
Civic Culture

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**Concept and Practice of Citizenship among Croatian
Secondary Schools Students**

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Summary

The essay describes the study of the evolution of the sense (understanding) and the practice (activities, participation) of citizenship among Croatian secondary school students (the first new generation of full-age citizens). The study was conducted in line with the similar models in relevant international studies, which enabled a comparative analysis. The analysis of the concept of citizenship was followed by a comparative analysis of the development and the distribution of the sense of citizenship and the measures of the practice of citizenship among Croatian secondary school students. A number of indicators of the sense of citizenship (civic identity, the model and the type of citizenship, the concept of a “good citizen”, and the concept of the rights and duties of citizens in democracy), and several measures of the practice of citizenship (interest in politics, discussing politics, following news in the media, the anticipated conventional and protest political engagement, political tolerance) have been used. The comparative analysis has shown that the Croatian students are in some aspect of citizenship at the level of the students in many of the compared countries, but that in others there are significant differences. For example, their level of interest in politics is significantly lower. The analysis has shown that there is a high sense of the rights, but a relatively low sense of the duties. Perhaps this discrepancy between the sense of the rights and the sense of the duties is the main problem in the development of the political culture of Croatian students and citizens. The anticipated conventional and protest participation of the Croatian students is significantly lower than among the students from the other countries. The research also shows that among the Croatian students (this has been noticed in the other countries as well) there is a significant discrepancy between, for example, the sense of the rights and the duties of citizens in democracy and the level of political tolerance: the high sense of one’s rights (freedom of speech, association, etc.) coexists with a relatively low level of tolerance. Thus, it can be said that various inconsistencies tag and “burden” the development of citizenship among Croatian secondary school students.

Key words: civic identity, Croatian citizenship, secondary school students, democracy



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The concepts of “citizen” and “citizenship” are central to democracy. Democracy as the rule of the people is impossible without citizens. The citizen, however, is not solely an individual with his or her own interests and needs, but also an individual who is concerned with public life, political community, common interest, the organization of the society, the forms of governance etc. The concept of citizen serves to define the status and the role of the individual within the society, both as the subject and the object of politics and government, which is why “citizen” and “democracy” go together. Since there is no democracy without citizens and citizenship, the theory of political education often focuses on the issue of civic education (citizen education, citizenship education) instead on the education for democracy. An apparent dilemma presents itself: “the education for democracy” or “civic education”. This dilemma is not the subject of our interest at this point; suffice is to say that the sintagm “the education for democracy” emphasizes the need for the education for democracy as a separate political system (a distinct form of governance), while the sintagm “citizenship education” emphasizes the need for the education of individuals as citizens as the subjects of the totality of political life.¹ The education for democracy and the education for citizenship are not contradictory. The first is built more around the education for political system and the second around the education of the individual as the subject of political life. These two approaches to political education may, of course, have different educational implications and consequences.

Although the citizen is the key figure of democracy, it does not mean that there is a uniform definition of this complex and controversial term. There are as many theories of citizenship as there are of democracy. Political theory today knows of several theories of citizenship that may be divided into three groups: liberal, communitarian and multi-cultural theories of citizenship. The chief bone of contention among them is the issue of the constitution and the function of the citizen in democracy characterized by pluralism of all ilk, primarily moral, religious and philosophical.² The evolution of the theory of citizenship has reached the point in which the possibility of a universalization of citizenship is conceivable as well as its separation from all forms of partialization (moral, religious, ethnic). Just when it seemed that the concept of the citizen would be a cure-all for transcending all particularities and for everything that divides and estranges people, that the concept of the citizen universalizes and is conducive to freedom and equality for all, there was a reversal, a sudden realization that citizenship is also an “ideological category” and not only a legal status, that the content of its universalization smothers other people’s attributes in a political community. The fiercest debates have been those concerning the interpretation of the relationship between the citizenship and the nationality, the “civic” and the “national” identity of people.³ The debate is still raging.

Namely, the question is whether the civic identity that would be independent of all other people’s and peoples’ identities (e.g. cultural), as well as from the concept of political community, is feasible at all? In this respect, the liberal theory of citizenship and democracy is at odds with all the variants of the communitarian-republican theory of citizenship and democracy. These disputes, often amply elaborated, are not only academic but affect the practice of democracy and its prospects. That is why the use of em-

¹ On various definitions and controversies surrounding political education, see Clause/Kili, 1988; Conely/Osborne 1988: 19-53; Brown, 1977; Crick/Porter, 1978.

² For a detailed analysis, see Rawls, 2000.

³ See Miller, 2000. For the response to Miller, see Abizadeh, 2002.

pirical methods is important in studying the evolution of the concepts of citizenship and its practice in democracy.

The concept of citizenship

Much effort has gone into defining the concept of citizenship, and today there is a manifold theory of citizenship: not a single one, but several. They could be divided into three groups: the liberal theories, the communitarian-republican theories, and the multicultural theories of citizenship.

The liberal and the communitarian theories differ greatly in their definition of the concept of citizenship, civic identity and its functions; they also differ in their definition of the ontology of the individual i.e. the relationship between the individual and the community and their roles. The liberal theory argues that citizenship is primarily a political category and determines the status of individuals within the society, above all by the fundamental rights and minimal responsibilities, regulating the instrumentally rational and primarily interest-based activities of individuals within the competitive social relations. In the communitarian theory, citizenship is mostly defined as the membership in the political community that establishes the common goals and decides on the fate of the individual as a social being i.e. the common good which all the members of a community must work for. The liberal theory emphasizes the interests and the rights of individuals in the pluralist society, while the communitarian theories concentrate on political community, participation and the common good.⁴

Critics say that citizenship in the contemporary plural social situation cannot be properly defined if as our starting point we exclusively use the interests of individuals, their personal freedom and the abstract political equality, as well as the imaginary political community and the predetermined common good. They criticize the concept of the predetermined “common good” in the communitarian theory, and the concept of the predetermined “individual interest” in the liberal theory of citizenship. The concept of the predetermined “common good” and the predetermined “individual interest” may only mean that “the common good” and “the personal interest” are something exogenous to the political process of citizens in a society. Thus individuals turn into mere executors of “the common good” or “the personal interest”, and stop being the creators of the political process.

That is why other theories of citizenship and democracy have been advanced; particularly significant is the theory of the multicultural or “group-differentiated” citizenship. In all its variants, this theory tries to prove that a full civic identity cannot be formed in an abstract manner i.e. independently of the cultural conditions of the group in which someone lives in a wider political community. The key word here is “group”, since individuals are shaped by groups and not only by their individual ontology or by their membership in wider political communities (states). The problem is therefore how to resolve the relationship between the civic identity of individuals that universalizes and the cultural identities (national and collective) that particularize. E. F. Isin and P. K. Wood have properly noticed that the early citizenship i.e. Marshall’s,⁵ focused on the distinctive features of certain natural rights and freedoms of individuals. They point out

⁴ For a marvelous analysis of the two concepts of democratic citizenship (the liberal and the participatory-republican), see Battistoni (1985: 21-77).

⁵ See Marshall, 1949.

that these rights have always been abstract and have not taken into account the importance of space i.e. locations in which people exert their rights. In other words, citizenship was understood primarily as a legal status i.e. statically, and not as a practice or process of obtaining rights. They also define citizenship as a practice that expands its scope to include various rights (from *polis* to *cosmopolis*). For them citizenship is a “battleground”, with democracy guaranteeing it will remain so. Just like Birch defines democracy as a process⁶ and not a model, these authors define citizenship as a process and not only as a legal status. Citizenship is, indeed, a legal status in the society (a set of civil, political and social rights), but also a sociological status (a set of cultural, symbolic, and economic practices): the “competent membership in the society” (Isin/Wood, 1999: 4). From the pedagogical i.e. political-educational perspective, particularly significant is the thesis that citizenship is a competence and not only a legal status.

While some think that civic identity universalizes the status of individuals in the society by fostering a variety of rights, independent of the various cultural identities that fragment and partialize social relationships among people, others claim that the notion of full citizenship cannot be separated from the nation and the state, since the nation is a cultural fact (the unity of language and history) and consequently exclusive, while the state is a legal fact, a factor of power wielded to the benefit of its members and is consequently also exclusive since it always defends the rights of the majority. The historical collusion between the nation and the state i.e. culture and power, has always been exclusive (by protecting and privileging some and suppressing the others), and cannot be the basis for unity and integration in the contemporary democratic society. Thus Faulks argues that nations and states are barriers to the emancipatory potential of citizenship: the basis for citizenship may only be what Habermas calls “constitutional patriotism”. Citizenship is a political and not cultural phenomenon: it is solely defined by the loyalty of people to the institutions of government, which guarantees their rights, without relying on the cultural unity. According to Faulks, citizenship is always a system of rights and responsibilities, regardless of the political context (Faulks, 2000: 54). However, although Isin and Wood notice that there is a tension between the universalist aspirations of the citizenship and the particularist demands of the identity, they nevertheless say that citizenship has never been universal and that it is more appropriate to interpret the differences in the formation of collective identities as the “demands for the recognition of civil rights” (Isin/Wood, 1999: 20). In this way, citizenship is defined as a process and not as a status.

However, not all liberal theoreticians of citizenship share Faulks’ opinion. Thus, for example, Kymlicka and Norman stress the significance of culture and national identity in the affirmation of self-perception (self-identity) and the full citizenship. As a matter of fact, Kymlicka claims that the cultural membership affects the perception of personal identity and capacities, that the national identity is the foundation of individual autonomy and the self-identity.⁷ However, there have been some systematic critiques of these theses. Thus for example, Evan Charney (2003) argues that Kymlicka’s theory of liberal nationalism that attributes the formation of identity to the national or cultural community, goes contrary to all the norms, practices, institutions, sub-communities, goals or ways of life linked to a certain national culture or other cultures, and that it is false for the complexity of human experience. Loyalty to the nation may be an important source of identity, but it certainly is not the only one. He criticizes the assumption about the domination of the national identity over all other self-perceptions and identities of indi-

⁶ See Birch, 2001: 71-159.

⁷ See Kymlicka, 1995: 105.

viduals. Charney claims that this is a form of nationalism that cannot be liberal.⁸ He thinks that this liberal loyalty to value pluralism forestalls any assumption about what constitutes or should constitute personal “genuine selves” or their deepest identities, loyalties and ties. The national culture and the identity cannot be equated as if the identity is simply the national identity (Charney, 2003: 308). However, Kymlicka and Norman are positive that the failure of state institutions to recognize and respect human culture and identity may result in a lack of self-respect of individuals and hinder their active role in the society (Kymlicka/Norman, 2000: 5). The authors refer to Galston’s thesis (1991) that the health and stability of modern democracy do not depend solely on the fairness of its institutions but also on the quality of the potential competitive forms of national, religious and ethnic identities.⁹ That is why they promote the concept of group-differentiated citizenship since, allegedly, the legalist concept that sees citizenship exclusively as a set of individual rights and freedoms, regardless of the political/cultural context, only serves to disguise the structural inequalities among people and their cultural idiosyncracies. Thus Kymlicka points out that it has become clear that minority rights cannot be included in the category of human rights. The traditional concept of human rights does not solve the problem of minority rights (the right to language, education, political representation, etc.), so it is necessary to complement human rights with the theory of minority rights which, consequently, implies developing a theory of group-differentiated or multicultural citizenship. In that vein Isin and Wood argue that group rights constitute the secret of modernity, but not in the sense of essentialist or exclusively constructivist theses i.e. in the sense of the historical predetermination of identities or their permanent instability.

Regardless of the controversies within the theory of citizenship, one thing is certain: contemporary democratic society is unimaginable without citizens as the subjects of the political process, as the subjects of the rights and responsibilities in the circumstances of equality and freedom. Although some see citizenship primarily as a legal status (a set of rights and duties), and others as identity (membership in the political community, a feeling of loyalty and belonging), citizenship can be best designated as a concept defining the relationship between the individual and the government (politics and state) i.e. as a reciprocity between the rights and the duties of both the individuals and the government.

Modern citizenship in the democratic society is indicative of the altered role of the individual in the society or the community. That is why it cannot be exhausted only in the system of rights and duties since there have always been some rights and some obligations, but this altered role of the individual is reflected in the change of the status or the position: from the object of politics to the subject of the political process. Citizenship becomes, in the words of Isin and Woods, not only a status but a competent status in the society. Modern citizenship is constituted in such a way that individuals become the participants in the political process. This does not mean the loss of other elements of their attitude towards the authority and the state, such as patriotism, loyalty, respect for law and order. In the civic political culture – as shown ages ago by Almond and Verba (1963) – the traditional elements of citizenship do not disappear but are integrated into its modern version. Modern citizenship has evolved into an amalgamate: a set of rights and duties as well as the social/political qualities or virtues of individuals.

⁸ See Charney, 2003: 308.

⁹ See Galston, 1991.

The fundamental elements (components or dimensions) of modern citizenship ought to be identified. This is also important because of the methodology of the research of the evolution of the sense and the practice of citizenship in a certain population.

We think that there are five dimensions of citizenship. The first dimension refers to the civic *identity* in the sense of belonging and loyalty to a certain political community; it also refers to the sense of the importance of civic identity in relation to individuals' other central self-identities, how centred people are on this identity in relation to the other self-identities. The second dimension refers to citizenship as a *status*, defined by the legal rights and duties (for example, the right to the freedom of speech and the obligation to respect law, the right to political association, the obligation to vote, etc.). The third dimension covers citizenship as a set of virtues (*arête*), such as political tolerance, public prudence, ability for argued judgement, and alike. The fourth dimension refers to political participation and civic engagement (conventional and unconventional political and civic engagement within the framework of civil society). The fifth dimension refers to the integrative function of citizenship in the contemporary pluralist society – citizenship has emerged as a tie that binds people of different convictions, outlooks and concepts of a good life. This essay is an attempt to analyse to what extent, however limited, each of the mentioned dimensions is present in the feelings and awareness of Croatian secondary school students.

The methodology

Our study of the concept and the practice of citizenship of Croatian secondary school students is a continuation of other relevant studies in the world. On the one hand it relies on the US study by Conover and Searing (2000), and on the other on the study conducted in the organization of the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA) on civic education (*Civic Education Study*), published under the title *Civic Knowledge and Engagement: An IEA Study of Upper Secondary Students in Sixteen Countries* (authors Jo-Ann Amadeo, Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Vera Husfeldt and Roumiana Nikolova, IEA, 2002). These studies were conducted on the samples of secondary school students in the USA and in 16 other countries (Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Norway, Israel, Chile, etc.). We also used a sample of secondary school students in Croatia consisting of 856 students of the final year of the four-year vocational high schools and grammar schools. The sample consisted of 45% male and 55% female respondents. The survey was conducted at the beginning of 2003. The sample is also appropriate because the final year students are soon to become adult Croatian citizens i.e. voters. They represent a new generation of Croatian citizens that is going to determine the future of Croatian politics, the reason more to find out how the attitudes and concepts of citizenship of the new generation of Croatian voters are developed and constituted.

The research had several tasks. The central task was, just like in the IEA's *Civic Education Study* (2002), to probe into, and as much as possible, to compare the readiness of our youth for the role of citizens in democracy. In order to find this out, first we had to find out how the sense of citizenship i.e. the sense of the civic identity was evolving. The question was how familiar our secondary school students are with the concept of citizenship i.e. how much it is a part of their central self-identity.

Of course, the sense of citizenship cannot be exhausted by measuring the civic identity and its model (orientation) because this would yield a much too abstract information about the level of development of civic identity. Since the sense of citizenship is pri-

marily reflected in the rights and responsibilities (duties) of citizens in a political community, one of the tasks was to see how our students view their civil rights (the degree of their importance for democracy) and how they understand civil duties (i.e. whether they view certain activities as unimportant, desirable or obligatory in democracy). This enables a gradual insight into the content of the concept of citizenship in democracy. Without these measures the sense of citizenship would remain an abstraction.

Following the example of the IEA study of citizenship and education, we also surveyed the attitudes of our students regarding the notion of “a good citizen” i.e. about adults as good citizens to find out about their understanding and perception of the characteristics and activities of “a good citizen” in democracy. The scale for measuring the model of “a good citizen” includes all those virtues and activities that the experts from many countries considered relevant for a good citizen in democracy, primarily the activities related to the conventional political participation (voting, party membership, participation in political debates, etc.), and the activities related to social movements (participation in the activities for the protection of human rights and environment and in the activities contributing to the community’s good).

And finally, the third measure of citizenship was the “practice of citizenship” i.e. the behavioural dimension of the students’ sense of citizenship. We used two measures of the “practice of citizenship”. One was the actual civic participation of the students in their everyday life, the other their anticipated participation in adulthood. The actual participation includes “talking about politics” in different situations (with friends, in the family, with other people), and “following the news”, both from Croatia and the world, in the media (newspapers, radio and TV). The anticipated political participation refers to the students’ assessment of their political engagement in adulthood, after they have come of age, within the framework of the conventional participation (taking part in elections, writing about public issues, taking part in political debates, etc.) and the unconventional participation (in various protest activities: graffiti, occupation of streets and buildings).

The “practice of citizenship” also includes the measure of political tolerance, based on the research by Conover and Searing. There is no doubt that many authors who have written about democratic political culture consider political tolerance one of the major virtues in democratic societies. Tolerance should not be understood solely as acknowledging the differences that otherwise we disapprove of in the society, but as accepting the differences in the name of enhancing the civil liberties and political rights of those groups in the society we deeply disapprove of. That is why it was crucial to look into this dimension of the practice of citizenship though the attitudinal measures of tolerance (our behaviour in a certain situation) are not always reliable and do not always measure people’s real behavioural tolerance.

The results

Sense of citizenship: civic identity

Sense of citizenship consists of the knowledge and the grasp of the concept of “citizen” and “citizenship”. This study focuses more on understanding, and understanding besides knowledge includes the perception of certain phenomena. Our first measure of sense of citizenship is the measure of civic identity, the attachment to the concept of “citizen” i.e. to what extent the image of oneself as a citizen is part of their central self-identity. This does not measure only the familiarity with the role of the “citizen”, but

also the emotional commitment to that role. How individuals see themselves in various roles and statuses makes up their picture of their total self-identity. For example, if an individual never thinks about himself or herself as a friend, an employee or a believer, then we can safely assume that their sense of these roles is undeveloped. If they envision themselves more often in different roles, they have a more developed image of themselves and a more complex sense of their identity. If, for example, an individual never thinks about himself or herself as a believer, it means that they do not possess a religious sense or a religious self-identity; they are not aware of it and it is not a part of their self-identity. That is why it was important to know how present the civic identity is in the sense of citizenship of the Croatian students.

In order to measure the level of civic identity, we asked the students to assess how often they think of themselves as “citizens”, but in relation to their various roles (as friends, believers, party members and pupils). In this way we measured how present the civic identity is in the students’ key self-identities i.e. how big a part it plays in their central self-identity. This measure of civic identity, though general and abstract, is significant for the initial insights into the level of the total sense of citizenship of the people in a society. It is an index of the motivational force for the total sense of citizenship and the practice of citizenship. If people do not see themselves as citizens, it means they have not developed a sense of that role and do not see it as part of their self-identity; consequently, the sense of citizenship is not part of their central self-identity. And it is the sense of civic identity that signifies the connection between individuals and their political community, state, politics, public engagement. Citizenship is a status and a role in a community’s public life. A political and public engagement in democracy is impossible without the constitution of the citizen and the citizenship. Thus political philosophy assumes that “civic identities shape the quality of public life, strengthen civil society and ensure the success of democratic institutions” (Conover/Searing, 2000: 97).

Table 1. Strength of civic identity of Croatian and American secondary school students

Identity strength	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
High 5	60.8	11.4
4	15.0	24.5
3	14.7	34.2
2	6.7	22.9
Low 1	3.2	6.9

Note: the high identity figures refer to those who “very often” think of themselves as citizens, and the low ones to those who “never” do (on a five-point scale). The US data from Conover/Searing (2000).

As the Conover/Searing findings show (2000), a significant portion of the American upper secondary school students have a very well developed civic identity i.e. they very often think of themselves as the US citizens. Since in our study we asked our students how often they think of themselves as citizens (without naming the state), perhaps this has diluted the strength of attachment to this identity. However, it is undoubtedly interesting to see how few Croatian high-schoolers (18-year-olds) think of themselves as citizens at all. We might say that civic identity is well represented in more than 75% American secondary school students and in only about 36% of their Croatian counterparts. This arrested development of the Croatian students’ civic identity and the weak

attachment to the role of the citizen as defined here, reflects the fact that Croats have been living in democracy for only a short period of time and that the concept of citizen has not yet “taken root” in people’s consciousness as a part of their key self-identities. The Croatian students have developed some other identities, as can be seen in the next table.

The data from *Table 2* clearly demonstrate that the centrality of the mentioned self-identities of the Croatian students is weak in comparison to the American students. Only one identity – that of a pupil – is stronger for the Croatian than the American students, which only proves that the role of the “pupil” in our culture is more important than in the American culture. Besides, these results confirm the validity of these measures on the whole i.e. that they are significant and discriminating. It remains to be seen what political or social implications these data might have for future studies and analyses. For the time being, we only state the facts and nothing more. However, these data tell us something about the social relations of the people in a community and about their culture in general. If, for example, only 11% of the students “very often” think of themselves as “citizens”, while more than 36% of them often think about themselves as “pupils”, then this speaks volumes about the meaning of these concepts (roles) in our social and political culture.

Table 2. Strength of individual self-identities

Identities	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
Friend	59	26.5
Party member	9	2.1
Pupil	28	36.6
Believer	40	23.6

Note: the data are only for those who “very often” think of themselves in the listed roles (on the five-point scale).

Of course, the knowledge of self-attachments, particularly of the strength (centrality) of the civic identity in a student’s social/political awareness is not enough to fully assess the overall development of the civic identity. We can say that the above measure of civic identity represents only a very generalized, abstract and largely impressionist picture of oneself as a citizen. However, this does not mean that that general impression of oneself, one’s self-identity, does not have some social-political meaning and implications for the overall sense of citizenship, particularly for the practice of citizenship i.e. for civic engagement. However, since this measure is only an abstract measure of the presence of different self-identities in the students’ social/political awareness, it was vital to obtain the data about some other measures of civic identity. Namely, we wanted to know which model of citizenship our students prefer – the liberal or the communitarian-republican – and in that way identify the citizenship model that indicates the commitment to a certain concept or orientation of people in democracy. While the civic identity represents people’s attachment to the role of the “citizen”, the citizenship model represents their attachment to the concept of citizenship or to the model of democracy in the society. This measure perhaps represents a higher level of understanding citizenship than the civic identity itself.

Many authors have analyzed these basic models of citizenship. Habermas analyses in several works the concept of citizenship from the perspective of different theories. At

one point he says that the liberal tradition of natural law (Locke and others) gives the role of the citizen the individualist and the instrumentalist meaning while the communitarian and the ethical perception of this role is rooted in the tradition of political philosophy dating back to Aristotle.¹⁰ Conover has given a comprehensive summary of the philosophical debates about civic identities. She concludes: from the liberal perspective, to be a citizen means to be an individual who has rights. Thus the status of the individual, which is determined by rights, is universalized and this is common to them all. On the other hand, from the communitarian perspective, to be a citizen means to be a member of a certain political community (state). This shared life is what binds people. Charles Taylor described these two models of citizenship in such a way that the liberal model is linked to individual rights and equal treatment (equality before the law and so on), while the communitarian-republican model is oriented towards the participation in government as the essence of freedom. As Aristotle stipulated millenniums ago, a citizen is a person who rules and who is ruled. Namely, Aristotle thought that a citizen is someone who – most importantly – participates in the government. Thus metics and slaves were not citizens. Nevertheless, Aristotle says that in the best polity “a citizen is someone who can and will obey and rule by living a virtuous life” (Aristotel, 75).

Different theories of citizenship and their controversies aside, in this study we were interested in finding out which tenets our respondents (secondary school students) accept: those of the liberal or the communitarian-republican concept of citizenship? Unlike P. Conover, we have not asked our students whether they see citizens primarily as members of a community or persons who have rights and duties, the reason being that this would not be enough to get the desired models and to better distinguish between the liberal and the communitarian orientation. Our question was: “What, for you, is a citizen primarily?” 1. “someone who obeys laws and is active in public life, cares for the common good, social justice, and moral edification of his or her community?” or 2. “someone who obeys laws and is self-reliant, and who rationally and successfully exercises his or her rights and champions his or her interests”. We thought that this would make a clearer distinction between the two models of citizenship which the respondents were choosing from. In the first, communitarian-republican model, the focus is on the contribution to the common good and the moral edification of the community, whereas in the other, liberal model, the emphasis is on the rational exercise of one’s rights and interests.

Table 3. Models of citizenship of secondary school students

Models	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
Liberal (rights and duties)	55.4	50.2
Communitarian (community member, common good)	40.2	49.1
Combined – no response	4.4	0.7

It is obvious that the American high-schoolers predominantly opt for the liberal concept of citizenship, whereas their Croatian counterparts are equally divided between both concepts. Based on the responses of the Croatian students, the next generation citizens, we might assume that in Croatia a certain “stalemate” is at work concerning the prospects of Croatia’s political development. According to these results, there is no critical mass of the citizens that would be able to decisively prevail and point which di-

¹⁰ See Habermas, 1994: 20-36.

rection democracy in Croatia should take, be it liberal or communitarian-republican. This should be tested at the level of a national sample of all the citizens.

The perception of “a good citizen”

The previously mentioned study on civic education (*IEA Civic Education Study*, 2002), among other things, conducted a survey of the evolution of students' perception of adults as “good citizens”. The results are very interesting, so we also included this measure of the sense of citizenship in our study. Of course, the sense of citizenship as a complex concept may be studied in many ways. The purpose of this measure was to find out how the sense of a good citizen was evolving, primarily from the perspective of the conventional political engagement (voting, following political events, participation in political discussions), and from the perspective of participating in the activities of various social movements (the activities of the civil society: promotion of human rights, environmental protection, etc.). These are all civic activities and virtues that have been singled out by many theoreticians as necessary for the concept of “a good citizen” in the contemporary democratic society.

The confirmatory factor analysis has shown that in the IEA study (conducted in 16 countries on the sample of upper secondary school students) for 15 measures of “a good citizen” there are two factors (two latent dimensions of a good citizen): one that covers the items with the conventional civic activities, and the other that covers the activities related to social movements. However, our analysis has shown a more complex picture in our students' perception of “a good citizen”. Their attitudes regarding “a good citizen” may be divided into four latent configurations or taxonomies of attitudes. However, first of all we are going to comparatively demonstrate the distribution of the attitudes regarding “a good citizen” for our students and for the international sample from the IEA study. This will be done only for two dimensions: “the conventional citizenship” and “the socially active citizenship” (activities in social movements), because in the international study only these two dimensions were obtained.

The data from *Table 5* show that quite a substantial percentage of students manifest a developed sense of what is important for “a good citizen” in democracy. The Croatian students are even somewhat better than the IEA average. However, the results show that the students in both samples do not demonstrate high consistency of their perception of what is important for a good citizen. Thus in both samples as many as 80% of the students think that for a good citizen it is important to follow political events in various media, while the membership in a party was assessed to be of a much less importance (for the Croatian students the percentage is much higher). We know that a very small percentage of citizens actually do join some political party. It is interesting to note that Slovenia was somewhat below the international average on this scale.

The data from *Table 6* show that both the students from the IEA study and the Croatian students have a more consistent perception of “a good citizen” regarding the activities in social movements than the conventional activities. The students in both samples consider these activities rather important in their image of “a good citizen”, that they are in some way aware of the importance of people's participation in civil society organizations i.e. that they are aware of the significance of civil society in democracy. The students' sense of citizenship, as well as of adult citizens in modern democracies, is increasingly shifting from the conventional activities to the activities in civil society organizations i.e. social movements. This is in line with the trend of the modernization of the sense of citizenship and the concept of a good citizen. It is another thing whether

this sense affects the development of civic engagement of students in Croatia and in the world. Namely, the question is whether this sense of “a good citizen” has any impact on the students’ actual civic engagement, their participation in the conventional and the social activities of their societies. This has to be investigated.

Table 5. Perception of conventional citizenship

Conventional activities	IEA study (%)	Croatia (%)
Respecting law	-	95
Taking part in political discussions	42	53
Voting in elections	86	79
Following political events in the media	80	80
Joining political parties	22	31
Familiarity with the country’s history	78	79
Respect for government officials	65	63

Note: the IEA study sample was not identical in all the countries; in some, younger students were included, although in most countries it included last year students; the percentages refer to those who have on a four-point scale selected “important” and “very important” for an adult.

Table 6. Perception of socially active citizenship

Social activities	IEA study (%)	Croatia (%)
Taking part in human rights activities	82	86.5
Taking part in ecological activities	78	82.0
Taking part in activities for communal good	85	91.0
Readiness for taking part in peaceful protests	76	80.0
Readiness for criticising laws violating human rights	-	91.3
Patriotism and loyalty to one’s country	-	87.7
Readiness to serve in the army for country’s defence	-	83.4
Diligence and perseverance	-	92.5

Note: The IEA study does not show the data for all the activities and virtues since some of the items did not fit the two-dimensional structure of the attitudes about “a good citizen”.

The perception of citizens’ rights and duties

Although citizenship is a multilayered concept, the prevailing opinion is that it is above all a *status*, defined by legal and moral rights and obligations (duties). Conover and Searing (2000) argue that one can, in general, get a better picture of the students’ perception of citizenship from the insights into how they perceive citizens’ rights and duties. That is why they asked their students to identify on their own certain rights of American citizens. The intention was to have the students confirm the rights as such i.e. whether certain rights really belong to American citizens or not, to name the rights and not to say whether some rights might or should be included in the category of civil

rights. In our study the approach was somewhat different and we examined the perception of the importance of rights for citizens in democracy. The students were asked to assess how important certain civil, social and political rights are for citizens in democracy. These two studies are therefore compatible, although we included only the more important rights.

Table 7. Sense of civil rights (averages and percentages)

Rights	USA (%)	Croatia	Croatia
	(0-1 point)	(1-4 points)	(%)
Freedom of speech	0.99	3.71	97.6
Right to privacy	0.91	3.78	98.2
Freedom of religion	0.97	3.59	93.7
Right to vote	0.97	3.53	93.3
Right to demonstrate	0.72	3.23	86.0
Right to education	0.97	3.87	99.1
Right to welfare	0.57	3.75	97.3
Right to association (groups, parties)	0.90	3.27	85.7
Right to work and employment	0.91	3.86	98.3

Note: Although there were differences between the American and the Croatian questionnaires, the comparisons are nevertheless possible and justified; in USA the students answered “yes” or “no” about the existence of the rights, and in Croatia on a four-point scale about the importance of the rights.

The data from Table 7 show that the American students identify many civil, political and social rights as the existing rights in their country. For example, almost all the students identify the freedom of speech as the fundamental civil right in their country. Not all the rights were equally recognized as the genuine rights. For example, the right to homosexual choice was not identified as a right by a big percentage of the students. The same applies to the right to welfare (the average on the scale from 0 to 1 was only 0,57). There is an array of rights that most American students identified as genuine rights in their country, mostly the ones linked to the freedom of expression (freedom of speech, religion, privacy), to the rule of proceduralism (equality before the law, fair trial), to the protection of private property and the right to association and forming groups. Apart from these major rights there are those that the American students are uncertain about, e.g. the right to abortion, to the homosexual orientation, to welfare. Of course, this uncertainty and dilemmas reflect the political debates and controversies concerning some rights. The conclusion is that the students easily identify as genuine those rights about which there is a consensus in the society, while those that there is no consensus about create dilemmas or disagreements.

Regarding the perception of civil rights of the Croatian students, it is evident that a big percentage of them think the listed rights are important for democracy. However, there is a very important difference between the Croatian and the American students. While the American students think that social rights are relatively poorly represented in the US, the Croatian students rank these rights quite high. Regardless of the differences in the method of identifying these rights, this fact clearly illustrates the differences in the political systems and cultures of the two countries. The right to “welfare” has been

firmly rooted in our students through socialization and education as an important and essential right. This is perhaps a relic from the socialist/communist period when social rights were high on the political agenda, but also due to the fact that today almost half of the respondents embrace the communitarian model of civic identity, unlike the US, where the liberal concept of citizenship and civic education prevail. Battistoni says that liberal education aims only at achieving the universal political values (respect for the law, personal rights, tolerance) and not at the “transformation of private individuals into public citizens” (Battistoni, 1985: 40). He suggests that even the contemporary American authors prefer the liberal theory of citizenship and civic education. He quotes Gibson, who in one of his works looks into the goals of civic education and reduces them, firstly to the acquisition of knowledge and the respect for the public laws, and secondly to the knowledge and behaviour that enhances individual self-sufficiency in economic and social sphere. Thus it is clear that the perception of rights of the US students reflects the practice of their liberal education, the education built around the “methodological individualism”.

Many theoreticians of liberal democracy agree that in liberalism (both in its theory and practice) the rights of citizens have been overemphasized, while their duties (obligations and responsibilities) have been neglected. It is time to strike a certain balance between the rights and the duties in liberal society.¹¹ We are, however, not interested in the theoretical debates about this issue; we would like to find out how the students’ sense of the duties evolves.

Table 8. Sense of civic duties

Duties	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
Respecting the law	-	70
Voting	83	37
Defending minority rights	53	20
Protesting against bad laws	49	29
Taking part in public debates	28	11
Tolerating differences	20	42
Fighting for the communal good	41	55
Willingness to work	54	73
Caring for the elderly and the sick	43	41
Patriotism and defence of the country	77	63

Note: the percentages are for the responses that the listed activities are duties; the other responses have not been shown.

The data from Table 8 show that the perception and the consistency in the students’ responses regarding the citizens’ duties in democracy are not as high as those for the rights. The students in US and Croatia are much better at identifying the civil rights than the duties and obligations. There is, however, a great difference in the recognition of the duties. While a huge proportion of the American students consider voting to be their legal or moral duty in democracy, only 37% of the Croatian students think so. A very

¹¹ See Quigley/Buchanan: 611-624.

small percentage of the students think that taking part in public debates is a civic duty, though the recent literature on deliberative democracy emphasize public reason and readiness to take part in an argued debate as a major obligation or ability of citizens. The deliberative model of democracy does not only imply – as Young points out – “expressing and registering interests as the given, exogenous processes, but transforming the participants’ preferences, interests, beliefs and judgements” (Young, 2000: 26). If the majority of citizens think that taking part in public debates is unimportant for democracy and that this is not everybody’s moral or political duty, it means that they are not aware that democracy is a process of political deliberation and too easily forfeit their active role in the creation of the public policy in the society. In such circumstances, the space is created for the expansion of partitocracy and bureaucratization, hierarchical and authoritarian relations in the political parties and the society in general.

Andrew Heywood alerted to the problem of the relationship between people’s civic identity and their other identities (national, religious, class); he also pointed out that the most difficult issue is the “the relationship between the civil rights and the duties and their balance” (Heywood, 1999: 207). We know that the pioneers of civic culture Almond and Verba (already in 1963) explicitly pointed out that the civic political culture is the culture of “balanced disparities” i.e. of the balanced active and passive elements of citizenship; we might add here the culture of balancing rights and duties. Our research shows that with the Croatian students there is a significant inconsistency between the perception of the importance of civil rights in democracy and the perception of the duties of civic engagement in democracy. For example, while 93% of the students think that the right to vote is a major right in democracy, only 37% consider that same right to be a civic duty. While 97% of the students think that the right to welfare is a major right in democracy, only 41% believe that caring for the elderly and the sick is a duty. The balance between the sense of the rights and the sense of the duties cannot be struck without an appropriate education for democracy and the responsible citizenship in the society because such a balance is not something given to people at birth. It can be only learnt and cultivated through the processes of socialization.

The practice of citizenship: the students’ political engagement

Unless the sense of citizenship creates a corresponding practice of citizenship, we can say that this sense is passive, abstract and formal. The practice of citizenship implies an active citizenship. Andrew Heywood says that there are disagreements surrounding the concept of active citizenship. The idea stems from the neoconservative notion of citizenship in the USA, whereas for the neoliberals the essence of active citizenship lies in entrepreneurship, diligence and self-help. It is questionable, however, whether self-reliance may constitute a theory of citizenship. Heywood claims that citizenship is in fact based on the membership and participation in a community and that it denotes the political or at least the public face of political life.¹² That is why it is necessary to see how citizens perform their role in public life i.e. how much and how they are active as citizens.

Different authors emphasize different elements of active citizenship. Conover and Searing highlight two basic elements in the practice of citizenship: the willingness and the ability to participate in political discussions, and the capacity for political tolerance (Conover/Searing, 2000: 105). We have used these two elements in our study, as well as

¹² See Heywood, 1999: 210-220.

some elements defined and surveyed in the IEA study of citizenship: the elements of the conventional and the unconventional political participation.¹³ The significance of these measures for active citizenship need not be elaborated on; suffice is to say that they are firmly rooted in today's political theory as central for the constitution of citizens in modern democracy.¹⁴

The basic indicator of the practice of active citizenship is the participation in political talks in different situations and about different issues. Our study measured only the participation of the students in political discussions in a variety of contexts (in the family, with friends, with other people). Taking part in political debates is the basic indicator of people's politicization and the basic measure of the political activity of citizens in general. If a person never takes part in political debates, this may signal political alienation in general, or political anomie and exclusion from public life on the whole.

Table 9. Frequency of the students' political conversations in various situations

Frequency of debate	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
Never	25.2	18.43
Seldom	43.6	42.00
Occasionally	27.8	29.50
Often	3.4	8.20

Note: The US the study included the conversations in six situations, and the Croatian study only in three (family, friends, others). The US source: Conover/Searing, 2000.

It is interesting to note that the distribution of the conversations about politics in different situations is very similar for the Croatian and the American secondary school students. The fact is, however, that between 60 and 70% of the students almost discuss no politics at all. Even when they do, this occurs in the family (in Croatia about 51%) and among friends (about 32%); only 24% talk about politics with other people. However, one international study (C. Hahn, 1998: 84-85) has given a somewhat more optimistic picture of discussing events and politics in some countries. In the USA, for example, (in 1994) 63% of high school students talked with their parents about events and politics and 46% with their friends; in Great Britain the numbers were 62% and 42% respectively; in Germany 66% versus 58%, while in Holland the ratio was 44% to 22%. Of course, it would be interesting to find out why there are such big differences between these studies.¹⁵

In our study the measure of active citizenship was how much the students follow the news about national and international events. A similar measure can be found in the IEA study on civic education, which makes these data all the more interesting. At first

¹³ On the concept and the theory of political participation, see Vujčić, 2001: 348-356.

¹⁴ See Vujčić, 2003: 16-33 where I showed how Rawls derives the political virtues of the contemporary citizen from the concept of "the burden of judgement". These virtues are: political tolerance, public reason, cooperative activities, etc. They are essential in the pluralist social circumstances.

¹⁵ Perhaps some differences are due to the question asked; the Hahn question included discussing "events", not only "politics".

sight it might seem that the measure of discussing politics and the measure of following the news in the media is the same thing. However, the data show that it is not the case. Although the correlation between these two variables is rather significant (0.46), it is not high, which suggests that these are two linked but independent occurrences. Thus it is completely justifiable to treat the discussion on politics and following the news in the media as two indices of the citizens' political participation. Additional analyses of the sources of the students' sense of citizenship will show how these variables operate differently. It seems that the index of following the news in the media shows a higher level of the intellectualization of political participation than the index of discussing politics.

Table 10. Following the news in the media

Country	Papers (%)	Radio (%)	TV (%)
Croatia	72	39	91
Slovenia	69	33	85
Czech Republic	79	69	93
Poland	74	82	92
Norway	87	61	93
Sweden	89	61	92
Portugal	81	61	97
IEA (a 14-country average)	75	64	91

Note: the data for the other countries from the IEA study (2002).

It is obvious that in all the countries the percentage of the students who claim they follow the news in the media – particularly on TV and in the papers – is very high.¹⁶ A sufficient number of the students follow the news in the papers, although Croatia is somewhat below the international average in that respect. The percentage of the respondents who listen to the news on the radio is rather intriguing due to the remarkable variations among the countries: it seems that the Slovenian and the Croatian students listen to the news on the radio least of all. This is interesting because both countries used to be in the former Yugoslavia. How to explain this? It is difficult to put forward a plausible hypothesis. We can only ascertain the fact. However, it is true that the percentage of the students in all the countries who listen to the news on the radio is low (with the exception of Poland).

Many researchers in the IEA study claimed that arousing the interest in politics of students was the main objective of civic education in many countries.¹⁷ This is logical when we consider the fact that interest in politics is the key variable in the totality of citizens' political awareness; interest in politics is a universal index of people's politicization and their political orientation. Interest in politics is a condensed indicator of the political culture of citizens in democracy, an expression of people's cognitive, affective and value attitude to politics.¹⁸ That is why it was necessary to establish the level of the

¹⁶ Interestingly enough, Hahn (1998: 83) in her comparative study obtained high results regarding the following of the news in the media.

¹⁷ See Amadeo/Torney-Purta/Lehmann/Husfeldt/Nikolova, 2002: 107-110.

¹⁸ See Vujčić, 2001: 191-206.

students' interest in politics since this measure best reveals the total practical dimension of their citizenship.

Table 11. Interest in politics of secondary school students

Country	“Very” and “Extremely” interested in politics (%)
Croatia	22
Slovenia	36
Czech Republic	41
Poland	44
Norway	40
Sweden	40
Portugal	43
IEA (all countries)	49

Note: the data for the listed countries from the IEA study (2002) about civic knowledge and engagement.

The Croatian secondary school students are undoubtedly least interested in politics (Table 11), even less than the international average (22% versus 49%). The already mentioned international study conducted by Carole L. Hahn (1998) has shown that only about 20% of the Dutch students in 1986 were interested in politics. Her study also showed that the interest in politics of secondary school students in five countries in 1993 ranged between 48% in the USA and 65% in Denmark.¹⁹ Her study showed that the students' interest in politics in most countries was approximately about 50%, which means at the level of the IEA study's average. If all this is taken into account, it is clear that the level of interest in politics of Croatian students is low indeed.

Some think that a low degree of interest in politics is a serious sign of political alienation of citizens from politics and the public. Since the Croatian students manifest a very low level of confidence in Croatian political and state institutions (more than 80% do not have confidence) and that only about 20% of Croats are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Croatia, this is indicative of a very high level of political alienation of Croatian students from politics, government institutions and civic identity – from citizenship in general. However, this does not explain why they take such a slight interest in politics. This is a clear reminder that the education for democracy and the civic education in Croatian schools has failed to generate an interest in politics in our students. And if the primary goal of political education is awakening interest in politics – and in many countries they claim it is – then this fact points to the shortcomings of political education in Croatian schools. In all other countries but Slovenia, the interest in politics was much more pronounced (in more than 40% of the students).

Another necessary information was how students envisage their active political participation once they have become adults. The IEA study also included in its survey of active citizenship the anticipated political participation. This is, of course, in line with the participatory-republican concept of citizenship, since it envisions politics as a means of resolving common problems and conflicts in the society and not as a means of unob-

¹⁹ Hahn, 1998: 59.

structed promotion of private interests.²⁰ Without political participation, individuals as selfish beings cannot be transformed into citizens as private persons, persons interested in the common good, in the entirety of social and political relations, and not only in their private interests and their effective protection from the state, perceived solely as a protector of individuals and their private desires and interests. If political participation is an essential component of democratic citizenship, which it undoubtedly is, then the evolution of the sense and the practice of participation of each generation of citizens of a community should be monitored.

Both in our and the IEA study, the measure of the anticipated participation covered a series of conventional and unconventional activities. A factor analysis of the nine measures of the conventional and the protest participation has clearly shown that there are two factors, one that precisely identifies the contents of the conventional political participation (the first factor explained about 36% of the common variance), and the other that precisely covered the contents (measures) of the citizens' protest activities (explaining away about 20% of the variance). These two factors explained about 56% of the variance, which means that these are well-defined attitudinal dimensions regarding the students' anticipated participation, and also that these are two independent dimensions of civic participation.

Table 12. Students' anticipated political participation

Activities	IEA study (%)	Croatia (%)
Party membership	18	15
Writing in the papers about public issues	21	10
Being a candidate in local elections	15	14
Voting in national elections	85	80
Collecting signatures for petitions	41	24
Taking part in peaceful protests	50	45
Writing protest slogans on walls	13	11
Blocking traffic as a form of protest	13	9
Occupying buildings as a form of protest	10	5

Note: the percentages are for those respondents who on a four-point scale chose the option that they would "probably" and "surely" take part in the listed activities as adults.

What do we see from Table 12? The first thing is that both the IEA and the Croatian students mainly demonstrate a higher level of the anticipated conventional political engagement than the unconventional i.e. protest activities (items 7 to 9 in the Table). The Croatian sample is a bit different since a somewhat higher percentage of the Croatian students is willing to write slogans (grafitti and alike) on the walls of buildings than to write about public issues in the papers. This is noticeable in the number of grafitti and different slogans in our cities. It is worth noting that significant differences between the Croatian students and the international average occur only regarding two items: "writing in papers about public issues" and "collecting signatures for petitions", the two conven-

²⁰ An excellent analysis of the difference between the liberal concept of politics and civic education and the republican concept can be found in Battistoni (1985).

tional activities that require personal effort and time. It is these very activities that require knowledge, willingness and some skill that the Croatian students are fifty percent less willing for than the international average. This seems to be an indication of the inefficient political and civic education of students within the Croatian educational system. It suggests that there is a need for a precise taxonomy of the goals and tasks of political education and for bringing the elements of this education more in line with those objectives. Without that we cannot expect the existing practice of political education to score better results. The results from the table of the anticipated political participation, although perhaps optimistically overshooting the realistic levels of participation in the society, clearly indicate that the Croatian students – in comparison with the students in other countries (based on the average) – anticipate a lower level of political participation. Unfortunately, these results are corroborated by some data from Carole Hahn's international study, namely that the students from five countries have shown a high level of the anticipated voting (the lowest in Holland, about 68%, and the highest in Denmark, about 98%), the possibility of entering local elections (from 10% in Germany to 21% in Denmark), of their membership in a political organization (from 16% in Germany to 38% in Denmark), and the participation in peaceful protests (from 52% in Germany to 67% in Denmark).²¹ We can assume that the low levels of anticipation mean even lower levels of actual engagement. These data, then, are not a matter of some exceptional political realism of the Croatian students, but a reflection of their weak constitution as citizens in the participatory-republican sense of that word. This also suggests the confusion in the Croatian society surrounding the strategies of our political development.

And finally, the last measure of “the practice of citizenship” was political tolerance. Today, political tolerance is appreciated equally by all theoreticians of democracy, even those who view democracy from the liberal perspective as a set of procedures (procedural rules and norms) for political decision-making and not as a way of transforming political interests and resolving political conflicts to achieve the common good. In our study we have applied the classical Sullivan's model of political tolerance that distinguishes between the attitudes towards the least appreciated social groups from the tolerance of those groups.²² The Croatian students were offered a choice of groups that probably exist in the society, and they had to choose one they personally appreciate least or suggest another group of their own choice. 23% chose communists as the least appreciated group, 30% pro-Yugoslavs, 13% homosexuals, about 14% neofascists, 8% nationalists, 5% atheists, etc. Based on these results, there is a very diffuse distribution of negative attitudes towards various social groups.

After the respondents had chosen their least appreciated group, they were asked to (on a four-point scale) assess how the members of those groups should be treated (whether they should be denied the right to run for Croatian parliament, the opportunity to work in public schools, the right to political association, the right to appear in the public media, the right to hold rallies, and whether the police should have the right to tap their phones). The factor analysis showed that these six measures of tolerance gave one consistent factor attitude that explained about 68% of the variance (alpha index: 0.90). The same model (taking into account the specific features of the American context) was used by Conover and Searing in the US. Political tolerance was not defined as mere sufferance of the differences we disapprove of,²³ but as tolerating these

²¹ See Hahn, 1998: 74-79.

²² See Sullivan 1982; Vujčić, 1995.

²³ On the future development of the theory of tolerance, see McKinnon/Castiglione (2003).

differences in the name of granting civil liberties and political rights (i.e. fundamental democratic norms) even to those we profoundly disapprove of politically and in values.

Table 13. Level of students' political tolerance

Number of tolerated actions	USA (%)	Croatia (%)
0	23.9	28.6
1	23.6	20.0
2	13.7	11.5
3	16.3	12.5
4	11.8	9.1
5	10.7	7.8
6	-	10.4

Note: the Croatian study used six measures of tolerance; only five were used in the American study.

The data from Table 13 led Conover and Searing to conclude that the level of political tolerance of the American secondary school students is disappointingly low, and that it varies greatly depending on whether a community is urban or rural, although some other studies (e.g. by Carole Hahn, 1989) paint a somewhat more optimistic picture.²⁴ The same might be said for the Croatian students. Out of six measures (activities), almost 30% of the students would not tolerate a single one to the members of their least appreciated group. This means that a third of the students do not distinguish between the negative attitude towards this group – their value/ideological disapproval – from the tolerance of that group. If tolerance is defined primarily as allowing civil liberties to the group we disapprove of, then such results are indeed disconcerting. Or, as Mark Peffley and Robert Rohrschneider say, if the respondents deny a right, for example the right to demonstration, to the least appreciated group, we might conclude that “they are not prepared to grant the least appreciated opponent the fundamental democratic freedom, a sign of intolerant citizens.” In other words, denying individuals and various opponents fundamental freedoms is “tantamount to the rejection of the vital element of democratic process” (2003: 248).

The Croatian data might lead us to the conclusion that only about 36% of the Croatian students have shown a satisfactory level of political tolerance towards the groups they personally most disapprove of. Another study (published in 1995) showed that the secondary school students at that time (wartime in Croatia) demonstrated an even lower

²⁴ Carole Hahn's study showed that the tolerance of the least appreciated group significantly varies among the countries, but that it depends on the content of the tolerated activities. Thus, for example, in the five countries the majority of the respondents think that the least appreciated groups should have the right to a hearing (from 66% in Great Britain to 79% in Denmark), while the right to organizing rallies was approved of to a much smaller extent (from 22% in Great Britain and to 38% in the USA), which means that the activity itself and not only the group as such determines the level of tolerance. Political contexts also cannot be ignored (duration of democracy, federalism or unitarism) (Hahn, 1989: 170).

level of political tolerance (about 31%).²⁵ It could be said that only about a third of the students exhibit a positive level of political tolerance.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to present the level of the sense and the practice of citizenship of Croatian students, to find out – in line with the theories of citizenship and some international studies – how the perception of citizenship of Croatian students, the practice of their citizenship and civic participation, have evolved. The study was conducted at the beginning of 2003 on a sample of upper secondary school students. The study and the presentation of the results are comparative.

We have measured the level and some aspects of the students' sense of citizenship and their civic practice. Regarding the students' sense of citizenship, we have found out that civic identity is very weak among the Croatian students: only in 12% of the sampled students (unlike the US where more than 60% of the respondents often think about themselves as "citizens"). This means that the concept of "citizen" is very poorly represented in the central self-identity of the Croatian students. Regarding the model of citizenship (the relational dimension: orientation to the liberal or the communitarian-republican concept), it should be said that both models of citizenship are equally represented in the Croatian study (fifty-fifty). This suggests "the stalemate" regarding the possibility of the political development of democracy in Croatia. Political development is thwarted in a way, but this merits further study.

Regarding the perception of "a good citizen", the questions centred on the perception of the conventionally good citizen and the socially active citizen, whether the students appreciate more the first – the one participating in political debates and elections, and follows political events – or the second – the citizen who is ready to take part in the activities of different social movements; ecological, humanitarian, for human rights, etc. The study showed that the Croatian students have a more developed sense of the socially active citizenship i.e. that they perceive "a good citizen" more in connection with the participation of adults in the social movements than in the conventional activities. The situation is similar in many other analysed countries. It is important to note, however, that the perception of the conventional citizenship is less consistent than the perception of the socially active citizenship. Thus, for example, 79% of the respondents consider voting important for "a good citizen", while only 53% think the same about taking part in political debates. The same inconsistency can be found in the IEA study. However, the sense of the socially active citizenship is high and consistent (the students equally appreciate the participation of "a good citizen" in different social movements).

We also looked into the evolution of the perception of civic rights and duties. Most of all, we were interested to find out whether there is a balance between the perception of the rights and the duties (obligations). The study has shown that there is a high level of the sense of the rights, but a relatively low level of the sense of the duties, and that the balance between the rights and the duties is very poor. The Croatian and the American students have demonstrated a relatively high sense of the rights, but with a difference: in comparison with the American students, the Croatian students much more appreciate (or identify) the right to welfare. This right is not identified by many American students (only half of them), while more than 97% of the Croatian students think this is an important right for people in democracy. This reflects the differences (perhaps even

²⁵ See Vujčić, 1995: 118.

in the way the study was conducted) in cultures and political systems in which Croats and Americans have lived. This suggests that the Croatian students have acquired a “welfare culture”. Very interesting are the differences concerning the sense of the duties, which is feeble in both the Croatian and the American students, in comparison with the sense of the rights. Still, there are differences between these two populations: 53% of the American students appreciate the protection of the rights of social minorities, while the respective percentage among the Croatian students is only about 20%. This shows that the shift from the conventional “good citizen” to the socially active citizen has not occurred among the Croatian students. Also, there is a glaring inconsistency among our students: while 55% of them think that it is their duty to work for the common good, at the same time only 11% think that taking part in political debates is a civic duty in democracy. Political scientists warn that the huge gap between the sense of the rights and the sense of the duties is the biggest problem in the constitution of the socially active citizenship. For example, about 93% of the Croatian students think that the right to vote is an important right in democracy, but only 37% think that it is also a civic duty. The inconsistency between the sense of the rights and the duties is extremely high, particularly for some rights and duties. Perhaps this is the fundamental problem of our political culture and reflects the key weaknesses in the processes of political education in Croatian schools and the society in general. Perhaps the purpose of civic education and the education for democracy primarily lies in developing the sense of the balance between the rights and the duties in people’s civic identity.

Concerning the practice of citizenship (civic engagement, participation) it is clear how decisive the participation in democracy is for democratic polities. That is why we have measured both the existing and the anticipated forms of participation. The results have shown that the level of interest in politics (the subjective assessment of the interest in politics) of the Croatian students is very low: only 22% express some interest, much below the levels in similar international studies. Also, the Croatian students discuss politics in various situations much less often than their counterparts in many other surveyed countries. It is also interesting to note that the Croatian students listen to the news on the radio much less frequently than the international average (for 16 countries), while the percentage for the other media (TV and newspapers) is at the level of the international average.

The anticipated conventional and unconventional (protest) political participation of the Croatian students in comparison to the international level is significantly lower, particularly for two items (writing in newspapers about public issues and collecting signatures for petitions). Only 10% of the Croatian secondary school students anticipate that as adults they are to write about public issues in the newspapers, while 80% anticipate they are going to vote, which means that 20% already think they will not vote at all. Our study has shown that the level of political tolerance of the Croatian secondary school students is very low (only about 36% would grant the members of the groups they disapprove of their civil liberties: the freedom of speech, gathering, privacy). This is a problem, since it creates a paradox: the sense of human rights is high, while tolerance (enabling the exercise of these rights) is developed only in a small percentage of the students. This suggests a paradox in the evolution of political tolerance worldwide: people in various democratic contexts highly appreciate democratic norms and civil liberties in a pluralist setting, but – as studies have shown (Putnam, Peffley, and others) – the duration (time span) of democracy, the federalization of the system and the level of social capital in the context (state, region) have a positive effect on the growth of tolerance and eventually lead to the resolution of this paradox. This means that the road to the constitution of an “uncontradictory citizen” is not easy: it requires both the institutional and the individual development.

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