

# Student participation in the discourse of Polish Citizenship Education textbooks for upper secondary school

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- Through discursive exclusion and numerous mitigating cases, students participation appears as limited.
- This mitigated version of student participation is not even part of the discourse on civic participation.

**Purpose:** This paper aims to reconstruct the discursive shape of student participation on the base of Polish school textbooks for citizenship education.

**Methodology:** The main research question is: What image of student participation can be reconstructed by analyzing the texts of Polish citizenship education textbooks? The method of gathering data was finding secondary sources. The sample included all textbooks used to teach a basic program of civic education at the upper secondary level of education. The applied method of analysis comes from the group of approaches defined as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The author adopted the approach represented by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl.

**Findings:** Through discursive exclusion and numerous mitigating cases, students become passive objects of adult policy and all forms of their agency are diminished and deprived of features that determine their strength.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Citizenship competence is listed as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning (Council of the EU, 2018). This competence is defined as “the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life [...]”, and one of its key attributes is “constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European and international level” (Council of the EU, 2018). Civic participation is, therefore, an essential component of citizenship competence. However, how civic participation is understood depends on the dominant concept of citizenship (Hoskins & Kerr, 2012). It can be understood as a right, a need or even an obligation; its meaning narrowed to participation in elections, or

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extended to various areas of political, social and civil life; or treated in functional or political terms, including a critical evaluation of social problems and the pursuit of systemic changes (Hoskins et al., 2015; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; de Groot & Veugelers, 2015). The model of citizenship education depends on dominant concept of citizenship, including concept of citizenship participation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; de Groot & Veugelers, 2015). But the shape of school citizenship education is also influenced by dominant concept of the role of school in society, the goals of school education, and the essence of learning and teaching (Gołębnik, 2004, pp. 115–117). Moreover, the important role is played by the position of children and teenagers as citizens, including the position of students in relation to teachers or others educational entities. The subject of interest in this article is the discursive shape of student participation. Civic participation, including civic activity, especially youth activity is the subject of interest of many social researchers. Most research, however, focuses on the universal, functional, and socializational understanding of citizenship and civic education (Banaji et al., 2018), and thus civic participation. Forms of civic activity are also examined (data collected by International IDEA, especially as part of the Voterturnout database, data collected by ERIC as part of the European Social Survey), as well as the relationship between patterns of civic activity and the distribution of civic norms (Dalton, 2008). In the field of civic education, cyclical ICCS research is conducted (Hoskins et al., 2015), the results of which mainly show the level of civic knowledge of students. Another trend is the research on the effectiveness of specific educational practices (e.g. Keating & Janmaat, 2018).

The study presented here, however, falls under this category of research in the field of civic education which deals with the reconstruction of civic education models, or assessment of educational assumptions or practices from the perspective of these models (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Biesta, 2009; Olson, 2012; de Groot & Veugelers, 2015). Adopting a critical perspective and using discursive categories allows to reveal the non-obvious dimensions of student participation, to cross the limits of its universal understanding, to question what is not usually questioned. The results of the research presented in this article may contribute at least partly to finding clues leading to connections between school civic education and civic participation. They can also be used in designing changes in educational practices and used by other researchers in comparative or interdiscursive analyses.

In the first part of the article I will present the theoretical assumptions that formed the basis for the design of the research. Then I will present the methods of collecting and analyzing data used in the research, justifying their choice. Next, I will discuss the results of the research that will allow me to draw conclusions in the final part.

## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper aims to reconstruct the discursive shape of student participation on the base of Polish school textbooks for citizenship education. The research presented in this article is embedded in a critical paradigm which implies a specific way of conceptualizing civic participation, including student participation. The critical model of citizenship focuses on civic engagement (Hoskins et al., 2015, p. 434; Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 671) and it refers to the involvement defined by de Groot and Veugelers (2015) as 'thick democratic engagement' (p. 31) or understood as the activity of the citizen described by Westheimer and Kahne as 'justice-oriented' (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). This understanding of civic engagement is in turn connected with a specific concept of understanding democracy as a political system (which is always under construction), as a principle of life, culture, and ethos (de Groot & Veugelers, 2015, p. 29). In this context civic participation includes all forms that allow citizens to participate in decision-making processes in the political, social and civil spheres and the catalogue of forms and models of participation is not closed.

Understanding democracy and citizenship in the way presented above implies a specific model of civic education. Since democracy is not understood only as a political system, since it is understood as a system that is always under construction, since civic participation is not limited to specific forms defined by legal regulations, civic education is not a preparation for civic participation but it is education in civic participation.

The fact is that children do not have (or have limited) legal capacity but it only matters in the legal sense. If we assume that the concept of democracy goes beyond political and legal understanding, and civic participation is much more than participation in elections and referendums as well as it is not limited to formal and legal ways of influencing decision-making, then the significance of the lack of legal capacity in the context of participation of children and youth is changing. According to Banaji et al. (2018), research on citizenship and civic education rarely focuses on the critical concept of citizenship and on the criticism of the version of citizenship offered by schools and formal education. If there is a gap, even in the scientific discourse, in this regard, it is hard to expect that the critical version of citizenship would be present in the school discourse. This does not mean, however, that the assumption that student participation is a part of civic participation is pointless. Interesting is what vision of student participation is present in the school discourse and what its relation to civic participation is. Even if civic education should be treated as 'a preparation for being a citizen', student participation should be a kind of civic participation exercise.

Considering student participation ([co]-participation of students in the decision-making processes in school) as an analytical category, and the relationship of student participation to civic participation *in genere*, offers the insight into school citizenship education. Consequently, it is possible not only to reconstruct the concept of citizenship underlying the citizenship education but also to consider school 'translation' of civic participation. The analysis of school discourse related to the citizenship of children and young people seems to be particularly interesting in this context. On the one hand, one should expect that the school education discourse in the field of citizenship education will be part of the general discourse on citizenship and civic participation. On the other hand this kind of vision of the civic participation could be modified by understanding the child as a citizen. Moreover, discursive shape of student participation could be influenced by positioning students in school.

An insight into the discursive shape of student participation is possible, for example, through the analysis of school textbooks. They are the source of socially constructed knowledge. They allow one to reveal what is considered worth reproducing in a given place and time.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (2006), pedagogical activities undertaken as part of school education impose and implement specific meanings treating them as worthy of recreating and they reproduce arbitrary selection made by a specific group (p. 80). Such imposition is possible thanks to the pedagogical authority that results solely from the position guaranteed by tradition or institution (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2006, pp. 95-96). The educational discourse legitimates a specific "knowledge" on the subject of student participation by giving the teaching the appearance of neutrality, thus contributing to its reproduction. Not only the transmitted content but also the organization of discourse is essential here.

Bernstein distinguishes two basic types of educational knowledge codes: the *collection code* and the *integration* one. According to Bernstein (2005, p. 157-171), the *collection code* is such an organization of knowledge that is associated with strong *classification*, while the *integration code* refers to such an organization of knowledge that is characterized by the desire to reduce the strength of *classification*. The concept of *classification*, however, refers to the degree of insulation between the content of education. *Classification* is strong when the content is clearly separated, and weak when the boundaries between the contents are not clear (Bernstein, 2005, p. 158). The concept of the *frame* defines the structure of the transmission system. It is about the strength of restrictions between what can and cannot be transmitted in the educational process (Bernstein, 2005, pp. 158-159).

The analysis of educational knowledge codes – the collection and integration codes, together with the concept of classification and framing by Bernstein – allows one not only to reveal the way content is structured, but also to show how to exercise control over discourse.

### 3 METHOD

The main research question is: What image of student participation can be reconstructed by analyzing the texts of Polish citizenship education textbooks?

The method of gathering data was finding secondary sources (Rubacha, 2008, p. 157). Purposive sampling is used in this article. The sample included all textbooks used to teach a basic program of civic education at the upper secondary level of education during the research (Table 1).

**Table 1: Textbooks included in the research sample<sup>1</sup>**

Author(s)	Title	Publisher	Place and year of publishing
Maciej Batorski	Ciekawi świata. Wiedza o społeczeństwie. Zakres podstawowy, szkoła ponadgimnazjalna [Curious About the World. Knowledge About Society. Basic Scope, Upper Secondary School]	Wydawnictwo Pedagogiczne Operon	Gdynia, 2012
Katarzyna Fic, Maciej Fic, Lech Krzyżanowski	Wiedza o społeczeństwie. Podręcznik dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych. Zakres podstawowy [Knowledge About Society. Upper Secondary School Textbook. Basic Scope]	SOP Oświatowiec,	Toruń, 2012
Marek Grondas, Janusz Zmijewski	Po prostu WOS. Wiedza o społeczeństwie. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych [Simply KAS. Knowledge About Society. Basic Scope. Upper Secondary School Textbook]	Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne,	Warszawa, 2012
Arkadiusz Janicki	W centrum uwagi, Podręcznik do wiedzy o społeczeństwie dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych, Zakres podstawowy [In the Spotlight. Knowledge About Society Textbook for Upper Secondary Schools]	Wydawnictwo Nowa Era	Warszawa, 2012
Piotr Krzesicki, Małgorzata Poręba	Wiedza o społeczeństwie. Podręcznik, Szkoły ponadgimnazjalne. Zakres podstawowy [Knowledge About Society. Textbook, Upper Secondary Schools. Basic Scope]	Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN	Warszawa, 2012
Zbigniew Smutek, Jan Maleska	Wiedza o społeczeństwie. Podręcznik dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych. Zakres Podstawowy [Knowledge About Society. Upper Secondary Schools Textbooks. Basic Scope]	Wydawnictwo Pedagogiczne Operon	Gdynia, 2013
Iwona Walendziak, Mikołaj Walczyk	Wiedza o społeczeństwie dla szkół ponadgimnazjalnych. Podręcznik z ćwiczeniami. Zakres podstawowy [Knowledge About Society for Upper Secondary Schools. Textbook with Exercises. Basic Scope]	Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Zofii Dobkowskiej „Żak”	Warszawa, 2012

*Wiedza o społeczeństwie [Knowledge About Society]* is a stand-alone school subject entirely devoted to citizenship education. In connection with the reform of the education structure introduced to Polish schools from the 2017/18 school year, the timetable for teaching this subject has also changed. So far, it has been implemented at the middle school level (three-year lower secondary school for 13- to 15-year-olds) for a total of 65 hours, and then (as will still apply for the school year 2018/19) in a three- to four-year upper-secondary school totaling 30 hours over the school year (basic program) and additional 180<sup>2</sup> in the extended program. Currently, this structure is changing<sup>3</sup> (Kopińska, 2019); however, in the 2018/19 school year, citizenship education was implemented in “old” type schools, according to the so-called “old” core curriculum (Kopińska & Solarczyk-Szwec, 2016).

The applied method of analysis comes from the group of approaches defined as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Wodak, 2001; Jäger, 2001). In this paper, the choice of this group of approaches results from a way of posing the research problem, and from general assumptions

which underlay a problem constructed in such a way. According to Meyer (2001), researchers using this group of approaches seek to reveal hidden power relationships and the results of their work have practical relevance (p. 15). CDA assumes that the social world is socially constructed and discourse is its inseparable element and driving force in social constructions (Fairclough, Duszak, 2008, p. 16). Although there are differences between the various approaches to discourse, the assumption about the relationship between language and society is very characteristic for CDA (Meyer, 2001, p. 15). The way of posing the main research question in this paper is closely related to the characteristics of the CDA indicated above. The research adopted a critical perspective of the problem and the assumed relationship between language and society. It is about revealing the tensions between civic and student participation and asking questions that will allow identification of any hidden power relations in this field. The subject of the analysis are the texts of school textbooks which, while appearing to be neutral, legitimize the knowledge. Their analysis allows insight into school civic education and more specifically, what is exposed and what is marginalized or excluded at the discursive level. This is important for educational practice and policy as it can contribute to the assessment of civic education in the context of civic participation, and to the identification of the gap between civic education and civic participation and thus, designing changes in this area.

In this paper, I adopted the approach represented by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl (Wodak, 2001a; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). The analysis is built on the four-level context concept developed by Wodak (2001, p. 67). However, due to the limited size of an article, it is not possible to fully present all levels of the analysis. For this reason in this paper, I focused on the first level of analysis – direct language context (text-internal co-text). Nevertheless, I signalized all the levels of analysis. The results of the analysis at the intertextual level were integrated with presenting the application of discursive strategies. To show the relationship between student participation and the citizenship one, I referred to the results of the analysis regarding the citizenship participation but I could not present it fully with examples proving it. Subsequently, I signalized the interdiscursive level by reaching to other works analyzing school textbooks to compare the discursive shape of student/child/teenager participation with my results. Finally, I analyzed the results in the context of legal rules concerning textbooks and theoretical assumptions that underlie the concept of the research.

In the first part, the analysis concerned the application of discursive strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2001a). Discursive strategies are “a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices including discursive practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological and linguistic aim” (Wodak, 2001a, p. 73). Wodak and Reisigl distinguish the following strategies:

- *Nomination*–introducing social actors, constructing their image;
- *Predication*– assigning specified valuing predicates to social actors;
- *Argumentation*– justifying positive or negative evaluations;
- *Perspectivation*– position or point of view of the author of the statement;
- *Intensification / Mitigation*– strengthening or weakening of statements (Wodak, 2001, p. 73; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

The analysis was also based on the socio-semantic inventory of ways of representing social actors developed by Theo van Leeuwen (2008, p. 23), in particular: *exclusion/inclusion*, *activation/passivation*, *genericization/specification* (representation of social actors as classes or a specific identifiable individuals), *indetermination/determination* (social actors are represented as non-specific and anonymous or their identity is somehow specified) (Van Leeuwen, 2008. pp. 32–54). The categories mentioned above refer in principle to the strategies applied to the representation of social actors, but they are also useful in relation to specific phenomena – in this case, to areas of student participation in decision-making processes.

Analysis of the discourse at the first level was aimed at answering the following questions:

- Are students included or excluded from the discourse on participation in decision-making in school?
- What are the students called in the context of their participation in the decision-making process in school?
- What are the positive and negative attributes assigned to students in the context of their participation in the decision-making process in school? Is their participation in this process valued?
- What arguments are used to try to justify possible cases of predication?
- From what perspective or point of view are the terms and methods of argument formulated?
- Are these statements formulated openly? Are they intensified? Alternatively, are they mitigated?

## 4 RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Inclusion/exclusion strategy in analysed textbooks

Analysis of the textbooks allows one to distinguish two areas of student participation. These are student participation – or rather, their influence on shaping the intra-school law (school statute<sup>4</sup>); and the participation of students in proceedings in the event of violations of student rights (Kopińska, 2017, p. 363). Strictly speaking, the latter does not constitute participation, and students do not participate in decision-making here: a competent authority makes the decision. However, the student (or his/her statutory representative in the case of a minor) is entitled to initiate proceedings, while the specified authority is required to take action in response to the student's request. The role of the student in this process is therefore significant, although he/she is not the one who makes decisions. Therefore, I decided to distinguish this area as part of student participation – bearing in mind, however, that this action is not an initiative: defending or enforcing one's rights is a reaction to violation of those rights.

As for the first area, its presence in the analyzed textbooks is minimal. The school statute seems to be primarily a source of student rights and duties, and students are merely its addressees. Only in the case of one textbook is there a direct reference to the possible participation of students (even by submitting proposals) in creating/changing this statute: "Students, parents, and teachers can offer provisions that they should find in the statute" (2:100<sup>5</sup>). The instructions below the text (Appendix, example 1) also refer to it. In other cases, the admissibility of this form of student participation can only be inferred from brief passing mentions of the subject, usually appearing in individual exercises/instructions below the texts regarding the design of regulations in force in school without indicating the possibility of introducing them in school.

In relation to the discourse on civic participation, the areas of student participation are reduced. Civic participation in the discourse of school textbooks, in addition to protecting and pursuing one's rights, filing various types of complaints and petitions (which may, at least in some cases, be interpreted as indirect influencing the law), also includes electoral rights (Kopińska, 2017, p.269). This issue, which after all can be translated into a school situation (in the form of school council elections), is absent from the discourse referring to students.

The three textbooks also mention active citizenship. In the case of two of these textbooks, the contents are structurally separated into individual chapters, which significantly affects their exposure. However, only one textbook uses the term "political participation" (3:14). Although,

the discourse excludes advanced forms of participation. It is instead about the influence of citizens in shaping the decisions made, and not their participation in making them.

#### 4.2 Application of the nomination strategy

A characteristic feature concerning the analyzed discourse is the representation of social actors by using genericization and determination (Kopińska, 2017, p.269). They are represented as a group, without indicating their unique identity, and determined by the roles they play, e.g., “Student/students”, “citizen/EU citizens.” In this respect, there is no difference between the discourse on civic participation and the one that relates to student participation. Referring to potential readers (as part of instructions to the exercises) is specific to the textbooks (and not only those analyzed by me). This construction is also present in the case of the analyzed textbooks. However, it does not mean a change in the strategy of representation of social actors, although it gives the contents the appearance of a specification.

#### 4.3 Predication

The analysis of the textbooks’ discourse showed that no predicates are assigned to students in relation to their participation in school life. The forms of participation themselves are also not valued (Kopińska, 2017, pp. 366–405). An exception here is the excerpt from one of the textbooks, which negatively evaluates students’ actions in the event of violation of their rights, calling them “radical measures” (Appendix, example 2).

As for the broader discourse on civic participation, there is a clear difference here. First of all, the forms of civic participation are valued. Participation in elections, especially parliamentary elections at the national level, is highlighted. These elections are said to be “the most common form of civic participation in public life” (1:25), and also “extremely important” (7:64). They are also a duty, a synonym of responsibility (2:20; 5:15) and freedom (2; 20). Participation in elections is emphasized not only by language but also by the location of texts in textbooks. It is always the main text, a separate subsection. It should be emphasized that it applies to a much lesser extent to participation in elections at the local level, and even less at the European level.

Three of the seven textbooks examined contain texts referring to active citizenship going beyond participation in elections and referendums, filing complaints and petitions, or protecting one’s rights. Active citizenship is positively evaluated here as an expression of concern for the common good, social and political maturity, while active citizens themselves are described as open, tolerant, and respectful of others (7:59).

#### 4.4 Argumentation

Since the predication strategy occurs neither in relation to forms of student participation nor in relation to students participating in them, the strategy of argumentation in this respect is also not present.

This is not the case with civic participation. Given the form of participation that is shown in all textbooks, which is participation in elections, especially those at the national level, the strategy of argumentation was used in five textbooks. The basic argument here is the reference to the social legitimacy obtained by the winning party (4:14). Participation in the referendum is argued in three textbooks, primarily by reference to legal regulations indicating its validity (3:19; 6:72). On the other hand, in the case of active citizenship going beyond the forms of indirect democracy and a referendum, arguments regarding the effectiveness of self-government institutions, development of territorial units and the state (2:20), legitimization by means of a standard and a procedure (3:23–24, 26) were used.

#### 4.5 Application of the strategy of perspectivation, intensification and mitigation

The perspective establishing and hierarchizing the discourse on student participation is the perspective of an adult perceiving a student through the prism of ability, age, rights and place in the school hierarchy. It is evidenced by the merely mentioned participation of students in the process of establishing/amending intra-school law,<sup>6</sup> and at the same time applying mitigating strategies in relation to their activity. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Application of mitigating strategy in relation to student participation**

Textbook number (randomly assigned)	Results of the analysis
1	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diminishing the role of the School Ombudsman for Students –the texts provide information that is not clear neither in terms of the appointment of the Ombudsman, nor when it comes to his/her competences (Appendix, example 3).</li> <li>- Mitigating students' activity in pursuing their rights through the use of depersonalizing and very formal language in relation to protection authorities, lack of practical information about the procedure (Appendix, example 4), and the use of the language that is passivizing the students themselves (e.g. "help is provided", "their rights are protected").</li> </ul>
2	<p>Participation in school lawmaking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Indicating the possibility of students suggesting changes to the school statute without providing any information on the fact that these changes may affect the shape of this statute (Appendix, example 5).</li> </ul> <p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- According to the textbook, the information on how to deal with violations should be included in the statute of the school, but at the same time, there is a clear suggestion that it may not be there. In the case of its absence, students are referred to the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure – that is, such regulations, which are not only unknown to students but also difficult to interpret. The text shows that the form teacher may "not be able to" deal with the case of violating the student's rights. Other information is also imprecise (there is no information on the forms and dates in the proceedings) (Appendix, example 6).</li> </ul>
3	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mitigating by publishing incomplete, inaccurate information on the procedure for dealing with the situation of violation of student rights – the authorities and persons to whom students may turn to are indicated, but the mode, form, and duties of these bodies in the scope of conduct and consequences for violators are not mentioned. The whole procedure is presented as a rather informal way of dealing with the matter; student "can talk to another teacher whom he/she trusts", "may consult, "may ask for help from the Superintendent of Schools". Thus the Superintendent of Schools is not shown as the appeal body who is obligated to take action if a student appeals but as the authority that can help a student if he or she asks for help (Appendix, example 7). An additional mitigating effect was obtained by placing a text regarding consequences for students who break the law at school close to the aforementioned vague procedure. Unlike the latter, this excerpt is particular and detailed (Appendix, example 8).</li> </ul>
4	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear discouragement to take formal measures ("if you are convinced...", "consider whether the entire procedure is worth starting...". "Although this possibility exists, it is better...", "radical measures"); encouragement to choose an amicable settlement, which is presented here as an alternative to the procedure for dealing with a situation of violation of student rights, and not as a part of this procedure (Appendix, example 2).</li> </ul>



5	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The excerpt on important information is mitigated by suggesting that the procedure is difficult, involving "certain risk", "takes time and work", "various dilemmas appear," "you must have allies" (Appendix, example 9).</li> <li>- A text emphasizing, on the one hand, the need to protect the rights of the child and the student and the obligation to disseminate knowledge on the subject, and on the other - diminishing this statement by saying: "Mentioning [...] a long list of provisions regarding the rights of children and students [...] is pointless" (5: 209).</li> </ul> <p>Participation in school lawmaking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diminishing the importance of this form of participation through brief passing mention of the subject</li> <li>- an indication that students can "sometimes" participate in the creation of intra-school law; this gives the impression that this situation rarely arises.</li> </ul>
6	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Precise information about the procedure for students to claim their rights is mitigated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the emphasis put on student duties (only one right is emphasized: right to education);</li> <li>- an excerpt that suggests that verifying one's rights is not at all easy because school statutes or school regulations may not contain them, or negatively regulate them (Appendix, example 10)</li> <li>- discouragement to take formal action, by indicating "However, it is best to start by talking to your loved ones" (6:11) and showing that the problem of non-observance of student rights in Polish schools is not large by placing a graph directly below the text showing respondents' answers to the question: "Are the students' rights observed in your school?"- the chart shows that the answer "no" and "not really" was selected by a total of 13% of respondents (6:11).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7	<p>Pursuing student rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Precise information on the bodies to which one can turn in situations of violation of student rights is mitigated by the exclusion of information on the mode and forms of such proceedings (7:35).</li> <li>-On the one hand, the excerpt criticizes the difficulty in enforcing students' rights and "vague procedures" (7:36); on the other, it provides no information on this subject.</li> <li>-The students' rights are once referred to as "customary laws" that "have no legal force" (7:30). At other times they are defined as "resulting from natural laws that belong to every human being" and not as a "privilege granted by adults". The status of students' rights is very unclear according to text in this textbook. The significance of students'rights is mitigated by exposing students' duties.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's research.

In the case of discursive shape of civic participation, the situation is somewhat different. As mentioned earlier, the discourse regarding elections at the national level (see sections 4.3 and 4.4) is emphasized in both linguistic and structural aspects. At the same time, this has the effect of diminishing the importance of other forms of civic participation. The information is incomplete, and there are cases of diminishing the role of civic participation at the European level (3:128; 4:29; 6:191). As to the issue of pursuing one's rights at the national level, the discourse is informative.

On the basis of the analysis, it is clear that the perspective chosen in constructing this discourse is that of a full-fledged citizen, and student participation is not treated as an integral part of this perspective. The relationship between civic participation and student participation is not emphasized.

#### 4.6 Student participation - an interdiscursive level of analysis

The discourse model referring to student participation reconstructed on the basis of the analyzed textbooks, and its relation to the discourse referring to civic participation *in genere*, corresponds with other research results. Zamojska (2010), on the basis of her research on literary education textbooks for Polish junior high school (using CDA), noted the dominant asymmetric model of communication between teachers and students, in which students take a subordinate position (Zamojska, 2010, pp. 246-247) that coincides with the discursive shape of the adult-child relationship (Zamojska, 2010, pp. 241-243). Such a relationship excludes student participation because children and young people take on a passive position in it; they are treated as those who "do not know" and require teachers to lead them. The only model of citizenship education that

can exist in such discursive conditions is the transfer of knowledge of how to be a citizen without referring to this up-to-date situation of the student.

The visible distinction between civic participation and student participation is also confirmed by the results of the analysis of history textbooks, as well as the second-language and citizenship education textbooks for secondary school students in Italy. The so-called conventional forms of civic participation are emphasized in the Italian textbooks, but there are no references to similar forms of participation at the school level (Albanesi, 2018, p. 27). There are also no references to youth civic engagement and political participation of young people (Albanesi, 2018, p. 27). Focusing on elections as a form of civic participation and lack of references to youth civic engagement is interpreted by the author as a result of the adoption of “a conservative normative definition of citizenship” and domination of a descriptive/informative approach to citizenship education (Albanesi, 2018, p. 27).

Slightly different conclusions arise from the analysis of textbooks for social studies in the upper secondary school in Sweden conducted by Arensmeier (2018). It is not about the relationship between civic participation and student participation, but about differences in discourse determined by the recipient of the textbook. Research indicates that while vocational students are expected to “learn new facts and words, vote and express (pre-existing) opinions” (Arensmeier, 2018, pp. 11–14), the academic track students are offered additional development of more advanced cognitive skills (Arensmeier, 2018, p. 14). It clearly shows that discourse control is not only differentiated with respect to the teacher–student relation but may also depend on the future social position of the student, determined for him/her by the specific educational path.

The results of the analysis of the textbooks presented in this article correspond with the discourse that goes beyond the analysis of school textbooks. Banaji et al. (2018) analyzed several hundred texts from eight scientific disciplines, identifying concentration on conformist and institutional citizenship (Banaji et al., 2018). They also diagnosed an apparent gap in the critique of the citizenship version offered by formal education and relatively little research on young citizenship (Banaji et al., 2018). This may mean that the issue of student participation does not play a pivotal role either in citizenship education or in the discourse on citizenship in general.

#### **4.8 Context of the national core curricula**

In Poland, school textbooks are released for use by a decision of the minister made on the basis of the opinion of experts (from the list of experts created by the Minister of National Education). One of the essential criteria for their release for use is their compliance with the core curriculum (Kopińska & Solarczyk-Szwec, 2016). Meanwhile, the analysis of Polish core curricula indicates that citizenship competence related to civic participation does not occupy a significant place there. It applies all the more to student participation (Kopińska & Solarczyk-Szwec, 2016; Kopińska, 2017). Textbooks may go beyond the core curriculum, but their detailed analysis leads to the conclusion that they are an exact “response” to the requirements of the core curriculum (Kopińska, 2017). The Polish core curricula do not give grounds to recognize student participation as something important, and at the same time make a clear separation of content related to civic participation from those that relate to student activity. Discourse control at the core curriculum level is reflected in the discursive shape of student participation presented in the studied textbooks.

#### 4.9 Discourse control of student participation

Discourse control in researched school textbooks can be analysed from the two main perspectives:

- perspective of knowledge legitimated by discourse;
- perspective of the organization of discourse.

The application of both perspectives leads to the conclusion that student participation legitimized by school textbooks is very limited. This conclusion results both from the definition of participation adopted in this article and from the assumption of its relationship with student participation. In the analysed texts on student participation, there are no references to civic participation. One notices that the contents of civic and student participation are separated from each other, placed in separate chapters, not referring to each other. The separation is subject to discursive control. It can, therefore, be interpreted as a use of *collection code* and *internal classification* (Bernstein, 2005, pp. 157–171). However, Bernstein, when mentioning *collection code* and *classification* meant primarily the insulation of the content designated by particular school subjects. In the case described above, the insulation has intra-subject character. I think that this kind of *classification* serves as discourse control as well. There is no structural connection between knowledge of civic participation and student participation. Because of this, it is difficult to see the relationship between them. It is additionally strengthened by the selection of meanings distributed in the discourse of school textbooks. The discursive structure of civic participation refers to adult fully fledged citizens and exposes participation in elections at the national level. Student participation is not a component of civic participation. Moreover, its discursive shape is also not built analogously to civic participation. It does not have any solid point. It is difficult to identify areas of student participation at all, and those that are present in the studied textbooks are presented in such a way to reduce their actual significance. Even elections to student council are excluded from the textbook discourse. Through discursive exclusion and numerous mitigating cases, students become passive objects of adult policy, and all forms of their agency are diminished and deprived of features that determine their strength. Student participation legitimized by school textbooks is not only far from "thick civic engagement" (de Groot, Veugelers, 2015, p. 31) but it is difficult to call it participation at all since it is not known:

- what the forms of this participation are,
- what significance the student's proposal/application has,
- what status the student's rights have,
- whether the bodies responsible for protecting student rights are obliged to take action at the student's request, or whether it is the type of informal help for which the student needs to ask.

The conducted analyses lead to the conclusion that student participation at the discursive level is not an integral part of civic participation. Even if we assumed that civic education is to prepare for being a citizen in the future, the version of student participation reconstructed on the basis of the analysed textbooks is too limited. The discursive shape of this participation does not emphasize the preparation for being a citizen. The limitation due to the lack of full legal capacity of children is not the only result of school 'translation' of participation. The more important one is positioning the child-student, putting him/her in a subordinate place in the school hierarchy.

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## APPENDIX

### Example 1

“Find out what students’ rights and obligations are in your school statute. Discuss the statute with your peers – maybe you think that some of the provisions should be changed, supplemented, rewritten? Present your suggestions to the class.” (2: 101)

### Example 2

“If you are convinced that your student rights have been violated, consider whether the entire procedure provided for in such situations is worth starting from the very beginning. Although this possibility exists, it is better first to try to solve the problem amicably, e.g., by direct conversation with the teacher – and only when it does not help, it is worth reaching for more radical measures.” (4: 94-95)

### Example 3

“An Ombudsman for Students maybe appointed in school. His tasks and competence are regulated by the school’s statute or special regulations. Usually, the students have the right to appoint him. The ombudsman mainly acts as a mediator in conflicts between students and teachers.”(1: 97)

Comment on example 3:

The text does not explain on whose application an Ombudsman for Students can be appointed. It does not indicate whether submitting such an application generates the obligation to appoint him/her. It does not

mention who the Ombudsman for Students can be. The Ombudsman's only competence which has been indicated does not stress what the essence of fulfilling the Ombudsman's role is; which is taking specific actions in the event of violation of students' rights.

#### Example 4

"School superintendents are also involved in protecting student rights. These are government administration units operating in voivodships which supervise educational institutions in a given voivodship". (1:98)

#### Comment on example 4:

Instead of specific information indicating who may be contacted if a student's rights are violated, the text indicates the name of the authority and its formal and legal definition. There is no practical information on the procedure that applies in this regard.

#### Example 5:

"The student's rights and obligations should be detailed, according to article 60 of the Act on the Education System of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1991, in a document called the school statute. Students, parents, and teachers can suggest records which, according to them, should be in the statute. The school board passes the statute; if the board is not appointed, the teaching board does it. The statute is open-access to the student, parent, teacher, as well as to the candidate for a given school who wants to become familiar with its rules". (2: 100)

#### Comment on example 5:

The school board is potentially the most democratic school body because of its composition (students, parents, and teachers in equal numbers) and competences. However, this body is not compulsory. Due to its strong control competences, it is also inconvenient for school headmasters. For this reason, the school board is rare in Polish schools - it occurs only in a few percent of schools. The teacher board consists of all teachers working in the school. There are no students in this body. As a result, it is therefore unknown what the character of the students' proposal regarding specific regulations in the school statute is. The text does not provide any specific information on the ways in which students participate in the process of creating a school statute.

#### Example 6

"The school statute should contain information on how to file complaints in case of violation of the student's rights. If the statute does not contain such information, it does not mean that the doors on the path of pursuing one's rights are closed. There are other appropriate provisions, for example in the Code of Administrative Procedure (Section VIII). Parents or legal guardians file complaints on behalf of the children. Students who are over 18 can do it themselves. One should start with the nearest instance, and this is without a doubt a form teacher. If the form teacher is not able to take care of your case, you can always go to the headmaster. In many schools, there is also an institution of the ombudsman for students. The upper instance is the Superintendent of Schools supervising schools in a given province." (2:101)

#### Example 7

##### **"Proceeding in a situation of violating the student's rights**

If the student's rights are violated, one should first turn to the form teacher. He/she has a statutory duty to care for the well-being of students and to resolve conflicts and problems at the levels: student-student, student-teacher. If a student for various reasons does not want to turn to this particular person, he/she can talk to another teacher whom he/she trusts

He/she may also consult the headmaster or the teachers' board. When the student has exhausted available levels of appeal on the school grounds (as well as in emergencies), he or she may ask for help from the Superintendent of Schools by himself or via parents." (3: 163)

## Example 8

"Consequences of breaking the law at school"

The student may be punished for grossly disregarding school duties, and in particular, for: inappropriate, uncivil behaviour, inducing fights and hooligan acts and participating in them, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, and smoking cigarettes on school premises, as well as at school events, e.g. trips. The following penalties are usually applied:

- admonition of a class teacher
- being reprimanded by the headmaster,
- detention of a student in school after class in order to repair damage caused.

The teacher board may also adopt a resolution regarding the removal of a person from the student list, who has committed:

- physical or mental abuse of others,
- proven theft,
- deliberate destruction of school or other persons' property or other persons,
- long-term, unexcused absence,
- use of force against a school employee, teacher, or colleague.

In addition to the penalties applied at school regarding a student who breaks the law, there are criminal penalties in accordance with applicable law. "(3: 163)

## Example 9

"Persons dealing with cases of non-compliance with the student's rights should:

- Determine which specific right has been violated – it will be easier to formulate a possible written complaint if one indicates a specific provision in the school statute, a national or international law document;
- When pursuing one's rights, behave assertively to avoid additional conflicts and minimize difficult situations;
- Look for **as many allies as possible**.

The pursuing of one's rights is usually connected with a certain **risk** (it may turn out that one's reasons will not be recognized); it **requires time and work**, and **various dilemmas may appear** in the meantime." (5:214)

## Example 10

"If you decide that your student rights have been violated, start by checking the school statute and other school regulations. **If you do not find them there or you think the regulations are not favorable for you, look for superior documents, i.e. relevant ordinance and acts**". (6: 12)

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The presented research results are not about criticizing the authors of textbooks, nor about creating a ranking of the textbooks studied, but about analyzing the discourse. Therefore, references and quotations use numbers 1–7, assigned to them randomly.

<sup>2</sup> The subjects realised in extended scope are established by the school programme (Kopińska & Solarczyk-Szwec, 2016). Every student can choose two or three subjects executed in this way. The choice of a specific subject is often associated with the choice of subjects taken at the final exam.

<sup>3</sup> The structure of education in Poland – see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018, The Structure of the European Education Systems 2018/19: Schematic Diagrams. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 23;

[https://eurydice.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/the\\_structure\\_of\\_the\\_european\\_education\\_systems\\_2018\\_19.pdf](https://eurydice.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/the_structure_of_the_european_education_systems_2018_19.pdf)

- <sup>4</sup> The school statute is an internal legal instrument that must be compliant with the universally binding law and which regulates, among others: school organization, rights, and obligations of students, teachers, legal competence of school authorities, internal grading system.
- <sup>5</sup> The first digit indicates the number of the textbook (randomly assigned, as explained in endnote 1); the second, the page number.
- <sup>6</sup> It is difficult to assess whether the mention is an example of mitigation of students' activity in this area or the type of exclusion in the form of backgrounding.