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CIVIC LEARNING IN THE MUSEUM

CAPACITIES AND METHODS

ABSTRACT Artykuł zwraca uwagę na potencjał edukacyjny muzeów w zakresie edukacji obywatelskiej. Podejmuje również próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie, jakiego typu obywatelskość może kształtować muzeum i jakimi metodami. Obywatel jest centralnym podmiotem społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, które nie może być „budowane”, lecz jest raczej współtworzone przez refleksyjne i działające jednostki. Dlatego celem obywatelskiej edukacji muzealnej powinna być nie tyle obywatelska „indoktrynacja”, ile inspirowanie jednostek do własnej refleksji nad związkiem między tym, co partykularne, a tym, co publiczne (wspólne, współtworzone), a także stwarzanie okazji do nabywania obywatelskich kompetencji. Najistotniejsze w muzealnej edukacji obywatelskiej jest zatem tworzenie warunków do uczenia się jednostek, które odkrywają lub wytwarzają wiedzę we współpracy z innymi uczestnikami procesu obywatelskiego samokształcenia facylitowanego w muzeum. Powyższy postulat może zostać zakwalifikowany do konstruktywistycznego nurtu w teorii edukacji, w którym wiedza jest odkrywana lub wytwarzana przez uczące się podmioty. Muzea, bez względu na tematyczny profil działalności, mogą odgrywać niebagatelną rolę w procesie obywatelskiego uczenia się. Mogą to robić na dwa sposoby: nawiązywać podejmowanymi treściami do wątków związanych z obywatelskością (świadomością współzależności między tym, co jednostkowe, a tym, co publiczne) lub mogą wprowadzać metody dydaktyczne, które służą nabywaniu obywatelskich kompetencji, takich jak refleksyjność czy umiejętność współpracy. Powyższy wywód jest poparty trzema przykładami pomysłów lub realizacji edukacyjnych wypracowanych przez Małopolski Instytut Kultury we współpracy z muzeami: Orawskim Parkiem Etnograficznym w Zubrzycy Górnej, Muzeum Pszczelarstwa w Stróżach oraz Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego w Gnieźnie.

Citizenship embraces axiological as well as praxeological qualities of a subject. Both these aspects could be reflected upon and practiced in the educational process. Assuming that citizenship is the core of civil society, the fundamental question is the content of the contemporary citizenship and the proper forms of its dissemination with respect to individual reflectivity and autonomy. The civic learning with the central position of the active and reflective learning subject supported by educator seems to meet this conditions. The purpose of the paper is to indicate the potential of the museums in facilitating the process of civic learning and to exemplify it with several cases providing the methods supportive to civil society.

THE CONTENT OF CITIZENSHIP

The idea of citizenship has its roots in ancient thought – the Greek concept of *arête* which could be understood as ethical courage as well as excellently done prosecution or fulfillment of functions and duties. *Arête* was a term which embraced both moral as well as praxeological aspects of citizenship.¹ The common feature which connects ancient and contemporary citizenship is activity in public domain which meant in antiquity participation in power and nowadays is associated rather with activity in the area between family and state which doesn't have to be connected with political affairs. However, the notion of citizenship as a practice supplements achievements of liberal tradition which underlined the protection of individual rights. The citizenship as practice restores elements of republican tradition which values the participation in public domain.² Contemporary idea of citizenship also encloses both axiological and praxeological dimension of citizenship which can be grasped as civic competences. The postulated content of contemporary citizenship was issued in the document worked out by European Parliament in 2006 called *The Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework*. According to that paper both social and civic³ competences “include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic

¹ K. Dziubka, *Obywatelskość jako virtù podmiotu demokracji*, Wrocław 2008, pp. 34-35, 48.

² R. Johnston, 'A Framework for Developing Adult Learning for Active Citizenship' in D. Wilde-meersch, V. Stroobants, M. Bron Jr. (eds.), *Active Citizenship and Multiple Identities in Europe*, Frankfurt 2005, p. 48.

³ According to G.A. Kelly ('Who Needs the Theories of Citizenship?' in R. Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Citizenship*, Albany 1995, pp. 79-103) the adjective “civil” derives from the word “citizenship” and is less affirmative and political than “civic”, but it is the attitude common in contemporary Western societies.

participation”.⁴ The concept of competent citizenship underlines activities based on knowledge about social and political life as well as the skills of effective involvement and cooperation. These competences are deep-set in civic values which point out the directions of civic efforts and activities. Thus, the civic competences are preceded by civility – a mental quality of a subject which constitutes comprehensive picture of citizenship.

The existence of civil society is possible thanks to common acceptance of civic values and existence of common good like the institutions of democratic state and rules of the law. These foundations are necessary conditions of civil society and they play role of its axiological and institutional framework. Within these frames there is a space for bottom up activities of individuals as citizens harmonizing particular interests with the perspective of common good. The active appearance of the individuals in the sphere of civil society demands from them not only the acceptance of foundations mentioned above. If we surpass the citizenship as status toward citizenship as a practice there should be fulfilled certain requirements that supplement legal notion of the term “citizen”. Firstly, the competent citizenship means appearance of civic reflexivity – mental abilities to recognize and concord both particular interests as well as the common good in habitual attitudes and activities. Secondly, there should be fulfilled the requirement of certain level of knowledge connected with functioning in public sphere (knowledge about legal rules, state institutions, *etc.*). Thirdly, the civic reflexivity and knowledge should be supplemented by abilities to cooperate effectively with the other citizens.

The civic reflexivity is connected with fundamental aspect of citizenship which is civility – state of mind which links the individuals life with broader entities like society and the democratic state. “Civility is the conduct of a person whose individual self-consciousness had been partly superseded by his collective self-consciousness, the society as a whole and the institutions of the civil society being the referents of his collective self-consciousness.”⁵ The civility plays crucial role – it conducts the relationships between key actors: individuals, individuals and the society as well as between groups, organizations and the state. Civility is also understood as “respect for the dignity and the desire for dignity of other persons”.⁶ This individualistic, mental phenomenon is the source of civic values, attitudes and actions. Civility can inspire sense of responsibility for public sphere, active involvement and disposition to collaborate with other citizens. The civility as a state of mind should be complemented by praxeological elements that support activities of individuals like civic knowledge and ability to undertake effective cooperation with the others. The competent citizenship is the foundations of civil society and democratic process. According to the concept by Robert Dahl the criteria

⁴ *The Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework*, European Communities, Luxembourg 2007, pp. 9-10.

⁵ E. Shils, *The Virtue of Civility. Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, Indianapolis 1997, p. 335.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

for democratic process are *inter alia* “effective participation” which means equal and effective opportunities to communicate own views and taking part in decision making process and “enlightened understanding” which means “equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their consequences”.⁷ Assuming the focal role of contemporary citizenship mentioned above as the pillar of civil society and democratic process, there is a question how to enable the subjects with status of citizen to gain civic competences. The possible answer would be the ideas of “civic education” or “civic learning”. Both concepts have similar purposes and could be seen they are two sides of the same coin varying in the approaches toward individuals. The concept of “civic learning” seems to be the most appropriate as it places emphasis on the reflective and autonomous individual who gains the citizenship as a practice through own, self-contained cognitive process.

CIVIC LEARNING AS THE FORM OF LIFELONG LEARNING

According to definition worked out by Longworth and Davies lifelong learning “is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments”.⁸ This approach underlines the concept of realizing human potential and vital role of individual’s will and efforts in this process. The meaning of learning is “180 degrees from education, training and instructing. The stimulus comes the two-way flow of ideas, concepts, topics, imagination, vision and creativity when the learner is intimately involved with the learning”.⁹ Lifelong learning tries to keep self-reliance of individuals and not to give ready answers, but to stimulate own reflection and practices of the learner. The paradigm of lifelong learning is rooted in individuals involvement and activity. The subject of lifelong learning refers to reflective activities as well as to developing abilities to act in different contexts and changing circumstances. That is why its assumptions and purposes correspond with subject of civic learning – citizenship as status enriched by citizenship as practice. The civic learning could be understood as the process of “learning for citizenship” which is “linking formal and informal learning, individual and collective citizenship and making dynamic connections between citizenship as a status and citizenship as a practice”.¹⁰ The learning for citizenship includes and combines two inter-relations between learning and citizenship:

⁷ R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, New Haven–London 2000, p. 37.

⁸ N. Longworth, W.K. Davies, *Lifelong Learning. New Vision, New Implications, New Roles for People, Organizations, Nations and Communities in the 21st Century*, London 1996, p. 22.

⁹ N. Longworth, *Lifelong Learning in Action. Transforming Education in the 21st Century*, London 2003, p. 19.

¹⁰ R. Johnston, ‘A Framework for...’, p. 49.

- “Learning about Citizenship”, which “covers historical and cultural understandings as well as information and discussion about rights and responsibilities. This learning is normally developed in designated teaching spaces, is primarily about citizenship as status, focuses mainly on the individual, is preparatory in its orientation toward citizenship and is relatively formal an top-down delivery”,
- “Learning through Citizenship”, which “is drawn from every day” and “likely to involve an element of conscious reflection on and discussion of, different experiences of citizenship. Here the nature of the learning is normally informal or nonformal and bottom-up, the focus can be on both the individual and the collective and it is approach towards citizenship as a practice”.¹¹

The concept of civic learning underlining bottom-up activities of a reflective agent is closer to the concept of “learning through citizenship” but it demands also certain level of civic knowledge which is assured by the process of “learning about the citizenship”. If the schooling formalized system seems to be focused on top down processes of education about citizenship, the museums has possibilities to fulfill complementary functions and conduct non-formal as well as informal processes of civic learning. The problem is how to assure the proper coexistence of both processes: “learning about” with “learning through citizenship”.

MUSEUMS AS A LEARNING GROUND FOR CITIZENSHIP

The lifelong learning embraces three types of learning capacities: “formal (at schools and in other institutions of the educational system), non-formal (in institutions not included in the educational system) and informal (natural) learning”.¹² The museums can provide civic learning process by the means of non-formal education like educational programmes directed for groups of participants, especially from schools. They have also possibilities to conduct the process of civic learning by the means of informal learning which can be provided in the form of volunteering programmes or by the creating expositions which involve visitors to interactions like spontaneous ideas sharing or other forms of cooperation. The comprehensive elaboration of informal civic learning in the museums is a topic which needs separate dissertation. In this paper we will focus on the civic learning as non-formal process which is realized by the educational offer projected and directed especially for organized groups.

The concept of civic learning in the museums rests in accordance with their general definition which embraces service for the society and education.¹³ Moreover, the

¹¹ Ibid.

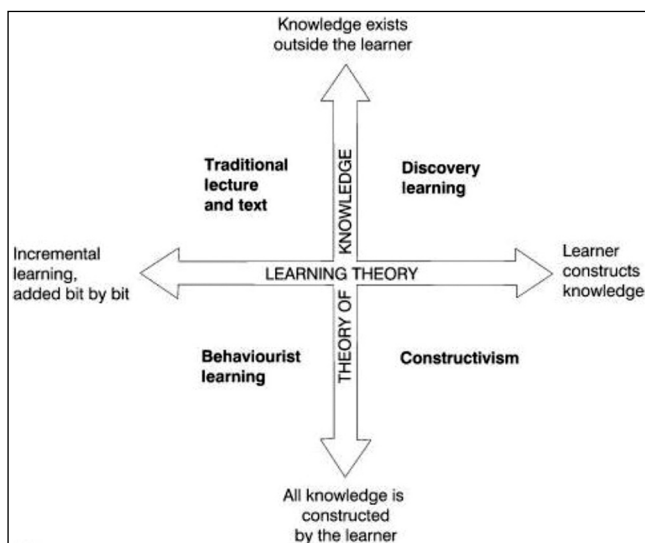
¹² E. Wittbrodt, ‘Contemporary Educational Challenges’ in E. Walkiewicz (ed.), *Lifelong Learning in the Context of Development of Civil Society*, Warszawa–Gdańsk 2007, p. 13.

¹³ According to the definition applied by International Council of Museums (ICOM), “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible

museums are vested with means which allow them to develop learning environment and set differentiated proposals for civic learning. They have infrastructure: public-oriented spaces, staff responsible for education, as well as meaningful exhibits which could take part in the learning process. Museums are respected as a public trustworthy institutions and dispose comprehensive knowledge about heritage as well as communities they serve. These capacities allows them to create promising opportunities for civic learning.

The educational potential of museums has become more and more significant and appreciated in contemporary curatorial practice.¹⁴ With the “educational turn in curating”¹⁵ we can witness the process of evolving functions of the museums where “curating is no longer understood as the mere mounting of the exhibitions; education is no longer understood as the transmission of existing values and acquisitions”.¹⁶

Figure 1. The model of theories of education by George E. Hein



Source: G.E. Hein, ‘The Constructivist Museum’, at <<http://www.gem.org.uk/pubs/news/hein1995.html>>, 18 February 2011.

heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”, at <<http://archives.icom.museum/definition.html>>, 18 February 2011.

¹⁴ P. O’Neill, M. Wilson (eds.), *Curating and the Educational Turn*, London–Amsterdam 2010, *passim*.

¹⁵ I. Rogoff, ‘Turning’, *e-flux journal*, No. 0 (November 2008), at <<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18>>, 1 February 2011.

¹⁶ N. Sternfeld, ‘Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?’, *e-flux journal*, No. 14 (March 2010), at <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/125#_ftn1>, 1 February 2011.

Where is the place of the civic learning in the context of theories of education? These theories could be generally divided into theories of learning and theories of knowledge (Figure 1) which have their practical consequences in certain educational practices. According to model worked out by George E. Hein the theories of education could be grouped on two axes:¹⁷

- the theories of learning could be ordered from assumptions of incremental learning and passive mind of knowledge receiver to the theories based on the assumption that learning is the process of active mind which gives rise to own reformulations,
- the theories of knowledge from these basing on assumption that knowledge exists outside the mind to these claiming that the knowledge is created or constructed individually or collectively.

The civic learning should avoid the means based on behavioral theories of learning and focus on the inspiring the reflection upon the interconnectedness between private and public affairs rather than indoctrinate or shape citizens in accordance with current policy. The civic learning would be placed in the area of constructivist theories of learning combined with discovery learning in which the knowledge is partially acquired and partially constructed by the learner. The constructivist approach is “the possibility of thinking about educational as something that overcomes the function of *reproducing* knowledge and becomes something else – something unpredictable and open to the possibility of a knowledge production that, in tones strident or subtle, would work to challenge the apparatus of value-coding”.¹⁸ Thus, the civic learning is a process connected with internal difficulties of democracy and liberties. It can be seen as the “weak”, dialectic measure of defending civic values in opposition to the “strong”, more authoritarian measures which can danger these protected values.¹⁹ From the one hand its intentions are focused on learning civic competences, but for the other hand the space for autonomous individual reflection must assume the possibility of uncivic choices of individuals which are intrinsic result of independent, critical thinking. Nevertheless, the “weakness” and the riskiness of civic learning empowers the practice of citizenship as it leaves the space for the conversation, negotiations between different values and interpretation of traditions. Thus, it allows the citizens to reproduce the knowledge by dialectic reflection on the relations between different values and interests connected with public affairs and to achieve comprehensive view providing to adequate decisions. “Constructivist educational theory argues that in any discussion of teaching and learning the focus needs to be on the learner, not on the subject to be learned. For museums, this translates into the dictum that we need to focus on the visitor, not

¹⁷ G.E. Hein, *Edukacja muzealna* in J. Skutnik, M. Szeląg (eds.), *Edukacja muzealna. Antologia tłumaczeń*, trans. by A. Bernaczyk [et al.], Poznań 2010, pp. 69-71.

¹⁸ N. Sternfeld, ‘Unglamorous Tasks...’

¹⁹ M. Reut, “‘Ograniczenia’ liberalizmu i samoograniczenie wolności (edukacja jako miejsce sporu o rozumienie wolności)’ in Z. Kwieciński (ed.), *Nieobecne dyskursy*, Vol. 5, Toruń 1997, p. 15, *Studia Kulturowe i Edukacyjne*.

the content of the museum.”²⁰ The civic learning for active citizenships can not be provided as a top-down schooling education process although schools play an important role in civic education. If formal school education is rather top-down authoritative process of content transmission we can grasp learning as the bottom up process of gaining civic competences – knowledge, skills and recognizing values. The civic learning in the museum would be rather non-formal process facilitated by educators. The process of learning could be conducted collectively or individually giving the ideas to consider and presenting different points of view and different dimensions of posed issues. It assumes self-reliant activities of learners which would be allowed to think critically on the basis of received knowledge and which are let to have their own conclusions.

THE POTENTIAL OF THE MUSEUM – TOWARDS THE FUSION OF HERITAGE AND CIVIC LEARNING

Assuming that museum decided to provide not “object oriented”, but rather “learner oriented”, constructivist educational programme there are still problems connected with the question how to link heritage at the disposal of the museums with civic learning process. How should look like these bonding methods or means? The problem of method of civic learning in the museum is also connected with peculiarities of these institutions which range from the entities focused on art, through the others taking up local and regional history to the ones paying attention to natural heritage. Their theme profiles which derive from collections seem to determine their educational potential, but we would argue, that it does not have to limit their capacities for providing civic learning.

The starting point for implementing civic learning in the museum is the insight into learning potential of the museum (collection, staff competences and interests, spaces for activities, partners, *etc.*) and looking for perspective which allows to go beyond taxonomic approach to the collection as well as strictly defined profile and scope of the educational activities. After examining the potential of the institution, the civic learning process can be worked out in two ways. First way would be examining the possibilities of projecting civic learning based on exhibits which are not connected with public (civic) affairs. For example, if the museum’s profile is connected with art, the method of implementing civic learning process would base on collective work like common debates or collective decision making. The visitors can acquire knowledge about the content of the museum by the means of learning that would serve also gaining civic competences.

The second way of merging heritage and civic learning is more demanding and possibly not applicable in each case, but if it is applied it could bring double effect

²⁰ G. Hein, ‘The Constructivist Museum’, at <<http://www.gem.org.uk/pubs/news/hein1995.html>>, 18 February 2011.

merging civic knowledge based on heritage with civic activities evoked in the process of learning. In this case civic learning methods like debating, common decision making and other form of collective work are conducted on the basis of heritage associated with civic affairs and topics. How to set up this connection between heritage and civic issues? The possible method is interpretation of heritage which is not merely explanation of its encyclopaedic meaning. Nowadays the notion of interpretation as a form of education in the museum is not only focused on the content explanation, but it also takes under consideration understanding by visitors and permits creative approach toward heritage.²¹ The notion of “interpretation” was introduced by Freeman Tilden in 1950s and it has been connected with education conducted in natural parks in United States before it was adapted in Europe. The interpretation has two aspects. First refers to the heritage, its preservation and cognition. The second is connected with development of heritage with engagement of audience or communities. According to Freeman Tilden interpretation is educational activity which tends to reveal the meaning of objects by personal experiences and examples rather than by simple transmission of information. The interpretation by Tilden is seen as art which tends rather to provoke than to teach. It is described as active mediation provided face to face with groups of visitors.²² In that point we should consider the role of a person conducting the process of civic learning on the basis of heritage interpretation. In the contemporary museums we can observe three models of educators: mediators, guides and animators.²³ The cultural mediator is the newest term which puts an accent on the process of communication between heritage and the visitors. The mediation is supportive process that takes place between museum as the centre of knowledge and learning visitors. In opposition to mediator we can pose the figure of a guide, a person who transmits the knowledge, takes full responsibility for the visiting group, indicates the way and explains the content of the heritage collected in the museum. The last term “animator” is adopted from the social education and assume active forms of education (animation) understood as dynamic process, developing social relations and using artistic and cultural content as a pretext to different activities. There are two aspects of participation in culture. The first, anthropologic is connected with the most general perspective of human being characterized by existence in culture. The second one is more specific and refers to the way as well as the intensity of human participation in culture and is connected with individual perspective.²⁴ This individualistic approach is the core of cultural animation. “The subject of cultural animation is not culture in general, but activity of a person in

²¹ D. Jacobi, A. Meunier, ‘Interpretacja jako narzędzie w realizacji edukacyjnego projektu ekspozycji’ in J. Skutnik, M. Szelaż (eds.), *Edukacja muzealna...*, pp. 244-249.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-256.

²⁴ A. Schindler, ‘O istocie animacji’ in K. Hrycyk (ed.), *Animacja społeczno-kulturalna wobec przemian cywilizacyjnych. Animacja – animator i jego kształcenie*, Wrocław 2000, p. 11.

culture” and its aim is “assistance in the process of reaching the values”.²⁵ The aims of cultural animation are convergent with the postulates of civic learning which promotes active attitudes of agents in recognizing civic values. Cultural animation inspires individual and collective aspirations, creativity and tries to support development of “personality with strong sense of liberty and responsibility”.²⁶ The cultural animation could be perceived as the process of creating situations which inspire individuals to reflect, to communicate and cooperate with the others. It encourages individuals to active cultural participation in its personal and collective dimension. The subject of cultural animation is connected with citizenship. The cultural animation could be seen as “supportive process” which assist the individuals in acquiring knowledge, skills and recognizing civic values as well as fostering creativity and self-confidence. Each of these elements of the process of lifelong learning defined by Longworth and Davies²⁷ could be find in the methods of cultural animation. The cultural animation plays multiple educational functions: it facilitates personal development, social communication and activates the social environment. That is why the active participation is the central category of cultural animation.²⁸ The cultural animation activates and supports the process of learning through the cultural participation. The quality and intensity of cultural participation depends not only on personal involvement of individual, but it is also dependent on the proposals designed by cultural animator. In this context museum acts not only as a holder of objects but also as an agent able to offer learning experiences to the visitors as participants. The participation is qualitative phenomenon and it can be gradated (Figure 2). According to Nina Simon this gradation is connected with the intensity of participation as well with the relations with the other participants. In the lowest level of participation there is solely vertical, top-down communication between the museum and the participant – the passive visitor receives the content prepared by the museum. At the next levels the participant becomes more active and receives more opportunities to interact with the content. The next levels of participation give the chances to interact with the other participants – to get know others opinions and to discuss them. Thus, from passive content reception conducted by isolated individual we get to active participation and building the relations with the presented content as well with the other participants. The presented gradation leads from passivity of visitor to activity of participant and from individual activities to the collective, cooperative ones. “*Stage four* helps visitors connect with particular people – staff members and other visitors – who share their content and activity interests. *Stage five* makes the entire institution feel like a social place, full of potentially interesting, challenging, enriching encounters

²⁵ Ibid.

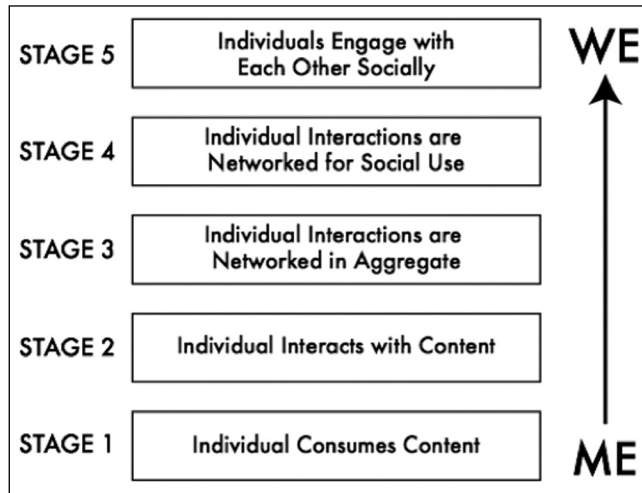
²⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

²⁷ N. Longworth, W.K. Davies, *Lifelong Learning. New Vision...*, p. 22.

²⁸ M. Kopczyńska, *Animacja społeczno-kulturalna. Podstawowe pojęcia i zagadnienia*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 37-39.

with other people.”²⁹ In the model worked out by Simon the higher levels of participation can facilitate the process of civic learning by the recognition of social and civic values in the individual reflection as well as gaining civic competences in the collaboration.

Figure 2. The five stages of social participation by Nina Simon



Source: N. Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz 2010, at <<http://www.participatorymuseum.org/chapter1/>>, 10 August 2010.

The experience of active cultural participation can lead to competent citizenship. The heritage based activities of individuals aroused in cultural field could spread to wider social and civic life. These experiences collected in the museum seem to smooth the path toward social and civic activities outside the museum. According to M.S. Jeanotte “those who participate in cultural activities are more likely to volunteer in other capacities...”³⁰

So far I have discussed major elements of civic learning in the museum: central role of individual with self-reliant reflective and cooperative activities, key role of interpretation in the process of linking heritage with civic matters and the supportive approach of educator as a cultural mediator or animator facilitating the process. If we focus on the role of museum as civic learning provider we perceive that institution not as spatial encyclopedia, transmitting ordered information, but rather as a public

²⁹ N. Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz 2010, at <<http://www.participatorymuseum.org/>>, 1 February 2011.

³⁰ *The Impact of Culture on Creativity. A Study Prepared for the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture)*, Bruxelles 2009, p. 82, cited by: M.S. Jeanotte, *Just Showing Up: Social and Cultural Capital in Everyday Life*, Strategic Research and Analysis (SRA) Strategic Policy and Research, Department of Canadian Heritage, 2003, p. 155.

space for reflecting and debating public affairs – the learning ground for practice of reflective and cooperative citizenship.

TOWARDS CIVIC LEARNING IN THE MUSEUMS – IDEAS AND EXAMPLES

How can museums broaden individuals perspectives linking citizenship as a status with citizenship as a practice – to develop the sense of civility, civic knowledge and cooperative abilities? How heritage based activities can support axiological and praxeological dimensions of citizenship? Let us look at several ideas projected for museums in Poland and examine their potential for civic learning.

1. The simulation of electoral campaign and voting – electoral workshop in The Orava Ethnographic Park Museum in Zubrzyca Górna³¹

At the foot of Babia Góra mountain in the south of Poland in Zubrzyca Górna there is heritage park called “The Orava Ethnographic Park Museum” which presents architecture, history and local traditions of Orava area. In Museum focused on regional heritage there was created electoral workshop for school groups called “You can also become prefect (village-mayor) of Orava”.

In the scenario of workshop a class of pupils was divided into several competing groups in order to work out the best development program of the region on the need for electoral campaign. At the beginning groups received materials with necessary information about the Orava area – its history, basic quantitative data and qualitative features (institutions, problems, main tourist attractions, *etc*). On the basis of selected information about the region the groups were supposed to conduct a SWOT³² analysis of the Orava area in order to organize received information and look for outstanding features of the region and possibilities of its development. After gaining, organizing and evaluating the knowledge the groups were supposed to work out plans of regional development of Orava area and their representatives (candidates for Orava’s prefect) presented them to the whole group. These rather substantive than marketing electoral programs were valued by each participant in the democratic election which was the culminating point of the workshop.

³¹ Electoral workshop was worked out in 2006 in the frames of “Muzeobranie” project (2004-2009), initiated by Małopolska Institute of Culture and conducted in cooperation with several museums of the Małopolska region in Poland. The direct inspiration of the electoral workshop in Zubrzyca Górna was election of local authorities which took place in Poland in 2006. The programme of “Muzeobranie 2006” in Zubrzyca Górna: <http://mikkrakow.nazwa.pl/Muzeobranie06/Muzeo06_zubrzyca.html>, 1 February 2011.

³² SWOT analysis is classical tool of strategic diagnosis. It is composed of four fields of analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and weaknesses connected of analyzed phenomenon. The use of that analytical tool was described in book by G. Gierszewska and M. Romanowska *Analiza strategiczna przedsiębiorstwa*, Warszawa 2002.

The form of educational workshops could be handled as the practice of civic learning which implicates three components: civility, knowledge and cooperation. It could be perceived as the mixture of regional (cultural) and civic education. It allows to increase the knowledge about region its heritage and community, to reflect on them collectively and to use collected information in favour of the region development which could be perceived as the common good. The tasks given to the participants demanded thinking from perspective of person responsible for area development. This practice broadens the horizons of thinking from particular point of view toward civic perspective. It demands activities of learners and involves their creativity to think about the potential of the place and the ways of its realization. Moreover, each proposal had to be discussed among electoral team and the chosen proposal was presented publicly. The role of participating learner was central and the educator only outlined the frames of collective work allowing the participants to create own ideas and to make own decisions. The presented method used local heritage and knowledge about democratic process at the local level in order to inspire civic reflection and cooperation between participants. The knowledge was partially given and partially constructed by participants in the process of collective learning.

2. The practice of political decision making – political game “PRO_POLIS” in the Museum of Apiculture in Stróże³³

The Museum of Apiculture in Stróże, Poland collects and presents exhibits connected with bees and beekeeping. This profile of the museum gave possibilities to go beyond the history of apiculture and to focus on political issues like ruling the country and creating the political systems. In the frames of “Hermes” project there was conducted experimental workshop for groups of youngsters inspired by the organization of the bees’ “community” which became associated by educators with the phenomenon of ancient polis and different concepts of utopia. This political perspective added to biological knowledge about bees was the starting point of educational activity called “PRO_POLIS – country game” which based on selected information about ideal political and social systems (like utopias by Plato or Thomas More).

The participants divided into few small groups were given the role of country governors and their focal purpose was to organize the state in the way which guaranteed the polis survival for specified time. During the workshop participants were obliged to make decisions in given complex, difficult and changing circumstances. The first package of decisions was connected with the process of establishing the polis – its locality and political system (for example the crucial choice was the selection

³³ The educational game was conducted in the frames of project entitled *HERMES. Heritage and New Media for Sustainable Regional Development* financed by European Union (INTERREG III B CADSES) realized from 2005 to 2006 by Małopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow and several museums of the Małopolska region. The results of the initiative are reported on the website: <http://www.swkk.de/hermes/research/Buchbeitraege/HERMES-Band_3/HERMES_vol3_05MIK.pdf>, p. 50, 5 August 2010.

of the valid laws) which influenced the organization of social groups living in the polis. The second set of decisions was connected with current situation of the polis and its changing circumstances (for example appearance of immigrants at the borders of the polis, varying relations with the neighbours or changing natural conditions influencing on the country position). With the shifting conditions influencing on the state the groups discussed the new circumstances, made the decisions and received information from educator about their consequences. The tasks were not easy because many decisions resulted in some costs or losses. The process of decision making was public – the groups of participants could observe and learn from the experiences of other participants.

In this workshop participants had opportunity to gain knowledge about natural heritage (the life of bees) as well as the to reflect on and experience political problems and decisive quandaries and dilemmas of governors. The participants received the opportunity to discover details connected with organization of societies – their social and political structure of ancient or medieval European cities, utopian visions of Plato and Thomas Moore as well as the “social” structure and role divisions among bees. The participants received highly eclectic package of knowledge and during the game they had opportunities to try out the qualities and faults of selected political systems in changing circumstances. The participants could practice the process of decision making, to discuss the political issues in the roles of the governors responsible for the common good – country organization and survival. In this case there was possibility to get broad perspective on political issues, to go beyond particular perspective and to gain awareness of person who makes political decisions, to simulate their consequences for collective life and state standing. The knowledge of learners were gained by debating and discoveries derived from results of made decisions.

3. The exercises with Polish history, political philosophy and spatial imagination – “Build your own state” – workshops for Museum of the Beginnings of Polish State in Gniezno

In the cooperation of Małopolska Institute of Culture and Museum of the Beginnings of Polish State in Gniezno in 2010 there was a double purpose – to link history of the beginnings of Polish state with the need to conduct contemporary civic education. The cooperation resulted in workshop scenario for pupils from secondary schools. The concept of the workshop embraces the basic knowledge about Polish state organization in three epochs: X-XI century (patrimonial principality and monarchy), XV-XVI century (electoral monarchy) and XX-XXI century (parliamentary republic). This knowledge is applied in fragmentary pieces – each pupil receives the card of figure from the past which describes his or her status in the political system and specifies duties, possibilities and limitations of given figure (for example the card of the figure can contain the Polish king from XI or XVI century, bishop, knight, noble man, peasant, townsman but also citizen of Polish state from XX century). The first purpose of each participant is to find the other participants with figures from

the same epoch and to reconstruct the society and political system of the state in the process of sharing information. After gaining comprehensive knowledge each group is asked to illustrate the socio-political system in spatial forms using huge, coloured bricks. So there are projected two processes which demand cooperation between group members:

- the process of getting historical knowledge about state organization in the communication within the groups – between the pupils owning cards with certain historical figures,
- the collective interpretation of historical knowledge in spatial forms with use of “political” bricks.

After having reconstructed power relations in three epochs, each construction made of bricks is presented to whole group with explanation of the projected meanings as well the rules and power relations between figures in each historical period. When the whole group becomes familiar with the political organization of the Polish state in each epoch the pupils are obliged to give back the card with historical figures to the educator. Afterwards everyone is asked to reflect individually upon reconstructed political systems as a individuals who do not know their position or social status and possibilities in three presented epochs. The personal reflection precedes the choice of epoch and Polish state in which they would prefer to live. This exercise is inspired by thought experiment called “original position” described by John Rawls in his influential *Theory of Justice*.³⁴ Hypothetic “original position” assumed that rational, reasonable and equal individuals choose the justice principles in the situation of “veil of ignorance”. In the conditions of “veil of knowledge” nobody knows own future place in the society, social status, the economic and political conditions as well as own talents and psychological features.³⁵ In the workshop the pupils are posed in the conditions of partial “veil of ignorance”, because they don’t know their personal position in the three epochs, but they are vested with knowledge about the socio-political organization in each presented historical periods. Thus, their partial ignorance is confronted with certain political system. The individual reflection – confrontation of particular perspective with the political system is the essence of that exercise. Its purpose is not to convince the participants to the advantages of contemporary liberal democracy, but to make them aware of fundamental differences between presented political systems and their impact on the individual’s condition. The final choice of political system in which would like to live participants could be discussed publicly by the group with the support of animator or mediator. However, this individual choice has to be accepted if we assume that educator (mediator or animator) should facilitate self-reliant and reflective activities of participants.

³⁴ J. Rawls, *Teoria sprawiedliwości*, trans. by M. Panufnik, J. Pasek, A. Romaniuk, Warszawa 2009, *passim*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-226.

The construction of the workshops merges historical knowledge enriched by developing spatial imagination with philosophical reflection upon the relationship between personal and public affairs. This concept joints collective work with personal reflection of participant who:

- learns about different forms of Polish state organization and historical figures which represented different political and social statuses,
- reflects upon different forms of power division and social relations evaluating them after gaining certain level of historical knowledge,
- is provoked to reflect upon justice principles in position close to Rawlsian “original position”,
- recognizes the problems of interconnectedness between individual life and the life of other individuals, as well as broader social and political entities,
- gains civic competences in cooperation with the others (knowledge sharing, discussions, joint decision making, public presentations).

CONCLUSION – THE CIVIC LEARNING CAPACITIES BY MEANS OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Robert Dahl indicated the need of strengthening the “institutions for civic education” or creating new ones able to supplement the existing need of acquiring civic competences.³⁶ Perhaps there is no need to create new organizations, but the efforts should rather focus on the exploration and more effective use of the potential lurking in existing institutions. Described cases reveal potential of heritage and its interpretation which could be used in civic learning practice. The examples sketched above indicated the potential of museums as “institutions for civic education” which can create “opportunities to gain an enlightened understanding of public matters” which were indicated by Robert Dahl as “requirement for democracy”.³⁷

The presented workshops used the method of role playing and simulations which put the participants in certain social and political positions. These measures provoke the reflection on public affairs which is the step on the way from citizenship as the status toward citizenship as the practice, that is “ultimate goal of learning for citizenship”.³⁸ According to Johnston citizenship as the practice could be achieved in two following processes of learning – firstly the “learning for reflexive citizenship” which is followed by “learning for active citizenship”.³⁹ Both forms of learning can be projected and implemented in differentiated museums.

The possibilities of civic learning are based on the implementation of reflective and cooperative methods of learning and interpretation bonding heritage with the

³⁶ R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, p. 80.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

³⁸ R. Johnston, ‘A Framework for...’, p. 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

public affairs. The focal purpose of civic learning in the museum would be creating the opportunities for civic practices: to reflect and to cooperate by means of cultural participation. Its objectives assume the role of educator as the designer of learning environment and supplier of the experiences for learning agents. The educator (mediator, animator) plays supportive role to own discoveries, reflections and choices of individuals – participants of civic learning process. This attitude of educator stems from the assumption that civil society can not be built, but rather developed by active and critically thinking citizens. That is why learning for citizenship can not be provided by means of indoctrination but rather inspiration which respects the foundation of civil society – individual liberty and dignity of citizens.

In presented educational forms the knowledge played supportive role to the process of considering posed questions and issues. The knowledge in the process of civic learning is given not to collect and repeat but to reflect and develop. The civic learning not only provokes individual reflective process but also uses “collaborative learning” in which learners use the knowledge to construct or create own ideas interacting with the other participants. The collaborating learning is a collective practice leading to the involvement, cooperation and team work as well as civic responsibility.⁴⁰

There is one more vital factor which seems to be decisive in successful implementation of civic learning in the museum – the adjustment of educational offer to the specificity of learners (their age, needs, interests, knowledge, receptivity, *etc.*). The expert knowledge of educator together with the empathy towards visitors are critical in the civic learning process. The lack of understanding between educator and learner as well as the boredom experience makes the process of civic learning impracticable. “What we need, is not civic spinach, healthy, but not attractive, but actualized version of scout interlink of values and amusement.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ B.L. Smith, J.T. MacGregor, ‘What Is Collaborative Learning?’, National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at Pennsylvania State University, at <<http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu/pdf/collab.pdf>>, 1 February 2011.

⁴¹ R.D. Putnam, *Samotna gra w kręgle. Upadek i odrodzenie wspólnot lokalnych w Stanach Zjednoczonych*, trans. by P. Sadura, S. Szymański, Warszawa 2008, p. 660.

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