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European Identity and Citizenship in Estonia: Analyses of Textbooks and Theoretical Developments

- Estonian civic education system (syllabuses, textbooks and teacher education) has been controversial.
- It has heralded democratic ideals, but failed to use for them adequate tools. It has described main political institutions but neglected concepts facilitating the formation of active citizens.
- Author has designed a conceptual system for democracy education and used it in his research and in his teaching of social sciences to students of some universities in Tallinn and Tartu, Estonia, in fifteen years.
- This framework would contribute to the education of democratic citizens and the formation of European identities in Estonia and other European countries.

Purpose: This article aims at elaboration of a relevant framework for European identity and citizenship. On this basis, comparative studies like ICSS, Estonian curricula, civic syllabuses and textbooks will be critically reviewed.
Methods: The framework relies on former studies on democracy and education. The work also draws on normative materials for European citizenship, comparative empirical and critical studies. The conceptual system relies on the literature on basic sociological and semiotic concepts. This framework is used for analyses of the Estonian civic education system.
Findings: The most general concepts like individual, society, culture, social actors and structures are defined as mutually inclusive. This has enabled to address complex and controversial social issues and achieve the aims of European identity and active citizenship.
The Estonian curricula, civic syllabuses and textbooks herald democratic ideals, but fail to provide for them relevant concepts. They focus on empirical and normative descriptions of main political institutions. The books hardly describe how could active citizens evaluate and influence these institutions. Their content avoids complex and controversial issues like hierarchical power relations and social inequality and fails to describe both the hierarchical public administration and the system for public participation in Estonia. All this rather hinders students' political literacy, critical thinking and active participation.

Keywords:
Social scientific conceptual system, active and critical citizenship, normative and critical civic education, curriculum development

1 Introduction

In the last decades, there have been published many critical investigations on civic education and textbooks in many countries (Hedtke, Proeschel & Szukala, 2018). Joseph L. De Vitis (2011) and Matthew Knoester (2012) have published proceedings on critical civic education. Typically, the social scientific level of civics textbooks has been low. Many social scholars have criticized the content of traditional social studies textbooks. These standard texts merely describe the main political institutions and don't reveal the social problems in these institutions. The books don't rely on social scientific system of concepts and avoid controversies and hard social issues, including critical evaluation of current social and political institutions (Fuchs & Zielonka, 2006; Hedtke et al., 2007, p. 9; Ross, 2001).

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They promote blind patriotism, obedience to laws and authorities (Davies, 2003, p. 161, Dekker, 1994; Ichilov, 1998, pp. 269-270; Knoester, 2012; Knoester & Parkison, 2015). There has been reliance on the functionalist social theory and tendency to rationalize or even justify political and economic authorities (Biesta, 2007, 2009 & 2011). As the authors have avoided complex social problems and conflicts, then they have rather hampered than promoted social change (Dekker, 1994, p. 26). Education based on information delivery, symbolic control and hierarchical relations reproduces or even deepens the existing social structures and inequalities (Wilde, 2004, p. 8). Many governments and educators have realized the need to revise the existing curriculum (Naval, 2002, p. 124).

In England, the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy identified several significant problems to be addressed in citizenship education already twenty years ago (Crick, 1998). The English and French civic education systems have been compared (Kiwan & Kiwan, 2005). In general, the English system still avoids criticality and its framework is not clear (Peterson & Davies, 2016, pp. 383-385). Some authors like Gert Biesta and Mark Priestly (2013) promote the political and critical approach to European

citizenship. In the nineties, German civics experts pointed to a limited progress in the promotion of political literacy, basic values and social skills (Händle et al., 1999). Now, there is a new curriculum for social studies that focuses on small number of main political problems and training of four main competences for that (e. g., Reinhardt, 2015; Mattes, 2016).

2 Education for democratic citizenship

Council of Europe has launched programs for education of democratic citizenship (EDC) since 1997. They have outlined objectives, key issues, activities and methods. Later, CE published a Charter (CE, 2010) and a progress report (CE, 2017). Now, they are dealing with a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture[1]. Francois Audigier (1999) has outlined the basic concepts and core competences in more detail. Still, the basic concepts are not defined. The proposal distinuishes between three main competences: cognitive (or knowledge), ethical (including values) and social (or capacity for communication and action). CE has also published many materials for that and some of them for teachers (Huddleston, 2007). The EDC stresses the need for active participation. It is vital, at least, in lower levels of political and social activities. It also recommends critical assessment of public authorities. Active citizens should react, if politicians and civil servants make mistakes or even misuse their power. Still, the EDC doesn't rely on critical studies on democracy education. The EDC has been criticized for a lack of theoretical framework (Naval, Print & Veldhuis, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2006; Veugelers, 2011). It outlines main dimenions, but not any system of concepts (Locker, Crick & Annette, 2003). The concepts should reflect complex relations between people and society, people and culture, citizens and the state (Haav, 2008 & 2010). The concepts should be integrated and complement each other.

Concepcion Naval, Murray Print and Ruud Veldhuis reviewed the EDC progress in 2002 and stressed the need for a better theoretical framework (2002, p. 124). Between 2001 and 2004, policies for EDC were studied in all Europe (Bîrzéa et al., 2004). Ton Olgers has criticized the EDC policy, as it relies too much on the rational actor theory (Olgers, 2001). Olgers also addressed values education. Values cannot be transferred, but they can be clarified. Rolf Gollob and Peter Krapf published a manual for secondary school teachers in 2008. They introduced some important political concepts like power and authority, rules and laws, government and politics. It seems that they do not link the concepts to social theoretical framework, to social actors, and their relations.

The Council of Europe Charter (2010) outlines a broad policy framework for education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC and HRE). The civic education should provide students and all citizens with necessary knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes for active participation in all spheres of society (civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural ones).

It should enable citizens to protect their rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Charter doesn't specify the necessary knowledge, concepts and theories.

The CE Report (2017) on EDC-HRE recognizes inconsistencies between policies and their implementtation in most countries. They recommend countries to consider EDC-HRE priority areas of education, youth and children policy and back it up with sufficient resources. The civic problems should occupy a solid position in the curricula (CE, 2017, p. 7). The Report recommends further specify some topics and definitions and then conduct quality EDC-HRE studies and provide more in-depth analyses of the situation in the future (CE, 2017, p. 54). It means that the charter needs to be further developed.

The EDC does not address complex and controversial problems in democracy. Representative democracy contains many controversies. It combines democratic decision making in elections and hierarchical power execution after that. In elections, there are controversies between its ideology and practices. The ideology relies on rational actor theory. In election campaigns, politicians use more some other models and theories like those of consumer behaviour. Between elections, the elected politicians use the hierarchical model for execution of their power. All citizens are equal only on the day of elections. In the periods between elections, they are unequal. The EDC does not address these controversies. It regards democracy education as a set of good practices and activities. It does not say which theories and concepts are necessary for a description of these practices and activities. Democracy education should explain representative democracy as a contro-versial problem. Roberto Michels has pointed to the iron law of oligarchy in democratic organizations, in a German political party already a hundred years ago (1911). Authoritarian leaders can make mistakes and misuse their power. These disadvantages can be avoided or diminished by use of participative democracy. Active citizens, experts and interest groups should have the right to receive information and make proposals about important political actions. They need relevant concepts for understanding of complex problems of democracy. Some of them have been provided in the new institutional theory by Paul DiMaggio, Walter Powell, Brian Rowan, Richard Scott, Philip Selznick etc. (Perrow, 1986).

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Studies (ICCS, 1999, 2009 and 2016) have followed the ideas of the EDC. They have outlined their theoretical model as an octagon and placed the individual student at the centre. The model describes how different factors influence on student (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p.21; Schulz et al., 2008, p. 12). This is not a conceptual system. They have defined the ideal goals for civic education, but they didn't elaborate the necessary concepts and theories for these goals.

"In democratic societies citizenship education supports students in becoming active, informed and responsible

citizens, who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and for their communities at the local, regional, national and international level. In order to achieve these objectives, citizenship education needs to help students develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in four broad competence areas: critical thinking, social interaction and communication, democratic participation" (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 9).

In various countries, there are different frameworks, curricula and textbooks. The ICCS analysed mainly their normative parts (ideal goals). They were interested in the topics addressed in civic education in various countries. They collected data about students' knowledge (about society, democratic principles, and participation), argumentation skills, attitudes and actual participation activeties. In 2009, they collected data about social and political institutions, democratic principles, civic participation and identities (Eurydice, 2012; Kerr et al., 2010; Toots, 2011). In 2016, half of the questions were the same as in 2009. The test included 88 questions, 78 multiple choice and 9 with open answers. They investigate trivial knowledge like what is good and what is bad for democracy (Toots, 2017, p. 42). They focused on abstract arguments on broad topics which are distant from students and their opportunities to make a differrence (Toots, 2017, pp. 31-32). They just classify students (A, B, C and D levels) on the basis of these abstract generalization skills. These questions provide interesting and necessary information, but this does not suffice for the main goals of civic education. The ICCS have not investigated how students understand controversial problems of representative democracy. They didn't prescribe *what the content* of citizenship education ought to be and *which competences* it should pursue (EC/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 24). In short, they didn't measure the level of democratic knowledge, critical thinking and democratic actions of students. The EDC and ICCS have ideal and ambitious intentions, but their conceptual system remains non-theoretical, incomplete and ambiguous. The ICCS enable to justify the dominant educational policies. For example, the Estonian team was focused on a comparison of the international results (factual knowledge). They took the studies like a competition between countries similarly to Olympic Games and Eurovision song contests. The average knowledge of Estonian students (546 points) is on the top! It is next to the Nordic countries (564-586 points) and equal to Russian students (545 points, Toots, 2017, pp. 28-30). The team is not interested in students' realist opportunities in actual democratic processes in Estonia.

There are conceptual problems in many countries. Geert Ten Dam and Monique Volman reviewed 74 theoretical or empirical studies on social competence (2007). They distinguished between three dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal and societal) and outlined many elements in these dimensions. These "elements" are actually broad topics. E. g., on social level there is knowledge of society, social structures, processes and influences. These "elements" are neither defined nor related to some conceptual systems (Ten Dam & Volman,

2007, p. 290). They did not find any instruments which were suitable for measuring social competence on the societal level (Ten Dam & Volman, 2007, p. 293). Of course, it is hard to measure something too broad and ambiguous like „knowledge of society". This ambiguity enables arbitrary definition and interpretation of basic concepts. This favours those who have got the authority to define the right knowledge.

3 New concepts for democracy education

The democratic countries aim at a mutually beneficial development of individuals, communities and society. Citizenship education should provide people with relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills in four broad competence areas (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 9). So far, the knowledge has been mostly descriptive; it was not based on a system of concepts. It hasn't sufficed for approaching complex and controversial relations between individuals and society, citizens and the state. To do so, it was vital to define the main concepts of individuals, society and culture as mutually related and complex, too. I have elaborated such a system of social scientific concepts for citizenship education since 2003. It relies on dichotomous concepts of individuals and society, and social actors and structures in sociology and those of individuals and culture in semiotics. It means that these most general concepts are mutually inclusive.

Sociology focuses on social interrelations between people. It defines *individual person* as a sum of his or her social relations and activities in social structure. *Society* has been treated as a sum of all human social relations, both vertical and horizontal. There is no society without people. Any social organization can be defined in a similar way as a collection of relations and interactions between its members. Social organizations are not physical bodies. We can observe but people's actions. These concepts of individuals and society are defined as mutually inclusive. Individuals are at the same time independent wholes and parts of society. Society as a system of actions is social process; it is not a real thing. (In a similar way, biology considers all organisms as processes.) Society is also controversial; it combines equality and inequality, equal (horizontal) and unequal (vertical) relations between people.

People are real objects and we can observe them. But the concept of individual person is not a real thing. It is a language sign that refers to some real persons. We should realize the difference in order to understand the essence of human beings. They differ from other animals by use of speech and language signs. Individuals acquire particular sign systems and signs, and use them. The signs mediate all actions and relations between people and their environment. The use of sings enables unlimited growth of human mind. Semiotics focuses on study on signs and their role in human development. They define human beings as users of signs and sign systems. They consider language (speech) signs and sign systems as most general definition of *culture*. People are at the same time parts of culture (users of signs) and independent wholes, actors of culture, creators of new

signs. The signs connect human minds and their environment. Words as signs enable to represent also invisible and abstract things. They enable to represent also something non-existent that is not true, that is lie.

The person - society dichotomy concerns all social relations; it does not distinguish qualitative differences between them. The relations between people may be equal and democratic or unequal and hierarchical. These inequalities may be temporary and occasional. In social organizations, they are permanent and systematic. There emerges the need for a new social dichotomy. Hierarchical organizational structures are the basis for the classification of main types of social actors. In market economy, there are producers and consumers. On the market place, there are sellers and buyers. In principle, these two groups of social actors are equal. Business organizations have hierarchical social structures that discriminate between owners, managers and employees. Owners have got property rights and they can use the whole (social) organizational structure and control all other actors. Managers have administrative rights and they can use them only in their units to control employees subordinated to them. Employees have neither property nor administrative rights. They must work under the supervision of their bosses. Thus, the number of the main social actors is small. The concepts of *social actors and structures* (Haav, 2008 & 2010) are close to another sociological dichotomy of agency-structure (Giddens, 1979 & 2009; Layder, 1994 & 2006; Hatch, 2018). The latter is in use in critical education studies, too (Apple, 2004 & 2010). The dichotomy of actors-structures is used in the typology of social class. There are similar social structures and social actors (rule-makers, administrators and executers) in other sectors like politics and education. The dichotomous concepts of social actors and structures enable to go behind the formal organizational structures and reveal how they create differences and inequalities between organizational members. This idea is in concert with new economic and organizational sociology that considers all social and political institutions as part of relations between people, between main social actors (e. g., Stan Deetz, 1995; Mark Granovetter, 1985; Richard Swedberg, 2007, et al.). There is a principal difference between the new organizational sociology and the classical management theories. The latter considers organizational structures and power relations as merely technical issues and ignores the opportunities for social inequality and injustice.

In the democratic states and organizations, there are two main models of decision making: *democratic* and *authoritarian*. There are democratic elections and hierarchical power execution. In the last decades, the hierarchical model has been complemented with *participative democracy* and *partnerships*. The last new idea is Open Governance Partnership (OGP). The authorities ask citizens, experts, interest groups and NGOs to take part in political processes. If active citizens make proposals and the authorities accept all good proposals and put them into effect, then this means a real *civic society*.

The main social concepts are complex; they are actually systems of concepts. After the initial definitions, the concepts will be differentiated and complemented with other aspects. Persons take part in many social systems: family, work organization, political, economic, cultural, health, religious and other organizations and institutions. Everybody has different roles in these social systems. Some of these roles rely on power and ability to control other people. These aspects are studied by a number of sciences: psychology, cultural anthropology, ethics, philosophy, politics, economics etc. The initial concepts will be complemented with additional definitions. A narrower concept of individual person is that of social identity. It refers to the most significant relations of persons. Human development is also enrichment of man's conceptual system. The initial definition is in the centre of this conceptual system. The school textbooks should provide students with these first and initial definitions.

System of relative concepts. The dichotomy of social actors and structures enables to reveal the inequality of the main actors. This inequality is the basis for introduction of next concepts that are evaluative and relative. The concepts are the following: *social effectiveness and social justice, social value orientations, political ideologies and scientific paradigms.* Is the inequality effective and just? Should the power differences be increased or diminished? What are more important, individual freedom and well-being or social solidarity and well-being? Can these problems be approached and solved in a unitary or a pluralist framework? Different social actors like employers and employees do not have similar economic interests, social values and political orientations. They cannot be addressed by a unitary scientific paradigm. There is a need for pluralist paradigm which enables mutual discussion, negotiation and solution. There are the same or similar concepts in many sociology textbooks (Giddens, 2009, etc.), but they neither rely on the social actor-structure dichotomy, nor make up a system. The textbooks review many studies in main sociological fields, but these various fields don't use unified system of concepts.

The classical management theories represent the interests of managers and ignore those of employees. They describe formal organizations and their formal structures in a seemingly neutral empirical way. They ignore the role of hierarchical power relations in introduction of social inequality. They present these public and business organizations as ideal bureaucracies. They don't interpret concepts of social effectiveness and justice as relativist. They do this in a one-sided way, from the owners' point of view, and take this as the only option, as the reality itself, as the final truth. They ignore the interests of other stakeholders and ignore the pluralist model. The semiotic concept of human knowledge could enable to reveal this incorrectness. After semiotics, the relevance of knowledge to reality should be proven. The mainstream Estonian civic textbooks reject the concepts of social actors and structures and use mainly ideas of classical management theories.

The mainstream civic textbooks also ignore the semiotic concept of knowledge as signs referring to some real things. After semiotics, the relevance of knowledge to reality should be proven. The absolutist concept ignores the symbolic essence of human knowledge. It doesn't discriminate between knowledge and reality. The verbal and symbolic knowledge is taken as the reality itself. If owners consider their organization as harmonious one, then this is taken as the reality. If Constitution declares that this country is a democracy, then this is taken as the reality itself.

Traditional individualist civic education disseminates the idea that active citizens should discuss, express their opinions and promote their proposals to all political problems. This idea is utopian because nobody can do all this. The new framework offers realist opportunities for public participation. Active individuals should become organized into professional and other groups. They should not react on all political initiatives. They should focus on actions that concern their interests. This idea is the basis for participative democracy. This idea is realistic because it does not require active reactions from all members of some interest groups. It requires activity from the active representatives of these groups. In this way, all active citizens can become organized and have a real say in actual political processes. This is the road to a real civic society. Citizens as members of organized power groups can be active on all levels, not only on local and national, but on the European levels, too. This framework introduces to students and all other citizens realist concepts and ways for active participation and development of their national, European and global identities.

This small system of main sociological concepts is necessary for description and analysis of all main political, economic and social institutions. It enables all students and citizens to understand their realist positions and opportunities in political and social systems. It is more relevant than traditional civic textbooks. First, in the former, the number of main concepts is limited, but still sufficient for understanding one's realist opportunities in society. In the latter, there is almost unlimited number of concepts and terms. In the new system, there are only three main concepts of actors (person, citizen and social actor), four concepts of structures (society, state, community and organizations) and three main models of decision making (authoritarian, democratic and partnership). Next, there are six relativist concepts: social equality, effectiveness, justice, social orientations, political orientations and scientific paradigms.

Why is this system necessary at all? Traditional civic education, including EDC, focuses on social and political institutions and provides about them general knowledge. This knowledge is mostly normative, empirical and technical; there are neither problems nor controversies. It pretends to be absolute truth and absolutist knowledge. Semiotics denies the concept of absolutist knowledge and considers human knowledge as relativist, as system of signs that have some socially negotiated meanings. These meanings might be valid or invalid. They might reflect realities more or less correctly. The relevance of the verbal knowledge to some realities should be proven by some arguments. The traditional civic textbooks ignore the fact that different social actors, the powerful and the powerless, have different social positions, opportunities, interests, values, political orientations and scientific paradigms. This favours some actors and discriminates others. It follows that all public organizations should be described from different positions.

This system of main sociological concepts is also an educational system. It is the theoretical basis of students' social and political development. In the basic school, they should become aware that such a system exists. In the higher secondary school, they should obtain deeper knowledge and practice using these concepts for description of their own experiences and analysis of actual political events. This system is the basis for political literacy. It is necessary and sufficient for active and critical citizens.

4 Syllabuses for civic studies in Estonia

I am going to use the system of concepts for analysing the implicit ideas behind the Estonian syllabuses and textbooks. Are they relevant for their declared goals, do they support formation of European identities and active citizens? First, I should remind the role of the Soviet totalitarian heritage in Estonian society and especially, in social sciences and civic education. Estonia was occupied by the Nazis Germany three years and by the totalitarian Soviet Empire about 48 years. In comparison, the Nazis ideology dominated in Germany only 12 years. In former Soviet Union and Russia, the totalitarian communism prevailed almost 70 years, up to 1991. The basic principles of totalitarian ideology are still visible and influential in Estonia. While Estonia became independent again, it abandoned from the communist ideology, but not from its authoritarian values, ideas and power structures. They were almost automatically replaced by authoritarian capitalist ideology and power structures. The authoritarian communism argued after Marx that all capitalists exploit all workers. Now, the totalitarian idea has been turned around: no entrepreneur never neither discriminates nor exploits any employee. One should notice that the new opposite idea is also totalitarian.

There are simplified understandings of democracy and democratic elections. The first free elections in 1992 have been considered as a restoration of full democracy at once. Second, the national Government has been evaluated as a model of democratic governance. They had the right to decide what the best was for people. Thus, there was no need for participatory democracy. Third, in the totalitarian Soviet Union, social scholars had to justify the ideology and policy of the ruling elite. It was dangerous to criticize them, even if they made mistakes or misused their power. Now, most of the scholars criticize the Communist authorities, but not the new ones, even if the latter are wrong and ineffective. Many civil society organizations (CSOs) have similar attitudes. Many of them apply for governmental support; they

don't criticize authorities and are ready to justify their activities.

We will demonstrate that this is reflected in all social studies textbooks, although they don't stress it. The books don't describe the hierarchical structures, social conflicts and controversies in private and public organizations at all. They don't use such concepts like power, subordination, domination and resistance. As a result, such problems like social inequality and injustice and misuse of power seem to be impossible. In practice, this is commonplace. Estonian media reveals cases of misuse of power and corruption every week, but the mainstream civic textbooks neglect the problems. The dichotomous concepts of social actors and structures could reveal this, but they are ignored and rejected in Estonian schools and education system.

It is vital to comment the education law, curricula and syllabuses before analysis of main textbooks. The main goal of laws is to regulate relations between different legal subjects, physical and legal entities. The Estonian education law focuses on relations between legal persons in the education system (institutions, schools, universities etc.), not on relations between different persons, groups and institutions in education (Riigikogu, 1992, § 1). This favours legal persons and enables to discriminate some individual persons. The law defines education as a collection of knowledge that is described in curriculum. This knowledge (curriculum), alas, must create favourable conditions for development of persons, family, nation and national economy, politics, culture and nature protection (Riigikogu, § 2). But the knowledge in curriculum is inadequate for both personal and social development. To be adequate for development of persons in society, it should provide students with relevant concepts and theories. This is the realist aim. The Law has replaced it by a utopian idea of favourable conditions. Knowledge is necessary, but insufficient condition for human development. The system of necessary conditions should contain besides intellectual (knowledge) also social, material and political conditions. The law introduces unequal treatment of individual and institutional or organizational actors. In hierarchical organizations, different members have unequal rights, they are different social actors. These different social actors (students, their parents, teachers, school heads and authorities) have unequal opportunities for regulation of their relations, for using legal, material and political resources for development of themselves and for contribution of national progress. It follows that the law is not quite adequate for its main goal.

According to political theories and models of curriculum, main educational partners should have equal opportunities for participation in all main steps in this process: definition of goals, learning materials and methods etc. (Pilli, 2009; Pinar et al., 2008, pp. 243 etc.; Rutiku et al., 2009, p. 20). Next, main goals should determine selection and design of subject syllabuses, learning materials and methods. Analyses of former curricula (NC, 1996 & 2002) have revealed deep gaps

between their normative and descriptive parts, general goals and description of subjects (Haav, 2012, pp. 60-62). All main reviewers, including OECD (2001) and Finnish Ministry of Education (FNBE, 2003) have drawn this conclusion. The paper will analyse, did the situation change in case of civics and citizenship education in the last ten years.

The last curriculum for gymnasium (adopted in 2010 and 2011, last amendments in 2014) consists of a general part, 15 mandatory subject syllabuses in 7 subject fields, eight extracurricular topics (including civic initiative and entrepreneurship) and 48 elective courses. The general part describes main goals and priorities, seven human and eleven social values and eight European key competencies[2] (including social and citizenship related). The main goal is the same as in many democratic countries: intellectual, physical, moral, social and emotional development of students. The civic knowledge, skills and activity are one of the five priorities, one of the eight extracurricular topics and one of the eight key competences. Still, the social competence includes the ability to understand global problems, but not the complex and controversial social issues (NC, 2011a, § 4). The extracurricular topic on civic initiative should be dealt with in all school subjects in order to provide students with "knowledge and skills for political and economical decision-making process on the local and national level" (NC, 2011a, Appendix 14).

All these civic and social issues are scrutinized in the syllabuses for social sciences (history, civics and personal studies). They are outlined in 46 pages in Appendix 5 (NC, 2011b[3]). There are six courses on history, two on civics and one on personal and health (human) studies (each course contains 35 hours). The two civic courses concern four main areas: society at large, politics and the state, economics and globalization on seven pages. The administrators of curricula have selected subjects, theories and concepts that are not most relevant and sufficient for achievement of the above goals, values and competences. This paper analyses normative part of the social subject field (pp. 1-7) and focuses on social and civic competences and the first civic course (pp. 24-29). In this normative part, there are eight very broad and abstract general outcomes. They are not formulated according to the Guidelines for learning outcomes. There is no hierarchical order. Becoming an independent personality and active citizen should be the main outcomes but they are only few out of many. Here are some other examples. "Students understand social changes in history and modernity. They respect democracy, human rights, laws, civic rights and duties and take responsibility. They know cultures of different nations and accept the differences." These formulations don't address only one indicator and they aren't measurable (Biggs and Tang, 2008, pp. 65 etc.; Pilli, 2009).

The civic course on society and governance is outlined on five pages (NC, 2011b, pp. 24-29). (In comparison, in Finnish curriculum 2003, the same course on politics and society outlines the same content on one page only. There are but four learning outcomes, and five main

topics. – FNBE 2003, pp. 188-189). The Estonian syllabus outlines its objectives and outcomes many times, first, for both main courses, and then for its four thematic areas. There are eight outcomes for the thematic area of society and seven for governance. Besides the objectives and content, there is also part 2.3.2, "course description" on three pages (NC, 2011b, pp. 25-27). This part is actually normative and it prescribes what the education (it means teachers) should do. It is expressed in declarative way in order to create an impression of the reality itself. The real description of the course on society and governance is in its content that takes one page only (NC, 2011b, pp. 28-29).

The syllabus declares nine broad learning objectives for the two civic courses, one of them is that students "define themselves as citizens of Estonia, Europe and the world, acknowledge their obligations and responsibilities as citizens; support the sustainable development of society, culture and natural environment through their behaviour and thoughtfully plan their future"(NC, 2011b, p. 24). This phrase could mean that citizens might have opportunities to take part in democratic processes. These nine general objectives are repeated many times as fifteen learning outcomes for society and politics (ibidem, pp. 27-29). One of them is that students "identify the principal features, structure, areas and organization of contemporary society, understand the mechanisms of politics and know how to relate to the development of society". The other argues that students „describe the features of contemporary society; understand its structure and functioning principles, areas of social life and the relations between them and relate themselves to the development of society" (ibidem, p. 28). These declared outcomes are very broad. They refer to a broad variety of external institutions. One objective reminds that students should understand their links to these institutions. This is one of the few student-centred goals. The percentage of such student-centred goals is very small. The syllabus mentions a number of social mechanisms and structures without any reference to the role of citizens (and students) at these institutions. The designers of the civic syllabus have once again violated the rules of formulation of learning objectives and outcomes. Each formulation should address only one indicator and it should be measurable.

The civic syllabuses have been eclectic from the beginning (NC, 1996). Its authors did not follow the curriculum theory. They compiled knowledge from many social sciences. They addressed mainly social, political, economic and legal systems. The syllabus for gymnasium defined four objectives and six learning outcomes. It did not aim at formation of active citizens. All these aims, outcomes and description of all thematic areas were outlined on two pages only. In the last syllabus for the higher secondary level (NC, 2011a); the structures of the two main civic courses are not logical. The first part about society contains a number of different types of society. There are also such concepts like public and business sectors, civil society (NGOs), industrial and post-industrial society. Next, it also contains the part "social

relations and institutions". There are concepts like national structures and social stratification. There are social problems like social mobility, economic and social inequality, poverty, and social justice (NC, 2011b, p. 28). It also refers to social institutions like family, market, state and media, although they are outlined in the next parts of the syllabus. There is nothing about education, schools and students in syllabuses (and most textbooks). (There is something about them in textbooks for basic schools, in grades six and nine). These topics are necessary for students' socialization and formation of their social competence, but the authors have replaced them with such topics like copyright law and consumer protection.

The course on governance and civic involvement is most extensive. It consists of seven chapters, but it is out of balance. This political course is focused on concepts like state, democratic and totalitarian regimes, political institutions, legislation, legal system, civil service, local authorities, human rights, ideologies, elections, political parties and NGOs. The concepts of national and local political institutions are neither linked to citizens' participation in politics nor to their civic initiatives. The authors ignore their own promises given in the normative part: „All main areas of social life (economy, politics and law) are analysed with regard to society as an integrated whole and the position and roles of the individual" (ibidem, p. 25). Again, the descriptive part ignores the normative part. The text compilers promise to focus on „considering the inclusion of citizens in the exercising of public authority and ways of influencing the activities of public authority"(NC, 2011b, p. 26), but they didn't include these ideas into the course content (ibidem, p. 29). One of seven chapters is headed as "Parties and civil societies". It concerns interest groups, civil society and inclusion. There is no reference to participation of interest groups and civil society organizations in political processes. The concepts of participative democracy and open governance partnership (OGP) enable citizens to take part in political processes, but they are missing from the syllabus. There is no reference to participation in schools, local and national levels, although one of the aims is communication with local and national authorities. Again, it means that the authors of this syllabus are willing to channel the citizens' activity from public and political spheres into private and personal spheres. The same tendency is identifiable in some textbooks published within this period (1997-2014).

It is not occasional that the concepts of public participation have been removed from the civic syllabus into the extracurricular topic on the civic initiative. It means that teachers of all subjects "should understand the role of an individual's in the political and economic system, know the opportunities and have the skills to influence the society and participate in the decision-making process" in both political and business systems on local and national levels (NC, 2011a, Appendix 14). Educators of civic teachers, compilers of civic syllabuses and textbooks have avoided these problems and put the civic initiative on shoulders of ordinary teachers.

The syllabus also concerns European political institutions, but not identities, values and citizenship. There is no reference to authoritarian model of power execution and hierarchical relations in the public organizations. This creates an illusion that the governance is also democratic. If so, there is no need for public participation. If the syllabus and textbooks confess that public governance and administration are hierarchical and authoritarian, then the need for public control and participation might become obvious. The authoritarian administrators could make mistakes and even misuse their power.

The introductory normative part of social studies syllabuses (NC, 2011b, p. 25) refers also to concepts of power, subordination, domination and resistance, but they are not represented in the content description. The content refers to some complex and controversial social phenomena (social equality and justice, poverty, democracy, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, extreme ideologies) and relevant concepts. The role of these references is very small, there are but some phrases on seven pages. It is easy to loose these fine phrases about complex problems and active citizens.

This means that the European citizenship and social competence is exposed in the general part of curriculum; there is something also in general part of social studies, but almost nothing in the content of the main civic courses. Thus, the descriptive part of the syllabus, its structure and selection of concepts is not quite relevant to its normative part and to the extracurricular topic of civic initiative. This is not favourable for formation of active citizens. The phrase of active citizen is expressed four or five times in the syllabus. Still, it doesn't outline any classification of different types of citizens: passive and active, responsible and critical. The syllabus outlines a complex of methods for assessment of subject knowledge, but nothing for measurement of activity levels. It does not address the students' attitudes and knowledge for participation either on national, or on local and school levels (NC, 2011b, p. 7). It is not quite relevant to the main task of civic education: formation of active citizens and European identities.

The syllabus does not rely on a system of sociological and social scientific concepts. It is rather a loosely linked collection of a number of empirical topics and narrow technical terms Estonian civic education system has promoted lengthy and ambiguous texts and ignored conceptual systems for students' progress in many decades. The system resists to changes and pretends to be perfect. They are going to reformulate social studies syllabuses by using some lists of topics (like those by Ten Dam & Volman, 2007, p. 290). It is very likely that these reformulations will be heralded as a curriculum innovation.

4 Mainstream textbooks

I will review and assess the relevance of textbooks to the civic syllabus, active citizenship and European identities. Do the Estonian textbooks provide students with a system of complex and integrated concepts or do they disseminate normative descriptions? Do they promote realist ideas for active participation in educational, public and business organizations, in local and national political institutions or do they disseminate abstract and utopian ideas? Are the civic concepts relevant for acquiring of practical competences and skills?

I have discussed the problems with many undergraduate students while I taught some social science courses at some universities in Tallinn and Tartu in 2000-2015. Did the school graduates understand political and sociological problems of democracy? I have also discussed the problems with representatives of different interest groups in social networks and at public forums. All this has happened in period of almost twenty years.

Civic studies were part of National Curriculum also in years 1920-1940 in Estonia (Haav, 2011). Some authors published textbooks for both basic schools and gymnasia (Toomas Adamson & Jüri Parijõgi, 1934 and Richard Kleis & Richard Räägo, 1938). In the Soviet period, the syllabuses and textbooks were compiled by leading scholars in Moscow. The books expressed Marxist ideology, plans for Soviet society and economy and ideological and moral requirements to youth (Shachnazarov, G. H. et al., 1963). They disseminated blind patriotism and obedience to authorities.

Since 1991, many new textbooks on citizenship education have been published in Estonia for both basic and secondary schools (Möldre and Toots, 1997, Möldre & Toots, 1999, Olenko & Toots, 2005 & Toots, 2014). The books from 1997, 1999 and 2005 have been formerly criticized in other publications (Kalmus, 2002 & 2003; Ruutsoo, 2000; Haav, 2008, 2010 & 2011; Räis, 2008). They have followed the eclectic civic syllabuses and formally described the main political institutions. Formation of active and democratic citizens has not been their main aim. The materials have avoided complex and controversial social issues. Concepts of social structure and social inequality have been reduced to differences between individuals (Möldre & Toots, 1999, pp. 31-33; Toots, 2014, pp. 105-106). In large organizations, there are large power differences between main social actors like employers, managers and employees. This enables social inequality and injustice. These authors and their writings neglect these opportunities. They describe the governmental institutions as rational ones and ignore the role of hierarchical power relations and struggles in them (Möldre & Toots 1999, p. 69 etc.; Olenko & Toots, 2005, p. 21, 44-46). Democratic systems combine democratic elections and hierarchical decision making after the elections. In practice, the authoritarian relations have been complemented with participative democracy in both public and business organizations in most European countries. In Estonia, this is typical for public organizations, but not for business companies. The mainstream management textbooks ignore the participative decision making not only in business sector, but in public sector, too. This ignorance can be conceptually explained. If the governance already is democratic, then there is no need for participative democracy. There are also some political reasons. Some interest groups oppose to the public

participation. Now, the main Estonian civic textbooks contribute to this ignorance. They don't describe the real systems for public participation neither on national, nor on local and school levels. In some textbooks the concept of participatory democracy (Möldre & Toots, 1997, p. 152) was replaced by that of (unpolitical) civil participation (Toots, 2014, p. 49). In many European countries, students' democratic experiences at school have been used in civic education (Print et al., 2002; Malafaia, Menezes et al., 2016). Estonian students have actually quite extensive rights and opportunities for self-governance and participation in school governance via school council (Eurydice, 2005; Toots et al., 2006; Toots 2011; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The Estonian textbooks don't refer to using of these experiences in democracy education.

In the last years, there have been published some new textbooks by some other scholars and civics teachers. They follow civic syllabuses, but some of them express also some critical ideas. I will review these books. Do they touch complex and controversial issues? Do they treat participatory democracy at school, local and national levels? One of them is a textbook from 2009 which dedicates four pages (Raudla, 2009, pp. 58-65) to formal description of main topics like parliament and government (again, without any references to public participation). According to the ideology of functionalist harmony, all politicians do their best for public interests. It doesn't challenge the ideology, but it quotes some journalists who have done so. The textbook introduces concepts of party oligarchy (Raudla, 2009, pp. 51-52) and group interests (ibidem, p. 26). Still, these phrases are not used for conceptual goals. The book doesn't argue that active citizens should react on the cases of misuse of public power. Only a quarter of citizens feel that they are enough competent and could influence on national policies (Raudla, 2009, p. 85). Still, more than 50 per cent are familiar with main channels of political influence: direct contact to some politicians or public authorities, via some interest groups or media, via public appeal etc. (ibidem, p.88). These percentages refer to opportunities for participative democracy, but there is no such concept at all. Still, in chapter on civic society, there is a sentence of principal importance. "Civic organizations take part in elaboration of draft laws and policies, and they also express their opinions about governmental policies" (ibidem, p. 87). Since 1990s, there are systems of participative democracy in Estonia on all levels, but the civics textbooks don't introduce them to Estonian youth. The ideas of participative democracy should be central in civics textbooks, but they are elaborated neither in this textbook nor in its workbook. The latter (Siilaberg, Somelar and Ugur, 2010) doesn't present any exercises for political actions. At least, it could have been useful in chapter on civic society. This workbook presents useful critical facts about political life in Estonia. It compares elections with competition between public relations agencies (Siilaberg, Somelar and Ugur, 2010, p. 45). They refer to the limited opportunities that people and NGOs have for participation in political activities. About 90 % of

people believe that they cannot influence the Parliament and Government. About two thirds believe the same about local authorities (Siilaberg, Somelar and Ugur, 2010, p. 24). These data have only informative function in these books. In civics workbooks, the ideas and exercises about participant democracy should be central. They could and should be used for practicing civic actions and formation of active attitudes. In Estonia, they have but peripheral role. In the chapter on civic society, there are but some references to participation portals[4].

A new textbook from 2014 (Saarts & Roosmaa, 2014) provides a more correct treatment of concepts of democracy and participation. It, too, refers to the web-based national system of public participation. It affirms that participant democracy complements the representative one. People can discuss draft laws and policies and make their own proposals (Saarts & Roosmaa, 2014, p. 153). The book neither isolates nor contrasts political and voluntary activities. They describe how interest groups can take part in and influence on political processes. The same authors have also published an electronic textbook[5]. The e-book doesn't have any references to public participation on local and national levels. Concepts like participative democracy are not present.

These last textbooks introduce some critical ideas and facts that are useful for political literacy and motivation. They facilitate students' independent and critical thinking, social and political skills. All this is useful, but not sufficient for emergence of active European citizenship. Unfortunately, they don't make up any conceptual system. Estonian curricula and civic syllabuses don't expose their actual theoretical foundations. They are eclectic collections of normative ideals and formal descriptions of social and political institutions. They are not linked to any system of social theoretical concepts. There has been no willingness to use the new system of concepts based on pluralist paradigm, new institutional theory and dichotomist concepts like man and society, social actors and structures.

The implicit ideological paradigm (not theoretical framework) behind these syllabuses and mainstream textbooks is that of functionalist harmony. According to this, all authorities do their best for achieving their official goals. They neither do mistakes, nor misuse their power. The authors ignore some critical social theories like the pluralist one and the new institutional theory[6] that is represented by Paul DiMaggio, Amitai Etzioni, Hans-Dieter Meyer, Charles Perrow, Walter Powell, Brian Rowan, Richard Scott, Philip Selznick et al. (Perrow, 1986). According to them, people and groups have different interests and some of them can put their selfish interests first. It means that active citizens should critically observe performance of public organizations, their administrators and civil servants. The European concept of democratic citizenship recommends this, too. All active citizens should be critical and if they notice something wrong, then they should make these cases public. Estonian civics' textbooks should also recommend this, but so far, they have been reluctant to do so.

5 Some conclusions

The main Estonian civic textbooks do not provide students with a relevant system of concepts for addressing complex problems. This paper tries to overcome this proposing, to this regard, a system of concepts. It relies on sociological dichotomies of person and society, and semiotic dichotomies of person and culture. The dichotomy of social actors and structures is the methodological basis for understanding of social problems in hierarchical political institutions (like parliament and government) and business and public organizations. This dichotomy is the basis for introduction of a system of relative concepts like social effectiveness and social justice, social value orientations, political ideologies and scientific paradigms. This is necessary for understanding of one's positions and opportunities on organizational, local and national levels. They enable to describe and analyse complex and controversial social and political phenomena like hierarchical power relations, social inequality and injustice. They provoke critical thinking and active attitudes to educational, social and political systems. All this corresponds to the aims of the EDC, national curriculum and civic syllabuses. Unfortunately, the Estonian civic education system has ignored these concepts so far.

The paper started the analysis of Estonian textbooks from that of National Curricula and civic syllabuses. These normative documents have been and have remained controversial. They have exposed humanist goals and high expectations in general normative parts. The goals have not been complemented with a relevant conceptual system. The last curriculum (NC, 2011a) mentions social and political literacy, knowledge about society and public participation, skills and motivation to take part in political processes and influence on social development. The civic syllabus mentions the EDC goals in normative part, but it doesn't focus on them. The content of syllabus and main textbooks fail to provide necessary concepts and theories for their achievement. The textbooks follow the content of the syllabus, but they don't focus on the main goals of EDC. They provide students with more or less extensive descriptions of normative tasks of main institutions. They fail to outline any system of concepts that would be necessary and sufficient for critical analyses of these institutions.

The paper has referred to some main shortcomings and controversies of the civic syllabuses and main textbooks. They don't point to the differences between political ideas and practices. The democratic elections rely on the rational actor theory. In election campaigns, many politicians take advantage of models and theories of consumer behaviour. The syllabuses and textbooks should reflect this contradiction, but they don't do this. They focus on the first model and avoid the second one. The models of democratic state and organizations combine controversial models of decision making: democratic elections and authoritarian power executions. The syllabus and main textbooks don't mention the power hierarchies. In practice, the hierarchical system has been complemented with participative democracy, but the syllabus and main textbooks practically ignore this. The Government has created a web-based system for public participation. This participation of active citizens, interest groups and NGOs links people and the State. The syllabus and textbooks should acknowledge students with these channels and opportunities for information, discussion and proposals. Such participation system exists also in schools and universities. The school textbooks should describe them, but they don't do so. Only in books for basic schools (grade six), there are small informative texts about schools. The textbooks for secondary schools ignore the topic. All textbooks should describe also some positive cases of student participation on school and local levels. These cases would enable use of active learning methods like critical analyses and discussions.

The governance part of the civic syllabus and textbooks centres on formal description of main political institutions. They don't mention power relations and struggles in these formal structures. There is also no reference to participation of active citizens, interest groups and NGOs. This enables isolate people from power execution. The syllabus and textbooks treat civil sector in isolation from the public sector. The political concept of civic society is replaced by an unpolitical civil society. There are references to NGOs, but not to the political opportunities of NGOs and interest groups to discuss political issues. This doesn't facilitate students' political literacy. They don't realize their opportunities to take part in political processes and have a real effect on national development.

In sum, the civic education system doesn't facilitate promotion of European identities and democratic citizenship. The curriculum theorists and textbook authors have limited opportunities for that in Estonia. Authors must conform to the rigid syllabuses. Usually, they have followed the content of their subject. They should also pay attention to the general parts of curriculum and social studies' syllabuses, but they have largely ignored this. They have written much neither about development of social competences and skills nor clarification of democratic European values and attitudes.

As such, it would be important that the whole civic education system, including curriculum administrators, curriculum developers, textbook authors and teachers themselves, discuss social scientific curriculum theory and its implication for civic education.

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Endnotes

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