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**The Ecological State, Environmental Democracy and Ecological Citizenship:  
A productive relationship?  
(work in progress)**

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*Introduction*

The idea of environmental or ecological citizenship emerged within the policy discourse before it entered the academic discourse of green political theory (Bell, 2005). In fact the term “environmental citizenship” was first used in 1990 by a state body, Environment Canada - the Canadian Ministry of the Environment (Szerszynski, 2006). The literature on ecological citizenship often assumes that states are, to a certain extent, responsible for implementing the mechanisms and creating the conditions for its practice (MacGregor and Pardoe, 2005; Dobson and Valencia Sáiz, 2005). Partly because most green theorists of citizenship live in liberal democratic states, partly because it is thought that any transformation of the political order shall emerge from existing institutions, attempts have been made to demonstrate that current neoliberal states can and should encourage more sustainable forms of citizenship (Bell, 2005; Hailwood, 2005; Valencia Sáiz, 2005; Dobson, 2003). There is a tendency to argue that states’ resources and steering capacity can be used to promote green behaviours as a route to extend ecological citizenship, for instance, using tools like legal and monetary incentives (Connelly, 2006; Barry, 2006), granting environmental substantive and procedural rights to citizens (Bell, 2005; Hailwood, 2005) or through ecological citizenship education in schools (Barry, 2006; Hailwood, 2005; Dobson, 2003).

Despite the potential that state bodies have for the promotion of green accounts of citizenship, liberal states are still far from endorsing a politics of environmental protection. Sustainability policies designed by liberal states do not imply the triumph of ecological values (Levy and Wissenburg, 2004). Since the green movement placed ecological issues on the public agenda in the 1970s, general environmental awareness has increased. However, our societies,

state institutions and economies, like many of our daily practices, are still unsustainable. State organisations are implicated in different ways in the process of environmental destruction. Political centralisation, bureaucracy, poverty, militarisation and the pursuit of economic growth, all have devastating consequences for the environment. This scenario makes it difficult for citizens to assume responsibility for their environments and constitutes an obstacle to ecological citizenship.

In the face of this, it seems that the promotion of ecological citizenship should be approached together with the ecological transformation of the state. Environmental political theory helps us to delineate an ideal account of the targets and functions states should endorse from an ecological viewpoint. Although it is widely accepted that any environmental form of state is to emerge from actually existing states, the magnitude of the changes required in institutions and competences is such that the result would be an organisation substantially different from the liberal democratic state. The rise of ecological states requires structural changes to “democratize, decentralize and downsize the state” in order to make it less dependent on capital accumulation and economic growth (Paterson et. al., 2006: 152). Hence the concept of the ecological state transcends the idea of a liberal democratic state governed by a green party with an environmental agenda, as it is grounded on new values, functions, decision rules and forms of participation and representation. Ecological citizenship would be one of these new institutions of the ecological state. Just as a liberal state promotes liberal citizenship, a green state would use its resources to encourage ecological citizenship as one of the essential components of the sustainable society (Barry, 2006, 1999; Eckersley, 2004; Christoff, 1996). From this angle, an ecological state may be in a better position than the liberal-capitalist state to articulate ecological citizenship and implement the green democracy needed to frame it. The underlying assumption is that ecological citizens need ecological states.

Yet, at the same time, ecological citizens are regarded the main actors in the process of greening state institutions. The move towards ecological states requires the active involvement of the green movement and ecological citizens acting together to trigger changes within state institutions, societies and the economy (Barry, 2006; Eckersley, 2004; Dryzek et. al., 2003). Unlike Marxist analyses of state power as the expression of class interests, a different approach sees states as having their own will, which cannot be reduced to the interests of any social group

(Evans, et. al., 1985)<sup>1</sup>. In line with this perspective, John Dryzek defines states' interests as "a set of imperatives for collective action" (2000: 82). State imperatives are functions "that governmental structures must perform if those structures are to secure longevity and stability" (Dryzek, 2000: 83). They exist independently of public officials' will and override their preferences in case of conflict. There are five imperatives: domestic peace, survival or the need to respond to external threats, economic imperative or the need to prevent capital flight, raise revenues and the legitimation imperative (Dryzek, 2000: 83; Dryzek et. al., 2003: 12). This definition of the state in terms of imperatives is useful to understand how a green state may originate and what could be the role of ecological citizens in this process.

The kinds of transformations that will, in the long term, lead to the materialisation of eco-states, are not likely to originate within the state apparatus but outside of it, in the realm of civil society. In order to come about, a green state needs citizens' action to influence debates about the role and functions of the state. Political innovation in the history of Western modern states begins with social movements and the fact that they could attach their respective defining interests to an incipient state imperative. If environmental values were to be linked with both legitimation and economic state imperatives, a green state with an environmental conservation imperative could be established. The first linkage - legitimation - could be done through a politics of environmental risk, whereas the second - economic growth - could be articulated through ecological modernisation (Hunold and Dryzek, 2005; Dryzek, et. al., 2003). These ideas highlight that ecological citizens and groups are the architects of the reforms that will culminate in green states. It appears then that ecological citizenship is both a precondition for the rise of green states and a key element to sustain them.

The above arguments suggest that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the consolidation of green states and the articulation of ecological citizenship. This contribution focuses on this relationship and asks whether it is a productive one. My aim is twofold. On one front, I examine the political system of the ecological state in view of assessing the ways in which it could encourage ecological citizenship. On a second front, I pay attention to how eco-states are going to emerge and be sustained, and in this sense, the role ecological citizens shall

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<sup>1</sup> States' autonomy from social groups does not mean that they do not favour particular groups to the detriment of others. For instance, states' need for capital accumulation renders their own interests coincident with those of economic elites. However, this claim is different from arguing that states are instruments of the capitalist class (Carter, 2010, 1999).

play in this task is stressed. This analysis is undertaken from a green political theory perspective. I take as a point of departure Robyn Eckersley's theory of the green state (2004) for various reasons, namely, because it is, in my view, the most sophisticated and comprehensive analysis of the ecological state, and because it strongly places democracy and citizenship at the core of the state. Drawing on this particular conception of the ecological state, I seek to address the following issues: How is ecological citizenship conceived by a green state? How would a green state promote ecological citizenship? And how could ecological citizens contribute to the emergence of a green state? Through these questions the potential of the ecological state as an agent for ecological citizenship transformation is assessed.

### *The green state and ecological citizenship*

Before embarking on this task, I wish to summarise the main aspects of Eckersley's green theory of the state (2004), as this will inform my study of the relationship between ecological citizenship and the ecological state. Although Eckersley's theory is complex and covers a wide range of topics, I will present an oversimplified account that focuses only on those elements that I find most relevant to my analysis of ecological citizenship.

The green state is, first and foremost, a democratic and constitutional state. It is governed by a "green constitution" that instantiates an "ecological democracy" as the political system of the state, and grants a series of environmental substantive and procedural rights to citizens. Second, the green state is a transnational body that has developed its sovereignty and identity beyond its borders, and assumes responsibility for citizens of other states whenever there are common, transboundary ecological problems. Third, it is not a neutral organisation, but an "ethical and democratically responsible state" (2004: 12), informed by "ecologically responsible statehood" (2004: 228). Fourth, the green state assumes a new rationale and new functions to achieve communicative, social and environmental justice. This is a normative account of the state.

The main objective and one of the key functions of the green state is the articulation of an ecological democracy that renders the implementation of ecological citizenship possible. Ecological democracy is defined as a deliberative democracy with a distinctively normative and ecological content - which results from the incorporation of environmental justice within

communicative justice; consequently, it has an expanded community of justice defined as the affected community” or “community at risk”, and a transnational dimension. What gives rise to the political and moral community of citizens is a “common ecological embeddedness” and the “common capacity to suffer serious ecological or biological harm” (Eckersley, 2004: 196).

Two central features define the promotion of ecological citizenship within the green state: it is a constitutional mandate, and it is accomplished through deliberative innovations. The decisive challenge for a green state seeking to implement an ecological democracy is to find the right mechanisms to enable ecological citizenship both within and beyond its borders, and to give expression to the cosmopolitan principle of affected interests. This principle encourages ecological citizenship obligations: when engaging in democratic debate, citizens should incorporate the interests and possible objections of those absent but affected by the risk or question being debated (that is, citizens of other states, future generations and non-human animals).

Particular procedures for institutionalising ecological democracy and promoting ecological citizenship include unilateral initiatives complemented by multilateral cooperative agreements between states. Examples of unilateral mechanisms are tribunals for non-citizens, where members of the local or national community are responsible for speaking in the name of non-citizens, and assemblies where members of environmental groups would be responsible for the proxy representation of non-humans and future generations. Together with these institutional designs, the green state incorporates other deliberative instruments like statutory policy advisory committees, citizens’ juries, consensus conferences and public environmental enquiries. Ecological democracy would also implement transnational mechanisms such as multilateral agreements between states which create transboundary rights and duties of ecological citizenship, deliberative forums with representatives of all the affected communities and cross-border referenda.

Now, how is this ideal state form going to flourish? The green state is developed from an immanent critique of social and political life. The main obstacles hindering the rise of green states at present are identified: liberal democracy, economic globalisation and the anarchic international system of states. Green states will emerge from practices conceived to reduce the negative effects of those structural features of modern states that have long acted as obstacles to ecological sustainability. In this sense, deliberative innovations, weak ecological modernisation

and environmental multilateralism are the points of departure that should be further deepened so as to result in ecological democracy, strong or reflexive ecological modernisation, and a world order of post-Westphalian or Kantian transnational states. This three-fold process aims at the “mutual democratisation of states and their societies” (Eckersley, 2004: 241).

Economic transformation precedes the move towards greener states. Neoliberal policies have triggered the emergence of the competition state, aimed at attracting capital and making national economies more competitive in the international context. In a world of globalised capitalism and great economic inequalities, the consolidation of green states will take place only if states, especially the most economically powerful, internalise the strong ecological modernisation paradigm. But strong ecological modernisation is a learning process that has to be achieved democratically. Yet liberal democracies do not seem to have the right tools to facilitate strong ecological modernisation and to institutionalise environmental justice, as they lack the free communicative framework that would enable the adoption of fair and unconstrained economic decisions. Consequently, liberal democracy should give way to an ecological and deliberative democracy that better suits the rationale of the green state. So, in Eckersley’s model, the transition to ecological democracy appears as a requisite for the implementation of reflexive ecological modernisation which, in turn, is a condition *sine qua non* for the genesis of a green state.

For changes in economic policy and democratic innovation to result in green states, they have to be reinforced by public debates about the conditions for ecological sustainability and how these may be incorporated into new state functions and roles. This debate, which aims to replace liberal democracy with ecological democracy, is to be initiated by civil society actors in the public sphere. Green movement organisations and ecological citizens have to create a multiplicity of green public spheres while, at the same time, using the party system to influence the conventional locus of politics. Hence the green constitution, ecological democracy, civil society and ecological modernisation are all complementary elements; they constitute a “virtuous circle of change” that will not take place without a dynamic green public sphere (Eckersley, 2004: 246)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> There is another element in Eckersley’s theory of change: an international community of transnational green states. This requires a transition from an anarchic to a post-Westphalian culture based on environmental multilateralism. So “the mutual democratization of states and their societies appears to operate in a virtuous relationship with reflexive ecological modernization at the domestic level and more active environmental multilateralism by such states (and

In short, placed within a theory of the deliberative green state, ecological citizenship is a means to achieve ecological democracy. Ecological citizens are to foster the reforms that will further democratise the state and culminate in the adoption of a green constitution. They have to strengthen the green public sphere, exercise their transboundary rights and make sure that adequate deliberative mechanisms are implemented. Hence the success of the green state depends, partly, on the degree to which citizens accept and commit to the new procedures of ecological democracy.

### *Assessing the potential of green states as facilitators of ecological citizenship*

My analysis of the green state-ecological citizenship nexus proceeds with a critical examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the promotion of ecological citizenship by the green state. Two issues become most relevant in this debate. One is the fact that an ecological democracy is a deliberative democracy. This democratic model offers the right setting for a deliberative understanding of citizenship and environmental issues, lacking in aggregative conceptions. The second aspect relates to the normative or specifically environmental dimension of this particular notion of democracy, which institutionalizes ecological citizenship responsibility. In what follows, I shall further elaborate these points.

The duties of ecological citizenship aim at the common good of the society, understood as ecological sustainability. Yet these duties are not self-evident; their specific content and definition as well as the means to achieve sustainability have to be determined, and this is a matter of conflict. Environmental knowledge can be produced and passed on to citizens via a top-down approach, drawing on scientific and technocratic information, as in some forms of state-sponsored deliberative and participatory initiatives (Drevensek, 2005; MacGregor and Szerszynski, 2003). Or it can be generated by citizens' themselves.

Ecological citizens' main duty consists of the reduction of one's ecological footprint (Dobson, 2003). But the exact content of this general mandate, what it means for each of us, living in different but interconnected societies, is something which cannot – and perhaps should

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their citizens) on the international stage” (Eckersley, 2004: 202). My discussion omits this aspect of Eckersley's account because it relates to relationships between states, and I am concerned here with relationships between the state and citizens.

not - be established as a matter of principle. Rather, it can be investigated and defined through deliberation, by reflecting in the course of political debate on one's place in the world and the use of resources each of us makes. Citizens also need to learn the virtues related to acting according to justice-based motivations and taking into account the interests of others (Connelly, 2006). From this perspective, ecological citizenship is a learning process about its own meaning: "a process for learning as well as a potential outcome of learning" (MacGregor and Pardoe, 2005: 10). Democratic deliberation aims at citizens' education through reasoned debate; it is a "form of social learning" (Barry, 1999: 229). It is deliberative democracy's educative potential that makes it appropriate for the cultivation of ecological citizenship.

Deliberative democracy can be described as "the practice of public reasoning", in which "participants make proposals, attempt to persuade others, and determine the best outcomes and policies based on the arguments and reasons fleshed out in public discourse" (Scholsberg, et. al. 2005: 216). According to liberal democratic theory, the role of democracy should be the aggregation of individual pre-given preferences into a collective choice, therefore "contemporary liberal institutions are not designed to encourage engagement and the testing of preferences and value orientations" (Smith, 2003: 55). In this respect, deliberative democracy is different in that "preferences and interests are not brought into the conversation as in a battle –with one person or group winning and others losing" (Scholsberg, et. al, 2005: 216). Ideally, when citizens take part in democratic debate, they are open and ready to have their preferences and values changed. This happens by virtue of the force of the better argument, and not due to external motivation - as it occurs when policy tools like regulation and monetary incentives are used to encourage pro-environmental attitudes.

Within deliberative structures citizens' views are not assumed as self-evident. Instead, the institutions and contexts where these are formed are taken into consideration. Citizens' actions are molded by the wider institutions, and this restriction can be an obstacle to the practice of ecological citizenship. A deliberative framework challenges the assumption that all citizens have the same opportunities to choose to act as ecological citizens. Time, knowledge, information, wealth and gender relations can sometimes be barriers to ecological citizenship (MacGregor, 2006a, 2006b; Luque, 2005; Seyfang, 2005). But these limitations can be made visible in a deliberative setting. From this point of view, through the implementation of a



deliberative democracy, the green state would be both removing obstacles to ecological citizenship and facilitating the internalisation of ecological citizenship motivations for action.

Advocates of deliberative democracy contend that communicative politics are likely to increase the effectiveness, sustainability and legitimacy of decisions. On the one hand, enhanced citizen participation shall lead to more democratic and authentic decisions; this would generate more legitimate environmental politics and policy (Baber and Barlett, 2005; Scholsberg et. al, 2005; Smith, 2003; Dryzek, 2000; Fischer, 2000). On the other hand, the normative indeterminacy, epistemological uncertainty and complexity of socio-environmental issues indicate that the sustainable society has to be built upon a dialogue between different points of view. Deliberative democracy has the ability to result in a more democratic making of environmental information: scientific and expert knowledge can be complemented with other forms of knowledge – like those grounded on citizens’ practical experiences or indigenous knowledge. In this respect, Barry argues that “communicative rationality makes it less likely that the collective result will be ecologically irrational”, since democracy conceived as communication “provides some evidence that individuals can deliver enhanced environmental public goods and avoid or limit environmental public bads” (Barry, 1996: 125; 1999: 230). A deliberative ecological democracy renders the green state more inclusive and accountable, as it facilitates more genuine citizens’ input and control than the aggregative procedures of the liberal state. And this, arguable, will lead to more effective ecological citizenship.

However, these are contingent claims and there is no definitive evidence that deliberation and participation will bring about sustainable and risk-averse policies (Baber and Barlett, 2005; Smith, 2003; Fischer, 2000). Deliberation has the potential to produce the transformation of non-ecological preferences through debate, but it cannot guarantee *per se* a better quality of social-environmental decisions. In fact, it can also lead to unsustainable and unfair arrangements. Nevertheless a discursive environment provides space for different conceptions of sustainable development to emerge and be compared by citizens. So even if the assumption that deliberative democracy will deliver environmental ends is just this, an assumption, it could still be argued that the openness and inclusiveness of the communication process would be a good platform to develop ecological citizenship.

It is possible to conclude then that in a deliberative green state, ecological citizenship is conceived as the assumption of responsibility for the impact that risk-generating activities have

on others (Eckersley, 2004). This responsibility is expressed in the course of debate, and results in the consideration of interests of groups excluded from political processes. Here citizenship is mainly concerned with reporting, condemning, revealing, claiming. And this, although being constitutive of ecological citizenship's aim to encourage and exemplify sustainability and oppose injustice, does not fully capture the nature of ecological citizenship responsibility. The practice of ecological citizenship also involves creating spaces where citizens can minimise the ecological impact of their daily lives. Ecological citizenship is about quotidian habits, everyday interactions with nature through walking, moving, consuming, travelling, working. And this embraces, but also transcends, democratic deliberation.

Ecological citizenship learning requires the creation and maintenance of infrastructures and systems of provisions of goods - outside the dominant market and state-based socio-economic organisations - that render possible sustainable forms of living and give cohesion to individual ecological citizenship behaviours. Of course this implies debates about how to create and organise these alternative systems of provision and to which specific ends, so there is a deliberative dimension in these practices too. But beyond debate, what facilitates ecological citizenship learning is the experience of getting involved (Travaline and Hunold, 2010; Seyfang, 2009; Smith, 2005; Reid and Taylor, 2000). Through engagement in practices that create alternative and sustainable structures within which it is possible to be a sustainable consumer, producer or worker, ecological citizenship transformation may take place, as knowledge, motivation and skills are gained as a result of lived experience.

### *The disturbing effects of capitalism*

So far we have established that the green state has a strong potential to promote ecological citizenship, albeit with a rather narrow focus on its deliberative dimension. However, recalling the ideas about how green states are to emerge, it is my intention to argue that this potential may not be fully realised. The apparently productive relationship between ecological citizenship, ecological democracy and the green state may be disrupted by the entry of capitalism into the picture. A green state will emerge from a reform of liberal democratic institutions and procedures. Such reform accepts, rather than rejects, what are considered to be the positive achievements of liberalism so that they can be shaped in an ecological direction. And this may be

an obstacle for the values and objectives of the green state - promising for the promotion of ecological citizenship - to unfold. Insofar as many of the formal aspects of the liberal state stay in place – because it is built on the foundations of the liberal state – there is a risk that those values and aims are not articulated but neutralised by the anti-ecological structure of the liberal-capitalist state. If this is the case, the potential that the green state has for the cultivation of ecological citizenship will decrease.

In order to further elaborate this claim, John Dryzek's analysis of different deliberative democratic models is insightful. Dryzek alludes to a constitutionalist trend that seeks to instantiate deliberative processes within liberal democratic institutions. This position manifests itself in at least three different - but compatible - approaches. The first one consists in using deliberative democracy's guiding principles to justify the existence of individual rights, particularly those rights needed for the exercise of democratic citizenship, and thus needed to sustain deliberative democracy itself. A second perspective seeks to use liberal constitutions to create a public space for deliberation. In this view, constitutions should prescribe that one of the new functions and goals for the state is to promote deliberative democracy, and establish new rules and mechanisms that consolidate deliberation. Finally, the constitution itself can be made through a deliberative process (Dryzek, 2000: 10-17; Dryzek, 1994: 190).

Let me reintroduce now Eckersley's conception of deliberative ecological democracy in order to make a few remarks. First, the use of constitutional provisions to secure political communication and implement ecological democracy defines, as we have seen, Eckersley's theory of the green state. The constitution establishes the state's responsibilities, functions and objectives. And one of these objectives is precisely to facilitate ecological democracy. Second, deliberative democracy is used to justify rights of participation and political equality, that is, those rights needed as a precondition to maintain deliberative democracy itself. In other words, the rights and obligations of ecological citizens are defined in deliberative terms: they are realised within the deliberative process and aim at articulating ecological democracy. So the constitution (also made through a deliberative process) is used in order to implement deliberative mechanisms and ecological citizenship rights that make a green and deliberative democracy possible. This approach, I suggest, shows a certain similarity to the constitutionalist trend mentioned above.

Drawing on Dryzek, I would argue that attempts to implement deliberative democracy through constitutional means may result in the assimilation of deliberative democracy by liberalism. In a capitalist economy, the health of liberal democracy relies on economic growth so that social and political inequalities remain hidden. If inequalities become more visible, social instability arises and threatens the very existence of liberal democracy. The fear of this scenario renders liberal democracies “imprisoned by the market’s growth imperative” (1994: 180). The accumulation imperative restricts public policy and becomes an obstacle for the democratisation of the state, and for effective deliberation. Dryzek introduces a distinction between discursive democracy and deliberative democracy, where deliberative democracy corresponds with liberal constitutionalism – earlier defined - while discursive democracy questions liberal democracy and the political economy of liberalism (2000). This more oppositional tendency focuses on spaces alternative to state institutions where deliberative democracy can be articulated, such as civil society, the public sphere and the workplace. Yet a double focus on civil society and the public sphere are not enough – Dryzek argues - to confront liberalism and to demarcate discursive democracy from liberal constitutionalism. The celebration of civil society and the public sphere is common amongst liberal scholars of deliberative democracy (Dryzek, 2000: 55), and both civil society and the public sphere have a liberal reading (Habermas, 1989, 1996; Calhoun, 1992; Fraser, 1992). In fact, scholars of deliberative constitutionalism believe that one of the main purposes of the constitution is to establish the necessary means for a public sphere for debate to be maintained (Dryzek, 2000).

So if the presence and inclusion of civil society and the public sphere are not enough for deliberative democracy to be critical, and to address the shortcomings of liberal democracy, what else is needed? For deliberative democracy not to be undermined by state imperatives, it should be located in oppositional public spheres. According to Dryzek, the public sphere has to remain autonomous, so that there is a sharp distinction between the public sphere and the state. Opinion should move from the public sphere toward the state (but not the other way round) (2000: 55-56). Discourses can and should affect public policy. However, the public sphere where such discourses are generated should be separated from the state, to avoid discourses being assimilated and co-opted by the state (which is different from discourses having an impact on state policy). As a result, political activity in civil society must seek the “democratic exercise of

power over the state”, while being vigilant to avoid “the inclusion of civil society within the state” (Dryzek, 2000: 102-103).

Eckersley’s account of ecological democracy is also critical of capitalism. In fact, one of the features of this notion of democracy is the use of democratic institutions to control capitalism, and make it fairer and sustainable – assuming that this is possible. So the adoption of reflexive ecological modernisation depends on the further ecological democratisation of – especially – the most economically developed states. And ecological democratisation, in turn, depends on ecological citizens’ commitment. But insofar as this democratic model is postliberal and departs from liberal institutions, those further steps - reflexive ecological modernisation – that will lead to controlling capitalism may not be taken. Before this is accomplished, the emancipatory potential of deliberation may be neutralised. I now turn to explain how this may occur.

A dual focus on reforming the liberal state and strengthening civil society and the public sphere is found in Eckersley’s theory. Despite the emphasis on the state and its formal institutions, we see a significant effort to locate deliberative settings and ecological citizenship also in the public sphere. Indeed, without ecological citizens maintaining a vibrant public sphere ecological democracy is not likely to survive, since one of the preconditions of ecological democracy is a “new ecological sensibility” produced as a result of a cultural shift. And this cultural shift can only take place in the public sphere (Eckersley, 2004: 245). For this reason, for a deliberative ecological state to emerge, the constitution, although necessary, is not enough. However, it is the state and the constitution that are entrusted with the promotion of ecological democracy, citizenship and the public sphere through mechanisms that seek to secure the availability of information about risk-generating activities, citizens’ participation in deliberations and access to environmental justice. So, in this account, the public sphere where deliberative democracy and the learning of ecological citizenship take place, is part of the state and it is encouraged by the state itself, lacking the sort of autonomy needed to retain its critical force. If the public sphere is included within the state, it is likely to be eroded and lose its vitality and oppositional nature. Such a view of the public sphere may result in the co-option of ecological democracy by the liberal democratic state. What is more, in so far as ecological democracy is placed within a theory of the state and institutionalised by constitutional means, is at risk of

being assimilated by the liberal state, and thus not lead to the kinds of transformations needed to originate a green state.

In light of Dryzek's typology of different state-civil society relations (Dryzek, 2000; Dryzek et. al., 2003), a civil society with a myriad of contested discourses will be more likely to be maintained when interacting with an "exclusive" state, since an "inclusive" state can absorb and erode diversity. A deliberative green state is inclusive, open and receptive to civil society and ecological citizenship deliberations, to the extent that the state acts as a facilitator of such deliberations, making information available, implementing the mechanisms for citizen participation, and acting as a coordinator of deliberation that takes place in both spaces - state and civil society<sup>3</sup>. A green state that incorporates civil society into its own political and constitutional structures would absorb civil society, not in the same way as authoritarian states do, but in a way that may compromise its confrontational powers and ability to change the present order.

In contrast to this approach, coordination could be entrusted to spontaneous networks in civil society. This spontaneous system is similar to the way international organisations and movements are organised. It is related to transnational discourses in the public sphere, placed outside spatial and temporal boundaries (Dryzek, 2000). Nevertheless, even though civil society should be self-governing, this does not mean that it can be completely separate from the state. State activities and regulations penetrate civil society and shape cultural, social and economic relations – just as civil society activities sometimes target the state and influence its policy. Yet civil society can be the source of legitimate and binding decisions, even if these do not emanate from state bodies. These decisions can be implemented and put into practice without being further institutionalised by the state. This is a form of "paragovernmental" activity (Jänicke, 1996) and "intra-society change" (Young, 2000) that seeks to affect social organisation directly.

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<sup>3</sup> In a deliberative eco-state, national parliaments and states agents are responsible for guaranteeing the application, use and functioning of the instruments of transboundary ecological democracy. So the state remains the first and primary unit of government, although democracy is transnationalised and the principle of the affected applied using deliberative mechanisms (Eckersley, 2004: 195).

## *Conclusion*

The prospects for ecological citizenship transformation within the structures of a green state are encouraging. In a constitutionalist, deliberative green state, ecological citizenship is a constitutional mandate and is to be enacted in the context of an ecological democracy. Citizens' environmental responsibility is assumed and expressed through democratic participation and representation. The idea of a framework for ecological citizenship activity that gives sense and coherence to isolated ecological citizenship acts is present here: the whole machinery of the state is put to the service of environmental and social justice.

A deliberative ecological democracy implemented by a green state will offer more possibilities for the promotion of ecological citizenship than an aggregative liberal democracy, since a deliberative framework acknowledges the process of formation and transformation of citizens' values, preferences and motivations to act, as well as the structures that constrain citizens' choices. Moreover, the ecological dimension of this view of deliberative democracy, which renders possible the inclusion of traditionally excluded groups, is central to the promotion of ecological citizenship. Ecological citizens assume responsibility for the way their daily activities impact on fellow citizens, citizens of other states, future generations and non-human nature as a means to achieve sustainability and justice. They take into account how their decisions and acts have an impact on others and on the environment. In this sense, a state whose political system is an ecological democracy that implements decision-making mechanisms inclusive of those groups excluded in conventional policy processes, will be using its institutions to facilitate ecological citizenship.

Yet two main issues are indicative of the problems that the promotion of ecological citizenship in the context of a deliberative green state will have to overcome. The first one relates to the means used to expand ecological citizenship: ecological democracy. The central implication is that ecological citizenship is encouraged through and enacted in political communication. This approach is vulnerable to all the criticisms raised against deliberative democracy in general – above all, that the capacity for transformation of citizens' values and preferences may not be realised, due to issues of power, asymmetries in participation, citizens' resources, time and skills - and at eco-deliberative democracy in particular – namely, that more participation may not lead to increased sustainable outcomes, that citizens may not get to see the benefits of pro-environmental action and that ecological citizenship motivations might not be

internalised. In addition, rationality and discourse are stressed over other means for ecological citizenship learning, especially those concerning learning through quotidian experiences - like gardening or walking - or through participation in alternative systems of provisions where decreased consumption and other aspirations of sustainable living can be met.

The second limitation that I hope to have thematised arises from the privileged position of the state as the main agent for ecological democracy. The fact that the new principles that constitute ecological democracy are embodied in state structures suggests that they may be co-opted by the liberal state. As Dryzek puts it, “liberalism is the most effective vacuum cleaner in the history of political thought, capable of sucking up all the doctrines that appear to challenge it, be they critical theory, environmentalism, feminism, or socialism” (2000: 27). What makes the deliberative green state potentially different from the liberal state - and a better candidate to promote ecological citizenship - are its values, new functions and aims. But changes to start creating a green state originate in the public sphere. If deliberations are neutralised by the constitutional system of the liberal state – caught up by the accumulation imperative - those transformations will not take place. So the oppositional element needed for the chain of reforms resulting in a deliberative green state to get started may be frustrated. And hence the potential for the promotion of ecological citizenship may remain “asleep”. This is what happens in the case of inclusive states that facilitate deliberation in the public sphere and the incorporation of public opinion into policy (Dryzek, et. al., 2003), where there is less democratic vitality and more social homogenisation.

Arguments defending the ecological readjustment of the state tend to assume that the state apparatus will be successful in putting capitalism to the ends of environmental justice. If the functions and rationale of the state changed – the argument goes - then it would be possible to transform environmentally detrimental policies and institutions. However, since the articulation of an eco-state constitutes a process that originates within liberal democratic institutions and within capitalistic relations, the possibilities for ecological democracy shall be inhibited before this is implemented and before the mechanisms for reflexive ecological modernisation are put in place. This would not only render difficult the task of creating a green state guided by ecological values, but constitute an obstacle to the promotion of ecological citizenship.



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