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GLOBALIZATION, POSTMODERNISM AND VALUES OF EDUCATION

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У статті критично розглянуто освітні цінності з позиції освітньої політики, спрямованої на глобалізацію та постмодернізм. Показано контраст між головними інструментами творення цінностей освітньої політики, спрямованої на глобалізацію та постмодерністським дискурсом плюралізму та «антитоталітарним вибором».

Пов'язаність освітньої політики, спрямованої на глобалізацію та плюралізм постмодернізму окреслено з можливим та реальним поділом і фрагментаризацією реальності, особливо освіти.

Ключові слова: цінності, освіта, глобалізація, постмодернізм

Education from the perspective of global politics of education

In European strategies of education in the 21st century, education is approached from the position of current and potential economic, social and technological changes on a global and local level. Education is interpreted as an important factor of economic, social and human development.

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, one of the most current themes is the appropriateness of the educational system today (and in the future) marked by turbulent political, social, economic and technological changes. Especially at a time of crisis about which the Europe 2020 agenda refers to as a time of 'awakening', 'courage' and 'ambition' so as to solve a 'short-term priority' – 'a successful way out from the crisis', and a long-term priority – 'a sustainable future' (Europa 2020, Europska strategija za pametan, održiv i uključivi rast, 2010, 3). The selected strategy of 'sustainable recovery' is in the function of loss recovery, 'regaining competitiveness' and 'boosting productivity' of the marked values in the last decade.

Perseverance on the sustainability of global politics and politics of education at a time of global crisis replenishes the importance of critical analysis, reconsideration of dominant reform discourse and neoliberal ideology in education (Zajda, 2010). Critical examination of the educational politics in the EU, especially educational reforms at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century above all refer to the market directionality of neoliberal politics. More specifically, to the contradictions between the proclaimed competitive market economy and a welfare society. Zajda (2010, XIV) sees 'economic rationalism' and 'neo-conservatism' as a dominant ideology in which education is a 'producer of goods and services' in the function of economic growth. In the global economy discourse about productivity, competitiveness, efficiency and profitability, ideals about human rights, social justice, tolerance and collectivity are in the background. With its development in the direction of a more and more complex social



stratification of 'nations, technology and education', globalization, according to Zajda (2010) 'has a potential to generate further polarization and socio-economic divisions in society, that are likely to create discontent and social conflict' (Zajda, 2010, IX).

A question that is also current in a critical discourse about globalization and education pertains to the possible feasibility of the demands of economic efficiency politics and demands of democratic citizenry. Sahlberg, Oldroyd (2010) claim that the education and schooling models based on bureaucratic, 'industrial' standards do not qualify students for competitiveness and collaboration. Therefore, they advocate for school and pedagogy politics which promotes 'creativity and human capacities for innovation' (Sahlberg, Oldroyd, 2010, 280).

A more specific critical approach to globalization and education manifests itself in indicating contradictory tendencies of educational politics. Waks (2006), in his debate about globalization, transformation and educational re-structuring, has a starting point in the contradictory tendencies in neoliberal countries' educational politics: between the 'bureaucratic standardization of curriculum' and evaluation and 'postmodern diversification' (Waks, 2006, 406).

In the context of globalization and the EU educational politics the dominant discourse is 'education for Europe'. In it, the global politics justifies the homogenization with political and economic reasons – economical and political integration, the response to 'global capitalism'. 'In this context, it is important to find the answers to a sort of EU identity crisis. The EU is nowadays commonly seen as a mechanism of bureaucratic governance and restrictive regulation, instead of seeing it as a guarantee of a good life. Habermas therefore suggests Europe to be associated with guarantees of fundamental rights and values, such as the right to education, social justice, autonomy and participation' (Muehleisen, 2004, 22).

The critical discourse about globalization and education is set in the context of educational politics and practices on global and local levels (Babić, 2007). Although there are specificities in individual discussions, they go from deconstruction to (re)construction. Deconstruction in the sense of rational disclosure of the essence of education from the perspective of neoliberal capitalism and competitive economic European politics. (Re)construction in the sense of necessary changes in the economic dimension of education in the direction of defining moral reasons of current and future politics from the perspective of people's well-being.

Postmodernism and education

What is postmodernism in education?

The discussions about postmodernism and education, postmodernism and pedagogy focus on the interpretation of potential and real dangers and utilities: postmodernism with its criticism of science and scepticism towards reason and reducing science to language games, is seen as a 'destroyer' of European educational system. Different meanings and changeability are seen as obstacles in the making of value orientations important from the perspective of the individual and society, country. However, if the external, institutional values contrast personal values (superiority, obligatory nature as opposed to submission and triviality) then every intentional intervention in the sense of achieving 'project man' without its own value, identity becomes questionable.

In relation to education, the postmodernists, following the logic of plurality



and changeability, criticise the control of educational content as well as the 'domination of one theoretical discourse above others' (Dimitriev, 2008, 175). Furthermore, rejecting objectivity, they 'absolutize the role of the subject in cognition, including his abilities to interpret the world, form his knowledge, determine its contextuality and give his own meaning to things and people, independent of other people's thoughts about them' (Ibid., 178).

In spite of claims that education is immune to postmodernistic influences, I consider it necessary to indicate some of the discussions and projections of the future of education in the context of neoliberal politics and bureaucratic standardization of education. In that light, for example, Waks (2006) in his argumentation of the assumption that 'postmodern diversification' of knowledge will overpower the 'bureaucratic standardization', his starting points are the observed contradictory tendencies: promoting bureaucratic curriculum standardization and standardized evaluation on the one hand, and postmodern diversification on the other. Waks claims: 'economic, social and cultural effects of globalization will pressure these states towards postmodern diversification of educational arrangements to strengthen their perceived legitimacy' (Waks, 2006, 403).

Both the advocates and the opponents of the postmodernistic vision of education (and pedagogy) are at a crossroads between regulation and comprehension of theory and practice. The abandonment of the uniqueness of aims and values, content, methodology of implementation and evaluation of education means deregulation in which critics see a danger of the collapse of society, culture and the individual. To advocates of postmodernism this means a kind of aesthetization of education by means of 'language games' i.e. deliberation feasible in symmetric relations without normativity and repressiveness. Using the words of Ogurcov, 'in the name of equality of sides, in the name of symmetrical relations between teachers and students, postmodernists renounce the 'pedagogical relationship' in which one side (the pedagogue/teacher) is invited to hand over his experience to a younger generation, form it in accordance with certain aims and ideals of education' (Ogurcov, 2001, 11).

Values of education

At global (EU level) and local levels, education is at a crossroads between modernistic and postmodernistic values i.e. between values named as national cohesion and collective identity (freedom, equality, brotherhood) on the one side, and pluralism, diversities and relativism (freedom, diversity, tolerance i.e. solidarity) on the other.

Values, as a sort of prescriptive and restrictive regulation at a social, global level, or values as deregulation in the sense of meaning making through interaction of knowledge, reasoning and practices about values of education.

In the consideration of values of education, the question I find important is the relatedness of instrumentality of global educational politics and plurality of postmodernism with possible and real particularism and fragmentation of reality and the question of the relatedness between the rhetoric and reality of global educational politics about values of education. The contradiction between demands oriented towards the market and individual valued is attempted to be resolved by compromise between market-oriented, guided education and other values in the society in the sense of creating an 'appropriate balance' (Elliot, Fourali, Issler, 2010).



What are educational ideals?

De Ruyter describes educational ideals as 'excellent or perfect values that prevail in education, values that are seen as highly important, but that are not yet realised' (De Ruyter, 2010, 53). He gives a possible differentiation of educational ideals in three groups: 'ideal aims, content-ideals and ideal educational methods or educational approaches' (Ibid., 53). He points out to subjective interpretation of educational ideals and their excellence from the perspective of professionals, parents, students, politics. He thinks that there are two educational aims for all: human flourishing (well-being) and morality – 'being a moral person'. These are also formal educational aims. In argumentation, De Ruyter (2010) uses 'objective and subjective 'theories'. Both justify the given ideals.

Unlike the common interpretation of educational ideals in the sense or-or – the position of exclusiveness, De Ruyter (2010) suggests the connection of objective and subjective – knowledge and belief as rational and emotional components of the excellence of values. However, is the 'personal interpretation' of ideals something individuals, people bind to, i.e. something that binds them, or is it a component of human rationality? Are educational ideals – human well-being and morality – feasible in the conditions of external regulation (of different possibility of choice levels)? The contradictory claim about an 'open-mindedness' and 'critical thinking' as instrumental and developmental values' talks of an approach of compromise which collides with the elaboration of ideals in general and educational ideals.

The compromise between the personal (subjective) and social (commonly accepted, normative) can be an obstacle in constructing theories and practices of democratic education, but also an open path to further unified, market-oriented globalization of educational politics.

The discourse about values of education is mainly directed towards the relationship between education and society's priority values in relation to the ideology of globalization. More commonly in the sense of agreement, acceptance and justification, and less in the sense of critical reconsideration from the position of autonomy and responsibility (individual and social). The profession and the science balance between the passive and active role in transformation of education. Under the influence of the 'global myth' and pressure of 'global standardization', the experts, professional in the area of education 'progressively' participate in the dissemination of the 'semantics of modernization', in the politics of counselling and in 'reformatory' reflections (Amos, Keiner, Proske, Radtke, 2002).

Simultaneous advocacy of autonomy with an expanded functionalization of education, schooling, higher social inequality with democratization (ideal and real), the approach to education as educational practice with intensification of talks about reforming and modernizing education are just some of the contradictions in the global rhetoric about education and its values.

The revitalization of education as a public good is feasible through a discourse based on a dialogue of different society, county interests.

I advocate the dialogue of educational professionals and representatives of educational politics because it has the potentials (it promises) for a reconsideration of educational values and educational politics and for understanding and dialogical construction of social reality.



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