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CiCe
Institute for Policy Studies in Education
London Metropolitan University
166 – 220 Holloway Road
London N7 8DB
UK

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Lithuanian social science textbooks: do they encourage development of the national and civic values?

*Irena Zaleskiene and Linas Jasinauskas
Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Lithuania)*

Abstract

The paper presents findings from the study on analyses of Social Science textbooks used in Lithuanian secondary schools. The aim of the study was to analyse and summarize concepts, purposes, functions and requirements in textbooks used from 1990 to 2012, with specific focus on the identification of civic and national values' manifest within them. The research methodology involved: a) analyses of national education policy documents such as curriculum, school based programs, guidelines for teachers, etc.); b) content analyses of textbooks (76 textbooks of history, geography, ethics, citizenship education, economics were analysed). Content analyses showed that important national values expressed in the textbooks included independence and autonomy, patriotism and national devotion, and these are seen as foundation stones for developments of Lithuanian nationhood.

Keywords: *textbooks, national values, civic values*

Introduction

According to Lithuanian and foreign authors alike, consideration of the intersection of national and civic values in a changing contemporary society is both relevant and complex (see for example, Sliogeris, 1999; Mikk, 2000; Luksiene, 2000; Zimenkova, 2008; Reints, 2009; Macgilchrist, Cristopher, 2009; Zaleskiene, 2011; Janusauskiene, 2013). Educational discourse encompasses problems of youth, national and civic identity construction; the changing concept of citizenship; and, related educational perspectives. The emphasis is not just on a passive youth status with regards to national and civic values, but also the challenges and consequences of globalization making real impact on the young persons' thinking, way of life, behaviour, search for better and happier life and the like. The value-related capacity of a textbook in the educational context is being stated and formulated, as a textbook, in terms of world researchers, remains one of the major educational tools.

In the Lithuanian educational context, often speculative nationality is associated with citizenship (these terms are frequently used interchangeably), without at least minimal explanation of these concepts, disclosure of their content, or discussion of the interrelations between them. Moreover, it is not possible to model the distribution of the educational process (national and citizenship education) in the contemporary society, let alone in tomorrow's society. The literature (Bruzgeleviciene, 2006, Grigas, 2007; Duobliene, 2009) presents a variety of interpretations of national identity and citizenship interaction. One study uses a simple metaphor, with national identity representing the

roots of a tree, and citizenship is the whole tree, including the trunk, branches, leaves and flowers (Šliogeris, 1999, p. 26). Within the academic discourse it is possible to envisage that the concept of national identity as ascribed by roles, both as a connector (connects the representatives of one nation), and distinctive (in a society distinguishes a specific group of people). Sometimes it proceeds even further, by using the concepts of “global citizenship”, “democratic citizenship”. In this way, citizenship is assigned exclusively to a connecting role in helping to create and maintain the society’s residents (correspondingly those living in the world) dignity and educating the connection – the civic identity. These approaches not only emphasize the multidimensionality of the content of concepts, but also its problematic use. More detailed attempts to reveal the conceptual content of national and civic education are present in the governmental “Long Term National and Civic Education Program”, which was approved by the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania Resolution No. X-818 (2006 September 19th). Citizenship in this Program is described “as awareness of persons of their rights, responsibilities and obligations for the democratic state, activities on behalf of the public interest, defending fellow citizens' rights and freedoms, democracy advocacy, the pursuit of well-being in Lithuania”. And national identity “as perception by a person of the history of his people, the cultural peculiarity, fostering its national identity, commitment to the people and the State of Lithuania, maintenance and creation of the Lithuanian cultural and political identity.” It is within this context that we explore how textbooks present and educate the national identity and citizenship in Lithuania, Europe and the world.

The aim of our research was to explore the national and civic values’ manifestation and dissemination in social and moral education textbooks for grades 5 to 12. The aim was concretized by the following research goals:

1. To analyse and summarize textbooks research within the Lithuanian and international education contexts.
2. To reveal the Lithuanian comprehensive education school textbook concept, purpose, functions and requirements for the quality of content configurations for 1990-2012.
3. To identify civic and national values’ manifestation and dissemination at the comprehensive education school through the social and moral education textbooks used in secondary schools.

Our research methodology involved:

- a) analyses of national education policy documents such as curriculum, school based programs, guidelines for teachers, etc.);
- b) met analyses of textbook research from national and international authors; b) content analyses of textbooks (76 textbooks of history, geography, ethics, citizenship education, economics were analysed).

1. The educational context for research

Citizenship and national identity education studies conducted in different countries show a changing didactic approach that seeks to find harmony between the national and global content in textbooks and educational media (Macgilchrist, Cristopher, 2009). This cognitive didactic change is leading to new perceptions of the modern world, including recognition of the relevancy of spaces and their development at global to local scales,

and new forms of subjectification. The second trend of research that became apparent in textbooks is the reflection of multiculturalism and efforts to strengthen identity. The selection and presentation of the educational materials focuses on the development of students as national entities and at the same time as world citizens in their teaching/learning, encouraging them to fully discuss, consider, rethink their cultural background, while repeatedly returning to the sources of the national culture (Senegacnik, 2009).

A third trend of research which became apparent could be described as the search of the theoretical concepts for using textbooks. This research direction could be assigned by the theoretical papers, the authors of which make attempts to answer the questions what are the materials of study? In which way, how could they be classified? In response to these questions, the researchers organize into a system the incoming responses, naming a) the functional educational materials (tools, measures) as a teaching / learning process facilitators; b) the semantic learning materials, which are defined as signs and semantic meanings (films, literature, paintings, texts and other objects reflecting the specific experiences in the area); c) the didactical learning materials, which harmonise the measures listed above, the texts and facilitating the teaching and learning processes (the textbooks and educational games). Such a conceptualization of learning materials enables the researchers to efficiently model the learning process, the result of which is the “change of skills”, indicating that the learning becomes a “movement from chaos / conflict / failure towards changes of skills, capacity” when the subject begins to be able to do what one could not do before” (Bundsgaard, Hansen, 2009).

In Lithuania the studies conducted on textbooks are fragmentary and rather reflect certain political orders and the resources allocated to carry them out than a continuing concern as well as interest in texts and contexts at comprehensive education schools. It is with regret to note that the Lithuanian textbooks research initiatives since the start of education reform, as initiated by Meilė Lukšienė, Violeta Jonynienė, Evaldas Bakonis, and developed later on at the Pedagogical Institute, institutionalized and German authorities’ financially supported textbooks research initiatives have been suspended, academic forces scattered following the reorganization of the Pedagogical Institute in 2001.

The analysis of the Lithuanian education documents, methodical and scientific literature revealed a certain textbook concept configurations during 1990 - 2012. One can observe the tendency that the textbooks and their contents at all times have been in continuous concern areas of the education policy-makers, publishers, textbook authors and the academic communities. Any change in the curriculum and textbook updating reflected the textbook formation policy contexts:

- In the first textbook concept projects (1992, 1995) there were defined textbook theoretical model which has been revised, and expanded, made more concrete, but the essential provisions have survived to the present day. The importance of textbook for realization of the reformed curriculum was emphasized, but its role in the educational process was not considered as absolute.
- In 2002 - 2003, there was comprehensive updating of the education curriculum with textbooks adjusted accordingly. In 2003 “The Requirements for Comprehensive Education Course Textbook” emphasized that the textbook will be converted from the

main source of knowledge into a manual for facilitating independent learning. It is a tool that should help students to develop a system of values, develop the capacity of training (learning) and education at large, and to provide the necessary learning materials. It is emphasized that the textbook is primarily intended for students and it is very important to have the textual and visual materials methodically structured for the purposes of independent learning.

- In 2008, following updating of the primary and basic education programs, the textbook and other learning aids concept has been adjusted. The purpose of the textbook, its features and content requirements were closely linked to the students' competencies development. The textbook is defined as a means to help students achieve the educational objectives and performance, defined by the Curriculum Framework, i.e. develop competencies - to develop a system of values, to acquire the necessary abilities, skills, knowledge and understanding. The methodological recommendations for textbook authors developed in 2012, present the idea of a textbook as printed or digital means that should be adapted to students individually or with other students so as to create their own knowledge, develop skills, attitudes and facilitate the development of learning, which encompasses and integrates information from different sources.

2. Research results

Analysis of Lithuanian and foreign authors' ideas, reflections, concepts of citizenship and national identity; and, the European Union's education strategic documents and recommendations for citizenship education in contemporary multicultural societies (All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies, 2004) helped to distinguish and classify the following basic civil and national values: *freedom and rights (civil and political rights, socio-economic rights); responsibility and duty; representation and service to the common interests of the honour/dignity; active civic and political participation; democracy; civic courage/civil resistance; justice of personal public respect; solidarity with the group community/state; patriotism and national loyalty; tolerance and respect; independence and self-sufficiency; conscious identity.*

Analysis of textbooks revealed that the social and moral education textbooks basically engage and help children as well as young people to develop the national and civic values under their education / learning (what is the result of these efforts, in other words, what national and civic values are developed by school graduates and how much the textbooks were helpful this in the process, would be the objective of another and a different survey). The study has highlighted certain national and civic values manifestation and dissemination trends in the social and moral education textbooks.

The values most emphasized in social education textbooks for grades of 5 – 12 are like: *independence and self-reliance, freedom and rights; patriotism and loyalty to nation.* This suggests that the school textbooks in the field are still dominated by the values associated with the restoration of the statehood at the end of the twentieth century, the struggle for the national survival and independence, and so on. But hardly any of these textbooks emphasized such values as *representation and service for the common interest, tolerance and respect, and justice personal / public solidarity, honour and dignity,* which, after all, are values highly significant for the sustainable functioning of modern democratic societies.

The history textbooks have focus mainly on the *substance of independence and autonomy, and civic courage/civil resistance, patriotism and national loyalty manifestations of society and public life*. However, the lack of a larger textbook authors' focus on the *responsibility and duty, representation and the service for the general interests, personal justice / public justice, honour and dignity*.

Citizenship education textbooks in particular emphasize the values of *freedom and rights*, those of democracy. Basic Education Citizenship textbooks frequently deliberate focus on *identity, democracy, tolerance and respect, active civic and political participation, honour and dignity*; while the secondary education textbooks often emphasized values: those of *independence and autonomy, justice personal/state representation and service to the common interest, freedom and rights* (social and economic).

Geography textbooks emphasized the value of *patriotism and loyalty to nation*; while the economic and entrepreneurial education textbooks emphasize the *socio-economic rights*. But these issues in textbooks lack attention to the values such as an *active civic and political participation, tolerance and respect*.

The moral education textbooks content usually focuses on values as follows: *conscious identity, responsibility and duty, tolerance and respect*. It should be noted that moral education textbooks unfold the various aspects of the securities starting with the personal existential experience and ending with the universal cultural - European philosophical thought, the history of the Church; of the Holy Scriptures wisdom, fiction, stories of famous personalities - context. However, the moral education textbooks allocate relatively little attention to the Lithuanian historical and contemporary social context: the prominent Lithuanian persons' personalities and significant events in the life of the Lithuanian state.

Ethics textbooks most often highlighted the national and civic values of *responsibility and duty, tolerance and respect, justice entity / state of freedom and rights*, but rarely do they focus on *democracy, justice, representation and service* to the general interests as well as the values. Similar values' manifestation ratios were identified also in the Catholic religion textbooks. The basic education ethics textbooks often emphasize *tolerance and respect, honour and dignity, civil courage and civil resistance, independence and autonomy*. In contrast, the secondary education ethics textbooks pay more attention, compared to the basic school textbooks, to *freedoms and rights, responsibility and duty; to justice*.

Conclusions

The results of the study show that in the most cases civic and national values are reflected in the social and moral education textbooks and help cultivate the Lithuanian youth civic and national moral dispositions/values and practical citizenship competencies.

Social and moral education textbooks maintain civic and national values as expressed, conveyed most often through the presentation of significant events, phenomena and

processes, and other historical figures as well as other elements not distinguished in this study. Textbooks contain dominating texts on civil and national values without judgment. That is, the authors of the textbooks usually provide only factual information, emphasizing one or the other national and/or civic values, without giving the author's own approach to the evaluation and/or opinions. Social education textbooks often reproduce values with the help of authentic author's texts and there is a significantly lower incidence of additional texts, tasks, and visual materials. Meanwhile, the moral education textbooks in most cases have the values conveyed via additional texts (excerpts from various creative works, sources, and comments).

The comparison of the tasks present in the social and moral education textbooks related to civil and national values manifestations the tendency was noticed that the moral education textbooks more often than social education textbooks present assignments that require critical evaluation, presentation of students own views or conclusions.

The differences were observed of the manifestation of the investigated civil and national values present in of the basic and secondary education textbooks. For example, basic education (grades 5-10) history books more often than the secondary school textbooks highlight values that are *conscious identity, honour and dignity, solidarity, tolerance and respect*. In contrast, the secondary education (grades 11-12) textbooks often emphasize *democracy, justice person / state; representation and service to the common interest, freedom and rights (social and economic rights)*.

Some ideas based on the results could be suggested to textbook authors. For example, to introduce: a) more controversial materials in order to help students to develop their attitudes, to express independent opinions; b) to submit more assignments not requiring the reproduction of the civic and national values in the relevant information, but also the tasks for which the students should submit their decisions, to validate and argument their views; c) the values as a power of textbooks should be related not only with texts, but also with the symbols, images, to seek to highlight the importance of the values, using not only texts, but also symbols, images, examples of historical figures.

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