Educational struggles and citizenship education. The case of Poland

Monika Popow
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan
Isidora Sáez-Rosenkranz
DHIGECS Group, University of Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyse the relation between educational struggles and citizenship education in contemporary Poland. It adopts the critical pedagogy perspective and broadly defines the concept of educational struggle as struggling over the content of education, as social tensions in the field of education, as well as the students' and teachers' capacity to perform educational change. Critical discourse analysis of the current grammar and secondary curricula in conducted. It is assumed that struggling, as a transformative and critical activity, plays important role in terms of citizenship education. In the case of Poland, two tendencies are distinguished – struggle as exercising the right for education, and struggle over the content of history. Moreover, the authors analyse representations of struggle in formal education, and explore the issue in the context of Polish cultural tradition, especially related to historical education.

Key words*: educational struggles, citizenship education, Poland, critical pedagogy*

Introduction

In the last years, there have been two major sets of tendencies in Poland that have had implications for citizenship education. The first is to do with the notion of active citizenship, which has become influential in terms of citizenship education and social participation understood in liberal terms. The second change, whereas, is related to conservatism, strengthened by nationalism, which has recently become a force consolidating right wing social movements.

The mentioned tendencies are also reflected in the so-called educational struggles, which may be aimed at defining what counts as a nation, citizenship, rights, as well as appropriate political, economic and cultural content of education (Apple & Buras 2006) In Poland, this may be illustrated by students' protests, that, from the one hand, may be based on social demands, such as protests against closing up schools and school canteens like in Krakow in 2013, or in Węgierska Górka in 2016, or on enforcement of the right to education in Warsaw in 2015. On the other hand, the

protests may be driven by a will to oppose liberal tendencies or by nationalism. Protests at universities against particular types of knowledge or thinkers, e.g.. Wrocław, Gdańsk 2013 against Zygmunt Bauman, which were attended, among other people, by students, are a good example.

The involvement of some groups of students into educational struggles, as well as their participation in political movements, is, then, factual. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon indicates certain meanings given by young people to the notions of citizenship, self-expression, and social protests. What interests us, is where formal education places itself in relation to these processes, specifically to educational struggles, and where educational struggles actually are conducted.

Objectives

The paper analyses the relation between educational struggles and citizenship education in contemporary Poland. The main objective of the text is to analyse the representations of struggle and citizenship in the formal educational discourse. Additionally, it also presents selected contemporary educational struggles in Poland within the context of the analysed educational discourse.

The paper has four main sections. First, we present the historical background of contemporary educational struggles in Poland, and next the theoretical framework related to the category of struggle in critical pedagogy. We focus primarily on the critical pedagogy perspective, as well as on the perspective of the radical democracy theory. Further on, the methodology is presented. In the next section we reconstruct the representations of educational struggle in the Polish curriculum. The sixth part explores an alternative to formal education spaces, where educational struggles may take place. The final section is devoted to discussion and conclusions.

Historical Background

In the Polish tradition, citizenship has been an important part of the patriotic discourse, leading to a displacement of cultural and political thinking on citizenship (Burszta et al. 2000). The reason of this phenomenon may be related to a long domination of a romantic vision of citizenship, in which a nation is perceived rather as a collective of feelings, than a political formation shaping rights and responsibilities (Burszta et al. 2000).

Similarly, education has been traditionally perceived as an important mean of preserving the national identity in Poland. The loss of independence at the end of the 18th century, which was a result of partitions of Poland, became a reason for the

emergence of the specific meaning given to education. While in the 19th century, the introduction of compulsory education in Western European societies was related to forming citizens, in Poland education has been understood exclusively in cultural terms, as a mean to transmit culture, language and national heritage (Wesołowska 1988). All attempts to impose cultural and educational dominance by the invading countries were perceived as an attack on the Polish identity, and, as such, demanded resistance. Consequently, the Polish tradition of educational struggles has been inseparably linked to patriotism and defending cultural tradition.

These tendencies may be observed in the 19th century images of school presented in literature and in history. Stefan Żeromski's novel *Syzyfowe prace* [Labours of Sisyphus] seems to be a good example. The novel based on the author's personal experience of childhood in the Congressed Poland, controlled by Russia, presents a school and its students resisting to the policy of Russification. However, the most important representation of educational struggle in the Polish history is the Września children strike in 1901-1904, aimed at resisting to taking Catholic religion classes in German (Miąso 2005). The strike, pacified through corporal punishment and lawsuits, is considered to be an important part of the Polish patriotic narration and national martyrdom. It should be highlighted that struggles over education, as well as other struggles present in the Polish historical tradition, bear exclusively patriotic meanings. Any other meanings, especially related to class struggle, are absent, or, even, pathologised, as in the case of *Rabacja Galicyjska*, a peasant uprising of 1846, traditionally presented as a bloody carnage, without a thorough analysis of its causes.

Educational struggles occurred also in the 20th century. Educational struggles in Poland were also resulting from deepening divisions in terms of equal rights to formal education. This might have involved radical exclusion of some groups, like Jews, who in the 1930s were denied the right to study under the same conditions as Polish students. Mostly, however, they were related to the patriotic struggle to preserve national heritage, culture and language, as in the case of the Polish underground education during the World War 2. In the communist Poland, educational struggles occurred in the tensions between the official educational propaganda and the anti-communist opposition, promoting censored historical and cultural facts and figures.

Contemporary educational struggles in Poland may be divided into two groups. First, these are struggles over the right to education. The struggles may be conducted at all educational levels and refer to wide range of topics, among which closing up schools and school canteens, as well as protests against commercialisation of education seem of particular importance. These struggles are conducted most often by students and

teachers of schools that are to be closed. There have been several struggles of that type in the last years. Thanks to their protests, some of the schools have been saved. For instance a protest against closing up a municipal cultural centre in Gdańsk in 2015 gathered more than a thousand of protesters, including youth and children, who criticised the local authorities for limiting access to art education (Michalak 2015). Pressure put on authorities resulted in suspending the decision to close the institution. This type of struggles may be also related to social tensions in the field of education.

The second significant type of educational struggles in Poland is related to the content of education, especially of history. These struggles are conducted among supporters of particular visions of the Polish history, promoting particular national narration, especially in parts related to anti-communist opposition. Although, this narration has been currently introduced into the mainstream educational discourse, those who struggle for their vision of history situate themselves in the opposition to the official educational discourse. It seems also that this type of educational struggles is influenced by the traditional understanding of struggle in Poland. Struggling for the right vision of history is related to preserving the collective memory. This type of struggles may be interpreted as referring to the capacity to perform social and national transformation using education.

Theoretical framework: educational struggles and citizenship education

Educational struggle is one of the central categories of critical pedagogy and critical citizenship education. In critical pedagogy, educational struggle is aimed at overcoming social injustice and creating equal access to education, understood as a common good. Struggle is also an inseparable element of the radical democracy theory. As Etienne Balibar (2008) puts it, democracy itself is a type of struggle aimed at constant democratisation of itself, especially in terms of elimination of exclusions. In this approach, struggle bears transformational potential needed for self-awareness and self-emancipation.

Struggle as a pedagogical category is related to the critical pedagogy and theories of radical democracy. It is understood as political action against particular obstacles on acting as an equal participant of a social life (Ingram 2008). It is aimed at overcoming social injustice and creating equal access to education in the sense of a common good. It is also an inseparable element of the radical democracy theory.

In critical pedagogy struggle is mainly defined as struggle for equality (Spring 1994) and for democracy (Carr & Hartnett 1996), highlighting its political dimension (Apple 2008). In a narrow sense, the struggle is to occur in terms of defining educational

goals (Labaree 1997). Used in a broad sense, educational struggle covers wide range of issues related to the question of whose voice is listenable in education. In this approach, struggle bears a transformational potential needed for self-awareness and self-emancipation.

In Freire's theory (2005), struggle is conducted to overcome socio-economic injustice and liberate the oppressed by leading not only to exercise the right to a just life, but also to self-awareness, and, consequently, to re-gaining humanity. Though, struggling is an important aim of liberating pedagogy which bears though deeply in ethical meaning. However, it may be also perceived as a space for possible unity of the oppressors and the oppressed restoring both their humanity.

Michael Apple's (2008) perspective focuses on the political dimension of education, determined by power relationships. In his theory, to achieve emancipation, a deep link between theory and particular issues of educational policy, as well as students, community and teacher's daily life is needed. For Giroux (2003), teachers should struggle for access to education for poor and minority students, turning struggle into a fight for social justice. Henry Giroux argues that "resistance must become part of a public pedagogy that works to position rigorous theoretical work and public bodies against corporate power, connect classrooms to the challenges faced by social movements in the streets, and provide spaces within classrooms for personal injury and private terrors to be translated into public considerations and struggles" (Giroux 2003, p. 14).

Accordingly, struggles are perceived as aimed at social and political transformation. Though, radical pedagogical theories should not only focus on curriculum and classroom practices, but also should commit itself in achieving strictly political goals so as to counteract systemic oppression (Giroux 2003). It is a progressive and creative phenomenon, organised around resistance understood as "the possibility of intervening productively in those educational contexts where reality is being continually transformed and power enacted in the interests of developing new democratic identities, relations, institutional forms, and modes of struggle" (Giroux 2003, p. 9).

In Giroux, educational struggle may be implied as class struggle, often understood in intersectional terms, as fight for social justice and counteracting oppression resulting from multiple premises (Giroux 1992). Moreover, within this framework, educational struggles are aimed at counteracting racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism and other form of discrimination (Tyson & Park 2008) that prevent individual from

accessing full citizenship rights. Therefore, critical pedagogy understands educational struggle in terms of a struggle against social, racial, gender and other inequalities. Equality is then seen as a mobilising factor. It is a struggle to access rights and resources which have been unequally distributed. It is a struggle over the right to be a citizen.

In this context, the idea of citizenship understood as equal capacity in terms of rights and consciousness (Rancière 1991) seems to be interesting. Political struggle occurs here when an individual tries to establish their identity and speaks for themselves. Educational struggle, in terms of Rancière's theory, is possible, though, only when school allows political subjectification and engages students as citizens in political roles (Ruitenberg 2015).

Furthermore, radical democracy theory offers an inspiring perspective for pedagogical understanding of struggle and its citizen dimension (Laclau & Mouffe 2001). It involves, on the one hand, equal access to decision making processes. Participation in public debates, during which norms and rules would be set, should ensure social, cultural, political and economical equality (Laclau & Mouffe 2001). A citizen is not perceived here as a passive receiver of their rights, but as an agent articulating rules. This is how a citizen influences participation of their own and the others.

On the other hand, social reality is understood in terms of a discursive construction, in which participatory meanings are articulated and stabilised. Some of them may obtain hegemonic status. The mechanism described by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) is particularly useful to describe formation of social groups as it describes mechanisms of creating collective identities. Here, a category of struggle appears as particularly important. Domination over meanings is related with establishing social and political identity, and involves the execution of meanings that do not match a particular order of meanings. It is always related to indicating the Other. According to this perspective, citizenship is, though, a field of struggle over who may call themselves a citizen, and who is excluded. Participating in decision making processes is though available only for those who may identify themselves with the identities articulated in the citizenship discourse.

Following the critical perspective, we understand educational struggles in a broad sense, not only as a struggle over content of formal education that may take place in a classroom, but also as social tensions in the field of education. The capacity of students and teachers to perform educational change and any action taken within educational discourse expanding its discursive boundaries, allowing to articulate new

meanings given to citizenship.

Methodology

To conduct the analysis of the representations of struggles and citizenship in formal education we choose current grammar and secondary education national curriculum, which is the main document, organising education. It also organises education in a symbolic way (Apple 2004). As citizenship education is traditionally related to the Polish language, history and civic education, we will focus on the analysis of formal documents and guidelines related to these subjects.

Specifically, the analysis has two main parts. On the one hand, the content analysis level (Piñuel Raigada 2002) as a first approach to identify the characteristics of citizenship and main struggle elements. We focused on the main concepts associated with citizenship and social construction that were used to rebuild the concept of citizenship. Here, we should refer to the fact that, in Poland, the terms *civic education* and *citizenship education* are constructed under the same word (*edukacja obywatelska)*, as our previous analysis of Polish textbooks and curriculum on all levels of compulsory education revealed (Popow & Sáez-Rosenkranz 2015-2016). According to Kerr (1999), it is very common to use both words as synonymous, but *civic education* is a content-based and knowledge-based approach, focused on formal education, whereas *citizenship education* is an actively courageous approach, aimed at participation (Philippou 2009). As he further indicates, although national curricula may refer to citizenship education, in practice they imply a civic approach focusing on students' knowledge, as well as legal-political rights and responsibilities, taught in traditional teaching methods (Philippou 2009). Consequently, in our study of formal education and curriculum, we will use the term civic education.

On a second level, we employed the critical discourse analysis for both, curriculum analysis and contemporary struggles in Poland, because it goes beyond the analysis of the explicit messages within the text itself. It considers also the context where those messages were produced, including people, historical moment and social hierarchies (Van Dijk 2008), and the social structure (Fairclough 1992). These are means to reveal the ways of understanding the world and underlying meanings (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). Thus, this method enables to look into the relationships between discourse and social practices. Following Eve Chiapello and Norman Fairclough (2002), we are particularly interested in relationships between the discourse and social practices.

We will seek into the complicated relations within citizenship, educational discourse and social life, as well as into meaning and making meanings (Fairclough 2013). In

other words, citizenship discourse.

Educational struggles and formal education

Undoubtedly, although curriculum and teaching materials are not the only tools engaged in the classroom, giving meaningful insights into the meanings of culture, as well as about social and political discourses engaged in public sphere, they indicate directions of development of education, as well as political ontology hidden behind. As Michael W. Apple puts it, "curriculum is part of a selective tradition legitimizing knowledge of particular social groups, and is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organize and disorganize people" (Apple, 1993, p. 222).

Civic education is one of the main goals of the Polish new core curriculum, especially in the chapter called "History and Society". It is described as one of the key competences recommended by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe (Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture 2012).

Civic discourse, though, is articulated in a wide range of contexts and discourses in curriculum. It may be related to active citizenship, entrepreneurship, as well as traditional Polish patriotism. The need to form students' civic attitudes and practices is justified by decreasing attention paid to upbringing. Formal education is presented as supporting parents in their responsibilities related to transmitting values, including citizenship and patriotic upbringing. Struggling is not expressed explicitly as an element of civic education. The role of patriotism is highlighted:

> In the social development it is very important to shape the civic attitude, the attitude of respect for a tradition and culture of one's own country, as well as of respect for other cultures and traditions (p. 17).

The crucial role of culture and tradition may be distinguished, as they are presented as synonymous to civic attitudes.

Let us look at skills that should be obtained by a child finishing a 1st grade. According to the curriculum a child:

> 1) should be able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad in contacts with peers and adults; knows that it is worth to be courageous, wise and help people in need; knows that one should not lie or conceal the truth;
>
> 2) cooperates with others in the play, at school and in everyday situations; complies with the rules in force in the community for children and in the world of adults, politely speaks

> to people at school, at home and in the street;
>
> 3) knows consequences of belonging to a family, the relationships between the loved ones, fulfils obligations towards them;
>
> 4) understands that money is obtained for work; adjusts expectations to economic reality of a family;
>
> 5) knows threat from other people; knows who and how to ask for help;
>
> 6) knows where fun can be safely organized and where it is prohibited and why;
>
> 7) specifies an administrative status of their town (village, city); knows what the work of, e.g. a police officer, a fire-fighter, a doctor, a vet, consists in; knows how to ask them for help.
>
> 8) knows his nationality, that they live in Poland, that Poland is in Europe; knows the national symbols (flag, emblem, national anthem), recognizes the flag and anthem of the European Union (p. 26).

The mentioned skills are related to upbringing in its individual and social dimension. A child should, though, behave in a desirable way which is related to responsibility and, at the same time, gain awareness on their duties as a member of particular social groups, such as a family and a state which may be considered a part of the citizenship education. The effects are however described using verbs describing "passive" activities, rather than competences related to critical thinking, frequently "active".

On the 2. and 3. educational levels, particular skills and features, considered to be an important element of bringing up future citizens, are mentioned:

> In the process of general education school at the III and IV educational level, which shapes students' attitude enabling continuing their individual and social development, such as honesty, reliability, responsibility, perseverance, self-values, respect for others, cognitive curiosity, creativity, entrepreneurship, manners, willingness to participate in culture, initiative and teamwork (p. 22).

The listed set of features is related to personal development, strongly embedded in individualism. Apart from 'respect for others' and 'team work', no skills related to collectivity or cooperation are mentioned. The listed skills suggest that the future citizen should be a responsible leader, organising team work, rather than an equal member of a team.

Let's look now at the content of civics at the 3. level. In a part devoted to citizens' participation, the effects are described in a language of knowledge, rather than active participation:

> The participation of citizens in a public life. A student:
>
> 1) presents the main actors of public life (citizens, associations of civil society, media, politicians and political parties, government, public institutions, business, etc.) and shows how they cooperate and compete with themselves in public life;
>
> 2) justifies the need to respect ethical principles in public life and gives examples of the consequences of breaking them;
>
> 3) shows examples of the activities of NGOs and social organizations (local associations, trade unions and political parties) and the reasons for their importance for citizens;
>
> 4) explains, providing examples, how citizens can influence decisions of authorities at local, national, European and global level;
>
> 5) develops — either individually or in a team – a student project addressing one of the problems of the school community or local and, if possible, implements it (e.g. as a volunteer) (p. 86).

The effects that are to be achieved during the learning process are described with verbs (explains, gives, expresses), relating to rather passive than engaged activities. Again, citizenship is seen as capacity, characterised by particular knowledge, skills understood in terms of individual responsibility (Biesta 2008).

Moreover, in the part devoted to the content of history and society lessons at the 2. level, the skills related to co-existence and managing conflicts are developed, as in the following quotation, describing knowledge to be achieved at the second education level: "(a student) gives examples of conflicts among people and suggests ways of solving it" (p. 29).

Ability to behave in a responsible and non-conflicting way becomes key-feature of the curriculum. A child should demonstrate an active role in mediating conflict and give constructive examples of solving conflicts.

Desirable attitudes are to be formed at school, which is presented as space introducing to democracy and full citizenship: "Civic education should be "a school of democracy" - it has to exceed the model of the one-side knowledge transmission for

teaching orientated on participation and dialogue. In the process a teacher is a guide and intermediary" (p. 122).

It can be easily seen that an active role of students as citizens is not assumed. They are rather to be brought up as citizens, than to learn how to exercise their rights. The civic as a school subject remains limited to learning knowledge which is clearly visible in the part devoted to the state. In this section, effects of learning are described as a set of particular knowledge:

> 1) (a student): explains democratic nature of the Polish state, using the concepts of free elections, freedom of speech, free media, constitution;
>
> 2) lists authorities of the Polish Republic: parliament, president, government, courts and discusses the most important function of each of these bodies in the political system;
>
> 3) gives examples of the rights and obligations of citizens of the Republic of Poland;
>
> 4) discusses the selected rights of children and tells to whom one should turn when they are violated (p. 29).

The articulated model may be interpreted in terms of a personally responsible citizenship, that Westheimer and Kahne characterise as individualistic, and not putting emphasis on collective initiatives. Moreover, according to them, it "distracts attention from analysis of the causes of social problems and from systematic solutions' and that 'voluntarism and kindness are put forward as ways of avoiding politics and policy" (Westheimer & Kahne 2004, p.243). Westheimer and Kahne indicate that although the responsible citizenship model promotes honesty and good neighbourliness, it may neglect democratic goals (Idem). As they put it, while young people learn that the most important value in citizenship is to live agreeably in a community, they also seem to be learning that "citizenship does not require democratic governments, politics, and even collective endeavours" (Westheimer & Kahne 2004, p.243).

Educational struggles out of formal education

As we have showed in the previous section, the curriculum does not provide space for transformative educational struggle, which could lead to individual, as well as, collective, emancipation. Interestingly, the struggles appear in new spaces, gaining increasing meaning in terms of practising citizenship.

In the face of no possibility to work out conflicts at school, educational struggles, involving young people, appear in alternative spaces, first of all on the streets. It is a

traditional space for conducting protests, enabling protesters to make their action visible in the public space. Usually marches, demonstrations and pickets are conducted. Currently some protesters use the form of a flash-mob, as it was performed in the case of students' protest in Gdańsk and Wrocław in 2010. The action in Wrocław, conducted by students, was aimed at drawing attention to the poor condition of education. The students lay on the street, symbolising "laying" education.

The second developing area, where educational struggles are conducted, is the Internet. An increasing number of open letters, on-line petitions, and, most of all, social media actions, such as fan-pages, groups, but also individual actions such as putting avatars, and sharing content related to education, may be observed. Undoubtedly, Polish educational struggles in the Internet vary, focusing on patriotism and national identity, social rights and customs. It may be related to the content of education (curriculum, textbooks), organisation of educational system, or, for instance, to changing the unfavourable decision of the authorities. Among recent events in social media, protests against teaching Catholic religion at school, demands to stop privatising educational system, as well as multiple protests against closing schools may be found. Many of them have been created by adults. Among these, where young people are involved, two types of struggles attract particular attention – these related to patriotism and historical education and these related to the right to public education.

It may be assumed that struggles bearing patriotic character are related to the traditional role education in the Polish culture. Putting patriotic avatars and creating patriotic fan-pages in social media may serve as a good example. The aim of these actions is to include content, perceived as patriotic, into the mainstream public discourse. It may be also aimed at including particular historical knowledge into the public discourse and education, as in the case of the anti-communist resistance movements, gaining increasing popularity among young people.

The fan-pages popularising Polish history attract thousands of fans in all age groups, with majority of young people, who share the historical content as a way to express their patriotic attitude. They often use nationalistic symbols, presenting the image of the Great Poland, with an exceptional role in the world culture and history. A discourse of re-gaining historical education, which is closely related to the discourse of the right to education, may be distinguished. The struggle over the right to historical education at schools is not articulated explicitly, occurring rather in demands to re-gain history and counteract historical misinterpretations. It places itself in opposition to the mainstream historical knowledge, highlighting a need to fight so

as to re-gain the history.

Similar activities in social media are related to resistance against decisions related to educational policy. Events created in social media gather often thousands of social media users, allowing to publicise protests and put pressure on authorities. The recent protest against the closing of a technical high school in Węgierska Górka is a good example. With the help of parents and teachers, students have been protesting against cutting funding, arguing that they have the right to preserve their school. The students have remained active in social media, using Facebook and You Tube. The protest has been covered in local media, and has led to changing the decision of the authorities. The protest of students in Węgierska Górka is definitely an example of using a discourse of the right to education.

Some researchers argue that the Internet may become a useful tool to facilitate dialogue in the public space. It is believed that it may potentially become a deliberative space enabling citizens to participate in politics, to conduct critical debates as well as to share information (Dahlberg 2007). Advocates of the deliberative public sphere argue that rational deliberation is possible on-line, not only on the local, but also on the global level, supported by decentralised and interactive communications. Supporters of the radical democracy theory take different positions. They indicate the possibility of radicalisation and contestation in the Internet. Here, the Internet is seen rather as space of struggle and conflict, which may result in domination and exclusion, as well as of solidarity and resistance (Dahlberg 2007). As Lincoln Dahlberg (2007) puts it:

> "The Internet is seen as helping marginalized groups – those groups associated with discourses excluded from the mainstream public sphere – develop their own deliberative forums, link up, and subsequently contest dominant meanings and practices. There are three parts to this argument. First, the Internet provides communication spaces for members of groups associated with marginalized discourses to develop counter-publics– 'alternative' discursive arenas constituted by a number of participants engaging in debate and criticism that strengthens and develops oppositional discourses (identities, interpretations, social imaginaries and languages) to those dominating the mainstream public sphere. Second, the Internet's interactivity and reach assists politically diverse and geographically dispersed counter-publics in finding shared points of identity and forming counter public networks and coalitions (or articulations) of radical discourses, leading to the development of more powerful oppositional discourse (…). Third, the Internet supports online and offline counter-public contestation of dominant discourses, and hence the contestation of the deliberations of the mainstream public sphere" (p.56).

According to Dahlberg, the Internet's interactivity helps to organise contestation

through e-mail protests, denial of service communication disruptions and semiotic warfare, like site graffiti, e-mail spam attacks and cyber-parody interventions (Dahlberg 2007). In this framework the Internet may play simultaneously an emancipatory and excluding role, in both cases providing effective tools for a struggle. The effectiveness, measured in fast and powerful impact, may be one of the reasons of its popularity among those who struggle for their vision of education.

Most Polish educational struggles conducted on the Internet bear no revolting character in terms of social change. Focusing on two areas – the right to education and the content of history education – they are rather determined to achieved their goals. Moreover, the historic educational struggles use rhetoric of nationalism, explicitly excluding Others, especially ethnic minorities and refugees. This practice may be understood as discursive radical exclusion, described by Laclau, as indispensable element of identity construction processes (Laclau 2009). Undoubtedly, in the case of the analysed educational struggles, the exclusion is radical.

Although, taking into consideration the increasing role of patriotic education in Poland, it may be assumed that the described struggles over history will be mainstreamed, and, in consequence, they will lose their significance, in the light of the current curriculum they represent an alternative to the civic education model of citizenship.

Regardless of the character of the presented educational struggles, they may be perceived as efforts to exercise citizenship rights in order to transform the social reality. As such, they follow a particular model of citizenship education, granting citizens the right to perform change. Importantly, the model escapes civic education as taught at school, and as such, remains on margins of formal education.

Discussion

The analysed Polish curriculum presents citizenship, on the one hand, as legal-political identity, and, on the other, as cultural identity, which is particularly visible in the case of goals assigned to history and civic. History as a school subject is though devoted to transmitting knowledge that bonds national and socio-cultural community (p. 67). The exceptional role of history is also indicated in teaching materials. As previous research of textbooks shows (Popow 2014), historical education in Poland provides strong identity models, based on a discourse of patriotic duties and self-sacrifice. The political nation discourse, which is related to global citizenship and neoliberalism, promotes rather attitudes than role models.

Civics, to the contrary, is aimed at forming modern patriotism, defined as open and not built on the criterion of common blood and soil (p. 114). It may be assumed that the articulated concept is based on a tradition of a political nation, whereas the tradition presented in the case of history, is related rather to a cultural nation tradition (Burszta et al. 2000)

Two contrasting concepts of citizenship differ also in their approach to struggle. The responsible citizenship related to the civic nation tradition prefers skills related to muting conflicts. Struggling is perceived as unwanted and dangerous, and, for that reason, students are taught how to manage potential conflicts. The desired social skills, described in the language of effects of learning, are focused on mediation and avoiding struggle.

Contrary, in the cultural nation tradition, a struggle is related to patriotism, and presented as bearing positive value. It is perceived as needed so as to preserve national tradition and, consequently, a nation. As we have presented at the beginning of our paper, it is also related to a particular image of school, understood as a space transmitting, first and foremost, national values.

In both cases, the emancipatory potential of struggle is not noticed. Consequently, a student is not expected to gain skills related to giving opinions or articulating identity. It may be assumed that a responsible citizen, who is to be brought up at school, is evaluated in terms of obtaining skills enabling to avoid struggle. The system of marking, aimed at classifying students, and realised in form of tests and ranking lists, values though the mentioned skills as a measurable effect of obtaining civic attitude. In the case of the cultural nation tradition, struggle is presented in the context of desirable patriotic attitudes, and, most importantly, as an inherent part of the national identity discourse (Popow 2014). As such it is an important element of the collective identity creation processes.

Surprisingly, in this context, educational struggles appear in the public discourse. They may be regarded as bearing emancipatory meanings. It may be assumed that struggles against commercialisation of education and closing up schools reflect awareness of the civic right to obtain free education. The history struggles, on the other hand, should be understood as struggles for identity. In the context of goals of historical education, it should not be surprising. Educational struggles over history are derived directly from the Polish tradition, using similar meanings given to education understood as a transmitter of national values. Further research is needed to estimate its emancipatory character and the meaning of using nationalist discourse.

Undoubtedly a strong voice of youth, demanding a change in educational system, can be heard. As Kowzan and others (2014) analysing interventions in lectures at Polish universities convincingly show, in recent years, that struggle over education took its form as struggle over the role of education. However, it seems that educational struggles conducted by young people in contemporary Poland defy traditional left-right divisions. On the one hand, it may bear a manifestly nationalistic character, glorifying the Great Poland. On the other, it may use the social-rights discourse, such as the right to public education, without referring to values traditionally associated with the left wing.

Looking at the case of Poland through the lenses of Laclau and Mouffe (2001) theory, it may be assumed that school cannot be considered as space for articulating political and educational demands of the youths. Consequently, political identities created in the educational struggles conducted in the public sphere are not related to the citizenship identity models promoted at school. The official hegemonic citizenship models promoted in the curriculum seem not to give space for struggles and struggling identities conducted in the public discourse. The alternative citizenship identities seem to be radically excluded, as Laclau puts it (2009), from the dominating citizenship discourse. Consequently, the citizenship discourse may be regarded as space of struggle over who and how may articulate their voice as a citizen. The excluded voices find outlet in the alternative spaces such as the Internet or streets.

Conclusion

As we have shown, in the case of Polish youth, active political roles are taken more and more often. Although the youth struggle for their vision of education, it does not give them tools for transformative educational struggle. Is seems obvious that in the case of the analysed educational discourse effort is made to neutralize the struggle. The official model of citizenship education neglects all differences as potentially dangerous. Following Claudia Ruitenberg (2015), it may be stated that the curriculum does not provide space for political subjectification, as it does not address citizenship as democratic, political role, constructing it rather as something for which a student is being prepared (Ruitenberg 2015). Instead, the curriculum provides a strong historical framework for identity formation, based on the discourse of regaining history, and, consequently, identity.

It seems that the need for schools defusing tensions in a constructive and critical manner is urgent. It should also strengthen the political citizenship and ownership of education, as well as deconstruct nationalistic attitudes. Only then supporting the youth in exercising their right to good education will be possible.

References

Apple, M., 1993. The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense. *Discourse*, 14(1), pp.1–16.

Apple, M., 2004. *Ideology and curriculum*, New York: Routledge.

Apple, M., 2008. Can schooling contribute to a more just society? *Education, citizenship and social justice*, 3(3), pp.239–261.

Apple, M.W. & Buras, K.L. eds., 2006. *The subaltern speak: curriculum, power, and educational struggles*, New York: Routledge.

Balibar, E., 2008. Historical Dilemmas of Democracy and Their Contemporary Relevance for Citizenship. *Rethinking Marxism*, 20(4), pp.522–538.

Biesta, G., 2008. What kind of citizen? What kind of democracy? Citizenship education and the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. *Scottish Educational Review*, 40(2), pp.38–52.

Burszta, W., Nowak, J. & Wawruch, K., 2000. *Od narodu szlacheckiego do państwa narodowego*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie: Poznan.

Carr, W. & Hartnett, A., 1996. *Education and the struggle for democracy: The politics of educational ideas*, Buckingham [England] ; Bristol, PA, USA: McGraw-Hill Education.

Chiapello, E. & Fairclough, N., 2002. Understanding the new management ideology: a transdisciplinary contribution from critical discourse analysis and new sociology of capitalism. *Discourse & Society*, 13(2), pp.185–208.

Dahlberg, 2007. The Internet, deliberative democracy, and power: Radicalizing the public sphere. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 3(1), pp.47–64.

Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture ed., 2012. *Citizenship education in Europe*, Brussels: EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [u.a.].

Fairclough, N., 1992. *Discourse and social change*, Cambridge, UK ; Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N., 2013. *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*, Routledge.

Freire, P., 2005. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Contunuum.

Giroux, H.A., 1992. *Border crossings: cultural workers and the politics of education*, New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H.A., 2003. Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Resistance: Notes on a critical theory of educational struggle. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 35(1), pp.5–16.

Ingram, P., 2008. *The signifying body: toward an ethics of sexual and racial difference*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L., 2002. *Discourse analysis as theory and method*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Kerr, D., 1999. Citizenship education in the curriculum: An international review. *School Field*, 10(3/4), pp.5–32.

Kowzan, P., Zielińska, M. & Prusinowska, M., 2014. Intervention in lectures as a form of social movement pedagogy and a pedagogical method. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, 6(1), pp.297–326.

Labaree, D.F., 1997. Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), pp.39–81.

Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C., 2001. *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*, New York: Verso.

Laclau, E., 2009. *Rozum populistyczny*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej.

Miąso, J., 2005. Walka o narodową szkołę w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1905-1907: w stulecie strajku szkolnego. *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, 44, pp.75–103.

Michalak, E., 2015. Pałac Młodzieży to nie wszystko. Więcej zmian w gdańskiej oświacie, trojmiasto.pl. Available at: http://nauka.trojmiasto.pl/Palac-Mlodziezy-to-nie-wszystko-Wiecej-zmian-w-gdanskiej-oswiacie-n87034.html [Accessed August 20, 2016].

Philippou, S., 2009. What makes Cyprus European? Curricular responses of Greek-Cypriot civic education to 'Europe'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(2), pp.199–223.

Piñuel Raigada, J.L., 2002. Epistemología, metodología y técnicas de análisis de contenido. *Estudios de Sociolingüística*, 3(1), pp.1–42.

Popow, M., 2014. The analysis of discursive constructions of national identity in Polish literature textbooks. *IARTEM e-Journal*, 6(2), pp.1–19.

Rancière, J., 1991. *The ignorant schoolmaster: five lessons in intellectual emancipation*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Ruitenberg, C.W., 2015. The Practice of Equality: A Critical Understanding of Democratic Citizenship Education. *Democracy and Education*, 23(1), pp.1–9.

Spring, J., 1994. *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*, New York: Mc Graw Hill.

Tyson, C.A. & Park, S.C., 2008. Civic education, social justice and critical race theory. In *Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy*. London: SAGE, pp. 29–39.

Van Dijk, T.A., 2008. *Discourse and Context a Sociocognitive Approach.*, Leiden: Cambridge University Press. Available at: http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=355474 [Accessed April 8, 2016].

Wesołowska, E.A., 1988. *Wychowanie patriotyczne w szkole*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.

Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J., 2004. What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American educational research journal*, 41(2), pp.237–269.

Author details

Monika Popow
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland
monika.popow@amu.edu.pl
+48 509 462 032

Isidora Sáez-Rosenkranz
DHIGECS Group, University of Barcelona, Spain
monika.popow@amu.edu.pl
+48 509 462 032