

**FIGHTING WITH POST-TOTALITARIAN GHOSTS:
CIVIC EDUCATION
AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP
IN SLOVAKIA**

By
Elena Bianchi

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (MA)

Supervisor: Professor Zsolt Enyedi

Budapest, Hungary
2008

ABSTRACT

Civic education and the way people understand their citizenship status are related in a predictable way. The aim of this thesis was to explore civic education and citizenship attitudes of civic education teachers in Slovakia in order to show whether and how the uncivic mentality of Slovak citizens is preserved by this institution. 15 interviews with civic education teachers from the Bratislava region were conducted and analyzed using the method of content analysis; moreover the national curriculum and parts of the textbook for the civic education course were analyzed. Civic education in the forms as it is taught in Slovakia still preserves the mentality of the former regime, moreover it focuses on the legal (thin) aspect of citizenship and on political participation on the state level and does not focus on community engagement or civic participation. No relationship between the conservative values of the teachers and their perceived importance of obedience and hierarchy in the context of citizenship was detected. The way how teachers perceive citizenship and understand the concept of good citizenship and their perception of the aims of civic education seem to be related in a predictable way. There is a negative relationship between the real level of participation and the feeling of satisfaction with the level of one's own participation. Finally, when studying civic education, one has to focus and distinguish different levels: the level of the state (curriculum and textbook), the level of real practice of teaching and the level of teachers' individual conceptualizations as these might differ significantly.

Key words: civic education, Slovakia, civic education teachers, good citizenship, citizenship, participation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor Mr. Zsolt Enyedi for the guidance and useful comments during my work and I am also very grateful to my second reader Mr. Levente Littvay for his kind support.

I would also like to express my thanks to Mrs. Šarlota Pufflerová from the organization *Občan a demokracia (Citizen and Democracy)* in Slovakia for her support and valuable information and all the participants of my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for the continuous and intense support during my studies at the *Central European University*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Conceptualizations of citizenship	4
1.2 Conceptualizations of good citizenship.....	5
1.2.1 Theoretical concepts of the good citizen.....	5
1.2.2 Theorizing good citizenship in psychology.....	7
1.2.3 Citizens talking about good citizenship	8
1.2.4 Good citizenship as a normative: where could be the problem?	12
1.3 The role of civic education.....	13
2 THE CASE OF SLOVAKIA.....	16
2.1 The perception of democracy after 1989 in Slovakia	16
2.2 What kind of citizens are young people in Slovakia?	19
2.3 Formulation of research questions, hypotheses and expectations.....	21
3 METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Qualitative interviewing.....	25
3.2 Data analysis.....	26
3.3 General questionnaire	28
3.4 Respondents.....	29
4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	33
4.1 Civic education.....	34
4.2 Democracy in schools	37
4.3 State - citizenship – nationality.....	38
4.4 Good citizenship	39
4.5 Participation.....	41
4.6 The role of the state.....	44
4.7 The citizen – state relationship in Slovakia.....	45
4.8 Teachers as citizens.....	47
4.9 Post-totalitarian ghosts	50
4.10 Emerging controversies, patterns and relationships.....	53
5 CONCLUSIONS	57
APPENDIX 1	69
APPENDIX 2	70
APPENDIX 3	74
REFERENCES.....	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 <i>Arguments for good citizenship</i>	11
Table 2 <i>Dimensions of the features of good citizenship (with examples)</i>	11
Table 3 <i>Analytical Dimensions</i>	24
Table 4 <i>High schools in the sample</i>	29
Table 5 <i>Teachers in the sample</i>	31
Table 6 <i>Teacher's political orientation</i>	31
Table 7 <i>Teacher's party preference (multiple possible)</i>	32
Table 8 <i>Features of good citizenship</i> <i>(with the number of teachers who mentioned them)</i>	41
Table 9 <i>Teacher's electoral participation</i>	47
Table 10 <i>Teacher's participation (multiple possible)</i>	48

1 INTRODUCTION

Civic education and the way people understand their citizenship status and act in the space between the state and the society are related in a predictable way. As several authors have stated, the so called good citizenship can be taught and shaped; therefore I believe in the importance of studying and exploring the relationship between citizenship and the process of political socialization, especially through the institution of civic education.

Good citizenship is studied on theoretical as well as empirical level; scholars are even exploring peoples' subjective understanding of this concept. Moreover, the concept of good citizenship is the object of research for scholars from different disciplines such as political science or psychology (Oliver and Heater 1994, Galston in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, Plichotvá 2004, Denters, Gabriel and Torcal 2007, Ichilov and Nave 1981, Theiss-Morse 1993, Klicperová 1998, 2002). On the other side there are scholars interested in the research of civic education, its character and impact on citizenship attitudes; in other words on its role in the political socialization process of the individual (Mc Allister 1998, Dudley and Gitelson 2003, Finkel 2002, Singer 2007, Hunter and Brisbin 2003). The research basically studies the mechanisms and contents of civic education and their effects on the individual. Concerning the target groups, a big part of both branches of research is focused on youth.

In order to localize my thesis in a broader framework, it can be considered as a part of the study of the relationship between the political socialization through civic education and the character of citizenship of the youth. In my former research, I have already focused on one of the variables – young people's understanding of citizenship and participation; in this thesis I would like to focus on the other variable – civic education. A deeper insight into this

political socialization tool can open up space for a more sophisticated research of the causal relationship between these two variables.

Furthermore, my interest is to explore civic education in a particular type of country – a post-communist country. Slovakia is a country with a non-democratic past and with a new young generation growing up in a consolidating democratic environment. However, based on empirical data from Slovakia, we can still observe an uncivic (even authoritarian) way of thinking and understanding of citizenship by the youth, even though the children/young adults do not have any direct experience with the former regime.

Therefore, in this thesis I explore civic education and citizenship attitudes of civic education teachers in Slovakia. I formulate my research questions as follows: *What notion/ conceptualization of citizenship is promoted by the civic education in Slovakia and how (character of education)?*, and *How do the teachers of civic education conceptualize citizenship and good citizenship?*

In order to answer my research questions I explore the national curriculum, parts of the textbook and the teachers' subjective understanding of citizenship and participation. I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with civic education teachers in the Bratislava region (Slovakia) and analyzed them with the method of content analysis. Based on this data I study the aims and the nature of civic education as well as the teacher's opinions about good citizenship and participation in relation to current theories of citizenship (Marshall in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, Delanty 2000, Tilly in Faulks 2000, Kymlicka and Norman 1994) as well as theories of good citizenship from both the political and psychological perspective (Oliver and Heater 1994, Galston in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, Klicperová 1998, 2002). Finally I show that the institution of civic education in the form as it is taught in Slovakia still carries the heritage from the past regime and this way preserves the uncivic mentality.

The design of my thesis contributes to this area of research in several ways; I am focusing on a very particular target group – teachers of civic education - that was not object of research in any of the relevant literature. Second I am focusing on civic education in a country with a particular past - a post-communist country. And finally, the character of my research is rather exploratory therefore I detect new issues, patterns and relationships that emerge from my data and that were not expected based on the literature.

The thesis starts with an overview of literature discussing citizenship and especially the concept of good citizenship on theoretical as well as empirical level. The final part of the chapter explores the role of civic education in shaping the citizens. In chapter 2 I focus on the particular case of Slovakia, mainly on the perception of democracy, on participation and on citizenship; moreover my key focus will be on youth, here I also identify my hypothesis, research questions and my research expectations. In the following chapter I describe the methodology that will be used in order to answer my research questions. Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the obtained data from interviews as well as from the textbook. This is followed by the final chapter where I discuss my findings with the literature and formulate the conclusions of my research.

1.1 Conceptualizations of citizenship

In order to be able to theorize the so called good citizenship, I want to present some basic theoretical conceptions of citizenship. According to Marshall's classical definition (in Kymlicka, Norman 1994) the citizenship status consists of three components: (1) civil citizenship; the civic rights and freedoms of private property and speech, etc.; (2) political citizenship; participation in the power execution on national and local levels; and (3) social citizenship; the right for a share on the public goods. Delanty (2000) criticises this static and formalistic definition and brings in new components. He defines citizenship as consisting of rights, responsibilities, participation and identity. The individual components are closely connected to different political traditions; the liberal tradition defines citizenship through rights, the conservative tradition emphasises duties and responsibilities, republicans and communitarians view participation as central for the conceptualization of citizenship and finally identity in of substantial interest for the nationalist theories of citizenship.

According to Charles Tilly's concept of the thin and thick citizenship (in Faulks 2000), the citizenship status can be viewed as a concept influencing only a limited number of activities of a person or, on the other hand, playing a role in substantial dimensions of the life of a citizen. Thin citizenship is a more a passive concept, emphasising the public character of citizenship and viewing the state as the necessary bad. Thick citizenship is, on the other hand, based on the notion of the mutual back-up of rights and responsibilities, on the belief that the political community is the essential feature of a good life and on the idea of the interconnection of the public and private; citizenship is active and has got a moral definition with the emphasis on civic virtues. In the following section I will show that although there are different conceptualizations of the so called good citizenship, they usually have much in common with the idea of thick citizenship.

1.2 Conceptualizations of good citizenship

Good citizenship is nowadays discussed in various contexts; often in connection with different policies, with the educational system as well as with youth participation. Generally, there are two sets of literature on good citizenship. One set is theoretical, mainly normative; theorizing how the good citizen should behave, what characteristics he should have and how he should understand the relationship between himself and his fellow citizens as well as the relationship between himself and the state institutions, politics and the community. The other set of literature is based on empirical research and on the individual subjective participants' understandings of what citizenship means to them, moreover what being a good citizen means.

1.2.1 Theoretical concepts of the good citizen

The concept of citizenship and furthermore the notion of a good citizen are interconnected with the understanding of democracy. As I will show in this section, the good citizen is usually meant to be an active member of the society participating in the public life. Schmidt (2000) presents an overview of the different participatory theories of democracy that emphasize the balance between the rule of the citizens and the values such as rights, freedom and pluralism. In these theories, the citizen is offered a great range of opportunities to participate in the political life of the community; on the other hand, it is expected a lot from him. The citizen is believed to be capable of more and better participation than the reality shows; moreover, the scholars believe that he can be simulated by the appropriate organization of the public deliberation to an enhanced activity.

According to some theoretical literature (see Kymlicka and Norman 1994, Oliver and Heater 1994), the idea of good citizenship came with the communitarian critique of the liberal concept of citizenship based mainly on rights. The authors show that there are different

approaches that react on the thin liberal conception of citizenship. The republican civic virtue approach recognises the value of participation in itself, according to this notion political life is superior to the private. The civil society theorists stress the obligation to participate in the civil society and the involvement in voluntary organisations. Other approaches point out the value of the community and of the common good and emphasize the importance of participation in the life of the community.

Although the idea of good citizenship was presented as a critique of the liberal tradition, Kymlicka and Norman (1994, 365) point out, that “some of the most interesting work on the importance or civic virtues is in fact being done by liberals”. Galston for example identifies four categories of virtues that are required for responsible citizenship: (1) general virtues (courage, law-abidingness, and loyalty), (2) social virtues (independence, open-mindedness), (3) economic virtues (work ethic, capacity to delay self-gratification, adaptability to economic and technological change) and (4) political virtues (capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, willingness to demand only what can be paid for, ability to evaluate the performance of those in office and the willingness to engage in public discourse) (Galston in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, 365). According to him, the most important virtues are the two political ones: the ability to question authority and the willingness to engage in public discourses; these form the grounds of the liberal virtue theory. Another theorist from this tradition is Macedo (in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, 366) who points out the virtue of “public reasonableness”, in other words the ability of each citizen not only to formulate his political demands, but to give them a reason and justify them.

According to Oliver and Heater (1994), the most important liberal argument for good citizenship is the need to protect freedom as the most essential liberal value. Liberal citizens should show interest in public affairs, they should understand the decisions made and demand public justification from decision-makers for their acts. Citizens should be “involved in

creating, interpreting and criticizing the law” (Oliver and Heater 1994, 121). The key values for the liberal citizen are responsibility and autonomy. The authors even formulate personal characteristics of the good citizen: individual’s self-knowledge, moderation, tolerance, empathy and willingness to enter into dialogue and understand and resolve conflicts.

Acknowledging that generally political participation is an important element of good citizenship, one has to think about the conditions that can be in this way supportive. Gabriel (1995, 357) points out that “when political efficacy goes along with political trust, it is an important antecedent of reformist activity”. On the other hand, political inefficacy can lead to political inactivity; moreover feelings of political efficacy combined with distrust may lead to disruptive activities. Under efficacy we understand perceived impact of political actions of individuals and the attitude that political and social change is possible. Furthermore, we can distinguish between (1) internal efficacy that stands for the individual being a competent political actor and (2) external efficacy when the political system is perceived as open and responsive. Next, trusting citizens feel that their interests will be fulfilled even with little supervision and control of the authorities, in other words they have positive expectations about the real performance of the authorities. Gabriel also claims that political efficacy is rather a more stable personal trait; on the other hand the feeling of political trust is more influenced by the performance of the political actors.

1.2.2 Theorizing good citizenship in psychology

Good citizenship is not only in the centre of interest of political scientists; good citizenship is theorized and researched also in other academic disciplines, for example in the field of social and political psychology. Klicperová (2002) identifies the psychological profile of the good citizen as follows: a healthy self-image, political literacy, ability to create differentiated political schemes, ability of cognitive assimilation and accommodation, internal

locus of control, positive general attitude, trust and tolerance, absence of xenophobia, authoritarianism and disaffection, maturity and differentiation of social attitudes, developed moral reasoning, involvement into social networks of the civil society. Similarly, Plichtová (2004) defines the concept of active citizenship as the ability to voluntarily take over the responsibility for the management of public affairs in the form of active opponency of the governmental programs, in the form of participation in the public deliberation or in the form of individual participation in activities of non-profit organizations. Plichtová implicitly claims that active citizenship is the good one (in contrast to the passive counterpart).

Moreover, good citizenship can be defined in a negative way; Klicperová (1998) defines the so called post-totalitarian syndrome that is considered to be an unwished phenomenon in the post socialist states. The post-totalitarian syndrome is a “specific pattern of cognitions, attitudes and behaviour that was developed in a totalitarian society and persists also during the period of transition” (Klicperová 1998, 345). It is characterized by the following symptoms: insufficient development of the individuality and a weakened autonomy, domination of a negative emotional state (anxiety, pessimism, and jealousy), black and white perceptions, manifestations of learnt helplessness, giving up of the responsibility in favour of the state, hedonistic impatience, absence of civic virtues, socialization defects. The concept of the post-totalitarian syndrome will be of great importance for my research as I am exploring citizenship in a post-communist society (Slovakia) and as I expect that this very uncivic concept is still present in the mentality of people.

1.2.3 Citizens talking about good citizenship

Unlike the previous theoretical approaches, in the empirical literature authors are interested in subjective conceptualizations of good citizenship by the participants themselves; they are interested in what being a good citizen means to the citizens. Denters, Gabriel and

Torcal (2007) present a comparative study conducted in 13 European countries (both western and eastern European countries included) on the perception of good citizenship by the mass public and conclude that despite the existing differences between the nations, the three sets of norms: criticism and deliberation, solidarity and law-abidingness are widely endorsed in all societies although they are stemming from different theoretical backgrounds; therefore they could be viewed as somehow essential to the notion of good citizenship.

Ichilov and Nave (1981) analyzed the understandings of the citizen's role of Israeli pupils¹ from Tel-Aviv with the help of a five-dimensional model² and the use of the Q-sort technique. The authors concluded that the good citizen was defined mainly in political terms with an emphasis on obedience of law and loyalty to the state rather than participation in everyday democratic society: "the good citizen is essentially one who obeys the law, is loyal to the state and performs his duties" (Ichilov and Nave 1981, 369). The findings were interpreted as a result of the political culture in Israel, particularly the power concentration of governmental institutions, the lack of democratic experience in the country and the type of civic education emphasizing the formal and legal aspects of the regime. This study is of special importance for my research because it identifies a notion of citizenship that is based on obedience and loyalty to the state that I would expect also in the case of Slovakia, i.e. due to the lack of democratic experience during the former regime.

Similarly, Theiss-Morse (1993) identified four conceptualizations of good citizenship and the types of activities considered appropriate for good citizens using the Q method technique on the sample of 49 participants from Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area. These were the following understandings of citizenship: (1) a citizen in a representative democracy (voting and being informed, electoral politics), (2) a political enthusiast (broad

¹ 1000 pupils in the age of 14-18 years

² 5 dimensions of the model: (1) type of orientation (abstract support and actual behaviour), (2) dimensions of orientation (affective, cognitive and evaluative), (3) nature of activity (productive active nature and passive-consumer nature), (4) source of demand (external requirement and voluntary preference) and (5) type of object (political object and non-political objects).

range of activities, different way of involvement in politics and important decision-making), (3) a citizen pursuing interests (interest-group involvement if an issue of concern reaches the public agenda) and finally (4) an indifferent citizen (minimal involvement, apathetic and alienated beliefs). The author argues that the knowledge of citizens' conceptualizations is important in order to know how they interact with the political leaders and state institutions.

Most recently, Lister et al. (2003) conducted a three-year longitudinal qualitative study of young people in Leicester, UK, focusing on their understanding of citizenship³ and of their transition to the citizenship status. According to the participants the essence of good citizenship was the constructive social participation in the local community; young people conceptualized good citizenship mainly in the terms of the communitarian model. Participants found it easier to talk about responsibilities than rights despite expectations that rights will be overemphasised at the expense of responsibilities. The young participants pointed out the so called first class citizen; an economically independent citizen with money, own home and a family. This is in contradiction to the Marshall's classical definition that portrays citizenship as an equal status for all the members of a society.

Based on the literature we can see that even on the theoretical level, there is not one definition of what a good citizen is or should be; scholars from different backgrounds try to theorize the concept, be it communitarians or liberals. Generally, the literature presents two arguments for good citizenship (see table 1); the liberal argument stresses the importance of the protection of individual rights and freedoms as the motive for participation; on the contrary, the communitarian argument values community and participation per se.

³ The authors identified five models of citizenship: (1) universal status, (2) respectable economic independence, (3) constructive social participation, (4) social-contractual and (5) right to a voice. These are not mutually exclusive, the understanding of citizenship is rather fluid.

Table 1 *Arguments for good citizenship*

Liberal	The liberal argument underlines the need to question the authority and participate in order to protect individual rights and freedom (Macedo in Kymlicka and Norman 1994, Oliver and Heater 1994)
Communitarian	The communitarian argument stresses the value of participation in itself and the importance of participation in the community - the community is valuable as such (Schmidt 2000, Kymlicka and Norman 1994)

Moreover, there is no unity on the empirical level either; even though Denters, Gabriel and Torcal (2007) were able to identify some common understanding of good citizenship that is valid in different societies, we may sum up that the subjective conceptualizations of good citizenship vary considerably. Table 2 presents different dimension that can help us analyse the particular features of good citizenship identified by the people. These dimensions are drawn from the empirical research on good citizenship presented in this chapter. They are mutually not exclusive; therefore the particular features can fit into more of them.

Table 2 *Dimensions of the features of good citizenship (with examples)*

voting, political engagement	political	_____	non-political	solidarity, family care, work ethics
national electoral activity	national	_____	local	local community participation
criticism, deliberation, courage	critique	_____	maintenance	law-abidingness, solidarity, loyalty
electoral activity, volunteering	action	_____	capacity	feeling of internal efficacy, tolerance

1.2.4 Good citizenship as a normative: where could be the problem?

The concept of good citizenship is very often equated with active participation of the youth and there is another set of literature dealing with the policy implications of the promotion of youth active participation, such as Dolejšiová (2005) who focused concretely on the developments of the situation in Slovakia and Czech Republic and evaluated the implementation of the policies of the European Union, the development of legal and practical conditions for youth participation and the real involvement of young people.

Nevertheless, there are also critical voices towards the excessive promotion of youth participation by governments. Bessant (2004) argues that these efforts fail to recognise the real obstacles that young people have to participate; she points out that young people do not really enjoy the same civil rights as all other citizens. Moreover she stresses that giving young people the chance to discuss issues without linking their conclusion to real decision-making, without giving them a real voice in politics, is just a facade for the government. Finally she argues that involvement in community activities does not increase the political efficacy of young people, this only serves to increase their regulation.

Mutz (2006) also criticizes the participatory ideal by advocating the deliberative democracy; she questions if highly active citizens engage in discussions with others than like-minded people. According to her, proper deliberation can occur only in heterogeneous environments and she claims that highly politically active citizens are exposed only to ideas and arguments their own political camp. Moreover, she brings in the argument of Muirhead and Mill (in Mutz 2006) that it is not only the engaged partisan citizens that serve an important purpose in the political world, it is also the observers who are open-minded and process information, arguments and opinions from different political camps. Finally Mutz argues that cross-cutting exposure is important for a good citizen as it decreases the probability of polarization.

1.3 The role of civic education

Good citizenship is viewed as a way of behaviour and thinking that can (and should) be learned and stimulated. Even though there are other different factors in the political socialization of young people such as the family, social environment and the media, civic education also plays a decisive role. According to the liberal virtue theorists, “schools must teach children how to engage in the kind of critical reasoning and moral perspective that defines public reasonableness” (Kymlicka, Norman 1994, 366). Even Aristotle (in Oliver, Heater 1994) believed that good citizens must be shaped by the community and by education. This seems to be not only the opinion of scholars; according to the Eurobarometer on Youth from the Candidate countries in 2003 the educational system is perceived to be the most important channel that makes the social or political participation of young people easier (26%), followed by television (19%) and youth organizations (18%) family and friends are mentioned by 11% and public authorities by 10%. According to the respondents⁴, the educational system is considered to be the most important structure in five out of the 13 candidate countries, among them also in Slovakia (29%). In Slovakia, the following channels are important: family and friends (27%) and television (20%). Generally, it was perceived that more information would encourage young people to participate, on the fourth place was the establishment of civic education in schools that was viewed as a possible catalyst for youth participation.

Knowledge transmitted by civic education increases political literacy and competence; however it does not really have an effect on participation, claims Mc Allinster (1998) based on his study of civic education in Australia. Nevertheless, civic education is very efficient in creating positive views of democratic institutions; it changes how the young people perceive the political world. This is especially interesting when we consider the above mentioned

⁴ Representative sample of 1000 respondents (15+)

negativistic attitude of young people in Slovakia and the lack of understanding of political processes. Similarly, Dudley and Gitelson (2003, 265) argue that “political knowledge is a necessary precondition to civic engagement, but information per se is unlikely to be a sufficient precondition to civic engagement”. This is in accordance with the finding that I have obtained from my research on youth participation in Slovakia; information matters, but there is nevertheless need for more specific motivation. But still, according to Finkel (2002) civic education can have considerable influence also on the behavior (on participation). This nevertheless depends on the nature of civic education; he claims that the combination of knowledge dissemination and direct political experience, in other words the use of active and participatory teaching methods can influence real participation.

The content and the applied method of civic education matter; furthermore it is also the overall environment in the schools and the individuality of the teachers that can make a difference in civic education. Singer (2007) brings in the idea that without democracy in schools there is no democratic education. He points out the undemocratic, sometimes even authoritarian general atmosphere in schools and stresses that under such conditions it is impossible to educate the youth for democracy; the teachers should be democratic themselves. Moreover, Hunter and Brisbin (2003) argue that it is also the nature of the individual teacher that matters; according to their research, “faculties who are not personally engaged are unlikely to try to stimulate their students to become engaged” (Hunter and Brisbin 2003, 762).

Thomas Ehrlich, a senior scholar and the co-director of the Political Engagement Project at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, supports the idea of learning by doing and claims that educating for democracy should not only be based on knowledge and information transfer, but should be based on practical activities (Ehrlich 2008). During his lecture at the Central European University in 2008, he quoted the American

philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey claiming that “learning starts with problems”. Moreover he stressed, that the education for democracy should go beyond the idea of community service that is widely recognized in the USA as an important part of high school education⁵; Ehlich stressed the importance of the shift from community participation to political participation. In this context he also described the techniques that were part of the teaching process of the program “Educating for democracy” in the USA: (1) discussion, deliberation, (2) political research, looking for information, (3) invited speakers, (4) structural reflection – commenting on an article or on a speaker and (5) political placement – internship.

To sum up, based on the literature, there is a relationship between the institution of civic education and the character of citizenship and participation; in other words civic education matters. However, the outcome also depends on the nature of civic education and on the general conditions for teaching as well as the character of the school environment.

⁵ Some high school even require community service as a precondition for graduation

2 THE CASE OF SLOVAKIA

2.1 The perception of democracy after 1989 in Slovakia

Miháliková (1994) describes the Slovak development from the post-communist euphoria about the endless possibilities of the democratic society and the boom of civil society activities towards skepticism about participations and the stability of democracy among the citizens. In 1994 people perceived politics generally as a dirty business and politicians as self-centered power seekers; they did not recognize the importance of their own participation. Miháliková describes the Slovak version of democracy as communicative democracy; media are the central instrument for communication between the citizens and the elites, citizens do not channel their interests through party membership or participation in meetings.

Similarly, according to a 2002 report by Inštitút pre verejné otázky (Istitute for Public Affairs, hereafter IVO), we can identify a clear heritage from the socialist past: the vertical model of the relationship between the public administration and the citizen. In this model, the citizen is perceived as an object rather than a subject of the administration and it creates a feeling of helplessness leading to an uncritical acceptance of charismatic leadership, to corruption or other expressions of anomic behavior. This trend is supported also by another study (Gál, Gonda, Kollár, Mesežnikov, Timoracký, Zajac 2003) claiming that 77% of the citizens think that they do not have any influence on politics and 64% feel that the political developments influence their lives. Moreover, according to the representative research conducted in 2004 by STEM and IVO in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, 62% of the Slovak citizens do not understand what is going on in the national political arena. This data did actually not change from 1994 when it was 64% of respondents. A very similar situation was observed in the Czech Republic. Only 43% of the Slovak respondents believe that

parliamentary elections give citizens the possibility to influence the development in Slovakia. Moreover; compared to 1994, the overall participation of citizens did not increase, on the contrary, it decreased.

In the post-communist counties the values of conservatism and hierarchy are of great importance; and on the other hand only little importance is attributed to values of intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy and coping. This showed the intercultural research on the influence of the political regime on the values of people living in the country conducted by Schwartz, Bardi and Bianchi (2000) which was also conducted in Slovakia and focused on the influence of the socialist regime. The researchers worked with 7 value categories such as: conservatism, intellectual autonomy, affective autonomy, hierarchy, egalitarianism, harmony and coping. Based on the longitudinal comparison or the research results from 1989-1991 and 1996-1997 in the eastern European countries, no shift in the value orientation of the respondents was identifiable. The absence of value change could be explained by the short time period that passed between the two research periods and the generally high stability of value orientation of an individual. For my research it is important to stress that the value of conservatism stands for the preservation of the status quo and the denial of any activities that would disrupt the traditional order of the society; the value of hierarchy stands for the importance of authorities and respect of the traditional societal roles.

Another value dimension that can be used in analysing different societies is the survival vs. self-expression dimension. The survival value is based on the priority of economic and physical security over self-expression and quality of life and on the maintenance of traditional values; self-expression stands for opposite and includes more tolerance and trust towards other members of the society as well as subjective well-being and political activism. According to Inglehart and Baker (2000) and their data from 1990,

Slovakia (together with other post-communist countries) stands clearly on the survival pole of the dimension.

A comprehensive exploration of the different discourses of democracy, in other words the variations of people's interpretations of what constitutes the essence of democracy in the post-communist countries (included Slovakia) was conducted by Dryzek and Holmes (2002). The research from 1998 in Slovakia produced two dominant national factors, that are indeed very polarized in their content: (1) Developing pluralism and (2) Unitary Populism. Respondents from the Developing Pluralism factor believe in the continual development of democracy in Slovakia with the emphasis on constitutional government, the legitimacy of criticism and the refusal of the communist past. This discourse reveals the agency of the citizenry in the democratization process (rather than the elites). Still, we have to bear in mind that the research focused on the perceived reality and not on real political participation. On the contrary, respondents from the Unitary Populism factor still have positive feelings about the communist past, they have a rather nationalistic and populist conception of democracy, and they view conflict as something negative and do not accept the autonomy of media. The participants of this factor presuppose that there is a unitary notion of what is good for the nation and do not accept any deviations from it. This factor is more or less based on an authoritarian notion of the governance. They observe a "sharp division between one discourse committed to civic, democratic, and constitutional norms, and another which sees democracy in more unitary, populist, and oppressive terms" (Dryzek, Holmes 2002, 189).

Based on the research of Moodie, Marková, Farr and Plichtová (1997) another characteristic feature of the Slovak post-communist society in the 90's was the perception of the local community as something redundant and negative and the perception of the individual in terms of loneliness and isolation. In contrast to this "eastern" perception, the "western" Scottish participants of the research perceived the local community in a positive light and as a

place of gathering; the individual was associated with active potential. We could expect that this perception did not change dramatically since then. In this context Uslaner and Badescu (2003) point out that the legacy of communism seems to be long-lasting; in the post-communist countries widespread distrust and civic disengagement are still persistent. However, according to Rustow (in Dowley and Silver 2003), an important precondition for a successful democratization is national unity. Nevertheless this does not mean that people should speak the same language or practice the same religion but they should feel that they belong to the same political community. However in a society where mutual distrust is still omnipresent, this can be problematic to achieve.

Based on the data about Slovakia, I focus in my research on the perceived internal efficacy of the teachers; I explore whether they have the feeling that they do have influence on politics and the political developments. Furthermore I hypothesize a relationship between conservative values and hierarchy based on the presented value research by Schwartz, Bardi and Bianchi (2000). I also hypothesize that community engagement will not be treated within civic education course which could possibly explain the findings of Moodie, Marková, Farr and Plichtová (1997). Finally I expect to find emphasis put on national identity in the discourse of the teachers.

2.2 What kind of citizens are young people in Slovakia?

My recent study on citizenship (Bianchi, 2006) explored and identified distinctive ways of thinking about citizenship and civic participation of Bratislava's adolescents and young adults. Using the Q methodology I identified four factors representing different beliefs about citizenship that represent a variety of views; the factors are the following: (1) individual responsibility, minimal state; a very liberal factor representing the notion of strong citizens and a minimal state, (2) passive negativism; a rather apathetic and negativistic factor, (3)

citizen's mutuality; a communitarian-like factor stressing mutual cooperation of citizens and finally (4) our state, our lord; a factor emphasizing the subordination and the unconditional of the state authority. Factor 2 and 4 are especially alarming as they express distrust towards fellow citizens, the feeling of civic helplessness and pessimism (in 2) and the subordination to authorities and the imperative of obedience of the state authority (in 4). This raises the question how is it possible, that even after the fall of the socialist regime we still experience these attitudes also among young people. This trend finds comparative evidence in the research on social capital in post-communist societies (concretely in Romania) by Uslaner and Badescu (2003). Against their expectations about more optimism for the future, younger respondents were the least trusting and the least tolerant (even when compared with the so called communist generation).

Another part of my study (Bianchi, 2006) was the exploration of the understanding of participation by the youth. Based on a focus groups research I was able to identify the perceived motives and conditions of participation; the motive for participation is usually some personal interest in the issue, self-actualization, seeking of power, own benefits or even altruism. But the motive itself is not sufficient; there are perceived conditions that have to be present (fulfilled) to enable the participation of the individual. These are: (1) the perceived possibility for change, (2) information, (3) relevance to one's own life and (4) predetermination of the individual to participate.

As my study was mainly concerned with the conceptualization of citizenship and participation, in order to get some representative data, we need to have a look at other sources. According to the Eurobarometer 2007 Youth Survey (age 15-30), young people in the 15 old European countries tend to be more involved in political life than young people from the new European countries; in order to make their voice is heard by policymakers they are more likely to join a political party, take part in a demonstration or sign a petition. It is also older

respondents and more highly-educated respondents who are more actively involved in political life. Nevertheless, concerning the very classical act of political participation, according to the survey 77% of the young people in Slovakia did vote in elections or a referendum in the previous 3 years and only 11% did not vote⁶. We can also observe a considerable high interest in politics in Slovakia; 83% of the respondents claim that they are interested in politics on the national level, 73% have interest in politics in the city or region where they live and 63% in politics in the European Union. Even though there is a low percentage of participation in diverse forms of political activities (only 17% signed a petition); young people generally vote in elections and claim that they are interested in politics.

2.3 Formulation of research questions, hypotheses and expectations

Given the empirical data about Slovakia, we can identify an ongoing (after nearly 20 years of the fall of the totalitarian regime) uncivic understanding of democracy, politics and participation. Even among the young people we can see a passive and negativistic attitude towards the political processes and even some authoritarian notions about the functioning of a society. This brings me to the formulation of the puzzle. The fact that even after nearly 20 years of democracy in Slovakia we can still identify a post-totalitarian understanding of democracy and citizenship among the population is not really a surprise as we have already noted that the persistence of post-communist (uncivic) way of thinking is quite long-lasting. Nevertheless, it is surprising that we can clearly identify this way of thinking among young people that do not have a direct experience with the totalitarian regime.

Based on the knowledge from the previous chapter about the role of civic education and about the relationship between civic education and citizenship (Mc Allister 1998, Dudley

⁶ The other 12% did not vote because they were not eligible yet.

and Gitelson 2003, Finkel 2002, Singer 2007 and Hunter and Brisbin 2003) we can conclude that civic education does have an impact on the civic identity of the individual, nevertheless the nature of this impact varies according to the character of the educational process. This thesis will therefore explore the character of civic education in Slovakia in order to explain the ongoing uncivic conception of citizenship identified by the Slovak youth. Based on the literature and the empirical data about Slovakia from the previous two chapters, I formulate my research questions and hypotheses as follows:

Research questions:

- *What notion/ conceptualization of citizenship is promoted by civic education in Slovakia and how (character of education)?*
- *How do the teachers of civic education conceptualize citizenship and good citizenship?*

HYPOTHESIS 1

Given the fact that Slovakia is a post-communist country, the dominant approach within civic education will be characterized by an uncivic understanding of citizenship.

This dominant approach will then be characterized by the following expectations which serve as indicators for the assessment of civic education in Slovakia:

Expectation 1.1 The conception of citizenship promoted by civic education does not encourage the students to participate and critically evaluate the developments in the society.

Expectation 1.2 Civic education is conducted by non-participatory methods.

Expectation 1.3 The schools create a predominantly non-democratic environment.

Expectation 1.4 Teachers' understanding of citizenship is strongly determined by the feeling of national pride.

Expectation 1.5 Teachers view law-abidingness as one of the most important features of good citizenship.

Expectation 1.6 Teachers' understanding of citizenship has the tendency to underline the strong state.

Expectation 1.7 The teachers have the feeling of helplessness.

Expectation 1.8 The teachers themselves do not embody the so called good citizens.

HYPOTHESIS 2

Civic education in Slovakia does not focus on community engagement, rather focuses on the on political participation on the national level.

HYPOTHESIS 3

Those teachers that have conservative values underline the importance of obedience and hierarchy when talking about citizenship and in the context of civic education.

In order to strengthen or weaken⁷ my hypotheses I explore the character of civic education in Slovakia; I study the curriculum, parts of the textbook as well as the teacher's understanding of civic education and good citizenship. For analyzing the understanding of citizenship by the teachers I apply the dimensions (table 1) that were presented in the previous theoretical section. I transformed the different theoretical concepts into the dimensions and research them on empirical level. These also formed ground for creating the research

⁷ Based on the fact that my research is conducted only with a limited number of respondents I can not really confirm or reject my hypotheses.

questions; nevertheless I expect and hope that the research data goes beyond the predefined dimensions and allows some new concepts to emerge.

Table 3 *Analytical Dimensions*

State protection	Individual responsibility
Minimal state	Welfare state
Participatory model of democracy	Liberal model of democracy
Individual helplessness	Efficacy
External inefficacy	External inefficacy (change is possible)
Power in the state	Power in the civil society
Agency potential in the state	Agency potential in the citizens
Obedience	Critical approach of the citizens
Survival, preference of stability, security	Self-expression

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative interviewing

The method of qualitative interviewing of a semi-structured type is especially suited for research with the aim to explore different perspectives or viewpoints on issues, concepts or events (Gaskell 2000). The underlying assumption is that the social world is not clearly given; it is constructed by people in their everyday lives. The aim of a qualitative interview is then to get a picture of the range of views on the research object; in other words to derive interpretations of the world and not given facts. The researcher therefore has to be very attentive to hear the meanings during the process of the interview. According to Warren (2002) in a qualitative interview, the participants are viewed rather as active meaning makers in opposition to passive respondents. The qualitative interview should be open to go beyond the existing theories and literature.

Conducting a qualitative interview is an interaction, a social process, therefore during the first phase of the interview the researcher should be able to create a rapport with the interviewee; this should contribute to an overall atmosphere of trust during the interview. Generally people like to talk and it is essential to show to the participants that the researcher is interested in their story and knowledge, to show them that they are valuable for the research. Moreover it is good to assure them that there are not any right or wrong answers and that the researcher is interested in the variety of understandings of the issues.

In the beginning of the interview it is very important to explain to the participants why they have been chosen, to give an idea about the purpose of the research, to assure them about the anonymity and to give them the information about the probable length of the interview. Warren (2002) also warns that the respondents may be in distress because of the topics that are raised during the interview; therefore the researcher has to be very cautious when opening

some sensitive issues. In order to protect the respondents as well as in order to protect myself as a researcher, I decided to sign with the respondents a contract called informed consent (see Appendix 1).

The interview is usually organized along a small number of open-ended questions, whereas it is advisable to start with more public question and then move to the more private ones (Willig 2001). Willig (2001) also claims that it is advisable to play “the naïve” and encourage the interviewee to explain even things that could be perceived as obvious as well as ask for illustration. It is also very useful to utilize the so called probes, such as: “*Could you tell me something more about that?, Can you give me a more detailed description of what happened?, Do you have further examples of this?*” (Kvale 1996, 133). Probes can have three functions: (1) help to specify the level of depth the interviewer wants, (2) ask the interviewee to finish up the particular answer currently being given, (3) indicate that the interviewer is paying attention (Rubin and Rubin 1995, 148).

In order to answer my research questions, I have compiled an interview scenario (see Appendix 2). The interview questions were created mainly based on the theoretical literature about citizenship and participation; moreover my intent was also to include some particular issues that are salient in the Slovak society. The questions were divided into two sections, the first focusing on civic education as such and on the reality of its teaching, the second section was focused on the subjective understanding of citizenship, participation and the relationship between the state and the citizens by the teachers, as well as on their perception on the particular Slovak reality. My intention was also to explore their behavior as citizens.

3.2 Data analysis

In order to analyze the data from the qualitative interviews I have used the method of content analysis. The main aim was the identification of different themes/issues, the focus on

the way they were presented and possibly on the frequency of their occurrence. As Gaskell (2000, 53) points out, “the broad aim of the analysis is to look for meanings and understanding”. While analyzing the given text, it is important to look for contradictions as well as to ask oneself the question, what is there and what is not there. Moreover it is important to think about possible latent and not only explicit meanings.

The essential part of the analysis is the process of coding and the forming of categories. Coding stands for critical reading of the data, asking oneself “what is this about?” and labeling the statements. The forming of categories is a follow up process, where reading the researcher tries to organize the content of the interview into meaningful categories while rereading the interview transcripts. The final categories should be both exhausting and exclusive (Billham 2000, 60); this means that they should cover the most of the coded text (most of the substantial statements) and that the data should be clearly assignable to one of the existing categories (data clearly belongs to one of the categories). Billham (2000) describes the two essential processes of the analysis as identifying the key and substantive points and bringing them into categories. He also points out the need for direct quotations in the final presentation of the data as the labels of the categories are not explanatory in themselves.

For the analysis of the data, Kvale (in Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor 2003) differentiates between three different contexts of understanding: (1) self-understanding (researcher tries to formulate what the participants themselves mean and understand), (2) critical common sense understanding (using general knowledge) and (3) placing the statements into a wider context and theoretical understanding (interpretations are placed into a theoretical context). All of them can be used in my analysis since I am interested in the very personal understandings of the teachers as well as in the theoretical context of them.

Finally, Spencer, Ritchie, O’Connor (2003, 212) formulate the so called analytic hierarchy; a description of stages and processes involved in qualitative analysis. Although

these are rather general, they can be used as a useful framework for the analysis of the obtained data. The particular procedural steps are the following:

- Raw data
- Identifying initial themes and concepts
- Labeling or tagging data by concept or theme
- Sorting data by theme or concept (in cross-sectional analysis)
- Summarizing or synthesizing data
- Identifying elements and dimensions, refining categories, classifying data
- Establishing typologies
- Detecting patterns (associative analysis and identification of clustering)
- Developing explanations (answering how and why questions)
- Seeking applications to wider theory/ policy strategies

When analyzing my data, I followed the process defined by Billham (2000); first of all I identified important issues and topics and then coded them and started to place them into categories (some of them were predefined, some of them emerged from the data). This way I conducted a comprehensive descriptive analysis of the interviews. In the next step of the analysis I was looking for emerging patterns, contradictions, relationships as well as for issues that did not appear (in accordance with Gaskell 2000 and Spencer, Ritchie, O'Connor 2003).

3.3 General questionnaire

Each of the interviewees also filled out a general questionnaire composed of 22 questions which traced the demographic data as well as the political orientation of the respondents. Moreover the questionnaire also contained questions concerning the character of political participation of the teachers. For the questionnaire see Appendix 3.

3.4 Respondents

Generally, there is no fixed number of interviews that should be conducted for a research project, generally “it depends” (Gaskell 2000, 43); moreover more interviews do not automatically mean better quality. Nevertheless Gaskell points out that there is an upper limit for the number of interviews that it is necessary to conduct and this upper limit is somewhere by 15-25 interviews for a single researcher. Therefore, based on the time available for the research work I conducted 15 interviews. An important precondition when selecting the respondents is their communicative competence (Warren 2002). As my target respondents were teachers, I could presuppose that they will be capable to express their opinions properly. Nevertheless, I had to bear in mind that teachers can have a strong tendency to give socially desirable responses.

The respondents of my research were 15 high school teachers of civic education (be it the course called *Education about the society* in gymnasiums or the course called *Civic education* in other high schools). My intention was to create a somehow representative sample; therefore I decided to cover gymnasiums, vocational high schools as well as church-owned gymnasiums; moreover one of the gymnasiums was a Hungarian one (see table 2).

Table 4 *High schools in the sample*

Type of school	Gymnasium	5
	Church owned gymnasium	4
	Hungarian gymnasium	1
	Vocational high school	5
School ownership	State	12
	Non-state	3
School location	Bratislava	13
	Other	2

As one possible method of respondents selection is the snowball method (Warren 2002); this way the researcher can move from acquainted participants to the strangers. Nevertheless, this method is risky in the way that it is highly probable that the respondents will recommend you friends and acquaintances of same views and opinions. As the aim of my research was to explore the diversity of the understanding of citizenship and civic education, I decided to apply another kind of recruiting method. Basically there were three sources of respondents for me: (1) I randomly visited two methodical centres in Bratislava in time when training/ workshop for civic education teachers was offered and recruited a part of the respondents. (2) I made use of the database of a non-governmental organization that offered civic education trainings in the past. (3) I randomly called to high schools in Bratislava in order to supplement the sample with the different types of school I intended to cover.

My sample was composed from 15 teachers, 12 women and 3 men; this gender ratio is generally in accordance with the female domination in the teaching profession. I have covered a wide range concerning the age of the teachers, the youngest in their 20's, nevertheless the majority of the teachers were in their 50's; this again would be in accordance with the tendency that there is a general lack of young teachers in Slovakia stemming from the low prestige of the job and the minimal financial reimbursement. The experience in teaching civic education courses varies as well; one third do have up to 10 years of experience, another third (approximately) up to 20 years and the last third (approximately) up to 30 years of experience.

Table 5 *Teachers in the sample*

Age	In their 20s	2
	In their 30s	4
	In their 40s	2
	In their 50s	7
Gender	Male	3
	Female	12
Experience in the subject	0-10 years	5
	11-20 years	4
	21-30 years	6

The teachers were predominantly of the right economical orientation (10 respondents), 12 of them preferred liberal instead of conservative values, 12 of them described themselves as rather secular as religious and all of the teachers preferred the civic instead of the national principle.

Table 6 *Teacher's political orientation*

Economically right orientation	10
Economically left orientation	4
NA	1
Liberal values	12
Conservative values	3
Religious principle	3
Secular principle	12
National principle	0
Civic principle	15

Concerning the party preference, nearly half of the teachers (7) expressed the intention to vote for SDKU in the next elections, followed by SF (3 respondents). Only one of the respondents did express support for the social-democratic party SMER. Three teachers did not indicate their party preference. Based on the fact that the interviews were conducted mainly in Bratislava, the political affiliation is in accordance with the generally strong support for

SDKU in the Bratislava region. Moreover, the teachers were even more liberal than the real vote in 2006 (see table 7), SDKU got a proportionally stronger support from the teachers, none of the teachers did express support for the conservative and nationalist parties and their declared support for the social-democratic party SMER was proportionally lower than in the elections.

Table 7 *Teacher's party preference (multiple possible)*

Teacher's party preference (multiple possible)	Number of teachers	%	Results of the elections in 2006 - Bratislava district
SDKU	7	47%	39%
SF	3	20%	6%
SMER	1	7%	20%
SMK	1	7%	5%
KDH	0		8%
SNS	0		8%
LS-HZDS	0		6%
other liberal party	1		
other	1		
NA	3		

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter of the thesis contains the results of the analysis of the conducted interviews complemented with the analysis of parts of the civic education course textbook and the curriculum. In this section I am answering my research questions and strengthening or weakening my hypotheses; however, as my study was rather exploratory, I present also new relationships and patterns that emerged during the research.

Four out of eight expectations formulated within the HYPOTHESIS 1 that concerned the character of civic education in Slovakia showed to be right; however, the other four expectations that concerned teachers' individual understanding of citizenship (not real practice of teaching) showed to be wrong. Therefore, within Hypothesis 1 we have to distinguish between the level of real practice and the level of teachers' individual understanding. Then I claim that Hypothesis 1 can be strengthened only concerning the real practice of teaching; the dominant approach within civic education does promote an uncivic understanding of citizenship.

HYPOTHESIS 2 can be strengthened; civic education in Slovakia does not focus on community level engagement, however, here again we have to distinguish the official level (curriculum and textbook) from the individual level of the teachers who indeed highly value local participation.

However, my data weakened HYPOTHESIS 3; teachers with conservative values did not underline the importance of obedience and hierarchy when talking about citizenship and in the context of civic education.

4.1 Civic education

Based on the Slovak national curriculum there are two civic education courses that vary according to the type of high school: *Education about the society* is taught in gymnasiums and *Civic education* is taught in all the other vocational high schools. Although they differ slightly in the content and the hour endowment, they have the same goal: to familiarize the students with the basics in the chosen social sciences that are important for the orientation in psychological, social, judicial, economic, political and philosophical questions; to guide them to get to know better themselves as well as the other; to understand the relationship between the individual and the society in the spirit of democracy, freedom, justice and humanity. The expected outcomes are the following: (1) gaining an overview of the chosen scientific and thematic fields, (2) development of the ability to formulate questions and assess the possible solutions and (3) development of one own opinions about the presented issues (National curriculum 1993). The concept of citizenship presented in both civic courses is framed in a legal form with the stress on civic freedoms and rights; citizenship acquisition and discrimination. The chapter about citizenship in the textbook *Základy politológie* (Basics of political science) focuses on the particular rights and freedoms that are connected to the citizenship status and on discrimination; nevertheless, it also briefly touches upon the concept of civic culture and civic solidarity (Tóth 1994).

One third of the respondents (5) identified the *legal aspect of citizenship* as the dominant in the course. Nevertheless, according to half of the interviewed teachers there is an *absence of a conception* of citizenship that would be promoted by the civic education course. The teachers were either unable to define it (3 of the teachers) or explicitly said that there is no clear conception of citizenship in the curriculum (4 of the teachers):

This society does not know what should be encompassed in civic education; this is the biggest tragedy
(interviewee 2)

It is divided into the separate sciences and I have the feeling that citizenship as such is forgotten. The course views the citizen separately as an economic person, social person, from the legal aspect, but there is no unifying impulse about what does it mean being a citizen (interviewee 11)

According to the teachers, it was possible to identify the following five categories of perceived aims of the civic education courses; the first three were present almost in all the interviews with slight modifications. The most frequent aim is the **knowledge** of rights and responsibilities, of the functioning of the state and the society, legal knowledge or the attainment of a general theoretical overview. Another perceived aim were **skills**; such as critical thinking, the ability to discuss (communication skills), presentation skills or other social skills. The third dominant aim was to stimulate **action** in the life of the pupils, be it interest stimulation for the developments in the society, discussion creation, stimulation of their real participation or the preparation for real life situations.

They should have the knowledge about the state, what is a state, what are human rights (interviewee 2)
...to accept the opinions from both sides, to evaluate them and critically assess; this is what I expect them to learn (interviewee 3)

When we talk about political science, I can see that they are more interested; they read more about those things, watch news in TV (interviewee 1)

The other two categories of perceived aims appeared with a lower frequency: **personal development** (mentioned by 3 of the respondents) which stands for the strengthening of self-confidence, development of self-understanding and own opinions; and **national pride** cultivation (underlined by 2 respondents):

They should know about the development of the Slovak nation and about his position in Europe, national pride and the national awareness (interviewee 2).

Above the goals formulated in the curriculum, the teachers do also have some kind of **personal intent** when teaching the course. This is not knowledge, but rather **soft skills** such as communication, critical thinking, discussion, **the strengthening of the personality** of the

pupils and their ability to express themselves, *practical use* of the attained knowledge, *and the decision about further studies* and *joy from learning*.

I do undermine their opinions on purpose. They will only strengthen their opinion when this will be questioned (interviewee 14).

Based on the interviews, the vast majority of time, civic education is based on *in-class learning and knowledge transmission* (from the teacher to the pupils); nevertheless the teachers work also with the *method of discussion or simulation of real life situations*. However this part is only a smaller part of the educational process. Therefore, there is a complete *absence of the so called learning by doing* with the only exception of charity activities; the majority of teachers claim that they do participate with the pupils in charity activities (collecting money in the streets). When asked about the ideal way of teaching civic education, they would prefer a more practical way of teaching, more discussion in smaller groups and excursions; nevertheless they feel restricted by the curriculum and size of the class.

When talking about education for citizenship, half of the participants explicitly claimed that it is the *family* that plays the major role. Some of them also claimed that in the high school it is often too late for citizenship education as the kinds already have their attitudes towards life. Nearly half of the respondents also stressed that civic education is not an issue that can be taught in a separate course. The teachers recognized the need to think about civic education even *in other courses*.

It (citizenship) is about feelings, it is life love. I can not teach you about love, I can not teach you about citizenship. When someone comes from an egoistic and ignorant family, he will not have any relationship to anything, to the state, to the city, to the house where he lives (interviewee 9)

There are lots of very rigid professors that do not see that even teaching mathematics means teaching about the basics of citizenship, tolerance. It is about the way he explains the problems or communicates with the pupils. I think that it (civic education) is an everyday issue (interviewee 11).

Based on this data we can observe that **EXPECTATION 1.1** was right because the dominant aspect of citizenship promoted by the course is the legal aspect, and the dominant aim is knowledge transfer (formulated in the national curriculum as well as perceived by the teachers). Although the teachers do identify action (participation) as well as critical thinking and the ability to discuss as important aims of the course, the nature of education (knowledge transfer) does not allow the real fulfillment of these goals. In accordance with the **EXPECTATION 1.2**, civic education is conducted mainly by non-participatory methods.

4.2 Democracy in schools

The majority of the teachers do express a *pro-democratic attitude* when asked about the possible participation of pupils in the decision making of the school. Nevertheless, they claim that this is not happening; democracy in schools does not exist. Five of the respondents claim that the main problem is the *lack of interest from the side of the pupils* because the teachers perceive external efficacy in the school (the system would be responsive if there would be the demand). Six of the teachers think that although it would be *wishful*, there is *no space for democracy* in the school; the school does not work on a democratic principle:

The school is not that democratic that we could talk about the education for democracy. Because, if we want to talk about democracy, then it should be in the whole school system which is not that democratic and which does not leave space for choice (interviewee 3).

Our children are educated as we were. We regulate them... you have to do this, you have to go there... they are not educated to be autonomous (interviewee 4).

Three of the *teachers do not show any interest* in the application of democratic principles in school; they do not know about the functioning or existence of the student's council and do not show interest concerning this issue. One of them even claimed that this kind of democracy is *not welcomed*:

We had a student council, but I do not know whether it still works (interviewee 5)

I do not know whether such democracy would be appropriate.... You know, we are a religious school, we have strict rules, and we have certain notions about how to educate the pupils (interviewee 5).

Nevertheless, there were two teachers that talked about **everyday examples** when they personally include the students in the decision making or discussing of important issues:

This is the task of the school. Not to forbid, but to argument (interviewee 2).

We take the school regulations, from our school and from two state schools and compare them. If it is stricter or if it restricts human right. We talk about how they would solve the issues and then, we present it to the director. We can do a lot with the pupils (interviewee 14).

We can conclude that **EXPECTATION 1.3** was correct; the schools generally do not create a democratic environment, moreover the teachers seem not to care about the student's council that could be seen as an opportunity for practicing democracy.

4.3 State - citizenship – nationality

Most of the teachers explicitly declared that ***nationality does not play a role*** in the concept of citizenship. Nationality and citizenship are viewed rather as separate issues. Still, three of the respondents explicitly underlined that ***national pride*** should be part of citizenship, however they all agreed with the importance of the civic principle anchored in the constitution (see later).

What else should be encompassed in civic education? – Love to traditions, to the folklore, they should pre proud that they come from here (interviewee 4).

Five of the respondents explicitly stressed the need of some kind of ***attachment to the state*** or a ***feeling of belonging***. Nevertheless, this does not have to be based on nationality.

They should know that they live in Slovakia. But they are of a different nationality. They should like the state. The republic (interviewee 15) (Hungarian gymnasium)

The preference of the civic principle is also supported by the fact that ten of the participants supported the idea to change the beginning of the preamble of the constitution from “we, the Slovak nation...” to “we, the citizens of the Slovak republic...”.

Based on the interviews, **EXPECTATION 1.4** seems to be incorrect. The majority of the respondents do not consider national attachment being part of citizenship and even those who highly value the concept of national pride are supportive for anchoring the civic principle in the constitution.

4.4 Good citizenship

The textbook *Základy politológie* (Basics of political science) presents the concept of the “ideal citizen”: “the public creates a model of the ideal citizen; a complex of positive traits that a person living in the society should have. This is called the “decent person”. The traits of this model vary according to his profession (doctor, judge, politician, shop-assistant, teacher).” (Tóth 1994, 55) However, the political behavior of this ideal citizen is then defined exclusively from the perspective of the state; there are the following 3 types of behavior: expected, accepted and sanctioned⁸. The position of the citizen is drawn from the top-down perspective of the state which automatically creates some kind of hierarchy; the evaluative criteria for the behavior of the citizen are defined by the state. The state expects, accepts or sanctions. The definition of an ideal citizen from the perspective of citizens is missing. One of the participants even spontaneously brought in the differentiation of the *perspectives* when talking about good citizenship and separately defined a good citizen from the perspective of the state as well as from the perspective of the citizen:

From the perspective of the state, a good citizen would be someone who would obey all the orders, who would actively participate only in the state where the state would allow him. And from the perspective

⁸ (1) It is expected that the citizens will make use of their rights and support the regime, the citizens should also support the international image of the state. Political pluralism and tolerance of different opinions are expected as well. (2) It is accepted that the citizens will voice some critique of the politics of the state, of particular political acts, the activity of a concrete politician or of the regime as a whole. It is also accepted that the citizens will group themselves in different pressure groups; nevertheless this is not very comfortable for the state. (3) The state will sanction such behavior of the citizens that is paralyzing the functioning of the state, that is not in accordance with the laws or that threatens the existing regime.

of the citizen.. it (good citizen) would be someone who knows his own value, his needs and dignity and demands his rights (interviewee10).

In contrast to the textbook, according to the teachers a good citizen is mainly someone who shows the *will to participate*, who is *active*, someone who *participates on local level* (explicitly mentioned by 9 respondents). The second dominant group of features of a good citizen (mentioned by 8 respondents) was mutual *solidarity, cooperation, tolerance* as well as *the fellow feeling* among the citizens. Approximately one third of the respondents (6 respondents) mentioned another feature of the good citizen: *courage, critical approach, feeling of internal efficacy and formulation of one's own opinion*.

The kids should learn the engaged approach towards life in the form of simulated situations. It should be under their skin and then they will feel the need to express themselves to public issues (interviewee 10).

A good citizen does all he can in his work, and he will not give up, so that he can later look into the mirror (interviewee 8).

There were also other features considered to be essential for being a good citizen, however these appeared with a lower frequency than the above mentioned: *responsibility* for one's own life and behavior (5 respondents), *showing interest* in what is happening around (4 respondents), *respect of law and norms* (4 respondents), attachment to the state (3 respondents), *work ethics* (2 respondents) and *family care* as well as *representation of the nation* (each by one respondent). It is important to say that the above mentioned conceptualizations are not exclusive and that they appeared in various combinations. Nevertheless the frequencies indicate the importance of the particular features.

Contrary to **EXPECTATION 1.5** the teachers did not stress the importance of law-abidingness. In context of the presented literature in chapter 1, we can conclude that the Slovak teachers stress more the importance of non-political, local level and maintenance features of good citizenship; they also strongly value the capacity for action and activity per se (see table 8).

Table 8 *Features of good citizenship (with number of teachers who mentioned them)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect for law and norms (4) 	political	————	non-political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solidarity, cooperation, tolerance, fellow feeling (8) • work ethics (2) • family care (1) • representation of the nation (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representation of the nation (1) 	national	————	local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activity and participation on local level (9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courage, critical approach, feeling of internal efficacy and formulation of one's own opinion (6) 	critique	————	maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solidarity, cooperation, tolerance, fellow feeling (8) • respect for law and norms (4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activity and participation on local level (9) • representation of the nation (1) • showing interest (4) 	action	————	capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courage, critical approach, feeling of internal efficacy and formulation of one's own opinion (6) • responsibility (5)

4.5 Participation

The textbook *Základy politológie* (Basics of political science) (Tóth 1994, 58) discusses the following types of political activities of the citizens: electoral activity, campaign activity, local activity and militant activity⁹ and mentions as well that there is a possibility for the activity of pressure groups which help the individual citizens to multiply his voice and

⁹ (1) The electoral activity is considered to be an individual form of participation; nevertheless the impact of the citizen on politics this way is described as great. (2) The campaign activity is considered to be a group activity that is linked to the activity of a political party; such as meetings, demonstrations, petitions or pre-electoral activities. (3) The local activity of citizens is described as a more often one, that can vary from an activity with a greater influence on politics to an activity with low influence, such as hobbyistic groups. (4) A militant type of activity is a strongly conflict type of activity such as a civil war.

strengthen his political efficiency. However all of the types of activities are described on a purely theoretical level without any example or further description.

Based on the interviews, **local participation** seems to be important for the respondents; six of the teachers explicitly pointed out its value. They even underlined that participation in the local community is more important than on the national level; however they admitted that people are usually not aware of its importance.

Big politics, the government change, the left, the right, this everything goes in one direction, slightly to the left or to the right. This is certain. But it is not certain if a skyscraper will grow in front of our windows where I take out my dog. Here the participation has its importance (interviewee 6).

Sometimes I have the feeling that we care more for what is happening in the parliament instead of caring about what happens on the community level (interviewee 10).

HYPOTHESIS 2 can be strengthened because of the fact that the textbook mentions local engagement only marginally and dominantly focuses on political participation on state level; the word community is not even mentioned in the chapter. However, on the level of teachers' individual understanding of citizenship we can see a stronger orientation towards local level engagement.

Five of the respondents underlined the **value of participation as such**, even without any visible results; they feel that participating is valuable per se. It is worth trying, even if the citizens have to face considerable obstacles or if they feel that the system is not responsive. These respondents also strongly value the individual **self-expression** and their attitudes were in accordance with their declared behavior (based on personal experience):

Q: You said that the petitions do not have an effect in Slovakia.

R: Well, but it is still important at least to voice your opinion. This is important (interviewee 7).

It is worth fighting. A lot of people see the current way of governing that we call democracy, it has a lot of negative aspects and they fall into the state of apathy. They think that nothing will change. But, it will change, because if every one of us will do something, it can change! (interviewee 12)

On the other hand, there were two respondents that were not able to answer the questions about participation:

Q: What is civic and political participation according to you?

R: Oh Jesus!

Q: What do you understand by that?

R: (silence) (interviewee 4)

Furthermore, the respondents had to express their theoretical preference either for a **participatory model of democracy** or a rather liberal one. Nine of them explicitly claimed that they are in favor of a participatory model; the **liberal model of democracy** had only one supporter.

(Active participation) is nowadays still needed. Because the democracy is still very weak, it is the beginning, we have the basic principles, but it is important that there will be a generation change (interviewee 7).

If the legal parameters, the boundaries would be properly set, then, I think, participating in elections would be enough (interviewee 3).

Three of the participants spontaneously brought in the idea of **consultative democracy**; they miss communication and cooperation between politicians and citizens which they consider being essential for the functioning of democracy. The teachers referred to the fact that the politicians should represent their wishes; however none of them touched upon the issue of **party membership** as one of the possible ways of citizens' political participation. The book as well does not mention this possibility when talking about political participation; however the possibility to join a party is mentioned in the chapter about political parties.

Participation is the cooperation between the citizens and politicians. Politicians should not be distanced from the citizens; they should act towards them, meet them, activate them and inform them. And the citizens should participate in the elections (interviewee 5).

The majority of the respondents were against the idea of **compulsory voting** (12 respondents) and their two main arguments were that when **voting is a right** it can not be a

duty and that everything that is compulsory *reminds them of the past regime*. Only three respondents approved compulsory voting with the argument that it is a responsibility to express one's opinion when the state organizes the elections and that compulsory voting could maybe stimulate the interest of citizens in politics.

Nine of the respondents would tolerate, some even support, *civic disobedience*, because they understand its *signal function* towards the state when something in the society does not work properly. Nevertheless, five of the respondents would not tolerate such activities, because they view it as *extreme* as the rights of other people may be restricted.

At least from the legal aspect, this is extremism; the rights of other people are restricted (interviewee 3).

4.6 The role of the state

The textbook *Základy politológie* (Basics of political science) describes three types of political behavior of the state: (1) The state is expected to protect the citizen and create space for his individual perspectives. (2) The state should guarantee peace (absence of terrorist acts, criminality, crisis or extreme radicalism) however it is accepted that there will be conflicts in different fields such as social, political, economic or cultural. (3) It is not accepted that the rights of the citizens will be suppressed and the national interests will not be respected (Tóth 1994, 57).

In accordance with the textbook, the two dominant tasks of the state were mentioned by the majority of respondents: *legal guarantee/ setting some kind of basic boundaries* in the functioning of the society (mentioned by 9 respondents), and the *support of citizens*, understood as basic social care, support of the disabled etc. (mentioned by 8 respondents):

The state should respect the basic charters, human rights.... Guarantee freedom (interviewee 11).

The most responsible should be the citizen. The state should be a support for those who are handicapped (interviewee 7).

The state should care about the citizens up to such a level that he will not lower their level of activity and engagement to care about themselves; it should not lead to passivity and parasitism (interviewee 9).

The following two tasks are compatible with the above mentioned two; nevertheless they are mutually exclusive as they touch upon the level of state intervention that is desirable for the respondents. Five of the respondents explicitly claimed that ***state intervention/interference is not desirable***; on the other hand four of them would appreciate ***intensive care*** from the state:

(The state should)... let the people decide how the world looks like (interviewee 6).

It is very appealing to me, that in the former regime, when someone finished the studies, the state simply took care about him, found a job for him and told him that you will work here. It was very good for the people. Now, there is such a insecurity (interviewee 1).

The **EXPECTATION 1.6** about the tendency towards the promotion of a strong state showed to be wrong, although the teachers disagree on the level of social support the state should offer, both the textbook as well as the teachers view the state mainly as a legal guarantor, protector as well as support for those who are in need.

4.7 The citizen – state relationship in Slovakia

Nearly all of the respondents explicitly and repeatedly claimed that the Slovak ***citizens are apathetic and passive***, that they have the ***feeling of helplessness*** and some of the respondents even underlined that the citizens are ***irresponsible***.

We do not value the power we have in our hands as citizens (interviewee 11).

The citizens take the responsibility for themselves only when it is beneficiary for them (interviewee 2).

On the other hand, the ***state*** is also perceived as ***ignorant*** and ***non-responsive*** (7 respondents). The respondents generally have the feeling that there is no efficient communication between the state and the citizens. Although the teachers did not mention the concept of trust as such, this finding could be interpreted as the perceived ***lack of trust***; according to Gabriel (1995)

trusting citizens feel that their interests will be fulfilled even with little supervision and control of the authorities and this seems not to be the case in the discourse of the teachers.

In the relationship to the state, I have the feeling that I am a big null. That I am not a person, or a citizen. Like a mosquito that annoys them (interviewee 2).

In our society you have the feeling that that the classical forms of participation are not heard. If it does not go to an extreme, nobody will take care about it (interviewee 7).

Nevertheless, eight of the respondents explicitly claimed that they still have the feeling of **external efficacy**; they think that the participation of the citizens can lead to changes; in other words that the people have the possibility to “do and change something”.

I think that the chance to actively participate is very present. The problem is the passivity from the other side, the unwillingness of the citizen to engage himself (interviewee 3).

Just take the referendum or plebiscite; these are great tools that are in the hands of the people. But how do we use them? Just look at the turnout by elections (interviewee 11).

The people have the opportunity to change a lot, but of course, it costs a lot of energy (interviewee 12).

According to the teachers the most **efficient channels/tools** by which the citizens can influence the development in the society are **elections** and **media** (both of them mentioned by 5 respondents); two of the respondents mentioning the media particularly pointed out the internet. The other channels were the **non-governmental organizations** (4 respondents) or **petitions** (3 respondents).

To sum up, it seems that although the teachers perceive that the system is not always responsive; the biggest blame is on the citizens and their apathy and passivity. This is also supported by the following finding: When asked about the perceived **threat to democracy**, the most frequent answer was the **passivity and lack of interest from the side of the citizens** (indicated by 5 respondents), followed by the **political arrogance or misuse of power** (3 respondents) and the comeback of **totality** (3 respondents). Another 3 respondents mentioned **extremism, racism and nationalism**.

Twelve of the respondents clearly expressed that they are *not satisfied* with the state of *civil society* in Slovakia. The most frequent reasons for the dissatisfaction were the following: *no feeling of fellowship* among the people (bad relationships and egoism) (6 teachers), *apathetic citizens* (4 teachers), *non-responsive state* (2 teachers), *racism* (1 teacher) or even the fact that there is *too much of the state* (too strong influence) in the society (1 teacher). However, three of the respondents seemed to *misunderstand the concept* of civil society.

The teachers dominantly perceive that change is possible and the citizens have the possibility to influence the development in the society even if it is not happening in reality. The perceived reason why this is not happening is the passivity and apathy of the citizens which is also viewed as a threat for democracy.

4.8 Teachers as citizens

Based on the data from the questionnaire the teachers do generally participate in all kinds of elections, all of the teachers plan to participate in the forthcoming elections in the year 2010 and with one exception all of them participate in local election. Twelve of them also vote in the election to the European parliament. Therefore, their electoral participation can be described as high.

Table 9 *Teacher's electoral participation*

National elections in 2006	yes	13
	no	2
National elections in 2010 (plan)	yes	15
	no	0
Local elections	yes	14
	no	1
Elections to the European parliament	yes	12
	no	3

The majority of the teachers (13) are not a member of any organization, nevertheless, some of them (6) participate in activities of some organizations; all of these activities are non-political. The majority of the teachers already participated in volunteer activities (11); eight of them do even organize this kind of activities. All of the teachers did sign a petition in the past two years, nevertheless only two of them participated in a protest activity and only three of them did engage in an online discussion forum. Generally we can observe that the teachers do participate strongly in non-political volunteer activities such as charity or environmental activities.

Table 10 *Teacher's participation (multiple possible)*

Membership in an organization	Trade union	1
	Organization for cat breeders	1
	No	13
Activities in an organization	Environmental organization	2
	Organizations helping children	2
	Feminist organization	1
	Organization for cat breeders	1
	Organization for planned parenthood	1
	Trade union	1
	No	9
Participation in a volunteer activity	Help for disabled people or children/ charity	9
	Environmental activity	2
	Sports activity	1
	No	4
Organization of a volunteer activity	Help for disabled people or children/ charity	5
	Environmental activity	2
	Sports activity	1
	No	7
Signing a petition in the last 2 years	Yes	15
	No	0
Participation in a protest	Yes	2
	No	13
Online discussion forums	Blogs	2
	Pedagogic forum	2
	No	12

Based on the interviews, the majority of the teachers (10) have the feeling that they do participate in the society based on the fact that they *participate in elections* (stated by 7 teachers) and *teach civic education* (stated by 6 teachers). Four of them are also engaged in local community activities, other forms of participation that were mentioned were petitions, professional engagement or internet chat. Two of the teachers admitted that they *do not participate at all* and they also perceived *internal inefficacy*:

Everything depends on the people up there. I do not dare to... mix with the government. Even in the educational system, I do not dare to say something in the decision making. But, I would like to say something when it concerns me (interviewee 4).

There were three teachers that claimed that they *do not feel that they participate enough*, even though, compared to the other respondents, they were engaged in more activities and were strongly expressing the value of participation and self-expression. It was also possible to identify the feeling of internal efficacy by these respondents. Two of these teachers also explicitly described the mechanism of *observation learning* by which the pupils learn by observing the behaviour of the teachers and this way she considered her own activity as key for the profession of a civic education teacher.

The best way the kids learn is when they hear what we say and then see that we do what we say (interviewee 12).

I can not be apathetic, because of the kids, I am responsible for them (interviewee 14).

Although some of the teachers claimed that they have the feeling of helplessness, the majority of the respondents did not voice this feeling (contrary to **EXPECTATION 1.7**). However, the majority of the teachers also did not think that as citizens they should act as an example for the pupils (in accordance with **EXPECTATION 1.8**).

4.9 Post-totalitarian ghosts

In this section I highlight some moments that contribute to the overall evaluation of civic education in Slovakia as preserving the uncivic mentality of the former regime, sometimes even called as the post-totalitarian syndrome (Klicperová 1998), i.e.: *the non-democratic character of the school environment, the lack of understanding of the concept of civil society, positive sentiments for the former regime, expectations about a paternalistic state, conflict avoidance, feelings of shame and fear connected to participation.*

► Critical thinking and Discussion; still strangers

One of the skills that a good citizen should have is also the ***ability to discuss and express one's own opinion***; nevertheless there are no courses in the school that would stimulate and develop this kind of skills.

I give them (the pupils) some questions, but I have the feeling that I am back in totality. Everybody looks into the ground and they think that they can not change anything.... The kinds do not know how to debate; there is no rhetoric in the schools. They are not able to talk. Not that they would not be intelligent - they are, they also have the overview, but they do not know how to express their opinions (interviewee 8).

It seems that the whole school system does not support critical thinking and open discussion and still carries the authoritarian model: director – teacher – pupil:

You can talk to our director, he will listen to you but nothing will change. He is still in the old tracks (interviewee 9).

► What is “Civil Society”?

There were three respondents that ***misunderstood the concept of civic society*** and interpreted it as the level of care that the state can take of the citizens; they claimed that they are not

satisfied with the state of the civil society because the state does not care enough about the citizens.

► Paternalistic state

One of the participants regretted that nowadays the *state* is not *strongly paternalistic* as it was during socialism:

It is very appealing to me, that in the former regime, when someone finished the studies, the state simply took care about him, found a job for him and told him: you will work here. It was very good for the people. Now, there is such as insecurity (interviewee 1).

Two of the respondents perceive that the *state* should be *above the citizens* and not vice versa:

The state is above the citizen. The law is the highest. There is nothing above the law (Interviewee 1).

► Avoidance of conflict

Several respondents mentioned that *people do not participate* because they are disgusted or not satisfied with politics. This implicitly means that people will participate only if they are satisfied with the development in the society. Moreover one of the respondents claimed the state should encourage the people to participate.

The state should coordinate it, like a father in a family. Coordinate the citizens so that they will come to the elections for example. Because when there are not the right people in power, the citizens do not have the will to participate (interviewee 5).

This way of thinking somehow ignores the fact that exactly in situations where the people are not satisfied (conflict situation) they should voice their opinions and initiate some change.

► Lack of participatory culture

Passivity seems to be *socially accepted* in the Slovak society. Some respondents even described “the teachers” as a prototype of these passive people; even though they are not

satisfied with the working conditions, they do not do anything about it. They give up the responsibility and feel helpless:

People should be actively engaged.... But they are unaware like we, the teachers. The teachers do not go for a strike for example (interviewee 5).

We, as teachers, do not like a lot of things, but we do not say anything; we just sit in our offices and swear. I do not understand it, but we are like that. Slovak teachers are like that (interviewee 7).

Analogous to this is the so called model of “pub democracy”; where people do not participate; they just sit in the pub, drink beer and swear.

I call it pub democracy, because we do not know how to constructively solve the problems, we just swear (interviewee 11).

This was pointed out by several respondents as the reality in Slovakia. Then, if the majority of people behave according to this model, those who do not can be viewed as strangers; in other words those who participate can be viewed in a negative light. One respondent claimed that those who participate are most probably *idealists* or people *seeking their own interests*:

(Those who participate) are mainly idealists or those who think about their own interests (interviewee 7).

One of the respondent even mentioned that she personally feels some sort of *shame*, in other words she has to overcome the feeling of shame to do something in the place where she lives or works.

I do care about the environment... and I often see a rubbish dump somewhere in the city or in the nature and then I feel that I would like to organize a team and go there to clean it up. But I am ashamed to do it. I could organize some pupils, but I am ashamed, I do not know what they would say (interviewee 12).

Passivity can be justified also in another way; one of the respondents expressed the opinion that political participation is *not for laics*:

R: People should interfere into politics only if they have the knowledge. Laics should not interfere.

Q: Who is someone with the proper knowledge?

R: Those who study political science for example (interviewee 15).

Finally, two of the respondents mentioned that they have the feeling that people still *fear* to say or do something; they fear to protest or express their opinion.

4.10 Emerging controversies, patterns and relationships

This section focuses on the controversies, relationships and patterns that emerged from the analysis of the data. Some of the categories and phenomena identified in the data showed to form a sort of pattern, some were exclusive and contradicting the logical expectations and some illustrated the contrast between the declaratory and real-life level of the respondents:

► **Conservative teachers from church-owned schools did not differ from the others; no relationship between the conservative orientation and the emphasis of hierarchy**

Also those respondents who have a *conservative orientation* (according to the questionnaire) have a *positive attitude towards democracy in schools* and higher involvement of the pupils in the decision-making (one of them even practicing). They would also tolerate civic disobedience and they do not claim that good citizenship is defined by **law-abidingness**; moreover they highly value *self-expression*.

There was no pattern among all the *teachers form the church owned gymnasiums* concerning the *attitude towards democracy in schools*; both extreme cases were included in this group of teachers: one of the teachers explicitly claimed that democracy in the school is not welcomed (interviewee 5), on the other hand, another teacher referred about the practical application of democratic principles and her own activity within the school council (interviewee 14).

This finding weakens my **HYPOTHESIS 3** about the expected relationship between the conservative values of the teachers and their perceived importance of obedience and hierarchy in the context of citizenship; in my sample, there was no such relationship.

► **Pupils are not mature enough; just a superficial excuse?**

Those teachers who claimed that the pupils are not involved in the decision-making in the school (no democracy in the school) or those who claimed that this is even not wishful did argue that the *pupils are not mature enough* and that they would only want to enforce such measures that would be good for them but impossible from the standpoint of the school. Although the teachers who apply the democratic principles in practice agree that the pupils may behave in an immature way; they perceive that the teachers have to *discuss* it with the pupils, offer arguments and this way they can come to results that will satisfy both sides.

Every year we have a student ball and it was always until 8 p.m., because it was problematic to find colleagues to be as the surveillance there. So I told the pupils that they should do it slowly and with patience. Every year we can add an hour and you will see that we will manage to enforce it. Because they want everything to happen immediately! But in the student council I teach them to be diplomatic and patient. So, now we have the ball until 2 a.m. (interviewee 14).

► **Post-totalitarian syndrome; giving up responsibility in both economic and civic issues and how does it mirror in the process of civic education**

Those four teachers that were in favor of the *strong welfare state* were also those who *misunderstood the concept of the civil society* or did not have any opinion on it. Among them were also those who claimed that they *do not dare to express some critique or opinion* of the political or even their professional life, or claimed that political participation is not for laics or they could not answer the question about participation. They did not voice that they have the feeling of *internal efficacy*. Moreover, among them were also those two (out of three) who were *uninterested in the engagement of the students* in the decision-making process at school.

► **Relationship between the individuality of the teacher and the character of the course**

Nearly all of the teachers which expressed that *participation* per se is valuable were those who think that the stimulation of participation should also be an *aim of civic education*; in other words the stimulation of participation as an aim of civic education was not expressed by those who did not underline the value of participation in general (or in their private life), or who misunderstood the concept of civil society.

Those four respondents who identified *law-abidingness* as one of the features of good citizenship did not differ from the rest in the *level of tolerance of civic disobedience*, two of them even expressed support for that kind of behavior. However, they formed the majority of those respondents who perceive that the aim of civic education is dominantly the *knowledge of the legal aspects of citizenship*.

► **External and internal efficacy; related or unrelated?**

Two teachers explicitly stated that although they perceive the *external inefficacy* they still feel *internal efficacy* and that the non-responsiveness of the system does not have any effect on their readiness to participate. These respondents perceive internal and external efficacy as two separate issues. However, when theorizing about the reasons of the *feeling of internal inefficacy*, other respondents claimed that it is caused perceived non-responsiveness of the system (absence of external efficacy).

► **Negative relationship between the level of participation and satisfaction**

Nearly all of the respondents do favor the *participatory model of democracy*, but the majority of them are *satisfied with their own level of participation* in the form of electoral activity and teaching of the civic education course. On the other hand those, who participate more, feel unsatisfied and feel that they should do more.

► Does age play a role for the level of participation?

Some of the teachers articulated the idea that the *level of participation* decreases with growing *age*:

Maybe carelessness grows with age, I always voted in the elections when I was younger, but now I do not know (interviewee 15).

However, after a closer look at the seven *participants in their 50's*, these did not differ from the other participants in the level of involvement. Nevertheless, this was the group that encompassed all the participants *underlining the importance of national pride* and those who favored the *strong welfare state*.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of my thesis was to explore civic education and citizenship attitudes of civic education teachers in Slovakia in order to explain the ongoing uncivic (even authoritarian) conception of citizenship identified by the Slovak youth. I conducted 15 interviews with civic education teachers and analyzed the curriculum as well as parts of the textbook for civic education and I was able to show that civic education in the forms as it is taught in Slovakia still preserves the mentality of the former regime. In this chapter I discuss my data with the literature and provide the interpretation of my major findings.

According to Finkel (2002), Singer (2007) and Hunter and Brisbin (2003), who argue that the character of civic education matters, I had to look deeper in the conceptions and methods that underlie civic education in order to show that my hypothesis 1 was right. Based on the fact that the Slovak youth does not show a participatory mode of behavior I expected (expectations 1.1-1.3 and 1.8) that civic education is not taught based on the principles pointed out by the authors. These expectations proved to be right; even though the teachers dominantly do have liberal and democratic views (expectations 1.4-1.7), the system as such preserves the rather the uncivic understanding of citizenship.

The analysis of the obtained data showed that generally the curriculum promotes a legal (thin) conception of citizenship and does not promote participation; moreover some of the teachers pointed out that the curriculum lacks any conception of citizenship. Dudley and Gitelson (2003) stress that knowledge per se does not contribute to the creation of active citizenry; in accordance with them I was able to identify that civic education in Slovakia is mainly based on knowledge transfer with discussion being the most participatory method of teaching. This could be one of the reasons for the low participation of the youth.

Moreover, Hunter and Brisbin (2003) underline the importance of the nature of the individual teachers. This relationship is supported also by my findings; those teachers who expressed that participation is valuable as such (also in their private lives) also perceived that stimulation of participation should be one of the aims of civic education. On the other hand those teachers who perceived law-abidingness as an important feature of good citizenship perceived that the aim of civic education is dominantly the knowledge of the legal aspects of citizenship.

I was also able to identify a pattern that would illustrate the post-totalitarian syndrome defined by Klicperová (1998). Teachers, who transferred the economic responsibility to the state, also did not dare to express their opinions and critique (absence of civic virtues) and did not have the feeling of internal efficacy. This group of teachers was also not interested in the engagement of the students on the school level which would also support the expected relationship between the citizenship attitudes of the teacher and the pupils. Therefore, in accordance with the expectation 1.8, not all of the teachers embody the good citizen themselves and can not serve as a model for the pupils.

Based on my data, there is generally no democracy in the Slovak schools; the pupils either do not have the possibility to express their opinions or their opinions do not have any impact on the decision-making. However Singer (2007) claims, that the overall democratic environment in schools is an important part of the education and Bessant (2004) argues that giving the children just the opportunity to express their opinion without linking it to real decision-making is just a façade for democracy. Therefore the lack of a more democratic atmosphere in school could be one of the factors that would probably explain the citizenship attitudes of the youth.

One of the major findings of this thesis is the fact that when studying civic education, one has to distinguish between several levels of analysis; (1) the level of state (curriculum and

textbook), (2) the level of teachers' practice (real activity) and (3) the level of teachers' subjective understanding of citizenship and participation (attitudes). These may differ in a considerable way as it also was the case in my research. The state promotes rather a legal (thin) conception of citizenship with the focus on political participation on national level; however the teachers highly value local participation and have rather a thick understanding of citizenship. The textbook defines good citizenship from a rather top-down state perspective, however the teachers stress the importance of activity and cooperation (solidarity) among the citizens, moreover they also underline the importance of critical thinking and courage. However, there was more or less unity about the definition of the role of the state, be it from the perspective of the teachers or the textbook.

It seems that the school system emphasizes authority and does not leave space for the personal approach of the individual teachers. Even though the majority of the teachers have relatively liberal and democratic (civic) attitudes, these are not applied in the process of teaching. Two of the respondents even explicitly admitted that the course as such does not contribute to the education of competent citizens:

Q: What are the most important civic competencies?

R: The ability to discuss rationally about problems and the ability to overcome the gap between the things that interest me and those things that could be beneficiary for more people. Opening up of the perspective. To understand that I am the one who can change the world.

Q: So, does civic education contribute to that?

R: In this form not. (interviewee 6)

According to the classical Marshall's definition (in Kymlicka, Norman 1994) citizenship is composed of three components (civil, political and social rights); however the respondents perceive that attachment to the state as well as participation are key elements of citizenship as well. Moreover, their need for the attachment to the state (feeling of belonging)

would contradict the theoretical understanding of citizenship as Delanty (2000) presents it; he claims that the identity dimension (such as the attachment to the state) is linked to nationalist theories of citizenship. However, the majority of the respondents explicitly claim that this attachment is separate from nationality. With the importance put on the attachment, the teachers basically confirmed the idea expressed by Rustow (in Dowley and Silver 2003), that national unity (attachment or feeling of belonging) is an important precondition for a successful democratization; however even according to Rustow this does not mean that people should be of the same nationality but they should feel that they belong to the same political community. However this data contradicted my expectation 1.4 about the importance of the feeling of national pride which could be explained by the specific character of the sample stemming from the capital and surroundings; the region is well known for the liberal and rather right oriented citizens (strong support for the party SDKÚ). Another explanation would be also the fact that the textbooks are framed from a rather descriptive and legal perspective, focusing mainly on institutions, their operation and relationships.

Although the interviews identified different importance of the particular features and characteristics of a good citizen compared to other empirical research in this field (Denters, Gabriel, Torcal 2007, Ichilov, Nave 1981, Theiss-Morse 1993, or Lister et. al. 2003), they did not bring any new characteristics that would be special for the Slovak case; the only one was the so called “representation of the nation” mentioned by one respondent. However, we can claim that they highly value rather non-political and local level activity; they stress the importance of mutual solidarity and tolerance as well as the capacity to question authority and express one’s opinion.

The data also showed an interesting idea about the different perspectives from which one can define a good citizen that emerged during the analysis. On one hand, the textbook emphasized the perspective of the state as it distinguishes between different levels of

“welcomed” behavior of the citizens from the side of the state; on the other hand the teachers conceptualized the good citizen clearly from the citizen’s point of view. Moreover, one of the respondents voiced the existence of these two different perspectives and defined the good citizen from both perspectives underlining the difference between them; the state would wish to have more obedient and passive citizens, on the contrary, the citizens’ perspective underlines the critical approach and activity.

Schwartz, Bardi, Bianchi (2000) point out the high importance of conservative values and values of hierarchy as well as the low importance of intellectual autonomy in the post-communist countries (among them in Slovakia). Viewing these values interlinked in a pattern, my data would contradict these findings, because those three teachers who indicated their preference for conservative values clearly expressed a pro-democratic attitude for a stronger involvement of the pupils (democracy in schools) and were also very supportive for their intellectual autonomy. Therefore the values identified by the cited research can not be viewed as connected. Although the church-owned schools promote conservative values they also highly value the intellectual development of the pupils. This could be explained by the fact that church-connected institutions were suppressed during to former regime and therefore their representatives nowadays strongly value democracy and intellectual autonomy.

According to the research conducted by Denters, Gabriel and Torcal (2007) in 13 European countries law-abidingness was among the three dominant features that were endorsed by all societies. Moreover, based on the findings of Ichilov and Nave (1981), the lack of democratic experience in Slovakia could let us expect that there would be a greater emphasis on the law-abidingness identified by the Slovak teachers. Therefore it is surprising, that law-abidingness was not mentioned very often (only by four teachers) and even those who identified it as one of the features of good citizenship did not differ from the rest in the level of tolerance towards civic disobedience; therefore law-abidingness seems not to have a

connotation of subordination. This could be explained by the general liberal character of the sample or by the memory of the former regime that causes an opposite reaction; obeying the laws may even have a negative connotation. In this context more teachers mentioned the ability to be critical and have the courage to express one's own opinion than obey the laws. However the relatively high tolerance of civic disobedience of the teachers is according to Barnes (2006) not surprising. He claims that in post-communist countries the approval of protest is widespread; citizens in new democracies generally express support for unconventional types of political participation.

In contradiction to expectation 1.6 the majority of the teachers claimed that they have liberal values and the majority of them also favored minimal intervention from the state. However they also strongly value community, fellow feeling as well as participation. This would contradict the theoretical differentiation between the participatory and the liberal model of democracy; according to the teachers, the most important feature of good citizenship was participation. Therefore, the liberal understanding of citizenship based mostly on rights did not appear even though the respondents claimed to be liberal. The respondents also did not use the liberal argument for participation according to which it is important to participate in order to protect the individual freedom and rights (Oliver and Heater 1994). Participation was always connected with a pro-social and non-egoistic attitude to life; in other words, the teachers perceive that people do not participate because they are too egoistic and individualistic and not enough pro-social. Therefore we could rather apply the communitarian argument that stresses the value of participation in itself and the participation on the community level (which was also the case in my sample).

Connected to this issue was also hypothesis 2 that was strengthened by my data; the institution of civic education does not promote community engagement. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Moodie, Marková, Farr and Plichtová (1997) who pointed out

another characteristic feature of the Slovak post-communist society: the perception of the local community as something redundant and negative and the perception of the individual in terms of loneliness and isolation. As it seems, there is no tradition of community engagement in Slovakia and it is also not promoted by the civic education course. Contrary to Ehrlich's urge to shift from the support of community engagement to real political participation within civic education in the USA, we observe a different situation in Slovakia where local level participation is not that dominant. The democratization process seems to have reached the national level however it did not yet reach the local level. As one of the teachers claimed:

Big politics, the government change, the left, the right, this everything goes in one direction, slightly to the left or to the right. This is certain. But it is not certain if a skyscraper will grow in front of our windows where I take out my dog. Here the participation has its importance (interviewee 6).

Here again we can observe a considerable difference between the textbook and the level of teachers' individual perception of citizenship and participation where we can find strong valuation of local participation as well as the desire for non-egoistic behavior of citizens and more care for their immediate environment (community).

There is another form of participation - party membership - that is not really promoted by the civic education course as well. Although the textbook marginally touches upon it, it was not at all mentioned by the teachers. Political participation through party membership seems not be a dominant form neither in the discourse of the teachers nor in the discourse of the state. However this finding is not surprising; Barnes (2006) conducted a research about political participation in post-communist countries and he shows that party membership is generally very low and the general descending membership tendency is visible also in the western democracies. Another explanation for the low popularity of party membership could be that party engagement can still have a negative connotation based on the experience from the former regime.

The majority of the respondents did not approve the idea of compulsory voting; voting was perceived as a right and not as a responsibility; however theoretically it can be perceived as a responsibility even in a liberal understanding. Lacroix (2007) for example shows that the liberal paradigm can be reconciled with the idea of compulsory voting. Her argument is based on the liberal notion of autonomy and equal liberty; liberty as autonomy then stands for the respect of laws that citizens created for themselves; civic obligations (among them voting) are a concrete form of this autonomy. Second, she claims that the encouragement of all socio-economic groups of citizens to participate (vote) will contribute to the idea of equality; participation of all citizens will make the governmental decisions more legitimate. However, the participants did not see that compulsory voting could contribute to more equality and legitimacy; only one of them mentioned that compulsory voting would contribute to more “objectivity” (meaning legitimacy) of the results (interviewee 4). Overall, compulsory voting had a strong negative connotation based on the experience from the past regime.

The theoretical liberal argument that the protection of one’s individual rights and freedoms should lead the citizens to participate and fully use their autonomy did not work in the argumentation of the respondents. Although they claimed that they feel external efficacy, possibility for change, most of them do not use it. As Faulks (2000, 108) points out, there is a need for the so called “ethic of participation”; in other words, the political community needs the tradition, the social practice of participation. This kind of ethics presupposes that the citizens know their rights and responsibilities, know how to articulate their preferences in order to be able to form associations and have the required skills to do so. Moreover, the citizens should be capable of a rational reflection and should be able to think critically. In Slovakia it seems that passivity is widely accepted and that this kind of ethic is not present.

One of the biggest controversies identified in the analysis was that generally the teachers have the feeling of external efficacy; in other words they feel that the citizens in

Slovakia can (have the possibility to) influence the development of the society and politics, however in reality this is not happening. The teachers also did not voice the lack of internal efficacy (contrary to expectation 1.7) which also supports the argument that pure knowledge (how to engage) is not enough unless the citizens do not have the experience of participation and unless there is not a participatory culture in the country. When theorizing political participation, Gabriel (1995) argues that political efficacy and political trust are important antecedents of reformist activities. However the teachers did not point out the issue of political trust spontaneously. Still, one could interpret their perceived lack of responsiveness from the state (ignorant state) as a possible cause for the absence of their political trust. In other words they do not have the feeling that their interests are fulfilled; the lack of trust could then explain the general low level of participation.

However, general passivity of citizens can be explained in a completely opposite way. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse present the concept of stealth democracy that contradicts the widespread notion that people want to govern themselves and that people are supporting the empowerment of citizens. The authors claim that according to their study “the last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision making” (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 1). People do not want to give input into the political process; they do not want participatory democracy. Rather they would prefer a so called *stealth democracy*; people want that the political process will be invisible, they are not eager to hold the government accountable. Participation is not low because people do not have the opportunities, it is low, because people do not like politics and generally try to avoid conflicts.

Here I would like to discuss whether this concept can be applicable to the Slovak society. On one hand, there was data that would support it, the respondents were generally satisfied with minimum participation such as the electoral activity and even though they seem to be participating more than the overall population, their activities were mainly non-political

(i.e. charity). This could stand for the avoidance of conflict. On the other hand nearly all of them expressed that they would prefer a rather participatory model of democracy and the majority of them think that activity and participation are important for good citizenship. Still, this can also be caused by social desirability; first of all, they are teachers of civic education, secondly, in a post-communist society it would be probably not acceptable to admit that people do not wish to participate and that they give up the possibility to participate.

Finally, Miháliková (1994) described the Slovak democracy as communicative democracy with the media being the central instrument for communication between the citizens and the elites. This mechanism can be found also in the discourse of the respondents. Personally, they do not participate in meetings; they are not members of any organizations or parties and media are viewed by the respondents as one of the most efficient channels of communication and influence for the citizens. However, several participants mentioned the internet as a possibility for participation, be it the blogs, discussion forums, or sending e-mails to the local administration. All of them also did have positive personal experience with this kind of communication. It seems that the new and more participatory understanding of media (internet, blogs, and discussion forums) opens up a new space for the communicative version of democracy that can change from the passive form into a more active one. Ward, Gibson and Lusoli (2003) for example identify the following effects that internet can have on people's participation: lowering participatory costs, increasing the efficiency of mobilisation, stimulating participation through additional information, creating virtual political networks, providing new forms of participation, increasing the quality and equality of participation, increasing organisational pluralism. However, based on the results of the Slovak representative study "Občania online" (Citizens online) (Veľšic 2007) only half of the respondents were able to use online public service on informative level (information search), more than a third of respondents for one-way communication (download) and only one fifth

for transaction, in other words as a full use of the electronic service. In order to support online participation in Slovakia, there is an urgent need for the development of digital literacy.

The major contribution of this thesis is to the area of political socialization research; particularly to the research of the relationship between civic education and the citizenship attitudes and participation. The thesis provides a comprehensive exploration of one of the variables - civic education (more particularly civic education in a post-communist country). The analysis can be further used for a more focused study of the causal relations between the particular aspect of political socialization and citizenship attitudes. Here I would like to sum up the major findings of my thesis:

- When studying civic education, one has to focus and distinguish different levels, such as the level of the state mirrored in the curriculum and the textbook, the level of real practice of teaching and the level of teachers' individual conceptualizations as these might differ significantly.
- Civic education in Slovakia does preserve the uncivic understanding of citizenship through the content as well as through the methods of teaching and through the undemocratic school environment.
- Civic education in Slovakia focuses on the legal (thin) aspect of citizenship and on political participation on the state level and does not focus on community engagement or civic participation.
- There is no relationship between the conservative values of the teachers and their perceived importance of obedience and hierarchy in the context of citizenship.
- The way how teachers perceive citizenship and understand the concept of good citizenship and their perception of the aims of civic education are related in a predictable way.

- There is a negative relationship between the real level of participation and the feeling of satisfaction with the level of one's own participation.

However, I am also aware of the possible limitations of this thesis. First of all, this thesis does not explain any causal relationships. Second I had to face the risk of social desirability when working with teachers. Nevertheless I tried to reflect this possible phenomenon in the discussion. Finally, another limitation concerns the sample and its limited representativeness; as already stated in the discussion, the narrow focus on the region of Bratislava with its specific political preferences of the inhabitants could have influenced my results.

The knowledge obtained by my research could find its practical application in any curricular reform initiative or any activity that should help to improve the particular course or the educational system as a whole. It is important to note that it is not only the content of the civic education course but the whole school environment and the cooperation with other teachers and courses and the school administration that have an important influence on the way the youth is socialized.

APPENDIX 1

Research for a MA thesis about:

Citizenship and civic education in Slovakia

Central European University, Budapest

Informed Consent

You were asked to participate in the interview because you are a teacher of civic education.

You will be asked questions about the issue of citizenship and about civic education.

The interview will be recorded.

The interview will last approximately 1 hour.

There is no risk connected to the interview. You may withdraw anytime during the interview.

The content of the interview will be a property of Elena Bianchi and the obtained data will be used only for research purposes (thesis writing at the Central European University)

Elena Bianchi agrees with the following:

- The data will be processed anonymously
- Neither the name of your school, nor your name will be mentioned in the transcript
- The transcript and the recording will be used only for research purposes
- Should the results of the research be published, it will not be possible to connect the data with your person

If you should have any questions, please contact:

Elena Bianchi
Riazanská 52
83103 BRATISLAVA
elena.bianchi@gmail.com
0918 310 718

Signature of the researcher _____

I agree with the participation in the interview.

Name and signature of the respondent

Address _____

Phone number/ e-mail _____

Date ____/____/____

APPENDIX 2

Interview scenario

Civic education/ Education about the society

1. Tell me something about how do you feel about teaching the course? (**warm up question**)

2. How would you describe the goals of the civic education course?

Do you have any personal intention while teaching the course?

- *Information/Knowledge transfer*
- *Learning by doing*
- *Learning how to protect individual rights when needed (liberal concept)*
- *Encouragement to participate*

(Please, try to describe, in what way does a pupil that took the course differ from a pupil that did not take it yet? Is he more... or less... (Characteristics, skills, knowledge, experience))

3. There are different conceptions about what is citizenship. What kind of conception is the goal of civic education?

Do you think that the curriculum is leaning towards a certain understanding of citizenship?

What kind of citizens does it educate?

- *Rights and responsibilities - thin version (public character)*
- *Community – mutual help and care of citizens*
- *Identity – connected to nationality*
- *Social aspect – care of the state*
- *Right to participate – political aspect*
- *Political and civic participation as a value in itself*

4. How does the concept “educating for democracy” or “citizenship education” sound like for you?

Do you think there is a need for it?

5. Imagine that you would have the time and means. How should civic education look like in the ideal case?

6. Do you think that the students should be more involved in the decision making within the school?

Citizenship and participation

1. There are different conceptions of citizenship. None of them is right or wrong. Try to take a normative stand. How would you define a “good citizen”?

What are according to you the most important civic competencies? (Knowledge, skills, motivation, morals)

How does the course of civic education contribute to the “creation” of good citizens?

- *The ability to question authority, ability to evaluate the performance of those in office*
- *The willingness to engage in public discourses*
- *The knowledge how to protect freedom as the most essential liberal value*
- *Obedying the law, performing the duties, loyalty to the state*
- *Participation in the community*
- *Work ethic*

2. What do you think is the role of the state in a democratic society?

How would you define the relationship between the state and the citizen in Slovakia?

(How do you understand responsibility in the relationship between the individual, the society and the state?)

(To which extent should the state take care about the citizens?)

- *Minimal state vs. welfare state*
- *Creation of common good vs. rights protection*
- *Obedience vs. critical approach from the side of the citizens*
- *Agency potential in the state vs. agency potential in the citizens*
- *Power in the state vs. power in the civil society*
- *State protection*
- *Individual responsibility*
- *Community care; people should care for their social environment*

3. What is civic and political participation according to you?

Some people would say that for a democratic society participation of all the citizens is needed, some people would say that for a democratic model, there is no need for all the citizens to participate? Which of the conceptions would you prefer and why?

- *Participatory model of democracy – Liberal model of democracy*
- *Permanent participation vs. participation only when a problem occurs*
- *Possibility for change*
- *Power in the state vs. power in the civil society*
- *Value in the act of self-expression and political activity vs. preference of stability, security*

4. Do you have the feeling that for the citizens in Slovakia it is possible to influence the development in the society/state?

If yes, what are the most efficient channels/ ways of participation according to you? How can the citizens influence the development in the society/state?

5. There are some countries, i.e. Belgium, where voting is compulsory. What do you think about it?

6. Do you consider yourself being a person that participates in the life of the civil society? How?

7. Imagine that a group of citizens decides to protest against some political development by civic disobedience. They decide to lie down on the street in front of the parliament, disabling the traffic and the blocking the entrance of the parliament. Some people would claim that they should be taken away by the police. What do you think about it? Would you accept civil disobedience?

Civil disobedience is the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government, or of an occupying power, without resorting to physical violence.

8. Are you satisfied with the state of civil society in Slovakia? Why? (system, people)

Where is the problem? People (mentality, internal political inefficacy = the individual is not perceived as a competent political actor) OR system, no possibilities for

participation, external political inefficacy (the political system is not perceived as open and responsive)

9. What is according to you the biggest threat to democracy in Slovakia? Why?

- *(Political intolerance – perceiving the political opponent as a threat can lead to political intolerance)*
- *Extremist groups*
- *Weak and passive citizenry*
- *Poverty*
- *Alienation*

10. The constitution of the Slovak republic starts with “we, the Slovak nation”. Some people think that the introduction to the constitution should be changed into: “we, citizens of the Slovak republic...” what do you think about it?

What role plays nationality in the concept of citizenship?

11. Some journalists like to take a very critical stance towards public figures (such as politicians or representatives of state institutions). How do you perceive it?

- *Trust and distrust*
- *Freedom of speech – any limits?*
- *Respect and obedience of authorities vs. the need to question them*

12. There are different political and social groups that could be labeled as extremist. On the other side, there is the human right for the freedom of expression.

In Germany, radical extremist parties are banned; on the other hand, in England this would be very problematic. Both are democratic countries. What do you think about it? What is more important, freedom of expression or protection of democracy?

Closure of the interview

We were talking about different issues. Is there something that you would like to add? Is there something that you consider important in this context and you did not have the space to say that? Do you have any other comments to add?

APPENDIX 3

General Questionnaire

1. Age:

2. Sex:

- *Male*
- *Female*

3. Type of school where you teach:

- *Gymnasium*
- *Gymnasium connected to a certain church*
- *High school with a certain professional orientation*
- *Economic high school*
- *Other:*

4. The school where you teach is:

- *A state school*
- *A private school*

5. City where your school is located:

.....

6. Exact name of the subject/subjects that you teach:

.....

.....

7. Years of practice in the subject Civic education/ Education about the society:

.....

8. Are you a formal member of an organization, club, society, church, etc.?

- *No*

- *Yes, what kind:*

.....

.....

9. Do you participate in activities of a political or societal organization?

- *No*
- *Yes, what kind of organization:*

.....

.....

10. Did you ever participate in a voluntary/charity activity?

- *No*
- *Yes, what kind:*

.....

.....

11. Did you ever organize a voluntary/ charity activity?

- *No*
- *Yes, what kind:*

.....

.....

12. Please, identify your personal political orientation on the following dimensions (cross for one from the pair):

1. *Economically right orientation (free trade, individual responsibility, .)*
2. *Economically left orientation (welfare state, social democracy, ...)*

1. *Conservative values (traditional family, preservation of the traditional social system)*
2. *Liberal values (individual freedom and plurality)*

1. *Religious principle*
2. *Secular principle*

1. *National principle*
2. *Civic principle*

13. Did you sign a petition in the past two years?

- *Yes*
- *No*

14. Did you participate in a protest action in the past two years?

- *Yes*
- *No*

15. Do you participate in online discussion forums concerning public affairs?

- *No*
- *Yes, what kind:*

.....

16. Do you participate in the public life in another way?

- *No*
- *Yes, how:*

.....

.....

17. Did you vote in the national parliamentary elections in 2006?

- *Yes*
- *No (go to question 19)*

18. Which party/ coalition did you vote for?

Hnutie za demokraciu (HZD)

Komunistická strana Slovenska (KSS)

Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (KDH)

Ľudová strana - Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (ĽS - HZDS)

Slobodné fórum (SF)

Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia (SDKÚ)

Slovenská národná strana (SNS)

SMER - sociálna demokracia

Strana maďarskej koalície (SMK)

Other political party, movement, coalition:

.....

19. Do you plan to vote in the next parliamentary elections?

- *Yes*
- *No (go to question 21)*

20. Which party do you think you would vote for?

(you can also indicate more than one alternative)

Hnutie za demokraciu (HZD)

Komunistická strana Slovenska (KSS)

Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (KDH)

Ľudová strana - Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (ĽS - HZDS)

Slobodné fórum (SF)

Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia (SDKÚ)

Slovenská národná strana (SNS)

SMER - sociálna demokracia

Strana maďarskej koalície (SMK)

iná politická strana, hnutie, koalícia

21. Do you participate in local elections?

- *Yes*
- *No*

22. Do you participate in the elections for the European parliament?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Thank you for your cooperation!

REFERENCES

- Barnes, S. H. 2006. The Changing Political Participation of Postcommunist Citizens. *International Journal of Sociology* 36: 76-98.
- Bessant, J. 2004. Mixed Messages: Youth Participation and Democratic Practice. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 39: 387-404.
- Bianchi, E. 2006. *Citizenship from the youth's perspective (social concept and its psychological context)*. Master's Thesis. Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava.
- Delanty, G. 2000. *Citizenship in a global age. Society, culture, politics*. Buckingham, Philadelphia : Open University Press.
- Denters, Bas, Gabriel, Oscar, Torcal, Mariano. 2007. Norms of Good Citizenship. In *Citizenship and Involvement in European Democracies. A comparative analysis*, ed. van Deth, J. W., Montero, J. R. and A. Westholm, 88-108. Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Dolejšiová, D. 2005. European youth policies and their effects in the Czech and Slovak republics. In *Revisiting youth political participation*, ed. Forbrig, Joerg, 111-119. Strasbourg Cedex: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Dowley, K. M. and Silver, B. D. 2003. Social capital, ethnicity and support for democracy in the post-communist states. In *Social Capital and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. Badescu, G. and E. M. Uslaner, 95-119. London, New York: Routledge.
- Dryzek, J. S. and L. Holmes. 2002. *Post-Communist Democratization. Political Discourses across Thirteen Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dudley, R. L. and A. R. Gitelson. 2003. Civic Education, Civic Engagement, and Youth Civic Development. *Political Science and Politics* 36: 263-267.
- Ehrlich, T. 2008. *Educating for Democracy*. Lecture at the Central European University, Budapest, 17th of March 2008.
- Faulks, K. 2000. *Citizenship*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Finkel, S. E. 2002. Civic Education and the Mobilization of Political Participation in Developing Democracies. *The Journal of Politics* 64: 994-1020.
- Gabriel, W. O. 1995. Political efficacy and trust. In *The Impact of Values*, ed. Van Deth and Scarbrough, 357-389. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gaskell, G. 2000. Individual and Group Interviewing. In *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound. A Practical Handbook*, ed. Bauer, M. W. and G. Gaskell, 38-56. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.

- Gillham, B. 2000. *The research interview*. London, New York: Continuum.
- Hibbing, J. R. and E. Theiss-Morse. 2002. *Stealth Democracy. Americans' beliefs about how government should work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunter, S. and R. A. Brisbin. 2003. Civic Education and Political Science: A Survey of Practices. *Political Science and Politics* 36: 759-763.
- Ichilov, O. and N. Nave. 1981. „The Good Citizen“ As Viewed by Israeli Adolescents. *Comparative Politics* 13: 361-376.
- Inglehart, R. and W. E. Baker. 2000. Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American Sociological Review* 65: 19-51.
- Klicperová, M. 1998. Post-totalitný syndróm? *Československá psychologie* 42: 344-350.
- Klicperová – Baker, M. 2002. Demokratické občianstvo. *Psychologie Dnes*, No.1. <http://obchod.portal.cz/scripts/detail.asp?id=311> (accessed October 5 2004).
- Kvale, S. 1996. *InterViews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.
- Kymlicka, W. and N. Wayne. 1994. Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory. *Ethics* 104: 352-381.
- Lacroix, J. 2007. Liberal defence of compulsory voting. *Politics* 27 (3): 190-195.
- Lister, R., Smith, N., Middleton, S., and L. Cox. 2003. Young People Talk about Citizenship: Empirical Perspectives on Theoretical and Political Debates. *Citizenship Studies* 7: 235-253.
- McAllister, I. 1998. Civic Education and Political Knowledge in Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 33: 7-23.
- Miháliková, S. 1994. The End of Illusions: Democracy in Post-Communist Slovakia. In *The Slovak Path of Transition to Democracy*, ed. Szomolányi, S. and G. Meyežnikov, 51-62. Bratislava: Slovak Political Science Association.
- Moodie, E., Marková, I., Farr, R., Plichtová, J. 1997. The Meaning of the Community and of the Individual in Slovakia and in Scotland. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 7: 19-37.
- Mutz, D. C. 2006. *Hearing the other side. Deliberative vs. participatory democracy*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo: Cambridge University Press.
- National curriculum. 1993. Bratislava: Štátny pedagogický ústav (National Institute for Education) http://www.statpedu.sk/buxus/generate_page.php?page_id=334.

- Oliver, D. and H. Derek. 1994. *The foundations of citizenship*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Plichtová, J. 2004. Aktívne občianstvo v spoločenských a psychologických súvislostiach. *Československá psychologie* 48: 52-68.
- Rubin, J. H. and I. S. Rubin. 1995. *Qualitative Interviewing. The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.
- Schmidt, M. G. 2000. *Demokratietheorien*. 3. Auflage. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Schwartz, S. H., Bardi, A., Bianchi, G. 2000. Value Adaptation to the Imposition and Collapse of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe. In S. A. Renshon, J. Duckitt: *Political Psychology. Cultural and Crosscultural Foundations*. Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire; London : MacMillan Press, 2000. p. 217-237. ISBN 0-333-75103-5.
- Singer, K. 2007. Zivilcourage in der Schule? Nur demokratische Lehrer können demokratisch erziehen. In *Politische Psychologie und politische Bildung*, (Hrsg) Frankenberger, R., Frech, S. and D. Grimm, 350-367. Schwalbach: WochenschauVerlag.
- Spencer, L., Ritchie, J, and W. O'Connor. 2003. Analysis: Practices, Principles and Processes. In *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, ed. Ritchie, J. and J. Lewis, 199-218. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.
- Theiss-Morse, E. 1993. Conceptualizations of Good Citizenship and Political Participation. *Political Behavior* 15: 355-380.
- Tóth, R. 1994. *Základy politológie*. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo.
- Uslaner, E. M. and G. Badescu. 2003. Legacies and conflicts: the challenges to social capital in the democratic transition. In *Social Capital and the Transition to Democracy*, ed. Badescu, G. and E. M. Uslaner, 219-233. London, New York: Routledge.
- Young Europeans*. A survey among young people between 15-30 in the European Union, Analytical Report. Flash Eurobarometer 202, 2007.
- Youth in New Europe*. Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2003.1.
- Velšic, M. 2007. *Občania online*. Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
<http://www.ivo.sk/5101/sk/aktuality/obcania-online-elektronicke-sluzby-verejnej-spravy-ocami-obcanov>.
- Většina lidí nerozumí tomu, co se na domácí politické scéně odehrává*. 2004. Inštitút pre verejné otázky (IVO) and Středisko empirických výzkumů (STEM).
<http://www.ivo.sk/470/sk/vyskum/vetsina-lidi-nerozumi-tomu-co-se-na-domaci-politicke-scene-odehrava-> (accessed February 14 2008).

Vnímanie politiky a demokracie. 2004. Inštitút pre verejné otázky (IVO) and Středisko empirických výzkumů (STEM). <http://www.ivo.sk/472/sk/vyskum/vnimanie-politiky-a-demokracie> (accessed February 14 2008).

Ward, S., Gibson, R. and W. Lusoli. 2003. Online Participation and Mobilisation in Britain: Hype, Hope and Reality, *Parliamentary Affairs* 56: 652 -668.

Warren, C. A. B. 2002. Qualitative Interviewing. In *Handbook of Interview Research. Context & Method*, ed. Gubrium, J. F. and J. A. Holstein, 83-101. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.

Willig, C. 2001. *Introducing qualitative research in psychology. Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.