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Pedagogical and Cultural Foundations of Human Rights and Civic Education

1. Foreword – Liberal Democracy, Culture, and Education

In a work from 1995,¹ Francis Fukuyama makes, from the futurologist perspective, an analysis for the coming years of the main ideological and political competitors for liberal democracies. In this analysis, the author of the well-known work *The End of History*² subtly differentiates the optimism he expressed in 1989 about the gradual transition, at different speeds and rhythms, of all human societies to liberal democracy,³ indicating four levels for consolidating it, without which the successful stabilization and democratic process cannot be achieved:

1. *Ideology*. It represents the level of certain normative beliefs regarding the validity or non-validity of the democratic institutions and of the market economy structures that support them. In other words, this level expresses the population's confidence in democracy, its understanding of the advantages of living in a democratic regime as well as the conscious preference for choosing democracy instead of an authoritarian or totalitarian regime.
2. *The Institutions*. According to Fukuyama, this level includes the constitutions, the legal system, the party system and the market structures that should support the consolidation of a liberal democratic regime.⁴ Fukuyama argues that this is the level where, during the recent years, most changes have been made within the framework of the emerging democracies of the so-called societies in transition to which the countries from Central and Eastern Europe belong, including Romania. In his opinion, a major issue for the emerging democracies is that, in many cases, a positive attitude of the population regarding the democratic values, practices and institutions is not accompanied by the practical know-how needed for putting into service the institutions necessary for a good functioning of liberal democracy.⁵

3. *The Civil Society.* Fukuyama appreciates that, from various reasons, at this level, things happen even slower than at the institutional one. He admits nevertheless a revival of the interest for this area both in the Western and in the ex-communist countries in the last two decades.⁶
4. *Culture.* For Fukuyama, it represents the deepest level, which includes phenomena such as the family structure, religion, moral values, ethnic consciousness, "civic" consciousness and the particular historical traditions.⁷ Although he recognizes the malleable character of the culture and its capacity to be influenced by the processes happening within the first three levels, Fukuyama shows that it is precisely culture that "tends to change the most slowly of all".⁸

For Fukuyama, the conclusion of this analysis is that the major difficulties "that liberal democracy will face in the future are likely to be encountered at levels three and especially at level four ... The real difficulties affecting the quality of life in modern democracies have to do with social and cultural pathologies that seem safely beyond the reach of institutional solutions, and hence of public policy. The chief issue is quickly becoming one of culture".⁹

Beyond Fukuyama's opinions – which are, in fact, debatable – about the existence and interactions between the different "levels" of democracy (there is for instance no explicit reference to the role of democratic leaders or to the importance of an effective judicial review system), two ideas seem to us to be especially important for our discussion about the cultural and pedagogical fundamentals of civic and human rights education: a) the role that Fukuyama ascribes to culture in consolidating liberal democracies and 2) the implications of this statement for education, since in the field of culture, we have to deal with values, norms, traditions and ideas. Unfortunately, the lack of interest on the part of specialists in political philosophy, political science and sociology for analyzing the relations between education and democracy is in fact widely spread, although this may seem strange if we consider that the role education plays in the cultural transmission of values and norms is generally accepted.¹⁰ There is no doubt that all discussion about the potential relationships between democracy and education has to cope with questions as those formulated by Bruner¹¹ when taking into consideration that <our times are marked by deep conjectures about what schools should be expected to "do" for those who choose to or are compelled to attend them – and, on the other hand, what schools *can* do, under the compulsion of other circumstances> (*apud* Bruner, 1996, p. IX).

In various backgrounds, and not only in those of the people involved in the education for a democratic citizenship or in the human rights education, there is nowadays a more and more evident recognition of the huge potential of education for the wellbeing of each individual as well as of the society as a whole.¹² Focusing the discussion on the potential for democracy of civic and human rights education, we have to analyze the way in which these branches of instruction can really contribute to the consolidation of a liberal democratic regime, to the increase of people's level of responsible involvement in the affairs of public interest and to the improvement of life quality both in the private and in the public field.

Unfortunately, empirical investigations, which could prove a clear link between the impact of educational actions and the quality of a democracy, are not relevant enough.¹³ On the contrary, some very elaborated studies, like the one prepared by Niemi and Junn,¹⁴ seem to demonstrate the lack of relevance that the duration of the study period has for the degree and quality of the civic involvement and also the relative failure of the formal civic education steps made in the United States with a view to developing and consolidating basic civic skills (it is true, especially at the cognitive level).

It is still encouraging that recent surveys, such as the one carried out by Elchardus, Kavadias and Siongers in the framework of the Council of Europe EDC project, based on 4,722 interviews and questionnaires with pupils of the last year of secondary education in 63 different schools, "revealed that schools can indeed develop values and that it is possible to distinguish between good and bad practice in the field of values and citizenship education" (1999, p.13). The research identified a set of pre-conditions for ensuring a favourable surrounding for values: 1. Develop a democratic school and a culture of involvement; 2. Stick to the agreed upon rules and principles; 3. Opt for supporting leadership; 4. Opt for an active leadership that does not suffocate the teacher's autonomy; 5. Keep in mind that efficient value development is an aspect of effectiveness in general; 6. Bear the teacher's values in mind. There are also other surveys demonstrating that certain pedagogical procedures can contribute "to the pupil's attainment of skills and competencies" in terms of democratic citizenship. As Munis shows (2000, pp. 3-5), interactive pedagogy based strategies valuing Gardner's "multiple intelligence" approach,¹⁵ as liberating and equally considering linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intra-personal intelligence within the class-room, represent a promising perspective for helping

children develop their full potential: <It is essential for the teacher to have a knowledge of (the difference of) all strengths within the seven intelligences housed in their children when considering how much each and every child learns about human rights for example. In this context the theory can be used methodologically in decisions involving materials, organization and activities>.

Under the circumstances, the question that obviously arises is whether the hope of relating education to the consolidation of democracy is justified, beyond any romantic optimism and beyond what sometimes seems to be regarded as (and, unfortunately, seems even to be) a fashion of transition periods, which tends to transform civic and human rights education into a convenience sometimes as tyrannical as the old mechanisms for the ideological indoctrination of the younger generations in regimes that tend to perpetuate by force of a new "civic religion".

In order to clarify this issue, in this work we intend to discuss the epistemological status of the civic and human rights education, in the light of some present-day controversies concerning the dilemmas related to citizenship in a democratic society, as well as the identity dilemmas in today's more and more globalized world. We shall also discuss the educational models considered to be good practices in the field of civic and human rights education, by establishing a link between the normative pedagogical discourse and the research-action whose purpose is to produce positive changes at the level of a certain school or local community. The main questions from which our discussion starts are those related to the way in which, on the one side, educational actions are justified as such and, on the other side, to what extent educational actions are related to the conditions in which civic and human rights education are legitimately associated to the consolidation of a liberal democracy.

2. Theoretical Perspectives on Citizenship and Human Rights: Some Present-day Dilemmas and Their Impact on Education

In order to explore the possible contributions of educational actions to the consolidation of liberal democracies, we have to analyze first the present meanings of the terms "citizenship" and "human rights" as they appear in contemporary theoretical discussions. These theoretical discussions are certainly fed by the evolutions in the field of the real politics and by different ways of encoding the human rights as well as the civic

responsibilities and duties within the framework of some official documents. From a rather narrow and conservative approach of "citizenship education", one can identify educational actions that only contemplate the mere briefing of both children and adults about the *status quo* of the question: for example, what are the legal provisions concerning the way of getting or losing citizenship, what duties and obligations does a citizen of a particular state have, what are the main provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights etc. In such a view of the civic and human rights education, equivalent to "civic instruction", emphasis is laid merely on transmitting knowledge.

Fortunately, such models are more and more replaced by approaches that take into consideration the philosophy of citizenship and of the human rights, which makes young people and adults be involved in a critical reflection on the democratic values, norms and practices.¹⁶ Such a reflection can only be fed if theorists, authors of the curriculum and of the textbooks take into account the present dilemmas concerning the status of citizenship and of human rights, with all the aspects that bring them together and differentiate them at the same time.

2.1 On the "Theorizing" of Citizenship

How is it possible to generate theories regarding political/civic education? Some authors, such as Fischer, answer this question by saying that "the theories referring to political/civic education can nor be deduced from any scientific subject – politics, the sciences of education, sociology, etc. – neither are they an appendix of those. To a large extent, they are constructions of the human mind where, besides the scientific consciousness of theorists, there is also something which has little or nothing at all to do with science".¹⁷ Starting from such premises, it is extremely interesting to explore the epistemological status of civic education and of an eventual didactics of it, from the perspective of the relationship between theory and practice, rationality and spontaneity in education, between ideal and practical achievement.

As Torney-Purta, Schwille and Amadeo show,¹⁸ there is, generally speaking, almost complete consensus on the importance of school education on influencing the norms, values and practices referring to democracy. However, the decision-makers in the field of educational policies should clarify their idea of "a good citizen". In countries which are undergoing the transition from totalitarianism to democracy, where

rapid economic and political changes are taking place, there may exist different, sometimes conflicting ideas, belonging to different power groups within society, about what civic identity means.

The concepts regarding citizenship are connected to the ones referring to the development of democracy. Countries which are now experiencing liberal constitutional regimes are being confronted with very many questions referring to the developments in civic education, for example which should be the aims of civic education: to help the young people comply with the current norms and values, to be oriented according to principles and rights which could guide the country's future democratic development or, on the contrary, to lead to submission and support for the present political institutions and the given social order? ¹⁹

The very idea of "democratic development" has many interpretations. To some people, democracy is mostly the creation of institutions, the citizen's capacity to elect those who lead them and the existence of laws which ensure the responsibility of the leaders to the electorate. This is a rather formal understanding of democracy, exclusively from the point of view of public life. With such an understanding of citizenship, civic education will focus mainly on knowledge about the political institutions and the respect for them, on the citizen's responsibilities (the vote, for instance) and maybe on the contribution the citizens can make to supporting and reforming the political and legal practices. According to some authors, this outlook corresponds to the "contract approach" about citizenship, having roots in the liberal political philosophy, which sees the political activity as a mostly private matter and as an instrument for achieving one's own interests.²⁰

To other people "democratic behavior" means much more, both from the institutional and the cultural perspective. According to Conover and Searing, John Dewey, Paulo Freire and others have promoted the idea "of a democratic way of life", highlighting the importance of personal relations, which lie at the basis of a country's political culture. Freire's idea about "education for emancipation" has connected the methodological aspects and their ideological contexts, so that the person who is being educated can see the links between the social-political structures and the act of learning and knowledge. ²¹

From this wider perspective, education for democratic citizenship can focus on the various decision-making or conflict solving processes, in relation with the democratic processes and the principles connected to them, in everyday life. This outlook on citizenship is linked with the so-

called "communitary outlook on citizenship", which sees the latter as a source for personal development and as a contribution to the general welfare of the community.²²

According to Conover and Searing, the idea of citizenship of a person (or of an educational system) is more likely to be a combination between the two concepts, the contract-based approach and the community-based one. "A good citizen" will be able to fulfil "a citizen profile" under various circumstances, with more stress laid on loyalty, civic virtue, tolerance, political self-development, civic memory, political involvement and civic behavior (including politeness, participation in public services and, eventually, the capacity to critically examine the information with political character which is present, for instance, in the mass media).

The first IEA study in 1976²³ demonstrated that, in practice, the concept of a good citizen was multidimensional, since various systems promoted different variants. For example, one of the results of the 1976 study showed that the pupils to whom high democratic values had been attached (for instance tolerance, respect for laws and equality) did not necessarily prove a special interest for civic participation. Similarly, a study carried out by USAID in Poland and the Dominican Republic, referring to the civic education programs, showed, among other things, that: "The programs that resulted in a high level of participation were not necessarily the ones with the strongest impact on the democratic values: participation could increase, without being accompanied by a change of orientation as far as the values are concerned, at least in the short term."²⁴

Discussions focusing on citizenship necessarily have as their point of reference the relation between the rights, the responsibilities and the duties of citizens. However, different theories may give priority either to the rights, or to the responsibilities or duties. Kymlicka and Norman²⁵ note that theories about citizenship can be differentiated according to the emphasis they lay on the rights or, on the other hand, on the responsibilities. Among the theories that emphasize the rights, they mention the contributions of Marshall (1949), Ignatieff (1989) and of the feminist movements (Gilligan, 1982). From the theories that turn the balance between the rights, the duties and the responsibilities to these last two, Kymlicka and Norman emphasize "The New Right" theory, represented among others by Mead (1986) and Barry (1990).

The theories about citizenship must, of course, be correlated to those about democracy and to the theories of justice. As Kymlicka and Norman show, in the last two decades, the theories of citizenship acquired a more

and more important role, even among the theories about democracy, because these gradually tend to recognize that, besides practices and the institutional mechanisms, liberal democracies need what is called civic virtue and public spiritedness. These virtues appear as general, social, economic and political ones, having specific roles in the theories that turn the balance either to the rights (the "left" theories, the "participatory democracy" theories and the "liberal virtue" theory), or to the responsibilities (the "civic republicanism"- Oldfield, 1990, the "civil society" theories – Walzer, 1992).

Discussions about citizenship generally have in view the following dimensions associated to the citizen status: individual entitlement to participation, rights and responsibilities, sense of justice, sense of identity and community membership. All these dimensions apply both to citizenship "*as-legal-status*" and to citizenship "*as-desirable-activity*".²⁶ If it is relatively easy to make and accept a distinction between different manifestations of citizenship (citizenship as legal status and as effective activity, as real participation of the citizen; citizenship in a tough sense – seen as effective and total participation of the citizen- ,and in a weak sense – as "passive citizenship"; citizen also in a large sense – where, for example, we can consider ourselves as citizen of the world, and in a narrow or restrictive sense – that of national citizenship, linked to the reality of a given passport, for instance). It is however more difficult to determine "what intensity of human energies to invest in the activities of citizenship, until we have not established the character of the civic relationships, and the nature of the political community whose legal and ethical bonds define the idea of citizenship".²⁷

None of the theories regarding citizenship can ignore the questions about the citizen as a member of a community, about a person's identity or multiple identities, about the ways in which a person feels attached to a specific political community and not to another one, about the relation between ethnic and civic identity. Present-day issues concerning citizenship, not only in countries with a strong immigration tradition (such as the United States, Australia, Canada and some countries belonging to the European Union), but also in developing countries, such as those from Africa and Asia or in transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, highlight the fact that one of the major questions of our time is represented by the tense relations between ethnic and civic identity. That is why, in what follows, we are going to pay special attention to this issue.

What seemed to have been a satisfactory solution within the framework of the nation-state or of a democratic confederation (like the United States),

namely "national citizenship" as an umbrella and a common denominator of the ethnical and cultural differences in a heterogeneous society, from the point of view of the population, is today challenged by different manifestations of what is usually called "differentiated citizenship". The concept of "differentiated citizenship" takes into account some special representation rights, some special rights required as self-government rights and the so-called multicultural rights. As Walzer ²⁸ shows, the special representation rights (required, for example, by women, by people having special needs, etc.) and the multicultural rights (that is, to education in the language of a certain ethnic community, to religious practice, etc.) are not necessarily irreconcilable with the idea of "national citizenship" and do not necessarily lead to centrifugal movements in relation to a "national" power. Instead, self-government rights are obviously a much more serious challenge to the monolithic concept of "national citizenship" and devolves upon obvious centrifugal tendencies, divergent in relation with the idea of the fundamental unity of a certain political community.

2.2 Multiculturalism, Universalism and the Problems of Citizenship

The 20th century, its second half mainly, has been a period featuring sometimes terrible movements of the (re)assertion of certain particular identities,²⁹ by exacerbating those dominant aspects that have been considered as distinctive for individuals and communities, such as the ethnic or the religious identity. All around the world, these movements have displayed various symptoms. After decades of what was called "melting-pot", the United States have witnessed, during the second half of the 20th century, the eruption of "differences", ranging from the racial to the religious and gender differences, all against the background of the movements aimed at political and social emancipation of the Afro-American population. Lately, Canada has been facing strong separatist movements, especially among the French-speaking community, which makes it evident that the idea of "citizenship" as civil or constitutional identity is undergoing a crisis. After long periods of colonialism, communities in Africa and Asia have (re)discovered the attachment for difference and assertion, violent as it was most of the time, of their ethnic and/or tribal identity. The ethnic communities in the ex-communist Central and East European countries, as well in the former Soviet Union, have (re)discovered, over the last decade, the attachment for the political, administrative, even territorial autonomy. Practical solutions have been

different, from the peaceful ones, as with the "velvet" separation of the Czech Republic and of Slovakia from the former Czechoslovakia, to the violent actions, many of them leading to wars, within the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia.

The causes of all these movements are deeply rooted in the economic, political and social problems of the respective communities; however, either the ethnic, or the religious conflicts appear to be the deepest immediate reason. In numerous countries, the relation (tensioned more often than not and sometimes presented as irreconcilable) between the ethnic and/or religious identity and the civil or constitutional identity³⁰ has become an extremely important problem in the second half of the 20th century. In some Central and Eastern European countries, in particular in the ex-Yugoslavian republics, the search for new constitutional formulas, based on the values of liberal democracies, was replaced, unfortunately, by the forcible settlement of certain claims to the self-determination of some ethnic communities that previously, during the period of totalitarian regimes, could not benefit from the framework required by an adequate management of the issue of differences. If totalitarian regimes (and, to a lesser extent, the authoritarian ones) tend to reduce and ignore the differences, the liberal-type democracy inevitably becomes the background against which the differences management is posed acutely. Not any management, but that management which strives at peacefully achieving the balance between the constitutional premises for the unity of a certain community and the legitimate manifestation of the right to difference. Alongside other characteristics,³¹ liberal democracy is the framework *par excellence* for the peaceful management of differences and conflict resolution by correcting mistakes without using violence and in due time.

It is this stress laid on emphasizing the strengths of liberal democracies³² as against totalitarian or authoritarian systems that helps us to better understand the very recrudescence of the violent, even ruthless, hostilities where ethnic or religious aspects seem to lie right in the heart of the conflict. Once the collapse of multifarious monolithic systems started, diversity has immediately had enough room to manifest itself. Even a minimal framework of liberal democracy (levels one, two and three, according to Fukuyama), considerably diminishes the risk that hostilities between "difference" groups degenerate into violence, whereas any delay in implementing this framework cannot but lead to the conflicting management of such differences.³³

However, the problems raised by the relation between the "civic" and the "ethnic" (or religious) identity, even if quite similar, display many

differences in various political communities all over the world. Multicultural societies, such as the United States and Canada, represent a distinct case, the study of which has extremely important consequences for the civic education and for the human rights education. Unlike the ethnic mixture, for instance, existing in the European countries, the particular circumstances in these two communities consist in that, with some exceptions, (the Afro-Americans, descending from slaves, and the American Indians), newcomers into the political community had to make an individual option against the background of a democratic constitutional union which, in Central and Eastern Europe in particular, is extremely recent. Irrespective of all the differences between a "European"³⁴ and an "American" model (either of them having various "sub-models") the questions related to an ideally peaceful management of differences within the political community are identical: how can one define a common set of political and moral values? Where can we (re)gain our identities? What effects can the processes of globalization and integration into overstate structures, such as European Union, produce upon the idea of citizenship? What is the role of education in a changing world so that it makes a significant contribution to applying the principle of peaceful difference management, both to the benefit of each individual, and of communities?

The American experience of debates and controversies associated to multiculturalism, relativism and universalism deserves special attention. Several authors, among whom Dahrendorf in particular (1992) tend to ascertain that social conflicts in the American society have been replaced by ethnic conflicts, a generic term that includes the racial reference as well. We do not deny in the least the importance of the emancipation movements initiated by the coloured population in America in the post-war period; nevertheless, we have to underline that, unfortunately, they were accompanied by the manipulation of enormous amounts of myths regarding the ethnic identity, myths which have led to gradually eroding the idea of "universal" values and their being replaced by the fashion of the cultural relativism that has largely fed upon the postmodern perspectives in the last three decades.

A theme recurring frequently in the debates on multiculturalism³⁵ and which is extremely confusing is to regard some values, ideas and practices of "universal" echo (such as the philosophy of human rights, the scientific-type rationality, or the principles of constitutional liberal democracy) emerging in the European (or Western) culture as equivalent of "Euro-centrism" that is seen as an imperialist attack against "identities" of various

kinds. The schooling and academic achievements of the Afro-Americans that, according to statistics, are poorer than those of the white or Asian population, have been interpreted as a consequence of the exposure of the Afro-Americans to the cultural pressure of the dominating-majority culture (white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant and eventually male, the so-called "wasp"), utterly irrelevant for the former. As far as the curriculum is concerned, for instance, such interpretations of euro-centrism have gradually led to replace some "euro-centrism" loaded contents by others meant to reflect the ethnic particularities of a certain culture and the contribution thereof made to the cultural stock of humankind. But soon the "Euro-centrism" accused of every evil has been progressively replaced by "Afro-centrism" or other centrisms, sometimes badly impairing the integration and the achievement potential of the minority members.³⁶

The multicultural debates in the United States are taking place between the fervent supporters of multiculturalism, interpreted as legitimating the absolute relativism (numerous post-modernisms, feminisms, ethno-centrisms are attaching themselves here) and the supporters of an universalism (sometimes viewed as "American universalism" or "American creed") based upon values of constitutional liberal democracy on the one hand, and between representatives of various orientation of the latter, on the other hand. If, for instance, the rallying cry *E pluribus unum* is valid for some champions of universalism (among whom Higham, Stotsky, Glazer, Barber), then the catch word *E pluribus plures* appeals to others (such as Ravitch, Walzer, Taylor, etc.). Interesting enough, both the supporters of *E pluribus unum* and the sustainers of *E pluribus plures* focus their argumentative endeavors upon the need for equilibrium between diversity and unity within the political community. As Ravitch has put it, referring to the state of affairs in the United States, "We are a multicultural people, but also a single nation, knitted together by a common set of political and moral values".³⁷

Seeking and emphasizing these common links, capable to turn a plural society into a cohesive structure of unitary political body that is apt to function to the benefit of each member of that community, is a task not only for the political theory or praxis, but also for the civic education. From this point of view, the experience of debates on multiculturalism in the United States is extremely significant for the process of European unification, even though the latter is occurring in a space the coordinates of which differ from those of the creation and evolution of the American nation.

The main problem of citizenship is, in fact, its attractiveness for those members of community to whom it associates: we have to actually investigate what induces the citizens of a particular political community to continue to live there when they could choose another citizenship³⁸ provided they enjoy freedom of movement. The national or European citizenship must allow for a balance between specific traditions and common ideals, while the aim of civic education is, from this point of view, not only to clarify these common ideals: moreover, it relates clarifying the unity in diversity of what makes the ethnic, religious, gender, difference, and so on.

Explaining to pupils or students the "European" emergence of the idea of unity in diversity and the practical solutions triggered in this space as well for the peaceful difference management one could only be accused of "Euro-centrism" by those who do not take into account that it is the very European ("Western") space that has given name to and made problematic such displays of negative consequences for the self-esteem of each individual as imperialism, sexism or racism.³⁹ The problems of the European integration and the new European citizenship are connected to maintaining the unquestionable benefits of the cultural diversity for generating material and spiritual goods, but especially to the ability of constructing a political community that takes into account the fostering of advantages of positive "*universalia*" (the observance of human rights, for instance) and the avoidance of slipping to the negative aftermath of other "*universalia*" (racism, xenophobia, or sexism, from the perspective of both misogynism, and radical feminism).

2.3 On the Status of a Human Rights Theory

While the concept of citizenship has benefited by theoretical approaches ranging from "big theories" , often linked with metaphysical arguments⁴⁰, to rather descriptive analyses on empirical bases concerning the nature and functions of the state, the concept of rights, more precisely human rights, seems not to have been privileged by such a wide ranging theoretical analysis⁴¹. It is true that authors such as Turner have a tendency towards narrowing human rights theories to sociological approaches, on account of the reserve of sociologists for such theories due to the problems of generalization inherent to each theory, under the circumstances of field collection of a variety of cultures and customs which would make such generalization somewhat artificial.

Taking into account the above arguments, we have to point out, however, that the sociological approach is probably not the best one for structuring a theory of human rights. Obviously sociology is no longer a science that thinks of itself to be purely empirical, meaning that it does not admit theoretical assumptions in the sociological investigation. Nevertheless sociologists are still inevitably tempted to start from facts, from field analysis and to avoid any surprise of the type of bongo-bongoism.⁴² Much more suitable ways of structuring a theoretical approach on human rights are the philosophical approaches, including political philosophy, the philosophy of law or anthropology. The matter of human rights cannot be theoretically tackled starting from factual situations, although these have an extremely important role.⁴³ Human rights, notwithstanding their practical dimension, are an ideal construction, an aspiration whose roots belong again as far as their emerging is concerned, to the space of European culture.⁴⁴ A short historical view will be helpful in better understanding the specific character of human rights and the prerequisites for the elaboration of a theory on these.

At the historic scale, the philosophy of human rights has a relatively recent starting point, although there are quite a number of elements (documents, works, events) which go back as far as antiquity. It is undoubtedly linked with the approaches connected with the natural rights in the Renaissance, developing as a generous ideology by seeing the individual as possessing rights which are God's gift to humans. By the philosophy of human rights we understand nowadays "a totality of values, intellectual attitudes and matters of universal relevance",⁴⁵ by means of which a certain interpretation of the dignity of an individual is made, in view of respect for each human being as a person, irrespective of the differences among individuals.

The developing of the philosophy of human rights was inevitably parallel with the birth of the modern theories about the state and again it inevitably bears the ideological stamp of the philosophy of natural rights as a prerequisite of the theory of the social contract. The original meaning of the philosophy of human rights is linked with the protection of the individual's freedom and dignity in relation with the political authority, as the state had the greatest power of encroaching upon human rights, they being primarily directed on the relations between citizens and the state.

Today this originary restriction of human rights to the sphere of relationship between individual and state⁴⁶ is out of date from at least two points of view: first of all the achievements of the twentieth century (for

instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), although they have as their privileged target the state leadership (and is the direct reaction to the unparalleled state violence in the period preceding and during World War II), see the human being as a "universal person" and not the legally and politically determined existence of the individual as the citizen of a certain political community, namely of a state. Secondly the so-called new generations of rights (the children's rights or the rights of third-age people, etc.), which follow the generation of civil and political rights and, then the social, economic and cultural rights, even more envisage the respect for the inter human relations, at the family level inclusively, and not only the protection of the individual against abusive state power.

3. Civic Education and Human Rights Education: Pedagogical Approaches

The extremely controversial issue of the universal character of human rights (which has practically been a permanent battlefield for the supporters of cultural relativism and those of "universalism", as a generic approach of people as human beings) that has been mentioned above, can help us understand why there is a difference in theory and practice between civic education and human rights education, although they also share a lot of common elements. Even if the theories regarding citizenship have evolved in the 20th century through the increasingly evident diminishing of the importance of the state-reference (as a consequence of the disappointment and fears induced by extreme state violence) and through the adoption of a reference in terms of political system (which is growingly making room to the civil society and to the citizens' initiatives), civic education continues to be inevitably connected to the state environment which defines a certain political community. In exchange, human rights education can be achieved without taking into account the limitations of a certain political system, and even against it, to the extent to which we are dealing with a political system where human rights are "subversive".

Undoubtedly, we are left with the special problem represented by the cultural differences, which cannot be ignored and the consequences of which on education will be dealt with in what follows. Theoretically, at least in the signatories states of international agreements regarding human rights, civic education should not be, in its essence, different from human

rights education. However, from the point of view of the practical approaches, the overlapping between civic education and human rights education does not seem so easy to achieve.

3.1 A Terminological Matter: Civic Education and/or Education for Democratic Citizenship

We notice that the literature having the educational field as its object operates with different terms, such as civic education, civics, citizenship education, education for democratic citizenship.⁴⁷ During the last few years, especially due to the "Education for Democratic Citizenship" project of the Council of Europe started in 1997, the opinion was imposed that the terms *civics*, *civic education* or *citizenship education* refer mainly to the space of formal education (mostly taking place in school), while *education for democratic citizenship* was thought to have a wider scope, including the dimensions of life-long education, both in a formal environment and, more especially, in forms of non-formal education⁴⁸ (such as projects of representatives of the civil society, for example NGOs).

As we see it, the issue of the name given to this dimension of education which is education for democratic citizenship is important not so much from the point of view of the place and means through which it is achieved, but mostly from the perspective of the values underlying it and of the way in which these values were explained. One may consider that civic education is also the education of a citizen belonging to a totalitarian and authoritative regime, and there are plenty of examples to illustrate such approaches.⁴⁹ Can education for citizenship in a non-democratic society be considered "civic education"? Of course it can, but it is not education for a democratic type of citizenship. Here is one of the sources of the caution expressed by some people regarding "civic education" in the societies in transition, because there is a danger that this should be achieved in the spirit of the civic education of old times. Here is also the source of major confusions regarding the aim, the objectives of education for democratic citizenship and the methodological approaches we shall be dealing with below.⁵⁰ According to Albala-Bertrand, the fundamental question of civic education is "what kind of citizen and for what kind of society?"⁵¹ If we take this into account and we are prepared to explain our set of values, the terminological issue is not a crucial one anymore.⁵²

3.2 The Status of a Didactics of Civic and Human Rights Education in School

Civic and Human Rights Education as a School Approach

Civic education (education for democratic citizenship), which until the '90s was taught in schools in a diffuse way, through the various subjects included in the curricula and which was more often than not "surrounded by suspicion or indifference"⁵³ is more and more present as an autonomous subject (especially in Europe), being allotted at least one hour per week in the curriculum.

The problem that arises due to the explicit presence of civic education in schools as an autonomous subject refers to the "design" of an adequate didactics, taking into account the fact that "it is not a subject like all the others",⁵⁴ that an original approach in terms of objectives and teaching methods is therefore needed, which should take into account not only the pupils' civic instruction, but also the effective participation of the pupils in democratic relationships in school. Based to an equal extent "on a body of knowledge and on convictions",⁵⁵ civic education as a school subject has many similarities with philosophy, especially due to the fact that "teaching can not be imposed in an authoritarian way"⁵⁶ and that it is not possible to end up in dogmatism without deeply contradicting the very essence of the respective subjects.

The balance between learning and understanding must be conceived and achieved in such a way which should avoid the accumulation of factual data and specific concepts, as a purpose in itself. Dialogue, team work and critical analysis of factual or value enunciation should be promoted.

Similar to philosophy, the issue of a *didactic approach* for civic education is not devoid of controversies and it triggers a series of reactions, either of acceptance or of rejection of such an endeavor, which is considered either useless, or even harmful. The arguments against a didactics of civic education are based in most cases on the assumption that didactic talent is inborn, and therefore the competence a teacher needs cannot be learnt and any attempt of supporting his/her initial and continuous training is useless, even dangerous, representing the best way to kill didactic spontaneity and replace it with a standardizing recipe.

Similar again to philosophy, another reason which is sometimes evoked to demonstrate the uselessness of a special didactics of civic education is

the fact that, through its nature, the subject has the capacity to induce continuous reflection on choosing the objectives, the contents, the methods and assessment techniques.

On the contrary, the voices that argue in favor of the existence of a "didactic theory" of civic education reject the reduction of the meaning of didactics to a sterile, passive and redundant methodological approach of self-sufficiency of the subject and highlight the need that civic education as a school subject should be based on the "didactic theory", which, in fact, is part of the education for democratic citizenship. In the case of civic education, "analysis and argumentation, as processes of the theoretical and practical education, can be seen as a didactic process, which is not at all equivalent with a simplifying or dogmatic, or even worse, a passive and inflexible approach for the manipulation of a given knowledge".⁵⁷

The arguments in favor of a "didactic inner substance of civic education" can, at the same time, become the principles of this didactics:

- a) the attention of educators, as well as of curriculum and learning materials developers should permanently focus on achieving the inter-relation among concepts, factual data, values, attitudes, motivation, on building a system of argumentative discussion on practicing democracy in class and in school;
- b) in the case of civic education, appealing to the "pupil's subjectivity" and its constant and plenary valuing are not only inevitable, but desirable,⁵⁸
- c) civic education should be oriented towards a practical purpose and should be made by relating it to the context;
- d) the teacher has full freedom in stressing not only the theoretical and rational aspects, but, more important, the emotional aspects, alternative ways of seeing things. He will not exclusively require the pupils to give "correct answers", which allow only for the dual alternatives "correct-incorrect", on the contrary, he will ask the pupils to make the effort to provide complex and in-depth argumentation.

While sharing the point of view of those who bring arguments in favor of the didactic "inner substance" of civic education, in what follows we intend to discuss various methodological aspects we consider important and specific of this special subject, *which is equivalent with a responsible analysis of the bases, legitimacy and desirable practices of the educational activity in this field.*

On condition we admit that it is both necessary and possible to place the pupil's personality in the center of the educational activity and to permanently treat the learner as a *person*, the so-called "current crisis of didactics" no longer seems to be a real problem. We are simply speaking about the decline of an outdated didactics, which has never allowed the pupil to play an active role in his own training. Without transforming civic education into a field where "everything goes", the particular didactics of this field, based on its special epistemological status, has all the premises that may allow it to replace the authoritative domination of the teacher with a partnership and cooperation relation between teachers and pupils.

Methodological Issues: Shaping and Developing the Competencies Associated with Citizenship in a Democratic Society

Civic education has at least five major dimensions: a) communicating or transmitting knowledge about society and social values, b) cultivating civic attitudes, c) cultivating a critical analysis of social values and norms, d) creating and developing democratic behavior, and e) stimulating the motivation for the full and responsible taking over of the quality of citizen belonging to a democratic society. Civic education is therefore inevitably related with "the issues referring to the definition of such values, with their ethical basis and the way in which the authorities, the families, the pupils and the teachers share them or not".⁵⁹

The whole development of the sciences of education, especially the use of alternative teaching methods at the beginning of the 20th century, following the tradition of pedagogues such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and others, with a special interest for the education of the masses and, within them, of each and every individual person, according to their own capability, has practically forced the adults to admit "the children's different way of being",⁶⁰ the fact that they are not miniature adults, but special beings, with their own qualities, interests and needs. In the 20th century, childhood has been (re)discovered, in the spirit of what Ellen Key called "the child's century".

One of the basic assumptions of the didactics of civic education should be that no didactic approach and no methodological choice are legitimate unless they are based on a constant effort for discovering the pupils' abilities and on adapting teaching and learning to the pupils' potential and needs.

Of course, a didactics of civic education will not be able to cover completely the extremely controversial area of the possibilities and limits

of education, for example the comparisons between ineism and constructivism or between rationalism and empiricism. However, it can constantly reflect on theories and models related to the development of personality and to the gradual development (in stages) of different personality dimensions, such as the theory of intellectual, moral, emotional and relational development. To neglect the pupil's status as a "subject" (and here we could mention the whole series of the philosophical discussions, from Kant to Heidegger and to personalism, with reference to the relationship subject-object from a humanistic perspective) is equivalent with missing the two major objectives of civic education: helping the pupils to confront actively and responsibly with various life situations and helping them to develop their own personality. Far from us to suggest the existence of only one model that could be considered absolute appropriate for the education of each child, in accordance with his or her own individuality, but we consider that an attitude of minimum morality of educators forces them to reflect upon "a right model" and to take into account the existence of differences between adults and children, which would be the best foundation of a responsible educational activity.

What should civic education be in school? No consensus exists on this issue, not even in the countries with a long and stable democratic tradition. The only consensus is the following: civic education, as a fundamental objective and dimension of schooling, cannot be absent from the educational offer, although in different ways, depending on each school. People speak about *implicit civic education* and about *explicit civic education*. The first situation is the one of the educational environment, which, by means of the democratic atmosphere and practice in school, supports the pupils' training in the spirit of democratic values and principles. Thus, participating in decision making within the school council, the possibility given to the pupils to express their opinions in the school magazine or their involvement in the pupils' representative structures are seen as means through which the children and the youth come into direct contact with forms and contents of the democratic practices. In this respect, implicit civic education would contain, *in extenso*, everything that school life, in close relation with the community life, can offer the pupils as a model (in a positive sense) of an authentic participatory democracy. Consequently, many of the adepts of implicit civic education would no longer need *explicit forms*, like a special discipline or cross-curricular (transversal) objectives/topics. However, some countries apply the *explicit civic education*, through the presence in the curriculum of

one or several subjects that aim at contributing to enabling the pupils with what is necessary for them to competently exert the quality of citizen in a democratic society.

This is also the case of Romania, where the curriculum for primary education included the subject Civic Education in forms III and IV, with one hour per week. In the present curriculum, for forms VII and VIII, as well as for the vocational schools, there is the subject Civic Culture. At the moment, in high school there is no special civic education subject, the only interventions of this kind in the curriculum being possible by means of the counseling and guidance classes.⁶¹

Most countries, among which Romania could also be included, have adopted the "and/and" solution instead of the "either/or" one: civic education is made through what used to be called "democracy in school" (with everything this implies), as well as by means of one or several subjects or classes included in the curriculum, having the role of a systematic framework for the initiation of children in the ABC of democracy.

Of course, civic education is made not only in school and only during the Civic Education classes, but these may have a decisive role in the understanding by the pupils of the democratic mechanism and for the exercise of democratic practices, from social communication to participation in political decision making.

As stated in Audigier's book "*Enseigner la société, transmettre les valeurs*" (1993) already in the title, it is essentially about teaching children what society is and how it works and is meant to convey to them to consensual values which lie at the basis of social (democratic) norms. The definition can be accepted almost without any qualification for civic education in a country with a consolidated democracy where the social environment strongly supports, by context and examples at hand for everyone, the school's effort for the pupil's democratic education.

Things became more complicated when we come to the Central and Eastern European countries like Romania, where the democratic society is in its early stages of building up, so that the pupils cannot get consolidated values. In countries like Romania, civic education has the role of contributing to the circulation of ideas and activities that can strongly support the setting up of a democratic mentality in society.

Democracy is not a value that has been obtained once and for ever in Western countries. It is a fragile framework, whose success depends on the involvement and public action of each citizen. The superiority of democracy as against totalitarianism lies in the fact that this type of political

regime contains the premises and the mechanisms for the peaceful correction of errors. The citizens are allowed to exert critical attitudes on and control the power, as in an authentic democracy the critical reflection on the social values and norms is accepted and encouraged.

From this point of view, civic education does not only mean merely "the transmission of values", but also enabling the pupils to critically refer to them. To criticise does not mean to deny or to abolish but, in the Kantian meaning, to compare and look for foundations. If the foundation of a norm is no longer meeting the needs of a group, of some persons etc., they can act towards changing it, a change that is achieved by peaceful means.

As an explicit approach, civic education aims at the acquiring by the pupils of knowledge (concepts, facts on society, the transmitting of social values, including and especially the ethical ones), and at enabling the pupils to critically refer to these, the shaping and developing of democratic attitudes and behavior.

Among these objectives and dimensions of civic education school requires a flexible approach, in keeping with the form, with a certain learning situation, with the specific features of a community. The balance in a successful didactic approach is obtained when the acquiring of knowledge is not the only and main target but is seen as a means for the critical reflection on the values and norms and for the shaping and developing of attitudes and behavior. Knowledge is extremely important in defining and exerting the competencies accompanying citizenship, but a "good citizen" is not only the individual who knows thoroughly a lot.

To be a citizen in a democratic society means to get involved in the life of the community you belong to, to be willing and able to competently influence the political decision taken at different levels, to behave in a certain way with other people, based on attitudes such as respect, tolerance, open-mindedness towards the opinions of others.

Democracy as a political regime is the successful attempt to peacefully manage the disputes arising among people. In fact, by accepting pluralism and democratic mechanisms the pursuing of one's personal interests doesn't necessarily oppose to pursuing of what is called the general interest or general welfare.

The shaping of democratic attitudes and behavior, especially as far as social communication is concerned, should and can start from an early age, so that positive habits should be exercised in different contexts and consolidated in time. Knowing to listen to others, knowing to express

your personal ideas with solid arguments, taking part in a dialogue in a decent manner, being able to face conflicts and find a constructive solution to them, are skills that need systematic formation along some time, to enable their flexible bringing up-to-date, as required by circumstances.

What should not be civic education in school? Civic education could be understood in a wide sense of the term "civic" or in its restricted sense. In a wide sense civic education means the education of the individual in order to live alongside the others in society, which includes polite behavior, hygiene norms, traffic rules, fire-protection rules, etc. In its restricted meaning, civic education means the acquiring by the pupils of a participatory political culture, that is the acquiring of knowledge and skills required from a citizen for actively participating in public life. In this respect civic education, as a subject, is inevitably an interdisciplinary approach. Consequently, at the curriculum level political, legal, philosophical, economic, historical, sociological aspects interrelate.

The specific character of civic education, as a subject lies first of all in its interdisciplinary character, which turns it into an extremely complex and difficult area. In spite of the widespread opinion that every citizen could teach civic education without any special training, as he knows his rights and duties, the teachers and schoolmasters who approach this need an adequate training in this field, without which the teaching process remains at an amateur, non-professional level.

The different meanings of the term "civic" are not mutually exclusive, but in the curriculum definition of civic education the objectives and emphasis of this subject must be clearly defined.

Thus if by civic education we understand only the teaching of traffic rules, of health and fire protection rules, that means we shall never attain the goal to make it a real school for democracy. Such above-mentioned types of education find their place in totalitarian systems as well, as we well know from our experience previous to 1989.

Civic education does not mean cheap moralizing, the inculcation of norms from the adult's superior position, carried out on a sweet, wise and self-satisfied tone. It is true that the teacher/pupil relationship is asymmetric, that the pupils are in most respect "inferior" to the adults, but it is entirely wrong to believe that by sweet words, wise advise, valuable directing will automatically be conducive to positive moral behavior. As has been brilliantly shown by the American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, among others, children judge ethically in a personal manner, each in his own

way, in keeping with landmarks that are not dependent on the "beauty" of discourse external to them. If the pupil is not supported to make progress in his moral thinking and to reach the same wave-length with the adults who require them to behave well, the external moralizing discourse can by no means be effective. Finally, civic education should not promote preconceived ideas, stereotypes, instead of supporting an open and flexible thinking.

Conclusions

The main objective of our study was to highlight the frames of mind which are necessarily linked to the conceptual and practical dimensions of education for democratic citizenship. Why do we accept to observe laws and to obey to different authority bodies? What makes citizen really participate in public affairs? These are only two questions which should generate reflective EDC practices both in formal and non-formal education. Unfortunately, as philosophers noticed long time ago, only very few people constantly reflect upon the reasons of their own activities. Moreover, every human activity tends to produce quickly the so-called "common-places" to which one cannot deny a certain usefulness in the context of daily routine.

However, as also philosopher noticed, human beings are luckily able to encounter from time to time the points where theory and practice meet, where concepts, methods and meanings come together in what we use to call (philosophical) "criticism". The magic of concepts tends sometimes to overthrow the critical approach so badly needed every time we seek to legitimate our actions. It is nevertheless true that very often it is the magic of practice which tends to overthrow any theoretical attempt supposed to enable us in legitimating and improving our practice. In our contemporary world, featured by a declining level of political trust, by reduced participation and by lack of interest in community service, there is probably more need than ever to constantly reflect upon democratic citizenship by means of theoretical and practical doing. In Nader's terms,⁶² "there can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship". That is why education for democratic citizenship and its human rights value core should not be absent from school and out-of-school approaches. In order to achieve its mission, education for democratic citizenship should focus on the following goals: to serve the needs of individual citizens, to serve the national interest,

to be consistent with the form of democratic self-government and to be accurate, which means to search for truth and for a reasonable approximation of accuracy.⁶³

As stated in many international documents, the state has to create a space to EDC, providing the framework for new links between school and community. This new space has to do with the development of a supportive environment (i.e. democratic schools) as well as with the use of new technologies in order to increase the participatory autonomy of students and adults.

Practitioners, researchers and politicians have to better cope with the need of a pluralistic, sometimes "conflictual" consensus building. In order to ensure sustainable development to EDC projects and to the "sites of democratic citizenship" (i.e. learning environments which foster the acquisition of skills and competencies) at local, national and international levels, all actors should pay attention to the successful dissemination of their work, to permanent awareness-raising and to sharing their results on the basis of the use of a common language. In order to enhance EDC prerequisites (i.e. resources, legal framework, training and technologies), the formal and non-formal education sector have to co-operate as equal partners.

To associate EDC principles to educational reform policies is very important, but not sufficient in terms of fostering a sustainable democratic culture in a given society and at a global level. EDC needs to become a concern of each individual and of society at large, in terms of conceptual approaches and in terms of the development of democratic skills and attitudes. There should be more closer links between philosophy, political sciences and education theory and practice, in terms of stimulating the improvement of educational strategies.⁶⁴ As Nader put it some years ago, it's time not only for school to make a priority out of civics but also to redesign civic participation as a contemporary formula for human happiness.

NOTES

1. The article "Democracy's Future. The primacy of Culture" was published in *Journal of Democracy*, January 1995, Vol. 6, No. 1.
2. The main thesis of this essay, published in 1989, is represented by the statement, attractive in the context of the anti-Communist revolutions at the end of the 80's, that history has an "end" seen, in our opinion, as *telos* (*End* having in English both meanings, namely that of "finish" but also that of "purpose"): "the end of the ideological evolution of humanity and the generalizing of Western liberal democracy, as a final form of human government" (*apud.* Fukuyama, 1989).
3. As Patrick (1999, p. 4-8) shows, among others, a distinction has to be made between minimal (electoral) and liberal democracies. Taking over the criteria mentioned by Huntington (1991, p. 7), Patrick shows that the fundamental fact for characterizing a political regime as a minimal democracy is "that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote". Unlike this minimal level of "the people's power", "a liberal democracy is government of, by, and for the people, which government is both empowered and limited by the supreme law of the people's constitution for the ultimate purpose of protecting equally the autonomy and rights of everyone in the polity" (1999, p. 6).
4. As numerous authors show (among others Huntington, 1991; Dahrendorf, 1992), a minimal democratic regime can sometimes be established without too many problems in post-totalitarian or post-authoritarian societies, in poor and developing societies as well as in societies traumatized by wars, famine or natural disasters. The main issue however remains that of consolidating democracy and transforming it into a liberal democracy, which can only happen in the context of ensuring the economic and social prosperity.
5. In discussing this viewpoint, it is interesting to mention that, for example, if at the beginning of the '90s, more than 90% of Romania's population expressed absolute confidence in democracy, recent polls (BAROMETRU – CURS, November 1999) indicate a confused state of mind: 69% of the Romanians consider that things are developing in a wrong direction, and only 19% of the 10% considering that things are going in a good direction tend to associate this "good direction" with freedom and democracy. These conclusions are undoubtedly due to the failure of creating efficient institutions, including and especially in the economic field during the last ten years.
6. Although Romanian NGOs functioned till recently on the basis of a legal framework going back to 1924, more than 14,000 were registered already

in the early '90s. But as numerous analyses show, an associative culture, true participation in public life and real partnerships cannot simply emerge from the formal existence of different bodies of the civil society. In Barber's terms (1989, p. 162), the "heart of the argument for strong democracy is to define what it means by public talk, public action, citizenship, and community...". When considering these features of a "strong democracy" it is clear that Romanian civil society is still in progress after its almost total extinction during the post-war communist period.

7. Culture is defined here by Fukuyama (1995, p. 8) "as a rational, ethical habit passed on through tradition". These concise definition is actually remarkably and converging consistent with different other understandings of culture, which are encompassing it from different, sometimes divergent, perspectives: a) meanings, symbols, values and norms, that are shared consciously or unconsciously by a group of people (Patterson); b) all that is learned or all that it is different from the inherited nature (Tyler); c) the special and distinctive lifestyle of a group or class, the meanings, the values and ideas as they are reflected in the institutions, in the social relationships, in system of beliefs, in customs and traditions, in the use of objects, and in material life (Clark); d) the specific shape in which the material life and the social organization are expressed; culture includes "maps of meaning" which make these things understandable for its members (Hofstede). In the context of our discussion it is interesting to notice that Fukuyama stresses the rational (e.g. conscious) dimension of culture, which doesn't mean of course that he ignores its emotional aspects, as well as its unconscious ones. Consequently, a democratic culture would be able to emerge in a given society and to become tradition on the basis of rational processes, which involve value clarification as well as a permanent argumentative questioning of the legitimacy of values, norms, institutions and relations.
8. *Op. cit.*, p. 8
9. *Ibidem*, p. 9. Another extremely interesting track for discussions, launched in the quoted article, but which, unfortunately, cannot be the object of our discussion, refers to the fact that "in recent years, ethnic conflicts have revealed a sizeable hole in traditional liberal political theory". (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 10). The need for a "new liberal political theory", in accordance with the new shape and content of nowadays political power (benefiting like never before by the mass-media manipulation potential, by the means of genetic control and by the modern arsenal of sophisticated nuclear weapons) is also stressed by authors like Steinvorth (1994), who think that we now live in a period when the classical separation of power, seen as the most efficient way of preventing political power abuse, seems to become less trustful than even some decades ago.
10. An issue which is worth raising here, following that it will be extensively discussed in this paper, is that of the different, sometimes opposite functions associated to education, either from the perspective of understanding it

rather as an instrument for cultural transmission (following a French tradition, starting with Durkheim, see Audigier, 1993), or from the broader perspective of the potential of education for institutional and value creation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Representatives of phenomenological constructivism, such as Berger and Luckmann, tend to ascribe education, seen as an instance of a symbolical legitimation an essential role in the social construction of reality: <It is correct to say that theories are produced so as to legitimate already existing social institutions. It may happen, however, that social institutions be transformed so as to correspond to the already existing theories, namely so as to become "legitimate". Experts in legitimate issues can work in order to justify the *status quo*; but they can equally appear as revolutionary ideologists. The definitions of reality have the power of self-creation. Theories can be fulfilled in history, even those theories that had, at the moment of their creation, an extremely abstract character / .../ As a result, social change must always be understood as being in a dialectic relation with "the history of ideas" > (*apud* Berger and Luckmann, 1996).

11. In the "Preface" of his book *The Culture of Education* (1996, p. IX), although recognizing that "schooling is only one small part of how a culture inducts the young into its canonical ways", Bruner focuses his interrogations on schools: <Should schools aim simply to reproduce the culture, to "assimilate" (to use a word now considered odious) the young into the ways of being little Americans or little Japanese?...Or would schools, given the revolutionary changes through which we are living, do better to dedicate themselves to the equally risky, perhaps equally quixotic ideal of preparing students to cope with the changing world in which they will be living?>
12. See, for example, the Report prepared for the UNESCO by a team coordinated by Jacques Delors *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996). This report suggests four pillars for the ideal education of a human being in the 21st century: to know, to know to do, to know to be and to know to live together with others.
13. See, for example, the results of a research carried out in four Romanian schools between 1995-1997, in which I participated together with Felisa Tibbitts (Tibbitts, 1999) from the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, published in 1999. The purpose of the research was to investigate a possible correlation between the classroom use of teaching materials conceived from the perspective of an interactive pedagogy and of some interactive teaching methods and the positive change of attitude related to the participatory dimensions of citizenship in a liberal democratic society. At the end of a two year period, pupils from the observed classes showed an obvious positive change of attitude regarding the participatory dimensions of citizenship, such as involving all citizens in the process of public decision making and their voluntary participation in community activities: "Data from nearly 900 surveys were collected over the course of the study. For the treatment classes, students demonstrated a statistically significant gain in their rating of the

importance of the following citizenship characteristics, following two years in the program:

- voting in most elections ($F=14.05$, $p<.0001$)
- trying to influence government decisions and policies ($F=21.87$, $p<.0001$).

These changes were also confirmed in the open-ended questions in the survey, as well as in interviews with students and teachers. There were no statistically significant gains in these categories for students in the comparison (non-experimental) classrooms." (*apud* Tibbitts and Torney-Purta, 1999, 24-25).

14. See their book from 1998 *Civic Education. What Makes Students Learn*, in which, among other things, they present the disappointing conclusion of a 1988 NAEP study that the proportion of the citizens' civic participation does not seem to rise in relation with the period of instruction that a person had benefited by. In other words, statistics do not allow any speculations about a correlation between the duration of the study periods and the civic involvement of the individuals, although at the theoretical level, there is the expectation (fostered by a whole rationalist tradition in education) that higher levels of education makes one a better citizen.
15. See Gardner, 1993.
16. As stated by Meintjes (1997, p. 66), "The critical difference between empowerment and banking education is the psychological impact each is likely to have. To treat students simply as receptacles to be filled with useful ideas and information, is to deprive them of their critical consciousness and to deceive them into believing that knowledge is an object to be received rather than a continuous process of inquiry and reflection. Students who are empowered, however, become conscious of their own participation in the creation of knowledge and of their own critical ability to conceptualize and re-conceptualize their experiences of reality."
17. According to Fisher, 1993, p. 97.
18. See Torney-Purta, Schwille and Amadeo, 1999
19. See Torney-Purta, Schwille, Amadeo, 1999, p. 14
20. These views about citizenship are shared among others by authors like Conover and Searing (see Conover and Searing, 1994, p. 34)
21. See Freire and Macedo, 1998, p. 3
22. See Conover and Searing, 1994, 9. 35.
23. See Torney-Purta and Schwille, 1986
24. According to Sabatini, Bevis and Finkel, 1998, p. 51.
25. See their study "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory" from the volume edited by Ronald Beiner *Theorizing Citizenship* (1995), in which theories about citizenship are identified and analyzed from the chronological point of view as well as from the point of view of their basic cultural patterns. In "Introduction", the authors show that "There has been an explosion of interest in the concept of citizenship among political theorists. In 1978, it could be confidently stated that <the

concept of citizenship has gone out of fashion among political thinkers> (*apud* van Gunsteren 1978, p. 9). Fifteen years later, citizenship has become the <*buzz word*> among thinkers on all points of the political spectrum... There are a number of reasons for this renewed interest in citizenship in the 1990s. At the level of theory it is a natural evolution in political discourse because the concept of citizenship seems to integrate the demands of justice and community membership – the central concepts of political philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. Citizenship is intimately linked to ideas of individual entitlement on the one hand and of attachment to a particular community on the other. Thus, it may help clarify what is really at stake in the debate between liberals and communitarians' (Kymlicka & Norman, 1995, p. 283).

26. Another way of expressing this difference between the citizen's legal and political status and the ideal aspects of his or her involvement in the community life was suggested by Flathman (1995). It is about the contrast between what he calls "high citizenship" and "law citizenship". As Beiner shows (1995, p. 19), "... the contention between them remains one of the central debates carried on by theorists of citizenship. The republican vision is associated with the enthusiasm of theorists like Hannah Arendt, Benjamin Barber, Skinner and Popock, Charles Taylor and myself, and this enthusiasm got a skeptical reception from Flathman, Michael Ignatieff, Kymlicka and Norman, and George Kelly, among the contributors to this volume."
27. See Beiner, 1995, p. 19.
28. See Walzer, 1995.
29. According to Rey (1988, 1991 and 1995), among others, when discussing a person's identity we have to consider various aspects and dimensions involved in such a complex design. What seems to be a "block identity" is actually the dynamic result of the interaction and (re)-connections between these aspects, among which there are the identities concerning family, gender, profession, ethnic group, nation (meaning here the state), region, religion, etc. Major conflicting problems arise between different such "identities" especially when one of these dimensions is isolated and approached separately from the others and tends to become the dominant (and even sole) feature in someone's personality.
30. Habermas (1995, p. 278), when discussing the future of Europe and the relationship between citizenship and national identity, forwards the idea of a "constitutional patriotism" which is based on continuously reinterpreting the constitutional fundamentals of a particular society according to the changes in its ethnic, religious composition, etc.: <The requisite competence "to act as citizens of a special political community (this particular polity)" is to be understood in another sense completely – namely, the universalistic sense – as soon as the political community itself implements universalistic basic laws. The identity of political community, which may not be touched by immigration, depends primarily upon the constitutional principles rooted

in a political culture and not upon an ethical-cultural form of life as a whole. This is why it must be expected that the new citizens will readily engage in the political culture of their new home, without necessarily giving up the cultural life specific to their country of origin.>

31. See footnote 3.
32. This point of view originates in Karl Popper's reflections on liberal democracy in the first place, as they were expressed in works such as *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1957) and *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt* (1987), where the failibilist perspective of Popper's epistemology is transferred into the social and political field. As with knowledge, errors are considered to inevitably accompany the social-political praxis, and the course taken in order to correct them or to make them productive lies not in ignoring them (as in totalitarian régimes), but in the argumentative-critical exercise performed by citizens. The vote is just the instrument to be used for the peaceful change of power in the state, but in minimal democracies it has not been a guarantee for the peaceful error correction. It is only the social and political culture of a community or open society that, in addition to the mechanisms and procedures of a liberal democracy, represents the guarantee for actually using the potential thereof to be a regime of peaceful difference management, both for the benefit of individuals as such, and of the community.
33. In our opinion, taking into account the case of Romania, a possible explanation for the fact that the violent events, completely unknown in the previous communist period – such as the "ethnic" collisions between the Romanians and the Hungarians in Transylvania in March 1990, the clashes between the Romanians and the Roma in 1991 and 1992, or the repeated "mineriads" (miners' assaults) – did not degenerate into a "civil war" or other forms of escalating murderous conflicts, is the very presence and action of some incipient, though imperfect, structures of a liberal democratic society. By contrast, the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo did degenerate as a result of the absence of both political democratic culture (not only for a part of population), and a minimal liberal-democratic framework.
34. This "European model" is in itself an idealization of other different "models", from the historical cohabitation of different ethnic groups within the same territory, which in time has become the defining territory of a national state, to the recent model of ethnic and cultural diversity in some Western countries, resulted from the post-war migrations in particular (for instance, the Maghrebi population to France, the Turkish population to Germany, the South-East Asian population to the Netherlands), but also from the migration of the Italians or the Portuguese originating in the underdeveloped regions of their countries towards developed countries or regions, such as Germany, Luxembourg, etc.

35. As Higham (1993) has pointed out, the term of "multiculturalism" is used with different meanings. From the educational perspective, "For a great many people, it means a wider recognition and appreciation of the different endowments that young people bring to the classroom." From the point of view of the majority – minority relationship, "It's a belief that equality can be advanced by maximizing the cohesiveness and the power of particular groups, particular minority groups, if they will stand together, if they ally themselves with one another", being thus an attempt to validate an identity. From the political and ideological point of view, Higham finds that the "academic multiculturalism" in particular, to which the identity movements in university campuses and the "political correctness" policy are attached, produces most deviations as concerns identity myths and the erosion of some unifying principles of political communities, by that it runs the risk to become "an ideology of minority rights that pays no attention to majorities".
36. As Diane Ravitch (1991) has put it, the aspiration of some American schools to provide pupils and communities with a "curriculum of inclusion", as an instrument to enhance the "self-esteem of children from social and ethnic minorities", and to thus generate "improved academic performance", have often ended in extreme solutions: schools in Puerto-Rico or in states with a numerous Hispanic population have replaced the "European mathematics" by Maya mathematical systems; in New York or Sacramento, "to think like an Afro-American" has become a priority of schools, whereas the technological education has been focused on "the African Mind Model Technique"; important English-language writers have been replaced in curriculum by authors, sometimes obscure, belonging to a particular minority; Hispanic pupils study Botany by Aztec agricultural techniques, and not through the perspective of the "European" science which is based on taxonomy and systemic approaches, such as Lynné's. In a controversial book, *Losing our language* (1998), Stotsky shows that the multicultural temptation is ever more tending to uphold differences as absolute, as illustrated by some rap lyrics, mentioned by Diane Ravitch as well: for the partisans of radical cultural relativism subjecting everyone to a "Euro-centric" culture "it's like trying to teach a dog to be a cat".
37. See Ravitch, 1991, p. 19.
38. In Rawls' terms, a society is formally just when the disadvantaged choose to remain within it, although they could leave it. Certainly, things are more complex in reality than in theory, but not different. For instance, it is odd that members of the Hispanic community, who often run extreme risks to emigrate to the States in order to become American citizens, later reject many elements defining this citizenship, English in particular, without leaving the American political community however, to go back to their original countries or elsewhere. In this case we are entitled to believe that with such citizens, the appeal of the American citizenship is still greater than its drawbacks, as it is mainly connected to material advantages. A major aspect of the civic education in the United States is consequently clarifying to

- citizens the relations between material prosperity and the democratic values and practices that have been substantiated indeed by values, ideas and practices which emerged over two centuries ago in the Anglo-Saxon culture, to which English is related in its turn.
39. In Lewis' s terms (1992,)), "*Imperialism, sexism, and racism* are words of western coinage – not because the West invented these evils, which are, alas, *universal*, but because the West recognized and named and condemned them as evils and struggled mightily, and not entirely in vain, to weaken their hold and to help the victims."
 40. See Kelly's study "Who Needs a Theory of Citizenship?" (1994) or Turner's "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship" (1994). Referring to Macphearson's article "Do we need a Theory of the State?" (1991), Kelly (1994, p. 24) shows that by "great theory" Macphearson means the theory in the style of Bodin, Hobbes, Hegel and Bosanquet (i.e. connecting human nature with the state's ideal value) and not simply a coherent account of empirical political processes, further qualified as "pluralist-elitist-equilibrium theory".
 41. According to Turner (1994, p. 162), this thing is even more valid if we refer to the contributions of sociology: "Although the idea of citizenship has received a lot of attention in recent sociological literature (Roche, 1987; Barbalet, 1988; Jordan, 1989; Turner, 1990), there is no parallel discussion of the sociological importance of human rights and has not developed any general theory of social rights as institutions. Sociology is typically skeptical, on historical and comparative grounds, about the social existence of universalistic rights and obligations."
 42. According to Lewellen (1997) by Bongo-Bongoism anthropologists designate the generalizations not born out by facts of the type "The customs I noticed at tribe bongo-bongo must be also in existence at tribe x...". The problem with Bongo-Bongoism is that one cannot generalize observations of such customs or behavior without running the risk of being contradicted by new field research.
 43. One cannot ignore in this context the contributions of codifying human rights, as they exist up to the present moment in international documents, some of which have a prevailing ethical role (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), whereas others have a legal character (The European Convention of Human Rights, 1950); The Convention concerning the Civil and Political Rights and the Convention regarding Economic and Social Rights of 1976, drawn up in consequence of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference (1975), etc. One cannot ignore the legal instruments for the international protection of human rights and the sanctioning of those guilty of their infringement. Without these tangible references the matter of human rights would be restricted to a generous rhetorical debate.
 44. By European culture or European space we refer here to the roots of these, such as the Greek and Judaic-Christian culture. Moreover, according to some points of view, there is a reiteration of the presence of "imperialistic" imposition, as universal standards, of some "European" rights. In this case

the same confusion is made, as mentioned above, between the validity in principle of some ideas and the particularity of their emergence in a certain cultural space.

45. See Georgescu, 1999, p. 106
46. It is interesting for instance, that the manifesto of the 1789 revolution, The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, bears in its very title the term citizen, whereas in the document-declaration of the United Nations Organisation of 1948 this term is absent; what remains is the syntagm "human rights", this being in English a fortunate syntagm, due to Eleanor Roosevelt – while in French "*droits de l'homme*" is considered a rather sexist syntagm.
47. Audigier (2000, p. 4) draws the attention that the terms used always determine some restrictions in the sense that they suggest "what is expected of education for citizenship and the words used to talk of it. The risk here is of swamping citizenship in a vision as idyllic as it is normative, to constantly make reference to it for any social activity or commitment, without always being clear about what this reference requires."
48. A central concept of the project of the Council of Europe "Education for Democratic Citizenship" (short EDC) is for example the one "on the sites of citizenship", which refers not necessarily to places, but to projects aiming at successfully promoting the ideal of democratic citizenship in everyday life environments.
49. It is enough to mention here some forms of civic education that existed in Romania before 1989: subjects as: The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania, (Form VII), a Socio-political Knowledge (Form X), the so called politico-ideological education, in the classes of the home-room teachers, or the activities in the youth and children's organizations; teaching of traffic rules, fire-protection rules, pre-military training; "patriotic labor" activities, etc.
50. Such for instance the health education, traffic rules education, education for protection against fire, can of course be integrated within the education for a democratic citizenship, but they should not become the ruling concerns thereby leading to the neglecting of the dimensions of political education of the children, young people and adults understood as education having as its objective the relationship between the political power and the individuals.
51. See Albala-Bertrand (1996).
52. In Romania, for instance, the school curriculum has included for several years two compulsory subjects: *Civic education* in forms III and IV (pupils of ages between 8-10), and *Civic culture*, forms VII and VIII (pupils of ages between 12-13 and 14-15). The working definition of these subjects lays stress on the ethical values and principles of a liberal democratic regime in the case of *Civic education* taught in the primary school, whereas *Civic culture* in the first stage of high school (called "gymnasium" in Romania) is directed towards the shaping and developing of skills linked with the citizen's

- political culture of a democratic society, with particular stress laid on creating participative skills, against the background of a rigorous and thorough knowledge of values, principles of a mechanism of a democratic, liberal, constitutional society.
53. According to Mastias and Dassier, 1986, p. 3
 54. *Ibidem*, p. 5
 55. *Ibidem*, p. 4
 56. See Martens, *Einführung in die Didaktik der Philosophie*, Darmstadt, 1983
 57. See Audigier, 1991.
 58. According to Berger and Luckmann, the representatives of phenomenological constructivism, the creation of the self, as an assumption of the world, "is taking place continuously by relationship with the other. In its broadest sense, education belongs to this relationship: the status of actor, in the purest sociological meaning of the word, of the person who is being educated, is undeniable. At the level of the everyday relations ego-alter there is no internal, neutral criterion on the basis of which one could distinguish between the educator and the educated: to an equal extent both are social actors participating in the process of standardization and shaping of common sense, while at the same time they are achieving a self-standardization. The differentiation made by formal, systematic education between transmitters and recipients seems to be based on the differentiation between the knowledgeable and the non-knowledgeable... The issue of the educator's authority (of asymmetry, our note) is not related to knowledge but to social position (power)." (*apud* Berger and Luckmann, 1966).
 59. See Audigier, *op.cit.*, p. 37.
 60. *Children are different* is the title of one of Maria Montessori's famous books.
 61. According to the new Curriculum Framework for primary and secondary education which has been implemented since the school year 1998-1999 in forms I-V, "Civic Culture" also appears in forms V and VI as an optional subject. Besides this, pupils can choose optional disciplines/topics/courses with civic "resonance" (such as "Communication in the public space", "Conflict solving", etc.) from the *Language and Communication, Man and Society, Counseling and Guidance* curricular areas. Likewise, the Curricula Frameworks for high school include civic education disciplines and courses/topics for all the profiles.
 62. See Nader, 1991.
 63. As stated in Fonte, 1991.
 64. It is worthy to mention for example Albala-Bertrand's impressive pledge for a "sociogenetic constructivist didactics of citizenship": "Constructivism therefore appears to serve the whole educational strategy in several ways: by facilitating educational approaches which are more effective and more respectful of learner's conceptions; by triggering social self-regulation mechanisms in individuals; by providing opportunity for reasoning and rationalizing educational policies; and, lastly, by facilitating an awareness

of communities-of-meaning among societies. As an approach switching between personal interest and the general interest, between national interest and an overall vision, constructivism, by its own internal logic, no longer appears as an instrument of social reproduction, of indoctrination and of ideological regulation (acc. to Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Bernstein, 1975). Thereby, renewed pedagogical constructivism emerges as having the potential of enlivening the emancipating role of education, and thus of inserting educational practice in the ethical framework of modernity." (Albala-Bertrand, 1996, pp. 738-739).

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