

The Importance of Education for Democracy

Ferit Baça

University of Tirana, Albania,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4442-7108>

Abstract: A democratic government, whose power belongs to the people, serves all its citizens equally and protects their natural rights. Its highest priority is to treat and serve its citizens properly and fulfill their interests. In democratic regimes, conflicts and other social issues can be resolved through dialogue, compromise, and consensus between the government and people of a given country to have a better future. In a democratic society, civic education plays an important role in shaping people's values and behaviors, and it cannot be achieved without a stable and developed economy. However, the interest of the human society in education dates back to the dawn of civilization in ancient Greece, when Plato spoke about the importance of education in the development of the state. And, based on his initiative, he wrote at the entrance of the Academy, "*Do not go inside unless you are a geometer.*" Plato's concept of geometry is used to understand a man with a high cultural and scientific level. Thus, the European Enlightenment based on Platonic concepts of education gave it the role and place it deserves among all the professions that develop and civilize people. In ancient Greece, education was not valued as a luxury for a small number of people in the society, but as a right of all citizens. However, in order to achieve the practical goals of education, human society needs to regard it as the most important tool for its development. Therefore, this paper discusses the significance of education in the development of society by enriching it with modern philosophical concepts. The following issues will be addressed: The philosophical essence of education, Education for democracy as a social requirement, The importance of intercultural and multicultural education.

Keywords: Education, School, Democracy, Society, Philosophy.

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Introduction

Deep economic and political transformations require the establishment of a developed democracy. However, the development of a democratic society is closely linked to the expansion of its well-being. Social foundations are built on two pillars: the rights and duties of each member of a given society. Every citizen becomes familiar with the protection and implementation of his/her rights and duties because of the deep and sustainable knowledge he/she has about them through education. Furthermore, the "rights and duties" of citizens converge with the protection of their social well-being. The concept of "well-being" encompasses all aspects of citizens'

social lives as well as the path that leads to their social improvement. Thus, social well-being is the only thing that can bring together all of society's individual tendencies, abilities, and interests. However, the achievement of social development is the result of the implementation of human ideas and works of great philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

A democratic system embodies many different elements that work together to nurture and sustain a truly developed society. However, these elements are related to the ability of individuals to dialogue, express convictions, make compromises, adapt to new social situations, evaluate actions for the benefit of the common interest, make decisions, and solve social issues. The ability of people to cooperate with one another and find solutions for different issues that may arise in a given society is an important part of the social life of people.

Throughout history, democratic societies have applied and followed new ideas and theories such as those of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Kant, and other philosophers. There can be no social community in the absence of a democratic climate and educational values. These values include both the fundamental and individual norms of society. From the top to the bottom of the social pyramid, everyone is interested in implementing and defending educational values. The most important task of the state is to educate its citizens, particularly the younger generations.

The school intends to standardize some aspects of civic and intellectual education for the members of the society. Thus, it expects students to learn and reflect on their own attitudes and opinions, even if they disagree on a particular issue. Moreover, civic education is a distinct front and a priority for schools, teachers and other social institutions such as family, religion, radio, television, media and government.

Furthermore, the feature that distinguishes a democratic society is that the process of education and civic values are not imposed by force on people. Their transmission and inculcation in young people are closely linked to the selection of the most appropriate remaining means: persuasion and reasoning. Simultaneously, the values of reasoning and logic in education constitute their intellectual synthesis. These values are promoted by both the individual and the society as a whole. Personal values are the result of an individual's intellectual level, which is based on his perception, thought, and idea processing abilities. While, social values are presented as "levels" of representation of an entire society.

A Literature Review

This research paper is the result of extensive reading and familiarization with relevant literature. Besides reading of relevant literature, I also used the reasoning and interpretation methods of existing information on education, taken from various sources. Also, these concepts were analyzed as the only trend for the development of the human society.

The Philosophical Essence of Education

Education remains one of the most important pillars of a society. Generally, education is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are inherited and passed on from generation to generation through teaching, training and research. Education takes place under the supervision of educators, such as teachers, lecturers, and so on. It can also be done through self-learning. However, any experience that has a formative effect on the path of thinking is valued and considered as educational. Thus, the ideas of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were influential in the development of educational concepts and methods, as well as their practical application. They began with the goal of educating a well-prepared and highly valued citizen. Socrates regarded education as a tool for discovering the truth, interpreting knowledge, combating ignorance and becoming acquainted with oneself and others. Socrates used a method of learning that became known throughout history as the "*Socratic method*". According to this methodology, the teacher asks the students various questions and leaves room for them to judge before giving the answers. Moreover, it is also about fostering debates; it entails testing human knowledge and discovering the truth. Socrates urged young people to think deeply about philosophical and social issues.

In his writings, Plato, a disciple of Socrates, underlined the importance of social education by considering it as essential for the development of humanity. Moreover, He writes in his book entitled "The Republic": "*The aim of education is to illuminate what the child has in his soul. Not just bringing knowledge into the soul, but extracting what is hidden there and directing it towards the soul. Education is the most important social life scheme*" (Plato, 1999, p. 82). Plato believes that education is important for both justice and the state. According to him, education should be divided into stages in which young people are trained in various subjects and prepared to defend the state. Plato's educational scheme is designed to last until the age of 50. This is analogous to the modern concept of "lifelong learning". According to Aristotle, the concepts of education, human nature, habits, and reasoning are powerful forces that must be cultivated by the entire society through education. Aristotle emphasized the importance of education by arguing that knowledge is gained through scientific research and by nurturing individuals' experience and skills.

The views of Plato about education are still relevant today. His ideas aimed at forming the individual as a human being so that he or she could be educated as a worthy citizen of the society. Plato used metal values to support his point, by saying: "*When God created man, He put different metals in his composition. For example, in some people he placed gold, in others he placed silver, and in others, he placed bronze and copper*" (Plato, 1999, p. 109). His idea is clear, and the concept of "metal" refers to the gift of talent, which, according to him, is education that allows people to manifest these talents.

In the Platonic views on education, it is stated that the educational aspect of man is to be a worthy citizen of the state, society and the instruments that make his education possible. Based on Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical points of view, the school is considered as an important institution in the function of the individual and society. It operates through certain rules and norms, and its mission is to:

Educate citizens as members of the state.

Provide professional training.

Introduce an individual's values to the society and emphasize his or her skills.

Make an individual to be aware of his/her individual values.

Train people professionally and provide them with employment opportunities.

However, educational institutions are different from family and religious ones. The school as an institution brings together and works with students from a variety of social, religious, cultural, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Same as any other institution, the school as an institution has its own set of rules and procedures. It allows young citizens to advance to a higher level of education once they have correctly followed the rules and mastered the specified requirements. Thus, the school is a place where children can learn about facts, culture, national history, and patriotism. School educators teach students common languages and communication methods, as well as critical perspectives and thoughts for facing life challenges.

The process of education is realized during our daily life. Through action and experience, we as human beings may create our own level of culture and knowledge. It is about a culture that has the necessary tools to comprehend life and its processes. Active participation in society becomes possible by using these types of tools freely and efficiently. The result of the process of education is the development of a continuous cultural level both personally and collectively. Although the role of the school and the works of various philosophers are quite important in human education, the criterion of truth is found in everyday life. That is why this postulation is passed on through the generations: *"All life is a real school"*. During his early existence, man learned to read and write and was able to pass on inherited knowledge to future generations. With the expansion of knowledge came the need to have an institution of education and knowledge, which became a school. The keys to this education are found in our daily life and practice.

The mission of philosophy continues to be the illuminate life when there is darkness and to resolve social conflicts. Its mission is to end violence and provide solutions, as well as to uphold the rule of law and the truth. As a result, it is never outdated or obsolete to acquire Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical ideas on the need for education and upbringing of the younger generations prior to their coming of age and in running the affairs of the state; it is more important than ever today. The ancient Sophists as teachers promised to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the development of Greek city-states. The primary goal of education, according to Aristotelian philosophy, is to contribute to the discovery, transmission, and application of knowledge. Moreover, Immanuel Kant emphasized: *"Education is the only way to become a man"* (Kant, 2004, P. 14). According to him, human beings as a unique existence can be real humans only through education. For Kant, education, in essence, is the process by which a society passes on accumulated knowledge from one generation to the next. Therefore, in essence, education is the process by which a society develops. Its mission is to dismantle social violence and provide solutions, as well as to understand and implement the rule of law.

Human education is essential in recognizing the values of society, the state, and the culture of people. The real

purpose of education is to guide young people on the right path of knowledge, to give them the opportunity to discover the present in order to prepare for the future, to get them acquainted with the institutions and the responsibility they carry in the service of their state, their national policies, as well as the relations of citizens themselves in the society where they live. Education is the battle of a society that runs on the path of knowing its rules, on the path of knowledge and values, as well as society-state relations, citizen-state relations, and state education.

Education is one of the most important fields in a society and in any social-political system because, through it, developmental values are transmitted to future generations. However, in all historical differences, a primary role is played by the education of society, especially that of the leading elites, which has sometimes accelerated the integration processes and sometimes slowed them down. In this respect, the education of the ruling elites continues to be a priority, which has both accelerated and slowed the integration process. Thus, the integration and strengthening of Albania's political, economic, and military relations are the "propellers" that push the "ship" towards Euro-Atlantic processes. Albanian institutions have a genuine desire and effort to integrate into the European Union, but it is also true that we do not go to Europe to "melt" or lose our national identity. Today, Albanian society offers the world the coexistence of different religious faiths, to which almost all of Europe is vulnerable, while Albania appears to have the golden key. This means that the next generation of Albanians must be well-versed in the culture and all that our people have inherited from generation to generation in the material and spiritual realms in order to pass it on to the next mosaic of European culture. Therefore, education is a process of constant change and reorganization, and its goal is to educate. The educational process should result in the ability to form a continuous formation, both social and personal.

Education for Democracy as Social Requirement

Education for democracy is the ability of a society to recognize and protect its freedom and democratic institutions. It (Education for democracy) should not be just a slogan, but a vital part of the life of people and the whole society. Education is the basis, the foundation of the overall development and future of a democratic and modern society. Thus, a comprehensive education in general, and democratic education in particular, are essential to society and the state because society and the state are governed by the same laws. Through education for democracy, the society is taught to love the state, the nation, to know itself, its responsibilities, etc. In democracy, the society and the institutions that make it up are tools of education and social formation. Therefore, education is still one of the most important aspects of any political and social system because it transmits developmental values to future generations. Moreover, it is about pursuing higher education from the comfort of one's own home, using technological advances such as the internet and the publication of electronic books. Of course, these phenomena of perspective not only represent the cutting edge of modern education but are also expected to play a progressive role in the phenomena of school attendance and its quality in the future. Considering higher education as the top of the pyramid and lower education as its base, we would emphasize the importance of maintaining the interactive relationship between the base and the top of this pyramid.

The purpose of education for democracy is to acquaint young people and the society in general with the principles and values of democracy. Thus, education for democracy is the essence of society; it is the promotion of the values of democracy and their implementation. Education is the foundation on which all moral, family, cultural, political institutions are developed. Democratic principles are the laws of life in a society and a democratic state. They are the pillars and values of that society. A democratic society is a free society, that is based on the principles of equality and justice. Freedom becomes possible when it is protected by laws. Only in this way can all citizens of a democratic decision be guaranteed equal protection and freedom. Therefore, freedom that knows no laws is debauchery; it is degeneration, and false illusion.

The basis of a democratic society is built on the premise that no power, including political ideologies and their leaders, has a monopoly of right. The philosophy of democracy moves and progresses along pragmatist rails. Even the values of theories surrounding them are primarily evaluated by the changes they bring to the society. Elections done in a given state in one period may be free and fair, reflecting the will of the sovereign and the people; whereas in another period and under different circumstances, these same elections may be manipulated or stolen by those in power. However, democratic systems educate citizens about democratic culture. The conduct of free elections becomes a fundamental criterion of their own freedom for them. For citizens of a democratic society, the rotation of powers is one of the essential gears by which democracy and society progress. The development of alternative and developmental ways of thinking is an undeniable value of democracy. Democracy creates equal opportunities for all members of a society.

There can be no social community without shared democratic values. These values emerge as the fundamental norms of a society and the individuals who inhabit it. Leaders and ordinary citizens are both concerned with the implementation and protection of these values. According to Ralph Dahrendorf, "*citizenship is a set of rights and obligations... citizenship is a concrete social function*" (Dahrendorf. 1997, p. 48). The essence of the rule of law is to establish a state in which the rule of law must prevail and all its citizens enjoy guaranteed rights as a result of these laws. Only members of a society who are equal before the law can create a prosperous democracy and society for themselves and their children.

The ethics and culture of democracy are of interest to the entire society. Therefore, the most important duty of the state is to educate members of the society, particularly the younger generations, about democratic values. However, in all aspects of social life, justice must be present and dominant. A democratic society is built on the fundamental concept of justice. Judgment is healthy when it is able to judge and evaluate the truth independently. We all require independent and impartial justice to discover and protect everyone's legal rights. Everyone seeks and desires justice. The desire for justice is an excellent starting point for the study of democratic values in schools and other institutions. The pursuit of justice for all is an unmistakable democratic value. Justice or "the first virtue of social institutions" is the basis of a democratic society. It governs how people behave in their relationships with others. Every individual in different communities has the right to be different and pursue his or her goals to the extent possible, as long as this is done without violating the basic laws and values of the society. The principles of justice require that each individual should have equal

opportunities to be happy and to enjoy other natural rights. This is the way to achieve equality. It must be remembered, however, that no one should pursue happiness to the exclusion of equal opportunities for others. In a democratic society, the government has the right to intervene and protect the rights of everyone to equal opportunities.

However, it is still the duty of every citizen, government agency, and educational institution to strengthen the pluralistic democratic system for the benefit of the present and upcoming generations. Despite the fact that civic education is implemented in all spheres of Albanian society, it is not by chance that we identified the role of intelligence and our country's educational system as a guarantee of accelerating the necessary developments within the integration processes. Thus, a sustainable economy is required for civic education in a democratic society. It is essential, especially in a democratic regime for all citizens to participate in the economic life of their society, but only within the context of freedom. The production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services between people constitute economic activity. Participation in this or that business is determined by market requirements. This is why democratic economic systems are frequently referred to as "market economies". Profit is the driving force behind this economy. Economic freedom or free initiative determines the effectiveness of a market economy. Economic freedom manifests itself in a variety of ways, including the ability to obtain a legitimate profit, the ability to buy and sell, the ability to compete, and the ability to innovate.

The Importance of Intercultural and Multicultural Education

The differences in people's worldviews make us aware of the existence of being different. The advancement of social democracy is one of the primary goals of modern education. The intercultural education system works to overcome differences in a multicultural society's daily life and shared relationships. Thus, this process can be achieved through mutual understanding, respect, and dialogue between groups from different cultures, as well as by providing equal opportunities and fighting discrimination. The essence of intercultural education among different people includes sensitive cultural areas that transmit and nurture friendly feelings between them, such as film screenings, theater performances, the organization of festivals, sporting events, scientific, philosophical, and political conferences, as well as visits to mutual and tourist attractions.

Education is at the heart of social cohesion's identity. It is closely linked to the system of factors that comprise it, particularly distinguishing the world views that nurture the way of thinking, as well as the feelings and actions of its members. It is the semantic differences between people that make us aware of the existence of being different. The educational system must take into account the multicultural nature of the society into which we want to integrate and contribute to the peaceful coexistence of people with different cultural backgrounds. From this point of view, there has traditionally been multicultural education, which allows for the recognition and acquisition of other cultures. It is the duty of every citizen, of state bodies, and of the structures of education and upbringing of generations to strengthen the system of pluralistic democracy.

The foundation of a democratic society is based on free and fair elections. The primary task of educating citizens and other state and social structures should focus on recognizing the democratic principles and norms for setting European standards. It aims at a more significant contribution from the education system to education and youths. Therefore, in dealing with the individual and his character, Lock came to the conclusion that: *"people are equal and independent, and no one should harm another's life, health, liberty, or property"* (Lock, 2005, p. 81). According to Lock, people, on the other hand, are aware of their inherent rights as well as their protection. However, in order to improve their rights and survive, they require an agreement or contract, which they entrust to a sovereign state. Contemporary democracy is representative of the values that free and liberal societies place on the relationship between politics and human rights. However, democracy is a form of government and a way for citizens, particularly young people, to participate in policymaking. Therefore, in everyday life, the most important front remains the education of citizens with a contemporary mentality. This important issue is almost left on the periphery of the work of state and social bodies, or better put, "in a free flow" and spontaneity, which is remembered only in special cases when pressure is exerted by European organizations.

The role of education is also to protect and develop the highest human values, especially equality and the right to live in dignity. Understanding the cultural traditions of different people, their intellectual and spiritual perspectives, their art, music, literature, way of life, value system, traditions, and religious beliefs are all examples of education. Friedrich von Hayek, a well-known political economist, used the phrase *"constitution of freedom"* instead of *"social democracy"*. He meant a set of elements that allowed the individual to coexist with society. Hayek highlights three of the most important aspects of this process. However, Jefferson, Locke, and Rousseau, based on a number of treaties, have been devoted to the individual's and society's freedom, rights, and duties. Thus, as stated in the Declaration of Independence of the American Revolution in 1776, all men are created equal, and further, the Creator (God) endows them with certain inalienable rights: *"There is no happiness without freedom; freedom without self-government; self-government without constitutionality; constitutionality without morals; and there are no such great goods without stability and order"* (Dhamo, 1999, p.24.).

In a pluralistic society, the consequences of globalization may aim to flatten the values and characteristics inherited from popular culture. It is an obvious reality that in our time there is need to outline and formulate theoretical-practical views on the causes of the failure of communist ideology and one of the most powerful philosophical currents of the last century, which had significant consequences and changes in today's human history. However, we cannot avoid the dangers that arise from the use of force and violence to solve problems and conflicts. This is because there is no greater paradox than the development of wars in the name of peace, even if only in the sense of an individual's life or that of the entire people of a nation. The phenomenon of globalization cannot exclude either the format of global culture, both in technological and sociological fields, without excluding philosophy, which can never be closed in the ivory tower but always stands at the forefront of socio-political developments. The imposition of global culture, particularly by the most developed capitalist countries with a consolidated democracy, may not find the right ground and bedrock due to the interdependence

of a number of developments in other fields of science, culture, and production. Every new phenomenon in human society immediately generates groups for and against it. This is because it does not occur immediately, but gradually replaces inherited values. This is the phenomenon of globalization. Therefore, the above issues lead to the conclusion that the mosaic of cultural pluralism should be treated and nurtured as the greatest asset of human society; it only does not endanger any people or nation but also enriches them and raises the demands of democracy to a greater degree.

Ethnocentrism makes intercultural communication and understanding difficult, if not impossible. To overcome these, it is necessary to work in a variety of areas, particularly through the intercultural integration of components in school curricula. This does not mean that we should not work on recognizing our cultural heritage at the same time, or that we should overestimate other cultures in comparison to our own. The Albanian people that live and work overseas develop new concepts and models for the development of small and large businesses, private initiatives, the free market, and the benefits of the democratic system. They return to their homeland to bring their lofty individual and social goals to life. But, from the start, they are confronted with the "mountain" of corruption obstacles that have gripped the public administration and state institutions, making their dreams and plans shrink or appear to fail.

In a democratic society, diversity is a current value. It is influenced by the population's diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and religious beliefs. At all levels, strata, and powers that exist in a democratic society, diversity remains the most important indicator. Ethnic and multicultural diversity simultaneously improve the quality of a society's democracy by respecting change for the sake of cultural and intellectual enrichment. Respect for diversity should not be regarded as a source of national disruption or a diverse population. In the presence of such a country, state, and population, commitment to universal democratic values remains their common honor, the vital cohesive factor that determines the present and future of this society with vital common interests. Only a truly democratic society is capable of preserving, defending, harmonizing, and respecting internal change and diversity, whether political, ethnic, religious, or multicultural in nature. This harmony is the foundation of this very democratic society.

Conclusion

Education remains one of the most important fields in any society and system, as it is through it that the most valuable knowledge, culture, and values are transmitted. As a result, education and society have a relationship that resembles a communication vessel with mutual influence. However, recently, education has been incoherent not only with countries' social changes, but also with their rapid technological and global developments.

The development of individual human resources and capacities remains the goal of education. Humans are engrossed in the process of the work that they perform on a daily basis. Democracy embodies moral, ideal, and political principles based on social coexistence. Culture is transformed into a means of free and full participation

in joint activities. In this way, it manages to foster social efficiency. The ethical value of democracy is achieving the benefits of social education. The goal of education is to form a reflective thought in order to formulate a hypothesis that will result in a specific attitude. To accomplish this goal, an individual must put his ideas into action and have the opportunity to testify about them. Intelligent learning, which implements the ability to think, is the only way to improve human theories and experiences

The laws of life in a democratic society and state are based on democratic principles. They are the foundations and values of a society. A democratic society is one that is free and founded on the principles of equality and justice. Only by legally protecting liberty can all citizens of a democratic society be equal and free. Democratic systems instill a democratic culture in citizens. The holding of free elections has become a fundamental criterion of their own liberty. For citizens of a democratic society, the rotation of powers is one of the essential gears by which democracy and society progress. The development of alternative and developmental ideas of thinking differently is undeniably a democratic value. Democracy creates equal opportunities for all members of a society.

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