


## Civil Protection Education: policies and practices in Portugal

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### Abstract

We live in a society in constant change and uncertainty, which has become more complex and, inevitably, more exposed to risks that reinforce the sense of vulnerability and exacerbate citizens' feelings of insecurity. Security, understood as a fundamental right of citizenship, should be a priority debate, namely in the definition of sustained and participatory civil protection policies, given the fundamental importance it assumes in the country's economic and social development. Thus, it is essential to promote a culture of safety and well-being and of individual and collective responsibility, where education, curriculum and research must assume fundamental roles in the construction of a participatory citizenship. In this article, using the hermeneutic method to interpret and the dialogic method to reflect, we will analyze, in the light of the ideological vision of education and the curriculum, the education policies for civil protection and the role that the school should assume in this context.

**Keywords:** Civil protection. Education. Citizenship. Policies. Curriculum.

### Educação para a protecção civil: políticas e práticas em Portugal

#### Resumo

Vivemos numa sociedade em constante mudança e incerteza, que se tornou mais complexa e, inevitavelmente, mais exposta a riscos que reforçam a sensação de vulnerabilidade e exacerbam os sentimentos de insegurança dos cidadãos. A segurança, entendida como um direito fundamental da cidadania, deve ser um debate prioritário, nomeadamente na definição de políticas de protecção civil sustentadas e participativas, dada a importância fundamental que assume no desenvolvimento económico e social do país. Assim, é essencial promover uma cultura de segurança e bem-estar e de responsabilidade individual e colectiva, onde a educação, o currículo e a investigação devem assumir papéis fundamentais na construção de uma cidadania participativa. Neste artigo, utilizando o método hermenêutico para interpretar e o método dialógico para



reflectir, analisaremos, à luz da visão ideológica da educação e do currículo, as políticas educativas para a protecção civil e o papel que a escola deve assumir neste contexto.

Palavras-chave: Protecção civil. Educação. Cidadania. Políticas de educação. Curriculum.

## 1 Introduction

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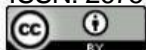
We live in a society in constant change and uncertainty, which has become more complex and, inevitably, more exposed to risks that reinforce the feeling of vulnerability and exacerbate the citizens' sense of insecurity (AMARO, 2020). In this context, security, understood as a fundamental right of citizenship (point 1 of Article 27 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic), should be a priority debate, both in society in general and in the political agenda of the different levels of governance (AMARO, 2020).

In this sense, in the context of national security, which is not to be confused with defense policies, and given the internal and external threats, whether natural or man-made disasters, there is a natural need to define sustained and participatory civil protection (CP) policies, given the fundamental importance it has in the economic and social development of the country (AMARO, 2020). Being fundamental the promotion of a culture of safety and well-being and responsibility, individual and collective, it makes sense to define general and specific policies, therefore local, with guidelines on education for the citizens' CP. Thus, education must assume a fundamental role in the construction of a participatory citizenship, for the protection of each and everyone.

In this paper, using the hermeneutic method and the dialogic as a reflection, we aim to analyze the policies of education for PC and the role that the school should assume in this context.

## 2 Methodology

For the development of this study we resorted to documentary research, analysis and synthesis related to CP education, namely researching evidence of policies and





practices in Portugal. We analyze, in the light of the critical and post-critical (i.e. ideological and identity) view of education and curriculum, CP education policies.

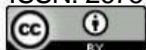
### 3 Results and Discussion

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The United Nations Organization (UNO, 1948), in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaims that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3), and it is up to the Member States to ensure the conditions for its pursuit. In this context, PC is a challenge that cuts across all of society, particularly in the concerted response that is required when faced with complex scenarios of collective natural and technological risks, which require a series of efforts from rescue teams and security forces (AMARO, 2020).

In this sense, there is a natural need to define CP policies (pillar of national security), sustained and participatory, given its fundamental importance in the economic and social development of the country (AMARO, 2020). In this way, it is clear that the PC also concerns civic construction and its development in the community, through the promotion of a PC culture (AMARO, 2020). Thus, it is fundamental that in the development of a PC model, the school is institutionally involved as an active context and directly interested in the process of social growth (GALVAGNI, 2020).

We are being utopian - but isn't utopia a possible world? - if we aspire to a citizen education in the light of the classical Greek definition? Political in nature, education in Ancient Greece aimed at an intelligent citizen with active participation in the civic community. Education aimed "...to cultivate the formation of virtuous character in the continuous pursuit of freedom." (GIROUX, 1983, p. 221). This freedom was constructed from the dynamic relationship between the individual and society, in a constant struggle for a more just political community (GIROUX, 1983). In this sense, we can understand the concept of citizenship as the exercise of rights and duties of the conscious and responsible individual, who actively participates in an organized society (GIROUX, 1983; SOUSA, 2018).



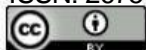


So, with this definition of education having a political nature, in this context, what was meant by politics? The word politics, which appears in Ancient Greece and derives from Pólis (City-State), was understood as the art of organizing the public affairs of the city. However, the exercise of citizenship in the Polis was not possible without the evocation of democracy (demos, or people + kratos, or power), that is, the government of the people (SOUSA, 2018). In this sense, the political dimension of the curriculum is fundamental for the democratization of education. In fact, the Portuguese State (our current Polis) in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (CRP) evokes freedom and security as fundamental rights of citizenship (point 1 of Article 27). It also defends, in the same document, that with the democratization of education, social progress and the participation of all in collective life are sought (point 2 of Article 73).

Given these constitutional prescriptions, of a Democratic State under the Rule of Law, it is legitimate to aspire to a citizen who can progressively become aware of his or her personal, cultural, and social reality, and who is able to look critically at the context in which he or she finds him or herself, acting on it and transforming it (FREIRE, 2001).

Democracy, being a government regime whose power comes from the people, should promote a participatory society in view of the shared common interest that gives it cohesion. All are free and invited to participate without barriers and in equal circumstances in the affairs of public and collective life, the state assuming the responsibility of participation and citizenship, through the public school (DEWEY apud SOUSA, 2017). However, does the curriculum organization and its practices promote the holistic understanding of the true purpose of education (SOUSA, 2017)?

In Portugal, responding to point 1 of Article 27 of the CRP - "All citizens have the right to freedom and security" - and complementing the Internal Security Law, the Basic Law of PC (Law No. 27/2006 of July 3, amended by Organic Law No. 1/2011 of November 30 and Law No. 80/2015 of August 3) defines PC as the concerted activity of the different levels of government (State, Autonomous Regions and local authorities), as well as of the entire civil society. It aims, therefore, to prevent collective risks associated with situations of serious accident or disaster, natural or man-made, seeking to mitigate their effects,



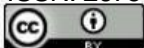


ensuring the protection and assistance to people and property, when these situations of risk occur.

In order to promote a paradigm shift from consequence management to risk management and in line with the current international framework (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals), the National Strategy for a 2030 Preventive CP (ENPCP 2030), while maintaining the alignment with the preventive dimension of CP (Basic Law on CP), highlights the importance of reactive strategies not being isolated from preventive ones. The success of this paradigm shift depends heavily on the municipal level, which assumes special relevance, namely due to its proximity to the populations and knowledge of the territory and its vulnerabilities (PORTUGAL, 2021).

This strategy aims to involve citizens in the knowledge of risks, educating them and raising their awareness, through measures directed to the educational community. However, when we consult the action plan, in the strategic objective number five (involve citizens in risk knowledge), at no time does the school of the geographical area or the community appear as a coordinating or involved entity. This coordination and involvement is the responsibility of the Directorate General of Education (DGE) and the Directorate General of School Establishments (DGEstE). Also, we verified that the Basic Law of PC foresees the citizens' right to information about the risks they are subject to and about preventive measures, and recommends education programs in the scope of citizenship training, in its different degrees, with PC and self-protection issues, aiming to disseminate practical knowledge and rules that the population should adopt in case of a major accident or catastrophe.

If the promotion of a culture of safety and responsibility, individual and collective, is fundamental, and if the educational community is understood as the privileged actor in the space of education and training for risk, is it enough to "raise awareness", "teach" or "disseminate" practical knowledge and rules to adopt in case of a major accident or catastrophe? And the school, what role does it play beyond "actor"?





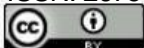
In fact, it is assumed that the school has autonomy to implement projects within the scope of the students' personal and social training (Article 15 of Decree-Law 139/2012) and that it is fundamental in the construction of a safety culture. Is the professionalism of the teacher being evoked? The one who researches, who reflects and who is autonomous? The one who has a democratic culture capable of stimulating the development of the student's competencies, necessary for the formation of a responsible and participatory citizen, aware of his rights and duties and who recognizes his role in society, with a place for the different other? Is there an opening for problematizing education in detriment of the banking/transmissive/reproducing one? (FREIRE, 2013; SOUSA, 2018).

The collaboration protocol established between DGE, DGEstE and Autoridade Nacional de Emergência e Proteção Civil (ANEPC) resulted in the Referential of Education for Risk with the objectives, the contents that should be addressed and the learning outcomes at different levels of education and teaching (SAÚDE et al., 2015). If, on the one hand, school autonomy and the cross-cutting nature of citizenship education are assumed, on the other hand, the knowledge to be taught is selected, as well as the objectives and learning outcomes. If there is, how far does school autonomy go? Are we not facing a prescriptive attitude with total disbelief in the possibility (knowledge, practice, critical ability) of the other (teacher and student), imposing on him/her educational "packages" that he/she should follow? Is the curriculum hostage to the political power that decides what to teach? Where is the right to citizen participation in collective life safeguarded? In this case, in the construction of a culture of civil protection with personal meaning? (RODRIGUES, 2011; FREIRE, 2001; SOUSA, 2018).

Ribeiro (2019), in his study on the national model of risk governance, namely analyzing the CP system, concluded that the Portuguese model presents a hierarchical root modeling when it comes to an inclusive citizenship, considering rights as public and collective values disregarding the individuality of each citizen. When the communication flows and the involvement of people in the PC system are analyzed, citizens are understood as receivers and recipients, prevailing hierarchical consultation and communication mechanisms. In this way, we verify a model very focused on experts (many of them military and in coordination positions - militaristic approach to the CP), relegating citizens to a position of mere recipients of the system's policies and measures, with little focus on their active participation (RIBEIRO, 2019).

Given these conclusions, it is inevitable to state that we are living in a post-modern era (SOUSA, 2020), and that we still have a State with characteristics of the modern era with direct influence on educational policy (in this case, only analyzing CP education).

More than a century after the beginning of the use of the term Curriculum (John Dewey) and the emergence of this being considered as a specific object of study and research (Franklin Bobbitt), in an era marked by industrialization, from the political point of view, the







Curriculum still assumes an instrumental character. As Giroux (1983, p. 221) already told us, "If we were to use citizenship education in the Greek sense, and thus judge the quality and significance of civic education in our society, it might be argued that it has been largely a failure." But is it possible to do so outside of the Curriculum? Or do we need another curriculum theory?

## 4 Concluding remarks

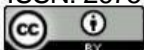
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Is a curriculum promoting democracy and participatory citizenship possible? Is a democratization of education for PC possible?

Education, understood as the main resource for the construction of democratic values, promotes "...civic, intercultural and social competences, mutual understanding and respect, and the appropriation of democratic values and fundamental rights at all levels and types of education and training" (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2021, p. 18), through educational practices that aim at the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that build an active citizenship and common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination. The Curriculum cannot neglect this challenge, not by creating more subjects, but by promoting a General Philosophy of Education, transversal to all curricular and non-curricular activities. However, we also need teachers with this democratic culture (SOUSA, 2018).

In this sense, school cannot be understood as an institution of reproduction, where the transmitted knowledge (preconceived social messages), explicit and hidden, transforms students into passive beings, enabling them to insert themselves in an unequal society (APPLE, 2001). In a free and democratic rule of law, educators are required to promote change. This change, catalyzed by individual predisposition (teachers and students), may find space to manifest itself within the autonomy that the school context offers (APPLE, 2001).

Given that educational practice is a necessary dimension of social practice proper to human beings, curious and programmed to learn, they must live the experience of teaching and learning. Since a neutral educational practice is impossible, those who teach are faced with the challenge of opting for practices that promote the active and constructive





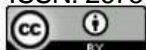
participation of the learner, or for manipulative practices at the service of an oppressive political ideal (FREIRE, 2001). By opting for educational practices that promote the active involvement of the learner in his learning process, the educator in the full use of his democratic freedom educates the learner to build his right to learn to choose, to decide, fostering the democratic ideal and freedom through his own example and the experience lived by the learner (GIROUX, 1983; FREIRE, 2001).

If this democratic option is that of the educator, assuming a practice consistent with its discourse, the isolation of the school from the rest of society, the understanding the learner as raw material to homogenize, the disregard for knowledge and experience of the learner, the devaluation of different thinking, authoritarianism and intolerance with the difference, have no place in a school promoting active citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination (GIROUX, 1983; FREIRE, 2001; SOUSA, 2018).

There emerges an urgent need to change the school as it currently exists, markedly influenced by modernity. There is no or little room for issues of multiculturalism, ethnicity, identity, power, knowledge, ethics, and labor. Teachers are not or have little awareness to accept and understand students as bearers of social and cultural memories, with the right to express and represent themselves in their learning process and self-determination (GIROUX, 1983).

In this post-modern world in which we live, the curriculum should not continue to neglect the specificity, the difference, the plurality and the multiple narratives of the new post-modern culture that has been emerging. Thus, in this globalized world, the school should legitimize academically and give social prestige to popular culture, under penalty of distorting the fundamental purposes of schooling and its true meaning (SOUSA, 2020).

In this perspective, it makes sense to state that school is, par excellence, the most appropriate space to stimulate educational policies, considering that "... the concept of the democratic ideal of education requires the experience of authentic learning situations, in real time, with meaning for students, and not as a way to prepare for the future" (DEWEY apud SOUSA, 2017, p. 93), including education for CP.







Ideally, the diffusion of PC culture should be guaranteed through an educational policy aimed at this cause, with the school context being the natural dynamizer of such a policy (GALVAGNI, 2020). This dynamization should be done in close partnership with the municipality, due to its proximity to the populations and its knowledge of the territory and its vulnerabilities (PORTUGAL, 2021).

However, if we aspire a resilient community with a PC culture, we must promote the paradigm shift from disaster management to risk management through research and innovation (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, n.d.). In this sense, at the national level we did not find evidence of the role of universities, beyond the teaching of different courses, nor of research centers. Even from the analysis made to the ENPCP 2030 action plan, the expected contribution of universities and research centers, as coordinating or involved entities, is incipient for the achievement of the objectives defined, including by the European Union:

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the results of research, training and exercises, as well as to optimize cooperation between the civil protection authorities and services of the Member States, a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network should be established based on existing structures in which research and training centers from the Member States and third countries are involved (RODRIGUES, 2018, p. 10).

So what role do universities and research centers play in building a resilient community with a PC culture?

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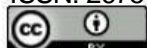
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