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To cite this article: Antonio Bernal Guerrero, Vicent Gozávez Pérez & Marta Burguet Arfelis (2019): Ethical reconstruction of citizenship: A proposal between the intimate self and the public sphere, Journal of Moral Education, DOI: [10.1080/03057240.2018.1563880](https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2018.1563880)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2018.1563880>



Published online: 18 Jun 2019.



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ARTICLE



## Ethical reconstruction of citizenship: A proposal between the intimate self and the public sphere

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### ABSTRACT

When, in societies today, civic commitment decreases, there is a call for the need to strengthen citizenship education, identified uniquely with its public dimension and, on the other hand, the requirement for character education has been advocated, which is a cultivator of the most strictly private dimension. Setting out from the recognition of the new social conditions, mediated by the phenomenon of globalisation and of the place that people have in these new contexts, we ask ourselves about the new profile which the construction of citizenship must adopt. We endeavor to show that the moral dimension is the core of reconsidering the link between the private and the public, so it would currently be meaningless to propose an education of citizenship exclusively focused on its public dimension.

### KEYWORDS

citizenship; ethics;  
citizenship education;  
character education; moral  
education

### Problematisation of citizenship in current societies

In the face of the recalcitrant data on the decrease of citizen participation in recent decades, alternative proposals to the traditional ones founded on the search for the participative increase of citizenship have emerged. It is assumed that in the irruption of a new era it is necessary to find formulas capable of satisfying the requirements of political equality in the new contexts of a marginalisation of citizenship in democratic life (Parvin, 2018). In a world with highly porous borders, the new concept of citizenship demands the inclusion of the ‘other stranger’ (the foreigner, the marginalized minorities, the vagabonds . . .) as ideal, an inclusion which often is in contradiction with the policy model of the nation-state in a neoliberal capitalism environment (Bosniak, 2006; Isin, 2002), a model which contributes to the deconstruction of the democracy itself (Balibar, 2015). The global changes in the new era oblige to remake the sense of democracy and the idea of participation in the *polis*, especially because we notice a manifest decline of civic commitment in contemporary societies, reflected in a drop in the levels of citizen participation in social life.

The present social, political and cultural framework alerts about the capital relevance of citizenship education—the more plainly its drive has been called for, the more

fruitless it has been—identifying it exclusively with its public or political dimension. For example, the current growing euroscepticism, after more than 60 years since the Treaty of Rome, must have something to do with the scant emotional cohesion, with the null invocation of the profoundest layers of citizenship, with the lack of cultural, moral, sentimental and spiritual intangibles, capable of edifying the anchorages required for a genuine unity.

It is necessary, then, to stop and observe the current scenarios, from a respectful interpretation of both history and tendencies, which are noted in the complex and vast current world, in order to contextually elucidate the grammar that a new citizenship education requires.

### ***Globalisation and its effects***

The dynamism which characterises the present world, inexistent in previous periods, is not only swifter, or 'haywire' (Giddens, 1999), but it also affects social practices more deeply. The progressive process of differentiation of the forms of human activity has led to the decoupling of social relations in their local contexts and their new ordination in undefined spatiotemporal areas. As a result of the impact of technologies and its social practices, the physical and symbolic 'mobility' (Urry, 2007) reveals that the individual experiences are more unattached of its traditional conditions of proximity, immediacy, continuity, coherence and emotional implication, generating a greater complexity in the construction of individual and community identities (Giddens, 1991). As Sassen (2007) already announced, the small-scale activism which implicitly or explicitly has a global agenda is crucial to properly address the complexity of the mutual interdependence among peoples, and to strengthen the close ties between the local (statewide) and the worldwide, which are becoming increasingly necessary given the progressive deterritorialization of the citizenship.

However, due to globalisation, a patent separation has taken place between the economy and the social and political entities, without the latter being able to exercise an effective control over the former (Esmaeili, Rad, Samadi, Asgari, & Fard, 2017). Even in developed countries, economic development is incurring a weakening of the middle and low classes, increasing inequality, as richness remains confined to a very reduced sector of the population. This only serves to increase the feeling of rejection towards the elites, particularly political, which have shown themselves to be incapable of facing the serious problems of citizenship. Under the amplifying effect of social networks and mass media, extremisms and populisms grow in this breeding ground, offering simplistic solutions susceptible of anchoring in those whom have by now lost all hope in what they know (Preite, 2017). Extreme movements have thus emerged as a promising route to penalise the political systems, finding a place among the population, especially those who are most vulnerable and despondent (Pilkington & Pollock, 2015). It is clear that in many people a loss of trust in democracy has taken place and a feeling of dissatisfaction with the institutions has spread (Campos & Martín, 2015; Williamson, 2014).

Concern or consternation is also due to many aspects of unforeseeable scope, divested of the current scientific and technological revolution, which call into question numerous values and realities. These until recently seemed solid and now appear to

collapse in front of our astonished gaze: the search for the ‘elixir’ of eternity, genetic manipulations, the loss of intimacy, the threat of uncontrollable robots ... The frightening shadow of a credible threat to humanism hangs over the world. This is perhaps represented exemplarily by the phenomenon of *dataism* (Harari, 2016). This menaces us with a conception of the universe as an immense flow of data, the value of any phenomenon or entity being determined by its contribution to the infinite processing of information. Our experiences acquire a value only if they are shared in the voracious and insatiable networks.

On the other hand, a logic of war and violence has also emerged in our current world, seriously altering the logic of the pacific constructions of societies. A clear exponent is the rupture between the West and the Arab Islamic world, which is leaving on both sides a tragic trail of death, destruction and desolation. The erosion of human civilisation’s ethical dignity does not cease.

Thus, as a first idea of globalisation refers predominantly to an image of a world controlled by economic, financial or business networks, the prevailing present conflicts suggest the confrontation of cultural settings—(not linked to frontiers and states—)and religious groups, not necessarily connected to the economy or to politics. The world’s current situation is also explained by the conflict between different cultural and religious backgrounds and beliefs.

Beyond the set of performance indicators we can muster to account for the various gaps produced in our globalized world, we attend to the downturn of citizenship because it has been generated by a breakdown of ties between the system and the subjects while still social actors, possibly because of the exhaustion of a model focused on the social integration itself. Traditionally, societies have been set up in the integration of individuals to the collective sense of a rule, closing off alternative possibilities of searching said sense, being that odds generators of questions (Castoriadis, 1998). Apart from the goodness of progress, the harmful effects of globalization seem to lead today to the rupture of said closure of the sense across the world, since it is increasingly evident that the sense of a rule for the system does not frequently correspond to the one that individuals have. Citizenship education invokes an ethical question.

### **Ethical dimension of citizenship**

Everything seems to indicate that we are witnessing the exhaustion of a political model centred exclusively on society, its functions and its integration. We are moving towards a new society where people are compelled to their own configuration; as we are cast into a world which no longer counts on the referential solidity of past times. Social changes foreground cultural rights. These are universal, though claimed from individuals (Goodale, 2016). Threatened by the pernicious slope of globalisation and by an obsession with identity, the subject manifests itself in opposition to the drama of the seductive invasion of an ‘economy of lightness’ (Lipovetsky, 2015) and of the alienation of communitarian proposals that enshrine certain social or cultural categories (Puchol, 2012).

We can debate the success or failure of the model of society which triumphed in the West. Consequently, we can feel optimistic about the achievements of progress or pessimistic that the ruin generated and accumulated. The new human situation requires correctly channeling the communication and awareness-raising capable of profiling this

new social sphere. This is not to be restricted to the goal of economic growth and enables us to escape a doctrinal insistence in the perspective of the welfare state (Camps, 2010) or in the economist liberalism which tends to restrict our time unequivocally ('Time is money').

Beyond functionalist formulas and the reiterated denunciation of critical thought, there is an urgent need for the generation of conditions which make the creation of free and responsible actors possible (Valentinov, Hielscher, & Pies, 2016). This will be via rational thought and respect for human rights, capable of projecting itself in social institutions interested in freedom and efficiency, in justice and care.

We need to learn from each other and there are different and legitimate processes of modernisation in the world. But there are certain principles, such as the prevalence of human rights and the belief in reason, typical of Western modernity (Nucci, 2016; Shayegan, 2008), which reveal that not all of the processes are equivalent. These principles form the conditioning factors that make the realisation of human dignity possible. The 'recognition' of the other (Taylor, 1994) demands a reasoning: it must be recognised as such, both accepting the universal principles, to which some are closer than others, without identifying them with any historic modality. One thus aspires to the pleasure of an encounter with the other from cultural singularity, in a framework capable of reconciling the universal moral view of belonging with the warmth of the local community (Appiah, 2006). The relevance of this encounter has been profoundly and radically postulated by the so-called 'pedagogy of alterity', especially from proposals such as that of Levinas (Ortega, 2004; Peperzak, Critchley, & Bernasconi, 1996). These days, citizenship is affected if it is not extended to areas in which most personal and collective experience is developed.

It is necessary to go thoroughly into the ethical dimension of citizens, attempting to attain their deepest strata where *ethos* is crystalised. The concern for the state to have to take care of the character of its citizens, that 'education of the soul' to which Appiah (2005) has referred, is an absolutely current question. Education must stress, along with caring for 'political literacy' and participation in public, social and cultural life, the development of critical thought and of the attitudes which foster the awareness and responsibility of recognising ourselves as citizens.

The broadening of identities, their opening to what is universal, combating the danger of navel-gazing and solipsistic narcissism, depends on caring for the processes of individualisation (Leung, 2013). If politics refer to the collectivity, to what is common to all individuals, and ethics is focused on the person, the notion of citizenship brings us to the image of a dominion interrelated with both individual and collective action. We therefore see ourselves bound to try and fruitfully combine, in multiple ways, commonly accepted principles with cultural, personal and social inheritances and projects (Bernal, 2017). Here we have the core of a genuine citizenship education, concerned likewise with probing into organisational and pedagogical strategies which foster ethical thought and transform citizens (Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2017) from a sentimental adhesion. Social cohesion depends on this.

### **Conceptual review. The controversy between character education and citizenship education**

Traditionally, the differentiation between character education and citizenship education has been recurrent. Though we can admit distinctions and nuances between both, it is

no less true that they are interlinked. Precisely, we try to show that the moral dimension is the area in which they intertwine, making a reconsideration of the link between the private and the public necessary.

Reviewing what has happened, for example, in the wake of the UK's 2016 Brexit vote, we note, along with specific nationalist elements (an emotional component reinforcing differentiations, a perception of having been harmed, a revindication of a rigorous control of immigration to safeguard social cohesion or security, and 'Britishness' or an exaggerated feeling of identity), a certain dilemma linked to the education area between two models: citizenship education and character education associated, respectively, with proposals which are more progressive or more conservative (Conroy, 2017), according to a privileging democratic education or one of the individual (Davies & Chong, 2016). So, the legislative promotion from 2010 of character education at the expense of the protagonism of citizenship education, has been able to apparently link up with the 'spirit' of Brexit, although this association has been criticised with precisely contrary arguments (Fuentes & Albertos, 2017; Johnson & Morris, 2012).

Indeed, although the interest in citizenship education has developed since the sixties under different denominations (political education, global education, education for development, etc.), it was at the beginning of our century, in 2002, that it was integrated for the first time in a national British curriculum as a subject: Citizenship Studies. Promoted by the Labour Party, this curricular initiative is engaged with the ideas expressed in the well-known Crick Report, a document elaborated by a group of experts, coordinated by Professor Bernard Crick. The aforementioned initiative is the foundation of the legislative text which propitiated the explicit incorporation of citizenship education in the curriculum. Its intention was to drive, from the very State, civic and moral education. Social and moral responsibility, political literacy and participation in community life are the main axes of citizenship education. This presents a relevant moral dimension of communitarian inspiration. In this way, although not patently, character education became a subject of interest for the British educational policy. Nevertheless, the National Curriculum reform, published in 2013 and in effect from 2014, carried out with the arrival in power of the coalition between conservatives and liberals in 2010, suppressed the compulsory subject Citizenship Studies and emphasised an interest in character education, underlining the importance of personal realisation, of the development of virtues and ways of being (Kristjánsson, 2016), beyond academic achievements.

Clinging to axiological neutrality, to a value-free position, can lead to giving relevance uniquely to the political dimension of citizenship education, ignoring its moral dimension. But without a solid ethical foundation it is difficult to perceive the crucial importance of understanding and participating in political matters. Thus, a person acquires a singular value of justification at a moment when the notions of nature appear darkened through scientific and technological development and the state-nation (Naval, Fuentes, & Quintanilla, 2017).

### **Interiority and citizenship ethics**

In this complex framework of the ethical construction of citizenship, education seeks a foundation in pointing out the learnings of freedom which help to contribute to the

education of stable citizens in the 'liquid' society, invoking the celebrated adjectivisation of Bauman (2000). The well-known Delors report underlined the need for a convivial education between very different people, given the huge current social mobility. Civic construction does not invalidate or minimise the construction of the personal being of each citizen, but rather claims this category (Mauri, 2016) as a principle and foundation upon which collective interests will be able to be constructed more solidly, even in times of uncertainty.

The meaning of life itself brings the person to an interior regard, to this multi-dimensional construction of the being which, from the Athenian frontispiece until our days, has not ceased to confront humanity: self-knowledge, as that invitation to rescue each one's most genuine identity features.

It is a question of a life whose meaning can be acquired, lent, imposed, discovered or created, but whose finality will not be valid if it does not emerge from the most internal part of each person. The study of the interior dimension brings us to this, not as an apology for the duality of interiority versus exteriority, but as a pledge for integration as a counterpart of division. The drama of modern humankind is no other than this split, this fragmented living that the postmodern condition appears to solve through living outwards and a great lack of interiorisation.

The theories of learning have also lived out this duality between those who place the object of learning outside the individual and those who understand the construction of knowledge as being typical of the learner. In this sense, it has been highlighted that knowledge is not only constructed in interaction but also in introspection, having been extracted, sedimented and consolidated inside the subject of knowledge, so that it shows outside, following the Kantian tradition revealing belief in the potential of development of the very being. This empathises with the conviction of Hannah Arendt (1964) when she stated that the greatest evil that can be committed is to deny oneself from being a person, referring to the banality of evil personified in Adolf Eichmann, lieutenant colonel of the SS and one of the most terrible criminals in history, who asserted in his famous 1961 trial to have never done anything on his own initiative.

The pedagogical itinerary towards interiority means a fight against the tide with regard to a system in which concern for competitiveness, individualism, superiority, an accelerated rhythm, the preeminence of multitasking, possessiveness and power reign. These are conditioners which, instead of liberating, trap people, measuring them by external parameters: to compete in relation with the other, to measure oneself by unfair treatment and by exceeding alterity, making prevail the possessiveness of people and external relations, and exercising power towards the other. This identity construction with extrinsic references to the very being, builds individuals identified with external constructs and de-identified with what is most internal, with the ego itself. This generates internal fragmentation, creates a considerable uprooting and a valuing and validation that is always according to parameters in permanent fluctuation. These are liquid, ephemeral and mutable, easy to convert into what is gregarious and massified, pending volitions and externalised indicators. In this line, currently, the distinction that Sen (1999) makes between what one can do and be seems interesting to us. The set of capacities is a bundle of opportunities to choose and act, most of which do not depend only on the person, but on multiple factors of the very environment.



Could this capacity of being oneself be defended morally as a balancing value in the achievement of being citizens? To unlearn acquired behaviours in order to learn others related to the interior life is often required. These are not imposed but acquired by conviction due to personal belief, a guarantee of holding on to a greater commitment. A conciliating game of opposites is what we require to carry out the cultivating of interiority.

Looking at the person from an ethic that pledges respect and human dignity and understanding the deployment of what is most genuine in that dignity, it is worth considering the construction of the being from an ethic that deploys the originality of each essence. This has a capacity of each essence, with both its own construction and autonomous decision concerning vital, personal projects which enables living in society in a harmonious and supportive manner. ‘The degree of ethical competence is in correspondence with the breadth of awareness and of personality’ (Neumann, 2004, p. 579). What is at stake is the delimitation of the ethic-moral bases which serve as principles of the behaviour of citizens in pursuit of co-living and social development. Virtuous citizens are the foundation of virtuous societies. Yet the virtuous life for a fair citizenship which, at the same time, is fulfilled or happy requires a moral education mindful of both internal and subjective aspects and more objective aspects of happiness (*eudaimonia*), in a constant course through moral philosophy (Kristjánsson, 2013).

To give form to existence itself in a plural society, recognising that not all versions of happiness are compatible with the requirements of justice (Ivic, 2011; Martínez, 2011), means legitimising the originalities of each person, allowing those spaces and times necessary to consolidate the learning of being, that learning from the personal identity construction where individuals develop publicly, but it comes after a prior internal construction.

An interior tradition, however, has been able to fall into the withdrawal of the ego itself. Even so, from awareness as a science of the very self (Fierro, 2005), theories of education have seen in self-knowledge and in self-observation a source of indispensable knowledge. The relational complexity of self-knowledge does not only consist of knowing and being aware of our ideas, emotions and feelings, but also ‘of the way in which they are organised to make up a project of life that considers its own needs, but also those of others’ (Buxarrais, 2016, p. 45). This is where the construction of the being coalesces—but does not collide—with the civic identity of the very being.

Pedagogies of being can go deeply into interiority as a reencounter of what is most original in each person, recuperating the permission that at times we do not give ourselves to be ourselves. Interiority implies, in the end, along with the unequivocal emotional dimension which it acquires, a revindication of reason, of the capacity to elaborate judgment. Faced with the critics of the value of rationality, we cannot blame reason for the problems of the world. This is an instrument which helps us to construct inferences from certain premises. The correct choice of the latter is what is relevant. The holocaust was not the consequence of logic but of racism and hate. The critical argumentation against reason, when it suggests alternatives (intuition, will, emotion, etc.), recurs to elements which, by themselves, can lead to both desirable and hapless situations. An anti-rationalist position determines the substitution of one biased perspective by another.



As projects of shared humanity, as necessarily relational beings, can we be citizens without constructing and deploying our own being? Can we develop our genuine being without deploying our civic identity? In some way, ‘thinking of oneself and living for others at the same time, once considered a contradiction in terms, is revealed as an internal, substantive connection’ (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2003, pp. 281–282). All this considers parameters of well-being as a complement to the parameters of welfare.

### **Ethical concern for political questions. An updated reconstruction of the area of citizenship**

The question of interiority in relation with the community and its influence in a radically relational personal being again invites the reconsideration of the links between a public moral and a civic or public ethic.

Public moral necessarily has to be designed as a democratic ethic; that is to say, a civic, participatory and plural ethic. That is, a civic ethic which seeks a foundation for a general social morality disseminated by the mass media, civil associations and educational institutions. This public moral has also been called ‘ethics of minima’ (Cortina, 1992), ethics which bless moral values such as the equal dignity of people, civil freedom, solidarity, plurality and the dialogued management of interpersonal conflicts in the public arena.

This is precisely the core of a subject such as ‘Education for citizenship’, whose primordial aim is to boost a democratic civic ethic; that is, a public ethic updated to the new times and in the face of new socio-moral challenges such as the urgent environmental problem or the question of freedom in the area of sexuality. However, these challenges do not exclusively belong to the sphere of what is public, but rather to the privacy of decisions such as that of recycling or not, or the personal way of coping with the diversity of sexual opinions (therefore, intimate) which struggles for visibility and public recognition. This is therefore an issue of a traditionally private space, such as that of the family.

In view of these questions, what most interests us now is to observe the way in which public morals and private morals are necessarily intermixed or mutually affected, to the same extent to which it is extremely decisive to overcome this dialectic—that necessary complementation—between individuals and society, and even between happiness and justice. In recent years, the ethic that has been cultivated and which has been thought about is the public, the civic, the social and shared space or sphere: the ethic of social justice, which has to be driven by education as a space for fostering discourse and civic comprehension in a Habermasian key (Martin, 2015). The foundation of this approach was formalist, procedural, and eminently called for the structure of a fair morality, consensual, and sharable from plurality. The other, the private, was the sphere of axiological polytheism that Weber talked of, that of the unwavering variety of contents about happiness, a sphere that each one had to solve very personally according to their expertise and understanding, or according to what they belonged to or preferred.

The public-private dichotomy alludes in some way to the distinction between procedural morals and specific contents morals, between justice and happiness, between society and the individual, between rationality and caring emotion, between minimum and maximum morals. These are efficient and operative dichotomies which still abound

and continue being valid to understand the complexity of our normative horizon. But it happens that our moral dimension, that of human beings who daily decide about what is good and what is fair, is irremediably unique (exception made of cases of moral schizophrenia or psychopathy). We are functional units, not a set of separated mental districts that at best support each other, despite the doubts or moral perplexities which often temporarily abduct our capacity of judgment and action.

All of this induces us to consider if it is not there, in that intersection between the private and the public, in the unfinished bridge between oneself and the others, between the structure and the content—between justice and a good or happy life—where one has to look at the failure of a civic moral that does not touch or which perhaps does not even brush up against our sensitive fibre, our most meaningful and intimate wish.

An unfinished public moral and a confused private moral. What is to be done? Do we ceaselessly enlarge that unfathomable gap between the self and the other? Or do we proceed with an ethical and educational reconstruction of the public (the communal, the social and the transnational) that encourages from intimate conviction? We will try to contribute some traits for this reconstruction.

One of the foundations is to rediscover new ways for freedom in those which remain to be explored: as well as freedom as autonomy, so decisive in education, one should delve into freedom as non-domination, linked to civic participation and into freedom as human development.

### ***Freedom as moral autonomy***

Indeed, moral autonomy has been a valid social and educational ideal since Kant. To think for oneself (not only about oneself), to have one's own judgment as an antidote to a run-of-the mill life, to have a critical capacity that weighs the arguments and consequences of a course of action, to use intelligence to overcome biases and dogmas of all persuasions ... these are undoubtedly some of the great aims of education in modern and post-conventional societies, which cannot renounce the educational value of dialogue and moral reasoning (Nucci, 2016). This is something that post-modernity has not been able to cast aside, as it is an ethical ideal united with emancipation and vital for the plurality so dear to what is post-modern (Vattimo, 1990).

We understand that civic education has to assume the value of moral autonomy as a necessary complement for freedom from liberalism, that freedom which essentially means the *independence* of people or the *non-interference* of the others in them: a freedom that undoubtedly prevails in free-market societies. The search for relational autonomy, intertwined, valid also in the area of the private, helps to overcome liberal individualism which, in its origin, meant a salvific movement in the face of the tyranny and the absolutism of the State. Yet taken as an absolute model this becomes a new form of tyranny in the shadow of a vapourous and cruel economism.

### ***Freedom as non-domination***

From the debate between liberals and communitarians that took place at the end of the last century, emerged as a synthesis a new way of understanding freedom, interpreted as *non-domination*. To be free is not only to be independent from the rest, from the State

or the society. To be free is, as we have known since Kant, to be morally and intellectually autonomous. But it also is, following the republican tradition put together by authors such as Bellah or Pettit, to live a life in which we do not submit ourselves to arbitrary powers (or micropowers), either in the public or in the private or daily areas, nor to psychologically self-imposed powers. Freedom is to live a life without servitude, without us having to lower our eyes in the face of an authority that is arbitrary and not recognised as such (Pettit, 1997), an authority which can be external or internal. Often the most difficult prison to liberate oneself from is inside. Freedom is not exactly, and as classical liberalism wishes, an absence of interference, but rather of domination. Interference and interdependence are inevitable, due to the fact of living in society. The key is in this interference not being arbitrary, not being abusive, not undermining the thin line which protects from unworthy treatment. Hence the importance of training the person not to succumb to these illegitimate interferences. For example, for pure liberals where there is law and rights there is not freedom. On the other hand, for republicanism freedom requires the good and necessary interference (of beneficial competition) of law and rights. It is there, in the area of rights, where it is moreover necessary to participate in democracy as citizens for our free condition to be so in plenitude, without unconscious alienations. Free citizenship is educated developing in it civic virtues and ways of participation which redound in collectively constituted norms. The revindications of feminism can be found at home when speaking about freedom understood in this manner. That is, a freedom that breaks with the classic barrier that separates the ego from the others, the private from the public, seeking points of encounter and ineludible links between personal dignity and social commitment. Classic liberalism, which enshrines the reign of private freedom compatible with domination by sex in the sacred sphere of intimacy, that liberalism which has been erected in a partial and substitutive universalism in favour of the Western male (Benhabib, 2011), has to be surmounted. To educate for citizenship today is, then, to do so in non-domination, in civic participation for the common good and the establishing of relations of respect. It is a matter of fostering cooperative relations to eradicate bullying and cyberbullying, to triumph over—gender or ethnic—based forms of domination; to actively contribute to an environmental and sustainable consumption (an increase), avoiding future generations being submitted to the tyranny of the few who administer scarce resources for a healthy life. It is also necessary to develop civic virtues, to construct *civitas* for a fair law which defends the interests of citizens (Camps, 2003). Likewise, we must turn to an ethic not only of rights and obligations, but also of habits and customs, of dispositions acquired from willingness, from actions thought and felt from critical deliberation and treating the other well; an ethic which considers authenticity and coherence.

Tocqueville, in the orbit of republicanism, spoke of the importance of these *habits of the heart* so necessary for the good functioning of democracy, indispensable in both the public and the private. It is the citizens who have to raise the moral bar of their societies from their capacity to judge and act in the different areas of their life, beginning with life in educational centres, as the protagonists of the moral world (Gozálvez & Jover, 2016; Snir & Eylon, 2017). Democracy is not only a mechanism of choice of the governing elites, but rather a *way of civic life* built in an educational manner and which affects the relations of human beings as beings who are, as Dewey stated,

irremediably social and active. Thus, to be free is something that only happens in democratic environments, after assuming that democracy is a way of facing existence based on a series of values and virtues: from active respect towards the other and towards oneself, to the freedoms or the pledge for solidarity and social justice (Guichot, 2015). To this we could add other values and moral aspirations such as a participatory spirit committed to a public, relational autonomy, a critical examining of oneself, or non-domination in the face of different forms of servitude.

### **Freedom as development**

Civic education also requires exploring freedom understood as a development of human capacities and as personal flourishing or realisation, as Sen and Nussbaum propose (Wilson-Strydom & Walker, 2015). To develop a life worth living cannot occur without taking into account the real functioning of human freedom in concrete social contexts. Nussbaum (2000) turns to a case that magnificently exemplifies this idea and which, en passant, helps us to understand that ethical intersection between the social and the personal. She refers to Vasanti, an Indian woman who, after abandoning a violent and wasteful husband, received external help from a civic association (SEWA, or *Self-Employed Women's Association*), a group which helped her to develop her capacities for a free and fulfilled life. She learnt to read and write. At the same time, she was provided with economic help to not have to depend on a loan from her brothers and sisters. After the *enabling* action of the SEWA, Vasanti managed to be free of debts and became an activist against domestic violence. To educate to really live a daily life is to stimulate and empower the capacities of people. It is not necessary to live in India to understand and put oneself in the shoes of Vasanti: one only needs to live in society and to experience some privation in the deployment of their capacities; it is enough to observe a serious impediment in carrying out the project of one's own or another person's life; an impediment which is not always in the public sphere and can very well revert us to more or less conscious, self-imposed oppressions.

It is especially interesting to insist that educating for democratic citizenship not only has to involve instructing about the knowledge of facts or the logical capacity of the learners: it is also necessary to develop in them the *narrative imagination*: 'This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story' (Nussbaum, 2010, pp. 95–96). Again, the construction of democracy must be through the help of intelligence and comprehensive emotion, pooling in the life of people a reflection about themselves and a concern for the other, the personal or private and the common or public. Social justice is not only a necessary condition of a happy life: it is an elemental form of happiness itself.

### **Keys of educational reconfiguration of citizenship**

A new project of citizenship is through bringing a universalist ethic of human rights closer to cultural and particular contexts of life: the attempts to attain an ethic situated in human rights from the idea of recognising the other (Benhabib, 2005; Gozávez & Jover, 2016). The search for social justice has to be rooted, on the other hand, in hearts.

From the notion of cordial justice (Cortina, 2010), it is worth navigating towards the idea of universalised and universalisable care, tracing limits and potentialities on the most erotic—affectionate—side of morality.

The ultimate aim is the educational reconfiguration of a civic feeling united with the reconstruction of a personal moral identity. The citizenship awaiting us affects our personal being and our common humanity, thus in an emocognitive key, as our emotion is thought out and our intelligence is sentient (Zubiri, 2004). The micro, meso and macrosphere of ethics are not distant worlds, and perhaps emerge from a primordial moral core: recognising the other in me and myself in the other, celebrating in passing the very personal features of each one. Yet this celebration is not legitimate if this fundamental practical experience has not been brought about and has not taken place before. First is to know oneself, to possess oneself with good judgment and sensitivity.

This is precisely why citizenship is a condition open to the exteriority of the political, the judicial, the social, the economic, and undoubtedly also to the ecological and to the mass media. In these levels of human reality, personal beings must forge themselves as autonomous, free beings capable of thinking of the innumerable burdens of servitude. This is a citizenship for which *the public is not limited to the state*, something that from action is exemplified with educational initiatives such as the Service-learning projects (Tinkler, McGann, & Tinkler, 2017), contributing in this way to the revitalisation of the civil society from a felt conviction and from an experience thought, deliberated and critically open to the other.

## Conclusion

Faced with the risk of a deconstruction that is both unlimited and sterile concerning the challenge of the ethic involvement of citizenship, we require an educational reconstruction of the public capable of genuinely taking root in our intimacy. The diverse paths which we can adopt, in this sense, necessarily accentuate the relevance of the personal subject as a social actor via the reconfiguration of individual and collective experiences, able to recompose the polarisations which have been typified because of the deployment of the different processes of contemporary modernisation. The ethical (re)construction of citizenship does not admit ambiguities concerning the recognition of the glory which corresponds to the freedom of the subjects who, nevertheless, have to deploy it in the framework of shared social and political projects, continually asking themselves about its meaning and pertinence.

Hence, we consider that citizenship is an interior condition projected towards the exteriority of the political, social, economic, judicial, ecological and mediatic spheres of the current world. The division and segregation between the private and the public has been precisely an obstacle for full development. We accumulate reasons for hope, in spite of the multitude of arguments to feed pessimism. To reduce citizenship at present to its political dimension is not only biased, but also probably reactionary. Political rights and social and cultural rights complement each other. The ethical construction of citizenship must integrate the voices of the arc of social actors, harbouring the real capacity of facilitating ways of reciprocity and recognition of the principles which have resisted the whirlwind of the corrosion of time and criticism, reason and rights.

The moral dimension is the essential domain for the reconsideration of the link between the private and the public. At the same time, it is the area towards which we must look if we aspire to surpass the sterile polemic between character education and citizenship education. It is not possible to educate citizens from deliberately biased or dualist proposals.

To educate for a flourishing and fulfilled civic life is a legitimate educational yearning in democratic societies, a proposition that forces reconstructing the abyss between the public and the intimate space, and which likewise links the subjective and objective aspects (personal and social) of self-realisation or *eudaimonia* (Han, 2015). Such is the current challenge that we educators have proposed: to offer, starting out from school, the opportunity to convert the proposals of social justice into something lived by oneself, and to cultivate the more cordial and meaningful side—more joyful—of living according to civic virtues.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Funding

This work was supported by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of the Government of Spain, State Plan 2013–2016 Excellence—R & D projects, under Grant number EDU-2013-42936-P.

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