Citizenship Education in Changing Lithuanian Society

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Abstract

Some theoretical concepts of globalisation and citizenship are discussed in the article as well as the changing role of citizenship education in transforming Lithuanian Society. The author points out that many problems in contemporary Lithuanian society arise from the fact that the relationship between individuals and the state is changing fundamentally. The state should broaden "positive" choices and support an individual by ensuring principles of equality in basic human rights and access to opportunities. On the other hand, an individual has to take the responsibility for his/her own life becoming a decisive factor in choosing personal life style and in building up civic community. In this respect it is expected that Citizenship Education plays an important role in educating competence and attitudes toward own responsibilities, in educating mental and practical skills for positive civic participation.

Key words: *exclusion, citizenship education, teacher training.*

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Introduction

The phenomena of globalization is considered as the most widespread trend on the eve of twenty – first century and has resulted from the world-wide integration of economic and financial sector (Hallak & Poison, 1999: 10). Globalization could be understood "as a socio – economic phenom-enon that has profound political and cultural implications (Jarvis, 2003: 10). Among the main implications of globalization, researchers name things such as: a) the emergence of learning societies due to multiplica-tion of sources of information and communication; b) the transformation of the nature of work with the need for more flexibility and mobility, the im-portance of communication skills, the necessity of team work, the increas-ing use of technologies, etc; c) the progression of social exclusion – a large part of the world's population does not participate in this process. Globalization causes the changing role of education; implementation of new trends in education (the need to keep up with changes taking place in society). Some of the characteristics of this new trend may be identified (Daswani, 2003: 19):

- The increasing incorporation of global and interdisciplinary topics into curriculum;
- Vocational education and lifelong learning (to prepare students for the world of work in adequate way);
- Citizenship education (to prepare students to assume their responsibil-ities as citizens and to develop competencies for active civic participa-tion);
- Basic knowledge versus "up-to-date" contents (students must be taught the skills of research, inquiry and interpretation so that they may continue learning beyond the school and find adequate place in soci-ety).

Researchers from different fields in different countries are looking to answer important questions such as: what do these characteristics of the trend mentioned above mean for education as whole? How do they change the role of education and particularly the role and content of civic education? Taking into account the assumption that civic education can help to solve some of the challenges of a globalized world we try to ana-lyse some of the possible answers to these questions.

The Role of Education and Main Goals for Civic Education

Education during the ages has been seen as a social institution having functions such as socialisation (Broom, 1992); personal development (Rodgers, 1994); political and social change (Leithwood, 1992); transferee of culture (Hodges, 1974); social stability and order (Selfe, 1987); and social integration (Fend, 1981). The latest developments of philosophical and sociological thinking shows that, integration of society, is becoming one of the most important functions of education. That's why education is seen as a main factor in extenuating social exclusion in modern societies. Education fulfils the role of social integration through curriculum, through infrastructure of educational institutions and through creating equal start possibilities for everyone.

Reformation of the educational system and inclusion of civic education into a compulsory curriculum could be seen as an important way for strengthening social cohesion. In this paper we will also focus on the Lithuanian situation as it relates to social cohesion and developments of civic education.

Some remarks on Social exclusion in Lithuania

In 1990, when Lithuanian citizens demonstrated their intention to build a free and open society based on the supremacy of law and democratic principles, they simultaneously undertook the responsibility for both their personal lives and strengthening statehood. People were ready to overcome the legal, political and social legacy of a totalitarian society and face the difficulties of transition. Nevertheless, it has now become clear that social processes are developing at a much more rapid pace than the human mind is able to handle and to adjust itself to new values and lifestyles. Many problems in contemporary Lithuanian society arise from the fact that the relationship between individuals and the state is changing fundamentally. It's important to recognize that the way in which people build their lives depends on many circumstances over which they may have no control. For example, children who are not attending school and who are not taught any skills are deprived of many choices and opportunities for their

future lives. And those people who have no access to information have no possibilities to make decisions. It seems logical that the state should broaden "positive" choices and support an individual by ensuring princi-ples of equality in basic human rights and access to opportunities. The Lithuanian Constitution ensures equal rights for everyone, but at the same time the state is not always capable of providing the necessary conditions for exercising these rights. For example, the rise in crime threatens indi-vidual rights to personal security, the volatility of the economy and labor market causes unemployment, a low standard of living often undermines the right to education, a quality health service, adequate housing, freedom to travel and the choice of place of residence. On the other hand, an indi-vidual has to take the responsibility for many aspects of his own life and thus becoming a decisive factor in choosing his/her life style. In this re-spect it is expected that Civic Education plays an important role in educat-ing competence and attitudes toward ones own responsibilities, in educat-ing mental and practical skills for positive civic participation.

Civic education and competencies

Researchers (Fulan, 1998; Ozmon & Craver, 1996; Jarvis, 2001) ana-lysing changing global world point out features of post modernity such as social (complexity and fragmentation of social structure), cultural (the frag-mentation of cultural identity which changes between different social set-tings); economic (competitive relations in the market are demanding mul-ti-skilled workers); and political (promotion of the virtues of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-decision making). A person living in such a complex related society has to be enabled to manage his or her life. And civic ed-ucation can play an important role in such circumstances especially when democracy is seen as a form of government and as a practice, in which participation and involvement are key points. Very often the form of gov-ernment is being understood in the light of the historical development. However, for most nations democracy is an ideal which is superior to the democratic practice in real life. Thus, democracy is a concept in continu-ous development and a topic for discussion without definitive answers. Nonetheless, there is a broad recognition of the possibilities for democra-cy to contribute to the learning to live together. In the project Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) the Council of Europe (2000) describes democracy as the ability of solving conflicts and differences of opinion in

a non-violent manner. It is obvious that democratically practice at the lo-cal level can turn out in ways that resembles more those of old socio-cul-tural traditions than the modern - western oriented - conception of democ-racy. Active citizenship is more a democratic practice, to a large extent it is culturally and politically based. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) states that "...education must lead to the acquisition of...the knowledge, values and abilities that are needed for individual development, and for the exercise of participatory and responsible citizenship in a democracy".

Researchers such as Philippe Perrenoud (2001) point out, that an ac-tive citizen could be described through developing "citizen" competencies which are needed by every individual in order to participate in the man-agement of personal and social life in the harmonious society. These com-petencies are being able to:

- Vote and assume one's responsibilities in a democratic political system and in community life, trade unions, etc.
- Find accommodation, start a family and conclude and abide by con-tracts (relating to marriage, work, rental, insurance, etc.) in order to sur-vive in a society of free competition;
- Invest and spend intelligently one's resources in a free and transparent market, using in a rational manner information about products and services;
- Find one's way around in the educational system, receiving training, and learning and using available information;
- Access culture and media by making informed choices of recreational and cultural activities;
- Look after one's health by preventative and responsible use of the medical and hospital system;
- Defend one's rights and interests by asking for police protection and making use of legal procedures and the courts.

In general, competencies are described as a specialised system of abilities, proficiencies or skills that are necessary or sufficient to reach a specific goal (Weiner, 2001); these have four dimensions:

- Political and legal dimension covers rights and duties with respect to the political system and law. It requires knowledge concerning the law, democratic attitudes and capacity to participate, exercise responsibili-ties at all levels of public life.

- Social dimension covers relations between individuals and requires knowledge of what these relations are based on and how they function in the society. Social competencies are paramount here. This dimension is connected to others (solidarity).
- Economic dimension concerns the world of production and consumption of goods and services.
- Cultural dimension refers to collective representation and imagination and to shared values, it implies recognition of common goods and common heritage.
- To better understand the changing role of civic education we will focus on the concept of "Citizenship" and to the main competencies which have to be obtained during the civic education process.

Concept of citizenship" and changing role of civic education

There are a number of ideas about what is meant when referring to citizen and/or citizenship. Concepts of "citizenship" deriving from theoretical and empirical research studies have been carried out in different countries by different researchers. Examples of these without being exhaustive either in our search or our presentation are the following:

- Theiss-Morse (1993) who references a model of four concepts of citizenship among adults in US: representative democracy (responsibility to be an informed voter); political enthusiast (advocacy through protest and little trust in elected officials); pursued interest (joining groups to pursue issues); and indifferent (trusting leaders and placing a law priority on trying to influence them);
- Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith and Sullivan (1997) identified citizenship concepts among a sample of teachers. Almost half of students have be taught to be questioning citizen, about one-quarter focused on teaching from a culturally pluralistic perspective and only a few stressed learning about government.
- Davies, Gregory and Riley S. (1999) in England found that social concern and tolerance for diversity received the greatest support among teachers;
- Prior (1999) in Australia found that social concern and social justice and participation in school/community affairs were important for teachers;
- Vontz, Metcalf and Patrick (2000), in a study of effectiveness of a civic

curriculum in Latvia, Lithuania and US found a positive impact on students' knowledge and skills but not their sense of citizen responsibility.

According to Torney-Purta et al, (2001), in the IEA (International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievements) Civic Education Study two concepts of citizenship were mainly used: Conventional Citizenship (obeying the law, voting, participation in political parties, etc.) and Social-Movements related citizenship (participates in activities to protect the environment, participates in activities to benefit people in the community, work hard, etc).

As far as we can observe differences in the concepts of citizenship and identity (Zaleskine, 1999), we can agree that there are some basic elements according to which the role of civic education is changing. These are:

A. Cognitive competencies:

competence of a legal and political nature knowledge of the present world competence of a procedural nature knowledge of the principal and value choices

B. Ethical competences and value choices:

freedom, equality and solidarity.

C. Capacities for action (as social competences):
- capacity to live together with others, to cooperate to construct and implement joint projects and so on;
- capacity to resolve conflicts in accordance with the principals of democratic law
- capacity to take part in public debate, to argue and choose in real life situation.

The Concept of Democratic citizenship has different meanings and connotations because of huge changes in cultural, political and social life. But a number of different researchers (Carr, 1999, Wringe, 2000, MacLaughlin, 2001, etc.), having very different views on it agree, that a citizen in our days has to have four main indications in order to have possibilities for positive socialisation into society. These indications are:

- Political activity. This indication did change during different periods of developments in the societies. The first one was dominate for a long

time. At the beginning of 20th Century the Values component become important.

- Values. After 1960 politicians and researchers were looking for reasons why political activities are not always transferred into the behaviours of citizens. Here we see identity as one of the aspects to be added to the concept of citizen.
- Identity. Finally, the developments of the last decades in the directions of modernisation of societies ("networking" society, integration of different societies, stress on importance of social capital for human development, etc.) added the fourth component for the concept of "democratic citizenship" - Social competencies.
- Social competencies. They are essential in current civic life, so, they are key point in the changing role of Civic Education.

Having in mind all the aspects mentioned above, the main role of civic education can be named as an education of skills and competences related to execution of active citizenship in a globalized world ("Citizenship education: Learning at School and in Society", 2001: 3):

To acquire knowledge

Basic skills such as literacy are a necessity for participating in the democratic processes at all levels. Eventually, computer literacy will also be crucial for the capability of participating in society. The ability to learn –learning to learn– is essential for enabling the individual to learn new things throughout life to meet the rapid changing needs of the labour market and to be able to participate in the current changes in society.

To make use of knowledge and involvement

Regarding citizenship, the basic skills cannot stand alone; the social dimension in which they are situated and the conduct and attitudes of the individual are essential. 'Life skills', 'coping skills' and 'participatory skills' involve the ability of participating on different levels in the activities of a democratic society as a responsible citizen. In this dimension also lies an emotional aspect. It is not sufficient to invest your knowledge according to a dissociated evaluation; you must also invest part of yourself by expressing commitment and belief in the activities you participate in. Just as knowledge and information are crucial for the development of citizenship, moral and ethical responsibility are equally important.

To understand yourself

In order to be able to participate as an active citizen in the activities of a community you must as an individual be aware of your own standpoints and affiliations. In earlier times the community was taken for granted, today we move in and out of communities and therefore we ourselves have to create coherence in our identity. This is the reason why some direct attention towards the narrative skills - the ability to place yourself in a connection by means of your life history, is important. It is also necessary to highlight another point, that of the historical dimension: Once you see yourself as biography it suddenly makes a big difference whether you participate or not.

Learning to live together

Learning to live together today is a necessity at many levels. We must deal with bigger and more complicated cohesions than in earlier times. The ability to live together in the family, the local community, the nation or globally is closely connected to the skills of being a citizen - to be part of a community. In his actions, the citizen must focus on what is best for the community, not on narrow individual interests.

Current Status of Civic Education in Lithuania

Short history of implementing Civic Education into National Curriculum

The mission of Civic Education in Lithuania was described in the first Law on Education (1991) which was legislated after the restoration of Lithuanian statehood: Civic Education is considered to be one of the essential goals of the educational system: to foster citizenship, the understanding of a person's duties toward family, nation, society, and the State of Lithuania, as well as the need to participate in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the Republic (The Law on Education in the Republic of Lithuania, 1991).

Concrete goals and tasks for Civic Education in Schools are formulated in the "Concept of Lithuanian Educational system" (1994), "Core-Curriculum for Secondary Education" (1996), and "National Standards of Students achievements" (1997). The whole educational process is supposed

to lead to an understanding of both the principles of life in a democratic society and also the problems in creating democracy (and ways to approach their solution). It was suggested that a course entitled "The Principals of Citizenship" has to be introduced as an obligatory subject at the basic school level (it did start in 1998).

Starting from 1992 teaching and learning materials are under developmental process, in-service teacher training courses (regional, national as well as an international) are held in different regions in Lithuania.

The processes of developing individual syllabus, school based curriculum, teaching and learning materials, pre-service and in-service teacher training courses are going on in Lithuania. It is expected that different schools, teachers will select the content for their civic lessons, will choose the teaching styles, will use new textbooks according to the mandatory precepts of National Core-Curriculum and suggested National Standards.

F. Civic education course started to be implemented in pre-service teacher training institutions in 2000.

The ways on which Civic Education is organised in Lithuania

Through formal curriculum:

Civic Education is taught as cross-curriculum. It means that Civic ideas, concepts, topics are integrated in the newly developed curriculum, textbooks, teaching and learning materials for a whole range of subjects and are already taught in the different grades, starting from 1st and ending with 12th grade. For example, the course "Me and the World" is implemented in the primary school (grades 1-4). History, Geography, Technology, Native Language and Literature, Political Science, Economics, Philosophy, Moral Education, etc. courses are very interrelated when it concerns educating the conscious and active citizens of the Lithuanian State.

The separate obligatory subject "The Principles of the Citizenship" is introduced in the 8th grade (one hour per week) and again in the 10th grade (one hour per week, but will be 2 hours per week in the nearest future).

Through extra - curriculum activities,the ways on which the school community is organized and school relations with the local communities.

One of the most important factors helping students to understand democracy in everyday life, to exercise decision making skills and the skills of participation, is the way in which school life is organized. Does dialogue

exist between students, between students and teachers, between teachers and parents, between teachers; does the teachers use democratic methods of teaching; are the students encouraged to be responsible for the whole school community; does self-government of students exists, etc? These are questions that need to be considered as they affect the way in which school life is organized. In cooperation with local governmental and social institutions students have possibilities to learn about the functions of social and political institutions in real life; they can obtain nesessary knowledge and skill for applying to these institutions; they can identify with problems their families are facing; they can study how problems are solved, etc. Extra curriculum activities help students to improve their knowledge, skills and habits which are learned during formal educational processes.

D. Through extending relations between students, school, local, Regional, National, European and World communities.

The social environment plays an important role in the Civic Education and creates good possibilities for applying democratic skills, which are learned during the educational process. OnAt the other hand, such kinds of relations can help the further development of Civic habits and responsibilities for the peoples future.

New Trends in Developments of Civic Education

Researchers and educators look for new approaches and new trends in teaching young people to take responsibility not only for their personal lives, but for the local, national and world communities.

Service learning

In recent years there has been a movement towards strengthening school- based civic education, which emphasizes instruction in the fundamental processes and instruments of democracy and government. Lithuanian developers of Civic Education look for new approaches reflecting the needs of living in a contemporary globalized world. One such approach is service-learning which could be described as an approach that combines a community service experience with classroom instruction and

reflection. It has been suggested as an opportunity to bring to life important political and social issues and thereby encourage youth activism and engagement (Gibson, 2001: 8). Specifically, service-learning emphasizes the experimental component of civic education by providing opportunities for young people to engage in community-based activities that integrate and put in context what they learn in the classroom.

It's important to understand the difference between service-learning and community or volunteer service. Community service is the volunteer work which isn't connected with school course work (Hepburn, 2001), but the service-learning is a particular form of community service that is curriculum based. It means that service experience is related to objectives in the curriculum and is connected to classroom studies by written activities and discussions. There are four general components or criteria for effective service oriented, school based programs:

- They integrate service into the content and activities of school courses because students gain more from the experience when it is carefully tied to courses in the school curriculum;
- They provide periods of reflection (journal writing, group discussions, assays, etc.) on the service experience to allow students to contemplate their service experience and their implication;
- They require service throughout the school years because very short periods of service have been shown to have little or no effects on students;
- They involve students, teachers, administrators and community agencies in the design of the curriculum.

We adopted the service-learning materials, T*ake charge: A Youth Guide to Community Change* developed by Constitutional Rights Foundation (Degelman, 2002). And we try to implement it into school curricula and teacher training courses.

Education for consumer citizenship

During last years new approach on the European civic developments has appeared – education for Consumer citizenship. Some EU projects have been conducted according to this approach along with the Department of Social Pedagogy at Vilnius Pedagogical University.

Activities dealing with issues related to consumer citizenship have been and are being carried out most notably in Canada and Australia. While citizenship education has gained ground in schools throughout Europe, consumer education in general, and consumer citizenship education in particular, has progressed slowly. This is despite the fact that the United Nations, as early as in 1985, emphasized the importance of consumer education. Article III/14/d of the "Plan of Implementation" of the Johannesburg WSSD (Sept. 2002) highlights the pressing need for sustainable consumption and points out that work towards this goal cannot be postponed. In Article 143 of the Amsterdam Treaty the European Community has also seen the importance of consumer education and citizenship training. The EU Agenda (Barcelona 2002) defined by the Heads of State and governments focuses on the goal of "sustainable growth and greater social cohesion" and refers to the need for increased cooperation between the physical and social sciences.

As the research shows Civic education has to a great extent concentrated on representative, participatory and judicial civic training for many years. Consumer education has been regarded as a minor aspect of daily life skills connected to home activities. Environmental education has generally focused on pollution and basic tenets of natural ecology. As far as a global citizenship refers to understanding one's responsibilities to others, to society and to environment, education has to take a role for combining these three components of education. That's how concept of consumer citizenship appears. Consumer citizenship can be described as a situation "when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being."(McGregor, 2002:40).

Consumer citizenship education is a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary approach to promote attitudes, transfer knowledge and develop skills that combine consumer education, environmental education and civic training. It deals with empowering students to develop and evaluate alternative visions of a sustainable future and motivates them to turn these visions into reality.

Learning to live together

In 1999, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, which included educationalists, philosophers and policy makers from all over the world did agree that education must be based on four pillars (International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2003: 28):

● Learning to know (general knowledge);
● Learning to do (broad competencies needed to deal with different and changing situation and work in teams);
● Learning to be (ability to develop one's personality around a set of core values and to act with greater autonomy);
● Learning to live together, learning to leave with others (to develop understanding of other people in the spirit of pluralism, respect for differences and peace).

The fourth pillar has a global nature: its omission may result in the annihilation of all other educational, health and development efforts through war, civil wars, terrorism, the deterioration of human, financial and natural resources, etc. Wanting and knowing how to live together implies knowledge, emotions and sensitivity, self-esteem, attitudes and behaviours. Thus, civic education does have an important role to play in questioning and challenging beliefs and attitudes that make it difficult for people to live together and in proposing an alternative to them. Universal civic education requires that responsibilities be shared and sense of belonging to a single entity that goes beyond the national, at the same time as a "common future".

Challenges for Civic Education and for Teacher Training

In conclusion we note that the rapid changes in the society and in the educational system influence the quality of civic education. In the Lithuanian context and conceivably in other countries we see that civic education and teacher training accordingly need to focus on several areas. This is a result of the fact that in many instances:

The content of civic education is described only in broad outline terms

in the core-curriculum as the curriculum and syllabi as well as teaching and learning materials are under the process of development. The new methodology of assessment and evaluation of students achievements aren't developed as yet. Teachers have to develop progammes according to their own understanding of, the often obligatory core-curriculum, national standards and students needs, and the new challenges in the world community. This is a very difficult task for teachers who were trained in older more traditional ways. The teacher training system itself is in need of reform. The content of civic education is not the subject of enough public discussion. Teachers consequently have to adapt their way of thinking and methods of teaching to new educational objectives and to new social and political circumstances in a globalised society.

Students present more diversity in terms of their social skills, social and cultural backgrounds, ambitions and behaviour. Many students are from excluded families. Teachers have to look for ways to include them. It has taken and continues to take some time and efforts to prepare teachers for this changed situation.

The local communities are relatively under-developed in Lithuanian society. They are not prepared to take an active part in civic education or in developing the sense of belonging to a community. In some places, the only important institutions are thought to be the family and the national state, with no intermediate organisations to which young people might develop a sense of loyalty. Teachers need some ideas and and methodology on how to include local institutions, and NGO (which are sometimes very strong) in the educational process.

Living in a global society we do need people, but teachers need to be trained in the certain ways: a) becoming citizens with strong social competencies by themselves; b) being able to help students to accumulate social capital and to develop a "networking society"; and c) being able to fulfil new functions (being one of the most important agents for social inclusion) in education.

Finally, we note that on the one hand the need to have "citizens with social competencies" and from the other, the changing role of education, coming from the developments in the societies, do help to move from the traditional understanding of civic education towards a more contemporray direction, reflecting on the needs of the society. Thus, we see that building up and reforming the system of civic education in general and particularly in teacher training curriculums is of paramount importance. We clearly do need to change our ideas about the role of civic education.

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