

Citizenship and a young person: expected and unexpected aspects

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Abstract

The discussion is focused on critical analysis of sources, with an emphasis on analysis of the contents of a concept of democracy and the role of citizens in relation to democracy, also the findings of international agencies on the state of democracy in Lithuania and the Ukraine are presented. Some of the empiric findings from an international survey, specifically the findings that responses of almost 400 respondents in Lithuania contributed to, are presented. Comparing, contrasting and synthesis of theoretical considerations, recent statistical data and the survey data enable identification of the important and vivid and sometimes at the margins of attention in young persons' democracy perception. The contents of this perception may add new nuances to the picture of citizenship and democracy and, thus, expectations and role for an educator. The paper is based on the part of the data (from Lithuania, collected in 2019); though some comparisons with the data collected by the team members in other countries, including from the Ukraine, are also provided. Due to the recent realities of 2022, the part of results presented there (Zuzevičiūtė, Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, 2022), are imbedded in a broader discussion on democracy and citizenship in this paper, when the changes in geopolitical arena, particularly in the light of the Ukrainian's experiences, called for a reconsideration and re-evaluation of seemingly agreed upon dimensions, e.g., increasing importance of citizenship education and educator's role.

Keywords: citizenship; citizenship education; democracy; young adults.

1. Introduction

While after the collapse of Soviet Union several countries, including Lithuania and the Ukraine regained and cherished the possibility for progress and democracy as independent states, but the following decades brought somewhat different experiences for these two countries at focus. In Lithuania, after the occupation of five decades, Independence was declared on 11 March, 1990; at the moment of developing this paper (2022) the Independence counts more than three decades. Together with 9 more countries, the Republic of Lithuania joined the European Union (EU) in 2004. It is a democratic country, more specifically, according to one perspective, which will be addressed later, it is an electoral democracy. The structure of governance is defined in the Constitution (adopted in 1992), which clearly identifies separation of legislative, executive, judiciary powers, which, as a consequence, serves as a tool for checks and balances to ensure the overall oversight over governing bodies and government's actions. The elections to municipal and state bodies are free with almost no breaches registered in the last elections, moreover, the level of participation in most recent elections of four years cycle to the main legislative body (Seimas (Parliament)) even

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under the pressure of pandemic reached 47,2 % [Lr Seimo Rinkimai, 2020]. The Ukraine, on the other hand, in the light of the recent events of 2022 has been granted the EU candidate status only in June of that same year [European Commission, 2022]. The governance apparatus and practices were scrutinised, legal structure, stipulations and their implementation were analysed for many years, with certain recommendations being taken into account by the country.

However, a clear and uniform aim of both countries to cherish individual country's rights to decide upon its future, life, values, such as justice, self-determination, informed and independent decisions, rights of the citizens to live a worth living life, unites both countries, and presents a clear similarity about the way they construct their present and the future.

Thus the activities and impact of each individual, a citizen of a respective country gain an increasing weight on the events and their direction. The paper analyses the concepts of citizenship and democracy, also some findings of an international empiric study are presented. While many aspects of the results are presented elsewhere [Zuzevičiūtė, Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, 2022], however in this paper the part of results on young persons' approaches to one's role in democracy are presented to a greater detail.

2. Literature review

Though democracy and the role of citizens have been under the scrutiny of intellectual discussions for millennia, but the intensity of discussions varied. At some instances of human history, the discussions were welcome, and there were other instances, even in very recent history, when the discussions warranted fierce opposition or even sanctions.

While most of us may refer to democracy as having the history of at least 2500 years, and give the example of Ancient Greece, however, the democracy in Athens, while a beacon of hope and pride for democratic thought, still was quite limited. Plato, the founder of much of what is considered the pillars of Western civilization, went as far as call it very bad form of governance [Plato here from Platonas, 1981]. On the one hand, we may agree with the reserved sentiment, because the democracy that was built 500 years BC certainly had its misgivings, e.g., it did not include women among citizens, also there were a number of other limitations, thus, it was rather limited [Sale, 1980]. On the other hand, after the collapse of the Ancient Greek system, it took more than 2000 years to start discussing this particular form of governance again in order to formulate the productive, effective approaches, the role of citizens and the mechanisms that enable co-existence of ideas and ambitions, and – yes – individuals. Thus, democracy is a very recent human invention, which deserves to be cherished.

While criticism is always welcome, but the fact that this innovation accounts for just the smallest fraction of human history may explain the need for a constant attention and reflection on it and the efforts to stabilize democracy and empower citizens' role.

While the works of thinkers of 17th and especially 18th century in re-birth of the idea of democracy, and consequently, the establishment of democracy as an experienced human reality is of utmost importance, but, due to the limitations for the scope for the paper, just a glimpse on more recent theoretical considerations is provided.

After almost a total dramatic collapse of democracies in 20th century, manifested by cruel world wide wars, then the entrenchment of the Soviet influence after the WWII in a large part of the world, the attention to democracy's founding pillars was acutely renewed. Among many theoreticians the ideas of the depth of democracy, characteristics and the relation between characteristics, the role of citizens were very important in shaping a contemporary, more inclusive idea of democracy [Schumpeter, 2003 (first edition: 1943); Dahl, 1971, Dalis, 1994].

For Schumpeter the democracy mainly was characterized by free elections and freedom to vote, that is, the mechanism of fair representation was more important, which is not surprising as these ideas were formulated in mid-20th century (the primary source was published in 1943 and was re-published decades later, which is referenced here). For Dahl, as his ideas were formulated three decades later, democracy was attributed more characteristics. Among them: the possibility for all the citizens to voice their expectations and needs, the opportunity for citizens to make those expectations publicly known and considered with equal attention and seriousness; therefore, citizens must have the rights to associations, rights to vote, to elect representatives, to be elected as a representative. It was also noted that it is imperative to have a number of impartial news outlets, elections must be free and the elections must have consequences (that is, the policies that were voted for must be followed through).

These ideas were expanded further; it was added that each and any structure of governing apparatus must be accountable for citizens (including military), moreover, the accountability must be before citizens and among different branches of power, moreover, political and civil pluralism is essential in order to have the arena of competing ideas and policies [Diamond, 1999].

Due to the ideas of these thinkers [and others, including, e.g., Zakaria, 1997], the democracy is viewed today as something complex and multifaceted rather than a solid entity. Democracy may be liberal, or it may be electoral, moreover, there is dynamics, when one form of democracy may change into another, or certain aspects of, let us say, liberal democracy, may change: sometimes the aspects may expand, sometimes – contract, thus changing the overall quality and depth of democracy. Electoral democracy is based on fair and free representation in governing; but when it is strengthened by attention to civic rights and liberties, rule of law, independent media, then liberal democracy may emerge [Dahl, 1994].

Lithuania enjoys a functional democracy, thriving economy, even if economy suffered blows by pandemic of 2020 and again more recent blows due to fall-out with China in 2021. Still, Lithuania participates in international community with a clear voice and solid reputation as being on the side of democracy and respect for human rights, which became especially evident during 2022, when Lithuania offered its support for the Ukrainian refugees.

According to a recent V-Dem Annual Democracy Report (Lührmann et al., 2019), Lithuania is ranked at the 29th place; which accounts for ranking among the the top 10–20 % countries globally in the Liberal Democracy Index ((LDI = 0.730); a scale of 01 to 1, where 1 denotes the highest LDI score is used). Various arguments, counterarguments and opposing critical

comments may be used regarding the undertaken research methodology, but the fact that just over a third (35 %) of the global population lived in democratic countries in 2018 (13 % in liberal democracies and 22 % in electoral democracies in 56 % of countries around the world) indicates that Lithuanian citizens enjoy a privileged status.

Lithuania is an electoral rather than a liberal democracy due to the balanced relations between judiciary, executive and legislative powers and the fact that all citizens are equal before law. In the last decade, numerous attempts have been made to increase the transparency and accountability of the judiciary system and especially eradicate political corruption. The attempts resulted in several pre-trial investigations and trials, even legislative changes. However, these factors could have had an opposite effect on the citizens' subjective perceptions, because these incidents attracted media attention, and as a consequence the events could have disproportionately sensitized the citizens to the extent of judicial and political corruption. As a result, several measures were implemented to minimize political corruption, including amendments to the Act on Financing Political Parties and Campaigns (Act on Financing Political Parties, 2013), which strictly define the entities and amounts eligible for contributions. Similarly, in the same survey, it was noted that the Ukraine political corruptions index also decreased, which adds to the efforts of the country to build itself as a democracy [Lührmann et al, 2019].

Another instrument, used by Economist Intelligence Unit (Democracy Index, 2021), employs another methodology and the classification. The instrument identifies four types of governance globally: Full democracies (21 countries, which account for 12,6 % of countries), Flawed democracies (53 countries, which account for 31,7 % of countries globally), Hybrid regimes (34 countries, that is, 20,4 % of countries) and Authoritarian regimes (59 countries, which account for 35,3 % of all countries globally). The highest index possible in this instrument is 10, and the first rank (the same as in the previously presented instrument) is given to Scandinavian country, Norway: 9,75 out of 10). Generally, the top countries in both instruments are allocated very similarly, thus we may safely conclude that the picture given by both instruments about situation in other countries is also adequate and is as precise as it is possible to achieve precision in such cases.

Lithuania is ranked lower in this instrument (in comparison to a previously presented instrument); it is enlisted among the Flawed democracies, at the 40th place (the index is: 7,18 out of 10). Ukraine is ranked at the 86th place (the index is: 5,57 out of 10).

Interestingly, the previous year, the same instrument [Democracy Index, 2020] classified 23 countries (13,8 % of countries globally) as Full democracies and 52 (31,1 %) as Flawed democracies. 35 countries (21 % of countries globally) were classified as Hybrid regimes. Among Authoritarian regime 57 countries (34,1 % of countries) were enlisted; thus, it seems, the number of both Full democracies and Authoritarian regimes decreased, even if by small number just recently, in the last year. According to the instrument, the quality of democracy in Lithuania is developing, because in 2020 it was ranked 42nd (index was: 7,13), as opposed to the 40th rank in 2021, which adds to general sentiment about the right direction that the state has taken.

In Lithuania, positive perceptions of the state and the quality of democracy, are also evidenced in the nationally constructed instrument, that is, by Lithuania's rank in the Civic Empowerment Index (CEI). The Civic Empowerment Index (CEI) was developed by the Civil Society Institute. The Civil Society Institute (CSI) is a foundation representing the third sector, therefore its findings may be considered low-biased, if not completely bias-free, because, once it is not a government organization, the CSI does not have agendas to defend or promote its policies and strategies. In 2019, Lithuania scored 39,7 out of 100 points in the CEI, which was the highest value since the first survey had been first conducted in 2007 [Pilietinės Galios Indeksas, 2019]. Voter turnout in national elections, the depth and coverage of national citizenship education policies, strategies and actions indicate that Lithuanians are willing to exercise their civic rights and participate in public life.

According to the authors of the CEI Report, this result reflects on the growing potential of civic engagement as Lithuanian citizens are increasingly aware that community and civic organizations as well as individual citizens can significantly influence public decisions. The CEI score in this particular dimension increased from 55,2 points in 2016 to 61,2 in 2019. The mean score measuring Lithuanian citizens' readiness to solve societal problems increased from 34,3 points in 2016 to 36,8 in 2019. Interestingly, even during the pandemic, the CEI score further increased, and in 2020 it was 41,3 (out of 100); the authors of the survey explained the dynamics due to an increased citizens' interest in their lives, policies that were adopted due to pandemic (both in support, and, in many cases one may argue – against the policies for managing the global health crises) [Pilietinės Galios Indeksas, 2020].

Evidently, three referenced instruments – two international and one national – take into account a multitude of factors, while providing the ranking. The increasing ratings illustrate that in Lithuanian society there are many aspects that we must be appreciative of and grateful for. Still, however, there are tasks to be addressed; among the latter young person's relation to democracy may be an important dimension. This relation constitutes one of the major pillars for continuance of the accomplished state of democracy. This relation may have expected and unexpected aspects, which we address further on.

On the one side, young person's focuses on citizenship, democracy (or using those – one may argue) are different than an older person's in many cases; and this is what we may expect and even appreciate in a situation of dynamic social systems. On the other side, there are also unexpected factors that may explain the way citizens' entitlements are enacted by a young person. Also, at least to some extent, these factors may even explain the ideas a contemporary young person has on citizenship, or democracy in general. One may argue that the notions on democracy and citizenship for a young person in some instances must be a little bit different than in an older person's perspective, however in some cases the difference is astonishing. Regarding difference of ideas held by more mature and younger people regarding citizenship and democracy, a generational factor is important, which seems completely logical having in mind the human history. There are ample illustrations about certain things raising to a spotlight of attention of younger generation causing utter surprise or even dismay for an older generation even in very recent history: the French students' protests in late 1960s, Greenpeace movement in late 80s serve as emblematic examples [Zuzevičiūtė, Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, 2022].

We posit that the first unexpected factor, which is characteristic exclusively for this generation, is expansion of a phenomenon that simply did not exist just before recently, namely, the IT assisted social networking. Logically, it may be argued that this factor may explain the specificity of the way that young adults engage in democracy. The second factor, which may account for differences, is the level of education of a contemporary young person. At least in Lithuania and the countries that enjoy similar level of civilization, the access to education (including higher education) is almost universal, resulting in high number of highly educated people.

The right to education is traditionally referred to so-called second generation rights, that is, the generation of human rights, which include economic, social and cultural rights. The right to education is embedded in various international documents and in the constitutions of many democratic states, and thus is recognized there as a universal and a constitutional right. E.g, we find in Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 26: «(1) *Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit*» [Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948]. Making of this right constitutionally protected poses many tasks for a contemporary state but also may account for quite different set of focus for a contemporary young adult.

Though, surely, there are several other factors, among them: technological advancement, globalisation, which are not analysed in details here, suffice it is to state that the other factors exists and they interact. The interaction of factors sometimes creates a synergy, sometimes negates each other. Still these two factors, which are the core of the discussion in this paper, namely: emergence of IT assisted social networks and the enhancement of a second generation human right to education may be useful in trying to frame a contemporary young adult's perception on state, on democracy, on the rights and the duties. The IT assisted social networks are not much older than a young adult, because the internet itself counts just 30 years [Butrime, Zuzeviciute, 2014]. The gigantic platforms that constitute so much of contemporary person's life, such as Facebook, counts as many years as our students' age. Thus it may seem that the role of an educator is diminishing and fades away in many aspects of education, including citizenship education. Yet, we – the authors of this paper – disagree.

Surely, the manifestations of citizenship entitlements and activities, where young people are involved are initiated, motivated, planned and implemented using IT assisted social networking platforms. For example, Lithuanian youth organised a series of events to support BLM movement, thus joining international like-minded community [LRT, 2020, <http://surl.li/efspy>]. Nationally, a lot of attention and actions, to the extent that some of these even caused some friction with the national legal framework, were dedicated to animals' rights [LRT, 2020 <http://surl.li/efsq>]. Those and other actions were organised mainly horizontally, they were peer based, organised using IT assisted tools, without much centralised input. Proliferation of IT assisted social networks and expansion of their role in young adults' life-fabric, including his/her involvement in democracy's functioning became increasingly evident. But at the same time, those citizenship and morality orientated activities also resulted in breaches of legal frameworks, for example, at times they led to trespassing or breaching private property, which is contrary to rule of law. Thus the role of citizenship education, discussing the limits and rules, reflection on good and evil, on the context and the balance in actions are still important, exactly the task for an educator to perform.

The foundation for contemporary democracies is a well-informed citizen, who knows and enjoys the citizens' rights, shows initiative in society, because a person knows that an individual is though the smallest, however, the crucial element of self-governing, and, as a consequence, potentially democratic, society [Šlapkauskas, 2006].

Society will only develop if an individual's freedoms are developed, but, freedom is also intrinsically related to reciprocal respect for an individual and individual's respect and also productive and sometimes altruistic involvement in societal matters. Probably the majority will agree with the main idea that society and individual develop together in a reciprocal way, we will also agree that there is no «either» or «or». This idea seems to gain traction in Lithuania in recent years. The issue of 'well-informed' remains to be further scrutinized, because, as it was identified above, because of the level of education (which is higher than ever before in history), a contemporary young adult constructs his/her realities on the much deeper and wider body of knowledge than ever before in history.

But, also, a young person relies on a body of knowledge that was gained in formal settings and also informally, often via IT assisted social networking, which may not always be accurate or bias-free. That is, the un-institutionalized, decentralized peer-based decision making process, is possible today more than ever before due to citizens' and residents' access to each other via IT assisted social networking platforms. And thus, due to the lack of informed and balancing input also the overreach and even overstepping the legal boundaries is notable both internationally and nationally, even if the noble cause is pursued.

The international survey (in Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania), designed and implemented by international team in 2019 enabled identification of several characteristic of a contemporary young person's perspective on democracy and citizenship. This paper focuses on the part of results, where young persons' approaches to one's role in democracy are at focus. While the findings presented here were collected mostly in Lithuania, but the results may be of interest also for educators in other countries, especially the ones having had experience of the Soviet regime. The data and findings on the Ukraine situation are presented in greater depth elsewhere [Bondarevskaya, Bondar, Rzywosz-Rynkiewicz, 2022]; here the findings from an above publication and other from the book are used for establishing a context.

3. Research methodology and methods

Young adults were asked to indicate their perspective regarding democracy and its state. The questions designed to examine respondents' perspective asked respondents to indicate their opinion on dynamics of situation in the period of two years, with answers being: from 1 – «Is much lower than before» – to 5 «Is much higher than before». The following dimensions comprising

citizenship were identified and analysed: passive citizenship, semi-active citizenship, active citizenship, which has 4 sub-dimensions or activities: social, personal, political, change orientated; more details on the instrument, its logic and the structure are available elsewhere. More detailed picture that derives from data is provided elsewhere [Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, Kennedy, 2022: «Reconstructing democracy and citizenship education»]. Totally in the internationally conducted study (survey) several thousand respondents were invited to share their perspective in several countries; but in Lithuania we had 372 respondents, 223 (59,9 %) women and 149 (40,1 %) men participated in the survey. Respondents filled a questionnaire which had been translated into Lithuanian language, and had been distributed in cities and towns all over Lithuania.

The majority: 317 (85,2 %) were 18–23 years old, 43 (11,6 %) were in the age group 24–26, and 12 (3,2 %) were 27 or older. All them were students in graduate or graduate programmes, in majority of cases in part times studies, because these young adults had started their careers already. 173 (46,6 %) studied social sciences, including law (among them: students in law enforcement orientated programmes), 37 (10 %) studied humanities, 35 (9,4 %) were students in the field of technologies, and 33 (8,9 %) studied of biology; 25,1 % did not indicate the field of study programme.

4. Main results

As it was already indicated, only some data, and only collected among Lithuanians is discussed here. Regarding respondents' assessment of the level of democracy the mean was 2,7773. More in-depth analyses of the dimensions associated and indicating level of democracy revealed quite a narrow spectrum of assessments.

While the freedom of speech and action was analysed, the factorial analysis was completed, aggregating the answers to several questions, which were designed to examine this issue. The results of answers to the questions (example of one of those: Media harassment – admission by politics or other bodies of power about physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates media representatives) revealed the general relatively positive perspective of respondents. The calculated mean was 2,514, which falls just within the average of possible evaluations between 1 and 5. Regarding media independence the perspective on dynamics was less positive, because respondents indicated having more concerns regarding media at the moment of survey than two years earlier (mean: 3,0598).

We may even suggest that the decreasing trust in media is related to expansion of the above mentioned other medias, such as IT assisted social networking: lack of editing and verification, professional journalistic scrutiny, free flow and exchange of unverified information did not serve society well; it remains to be assessed what was the impact of fake news, especially while the pandemic broke (after the survey was conducted).

Respondents also indicated having less concerns about state of elections, when the data on aggregated questions regarding this issue (e.g., one of the questions: Elections are free / fair) is analysed: the calculated mean was 2,7460. Calculated mean of 2,9088 indicated a degree of concern regarding intimidation and repressions in political life. We see that in both cases the mean is somewhat in the middle (between 1 and 5).

Regarding citizenship, its interpretation the respondents were invited to share their perspective in the scale «1» – definitely no, to «4» – definitely yes. The general aggregated estimation, expressed by Lithuanian respondents (mean 2,8137) illustrates quite high positive attitude and readiness for citizenship and its dimensions, activities.

Lithuanian respondents' responses regarding political dimension of citizenship seem to indicate the similar pattern to average responses in general sample. Lithuanian respondents' perspective was scored the highest in this particular activity among their peers (the calculated mean: 2,0282), followed by youth in Ukraine (1,9185) and in Moldova (1,8386).

Though quantitative approach does not provide insights about the reasons for the choice, however the possible interpretation may indicate the above mentioned rise of the IT assisted social networking as underlying reason. IT networking enabled political forces sensitive to young people's issues to reach out to their base in a more effective and intimate way. Evidently, the reasons should be further explored using more subtle research approaches.

Lithuanian respondents similarly to other respondents in the sample were the most positive regarding semi-active citizenship dimension (mean: 3,4515).

Lithuanian respondents' responses stand out in the passive citizenship dimension: Lithuanians demonstrated the highest positive score in this activity (mean: 3,4147) among respondents in 8 countries (from Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania). But the theoretical readiness is much different from a practical implementation, which remains to be tested by life realities.

Regarding the last two sub-dimensions/activities of citizenship: personal and social, responses of Lithuanian respondents do not fall far away from the average score among their peers in 8 countries: mean 3.2186 and mean 2.3400 respectively.

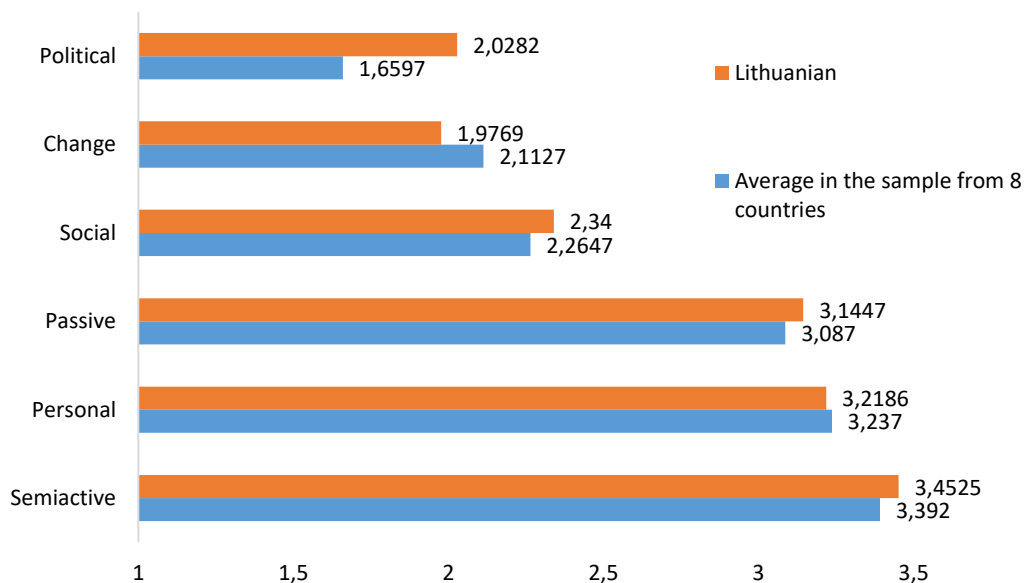


Fig. 1. Comparison of responses from Lithuanian respondents within the average score given by all respondents of the study

Figure 1 shows how Lithuanian respondents' responses compare in the sample of 8 countries. Both the general score on citizenship and its comprising dimensions in majority of cases reveal a general inclination of Lithuanian respondents' relative interest in being citizens and performing many roles and functions, which a citizen is expected and entitled to perform. A possible interpretation (one of many, this remains to be tested) of these results may stem from the fact that a large proportion of respondents represented students (current or former) in social sciences, such as law. Because people, who relate their professional activities with serving communities, ensuring rule of law may be more inclined for a sensitive and invested approach to their state.

Lithuanian respondents (372 in total) seem to have reserved position on where they stand regarding change, because while comparing the score to the average score in the sample, the respondents scored lower than the average (1,9769 versus 2,1127) regarding readiness to changes.

K-Means Cluster analysis enabled identification of 5 clusters in data, regarding specific distribution of people into groups in terms of their association to the activities analysed (passive, semi-active, active, social, political, orientated to change and orientated towards personal development).

13 % Lithuanian respondents were indicated among the cluster of Individualists. In cluster of Alienated 16 % Lithuanian respondents were identified (Fig. 2).

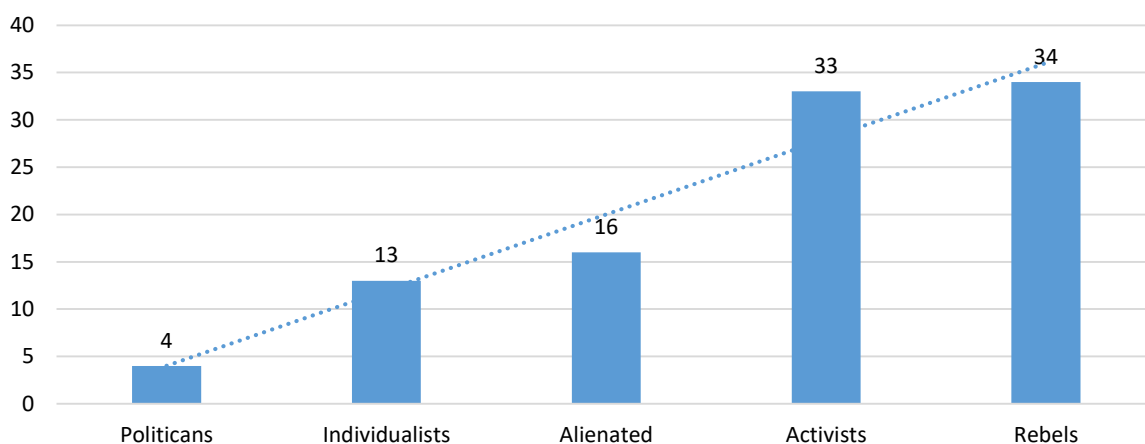


Fig. 2. Percentage of Lithuanian respondents in the clusters

Picture in Figure 2, it seems, illustrates a relative interest of young Lithuanians to participate in their state's life: they seem to be interested and quite engaged into changing things, and in some cases even seem to be revolutionary in their approaches. Political engagement, or rather engagement in the forms of political activities was low for respondents in general sample, therefore Lithuanian young adults did not show dramatically different perspectives in this regard.

The relative positive inclination regarding democracy and citizenship of Lithuanian respondents may be explained by several reasons: solid and reliable advancements of the Lithuanian state towards democracy is demonstrated by a variety of facts and indicators and the composition of sample may have had an impact on specific findings (because the majority of respondents came from such spheres as social studies, such as law studies).

It is logical to expect people, who choose their profession, which is inevitably related to law, to have certain positive attitude towards law and the way it functions). But this limitation of the study and the composition of the sample is mitigated and counteracted by the data outside this sample: it is improbable, that the three sources: international, national studies, and this particular survey will all deviate to a significant degree from relatively correct picture on the quality of democracy and the perceptions, assessments, perspectives that young citizens truly hold. Also as a reason an expansion of the IT assisted social networking can be indicated, because the networking enables young people to express their citizenship preferences and even translate them into actions (these, however, sometimes take the potentially or actually dangerous and illegal forms).

5. Conclusions

The theoretical considerations, analysis of statistical data, sources and reflection on recent realities revealed the dramatic changes in contemporary young adult's life. Contemporary young adult may enjoy the most privileged life in human history (in countries, where the technological advancements and the societal achievements are evident; Lithuania belongs, and Ukraine up to the recent year, even if certain aspects remained to be addressed, belonged to the group of such countries). The high level of education, access to public services, connectivity to the body of readily available body of knowledge and the people globally may be enumerated among many other. Some of these aspects serve as building blocks for citizenship activity for a young person. The ecology, social justice, moral causes may be enumerated among the pursuits the young people engage easily and in an effective way due to IT social networking. However, the same actions for noble causes may lead – and do – to breaches of legal frameworks and harming other citizens' rights, thus the role of educator even in this world of abundant information remains important.

The empiric findings quite strongly suggest that Lithuanian respondents reported themselves to be quite involved in the affairs of their state, its social and political life and actualities. Their relative positive attitude towards democracy and citizenship in this survey falls in line of findings in other studies, carried out nationally and internationally with a similar pattern, and the tendencies across several years. While the results in this survey are encouraging, nevertheless, it is empirically evident that respondents prefer theoretical readiness as opposed to an actual action in many cases.

In the light of characteristics of contemporary life and the recent and on-going trauma of Ukrainian citizens, two challenges for citizenship education remain at the focus of educators.

Firstly, it is imperative in educational settings to invite young adults into discussions about the depth and spectre of tasks within democracy. The necessity to constantly defend democracy and its elements, such as freedom of speech, freedom of expression, necessity to constantly strengthen the balance between governing agencies and independence of governing and judicial powers, is crucial. In this regard discussions, critical discussions, in-depth reflections, and debates on the state, on the situation in a country and globally, on history and on the models for the future were always crucial part of qualitative education, and remain to be such.

Secondly, educators have a specific and important role due domination of the IT assisted social networking. A large proportion of young person's life is organised and even experienced in IT assisted social networking, which has been further reinforced to an extreme degree by the ongoing pandemic and then-invasion. Though free and un-edited, un-censored flow of information seemingly comprises the very essence of democracy, but the same as in any other system, the balance between elements is of extreme importance [Butrimė, Zuzevičiūtė, 2014]. All the elements and a reasonable, productive interaction between them are necessary for any system to survive: the same applies to democracy. Free of censorship communication is very important, but so is the action based on legal frameworks: without the first, the totalitarianism raises its ugly head, and without the second one – an equally ugly head of anarchy starts emerging.

Sometimes, relatively benign, and at other times, clearly malign actions (such as propaganda), especially in contemporary context when an aggressor uses medias for the advancement of rationalisation of its actions, and even blaming the victim, indicate the importance of education in this specific field, including in higher education. In this regard, the attention to critical thinking, checking information, reaching out to other sources of information, analysis of data and collecting empiric, real life data are all crucial skills, which always have been important, and remain to be such in educational settings.

Thus the indicated two challenges for citizenship education, democracy and security are linked. The linkage is dynamic and should always be constantly discussed and reflected upon, which comprises one of the crucial tasks for a contemporary educator.

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