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Citizenship, Civil Society, Lifelong Learning and the Third Age in the European Union

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Societies throughout this changing world are today being forced to rethink the nature of the state and of governance. This, in its turn, demands a re-conceptualisation of citizenship and of civil society and this paper offers an interpretation of these phenomena and, finally, asks questions about the place of lifelong learning within this changing politico-economic world. It is argued that these changes can be understood more clearly if they are examined within a framework of the globalisation thesis.

Globalisation might best be understood as a socio-economic phenomenon having profound political and cultural implications. From an over-simplistic perspective, it can be understood by thinking of the *world* as having a substructure and a superstructure, whereas the simple Marxist model of society was that each *society* had its own substructure and a superstructure. For Marx, the substructure was the economic institution and the superstructure everything else in social and cultural life – including the state, culture, and so on. Those who owned the capital, and therefore the means of production, were able to exercise power throughout the whole of their society, or in other words ownership in the private sphere was the basis of power within the public one – a point to which we shall return later in this paper. But over the years the significance of ownership declined as more mechanisms to control capital emerged, and more recently the capital has become intellectual as well as financial. However, the other major change has been that this substructure has become global rather than societal. Globalisation has two main elements: the first is the way that those who have control of the substructure in the countries of the dominant West have been enabled to extend their control over the substructures of all the other countries in the world; the second is the effects that these sub-structural changes are having on the superstructure of each society since the common sub-structure means that similar forces are being exerted on each people and society despite each having different histories, cultures, languages, and so on. The additional dominant factor in this process has been the tremendous advances in information technology that have facilitated the global processes. Consequently we can see that the forces of globalisation exercise standardising pressures and Beck (2000,p.11) actually suggests that globalisation is 'the *processes* through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks' (*italics* in original). At the same time in Europe, Europeanisation also operates in precisely the same way but for different reasons, of undermining national sovereignty and endeavouring to create a cosmopolitan society and ultimately some form of federal state.

Once this is recognised, the political processes within each national territory can be seen to be devalued and appear to be no more than the state seeking to administer the territory in response to the global economic pressures and, in Europe, in response to the forces of Europeanisation. Once the power of the state has been seen to be diminished, it is hardly surprising that the public recognises that state can no longer protect people's rights as it is forced to respond to the demands of the substructure (see Korten, 1995, Monbiot, 2000) and not surprisingly the public loses its confidence in the political processes and with it a sense of responsibility and the desire to participate in the not so

democratic processes of the state. Additionally, the people's sense of identity is threatened.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that for some people and even nations, global capitalism has produced a high standard of living and an enjoyable life style. This is clearly true in the West where the third age are amongst the most wealthy people – indeed, it was recently estimated in a Sunday newspaper that the over-50s own 80% of the United Kingdom's wealth (Bedell, 2005, p.1) Consequently, not all would want to oppose the process, although it will also be argued below that there is a fundamental tensions between capitalism and citizenship, and our style of living and what we feel is right for the planet - but globalisation has exacerbated the divide between the rich and the poor. In contrast, a variety of nations and peoples and societies are resisting this process by endeavouring, to differing extents, to retain their uniqueness and independence which has given rise to our understanding of the phenomenon of glocalisation (Robertson, 1995). The global superstructure is now more like a lattice work in which the various parts are fluid and changing as some lose their distinctness within the sea of change, whilst others fight to retain their difference. Although a world government is a long way off, the global society needs a greater degree of harmonisation of the superstructure if the people are ever going to feel that the creation of cosmopolitan democracy can be achieved but this might only be achievable by the loss of some of the cultural uniqueness that people are seeking to preserve. Herein lies one of the major paradoxes in the creation of a genuinely global civil society.

Since the sovereignty of nation states is being challenged by these processes, it is necessary to re-examine the nature of citizenship within a global society and this constitutes the first part of this paper; the second looks at the nature of civil society and, finally, the contribution of lifelong learning to the political processes in this changing world is examined.

Part 1 The Changing Nature of Citizenship

Barbalet (1988,p.1) suggests citizenship 'defines who are, and who are not, members of a common society', and the earliest approaches to citizenship revolved around the idea of being members of the city. The ancient Greeks, for instance, regarded the citizen as one who was a full member of the *polis* and who had the right to speak and govern. In England, the citizen was an inhabitant of a city. Turner (1990,p.293) points out that Bells Dictionary of 1757 regarded the citizen as a ' Freeman of a City'. Basically, citizens were inhabitants of cities and those who lived beyond the city walls were subjects. Nevertheless with the growth of the nation state, citizenship became a matter of membership of a society, or a state. But now in global society we can begin to see the emergence of multiple citizenships and it is not surprising that a more recent European Union policy statement suggests that the 'concept of citizenship is...becoming more fluid and dynamic' (EC,1998,p.5).

However, as we pointed out above, reference to the European Union highlights the fact that it is not only the citizenship that is changing; so too is the territory of the society of which one is a member. Europeanisation, which began after World War II to try to ensure that Europe would never again be torn asunder by war, is also weakening the territorial boundaries as Member States cede some of the sovereignty to the European Union. This process has recently been more overt with the introduction of the common currency – the Euro. Even so, these cultures remain comparatively strong since the European Union seeks to preserve difference, something that the global socio-economic forces are not really concerned about. But in their different ways both are not only weakening the

boundaries of nation states, weakening the sense of national identity and creating a need to discover a new identity or identities - an ethnic or local, national or global one, and so on.

However, the ancient Greek tradition made a fundamental distinction between the private sphere and the public one in society. In it, citizens played their role on the public stage. As Habermas (1989,p.3) points out that in ancient Greece, citizens, by virtue of ownership of private property and slaves, were autonomous and free to participate in public life; in other words their private ownership was the basis upon which they could be active citizens in the public sphere - a phenomenon that we have already noted and to which we shall return later in this paper. However, Habermas (1989,p.4) describes this situation thus:

Just as the wants of life and the procurement of its necessities were shamefully hidden inside the *oikos*, so the *polis* provided an open field for honorable distinction.

Turner (1990,p.201) echoes this when he writes:

Because the full rights of citizenship were conferred upon members of the polis who had the right to speak and govern, there was an ideological need to explain and legitimise the subordinate status of women, adult slaves and children;

The public sphere was the male stage whereas the private sphere was the domain of women even though they were not dominant within it. We shall return to the place of women later in this paper but, in one sense, the public sphere was something wider than just the political - it was those aspects of social life that were conducted outside of the privacy of the home and family, such as the political and the market. Turner (1990,p.198), however, argues that the Protestant Reformation was a major force in the strengthening of the private sphere:

The effect of the Protestant doctrine was to create a private sphere (of devotional religious practice, the subjectivity of the individual conscience, the privatised confessional and family practices) in which the moral education of the individual was to be achieved, and a public world of the state and the market place, which was the realm of necessity.

Christians were enjoined to obey the laws of the land and become obedient subjects, so that they were expected to become passive citizens in the political sense, although the prophetic tradition of Christianity has often been far from passive. In addition, Sennett (1986,pp.142-3) nicely argues that with the advent of the fixed-price mass produced commodity retail store in the mid-nineteenth century (in previous generations it was forbidden by law to display a fixed price on any commodity for sale so that there had to be bought by public bargaining), the market was also removed from the public domain, and the consumer became a passive purchaser functioning in the private sphere - shopping became a woman's role. Bauman (1988, pp.76-77) also captured this emphasis on the way that economic forces are capturing the private sphere:

These pressures (of advertising), however, are not experienced as an oppression. The surrender they demand promises nothing but joy; not just the joy of submitting to something greater than myself...but straightforward, sensual joy of tasty eating, pleasant smelling, soothing

drinking, relaxing driving, or the joy of being surrounded with smart, glistening, eye-caressing objects. With such duties, who needs rights?

The public space has, therefore, been frequently curtailed and the foundations for passive citizenship were laid long before the end of the nineteenth century. Such passivity has subsequently been fostered by the public role of the mass media since individuals simply watched the political debate being performed for them on their television screens – a virtual public space. However, with the advent of mass interactive information technology the public sphere is being transformed yet again as a few more opportunities for a slightly more active form of citizenship in the public sphere are arising as television companies are beginning to invite citizens to send in their views on contentious subjects and then getting the politicians – but, as yet, rarely the industrialists – to respond to the points being made. Nevertheless, we can see that active citizenship is something still performed in the public sphere, even though its nature is undergoing profound changes in global society.

But we can see that if we try to restrict our discussion of private and public to territory or even a common society, we are faced with severe difficulties in seeking to understand citizenship. Barbalet certainly recognises that this traditional approach is too simple, even though he was writing before the significance of globalisation emerged. Consequently, he focused on the influential work of Marshall (1950), who in writing about the United Kingdom, argued that citizenship has three dimensions - civil, political, and social: civil being about human freedoms and rights; political about the right to participate in political processes; social the right to live, and be supported if necessary, at a civilised life-style according to the standards of the society in which individuals live. Marshall suggested that the first two of these dimensions emerged in the eighteenth century and the final one in the twentieth century after the introduction of free compulsory education. But we have already seen that the power of the state is declining so that Marshall's formulation may only have been relevant for the United Kingdom at a very specific time in history. At the same time, he isolated dimensions of social life that underlie citizenship itself – however, and wherever it is exercised. While Marshall's three dimensions have been extremely influential in discussions about citizenship, his work has not been without criticism (see Heater, 1999; Mann, 1987; Turner, 1990; *inter alia*). At the same time, we want to suggest that they still constitute a clear way of understanding citizenship, although there are different elements of each that also need to be considered here.

One of the strengths of Marshall's work was the insight that he had that there must always be a tension between citizenship and capitalism, a tension already noted in this paper. This is a point upon which Turner (1990,p.193) elaborated:

It is clear however that political rights are of a very different order from economic rights, since in many respects the development in capitalist societies stopped, as it were, at the factory gates. Democracy did not develop fully into economic democracy.

Indeed, the battles for workers' rights occupies many a page in the history of most societies of the world as the public has sought to exercise power over the private domain of capital - and we might also add to economic rights those of the consumer. We have already illustrated the significance of Turner's statement in our previous discussion on globalisation: indeed, globalisation has emphasised the need civil action since the power of the state is itself being undermined by these processes. But we have already seen how historical processes have helped generate a sense of passivity amongst the

people. Nevertheless, consumerism can also become a political agency in a world dominated by the global market since buyers can merely change their shopping preferences. But unless there is concerted action in public space, these changes in consumer preference may merely be viewed as market forces, so that there is the need for public space and therefore political and civil rights to institute changes that are more than market forces. But, with the change in the nature of the political and the way that the market can be influenced by civil action demonstrates that the distinction between the private and the public is still fluid, as Habermas (1989) has shown quite clearly.

Precisely the same type of argument can be made for other concerns such as the ecological movement, feminism, the rights of the elderly, and so on. Without political and civil rights there is no space for active citizenship – at whatever level it is to be performed. However, this is one of the major problems since there is now no given territory in which a dominant political power operates. Agents of change are necessary, especially in response to the forces of globalisation and they focus on the significance of non-governmental organisations which are able to challenge the authority of states, international agencies and even the global sub-structure. Held *et al* (1999,p.449) regard this position as radical republicanism. For them (1999,p.447), liberal thinking is reformist and based on an assumption that ‘political necessity will drive forward the democratization and civilization of globalization’ (Held *et al*, 1999,p.447). This is a rather passive form of citizenship. In this global society, active citizenship and democracy are about belonging to communities of interest at local, national and international level, which is about civil action, and this is at the heart of politics itself. They also point to cosmopolitan forms of citizenship which entail ‘mediating between national traditions, communities of fate and alternative forms of life’ (p.449). For them, the active role of the citizen is also to be a negotiator and mediator between different traditions but also to be able to enter different cultural and political communities.

Marshall’s third dimension of citizenship rights is the social. But it is increasingly clear that in global society there are vast numbers of people who appear to have no social rights. Bauman (1999,pp.175-6) summarises a United Nations’ Development report thus:

- consumption has multiplied by a factor of six since 1950, but one billion people cannot even satisfy their most elementary needs;
- 60% of residents in developing countries have no basic social infrastructures, 33% no access to drinking water, 25% no accommodation worthy of the name and 20% no sanitary or medical services;
- the average income of 120 million people is less than \$1 per day;
- in the world’s richest country (USA), 16.5% live in poverty, 20% of the adult population are illiterate; 13% have a life expectancy of shorter than 60 years;
- the world’s three richest men have private assets greater than the combined national products of the 48 poorest countries;
- the fortunes of the 15 richest men exceeds the total produce of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa;
- 4% of the wealth of the world’s richest 225 men would offer the poor of the world access to elementary medical and educational amenities as well as adequate nutrition.

What is being described here is a situation within which there are no global social rights and no global form of government which could protect these rights, if they actually existed. There is no way that the global economic substructure will either grant these rights or protect them; on the contrary, it is forcing states with welfare systems to restrict

and even abolish them. Hence, there is a need for global civil action to ensure that these conditions of inequality are replaced by a more egalitarian world system, and this has led some commentators to see citizenship as something cosmopolitan (Delanty, 2000).

However, the divide between the rich and the poor has also been one factor in modern migration, although there are others such as people being forced to leave their homes as political refugees. Migration has meant that no population is homogeneous, nor are all its members citizens. Heater (1999, pp87-88) suggests that populations consist of a number of different types of citizen:

- active citizens – who have complete set of rights and discharge their civic duties;
- passive citizens – who have full rights but are apathetic in performing their civic duties;
- second class citizens – have status but are denied their legal rights because of discrimination;
- underclass – have legal status but because of impoverishment they are excluded from the normal social and political activity that the term connotes;
- denizens – residents but not citizens and are denied political rights but enjoy many of the other rights associated with citizenship.

Significantly, he also suggests that women should be regarded as a sixth category since they have been denied civic equality since the invention of the citizenship role. While they are still being denied that equality the feminist movement has played a significant role in reducing it in some, but by no means all, parts of the world. In addition, it might well be that the greater proportion of older citizens would be regarded as passive citizens – although by no means all of them!

The above discussion points to the complexity of the concept and practice of citizenship in global society which is one reason why many of the recent writers cited above do not attempt to offer a definition of it.

Part 2 Civil Society and the Decline of Social Capital

Throughout the above discussion it is clear that the significance of the public sphere has declined because of the power of the private – the global substructure. Now most of the formulations of active citizenship concentrate on the civil domain rather than the political or social. Habermas (2001, p.61) suggests that:

There is a crippling sense that national politics have dwindled to more or less intelligent management of a process of forced adaptation to the pressure to shore up purely local positional advantages.

Delanty, in a similar vein, argues that the idea of a cosmopolitan civil society is meaningless unless there is a cosmopolitan public sphere. He suggests that without a cosmopolitan public sphere, legal and political forms of civil society will not be rooted in the civic dimension of community that is necessary in order to resist homogenizing (*sic*) forms of globalization (Delanty 2000, p.145).

But it might be argued that there is at least a limited public sphere but it is not sufficiently powerful to resist the pressures of globalisation. Indeed, at the level of local or national society, it is advantageous for active citizens in the public sphere to have the security of independence as a result of ownership in the private one (as did the Greeks), but now individuals recognise that no job is for life and that employability is necessary for survival,

so that security is removed. Additionally, the large corporations which either employ, or can influence other employers who employ, activists can find reasons for their dismissal and this adds to the sense of insecurity for those prepared to play a role in the public domain. Indeed, there are an increasing number of cases where individuals' job security has been threatened by the actions of powerful employers. But active membership of a variety of non-governmental agencies does not mean that all civil action need be directed towards resisting the socio-economic forces of globalisation since, as we pointed out above, the process has been wealth producing.

Nevertheless most civil action is still played out at local and state level rather than on a more global playing field, but even action at these levels can have profound effects on the global processes, which is something recognised in the glocalisation debate. Indeed, media coverage of local events makes the concerns of the action known to a wider, and sometimes even a global, public so that an embryonic global public sphere is generated. However, there are still only a few political or legal organisations that transcend the state, such as the European Court of Human Rights.

Most definitions of civil society restrict it to the sphere of action within the state (i.e. Schopflin, 1997) which, whilst realistic, does not allow for the emergence of a global civil society, although some of its apparatus are slowly beginning to appear. In traditional Marxist definitions, the economic sphere was included in definitions of civil society, but due to the forces of globalisation, civil society 'no longer included the economy as constituted by private law and steered through markets in labor, capital and commodities' (Habermas, 1996, p. 366). For Habermas, civil society comprises:

Those nongovernmental and non-economic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld. Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private spheres, distill (*sic*) and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres.
(Habermas, 1996, pp. 366-367)

In a similar manner, the Centre for Civil Society (www) defines it as 'the set of institutions, organisations and behaviour situated between the state, the business world, and the family'. Basically, it consists of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) that address all aspects of citizenship and as Held *et al* maintain active citizenship is now about participation in these communities of interest by both men and women. Significantly, denizens can also be members of NGOs and play a full role in active citizenship in the public sphere in both the civil and social dimensions, but they are still denied the political rights of citizenship.

One of both Turner's and Heater's categories of citizenship is passive citizenship and we have isolated four reasons (the high standard of living, in effectiveness of the political domain in the face of global forces and the risk) which serve to inhibit active citizenship. Putnam's (2000) work is perhaps the most impressive study of the decline in social capital in America over the past few decades, a decline that reflects the decline in active citizenship. Social capital is the potentiality for social action that resides in groups through their shared norms and values, but it must be noted immediately that groups which do not work for the good of society but for their own ends, e.g. racist groups, fundamentalist

religious sects, also possess social capital, so that all social capital is not necessarily socially good. Putnam's work, however, is not without its critics for there are major problems with measurement of social capital. At the same time, there is widespread agreement that there has been a decline in civic participation over these past few decades, for whatever reasons, and this has allowed the forces of the substructure even more freedom.

As can be seen from the above discussion, the society in which we live is very complex, and it is not only the forces of globalisation which need understanding, as Beck (1992) points out, there is a need to understand the complexities of scientific knowledge that has helped generate the risk in today's society. This lack of knowledge is very clear and so education is, unsurprisingly, one of Fukuyama's (1999) suggestions about the ways in which social capital can be increased. He does recognise that creating social capital is a difficult undertaking since much resides within religious communities, but he also suggests that the state should provide more public goods, like property rights. Additionally, he claims that states should not do things in the public sphere that are best left to the public and that globalisation has also had an enriching effect in some ways on civil society. However, he does not really examine the total effects of globalisation on the civil sphere since, had he done so, he may have found it difficult to see the state as quite the autonomous entity that he suggests it to be. Even so, education is a significant factor and it is to this that we now turn.

Part 3 Lifelong Learning

The history of education contains many examples of its claims and functions in preparing people to play active citizenship roles but, paradoxically, much sociological work into education has demonstrated that it has always played a socially and culturally reproductive role in society. For instance, Bourdieu (1973,p.84) wrote:

By making social hierarchies and the reproduction of these hierarchies appear to be based upon the hierarchy of 'gifts', merits or skills established and ratified by its sanctions, or, in a word, by converting social hierarchies into academic hierarchies, the educational system fulfils a function of legitimation which is more and more necessary to the perpetuation of the 'social order' as the evolution of the power relationship between classes tends more completely to exclude the imposition of a hierarchy based upon the crude and ruthless affirmation of the power relationship.

Basically, Bourdieu is arguing that schooling will not succeed in creating the type of active citizens in civic society that contemporary society demands. Moreover, we are beginning to see the way that education is becoming more orientated to employability than ever before. But there have been significant changes in our thinking about education over these past three decades and now lifelong learning has come to the fore, and employability is also a major theme in the European documents on lifelong learning, although the Commission's thinking has itself changed over the past few years and so, perhaps, it will be useful to trace briefly this evolution.

In 1995 when it published the *White Paper on Education and Training* the European Commission has made public its concerns about the need to have lifelong learning within the whole of Europe so that it can assume its place as a global leader in the knowledge economy. In a sense the paper sets the citizenship and education agenda:

The future of European culture depends on its capacity to equip young people to question constantly and seek new answers without prejudicing human values. This is the very foundation of citizenship and is essential if European society is to be open, multicultural and democratic (EC 1995,p.10).

Within two years, however, the Commission had coupled lifelong learning and citizenship much more explicitly, whilst still emphasising the need to promote policies to restore the employment situation.

This educational area (Europe) will facilitate an **enhancement of citizenship** through the sharing of common values, and the development of a sense of belonging to a common social and cultural area. It must encourage a broader-based understanding of citizenship, founded on active solidarity and on mutual understanding of the cultural diversities that constitute Europe's originality and richness. (**bold** in the original). (European Commission, 1997,p.4)

Two things are clear here: that the emphasis is still on education for citizenship and that the concern is still with citizenship *per se* rather than with active citizenship. Both of these emphases were to change the following year.

In 1998, however, the Commission acknowledged citizenship could not be taught, since it had cognitive, affective and practical dimensions – it could be learned, however, and learning for active citizenship became an aim of lifelong learning. Here, the teaching of citizenship is not enough – it is the learning of citizenship which is essential...Learning for active citizenship includes access to the skills and competencies that young people will need for effective economic participation under conditions of technological modernisation, economic globalisation, and, very concretely, transnational European labour markets. (EC,1998,p.6)

Learning for active citizenship is still something for young people but it is not an optional extra but an integral part of living and acting within the EU, demanding autonomy and critical reflection rather than having a fixed list of norms and values. Yet this is also a major problem, since schools usually have little time to build the *learning active* dimension of citizenship into their curriculum.

In many ways the Commission had already actually been encouraging the process of learning to be European citizens by its exchange programmes and its encouragement of co-operative endeavours, and it now recognised that these programmes offered 'considerable scope for the promotion of various learning for active citizenship' (European Commission, 1998,p.7). More significantly, the Commission espoused democratic and participative pedagogies that have long been accepted by adult educators without overtly adopting the political perspectives of many of the adult educators who practised these pedagogies in the past. The document even uses the language of adult education, such as critical thinking, reflective thought and empowerment, and we shall return to this below. Once this step had been made the emphasis was no more solely on providing for the citizens since they had to be active and participant learners, so that there was a shift in emphasis from the provision of rights to the responsibilities of the citizen, and the type of citizenship to be emphasised changed from a passive form to an active one:

Active citizenship with a European dimension implies not simply being aware of and effectively exercising the rights and responsibilities enjoyed by citizens of the Union, but also affirming the principles of and gaining the skills required to live in plural societies that are constructed through multifaceted difference. (European Commission, 1998,p,9)

Now the practice of active citizenship in Europe had become about exercising both rights and responsibilities. Active citizenship means participation and involvement as was clearly stated in *Education for Active Citizenship* (EC 1998). It is the responsibility of people to become socially included. Consequently, by the time of the *Memorandum of Lifelong Learning* (EC 2000) there were now two clear aims of lifelong learning: active citizenship and employability. Indeed, employability was seen as 'a core dimension of active citizenship' (p.5) and it may be regarded as the key that unlocks the door to some form of citizenship, but both are dependent on having adequate and up-to-date knowledge. However, employability does not provide that security that we have already argued is essential for citizens who may be prepared to risk playing an active role in society. Nevertheless, lifelong learning became regarded as 'the key to ensuring social integration and achieving equal opportunities' (p.6), but it is also essential for social inclusion. In addition, there is continuing recognition that learning is more than a cognitive phenomenon, but those other aspects are not really discussed. The cognitive domain is the one least likely to result in activity! However, the Commission is clear that innovative pedagogies will constitute part of the theme for research funding under Framework 6. In our own research (ETGACE), which was funded by the Commission, we have found that active citizens often has a religious background or that they have acquired their desire to be active from their family upbringing. This reflects the discussion above on social capital. But other respondents have specified that a feeling, a sense of injustice being perpetuated motivated them to action – something that is both affective and moral.

More recently, the Commission (2001a) published *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* in which it was more specifically recognised that the Europe of Knowledge threatens to bring about 'greater inequalities and social exclusion' (p.6) so that it is claimed that lifelong learning

is much more than economics. It also promotes the goals and ambitions of the European countries to become more inclusive, tolerant and democratic. And it promises a Europe in which citizens have the opportunity and ability to realise their ambitions and to participate in building a better society (p.7).

Significantly, the emphasis on the relationship between active citizenship and employability is explicitly downplayed (p.9). Now the aims of lifelong learning have become: personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability. At the same time, building a 'better society' has become an aim of citizenship and unless the good society is only materialistic, and the EC documents do not really read this way, then space is implicitly being made for political action in the public sphere. However, EC documents are at pains to point out that in the Europe of Knowledge, active citizens must be aware of the issues and engage in critical debate. Lifelong learning should empower citizens both to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based society and also to respond to the demands and ambitions of the European Union and its member states (p.8).

At about the same time, the Commission published a White Paper on *Governance* (2001b) in which it recognises that European citizens are fundamentally disenchanted with politics and politicians, i.e. they are dissatisfied consumers, as we pointed out earlier in this paper. However, its two solutions are about enabling its citizens to understand about the way that European governance operates (knowledgeable consumers) and, significantly, a greater involvement by civil society in the processes of governance.

Civil society plays an important role in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people's needs. Churches and religious communities have a particular contribution to make. The organisations that make up civil society mobilise people and support, for instance, those suffering from exclusion or discrimination. The Union has encouraged the development of civil society in the applicant countries, as part of their preparation for membership. Nongovernmental organisations play an important role at global level in the development of policy. They often act as a warning system for the direction of political debate.
(European Commission, 2001b,p.10)

The White Paper makes it clear that greater participation in governance is a necessity, although it does not spell out any of the strategies for lifelong learning for active citizenship that might be expected given the emphasis placed on it in the lifelong learning documents. Yet those documents give something of a clue for the way that the Commission's thinking about lifelong learning is going and perhaps it could also learn from the history of adult education, the vocabulary of which the recent documents have employed. But lifelong learning has always used this vocabulary, but it now needs to rediscover some the adult educational practices from which it emerged originally.

Adult education has long been involved in all forms of citizenship education for civil society, and it has not only produced thinkers about it but also a wide variety of innovative educational programmes. Amongst the thinkers have been Freire and Horton (see Jarvis, 2001,pp.223-299 for a discussion of some of them) and feminist thinkers like Jane Thompson (1983); amongst the programmes have been the Danish folk high schools and the Scandinavian Study Circles; amongst the community action programmes have been those in the troubled Northern Ireland (Lovett *et al*, 1983) and a great deal of the early history of Canadian adult education (Selman,1991). It would be possible to extend this list almost *ad infinitum*, but these are but examples of this history. As lifelong learning has embraced the traditional educational approaches and now moves towards more innovative pedagogies, there is a great deal that it can learn from adult education's rich history.

But school education should not be omitted from this discussion even though it has traditionally acted as an agency of reproduction – it also needs to discover new pedagogies based upon the fact that active citizenship in civil society is practical, moral, religious and affective. School curricula, including the processes of teaching and learning, need to find ways of incorporating these so that children can be exposed to a programme that prepares them for life as well as one that prepares them for working life.

Concluding Discussion

In conclusion, therefore, I want to pick up some of these issues as they relate to the third age and lifelong learning.

I do not think that Marshal was wrong when he pointed to the significance of education for citizenship but I would like to make two points about this. Firstly, we are now talking

about lifelong learning and while I am convinced that citizenship is still an important subject for school curricula, it is also a vital one for adult education. As we have seen this is one branch of education that has provided many opportunities for learning to be active citizens. Its history is replete with thinkers who have been involved in active citizenship and so I think that the European Commission needs to devote more time framing policies for adult education that are less vocational and more citizenship orientated. But because of globalisation, I think that this form of adult learning is under considerable threat. Governments, e.g. the UK, withdraw funding from liberal adult education and give it to vocational education. Responding to the global pressures, governments have tended to give in – but then they would have the support of the powerful in global businesses because they are often bad citizens despite their publicity claims to be otherwise. Consequently, we can see that while governments claim to be supporting active citizenship, there is a real sense in which other policies that they introduce is doing precisely the opposite.

Secondly, we know – and I know from my own experience with a local University of the Third Age, that many third-agers are not really concerned with being involved in lifelong learning nor active citizenship. Aldridge and Tuckett (2004,p.10) showed for the UK that from 45years onwards there is a declining participation rate in adult learning – but we should not be discouraged at this because active living is itself undergoing considerable change. In the United Kingdom the life expectancy has increased by about 10 years in the past half a century, more older people are continuing to work in order to fulfil themselves and more are much healthier. This trend is expected to continue, so that we can anticipate a greater number of third age people being actively concerned in the next generation and, as they increase in number, so their political potency increases and politicians will have to listen to them.

However, there is one major reason why third-agers should be in a position to play a more active political role in society and this is security. The Greeks who were able to play that role owned their own property and were, therefore, independent of the State. Note the number of times somebody speaks out about their employer's malpractice that they lose their job – note the way that the term 'whistle blower' carries an undertone of distrust and disrespect. In this competitive world people depend on their employers and so it becomes harder to speak out against malpractice and also as the often extremely long hours demanded at work there is little time to be involved so that that independence only emerges on retirement, so that with increasing wealth and health third-agers are becoming a major force in civil society. It seems to me, therefore, that it is the more affluent, independent, educated third-ager who can actually become the active citizen that contemporary democracies demand and for which the European Commission is asking.

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