The Role of a Gender-Based History-Writing of Education in the Preparation for Social and Civic Competence

Orsolya Kereszty

Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Education

Abstract

Out of the eight key competences that have been accepted by the European Union in 2006 one is social and civic competence, which is an individuals' ability to participate actively in the formation of society and to organize the macro- and micro-society in their immediate surroundings. A significant aspect of civics is history, and within that, the results of the history of education, which show and stress the individual's active social involvement based on the accomplishments of the past. But one should not forget those social groups, which – for various reasons – have been left out of the history-writing of education, such as women, Roma people, and individuals living with disabilities. A history writing of education based on gender takes these marginalized groups into consideration on the one hand, while on the other, it also problematizes the process by which exclusion happens.

In my paper – primarily relying on the English sources of a gender-based history-writing of education – with the aid of content analysis, I explore the ways in which gender appears in Hungarian history-writing of education, how the various authors discuss the histories of different social groups and the kind of "alternative" histories that are created.

A gender-based, history-writing of education can contribute to raising people's awareness to the fact, that gender roles are socially constructed, that one's rigid and fixed expectations towards gender roles narrow their prospects (and not only in education), and define their lives. An equitable education would mean that everyone, regardless of their social definiteness, has access to resources without limitations, and everyone can actively participate in the life of society; and in order to do so, they would receive sufficient and appropriate examples during their time spent in educational institutions.

Key words: gender, history, social competence, education

Background

Nowadays practically every EU level policy acknowledges the importance of supporting active democratic citizenship (Eurydice, 2012). One of the aims of the European Council in Lisbon in 2000 was to create a European framework system, which could define for every individual the new basic skills based on lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society. The Lisbon Strategy emphasized the importance of key competences owned by the individual in establishing social cohesion, economic development, competitiveness and welfare. (Hoskins et al., 2008., Halász-Michel, 2011) It is also due to the Lisbon Strategy that the concept of active citizenship entered the vocabulary of EU documents and policies. Within the frame of the Strategy active citizenship meant that the individual is prepared to make their voice heard in the community, and that they are able to interpret the relationship between the individual and the community, understand the different cultures and opinions and accept equality and democracy as values. Later, the original definition was followed by a number of different interpretations coming from various points of view, in which rights and responsibilities were primarily emphasized, which was later supplemented with the concept of participatory democracy. (Hoskins et al., 2008)

The Education and Training 2010 strategic frame program, which was accepted as part of the Lisbon Strategy, proposed three aims: improving the quality and efficiency of educational and training systems, provide accessibility to every individual, and make education accessible in the whole world. The requirement that accessibility should be provided includes active civil existence, supporting equal opportunities and social cohesion, in which the individual learns how to participate actively and responsibly in the society that surrounds him or her, and how to support minority groups in practicing their rights and making their points of view visible. The frame program – not only in this area – thinks of education and training as a strategic field. In this interpretation, education and training can be understood as a tool in the hands of society, by which society can be formed, so for example, the individual can learn that discrimination based on any identity component (skin colour, gender etc.) is not an acceptable social practice.

The Education and Training 2020 strategic framework reinforces in its aims the importance of the so-called cross-curriculum competences: lifelong learning and mobility, social cohesion and active citizenship, creativity, innovation and supporting enterprises. (Halász-Michel, 2011) One of its aims is "promoting fairness, social cohesion and active civic involvement", in which the role of education and training is to enable every citizen to "acquire, update and develop skills and competences required for employability, and it should also facilitate further learning, active civil involvement and creating a dialogue between cultures."

¹ Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) [Official Journal C 119 of 28.5.2009]. Strategic Objectives:

^{1.} making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

^{2.} improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

^{3.} promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

^{4.} enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

Thinking about competences necessary for a knowledge-based society had already started in the 1990s in the activities of international organizations dealing with education. The OECD emphasized on many forums and in studies that redefining the content of education is necessary in order to allow every citizen to learn the basics required for prosperity in a 21st century society. These were mostly proposed in the form of new knowledge, competences and values. The need rightfully emerged for proposing general skills, whose basic knowledge can help the individual participate effectively and successfully in a knowledge-based society, and so help society itself run successfully. In the 2000s, OECD started the PISA tests in which they measured in 15-year-olds how well they acquired the competences necessary for their later lives, successful employment and active citizenship. During the tests they measured both those skills learned within and those learned outside the school system in real-life situations (Halász-Michel, 2011) and sought answers to the question of what kind of qualities and knowledge does a young person need nowadays in order to operate effectively in society. In other words, education and learning must prepare young people to enable them to motivate and manage their own learning throughout their lives. (Kerr, 2008)

The 2006 recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on the common European reference framework for the key competences² – based on the context of the time – proposed eight key competences which ensure that the individual is capable of adapting to continuous changes, and which everyone needs for self-realization, development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. That is, the key competences might be the means to prosper in a knowledge-based society, and their acquisition – according to the recommendation – is primarily connected to formal education. One of the eight key competences is social and civic competence, from which social competence is the one that really focuses on the issues in my present study. According to the document: "Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is connected to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in democratic participation actively in the society. This includes for example that the individual thinks about equality between the genders in a responsible manner, knows about the relationship between individuals and society, knows about and understands the multicultural and social-economic dimensions of European societies. It also includes the individual's ability to communicate effectively in different environments. Furthermore, they are tolerant, they accept and understand the various points of view, they are empathetic and sympathetic. All of the above can only be realized if the individual respects diversity, respects others, and is prepared to fight prejudice. Civic competence includes the individual's effective cooperation with others and their solidarity regarding the problems of the community that surrounds them. This would be inconceivable without the individual's acceptance of equity as a value and without their respect for different social groups. Active participation means that

² For the conceptual definition of competences and key competences see: Halász-Michel, 2011.

the individual supports social diversity, cohesion and sustainable development, and respects the private life and values of others.

It is clear that since the 2000s, education and training has been more and more conceived as a strategic field in the documents of the Union and OECD, in the recommendations and in the policies. This means a kind of education and training which satisfies the current needs of the individual and the society; one which is fair, which means that it provides access to everyone, and offers extra support to those social groups, who, due to some disadvantages, would otherwise be excluded from it. Education is positively connected with the construction and maintenance of active citizenship competences and that higher education has the greatest effect. (Hoskins et al., 2008) As the previously mentioned EU documents propose, the literature also stresses that education is a strategic tool and area in a democratic society and in creating social cohesion, and as part of it, in training young people to become active citizens. The most efficient form of learning about participating as citizens is the so called situational learning/learning embedded situation/understanding connected to a situation/situated learning, in which we create a learning environment that is most appropriate for the context (for example volunteerism). (Hoskins et al., 2012a)

One of the elements of creating knowledge which is the basis of critical active citizenship is realizing the components that exclusion from society is based on, and how exclusion happens. This is possible if students come into contact with stories about minority groups from the point of view of the minority groups themselves during formal education. The most recent research of Korostelina (2013) investigates the role history-writing has on identity formation, how it can help mitigate conflicts and – with the constant revision of the curriculum – how it can create the culture of peace.

Learning history and getting to know the histories of different social groups is a tool that can change the dynamics of identity-based conflicts, it can reduce negative perception, and facilitate an understanding between different or even opposing groups. When teaching history there is a possibility to question stereotypes and prejudices with the aid of different stories, as well as to come up with alternative interpretations and to represent multiperspective points of view. This means that learning history plays a key role in forming social identity. Teaching history supports social cohesion on the one hand, with the curriculum, which can help us understand which social groups were excluded from the current group identity and the reason behind it, and on the other hand, it can contribute to the reformation of identities. History books which connect contemporary events, policies and decisions with events of the past operate as similar tools, and with the aid of this technique they can problematize concepts such as equality, or human rights. For this very reason, history teaching – based on examples – instead of stressing differences and opposition is capable of presenting diversity as a value, which relies on tolerance, solidarity and collective welfare and prosperity. The discussed examples and historical narratives support critical thinking, reflexion on identity, power and dominant positions as well as the core principles of mutuality and cooperation. (Korostelina, 2013)

In order to make the histories of different minorities and social groups that have been left out of mainstream history-narratives accessible in formal education the primary necessity is to know the histories of these groups and the fact that historiography should talk about these narratives. One of the subareas of a history writing which integrates gender is the history-writing of education, in which researchers primarily seek answers to the questions of

how the histories of women can be made visible for the history-writing of education, how they became the shapers of their own educational opportunities, and why or how they were subjected to multiple disadvantages in education even during the 20th century. In these histories women are not understood as a homogeneous category but, in addition to the gender aspect, they are understood along the lines of other identity components such as social background, ethnicity etc. One of the questions in my study is how much this criteria, these questions and these problem areas are present in the history-writing of education in contemporary Hungary. Who writes these histories and of whom are these histories written? Based on my initial suggestions, even though there are women in the history-writing of education, these researches rather "add" women's histories to already existing ones.

One of the most frequent questions regarding the analysis of gender is how much difference can there be between gender history and women's history. An excellent researcher of the history of education and cultural history, Ruth Watts (2005), when analyzing the 1976-2004 issues of History of Education³, a well-established scientific journal, pointed out that the categories of "gender" and "gender studies" are used in a considerably lax manner and often as a synonym for "women". One of the primary reasons for this is that the border between the two is so faded that they are hard to distinguish. (Watts, 2005) Research of the last two hundred years clearly stresses the significance of gender as an analysis category. The real question is whether the increasing visibility of the gender issue contributed to changing gender-interpretations and whether it had an effect on the whole area of knowledge.⁵ It is primarily characteristic of English-speaking areas that in addition to the effect of feminist and gender history we can clearly establish the effect of postcolonial theories on the historywriting of education, culture and andragogy. (Goodman – Martin, 2005)⁶ The effects of these theories can be observed in the continuously renewable methodology and in the choice of topics as well. Stressing interdisciplinarity, it problematizes the visibility of women, the relationship between gender and power, the connection between work and gender, the social constructedness of sexuality, the dichotomy of the public and private spheres, and the study of family, social background, and different social networks. (Watts, 2005)

Gendered Papers on History of Education in Hungarian Pedagogical Journals

In my research I analyse the four decisive Hungarian journals of the field of education, concentrating on the time period after 2004. One can rightfully ask what changes were made in the Hungarian history-writing of education in the decade since Hungary joined the European Union and what problem areas became foregrounded. My main enquiry is whether women appear at all, if they are visible as active agents, as narrators or shapers of stories. Are

_

³ See the list of studies in: Watts, 2005b.

⁴ Goodman and Martin also analyse the articles of the History of Education between 1972 and 2004 with special regard to debates, topics and methodologies. They ask how much historians were capable of surpassing established academic borders. Goodman – Martin, 2004.

⁵In her analysis Watts highlights the fact that it is not important whether in a quantified manner there were more articles published in the History of Education about women or by women, because this would only be a simplified quantitative indicator. She specifically calls attention to the fact that there are articles which are about women but do not discuss gender issues. Watts, 2005.

⁶ On the connection between the theories and feminist view points, primarily based on the approach of Margaret MacLure see: Goodman, 2003.

there histories about women? Upon further consideration of the issue, it is worth considering how much we can discuss women as a homogeneous group and how much other identity components define how we talk about women. As quantifying the published material is not sufficient; it is also necessary to investigate whether the possibly quantifiably larger visibility necessarily means the appearance of gender-based interpretations in the field, and whether it means gender consciousness. In other words, does the greater number impact the field itself? (Watts, 2005)

The attention of Hungarian history-writing of education, culture and andragogy has turned more specifically and more strongly towards gender as an analysis category in the past few years. We can consider it a positive change that there are more and more studies and conferences where we hear about research where the point of view of gender analysis was also 'used'. However, it is also clear that there are still specific conferences organized around the topic of gender and journals still dedicate special issues to the topic. It is a much rarer phenomenon that the analysis point of view of gender is an integrated part of conferences and journals of the history-writing of andragogy, education and culture. This, on the one hand, means that gender is included in the discourse of Hungarian history-writing of education, culture and andragogy, but on the other hand, one might ask in what form is it included. The question is, when gender is considered, do researchers reflect on the theoretical framework and methodology behind it or are these writings strictly about women?

To gain a deeper understanding of the issue I indicated the exact percentage of works published in journals dedicated to education which deal with the history-writing of education, and how many of those focus specifically on women or the two genders. I followed the methodology and steps of Watts (2005), the president of the History of Education Society at the time, who analysed from a gender point of view the articles published in the History of Education journal between 1976 and 2004. Her main question was how many articles were written in this period about the history of genders, about women, and whether the larger quantity of published articles meant a change or broadening of the field of history-writing of education. Watts found 87 studies published in the 28 year interval that were about the education of women and/or used a gender-based analysis. Apart from quantifying, Watts did a qualitative content analysis as well. She pointed out that there was not only a change in the content in this period, but that the diversification of the research focus also brought theoretical and methodological reflections as well. Based on this, one can conclude that if one wants to research the histories of social groups that have been excluded from the mainstream historywriting of education, one needs to change their methodology as well. Due to the historical legacy of colonization, the post-colonial approach is markedly present in the History of Education journal along with post-structuralism. She specified minorities, geographical links and masculinity researches as areas of shortage (Watts, 2005).

As a necessity, I understood women as a homogeneous category in this research, but it is important to note that the concept of intersectionality points out the very fact that the various identity components (gender, social class, ethnicity etc.) cannot be understood alone, because they are in constant interaction with each other, creating different inequalities. (Vincze, 2012., Sebestyén, 2014)

⁷ The title or the text itself should include the word "women".

⁸ This is due to the fact that Watts (2005) examined a journal that specifically deals with the history of education.

JOURNAL	Educational Sciences	History of education	About women
Magyar Pedagógia	155	26	3
Iskolakultúra	1151	186	11
Új Pedagógiai Szemle	982	83	2
Educatio	462	48	6
TOTAL	2750	344	22

Hungarian Educational journals 2004-2013

From between 2004 and 2013, 2750 works were examined in the research, out of which 344, that is, 12% dealt with the history of education or had a history-writing of education focus. It can be concluded that the works on the history of education have a Hungarian focus and that we can rarely find works that analyse a period or issue of a broadly understood Europe; not to mention territories outside of Europe. This phenomenon might be due to the fact that the analysed journals are in Hungarian and are optimized to the Hungarian readership. Regarding the international promotion of the Hungarian results Benő Csapó emphasizes: "From the point of view of the tasks of Magyar Pedagógia, the most important question that continuously needs to be reconsidered and reinterpreted is the connection between the internationality of science and the Hungarian publications. (...) Being a member of the European Union and the creation of a European research space makes the international integration of the Hungarian history of education research inevitable." (Csapó, 2005. 6.) Due to the particular situation of pedagogy the author explains that – even though there is a growing need for publication in foreign languages – the use of the national language is understandable since the research results are read not only by researchers but by teachers in training and occasionally by parents as well.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that gender does not appear in the history-writing of education: the works only occasionally reflect on the hierarchies and inequalities that arise from the interaction of the various identity components. This might be due to the fact that the English-speaking feminist/gender-based tradition of history-writing of education did not become established in Hungary. That is, the works are not about women, their points of view, fights and neither are their notions represented. During the analysis I do not consider the general history of education articles apart from quantifying them, but primarily concentrate on those that focus on the history of women's education. However – due to the interpretative nature of qualitative content analysis – I address topics that require special attention in accordance with the categories of the research even though they do not specifically focus on gender (such as territories outside of Europe, the histories of Roma people and teaching the holocaust).

Magyar Pedagógia (Hungarian Pedagogy) is the scholarly journal of the Pedagogical Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In the examined interval, 17%, that is, 26 studies were categorized as having a (broadly understood) theme of the history of education. I

9 Occasionally there are works in Magyar Pedagógia (Hungarian Pedagogy) which are written in a foreign language.

¹⁰ Katalin Kéri pointed this out to us at the National Pedagogy Conference in 2011. Unravelling the reasons for this would require more inquiries, which go beyond the limits of this study.

found three works that, even though they do not specifically deal with the education of women, consider the different opportunities and roles of the two genders. The journal entitled Iskolakultúra (School-culture) was created after the change of regime in Hungary, with the primary aim of disseminating professional and scholarly knowledge¹¹. The proportion of works with a history of education theme is 16%, out of which 11 focus specifically on women, or present – and possibly centralize – the points of view of women in the analysis. It is also due to the orientation of Iskolakultúra that there is a relatively high number of works discussing territories outside of Europe, the history of childhood or works focusing on the theoretical and practical issues of history-writing. Iskolakultúra – due to its strong interdisciplinary nature – publishes a higher number of studies and articles on the history of literature, philosophy and even natural sciences. The 11 discussed works make up 6% of the studies that have a history of education focus, but gender does not appear in them. There are 47 articles regarding the history of education in Educatio, another interdisciplinary journal, of which there are 6 in which issues are discussed based on gender-differentiation, or discuss specifically women's issues. Out of the 83 studies that appeared in Új Pedagógiai Szemle (New Pedagogical Review) which discuss the history of education or history-writing, only 2 focus on the history of women's education.

Conclusion

One can justifiably ask how preparing people for social and civic competences can be realized if there are hardly any scholarly works on the history of women's education in history-writing. It is important primarily because women, as one of the largest minority groups, are (also) present in the history of education. However, one has little knowledge of their roles and voices not only in the Hungarian but also in the international arena. This lack of knowledge was changed by the growing number of researches on the history of women's education, which can be closely connected to the increasing number of researches on the history of women in general.

As Joan Wallach Scott (1986) pointed out in her ground-breaking study on historiography, when analysing gender one needs a theoretical framework, otherwise the great number of good quality historical works are in vain. Even though more and more researches are based on the results of gender studies, or rather, there are more that integrate the analysis category of gender, one can rarely find works either regarding the definition of gender or – based on international literature – works that sketch the related theoretical and methodological frame in the Hungarian literature. And in works on the Hungarian history of women's education these cannot be found at all.

Obviously, there is no direct connection between new developments in a field of science and the integration of these developments into its school curriculum. Yet we still think that if the focus of scholarly works ignore minority groups, for example talks of education and training in a general way, the defining parts of the history of society will remain invisible. Based on my analysis I conclude that the history of women's education is still on the periphery in the Hungarian history-writing of education and they rather add stories to the

_

Géczi says the following: "between the scholarly and disseminating journals, it takes on the task of maintaining the communication between educators and highly qualified pedagogical professionals" (Géczi, 2005. 24.)

mainstream histories of education instead of integrating and building on gender theories and methodologies.

Social and civic competence presupposes that the individual can think responsibly about the inequalities between the genders, about the relationship between the individual and society and knows and understands the multicultural and social-economic dimensions of European societies, understands and accepts the various points of view. It is the task of history-writers of education and members of the academy to – supposing that they themselves are sensitive to social issues – make the histories of marginal groups visible and continuously question the problem areas and boundaries of mainstream history-writing of education.

One might ask what social effects do those histories of women's education might have that, even though they are about women, they do not discuss repressive gender structures and do not critically interpret the dynamics of inclusion-exclusion which are realized in the field of education and training. Without a critical interpretation the very thing that could contribute to sensitizing and could strengthen the key competences of those who participate in lifelong/lifewide learning will remain invisible: questioning dominant ideologies and standing up to injustice against themselves and other social groups.

The research of Korostelina (2013) shows that learning history and getting to know different histories are especially important in learning social and civic competences. Getting to know the histories of different social groups is a tool which can help decrease social conflicts and prejudices, can effectively support mutual understanding and promote the creation of coexisting multi-perspective interpretations. It is necessary for this that we not only present histories but – for example in the case of the history of women's education – build on the basic (in this case gender) theoretical and methodological frames.

References

Daskalova, K. (2009). *Managing Gender and Diversity: Key Competences in Cultural and Citizenship Education?* The Impact of Cultural and Citizenship Education on Social Cohesion. 3-5- December. Vilnius.

Eurydice (2012). Citizenship Education in Europe. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf (last retrieved: 30 October 2014.)

Gáti, A. (2010). Aktív állampolgárság Magyarországon nemzetközi összehasonlításban. (Active citizenship in Hungary in international context) Budapest: TÁRKI-Tudok Tudásmenedzsment és Oktató Központ Zrt. http://campuslet.unideb.hu/dokumentumok/tanulmanyok1/Gati_Annamaria_TARKI_TUDOK .pdf (last retrieved: 30 October 2014.)

Géczi, J. (2005). Az Iskolakultúráról. (About Iskolakultúra) Iskolakultúra, 5, 22-24.

Goodman, J. (2003). Troubling histories and theories: gender and the history of education. *History of Education* 2, 157-174.

Goodman, J – Martin, J. (2004). Editorial: History of education – defining a field. *History of Education*, 1, 1-10.

Goodman, J. (2012). The gendered politics of historical writing in History of Education *History of Education*, 1, 9-24.

Halász, G. – Michel, A. (2011). Key competences in Europe: Interpretation, policy formulation and implementation. *European Journal of Education*, 3, 289-306.

Hoskins, B. – d'Hombres, B. – Campbell, J. (2008). Does Formal Education Have an Impact on Active Citizenship Behavior? *European Educational Research Journal*, 3, 386-402.

Hoskins, B. – Kerr, D. – Abs, H. J. –Janmaat, J. G. – Morrison, J. – Ridley, R. – Sizmur, J. (2012a). *Analytic Report: Participatory Citizenship in the EU. Report 2*. Europe for Citizens Programme. http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/report2_analytic_report.pdf (last retrieved: 17 July 2014.)

Hoskins, B. – Abs, H. J. - Han, C. – Kerr, D. – Wiel Veugelers (2012b). *Contextual Analysis Report: Participatory Citizenship in the EU. Report 2.* Europe for Citizens Programme. http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/report_1_conextual_report.pdf (last retrieved: 17 July 2014.)

Kerr, D. (2008). Hatást gyakorolni a világra. Az aktív állampolgárságra nevelés új koncepciója. (Making effect on the world. The new concept of educating for active citizenship) *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 11-12, http://www.ofi.hu/tudastar/david-kerr-hatast (last letrieved: 20 January 2015)

Korostelina, K. V. (2013). History Education in the Formation of Social Identity. Toward a Culture of Peace. New York, Plagrave.

Scott, J. W. (1986). Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis. *American Historical Review*. 5, 1053–75.

Watts, R. (1996). Making Women Visible in the History of Education. In Anya Heikkinen (ed.): *Gendered History of (Vocational) Education – European Comparisons*. Ammattikasvatussarja 14, Hameenlina 9-28.

Watts, R. (2003). Science and Women in the History of Education: Expanding the Archive. *History of Education*, 2, 189-200.

Watts, R. (2005) Gendering the story: change in the history of education. *History of Education*, 3, 225-241.

Watts, R. (2005b). Appendix: Gender articles in History of Education since 1976. *History of Education*, 6, 689-694.

Watts, R. (2007). Women in Science: A Social and Cultural History. London - New York, Routledge.

Watts, R. (2007): Whose knowledge? Gender, Education, Science and History. *History of Education*, 3, 283-302.

Watts, R. (2012). 'Gender and Education in History' ed. with Mineke van Essen (2012) *Paedagogica Historica*, 3 (themed issue), 335-90

Zepke, N. (2013). Three perspectives on active citizenship in lifelong and lifewide education research. LLine 2. http://www.lline.fi/en/article/research/220132/three-perspectives-on-active-citizenship-in-lifelong-and-life-wide-education-research (last retrieved: 20 January 2015.)

Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) [Official Journal C 119 of 28.5.2009].

Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006 (15 July 2014.)