describes the characteristic principles, specifying nevertheless that very few theoreticians or political philosophers defend this orientation today: "The State should actively favor assimilation of the collective traditional way of life and refuse to politically support non-traditional groups and identities - in fact, states should even discourage individual attempts to maintain a group's differences. Being a real member of a collectivity should automatically entail a total acceptance of the shared values issuing from historical and traditional collective practices" (p. 59).

2. "Political order does not depend exclusively on historically based or accidental illusions, or even on other erroneous beliefs which rely on deceiving appearances of institutions, as a regard to their functioning. Of course, there is no certainty here. But, advertising guarantees, as much as practical measures allow, that citizens are in position to know and accept the profound influence of the base structure which alter their own self-conceptions, their character and finalities. This is a requirement to them, being completely autonomous organisms on a political point of view, achieving political liberty" (Rawls, 1995, p. 99).

3. But this does not mean that we need to reduce in its entirety civic apprenticeship to a mere principle of active exercise in concrete situations (even if the application of such a principle remains desirable), to the detriment of formal scholarly programs engaging a theoretical critical reflection on social phenomena; Tessier and McAndrew (2001) have demonstrated, for example, the dangers of this simple unnuanced free reduction: "inviting students to participate in the distribution of meals in the neighborhood does not automatically means they will develop values such as tolerance. If no intellectual reflection is added of the social conditions which generate such inequalities, such an experience could even go the opposite way and lead to further prejudices" (p. 327).

4. It will, therefore, become very difficult to satisfy concretely one of the Council's recommendations in particular (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, 1998). The Council believes that "an active and responsible citizenship [...] involves the citizen's participation both in national public life, and, at the same time, on other levels, where collective life fashions itself; unfortunately, most find satisfaction in private or professional accomplishments, leaving no time for, or any interest in, civic participation, notably in political fields. This tendency is exactly what needs to be reversed" (p. 22-23).

References

- ARENDDT, H. (1967). *Essai sur la Révolution* (M. Chrestien, Trans.). Paris: Gallimard. (Original work published 1963)
- BARBER, B. (1996). An American Civic Forum : Civil Society Between Market Individuals and the Political Community. In R. F. Paulet and F. D. Miller Jr. (Eds.), *The Communitarian Challenge to Liberalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- BARBER, B. (1984). *Strong Democracy : Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- BERLIN, I. (1969). *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CALLAN, E. (1997). *Creating Citizens : Political Education and Liberal Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION (1998). *Éduquer à la citoyenneté*. Québec: Conseil supérieur de l'éducation - Ministère de l'Éducation.
- FRANKEL, C. (1962). *The Democratic Prospect*. New York: Harper & Row.
- GALSTON, W. (1991). *Liberal Purposes : Goods, Virtues, and Duties in the Liberal State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- GUTMANN, A. (1999). *Democratic Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1987)
- HURTADO, S. (2001). Research and Evaluation on Intergroup Dialogue. In D. Schoem et S. Hurtado (Eds.), *Intergroup Dialogue. Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community, and Workplace*. Detroit: The University of Michigan Press.
- KYMLICKA, W. (2001). *Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- KYMLICKA, W. et W. NORMAN (1994). Return of the Citizen : a Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory. In *Ethics*, vol. 104, no. 2.
- KYMLICKA, W. (1992). *Théories récentes sur la citoyenneté - Recent Work in Citizenship Theory*. Ottawa: Multiculturalisme et Citoyenneté Canada.
- LARMORE, C. (2001). A Critique of Philip Pettit's Republicanism. In E. Sosa et E. Villanueva (Eds.), *Philosophical Issues, 11 - Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy*. Boston: Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
- LE PORS, A. (1999). *La citoyenneté*. Paris: PUF - Que sais-je ?
- MACEDO, S. (2000) *Diversity and Distrust. Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy*. Cambridge - London: Harvard University Press.
- MACEDO, S. (1990). *Liberal Virtues : Citizenship, Virtue and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MARSHALL, T. H. (1964). *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- McANDREW, M. (2004). Education interculturelle et éducation à la citoyenneté dans les nouveaux programmes québécois : une analyse critique. In F. Ouellet (Ed.), *Quelle formation pour l'éducation à la citoyenneté?*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- McLAUGHLIN, T. H. (1992). Citizenship, Diversity, and Education : a Philosophical Perspective. In *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 21, no. 3.
- MILNER, H. (2004). *La compétence civique : comment les citoyens informés contribuent au bon fonctionnement de la démocratie*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION (2004). *Programme de formation de l'école québécoise, Enseignement secondaire - 1^{er}*

- cycle. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec.
- PAGE, M. (2004). L'éducation à la citoyenneté : des compétences pour la participation en démocratie plurielle. In F. Ouellet (Ed.), *Quelle formation pour l'éducation à la citoyenneté ?*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- PAGE, M. (2001). L'éducation à la citoyenneté devant la diversité des conceptions de la citoyenneté. In M. Pagé, F. Ouellet et L. Cortesão (Eds.), *L'éducation à la citoyenneté*. Sherbrooke: Les Editions du CRP.
- PETTIT, P. (1997). *Republicanism. A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- POCOCK, J. G. A. (1975). *The Machiavellian Moment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- RAULET, G. (1999). *Apologie de la citoyenneté*. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf.
- RAWLS, J. (1995). *Libéralisme politique*. (C. Audard, Trans.). Paris: PUF. (Original work published in 1993)
- ROMAN, J. (1995). Une société citoyenne. In P. Herzog et al. (Eds.), *Quelle démocratie, quelle citoyenneté ?*. Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier - Les Editions Ouvrières.
- ROUSSEAU, J. -J. (1972, 1978). *Du Contrat social*. Paris: Hachette - Pluriel. (Original work published in 1762)
- SANDEL, M. (1996). *Democracy's Discontent : America in Search of a Public Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- SANDEL, M. (1984). The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self. In *Political Theory*, vol. 12, no. 1.
- SCHNAPPER, D. (2000). *Qu'est-ce que la citoyenneté ?*. Paris: Gallimard.
- STEUTEL, J. et B. SPIECKER (2000). The Aims of Civic Education in a Multi-cultural Democracy. In M. Leicester, C. Modgil et S. Modgil (Eds.), *Politics, Education and Citizenship – Education, Culture and Values ; Volume VI*. London - New York: Falmer Press.
- TESSIER, C. et M. McANDREW (2001). L'éducation à la citoyenneté. In C. Gohier et S. Laurin (Eds.), *Entre culture, compétence et contenu. La formation fondamentale, un espace à redéfinir*. Québec: Les Editions Logiques.
- TIVEN, L. (2001). Student Voices : The ADL's A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Institute Peer Training Program. In D. Schoem et S. Hurtado (Eds.), *Intergroup Dialogue. Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community, and Workplace*. Detroit: The University of Michigan Press.
- WALZER, M. (1990). The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism. In *Political Theory*, vol. 18, no. 1.
- WEINSTOCK, D. (2000). La citoyenneté en mutation. in J. Hamel, Y. Boisvert et M. Molgat (Eds.), *Vivre la citoyenneté*. Montréal: Liber.

Address correspondence to:

David Lefrançois
 Département de philosophie
 Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
 C. P. 500, Trois-Rivières
 Québec, Canada / G9A 5H7
davidl@point-net.com