

## Does Democratic Education Have to be a Liberal Education? A Philosophical Assessment

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### Abstract

Education has always been a significant topic of interest not only for theorists and practitioners of education but also for political philosophers. Philosophers aimed to describe the relation between education and democracy by referring to various functions that educational institutions can play for contributing the improvement of democracy since the time of Stoics in Ancient Greece and Rome.

This paper aims to draw the conceptual and moral boundaries of what democratic education amounts to. When dealing with the meaning of democratic education, there is one significant matter that is the source of confusion for many of us: whether democratic education and liberal education are same, and if not, to what extent they are different. In line with this question, this paper argues that democratic education cannot be reduced to liberal education in the sense of promoting merely liberal values but it should be founded on the idea of creating autonomous citizens as a necessary minimum liberal requirement. Thus, it is claimed that, along with the value of autonomy, democratic education may promote various different values at the same time as long as these values are not unreasonable in the sense of disrespecting the equal moral status of every citizen.

First, arguments regarding the concept of autonomy that are developed by political liberalism and classical/comprehensive liberalism are analyzed comparatively. Second, the significance of the promotion of autonomy as a moral principle in democratic education is discussed. Third, possible other values that can be supported along with autonomy are outlined. Since this paper is a theoretical analysis which aims to examine critically certain contemporary liberal theories on education, it does not intend to focus on the practical field of education.

**Keywords:** education, democratic education, liberal education, political liberalism, liberalism, autonomy

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### Introduction

It is difficult to deny the relevance of education for the realization of certain goals in a society, no matter if the society is democratic or not. Regardless of the character of the political regime, education is an instrument that is used to promote certain common goals in a society. In non-democratic societies, education is utilized to serve non-democratic ends in order to sustain the stability in the political system. In other words, in non-democratic political regimes, education becomes a mere tool in the hands of power holders to impose and sustain their hegemony in the society.

In democratic political regimes too, education has a functional relevance to sustain the stability and continuity of the political system, yet the goals that are promoted through education and the principles on which educational policies are based, are of different nature. Democratic education, put simply, is education that aims to contribute to democracy broadly speaking. The values and principles that contribute to democracy constitute the goals that are promoted by democratic education.

It is a common tendency to use the concepts of democracy and liberalism interchangeably mostly due to the historical legacy that brought together the development of modern democracy and liberal ideology as parallel forces that affected each other. We encounter the same tendency in our usage of the concepts of democratic education and liberal education too. This paper aims to answer the question whether democratic education and liberal education are same, and if not, to what extent they are different.

In my attempt to answer this question, I address a specific debate within contemporary liberalism between classical/comprehensive liberalism and political liberalism.<sup>1</sup> A classical liberal position supports that autonomy should be the basic value that is to be promoted in democratic education. On the other hand, a political liberal position supports the idea that instead of the promotion of the value of autonomy in education, we should support values such as toleration and respect. Political liberals think that promotion of autonomy means imposition of a particular conception of good life on all persons in a society and that is intolerant. In this paper, it is claimed that, contrary to what political liberals argue, democratic education has to be liberal because promoting autonomy- ability to choose on the basis of critical reflection regarding the right and the good- is at the core of the democratic ideal. In line with this requirement, it is also claimed that values such as toleration and respect can be supported by democratic education coherently too. That is to say, we can think of an education that is both democratic and liberal which is founded on the values of autonomy, toleration and respect. That is to say, we do not have to either choose a classical liberal or political liberal position on education since incorporating both positions is possible.

First, the paper begins by discussing which moral values a classical liberal education is founded on. This is an analysis of a liberal concept of education in terms of its moral goals from a paradigmatic point of view. In this manner, specifically the value of autonomy and its relevance in education are analyzed. Second, the concept of education from a political liberal perspective is examined in terms of its moral goals. In this sense, toleration and respect are discussed as two foundational values for a political liberal conception of education. Third, I discuss the dimensions of a democratic conception of education that incorporates autonomy, toleration and respect as foundational values.

### **Classical Liberal Conception of Education and the Value of Autonomy**

In this part of the paper, I intend to explicate the features of a classical liberal understanding of education that is based on autonomy. Specifically, I analyze Immanuel Kant's theory of education as a significant interpretation of a conception of education based on autonomy.

Immanuel Kant is the first philosopher that comes to mind in modern philosophy when we refer to autonomy. For Kant, autonomy is a property of the will which human beings possess as rational beings. In this sense, autonomous action is action that is motivated by reason. Individuals act autonomously as long as they act out of their reason, without the influence of any external force, inclination or necessity. This means human will is autonomous when it is not motivated by anything outside itself. (Kant, 2004, pp. xv-52) Moreover, individuals act autonomously when they obey the moral law they have made themselves. Autonomy means the power of determining oneself to action in accordance with certain laws. In this sense, it refers to self-determination.

The goal here is not to explicate the features of the concept of autonomy in Kant's philosophy in detail but rather, to outline the meaning of autonomy and its relevance for education. Therefore, I refer to a specific primary text by Kant called *Über Pädagogik* which was first published in 1803.

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<sup>1</sup> The distinction between what I call classical and political liberalism is based on John Rawls's distinction between comprehensive and political liberalism that he developed in his book *Political Liberalism*. In the book, he calls liberalism as "comprehensive liberalism" that aims to impose the value of autonomy on different types of world-views as opposed to political liberalism that is based on toleration which refrain from imposing any comprehensive value on people. According to Rawls, liberalism as a comprehensive philosophical doctrine is intolerant towards world-views that do not value autonomy. For details see (Rawls, 2005)

In *Über Pädagogik*, Kant categorizes education into three phases: nurture, discipline and teaching, together with culture. (Kant, 1900, p.11) Nurture refers to feeding and care of the infant. Discipline “prevents man from being turned aside by his animal impulses from humanity.”(Kant, 1900, pp.11-12). In this sense, discipline helps to shape the character of a person by restraining his/her animal nature and extract the best human side in him/her as an individual and as a member of society.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, education must provide persons with culture and moral training. Thus education supplies persons with discretion so that he/she may be able to conduct himself/herself in society in a better and acceptable way. (Kant, 1900, p. 17). Moral training should aim to guide children towards good ends which may be willed as the ends of everyone. That is to say, moral education should aim to assist children towards acting from duty.

Although for Kant, the moral capacity is a property of human will and it is presupposed by every rational being, education towards developing that capacity can be seen as a necessary and essential practice.<sup>3</sup> Kant openly points out that the ultimate aim of education is to develop correct principles and lead children to understand and accept them. (Kant, 1900, p.51). In line with this for Kant, individual becomes a moral being only by developing the ideas of duty and law, which are at the core of Kant's conceptions of morality and autonomy. Children should be guided about the duties for oneself and duties for others. In this sense, if a man makes a promise, he must keep it as a duty for oneself and moreover, as a duty to others, a child should learn to respect the rights of others and try to realize this in his actions too. (Kant, 1900, pp. 47-48)

Kant's emphasis on duty in education is related to his understanding of autonomy. That is to say, he argues that children should learn to regard an action as worthy, not because it falls within their inclinations, but because they fulfill their duty in performing it. (Kant, 1900, p. 55) This is in line with Kant's conception of autonomy: autonomous agent does not allow her actions guided by natural impulses or inclinations but only by maxims that can be willed as a universal law. Kant calls this categorical imperative, the law of reason. (Kant, 2004, pp. xv-52) According to Kant, the goal of education is to make children be aware of their potential as autonomous agents and develop the capacity to act autonomously by guiding them in accordance with a moral education.

What is the role of the educator in guiding children for developing their autonomous capacities? Kantian pedagogy offers a Socratic method for assisting students in terms of moral teaching. Kant says: “In the culture of reason we must proceed according to the Socratic method. Socrates, who called himself the midwife of his hearers' knowledge, gives examples in his dialogues, which Plato has in a manner preserved for us, of the way in which, even in the case of grown-up people, ideas may be drawn forth from their own individual reason.” (Kant, 1900, p. 40) Thus, the aim and role of the educator should be to extract the rational and moral knowledge from them rather than introducing and carrying knowledge into students. (Giesinger, 2012, p.783)

Moreover, Kant claims that a catechism of right conduct can be helpful in school curriculums for children to develop a sense of duty and morality.<sup>4</sup> He suggests that this should be in the form of everyday questions of right and wrong in a popular form. (Kant, 1900, p.49) For instance, the question if lying is ever justified in certain circumstances can be included in the questions about right and wrong conduct. It is significant that children learn lying is wrong under any kind of circumstances. Kant thinks that if we teach children, they are allowed to lie in a specific situation, and then they would

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<sup>2</sup> Giesinger claims that the role of discipline in Kant's pedagogy is negative in the sense that it does not bring about morality but helps human beings to hold back their animal impulses. For this reason, discipline can be regarded as the first step in the child's process of humanization. (Giesinger, 2012, p. 781)

<sup>3</sup> Johannes Giesinger addresses a paradox in Kant's pedagogy. According to Kant, the human self can only be regarded as free and autonomous if it is not influenced by empirical causes. In this manner, Giesinger claims that “Kant's Notion of non-empirical sense is at odds with the idea of education: While it might be assumed that the noumenal self shows itself in the empirical actions of the person, it can hardly be imagined that the moulding of the empirical character has any impact on the intelligible character- if this were the case, the intelligible character would not be free in Kant's sense.” (Giesinger, 2012, p. 777)

<sup>4</sup> Chris W. Surprenant points out that what Kant has in mind by referring to catechism is something similar to Luther's catechism which had the function to teach students doctrines and prayers of the church through a series of questions and memorized answers. However, he claims, unlike Luther's catechism, Kant's catechism does not require students to memorize answers that they could not generate themselves since for Kant, morality requires individuals to use their own reason freely to determine and adopt maxims out of respect for the moral law itself. (Surprenant, 2010, p. 169)

use this occasion to lie in most situations. He says "if there were a book of this kind, an hour might be very profitably be spent daily in studying it, so that children might learn and take heart lessons on right conduct- the apple of God's eye upon earth." (Kant, 1900, p.49)

According to Kant, moral education has to be cosmopolitan in the sense that it should assist children to develop a value in them with regard to the whole human race. Kant states that children should be brought up not only with an interest in themselves and those with whom they have been brought up but also an interest in the progress of the world. (Kant, 1900, p. 55) An interest in the progress of the world signifies seeing our activities as promoting and sustaining a shared moral culture with other persons. (Herman, 1998, p.266) In other words, cosmopolitan principle in education for Kant means raising children with the awareness that they are part of human race and thus, they have an impact on the moral culture and progress of human history.

As an example of a classical liberal conception of education, Kant's pedagogy aims to train individuals as autonomous beings who are members of a world community. Autonomy is regarded as a presupposed property of human will and education provides the necessary assistance to children to be able to use this moral capacity of living in accordance with the laws of their own reason. Thus, the goal of education in a classical liberal account of education is to help children to develop their moral capacity which every rational being can find within him/her.

### **Political Liberal Conception of Education**

On a political liberal view, education should not be based on goals such as promoting autonomy since this would mean imposing a comprehensive worldview on others who do not value autonomy. This view of political liberalism is not only restricted to the realm of education but rather, it is about the framing of laws, and regulation of political and social life in general. Political liberals argue that toleration should be basic principle of decision making processes in a democratic society. For instance, a law or regulation cannot be justified with reference to a specific comprehensive worldview such as a religion, ideology or doctrine. Since the goal of this paper is limited to the arguments of classical liberals and political liberals about the moral foundations of education, I do not go through arguments of political liberals in general.

In this part of the paper, I analyze specifically Stephen Macedo's perspective on education as a political liberal view. Macedo defines political liberalism as a neutral liberalism with respect to the ideals of life as a whole due to the reason that it does not rely on the justifiability of any particular comprehensive view of the truth (Macedo, 2000, p.179). In a parallel vein, and as a requirement of this neutrality, Macedo asserts that liberalism will reject in principle a public program that teaches one worldview as the true necessary road to truth. (Macedo, 2000, p.176) Thus, he claims that we should focus on shared civic virtues and values rather than promoting one comprehensive worldview such as a religious doctrine, secular humanism or atheism as the only way to truth.

What are those civic virtues and values? Certainly these are liberal values such as toleration for reasonable<sup>5</sup> forms of diversity, respect for equal rights and liberties of all individuals and the importance of a critical attitude toward contending political claims. (Macedo, 2000, p.179) Promotion of these liberal values is acceptable for Macedo in educational institutions. However, the problem arises when autonomy as a core value is promoted because in his view, this would violate the principle of toleration.

The justification of political liberals regarding the exclusion of the promotion of autonomy in education is based on the claim that not all reasonable worldviews accept autonomy as a value for their lives. But values such as toleration and respect can be shared by all reasonable worldviews. These public moral principles can have a mutually acceptable and convincing rationale for all reasonable diverse ways of living. In this manner, it is assumed that autonomy constitutes a too demanding requirement for certain forms of life especially religious and traditionalist forms of life. (Macedo, 2000, p.167) The expectation that individuals should act autonomously in religious matters would mean to impose the view that individuals should adopt religious beliefs only after a critical reflection. However, this

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of reasonableness is first developed by John Rawls. By referring to Rawls, Macedo points out that reasonableness is characterized by a commitment to two basic virtues. First, he says, reasonable citizens abide by fair terms of cooperation provided that others do the same. This means citizens should be ready to propose principles that can be willingly accepted by other citizens. Second, he says, citizens should be willing to acknowledge the fact of reasonable pluralism. That is to say, citizens should know that reasonable people might disagree profoundly over their conceptions of good. (Macedo, 2000, p. 171).

requirement conflicts with the morality of many religious beliefs and traditional life styles. Unconditional belief and acceptance are the major requirements of almost all religions. Thus, Macedo argues that critical moral autonomy claims more than we should want to claim on behalf of our political order since promotion of autonomy would exclude most forms of life that do not value autonomy as their core moral principle. (Macedo, 2000, p.167)

It can be argued that as long as public justification of laws and decisions in political order are concerned, Macedo's argument is sound. Political liberalism is right in warning us against the intolerance of the imposition of a comprehensive value such as autonomy on others who do not value autonomy as a moral ideal in a political order. Imposition of one worldview is morally wrong and illegitimate because in a democratic regime, all citizens are equal in sharing political power and that exclusion of certain citizens due to their moral views is in conflict with the premise of democracy. However, in the educational policies and regulations, promotion of autonomy as a moral value is necessary and even inevitable as long as we commit ourselves to a liberal civic life.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, it can be claimed that in the realm of education, promotion of autonomy is a requirement of democratic education.

Democratic education has to promote autonomy as a value for two reasons. First, treating children with moral respect requires the promotion of autonomy. Children are not only members of their families but also at the same time they are individuals who have the right to evaluate their own goals in life and have the capacity to choose and live a life which they think fit their own conceptions of good. In order to consider children (students) as individuals who are in need of developing the capacity to choose for themselves, we need to accept that promotion of autonomy as a value (at least in the minimal sense of developing self-critical capacity and reflection) is inevitable and necessary in education.

Second, it is impossible to develop the capacity to deliberate in children without helping them to improve their reasoning autonomously. In a democratic society, it is the institutions of public education that aim to raise citizens. Democracy is about public deliberation, providing reasonable arguments and evaluating the other's opinion from a critical and rational point of view. In this sense, raising citizens, at the same time, means educating future deliberators that will contribute to democratic politics. Democratic education should aim to develop capacities of deliberation and this requires to develop the capacities of self-critical reflection and critical inquiry. That is to say, developing the capacity of autonomous thinking and reflection are among the principle components of democratic education.

For the reasons outlined above, Macedo has to welcome autonomy from the back door even though he insists that promoting autonomy in education is not the goal of political liberalism.<sup>7</sup> We can find the traces of this welcoming even in Macedo's own arguments concerning liberal education. For instance, Macedo contends that

"Civic liberalism will insist that children learn that the freedom to choose is the birthright of every citizen of a liberal political community: that they are right holders and that as adults they may leave oppressive associations and relationships without losing their status as equal citizens. Children must at the very least be provided with the intellectual

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<sup>6</sup> Here, in a similar fashion, Eemon Callan addresses that the distinction between comprehensive liberalism and political liberalism fails in the realm of education. But his argument is different than mine: in my view, the distinction between two liberalisms has some relevance in the realm of the public justification of laws unlike the realm of education. On the other hand, Callan claims that the distinction between two liberalisms is mistaken and illusory in general and we can see this in the convergent educational implications of the two liberalisms. The fact that Macedo has to invite autonomy from the back door is a proof of Callan's thesis. Callan draws our attention to whether and how the acceptance of burdens of judgment can be encouraged in children among the families whom it has yet to develop. He rightly asserts that the families will try to raise their children on the basis of their ethical doctrines, motivated by their desire to perpetuate their own deepest values in the lives of their children. (Callan, 1996, p. 16).

<sup>7</sup> Amy Gutman claims that comprehensive and political liberalism are not much different when looked from the premises they rely on. Both liberalisms aim to persuade close-minded citizens to respect reasonable opposition and for achieving this end, they can accept to teach deliberation, mutual respect and toleration at the same time. She also argues that both liberalisms can also reply to the critique that their conception of civic education wrongly restricts diversity. Teaching toleration, mutual respect and deliberation supports diversity but at the same time autonomy and individuality. (Gutman, April 1995, p. 579)

tools necessary to understand the world around them, formulate their own convictions, and make their own way in life.” (Macedo, 2000, pp.238-239)

Macedo accepts that children should learn that they have a right to autonomy in the sense of choosing their own way of living.

Furthermore, Macedo contends that critical thinking is an important quality of citizens in a democracy. He claims that a basic aim of civic education is to develop the ability of critical reflection in children for the sake of honoring shared principles of liberal justice and equal rights for all. (Macedo, 2000, p. 239)<sup>8</sup> The ability of critical thinking and reflection presupposes a capacity to reason independently of the external authorities and impositions. Put simply, in the view of Macedo, developing the ability to reason autonomously is accepted as a significant goal of political liberal education.

### **Democratic Education**

In the previous section of the paper, I demonstrated that even though political liberalism wishes to do away with the concept of autonomy in the realm of education, it is not capable of doing this for certain reasons. By focusing on the theory of Macedo on education, I stated that political liberalism has to welcome autonomy from the back door as long as it is committed to the civic liberal principles such as equal rights and liberties for all. Autonomy in the sense of the ability to choose on the basis of critical reflection regarding the right and the good is an inevitable and necessary qualification that should be developed to raise democratic citizens who are committed to liberal values.

Relying only on toleration as a moral foundation in education will not help us to raise citizens who are capable of democratic deliberation and reason giving in the public political realm. In other words, toleration alone cannot provide a strong enough ground for raising citizens who are capable of critical reflection but at the same time emphatic towards diversity. Promotion of autonomy in the sense of developing the capacity to critical reflection is an essential prerequisite for democratic education. For this reason, democratic education is a liberal education by definition and as a matter of principle. However, this does not mean that only autonomy should be promoted as a core value. Rather, other values such as toleration and respect should be supported as moral values too along with autonomy through democratic education.

In this paper, I share the motivation of Amy Gutman who claims that our concern for democratic education is related to our commitment to democracy. (Gutman, 1987, p.289) That is to say, democratic education aims to raise good citizens who are the principle actors of democratic deliberation. This view prioritizes political education over other types of public education since the aim of political education is to cultivate the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation.<sup>9</sup> “Political education prepares citizens to participate in consciously reproducing their society, and conscious social reproduction is the ideal not only of democratic education but also of democratic politics.” (Gutman,1987,p.287).

If we reason in line with Gutman, we have to contend that autonomy in the sense of critical reflection should be considered as one of the core values of democratic education. Without the promotion of autonomy, it seems impossible to cultivate the virtues, skills and knowledge necessary for political participation. Political participation requires self- reflection and criticism as well as critical inquiry of other’s argument and opinions. Moreover, it requires a developed capacity of judgment and reason giving for the justification of one’s opinion or standpoint regarding public matters. Therefore, a developed capacity of autonomy in the sense of choosing on the basis of critical reflection about what is right and the good is a necessary component of public political deliberation. Democratic education has to help students to develop their capacity of autonomy in order to contribute raising democratic citizens.

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<sup>8</sup> In a similar vein, in another text, Macedo asserts that it is very important for liberal constitutionalism to educate individuals and shape communities in ways that are congruent with liberalism. (Macedo, 1995, p. 236). This implies that democratic education means educating citizens in a manner that they can develop their abilities for liberal democratic deliberation. Critical reflection and autonomous reasoning are at the core of these abilities of democratic deliberation which should be developed.

<sup>9</sup> Amy Gutman rightly points out that the skills of political reflection cannot be clearly differentiated from the skills of evaluating one’s own way of life. She claims that this is an important reason why civic education is so demanding and threatening to some ways of life. Civic education might open the door for students to criticize their parents’ way of living and the traditions and values of their families. That is to say it is not possible to separate the political quality of critical reflection from personal critical reflection. (Gutman, 1995,p. 578)

Toleration and respect are other values that can be promoted along with autonomy in a democratic educational system. Toleration -refraining from intervention with a practice or way of living that we consider morally wrong- is necessary for peaceful coexistence in a democratic society but it is not enough if we commit ourselves to sustaining and reproducing a democratic civic culture. Toleration might have non-principled justifications such as serving the self-interest of the tolerator or consequences such as contributing peace. However, for a civic democratic culture to reproduce itself, children should have an insight on moral and principled justifications for why we should put up with others who think and live differently from them.

I agree with Amy Gutman on the claim that the most basic premise of democratic education is to raise students with the consciousness of respect for all individuals as free and equal citizens. Here, the meaning of respect should be thought together with recognition too: "Democratic education supports a "politics of recognition" based on respect for individuals and their equal rights as citizens, not on deference to tradition, proportional representation of groups, or the survival rights of cultures." (Gutman, 1987, p.306) Respect is a value concerning the equal moral status of all individuals but not equal moral status of all traditions and cultures. Saying this does not mean to ignore the value of traditions and cultures for the realization of different ways of living. However, cultures and traditions should be evaluated on the basis of the way they treat individuals. There can be specific cultures that do not respect all individuals as equal and free citizens and we should have the freedom to criticize them. Furthermore, the principle of reciprocity demands mutual respect for the personal integrity of all persons. (Gutman, 1987, p.308)

Cultivating mutual respect requires developing hermeneutical understanding as a quality in students regarding their judgment about diversity. Understanding people in their own particularity and way of living should precede acceptance or rejection of a certain way of living. (Gutman, 1987, p.309) Understanding has important contributions for the reproduction of civic public culture. First of all, it will help students to reason and judge by means emphatic approach rather than a crude judgmental one. Furthermore, "understanding opens up previously unknown or misunderstood ways of living and the relationship of those ways of living to politics and public life. Such understanding enriches students' store of civic knowledge." (Gutman, 1987, p.309).

Emphatic reasoning and hermeneutical understanding as components of democratic education are compatible with cosmopolitanism too. Cosmopolitanism requires one to be able to sustain a certain level of distance towards one's own culture and way of living which will help to build up empathy towards individuals from other cultures that are different than the culture of one's own country. The ability to sustain a self-critical cognitive distance towards one's own culture is a necessary step before developing empathy and understanding towards other cultures.

Furthermore, democratic education and cosmopolitanism are compatible with respect to the moral foundation that they both rely on. As Amy Gutman puts it rightly: "Teaching consistently with a moral perspective of democracy means treating students—and expecting students to treat each other and to consider individuals around the world—as having the moral status of civic equals. Democratic education, by virtue of its moral commitment to the equal dignity and civic equality of all individuals, therefore, is conducive to cultivating egalitarian cosmopolitans," (Gutman, 1987, pp.311-312) In this sense, both democratic education and cosmopolitanism are committed to the moral premise that all individuals have equal moral status regardless of their local identities. Although Gutman is reluctant in equating democratic education with cosmopolitan education straightforwardly, I think, democratic education, as a matter of principle, is cosmopolitan since the commitment to the equal moral status of all individuals as free and equal citizens demands a commitment to human dignity regardless of any concern to local identities.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

In this paper, I intended to answer the question whether democratic education has to be a liberal education and if so, on what grounds. To answer this question, I focused on a debate within liberalism regarding the moral relevance of promotion of autonomy in education. The debate between

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<sup>10</sup> Gutman thinks that democratic education and egalitarian cosmopolitanism are compatible but, it is not the primary goal of democratic education to cultivate egalitarian cosmopolitans. Gutman claims that: "There are multiple ways of being attached to people that are compatible with a democratic commitment to treating all individuals as civic equals. Egalitarian cosmopolitanism is one of those ways." (Gutman, 1987, pp. 311-312)

classical/comprehensive liberalism and political liberalism was analyzed critically to reflect on the moral grounds of civic education.

First, I focused on classical liberalism and specifically Immanuel Kant's conception of education. I analyzed on what grounds Kantian philosophy defends autonomy as a moral principle in education. I addressed that on a Kantian view, although autonomy is presupposed as a property of human will in every rational being, education is necessary for the development of the capacity of autonomy. In line with this, it is stated that in a classical liberal account of education, students are assisted in learning and developing to use their capacity of autonomy.

Second, I examined on what grounds political liberals criticize classical liberals regarding the promotion of autonomy and whether their criticism is sustainable. I addressed that according to political liberalism, promotion of autonomy means imposition of one worldview on others who do not value autonomy. Particularly, I examined Stephen Macedo's argument on education that is based on the promotion of civic political values such as toleration towards all reasonable worldviews and equal liberties and rights for all. I argued Macedo has to welcome autonomy from the back door for two main reasons. First, the moral requirement to treat children as beings that deserve respect on their own regardless of their familial membership is a reason for the promotion of autonomy. Children are not only members of their families but they are also individuals who have the right to develop their capacity of free choice among various ways of life. Second, I claimed that children are potential future political deliberators in the public realm in a democratic regime and in order to learn deliberation and critical reflection, they need to develop their capacity to reason autonomously.

I demonstrated that Macedo's argument about autonomy is not sustainable and that we can support the promotion of autonomy as well as toleration and respect. In other words, I claimed that promotion of toleration alone cannot serve raising democratic citizens and that is why, political liberal claim about doing away with the promotion of autonomy in education is not sustainable if we want to remain committed to the democratic ideal of raising citizens.

I referred to Amy Gutman's perspective on democratic education which prioritizes political education over other types of education to contemplate on the values and principles that democratic education should promote. In this sense, I considered political education as education that aims to teach students the basic skills, virtues and knowledge necessary for political participation. Political participation requires self-reflection and criticism as well as critical inquiry of other's argument and opinions. Therefore, a developed capacity of autonomy in the sense of choosing on the basis of critical reflection about what is right and the good is a necessary component of public political deliberation.

I emphasized that toleration is another value that should be promoted in democratic education along with autonomy. However, toleration- in the sense of putting up with something we find morally wrong- is not enough for the development and continuity of civic democratic culture. Children should have an insight on moral and principled justifications for why we should put up with others who think and live differently from them.

Finally, I qualified that respect can provide a good moral ground for children to understand and value diversity. Respect is considered as a value concerning the equal moral status of all individuals but not equal moral status of all traditions and cultures. This means traditions, cultures and ways of living deserve recognition as long as they treat individuals as equal and free citizens.

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