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Citizenship Education in Slovenia after the Formation of the Independent State

Abstract

In the present article we first describe how citizenship education is positioned in the curriculum of pre-university Slovene education. We then analyse the influence of various pedagogical and other concepts in the last fifteen years on the formation of legal provisions and curricular solutions, as well as on actual citizenship instruction in the state school. We first establish how influence is exerted – or could be exerted – on citizenship education by the interests of the Roman Catholic Church such that its own subject of denominational religious education is implemented in the state school, along with general implications regarding questions of which values should form the basis of education in the state school. Recently the question of moral education and the educational concept in the state school has come to the fore, and with this also the question of universal or particular values. In the continuation we analyse how the prevailing permissive paradigm influenced the very concept and implementation of the subject of Ethics and Society in the 1990s, and from the end of the previous decade onwards – after the implementation of curricular reforms – how it has influenced the subject of Citizenship Educational and Ethics.

Contents

Keywords

Citizenship education, civic education, curriculum, religious education, permissiveness, democracy, human rights

1. Introduction

Before describing how citizenship education is positioned in the curriculum of Slovene pre-university education and analysing how various conceptualisations of moral education and values have influenced the formation of legal provisions and curricular solutions, as well as actual citizenship instruction in the state school in Slovenia, we should first briefly describe the broader context of the emergence of Slovenia as an independent state and the formation of its school system in the last decade and a half, i.e., from 1991 to 2007.

In 1991, the most far-reaching political change for Slovenia occurred with the formation of the Republic of Slovenia[30] as an independent, liberal democratic state. Slovenia became a member of the European Union in 2004 and adopted the euro as its currency in 2007.

The education system obtained a new legal framework in 1996.[31] The theoretical and conceptual part of this legislation was prepared and publicly discussed from 1992 to 1994, resulting in the *White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia,* which was published in January 1995 (Bela knjiga … 1995).[32] Following these conceptual guidelines, the process of legislative and curricular reform was based on the political, cultural and moral values reflected in human rights, the rule of law, pluralistic democracy, tolerance and solidarity.

After the education system had obtained a new legal framework in 1996, the process of reworking the curriculum for the entire pre-university education system began,[33] with the bulk of the curricular reform being carried out between 1996 and 1999. However, the process of implementing the specific major changes required by the educational legislation was not completed until 2005.[34] At the same time, the new government that came to power in the 2004 elections, started to introduce some important changes in the educational system in subsequent years. The 'small changes' policy that the Ministry of Education has carried out since 2004 (which by 2007 had evolved to the scope of a genuine school reform - at least on the level of compulsory education) has been controversial because of its non-transparency and due to the lack of expert discussion prior to the adoption of legislative solutions. Some changes are also linked to questions concerning citizenship education, such as the promotion of so-called homeland education by the Minister for Education himself (cf. Zver 2005) and the initiative concerning the development of school educational plans (cf. Proposal for the Act … 2007). However, the general conclusion on the Slovene education system after 1991 could be that it seems to have been successfully modernised and liberalised. It has also developed in material terms,[35] but again in recent years its further material

[30] With its capital in Ljubljana and a population of 2 million, prior to 1991 Slovenia had been the industrially well developed northern region of former Yugoslavia, bordering Italy, Austria and Hungary. Its ethnic structure is rather homogenous and has not changed dramatically since 1991. Approximately 88% of the inhabitants of Slovenia are Slovenes, whose religion is predominantly Catholic, with Hungarian and Italian minorities near the Hungarian and Italian borders, a Romany minority, and other minorities (mainly economic immigrants) from other parts of former Yugoslavia – Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, etc. The Italian, Hungarian and Romany minorities enjoy constitutional and legal protection.

[31] In February 1996, the parliament adopted the most important acts of the new educational legislation: *The Organisation and Financing Act*, *The Pre-School Institutions Act*, *The Primary Education Act*, *The Grammar Schools Act*, *The Vocational and Professional Schools Act* and *The Adult Education Act* (School Legislation 1996). In subsequent years, acts concerning professional and academic titles, school inspectorates, music schools and the placement of children with special needs followed. Following a different developmental logic, *The Higher Education Act* was adopted as early as 1993 and was amended in 2006. Prior to 2007, several new solutions were implemented, with the most significant changes being adopted in *The Organisation and Financing Act* and *The Primary Education Act*.

[32] Its English version was published in 1996 (White Paper… 1996). See Slovene and English versions on the internet: http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_slo.htm.

[33] The reform also required the establishment of some new professional public institutions, such as The National Adult Education Centre (1990 - *Andragoški center Slovenije*, ACS), The National Examinations Centre (1993 - *Državni izpitni center*, RIC), The Centre for VET (1995 – *Center za poklicno izobraževanje*, CPI), The School for Principals (1995 – *Šola za ravnatelje*, ŠR), The Centre for Out-of-School Activities (1995 – *Center za šolske in obšolske dejavnosti*, CŠOD).

[34] For more about the educational reform see: Zgaga, Pavel, Krek, Janez (2005).

[35] In the nineties, extensive renovation of its buildings and other capacities took place. In organisational terms, as a result of the reform, the education system has been both centralised and decentralised. Educational legislation has strengthened a democratic and functioning system of power-sharing, since it has promoted the professional autonomy of teachers and schools. On the other hand, there have been

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development has not been the goal of the 'neo-liberal' policy of the present conservative government, which is more concerned with promoting private schools and improving their position in comparison to public schools.

2. Citizenship education in the school curriculum in Slovenia

According to analysis undertaken by Eurydice, Slovene solutions are consistent with general European trends: "In most countries, citizenship education is referred to as a principle governing the aims of the specific curricula for compulsory and upper secondary education. It is part of the curriculum in all countries and at all three levels of general education…" (Citizenship Education 2005, 19).

The new *nine-year elementary school* curriculum includes a subject called *Civic Education and Ethics,* which is an obligatory subject, one hour per week throughout the 7th and 8th grades (3.3% of the total number of hours in the 7th and 8th grades).

This subject is a successor of another subject with an interesting history. In former Yugoslavia, the subject was called 'Socio-Moral Education' (at the upper-secondary school level it was called 'Self-Management and the Fundamentals of Marxism') and in the nineties - before the curricular reform - the subject remained a part of the curriculum, conceived as an experiment. At that time, it was called 'Ethics and Society'. The subject 'Socio-Moral Education' was an obligatory subject in the 7th and 8th grades in eight-year primary school (3% of the total number of hours in the 7th and 8th grades). In nine-year primary school the subject begins one year earlier than in the previous eight-year school curriculum.[36]

Besides this subject, the curriculum of the nine-year primary school has three weeks per school year earmarked for practical activities, such as cultural activity days, science days, *community work* and sports days. Each school defines for itself, in its annual programme of work, the specific educational aims and contents of these activities.

In the process of curricular reform, groups of experts in different subject areas, such as history, geography and social studies (a subject in the lower grades of primary school), had to work together to make a coherent syllabus for EDC as a cross-curricular subject. Therefore, the educational aims of different subjects such as history, geography, etc., include EDC aims. The general orientation of this work was not concerned with including the aims of *civic education* (political education) in syllabuses, but more generally "knowledge about society".

The upper-secondary school level curriculum includes various subjects that could be linked to citizenship education, such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography, etc., but the secondary school (gymnasium) programme does not have *civic education* as a separate subject. Within the framework of the *compulsory electives* (up to 300 hours, which is 6% of the total number of hours of the programme), schools have to carry out 15 hours of *civic culture* and another 15 hours of *peace education* (in comparison with other subjects, compulsory electives are different because there are no syllabuses for them on the national level, only recommendations, and these electives are often

steps towards centralisation, for example regarding finances. Before 1990, the finances of the education system were decentralised; schools were financed mainly through municipalities, with the effect that in less prosperous regions teachers' salaries were considerably lower. For this reason, after the new state had emerged the system of finances was centralised. Its aim has been to attain equality and transparency, which was even more necessary in the unpredictable circumstances of the development of a new system of municipalities.

[36] One result of certain compromises in curricular reform was that it was not included in the school curriculum of the ninth grade.

executed as excursions, camps, activities, etc.). Although schools are able to offer civic education of up to 150 hours, they usually offer only the required minimum of 15 hours. The concept of compulsory electives has enabled them to be carried out by both school teachers and outside actors. The requirements concerning formal education for participants have been relaxed, and since 6% of the hours of all four-year programmes is not negligible in financial and other terms, this aspect of the programme has created quite a dynamic picture, offering diverse programmes and a variety of participants, such as NGOs and other independent freelance experts. Schools choose among programmes and providers on the basis of the *Catalogue of Compulsory Electives,* which is edited and published each year by the *Board of Education*.

Vocational education and training: in two, three and four-year programmes there is a subject called Social Sciences, which should, in principle, provide space for civic education (civic culture). Two-year programmes contain 85 hours of Social Sciences (4.2% of the total curriculum). Two-year programmes that accept pupils who have not finished compulsory school contain 190 hours of Social Sciences (5.6% of the total curriculum). The aims of civic education within this subject should be similar to those of the primary school subject Citizenship Education and Ethics, precisely because it is intended for pupils who have not completed primary school. Three-year dual system programmes contain a minimum of 105 hours of Social Sciences (2.4%) and three-year non-dual programmes have a minimum of 210 hours (5.6%). Four-year vocational education and training programmes have 140 hours of History and 140 hours of Social Sciences (5.5% of the total curriculum). In fact, the programmes do not contain genuine civic education content because in the course of the curricular reform three scientific disciplines (history, geography and sociology) have occupied the entire space of the subject Social Sciences with their specific subject matter.

From the perspective of citizenship education on the level of vocation education and training, the fact that civic education is not a separate scientific discipline - as sociology, history and geography are - may have an impact. Because of the professional interests of experts in the above-mentioned scientific disciplines, the subject Social Sciences is divided among the three disciplines, with the unfortunate result that the contents of *civic education* may, in fact, not be introduced at all. It is true that teachers do have their professional autonomy, and that the syllabus does offer possibilities for teaching civics. But since teachers of Social Sciences regard the teaching of democracy (civic education), generally speaking, as something rather alien, and as there is not enough external support for them, we may speculate that this is not likely to happen in practice.

3. The place of *citizenship education* in the curriculum: *civic education, values and moral education and educational plan of the school*

This brief description of the system needs further explanation, as there is, of course, also the question of how these subjects are set up conceptually, and how pedagogical theories and changes in the school and political spheres influence the concepts and practice of citizenship education. In the national curriculum documents and laws, the explicit concept of 'citizenship education' is linked to *civic education*, which teaches about society, human rights, democracy, the political system, etc. Nonetheless, the notion of citizenship education should also be extended to questions of values and the concept of *moral education* in school, which permeates all educational activities, and with that also to questions of the *educational concept or educational plan* [Erziehungskoncept] of the school.

In other words, the conceptualisation of citizenship education reaches beyond the mere setting of curriculum, that is, of citizenship education as a separated stand-alone subject, as a subject integrated into one or more other subjects, or as a cross–

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curricular educational theme, and tries to answer questions raised within pedagogical discussions on the concept of moral education in school, and the educational concept of a school. This may also be placed in the context of analysis in Eurydice's publication *Citizenship Education at School in Europe*, which states that:

"Citizenship education should not therefore be provided solely via formal curriculum. It should also form a natural part of the daily life of schools and the way they are organised. This principle raises several questions to be dealt with in turn: How are school organisation and its 'culture' meant to contribute to the development of citizenship among pupils? (…) What formal or informal arrangements are there for parents to become involved in developing a secure, democratic and respectful learning environment in schools? How do schools contribute to society? More particularly, do they pursue aims that enable pupils to engage with the local community, and reinforce their sense of belonging to it and sharing its values?" (Ibid., 27).

The White Paper (1995) stated that public education – and therefore education for democratic citizenship – has to have both a *lay* character and a *universal* character: "Public education has a lay character and should not be under the monopolistic influence of individual churches, parties or groups with various ideological conceptions of life. Lay pre-school institutions and schools are institutions with room for all regardless of their personal concept of life, religious, philosophical or other convictions and opinions" (White paper 1995, pp. 44 [1996]). Since then, this concept of ethics, based on the values of human rights, has been the official value orientation in Slovene public schools.

This does not, however, mean that there have been no disputes about these concepts, that the dilemmas are solved once and for all and that discussions about value bases will not return, perhaps in some other form.

4.The universal or particular value character of public education

In Slovenia there are, as there have historically been (cf. Krek, Kovač Šebart 2001), two divergent conceptualisations of the position of 'civic education' in state-run schools.

According to the first, which we have described above (and at the moment is based in law, since *The White Paper* was in favour of this concept and it was later accepted in the process of adopting the educational legislation), the contents of civic education are learned or taught through different subjects of the curriculum, as well as being conveyed through a specific subject (called Civic Education and Ethics) that is *compulsory* for *all* students. Based on human rights, it teaches values that reflect a consensus of fundamental values and value systems and must, just like all other subjects in state schools, meet the criteria according to which indoctrination must not be the objective of the educational process.

How it is possible to achieve the goal that school educates *for* values but without indoctrination? In a brief search for an answer to this question, let us examine the decisions and reasoning that the *European Court of Human Rights* has applied in several disputes involving educational issues. As Kodelja writes (1995), besides Articles 8 and 9 of *The European Convention of Human Rights* the provision of primary importance in the sphere of education is Article 2 of *The First Protocol to the Convention,* which provides that: "No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions."

Article 2 requires the State to actively respect parental convictions within state schools, which raises the question as to what the meaning and scope of the 'respect' clause

actually is. *The European Commission* took the view that the essence of the second sentence of the *Protocol* was "'the safeguarding of pluralism and tolerance in public education and the prohibition of indoctrination', and it stressed that parents' philosophical convictions had to be *respected*, not necessarily *reflected* in the state school system" (cf. Meredith 1992, p. 27; Kodelja 1995, p. 23). *The European Court* repeatedly stated that: "The primary concern of Article 2 is to protect the children of certain parents from compulsory religious or philosophical instruction which is not directed at providing information but which is concerned with indoctrinating children with unacceptable beliefs, convictions or ideologies" *(Digest of Strasbourg Case-Law…* 1985, p. 805). It went on to say that, on the other hand, Article 2 "neither expressly nor implicitly grants a general right of exemption from all subjects where religious and philosophical convictions may be involved." (Ibid.) Therefore, we may ask what can be considered to be the 'positive' meaning of the 'respect' clause? In several of their rulings, the *Commission* and the *Court* took the standpoint that "the State in fulfilling the functions assumed by it in regard to education and teaching must take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. The State is forbidden to pursue an aim of indoctrination that might be considered as not respecting parents' religious and philosophical convictions. That is the limit that must not be exceeded." (Ibid.; cf. Kodelja 1995, p. 24). In its decisions with respect to the right of parents "to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions", the *European Commission* and the *Court of Human Rights* thus established the fundamental principle (Meredith 1992, p. 28.) of *objective*, *critical* and *pluralistic* teaching and education.
This reasoning applies to state schools and to teaching in general. It means that all school education is required to follow the above principle. The above cited *Court's* interpretations of the right are valid for the state school, including all educational activity within it, and are not limited to particular contents or a particular subject. Therefore, the interpretations are also valid for citizenship education, including both civic education as a separate subject and civic education through any other subject.
According to this interpretation, the clause *in conformity* in Article 2 does not, therefore, mean that the parents' demands and school education have to agree. In order to respect the right of parents there exists an educational principle (of *objective*, *critical* and *pluralistic* teaching) that is established and accepted. Consequently, a certain *discord* in outcome is to be expected as an inevitable element of any education and teaching that respects the criteria of objective, critical and pluralistic teaching and education. According to this concept, even if it leads to moral distress on the part of students, this is seen as something unavoidable in education, and something that increases one's capacity for tolerance. It is precisely here that it essentially differs from the other concept.

The second concept of civic education has (had) two variants. According to this concept, in the first variant the contents of civic education should be put into effect as a *compulsory* subject for *all* students (in state schools) based on a specific, *particular* value system. In Slovenia, historically both the Church and the Communist Party demanded from schools that a certain world view should permeate through this and all other subjects; in the first case, it should be Catholicism, in the second, Marxism. It is clear that the educational aim in this case is not to follow the above mentioned principles of objective, critical and pluralistic teaching. However, today no one is in favour of this concept because its goal is understood as ideological.

In the second variant, civic education, ethics, etc., are conceived as subjects that are *an alternative* to *optional* religious instruction classes. The teaching of religion is here conceived as religious instruction classes of a particular (Catholic) religion. Because of

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its aims as denominational education[37] the subject has to be optional. The foremost and most insistent advocate of this conceptualisation of education in Slovenia has been the Roman Catholic Church. When these proposals were first put forward it is likely that the primary concern of the Church was not civic education, or ethics, etc., but rather denominational Catholic religious education. However, as a consequence of the concept of the denominational religious subject its alternatives – i.e., citizenship education, which is perceived by the Church as 'lay ethics', etc. – 'have to' be optional subjects.

After the change of political system at the beginning of the nineties, this was first put forward during the debates that took place around 1993 and 1994 between the Church and the Government concerning the concept of religious education as a separate subject in the curriculum of state schools. The question was whether to teach about religions or to give Catholic religious instruction. The Church would like to see (its) religious instruction incorporated in the state school curriculum and kept under its own control. To illustrate this point, let us add the wording of the *Slovene Episcopal Conference*, which in its comment and annotations to the school legislation in 1995 proposed: "Religious instruction is a compulsory-optional subject in all classes of compulsory [primary and secondary] school. The alternative to these lessons is ethics, ecology, civic education [literally 'homeland' education] …" (Podbersič 1995, 5).[38]

According to its own understanding and comprehension, this kind of education and teaching does not seek 'merely' to transmit information concerning religion, and its primary aim is not the mastery of knowledge about religion. It seems that the proposed concept of civic education as an optional and 'lay' subject is indeed related to the fact that the optional or exemption form is currently necessarily applied in our society in the case of denominational religious instruction because of its specifically understood and directed educational aim.

That is why, from the perspective of the second variant, it seems plausible that the necessity of a form of choice in regard to the 'first subject', which is, of course, religious instruction, also brings with it the logic of option in regard to civic education, which is conceived as 'the other side' of religious instruction and regarded as 'lay ethics'.

Although in the current curriculum there is, in fact, no denominational religious education, this does not mean that the idea is dead, and that it will not soon, or sometime in the future, resurface. However, hypothetically speaking, if denominational religious education had been implemented in the state school, questions of whether there exists a common value basis of education and citizenship in the state school or whether education will be based on a particular value system would not have been resolved in this way - the introduction of such a subject would no doubt have opened debate on the topic.

[37] To have an option is a practical solution that also secures the right of children to be educated in conformity with the religious and philosophical convictions of their parents. According to the *European Court of Human Rights*, it is "the only appropriate method for denominational education in one religion. Compulsory education in one religion without the possibility of exemption, would violate Article 2" (*Digest of Strasbourg Case-Law …* 1985, p. 801).

[38] In the time of reaching agreement on school legislation, The National Assembly (within The Primary School Act) accepted the solution that 'Ethics and Society' be a compulsory subject and the non-denominational subject 'Religions and Ethics' be an optional subject in the social sciences and humanities complex that school was obliged to offer. Furthermore, the agreement on the modifications of the Act signed by the coalition partners in January 1998 did not make any drastic changes to the solutions set before. After a clearly expressed wish of one the parties that the subject 'Ethics and Society' be named 'Homeland Education [Heimatkunde]' and its content be changed accordingly, agreement was reached on a subject to be named 'Civic Education'. Likewise, the proposal that school should offer denominational religious instruction and 'lay ethics' as its alternative, which the Church had been demanding more and more loudly, was not accepted in the agreement. The actual Minister of Education (the Government came into power in 2004 and has a four year mandate) is now openly advocating 'homeland education', but he has not yet taken steps to change the existing syllabus of the subject according to this idea.

Since 2004, when a conservative coalition formed the government, the concept according to which education in the state school would be based on a particular value system (in reality, on the Christian, or rather Catholic, value framework) has been revived through different channels; namely, through changes to the law connected with an increased interest by the Minster of Education in the so-called educational concept of school. According to the initial proposals for one of the school acts, the state school would be able to build the specific values of the school into the framework of the educational concept. This would open the door to particular value systems, and shift education in the state school away from the concept of human rights – conceived as values common to everyone - as the basis of education in the state school. This suggestion has not, however, been included in the actual proposal. The efforts of the Minister of Education to transform citizenship education into 'heimatkunde' have not, thus far, led to a new subject that would take the place of the existing subject of Civic Education and Ethics. Nonetheless, according to the new proposal the subject will be called 'citizenship and homeland education and ethics' and, as it seems, will be partly changed.

Civic education and the discourse of permissiveness

In the last two or three decades, education in general, as well as civic education in Slovenia, has also been defined by discourse that can be described by the terms 'the culture of narcissism' (Lasch), permissiveness and progressive education.

In the nineties, this was probably the prevailing orientation in the teaching profession, as well as in public discourse, in Slovenia. How can we describe the discourse of permissiveness?

We should briefly summarise one of its authors, who writes that encyclopaedically-oriented schooling does not belong in our times; instead, school should transfer the brunt of its requirements from teachers to students and from memorising facts to developing thinking (cf.: Kramar 1980, 38–40). We have used this somewhat older reference since the time dimension of the problem must also be seen.

A point that, at the time, perhaps had a subversive flavour, since it was expressed in opposition to the existing conventional wisdom of the time, has been preserved unchanged in pedagogical and public discourse - as if schools and teaching have remained unchanged - and has become an ideology.

We observed the fundamental opposition above: there should be *less* '*knowledge*' and *more* '*thinking*', as a consequence of which the message via the logic of oppositions (*either-or*) becomes a perversion of the slogan of the Enlightenment: what is needed is *not knowledge and facts,* but *thinking* (alone!). Attached to this opposition are claims we hear incessantly: that knowledge is still too fact-based, that school requires only memorisation. Today we also hear discourse that runs as follows: we should support a move *away from* a lower conceptualisation of learning (accumulation of data, rote memorization) *towards* a higher conceptualisation of learning (application and giving meaning). In essence, this communicates the message that it is possible and necessary to *eliminate* rote memorisation and the learning of facts, since knowing principles, definitions and facts is, in this discourse, not regarded as a condition for a higher level of knowledge. In the opposite case, the idea would not be expressed in the opposition *away from … towards …*, but that along with learning the necessary information, facts, definitions, etc., it is also necessary to build up the pupil's ability to use and give meaning to them.

Another trace of the discourse is *a belief in the spontaneous and natural (self)development of the individual,* as opposed to emphasising the objective social dimensions of the education and socialisation process (cf.: Kovač Šebart 2002).

In illustration, we first cite Svetina, since he directly and comprehensively states the assumptions that are often found in a more abridged form. This author states that the

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task of schools is no longer to adapt children to already established value systems, behavioural patters, social concepts, ideas and requirements, but to nurture them and release their 'inner growth potentials'. In other words, schools should help children to discover their own personal values and life maxims, principles, norms and ideals (cf.: Svetina 1990, 26–27).

He goes on to state that it is necessary to methodically remove from educational processes and practice everything that limits the child's personal development, so that we at least make it possible, even if we are unable to support it or encourage it. Then "[…] the developmental forces within children and young people could themselves accomplish a lot of the things which can presently be set as the goals of declarative official pedagogy or normative pedagogical thinking." (op. cit., 29) Our current schooling, with its inappropriate methods, e.g., "[…] (by forcing children and young people to study, which by the very nature of things creates resistance to learning and to all of the subjects which they are forced to learn) very often stifles their enjoyment of studying […]" (op. cit., 32).

Belief in (*genuine*) *nature* and *spontaneity* appears in various contexts and texts.[39] However, their common element is a belief that a person can *naturally* become a socialised being, *spontaneously* enjoy work, etc., whereby, of course "[…] we come to the typical ideological image according to which man is already in his innermost core good, hard-working, etc. […] this innermost core is the only hope man has that someday he will succeed in managing his social distress." (Žižek 1983, 11)

A typically ideological picture is at work here, according to which the human is good, hard-working and creative in his or her natural core and this natural core is the only hope for humanity's successful control of social misery some day (cf. Žižek 1983, 11). In other words, in education we are now dealing with the belief that the individual's conformity to society is not paid for by irrational, compulsive, uncontrolled renunciation.[40] From this perspective, the only mission that remains for the teacher is to enable fulfilment of the *universal human potential* of each student. Education should only foster and release the child's inner growth potential and reveal his or her own personal values, maxims, principles, norms and ideals (cf. Svetina 1990, 26 -27).
At the end of the day, the result of permissiveness was a radically non-autonomous individual, only able to establish a 'mirror-like', imaginary relationship to the Other, completely dependent and in a state of permanent anxiety, and unable to reflect desire in relation to others, e.g., desire for his or her own child. The outcome of the permissiveness of parents and teachers, who, with the best intentions, do not provide

[39] In illustration, we present only the thoughts of B. Marentič Požarnik, from a text in which the author deals with the issues of grading and motivation: "External encouragements, even if positive, such as awards, suffocate or undermine inner motivation and genuine interest […] stars or material awards undermine inner interest […] Looked at as a whole, the excessive paying of attention to grades in Slovenia is well on the way to 'draining out' genuine interest and inner motivation among the majority of students." (B. Marentič-Požarnik 2002, 9–10.) Thus, since such discourse characterises only one side as value positive, the effect is not just as if it were a change of emphasis, but rather to *eliminate* that which is 'on the other side'. The fact is that we do not simply create our thoughts and predispositions ourselves; they come from the outside – on the level of the network of symbols, we receive them as 'ours' through meanings that are given by Others and are thus 'forced' upon us. If over time we no longer feel these constraints, it is only because we internalise them; the pressure of the social environment can be understood in this way. The recognition of our potentials is therefore already integral to the externally imposed network of symbols. But it is precisely this that the discourse denies – therefore we say that this involves *belief* in the (self-) development and self-actualisation of the individual (cf. Kovač Krek 2004).
[40] In this sense, it is owing to C. Lasch that we can see how the cult of authenticity, spontaneity, liberation from compulsion is nothing more than a phenomenon of pre-Oedipal dependence, and that this dependence can be overcome merely by identifying oneself with a decentred, foreign, ego-external instance of symbolic law (cf. Žižek 1987, p. 136).

resistance to the desires of the child, is a lack of capacity for the autonomous individuality in the child.

At the same time, the beliefs of youth in Slovenia regarding the political sphere and 'civic life' in general changed significantly. In the first half of the nineties, research on youth (carried out in 1993) indicated considerable changes of value preferences in comparison to the results of research carried out in the mid-eighties: "In comparison with 1985, 1993 saw a marked decrease in the importance of all problems connected with either the personal emancipation of young people or their political influence" (Miheljak 1995, 121).

How is this lesson related to civic education? Let us consider briefly the history of the subject that is supposed to play the role of education for citizenship in the curriculum of Slovene schools.

The evolution of the subject 'Ethics and Society' (cf. Ethics and Society 1997) after the transition to the new regime proves - in our analysis - that the reasons for uncertainty and the tentative steps regarding the ways of teaching this subject and its contents in general are to be found in the teachers and the experts who *themselves* are victims of an illusion of what individuality means and how to achieve it through education through the discourse of permissiveness.

The illusion of the *universal human potential* brings with it the fantasy that 'universal human potential' and 'inner interest' are what matters, and that the children 'themselves' should provide the *contents* that would be thought of as civics. Namely, in the nineties, the subject 'Ethics and Society' was typically conducted as 'learning hours', where the themes were defined by the pupils - 'about the problems of youth' - and where pupils' discussion was the only method of teaching. Even now, after the curriculum reform, a significant portion of the hours available for the *syllabus* of civic education is assigned to those themes that proved to be 'popular' and 'interesting for pupils'.

At the same time, research has shown that Slovene youth does not ascribe great importance to the political, with the exception of national identity: "National identity and the consequences derived from it are actually the only themes - conditionally speaking - of political identity, of the political consciousness of this younger generation" (ibid., 175). Only 7.6% of the younger generation thought that their problem was a lack of political influence. As a result of this attitude towards the political field, and with the 'help' of the permissive approach in teaching the subject 'Ethics and Society', which conformed to the value preferences of pupils, civic education lost most of the elements that help to develop a citizen's knowledge and skills required for entering and participating in political life in general.

That which has been called the permissive approach can be seen partly as the result of a different philosophy of education that tends to abandon 'the coercion of youth to learn' and develop the student's activity on the basis of autonomous motivation instead of external constraint. Even if one agrees with this assertion, one cannot ignore the fact that the ability of children to speak for themselves, to express their autonomous motivation, is mediated by the social network, which means that motivation and autonomy are established only through pressure or coercion in the process of education.[41]

Even today, less attention is paid in Slovenia to knowledge that enables understanding of the institutions of democracy, and less room is left for grasping certain notions that are essential for entering democratic political life. It is more than questionable whether

[41] Therefore, one is advised not to reject the old wisdom of a classic theorist of education, J. F. Herbart, who says, "… there is a well-known educational rule that the teacher should strive to arouse the interest of the students in what he or she teaches. However, the rule is usually given and understood in the sense that learning is the aim and the interest is the means to achieve it." He inverts this relationship: "Learning is temporary, the interest has to endure the entire life" (Herbart 1919, 111).

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civic education *in schools* provides the necessary standards required for everyone *in the reality* of democratic political life.

Civic education remained in the interregnum: it did not want to be indoctrination but, on the other hand, it did not manage to become equal to other subjects on the level of knowledge and in the mediation of values. It is due to the specificity of the aim that the subject was established and conceived as an exception among subjects, and the 'exceptionality' was maintained on the level of the concept of a new subject Civic Education and Ethics, established in 1999.

The syllabus for the 7th and 8th grades of nine-year primary school encompasses 10 themes in the two grades (5 in each grade). In the first theme, entitled 'Life in the Community: Nation, State', of the nine operative goals only one of them actually refers directly to the theme. The remaining four themes in the 7th grade are: 2. Family; 3. Models and Authority; 4. Agreement and Decision Making in the Community; and 5. The Media and Information. Conceptually the subject is very much based on psychology, which gives the content an orientation towards interpersonal relationships and communication. Again in the 8th grade only one of the five themes (the third theme: Settling Common Matters: the Question of Democracy) is directed towards establishing the pupils' political literacy in connection with the status of citizenship. The other four themes are: 1. Generations and Culture – Mutual Understanding; 2. Faith and Belief – Christianity; 4. Profession and Work; and 5. The Society of the Future: What Kind of Society Is It? The entire syllabus of the 8th grade encompasses more than 35 goals, of which only five relate to imparting basic citizenship political literacy to the pupils.

This subject also retains an optional component - presented as an integral part of the subject - where the document lists a further 18 optional topics (relationships between the sexes; forms of dependence and addiction; education/employment; interpersonal relationships in school; distant cultures and places; violence (amongst peers); free time; forms of politeness (bon ton); marginal groups; relationships between cultures; the attitude towards the chronically ill and the developmentally challenged; new spiritual movements and sects; learning strategies; dealing with limited natural resources; mental and physical health; united Europe – aging Europe; terrorism and peace in the world; to be or to have). The argument for including optional topics in the syllabus is supposed to be the interest of the pupils (Citizenship Education and Ethics 1999, 4).

Here again it is evident that in planning the subject arguments prevailed that were more oriented towards the treatment of interpersonal relationships and communication, as well as discussion between pupils and teachers. The subject treats questions of the functioning of society thoroughly, but is less concerned with a familiarity with the notions, concepts and tools of political and citizenship literacy.

Citizenship and Ethics is, however, built upon in the syllabus with an optional subject called Citizenship Culture for the 9th grade of nine-year primary school (cf. Citizenship Culture 2001). This subject includes three themes: 1. Democracy, Political Order and Institutions; 2. Human and Child Rights; and 3. Equality and Diversity. However, as this is an optional subject that is, in reality, seldom executed, it can be foreseen that the knowledge of political literacy that the subject could potentially impart is *de facto* accessible to an extremely small portion of primary school pupils.

In short, the concepts of citizenship and political literacy remain on the fringes in citizenship education as a curricular subject. The arguments that led to such a scheme could also be derived from the supposition that some of the concepts and values that are an important part of contemporary citizenship – such as: power and authority, freedom and order, justice, human rights in connection with law, the legal state, rules and laws, and especially political literacy in the sense of a familiarity with the political system – are uninteresting for pupils. The borders of citizenship education - in the sense of knowledge, skills and the formation of values – are, of course, established by explicitly formed curricular goals. If these goals are poorly represented in the curriculum through which political literacy is formed (or if the school avoids these goals) then it is not possible to expect that citizenship education will shape a citizenship

literate young generation - and the Ministry's current initiative, which seeks to redesign the subject to became more like 'homeland education', also leads in this direction.

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