CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY IN XXI CENTURY: ANALYSIS OF THE MOAS AS A FORUM FOR TRAINING IN DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The challenges existing in today's globalized, interdependent and changing world require the search and implementation of innovative teaching-learning methodologies to facilitate the process of acquiring skills for active citizenship that promotes critical thinking, leadership and negotiation.

The simulations, as a methodological strategy, allow exercise a skill set associated with the practice of citizenship, which is why this research presents and analyzes a specific case: Model OAS –Organization of American States-General Assembly (MOAS) as a forum for training in democratic values and practices.

This research analyzes the training process and results of the academic experience of this type of simulations on two levels: secondary and university students.

KEY WORDS: Democracy- active citizenship- MOAS - innovative teaching-learning methodologies.

PANEL: International political socialization and its effects.

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INTRODUCTION

Most politological studies on youth and participation in Latin America have been oriented fundamentally towards characterizing their democratic practices from an electoral perspective (party identification and voting) and a social perspective (being a part of organizations and associations), adopting a quantitative approach. Whereas, the efforts to understand their own notions of democracy and citizenship, created on their quotidian environment, have been slightly less considerable.

In this sense, and with the intention of systematizing and spreading an experience that contributes to political socialization, the present study discusses the academic simulation (MOAS) that intends to develop values and democratic practices in secondary students (between the ages of 14 and 17) and university students (between the ages of 18 and 24) in an international context that allows them to understand the logic under which international actors operate (the Organization of American States, OAS), value agreements, adopting the position of a someone other than oneself (particularly a Member State) and acquire a more complex vision of themselves as global citizens. The MOAS is a simulation of the process of deliberation in the permanent Committees of the OAS, where students develop skills such as leadership, negotiation, communication, as well as others.

To achieve the goal that was set, this paper is structured in the following manner: (i) Challenges for education in XXI century and its relations with democracy and global citizenship; (ii) Case study: Model of the OAS General Assembly (MOAS); (iii) Analysis of the training process previous to MOAS and its effects on political socialization of secondary and university students. And to conclude we present a final part with some last thoughts.
Today, our world is interdependent and globalized, forces that are strengthening in twenty-first century, emerging tensions between global public problems and local public problems, universal or individual concerns, extraordinary expansion of knowledge and human capability to assimilate it; spiritual development and material progress, among others. All these changes present a big challenge for education, since both industrialization and the consolidation of capitalist system have led to a reductionist and biased human beings, the compartmentalization of knowledge, the division of labor, over-specialization, the disintegration information and the resulting multiplicity of approaches and paradigms to "see" the world and live in it.

In this context, individuals interact with progressively larger numbers of people who are increasingly diverse (in terms of culture, language, religion, ideology, abilities, lifestyles, etc.). This diversity requires human beings who are able to understand, accept and respect "the other as legitimate other" (Maturana, 2008: 45).

In the Latin American space particularly in the last decades of the twentieth century end authoritarian regimes and the emphasis is on the return to democracy. The first decade of the twenty-first century begins, then as a post-authoritarian period of "transition", where concerns relate to gradually consolidate democracy in the countries of the region, then in the second decade of the century -after thirty years of democracy in Latin America - go to the stage of "post transition" as much or more complex phase in the democratization process, in which the debate focuses on the quality of democracy, mechanisms to ensure social rights for citizens and reduce the concentration of political power (UNDP 2004, UNDP, OAS, 2010).

In Latin America, during the last decades of the XX century, the authoritarian regime came to an end and emerged a new emphasis on the recuperation of democracies, initiating the XXI century as post-authoritarian, or “transitional”. New concerns are related more intensely with the consolidation of democracy in countries throughout the region, and on the second decade of the XXI century – after thirty years of democracy in Latin America – the debate becomes more focalized on guaranteeing the quality of democracy, the mechanisms for assuring social rights for citizens and diminishing the concentration of political power (PNUD, 2004; PNUD-OEA, 2010).

In this regional context, new practices, discourses and tensions arise in relation to the exercise of citizenship and public affairs, that can be appreciated in the so called “deficit of Latin-American democracies”.

1. Crisis of representation, related to the weakness of electoral options and the elimination of key issues in the democratic agenda;
2. Insufficient check and balances within the State, lack of transparency and accountability towards citizens.
3. A weak capacity of the State to exercise its functions effectively, from maintain the monopoly of legitimate force use to assuring citizen’s rights (PNUD-OEA, 2010: 16).

In this overview, the region “must take a quantitative leap of additional improves and expansion of citizenship, otherwise, current democratic deficits will deepen” (Muñoz en PNUD-OEA, 2010: 23).

However, even though the establishment of the quality of democracy is directly related to their capacity to generate citizenship, because “democracy is a method of organization of power and society so that their inhabitants may progress in the effective realization of their rights, understanding this step- from the nominal to the real- as the creation of citizenship” (PNUD-OEA, 2010: 27);
The necessity to generate it or expand it to move forward in the process of democratization and; it is stated that “the public agenda and the debate are important for the development of citizenship” (PNUD-OEA-OEA, 2010: 41), but no courses of action are set forth to achieve such objective.

So, before the question, how to expand citizenship?, the role of education emerges as key, even more when it is recognized within the challenges of social policies, as one of the rights that permit the true practice of liberty by citizens within the democratic system, since it allows social mobility. It also allows us to generate spaces to strengthen active citizen exercise, global overview and the acknowledgement of local identity particularities and the value that they entail.

Educate to generate and/or expand citizenship, requires identifying and selecting an educative approach that permits individuals to mobilization their resources, become actively involved in public affairs, bearing in mind that “the individual is a carrier of rights. The citizen is an actor of rights” (PNUD-OEA, 2010: 51), thus emerging the approach of development by competences as an alternative. In consequence it becomes necessary to generate programs with innovative methodologies that understand these challenges, but not with a restrictive perspective focused solely on work performance, but a much more comprehensive approach for the exercise of citizenship in a globalized world.

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3 Polisemantic concept associated with its use and the characteristics of the surrounding
Concepto polisémico asociado al uso que se hace de ella y a las características del entorno en la que se ubica. Sin embargo, su utilización comienza a popularizarse a partir de lo señalado por Chomsky en el área de la lingüística, donde establece la diferencia entre competencia y desempeño -competence and performance- (Chomsky, 1965:4). En forma progresiva, diversas disciplinas fueron incorporando y reelaborando este concepto hasta llegar a su aplicación en el campo educativo.
Xxx, the formation of competences has been debated worldwide. In the early 90’s, the “World Declaration of Education for all” or “Jomtien Declaration” underlines the international concern for the development of specific competences that are not necessarily acquired with a teaching style centered on the accumulation of knowledge. Afterwards the “Delors Report”\(^4\) (1996) – one of the most meaningful contemporary documents related to the subject, prepared for UNESCO by the International Commission of Education for the XXI century, entitled “Learning: the treasure within” establishes that in the current context it is necessary to “accomplish that the world converges towards mutual comprehension, on the base of accepting our differences” (Delors et al, 1996: 31). Then, education plays a key role in the realization of this universal task, since it “helps us understand the world and comprehend each other, thus comprehending oneself” (Delors et al, 1996: 31).

The importance of this text lies in that, even though it does not take care of the term “competence” explicitly, it reinstalls in the international sphere the idea of integral and harmonious education, establishing that education must be sustained in four key pillars: (i) learn to know, (ii) learn to do, (iii) learn to be, (iv) learn to coexist (Delors et al, 1996: 34). On one hand, “learn to learn”, that goes beyond the simple transmission of information and is not related exclusively to the acquirement of classified and codified knowledge, but to handle tools of personal knowledge. Moreover, “learn to be” reinforces the idea of potential and personal abilities, also “learn to coexist” emphasizes the necessity to comprehend the otherness, respecting and accepting diversity (Delors et al, 1996).

However, the definitive impulse that awarded legitimacy to the formation of competences was done in 2006, in the context of the European Community, through the recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council. The relevance of this document is mayor, since it makes explicit the notion of permanent learning and identifies the substantial difference between competences and “key competences” or “basic competences”, being “those that everyone requires for their realization and personal development, an also for active citizenship, social inclusion and employment” (European Parliament and Council, 2006: 13). In this manner, a specific category that is not only related to competences is recognized with the performance in a specific work environment, but to those linked to public affairs and the exercise of global citizenship.

It is a way of approaching all that we do in any educational institutions. It can be embedded in any subject and applies to all ages and abilities and is about the outcomes in the individual. (OXFAM, 2008: 2).

At the same time, this concept included the necessity of been flexible, creative, proactive, able to solve problems, make decisions, think critically, communicate

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\(^4\) Así conocido debido a que el Presidente de la Comisión era Jacques Delors, político francés de amplia experiencia, no sólo fue Ministro de Hacienda sino también presidente de la Comisión Europea entre 1985 y 1995.
ideas effectively and work well within teams and groups. These skills and attributes are increasingly recognized as being essential to succeed in other areas of 21st century life too (…) These skills and qualities cannot be developed without the use of active learning methods through which pupils learn by doing and by collaborating with others. (OXFAM, 1998:5).

The key competences identified by the European Parliament and Council are: (i) communication in the mother tongue; (ii) communication in foreign languages; (iii) mathematic competence and basic competences in science and technology; (iv) digital competence; (v) learn to learn; (vi) civil and social competences; (vii) sense of initiative and enterprise spirit; (viii) consciousness and cultural expressions (Parlamento Europeo y Consejo, 2006: 13).

Concomitantly, and with a more global view (not just European), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the year 2005 as a result of the Definition and Selection of Competencies Project (DeSeCo Project) it follows the logic of differentiating among those competences that can be called as “basic” and it establishes – in collaboration with academic, experts and institutions- a set of key competences. Thus it points out that “a competency is more than knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to face complex demands, relying in and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including resources and attitudes) in a particular context” (OCDE, 2005: 3).

Furthermore it emphasizes that “a competency is also an important factor in the contribution of individuals to change or transform the world, not just in the way in which they face it” (OCDE, 2005: 5). In a more specific sense, then, key competencies “involve the mobilization of practical and cognitive skills, creative abilities and other psychosocial resources such as attitudes, motivation and values (…) a main part of this framework is thinking and reflective action” (OCDE, 2005: 5).

Key competences identified by the OECD are: (i) the ability to use interactively tools- languages, symbols, knowledge, information, technology in an effective manner; (ii) the ability to interact with heterogeneous groups – relate, cooperate, handle and resolve conflicts– and (iii) the ability to act autonomously – behaving according to the context, formulating and conducting life plans, personal projects, asserting rights, limits, interests and necessity (OCDE 2005).

The revision of the advances in the approach of the formation by competencies at an international level, showing a certain convergence; the basic competencies that people require within its behavioral repertoire to cope in the XXI century, relating to those required for the active exercise of active and global citizenship.

5 “A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context” (OECD, 2005: 4).
In a more specific sense then, how can we develop practical competencies for global and active citizenship? In the face of this question the necessity to focalize the reflection arises, in those innovative and participative methodologies of teaching-learning focused on the students that permit the acquirement of competencies through “learn by doing”.

Then, case studies and simulations emerge as useful methodological strategies, because they allow students not only to know and understand concrete social processes, but develop analytic capacity, critical judgments, ability to synthesize, creativity and proactivity.

The simulations are “previously structured reproductions of situations, events and real problems, that present themselves within a political system regarding a public policy or a resolution of governmental nature, generally dealing with controversial issues (...) and conflict resolution of economical, social and political actors …” (Hernández, 2008: 11). Therefore, they have the utility that “introduces students to concrete pressures that interfere in the judgment of the decision makers, the dilemmas they face and the restrictions that limited resources impose on to them; allowing students to experiment the decision making in a group context and providing a vision of the world with models that students can capture more easily in the real world” (Dougherty y Pfaltzgraff, 199: 540).

Then, depending on how the simulations are designed they can contribute to developing and/or strengthening team work, leadership, problem solving ability, communications skills, negotiation, conflict management and resolution, among others. All competencies and abilities that are increasingly acknowledge as key in the life in the XXI century (OXFAM, 1998; OXFAM, 2008). In this way, educative models promote competencies related to democratic practices through methodologies that tend towards meaningful learning, favouring the construction of active citizenship and a democracy with higher level of legitimacy.

**CASE STUDY: MODEL OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (MOAS)**

**What is MOAS? A description of its history, objectives and procedures.**

The Model of the OAS General Assembly (MOAS) is a program of the Department of International Affairs (DIA) / Secretariat for External Relations of the OAS, designed in 1980 -as a joint project between the OAS and

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These skills and qualities cannot be developed without the use of active learning methods through which pupils learn by doing and by collaborating with others (OXFAM, 1998:5).
Georgetown University- to promote democratic values amongst the youth of the Hemisphere (DAI, 2012).

The MOAS is a simulation exercise of the debates of the OAS Permanent Council and of the annual regular sessions of the General Assembly of the OAS. During the simulation, students represent the policies and interests of one OAS Member State, they follow proper parliamentary proceedings to debate and approve resolutions prepared by them dealing with current issues on the Inter-American agenda associated with democracy, Human Rights, development, security, regional cooperation and other topics (DAI, 2012).

Therefore, MOAS objectives are related to global and active citizenship formation (DAI, 2012):

i) Promote democratic values and practices amongst the youth of the region;

ii) Familiarize students and academic institutions of the Americas with the mission, structure and functions of the OAS and its role as the foremost political forum of the Hemisphere;

iii) Offer a space for participants to analyze the major political, economic, social and security issues in the Americas;

iv) Highlight the relevance of diplomacy as a problem solving mechanism;

v) Facilitate the development of leadership skills in young people, such as negotiation, team-work and problem solving.

There are MOAS for universities, high schools and OAS Interns. Each year approximately 1500 students and 100 teachers from throughout the Hemisphere participate in the various MOAS (DAI, 2012). MOAS for universities has two formats: one in English (held annually in Washington D.C.) and other one in Spanish, held in different countries of the Americas each year (in the same city where the GA will take place afterwards). The model for high schools and OAS Interns was made only in United States (English version) up until 2011, when other countries such as Chile, Colombia and El Salvador, began to organize national Models with high school students.

Specifically, each participating high school or university (according to the type of MOAS) represents one of the 34 OAS Member States. Countries are assigned by the Department of International Affairs of the OAS or by the University that is in charge of organizing the Model (in national ones), (DAI, 2012).

The work is done in Permanent Council Committees (replicating the real work of the Organization), which are:

i) General Committee,

ii) Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs,

iii) Committee on Hemispheric Security,

iv) Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities,

v) Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs.
Each delegation must have two students per Committee, adding up to a total of ten (10) delegates and one faculty advisor. Delegates must have a working knowledge of the OAS functions and its basic documentation, as well as a thorough knowledge of the MOAS rules of procedure, which must be observed throughout the duration of the sessions. Moreover, students must draft resolution proposals following the Instructions for Drafting Resolutions provided by the Department of International Affairs or the University, depending on the type of MOAS. Once they have completed them, they are expected to lobby in order to obtain support from other participant to the proposals. When they have guaranteed that support, a delegate must defend his or hers proposal during debate in their respective Committees. Nonetheless, it is important to consider that MOAS is more than just an event, it’s an academic experience that is helpful for understanding what democracy is and how to live it.

What is the methodology? Three phases of the Model and the activities in each one

a. Preparation Phase

Once the team has been (students and faculty advisor) and a country has been assigned to them, the preparation process begins. During this time, the team has to investigate, do case studies and role playing.

The research work is comprised by the recollection, systematization, hierarchization and analysis of useful information required for the elaboration of resolutions and political speeches. On one hand the objective of doing case study work is to become more familiarized with the country assigned to represent, understand its foreign policy, political allies within the region, and its priorities in the Inter-American agenda. On the other hand, the purpose of role playing is to practice rules of procedure that they are required to know in order to debate in the Model, this exercise also encourages improvisation and the development of counter argumentation and rhetoric skills, using proper diplomatic language commonly used in multilateral forums.

During this period of preparation, the faculty advisors have to attend formative meetings especially organized to prepare them for the Model, to understands its procedures, the issues in the agenda, and also to provide them with a general overview of the international context. Furthermore, an optional visit to the Embassy of the country they represent takes places in this stage.

b. Implementation Phase (the simulation itself)

In this final academic event (that lasts generally around three days) all that has been learned in the preparation phase is put into practice, the multiple competences that where assimilated through reflection during the preparations phase.
The first activity is the Inauguration Ceremony, where several authorities from the OAS, the University that organizes the events and the host country attend as well as all delegations. The Ceremony is initiated with welcoming speeches from the authorities and followed by the inaugural speeches of each head delegate where they address the GA as a formal representative of the country assigned to them.

After this ceremony comes to an end, the debate is initiated. At this moment all delegates attend separately to their respective Committees. During the debate they present their resolutions and defend them publicly in a formal speech; they can also intervene during the presentation of the resolutions presented by other countries, to do so they must formulate speeches in favor or against supporting the resolution in question, bearing in mind that those speeches must be aligned with the foreign policy of the country they represent. At this point, critical thinking, the ability to argument and make decision under pressure is key. Simultaneously, the center of communications comprised by communication officials appointed by each delegation organizes press conferences and press releases related to the Inter-America agenda.

After the debate in each Commission has been finalized, delegates must select their authorities for the Model that will take place the following year; those authorities are President and Vice-President per Committee and the Secretary General of the Model. Usually the election of authorities is the result of positive evaluation of the performance of certain delegates by their peers.

Finally, the last day of the Model, the heads delegates simulate a General Assembly where they vote the book of resolution that contain all resolutions that were approved in the Committees, they also vote the Declaration, a political document elaborated by delegates simultaneous to the work in Committees.

c. Evaluation Phase

This phase is not formally a part of the Model designed by the OAS; however, it is of vital importance to comprehend the meaningful learning done by students during their participation. The responsibility of evaluating, however, rests solely on the faculty advisors.

In the case of the Model organized by the University of Chile for secondary students, a process of evaluation was implemented; several surveys and semi-structured interviews to participants (both students and their teachers) were applied.
University level

In so far, we have detailed over five years of experience of preparation and participation in Models for universities, both in spanish (Buenos Aires, 2007; Chile, 2008; Honduras, 2009; Lima, 2010; El Salvador, 2011; Cochabamba, 2012) and in english (Washington, 2008, y 2010). In these versions, the delegation from the University of Chile has been solely students from the degree of Public Administration.

Over sixty students have participated in these models, building teams of students in different years of the career.

The participation in MOAS allows them to discover the existence of another area of professional performance, related to the international sphere, strengthening their abilities of communication, negotiation, decision-making that will be useful for their academic development, as well as citizen exercise and professional future.

After participating in the Models, all attendants develop and strengthen their international scope, on public issues with a particular stress on regional affairs, something that becomes evident when we examine the development of internships, research oriented to international affairs and also the advance of post-graduates titles in this subject. Furthermore, a virtual community arises among participants, this facilitates the interaction despite geographical distances and the discussion of the key issues in the Inter-American

Participants have also been a part of surveys and interviews, most of them pointed out that MOAS allowed them to: know different realities, building networks of academic collaboration and friendship with young leaders interested in public affairs in the American region.

Secondary level

On the other hand, the experience with secondary students this is due to the organizer role adopted the University of Chile, particularly the Institute of Public Affairs, to implement the "First National Model OAS General Assembly for high school students", capitalizing on the experience gained in university Models.

This academic project corresponds to an innovative experience, since it was the first time a model of this kind took place in Latin America, attracting the interest in the other countries of the region. This project was supported by the Department of International Affairs (DIA) of the Ministry of External Relations of the OAS and with the sponsorship of the House of Representatives and Senate of Chile, the Subsecretariat of Foreign Affairs and the Diplomatic Academy "Andres Bello ".

This Model was held from 17 to 19 August 2011 and was attended by 250 young people from different schools in the country (public and private) and from different regions of Chile (from Chuquicamata in the north to Punta Arenas in the south) in a country highly segregated (OECD, 2011). Thus, the Model generated a meeting of public and private schools from different regions, contributing to meet diverse realities and worldviews.

It is also worth mentioning that the first MOAS for secondary students in Chile took place in a context of protests and student movements, which demanded free and quality education, contrary to the prevailing neoliberal model.

It is noteworthy that the school environment replicates the social segregation in Chile and the MOAS allowed the construction of a community of students who stay in touch by having common interests, discussing public affairs in the region with highly use of Facebook as a network of collaboration and promotion of public debate that is still active to date.

Taking into account both experiences, is possible to say: if at university level is important to students know foreign cultures and people, in a secondary level (specially in the Chilean case, where the educative system is deep segregate and maintain social exclusion) to meet students from different regions of the country and distinct socio-economical levels, is like meet foreign.

What are the competences that students developed in this Model? The impact in student’s formation and its effects in international political socialization

Both the preparatory and in the implementation phase of the model, the students put into practice skills of knowledge, know-how and being. As detailed below:

**Cognitive Competences**

a) To know the structure of OAS (its key documents and organizational behavior).
b) To learn about the topics included in interamerican agenda (contents and implications).
c) To understand and measure up the exercise of diplomacy (use of language, interpersonal communication style, importance of the rules of procedure to articulate debate in at an international forum).
d) To assimilate in a reflexive way the international political positions of the represented country and their role in a multilateral forum (positions, objectives, and political coalitions in the region).
e) To understand and measure up the parliamentarian procedures in a democratic context.
**Procedimental Competences**

a) To collect, select and systematize information.
b) To elaborate proposal drafts resolutions.
c) To elaborate discourses according with international political position of the Member State represented.
d) To design strategies in a particular negotiation context to achieve consensus.
e) To persuade with arguments with sense for another one, recognizing as an actor who can complement and improve the proposal draft resolutions.
f) To put in practice negotiation skills and make decisions in complex, diverse and interdependent scenario.
g) To advance solutions of public policies in the American context.

**Actitudinal Competences**

a) Commitment and leadership.
b) Tolerance
c) Selfstime
d) Confidence
e) Proactivity
f) Creativity and innovation
g) Communication skills
h) Empathy and assertiveness
i) Team work
j) Adaptation capability
k) Critical judgement
l) Active listening
To summarize, the follow diagram show the explicative case study sistematized:

Diagram 1.
The phases of MOAS and their effects in international political socialization

Preparation

Simulation

Evaluation

Effects:
- Know the international context.
- Reflexive assimilation of power relationships.

Effects:
- Empowerment in the decision making process.
- Interactive political relations.
- Commitment with global objectives.

Outcomes:
- Development of global thinking and active citizenship.
- Incorporate democratic values and practices.
- Community of shared experiences.

Effects:
- Became aware of key competences to practice citizenship.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

This diagram presents the three phases of the Model (preparation, simulation and evaluation) and the effects of each one. This process has outcomes related with development of active and global citizenship.

Therefore, simulation is a methodology that promotes the appropriation, development and/or strengthening of some practices. In this particular case, the simulation developed democratic practices (leadership, deliberation, critical thinking, negotiation) and values (tolerance, respect). In this sense, the scheme allow to apprehend the complexity of teaching-learning process involved in this
case study as an innovative methodological strategy, which permit to put in practice basic competences for global and active citizenship exercise in the XXI century.

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