

Educational Tendencies: Private and Alternative Schools

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to highlight the concepts of private and alternative education, and their relationships and interactions. The focus is on the analysis of experiences regarding the work of private and alternative primary (compulsory) schools, with the emphasis on a wide range of practices implemented in particular central European countries in order to promote and implement the parental choice of school. The conclusion is that educational reforms in the region are conditioned by specific cultural characteristics of each country and its local communities. However, what most of them have in common is the fact that they regulated private education by law at the beginning of the transition. Also, the conclusion is that Serbia is still at the very beginning when it comes to the development of pedagogical and school pluralism observed through activities of private and alternative schools.

Key words: *alternative education; educational and pedagogical pluralism; parental choice of school; private education*

Introduction

Given the changed circumstances in the modern world, education has a vital role in providing answers to the challenges of global developmental changes. Since the 1970s to the present day, almost every country has treated the problems of school and education as social issues of high importance. Yet today many people express their discontent with traditional education. Indeed, traditional educational system, its organization and internal constitution, ceased to be functional and efficient, because it failed (by its nature) to respond to the needs and requirements of the modern society. Therefore, there was a need for reforms and changes which penetrated various parts of the world with different intensity and success (Riddle, 2003, p. 340). These reform demands were not something new, since they were mainly focused on the well-established pupil-oriented teaching, on the education that would be closer to

nature and needs of children, on the promotion of active learning pedagogy and the acquisition of useful knowledge and skills, on the development of democracy in society, etc.

Namely, dissatisfaction with traditional schools, expressed both by professionals and parents, has become particularly intense in the early 1920s, when movements demanding the freedom of education have appeared along with the struggle for democratization (Maleš, 1995). In Europe and the United States, in the first half of the 20th century, the movements of “reform pedagogy”, “new education” or “progressive education” have appeared and a number of directions and models were tested to overcome the weaknesses and shortcomings of the school, teaching activity and education as a whole. During this period, several attempts for radical transformation of the internal organization of schools have emerged, the most notable of which were the Project Method, the Mannheim’s Model, the Montessori Method, the Freinet Pedagogy, the Waldorf School, the Dalton-Plan, the Winnetka Plan, the Cousinet School and so on (Matijević, 2001, p. 14). Many of the school transformation efforts from the first half of the 20th century have survived even nowadays fighting against the policy of standardization, and evolving over time as models of alternative schools.

The reform of pedagogy in the early 20th century has undoubtedly contributed to the process of critical examination of the traditional model of education and school system, its theoretical foundation and disadvantages. The process of critically challenging the conventional school system has continued through the following period, and parents were demanding opportunities for the establishment and recognition of educational institutions which were not under direct patronage of the state, in addition to demanding the right to choose the school or the study programme and the right to be informed about what happens in school (Maleš, 1995). The result of this struggle was the introduction of legislative innovations that provide parents with greater freedom of action, establishing alternative schools where this was allowed by the democratic social order.

In this context, the general tendency which specifically shaped the education in the 20th century was the continuous expansion of democratization of education in terms of increasing the diversity of its content, methods and forms of work, and the possibility of selecting among different paths that lead to the required education. In particular, this tendency is expressed by pluralism in education, through supporting the reformed educational and alternative ways of teaching and by abandoning the mass forms of work, and introducing individual or group work (Riddle, 2003, p. 343). While in many EU countries there is a wealth of experience with private education and other opportunities for choice within the public system of education, by the end of the 20th century the issue of private and alternative education has also attracted the countries where the educational and school pluralism were suppressed.

In fact, many countries in Central Europe (e.g. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Slovakia) have started the process of introducing private education

along with the process of transition (Milutinović, 2011). These countries have highlighted private education as a political and civil right, regarding it as a contribution to the pluralism in the post-Soviet society (Sliwka & Istance, 2006). In this sense, the goal of this paper is to discuss the concept of private and alternative education and their mutual relationships and interactions. The focus is on investigating the experience in the operation of private and alternative basic (compulsory) education, with the emphasis on a wide range of practices. The goal of such practice in specific Central European countries is to promote and implement the parental choice of school.

Private and Alternative Schools

One of the basic features of a pluralistically oriented society is that it offers alternatives in all areas, including the field of education. Thus, in societies with a well-developed democracy, pluralism in education has developed along with political pluralism. This means that, in addition to publicly established and funded schools, schools may also be established by individual citizens, civil and teachers' associations, religious communities, as well as local governments and other legal entities (Matijević, 2009). While school pluralism is related to the work of private and alternative schools, it is important to note that these two concepts are not synonymous, and that the terms "private" and "alternative" education are not equal.

The term "private education" is often used to denote education that does not belong to the category of public education. However, the concept of private education covers a wide range of rather different situations. According to the most common interpretations, the term "private education" covers the form of education that is established and funded by individuals, non-governmental bodies or associations which are subject to relevant legislation (*Private education in the European Union, organisation, administration and the public authorities' role*, 2000, p. 10). Within this sector, however, private education in the strict sense, and grant-aided private education are differentiated; while private education in the strict sense is entirely funded by individuals or non-governmental bodies, grant-aided private education receives some financial assistance (which may or may not be significant) from governmental authorities.

On the basis of the established relations between private education and the public authorities, EU countries can be divided into three categories (ibid.). The first category consists of the countries (e.g. Greece, the UK) where private schools do not receive any financial assistance from the state. However, absence of funding does not exclude the control of private educational institutions by state authorities. In addition, church schools in the UK receive some funding from the state and are considered a part of the public education. The second category consists of the countries (France, Italy, and Portugal) where the links between private schools and the state government are established through different types of contracts. Depending on the type of contract,

schools receive more or less significant financial aid from the state. Finally, the third category consists of the largest number of countries, and in these grant-aided private schools have much in common with public schools. In Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland and Sweden, grant-aided private schools are operating under similar conditions as the schools in the public sector. In the Netherlands, for example, the strong financial equality of the grant-aided private and public sector of education is guaranteed by the constitution.

Regarding the alternative schools, it should be noted that they have become especially popular after the criticism of the current public system of education which is commonly seen as failing to meet both social and individual needs (Vrcelj, 2000, p. 34). In this context, some of the models of school reforms from the first half of the 20th century until today, along with the models that were created from the 1960s and 1970s onward, were commonly identified as alternative schools. Thus, the focus is on the interpretation of the term “alternative school”, which is rather vaguely and ambiguously defined in scientific and professional literature. This is not surprising, especially because since their foundation, the alternative schools have supported very different ideas (Milutinović, 2011). It should be noted that they were founded and designed to meet a variety of purposes, operating in rather different ways.

In this context, it would be inaccurate to define a theoretical orientation based on which alternative schools have emerged, although in the 1960s and 1970s many of them have relied on the ideas of humanistic psychology and the theory and practice of progressive education. In this period a direction has appeared which was indicated in the literature as “basic schools” (“fundamental schools”). Established mainly at the request of parents, these schools have turned to the most conservative tradition of the educational process (Mijatović, 1999; Neumann, 1994). Schools for pupils from at-risk groups are another type of schools different from the conventional model.

On the basis of their purpose, some authors (Raywid, 1999) have identified three types of alternative schools: (1) alternative schools with correction purpose are intended primarily for at-risk groups of pupils; (2) alternative schools that have innovative function, involving the introduction of innovative curricula, implementing non-standard methods, partnerships in education, a positive psycho-social climate in the classroom; (3) alternative schools for the purpose of introducing systemic change in education by providing variability in the range of educational options. In this context, some authors (Riddle, 2003) point out that any school or movement could be alternative in relation to some other movement or school, depending on the aspect, approach or criteria that is selected as determining. Here, the term “alternative school” is used from a wider perspective. In a more narrow sense, these are only the schools that were denoted by term “alternative” since the 1970s, at the time of public dissatisfaction with the content and organization of public education and the establishment of schools based on the perception of certain social groups. From this perspective, the main criteria when defining the term “alternative school” is

pedagogical approach itself. Alternative schools are those that work on the partnership approach towards pupils and respect their individual perceptions, regardless of the type of school (public or private).

The above definitions and classifications suggest that there are two different concepts of alternative education: formal and substantive. According to the formal definition, any school that is available by choice within the differentiated school system is considered alternative. The emphasis is on the diversity and freedom of choice. Thus, the pedagogical orientation is irrelevant, meaning that both free and fundamental schools (back-to-basics) may be regarded as alternative schools. The definition of substantive education relies heavily on the definition of formal education, significantly supplementing it by pointing out that alternative schools are characterized by certain types of pedagogical orientation (Raywid, 1983). Thus, we can speak about two “waves” in the establishment of alternative schools. In the first wave, there is the Jena-Plan School, the Waldorf School, the Freinet School, as well as many others that have appeared in response to the scientific orientation of the 19th century. In the late 1960s, a new, more powerful alternative school movement appeared in the United States (Maleš, 1995). The decisive influence was that of the “Sputnik-shock” as the result of the intellectual superiority of the Soviet Union.

Namely, in the 1950s, the level of intellectual decline of American education was clearly indicated, and there were certain requirements for educational system that would result in the higher success of their pupils. This resulted in a bureaucratic, highly organized and programmed education, overloaded curriculum, with little opportunity for freedom and creativity of the individual (*ibid.*). In this atmosphere, public education was radically criticized and many alternative schools were founded and characterized by the following: (1) the emphasis was on the development of close interpersonal relationships among the participants of the educational process; (2) the curriculum was often not divided into teaching subjects, but reflected integrative topics within which pupils acquired knowledge from multiple scientific disciplines; (3) the focus was on active learning, i.e. learning through action and experience; (4) pupils’ self-evaluation and self-assessment were promoted; (5) only few school rules were typically created with the higher participation of pupils in individual and collective decision-making.

According to the substantive definition, alternative schools clearly function on the model of schools that were developed during the reform pedagogy of the early 20th century (Milutinović, 2011). These schools reaffirm the ideals of pupil-oriented education, emphasize the importance of personal experiences, and reject the reflection that there is a single best way of learning for all pupils. In this framework, some authors (Kellmayer, as cited in Nagata, 2006, p. 1) suggest the following common characteristics of alternative schools: (1) a critical attitude toward public education; (2) pupil’s personality and individuality are in the centre of the educational process; (3) family-type atmosphere; (4) the teachers, parents and pupils’ common vision of

education; (5) collaborative spirit and sense of group membership; (6) the culture of care; (7) active participation of pupils, parents and participants in school life and development (school is a “living community”). In addition, alternative schools are often defined as schools with few pupils, where the role of teachers is expanded into counsellors and facilitators, and where innovative teaching methods and contents are introduced, providing a relevant curriculum. While, according to some authors (Neumann, 1994), these values of alternative schools are widely accepted, the ideas concerning specific approach, as school democracy and autonomy, are less compliant.

In general, the meaning of “alternative education” and “alternative school” is variable depending on the place and time. These concepts are manifold and have a number of characteristics, indicating that they are difficult to define. Taking all this into account, the term alternative education hereinafter will be referred to as school education that is distinct from educational mainstreams represented by the state. It is commonly realized in the form of public or private schools with specific, often innovative curriculum and a flexible programme based on the pupils’ interests and needs.

Central European Experiences

In Central European countries, the educational reforms which were initiated by the processes of transition, political democratization and the pluralism in society included the re-establishment of private education and the establishment of alternative schools. The introduction of pedagogical and school pluralism in the region largely represented an attempt to offset the public uniform schools typical of the previous school system. It is noteworthy that in many countries of the region the establishment of private education sector was not only a political issue. The demand for the establishment of private schools was also conditioned both by the specific dissatisfaction with public education and the desire for alternative forms of education (Klus-Stranska & Olek, 1998, 237). Therefore, the high expectations regarding private education emerged as the result of political and educational aspirations, and were based on the assumptions of the quality of private education sector and the possibilities of self-generated changes in the educational process. It is also clear that in the development of the private education sector Central European countries have followed a somewhat specific education policy.

In the Slovak Republic, the centralization in managing schools, that characterized the previous period, neither suited the demands of a new society nor the market. Since 1989, the law included the possibility of opening private and alternative schools, so the country was directed towards further decentralization of educational system and development in the sphere of private schools (Sliwka & Istance, 2006). In the Slovak Republic there is a tendency of verifying all models of alternative schools, regardless of whether these are globally proven and guaranteed by international professional associations (for example, the Waldorf School, Montessori School) or new alternative

schools arising from domestic traditions. Based on the records of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport for the year 2000, numerous alternative schools operate on the territory of the Slovak Republic, most of them public: Healthy Schools, schools applying the programme of “Integrated thematic teaching”, kindergartens and primary schools applying the “Step by step” programme, regional schools and author’s classes. Within the “Change” project, modified Montessori and Waldorf pedagogies (Matulčíkova, 2003) are applied. Less frequent are the Hungarian Tolnai and Zsolnai project programmes, and in provincial schools with few classes the model of Dalton Plan is applied. Waldorf School and Montessori School are official names of some schools in Slovakia.

The most widely applied models of alternative schools in this country are: 1) regional schools representing the Slovak project of alternative schools, the aim of which is to enable a child to develop his/her own identity through the knowledge about national history and respect of national tradition; 2) schools and classes within the “Integrated thematic teaching” (ITT) which is the most widely used innovative (alternative) programme that introduces significant changes both in the teaching process and preparation of course contents; 3) the “Step by Step” programme which does not imply an alternative school, instead, it is an innovation which is experimentally verified and approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport for its implementation in public schools (*ibid.*).

It should be noted that the State Pedagogical Institute of the Slovak Republic carried out a research for the purpose of monitoring alternative schools. The basic research question aimed to gain insight into the rate of success pupils from alternative schools achieve when they continue their education at higher levels. The results have shown that the pupils who finished alternative schools did not feel burdened by school demands as much as the pupils from traditional schools. Also, pupils from alternative schools had a higher degree of positive work motivation in comparison with the pupils from traditional schools. In the parents’ view, the adaptation of children from alternative schools was somewhat more difficult than that of children from traditional schools. According to the teachers’ assessment, pupils from alternative schools were more mature only in terms of self-confidence, while regarding other personal qualities (activity, expressive possibilities, practical skills, interest in acquiring knowledge, etc.) there were no significant differences when compared with the pupils from traditional schools (*ibid.*). Generally, in the Slovak Republic, parents today have the right to choose between different schools at the elementary level, including those with alternative philosophies. The policy goals can be seen in the further development of study programmes to support educational innovation through offering a wide range of opportunities for parental choices.

Education in the Czech Republic is generally characterized by the tendency to decentralize the supervision of educational process and the outcomes of education. At the beginning of the transition process, this country legally offered the opportunity

for private and non-public schools to be established. Educational transformations were characterized by the opening and liberalization of the system, as well as by limiting the state control (supervision) over certain segments such as the development of the institutional structure of educational system. The main changes introduced since 1989 can be summarized as follows: 1) de-politicization of education and training; 2) affirmation of pupils and their parents' rights to choose their way of education; 3) elimination of state monopoly in education; 4) decentralization of management methods (Rydl, as cited in Daun, 2006, p. 88). Thus, changes have covered the structure of the entire system, curriculum, legislation, management, administration, financing systems and schools, and the creation of new school.

In the school year 2000/01, there were 32 private primary schools and 19 primary schools in Czech Republic; the latter were established by religious institutions. During this period, there were seven Waldorf schools, one private Montessori school, five Dalton plan based schools (teaching at three levels of complexity, abandoning frontal teaching approach, etc.), and another twenty schools that have adopted the elements of Dalton Plan (Matijević, 2001). Over the last few years, the number of private schools has almost doubled annually (Daun, 2006, p. 89). At the same time, there are expectations in this country for private schools to become market-oriented and inform parents about their educational profile.

In Poland, with the elimination of state monopoly over the educational system in 1990, the educational choices were diversified, i.e. the law allowed the possibility for individuals, institutions, churches and associations to open schools. Instead of the legal requirement to enrol the nearest school, parents and their children were allowed to opt for the education of their choice. The debate about the quality of education began with the creation of the first private schools in 1998. Some have seen the reduction of inequalities in education as the primary goal of school, while the others accepted the possibility that private schools are funded solely by the parents (Sliwka & Istance, 2006). Differences between the two sides in this debate are reflected in the two types of non-public schools – civil and private.

In this context, private schools in Poland can be divided as follows: 1) entirely private schools owned by individuals or private entities; 2) civil schools owned by civic organizations; 3) private schools related to a specific religious orientation (ibid, p. 53). Most private primary schools are classified as civil schools, operating as non-profit organizations, mostly run by parents and teachers. They are known for a range of extracurricular activities and innovative curriculum. Parents who choose civil schools believe that these schools have better relationships between teachers and pupils, that they meet the personal needs of individuals in classes with few pupils, and offer more comfortable educational opportunities. Schools in private ownership, on the other hand, cover the entire costs with tuition fees paid by parents. These fees are rather high in order to provide enriched curriculum for pupils, comfortable classrooms to meet the parents' expectations in terms of their own private investment.

When examining the development of private education sector in Poland and its contribution to the process of democratization and the quality of education, some authors (Klus-Stranska & Olek, 1998) concluded that private education in this country has contributed to the establishment of the diversity of educational programmes and the introduction of educational innovations to the school system, especially in comparison with the previous period. However, the results have shown that this influence is limited by economic, social, political, and educational factors. Regarding educational innovations, the data have shown that many schools in the private sector have the ability to compensate certain shortcomings present in the public sector. Despite the political and other limiting factors, the study shows that in general private schools offer different approach to the educational process in comparison with the uniform and ready-made state schools.

In Hungary, alternative schools are funded by local authorities. The largest alternative schools are the Waldorf schools, and some of them work according to the model of Celestine Freinet, Maria Montessori and Carl Rogers. Research data clearly indicate that there is a correlation between the parents' educational level and their expectations and behaviour when deciding on their children's education (Sliwka & Istance, 2006, p. 49). Parents with higher level of education in many cases choose the school for reasons other than its spatial accessibility (choosing the school in their vicinity), and thus, they are more willing to enrol their child to another school if the present one fails to meet their expectations.

The development of private education in Croatia began in 1991 by the establishment of private enterprise for providing educational service "Pitagora" in Pula. Experiences obtained by "Pitagora" enabled its transformation to the first private elementary school "Juraj Dobrila", which started its work in 1993 based on the decision of the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Croatia. The establishment of the first private primary school "Juraj Dobrila" was followed by the intensification of the privatization process in Croatian schools. In the school year 1996/97, there were five private primary schools (Krbec, 1999). According to the more recent data (Rajić, 2008), there were eleven private schools in Croatia, three of which teach according to an alternative pedagogical concept.

The establishment of private schools in the Republic of Croatia is controlled by the state supervision board or specific supervision bodies operating at the state level. In addition, private primary schools are partly funded by the state (*ibid*). Therefore, the establishment and operation of "accredited private schools" is limited by certain formal requirements: 1) the level of meeting pedagogical standards – teaching staff, facilities, equipment; 2) including mandatory curriculum; 3) providing the (minimum) quality of educational outcomes that are considered educational achievements, measurable by standard forms of testing and evaluation (Krbec, 1999, p. 271). However, some authors (Maleš, 1995) believe that although the possibility of establishing private schools in Croatia is suggested by legal provisions, they are not represented in sufficient numbers.

Research (Rajić, 2008) which aimed to determine the level of knowledge about private and alternative schools, and reflections on the development of private and alternative schools in Croatia, has shown that teachers in lower grades of primary school, teachers in higher grades of primary school and parents have neither extremely negative, nor positive opinion about the educational activities of private and alternative schools. Research has also indicated that all three groups of respondents lack knowledge about alternative educational concepts. The “Step by Step” and the Waldorf pedagogy are the best known concepts, the Montessori concept is hardly recognized, while the Freinet concept is completely unknown to the teachers in lower grades of primary school. At the same time, teachers in higher grades of primary school estimate their knowledge of alternative educational concepts as poor. Parents point out the Waldorf pedagogy as the best known teaching concept and completely lack the knowledge about the Freinet concept. All three groups of respondents believe that in the next ten years there will be no significant development and increase in the number of private and alternative schools in the Republic of Croatia. Based on the research, it can be concluded that there is a need for raising the awareness of teachers and parents about the activities of private and alternative schools in order to create conditions for the development of educational and pedagogical pluralism in Croatia.

In general, studies have shown that privatization of education in many Central European countries is closely related to the political democracy and pluralism in the society. The introduction of market approach to education certainly left more room for the implementation of free choice of schools and expanded the role of parents in decision making and in school management. Thus, the creation of alternative schools in the region is largely governed by parental demands. Therefore, it can be understood as a sign of increased willingness to express clear demands in the field of education.

Concluding Remarks

In the present European educational surrounding, opportunities for choosing between different schools, both within the public system, and between the public and private systems, are rather a rule than exception. However, it is important to note that the issue of school choice is a somewhat controversial one, since perspectives regarding the reliance on the mechanisms of free market in education are clearly polarized and highly subjective.

Critics of school choice believe that education is not a “consumer product”, but a public benefit by which society achieves its goals (Savićević, 2000, p. 189). The views contrary to the unobstructed parental choice are based also on the belief that the introduction of free market principles in education deepens the existing class and social inequality (Boyd, 2005). Indeed, some European experiences (Ambler, 1994; Butler, & van Zanten, 2007) suggest that the choice of school has a tendency to increase the educational gap between the privileged and underprivileged. The problem naturally arises from the fact that social classes are significantly differentiated by

their motivation, effort and time invested in obtaining information about educational options, as well as the ability to understand and evaluate the acquired information. In this context, the choice of school seems to contribute to social layering by creating opportunities for better-informed parents to enrol their children to the best schools.

On the other hand, the widespread belief is that the possibility to choose the school is an important means of improving the quality of education (Milutinović, 2011). According to the supporters of school choice, the approach of bringing the schools in the position to obtain pupils on principles of the market economy introduces diversity into a uniform educational system, solving the problem of mediocrity in public education caused by the state monopoly. In addition, supporters of private schools point out that the choice of school holds up the rights of ethnic and cultural groups and their identity (Boyd, 2005). The choice of school is also argued to encourage the parents' involvement in their children's education and increases educational opportunities for some poor and underprivileged pupils (Škole i kvalitet [Schools and Quality], 1998, p. 165). In this context, research results (White & Coleman, according to Randall, 1994) suggest that, due to the active involvement of parents, pupils from private schools are more likely to receive adequate education. In turn, most arguments regarding the defence of school choice is based on the view that the possibility of choice is a fundamental principle of a pluralistic democratic society.

Finally, countries where education is marked as a public benefit with a strong belief in equality (for example, Nordic countries) also accomplish and promote educational pluralism. In the case when the relationship between quality and equality is in contrast, the results of the *Program for International Student Assessment* (PISA, as cited in Sliwka & Istance, 2006, p. 57) suggest that at the level of the educational system both aspects can be realized simultaneously: in the countries where the pupils' results are at the highest levels (Finland, Japan, Korea), the lowest level of inequality was also measured in terms of the pupils' social background.

Important issue in many countries of Central Europe is sustaining the conditions of diverse educational programmes (schools), providing the right to education as well as the quality of education. Studies have shown that educational reforms (processes and outcomes) in this region were conditioned upon the specific cultural characteristics of each country and its local communities. However, it is a common occurrence in most countries that private education was regulated by legislation at the very beginning of the transition process. Also, relatively new situation in the countries of the region assumes a significant development of legal and civic awareness and responsibility regarding school choice and parental education. For example, in the Slovak Republic, according to Matulčíkova (2003), the current issue of school choice in fact reflects the lack of parents' experience in decision making and in choosing schools for their children among the listed types of schools that are often attractive, but still inadequately recognized. Thus, it is proposed that the state should solve the problem systematically through the administrative departments of education. While it is

necessary to improve the conditions required by the parents for responsible decision-making, it is also important to monitor and evaluate the educational innovations and support the educational creativity of employees.

Changes in the socio-political environment have resulted in the need for adjusting school system to the demands of the new era in Serbia. Regarding the development of pedagogical and educational pluralism examined through the existence of private and alternative schools, Serbia is still at the very beginning. Therefore, it is necessary to study the historical development, as well as success and failure of private education in Serbia. Positive experiences, especially in the countries with healthy economy, should be evaluated comparatively. Also, possibilities of applying these experiences in Serbia at different levels of education (Savičević, 2000) should be examined. The fact is that West European countries follow a somewhat different education policy in terms of private and alternative schools (e.g., varying financial support is given by individual countries to private and alternative schools). Given the similarity of situation, experiences of transitional countries are very important in order to avoid similar shortcomings in the development of education policy. In order to improve the pedagogical and educational pluralism, it is highly important to examine the level of the parents' awareness, as well as parents and teachers' attitudes towards private and alternative schools, also at the empirical level. The results of such research could assist in the development of private and alternative education, i.e. in promoting school choice as parents' right, and the improvement of the quality of education.

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Odgojne i obrazovne tendencije: Privatne i alternativne škole

Sažetak

Cilj je ovoga rada istaknuti koncepte privatnog i alternativnog odgoja i obrazovanja, te njihove međusobne odnose i interakcije. Naglasak je na analizi iskustava vezanih uz rad privatnih i

alternativnih osnovnih škola (obavezno obrazovanje) s naglaskom na širok raspon primjera u određenim zemljama srednje Europe s ciljem promicanja i primjene prakse prema kojoj roditelji imaju pravo na izbor škole. Zaključak je da su obrazovne reforme u regiji uvjetovane specifičnim kulturnim obilježjima svake zemlje i njezinih lokalnih zajednica. Međutim, većini je zemalja zajednička činjenica da su zakonom regulirale privatno školovanje na početku tranzicije. Također, zaključak je da je Srbija još uvijek na početku kada je u pitanju razvoj pedagoškog i školskog pluralizma gledano s aspekta aktivnosti privatnih i alternativnih škola.

Ključne riječi: *alternativno obrazovanje; obrazovni i pedagoški pluralizam; pravo roditelja na izbor škole; privatno obrazovanje*

Uvod

S obzirom na promijenjene okolnosti u suvremenom svijetu, odgoj i obrazovanje ima ključnu ulogu u pružanju odgovora na izazove globalnih razvojnih promjena. Od 1970-ih do danas gotovo svaka zemlja tretira probleme škole i obrazovanja kao društvena pitanja od iznimne važnosti. Ipak, danas mnogi ljudi izražavaju nezadovoljstvo tradicionalnim odgojem i obrazovanjem. Doista, tradicionalni odgojno-obrazovni sustav kao i njegova organizacija i unutarnji ustroj prestali su biti funkcionalni i učinkoviti, jer nisu uspjeli zadovoljiti potrebe i zahtjeve suvremenoga društva. Stoga se pokazala potreba za reformama i promjenama koje su prodrle u različite dijelove svijeta s različitim intenzitetom i uspjehom (Riddle, 2003, str. 340). Te potrebe za reformama nisu novost, jer su uglavnom usredotočene na dobro utemeljenu nastavu usmjerenu prema učenicima, na obrazovanje koje će biti bliže prirodi i potrebama djece, na promociju pedagogije aktivnog učenja i stjecanje korisnih znanja i vještina, na razvoj demokracije u društvu itd.

Naime, nezadovoljstvo tradicionalnim školama koje iskazuju stručnjaci, ali i roditelji, postalo je osobito intenzivno u ranim 1920-im, kada se zajedno s borbom za demokratizaciju javljaju i pokreti koji zahtijevaju slobodu odgoja i obrazovanja (Maleš, 1995). U Europi i SAD-u u prvoj polovini 20. stoljeća javljaju se pokreti “reformne pedagogije”, “novoga odgoja i obrazovanja” ili “progresivnoga odgoja i obrazovanja”, iskušavaju se brojni smjerovi i modeli kako bi se prevladale slabosti i nedostaci škole, nastavnih aktivnosti te odgoja i obrazovanja u cjelini. Tijekom toga razdoblja dolazi do nekoliko pokušaja radikalne transformacije unutarnjeg ustroja škola, od kojih su najzapaženiji Projektna metoda, Mannheimov model, Montessori metoda, Freinetova pedagogija, Waldorfska škola, Dalton plan, Winnetka plan, Cousinet škola i drugi (Matijević, 2001, str. 14). Brojni napori usmjereni prema transformaciji škola iz prve polovine 20. stoljeća preživjeli su do danas u borbi protiv politike standardizacije i razvili se tijekom vremena kao modeli alternativnih škola.

Reforma pedagogije na početku 20. stoljeća nesumnjivo je pridonijela procesu kritičkog propitkivanja tradicionalnog modela odgoja i obrazovanja i školskog sustava, teorijskih osnova i nedostataka. Proces kritičnog propitkivanja konvencionalnoga školskog sustava nastavio se i u narednom razdoblju, a roditelji su zahtijevali: mogućnosti za uspostavu i priznavanje odgojno-obrazovnih institucija koje nisu bile pod izravnim pokroviteljstvom države, pravo na izbor škole ili studija te pravo da budu obaviješteni o tome što se u školi događa (Maleš, 1995). Rezultat te borbe bio je uvođenje zakonskih inovacija koje roditeljima pružaju veću slobodu djelovanja i osnivanje alternativnih škola u zemljama u kojima je demokratski društveni poredak to dopuštao.

U tom kontekstu, opća tendencija koja je posebno oblikovala odgoj i obrazovanje u 20. stoljeću bila je kontinuirano širenje demokratizacije odgoja i obrazovanja u smislu povećanja raznolikosti sadržaja, metoda i oblika rada, te mogućnosti odabira različitih puteva koji vode prema željenom obrazovanju. Točnije, ta je tendencija izražena posredstvom pluralizma u odgoju i obrazovanju, podrškom reformiranih odgojno-obrazovnih i alternativnih načina poučavanja i napuštanja masovnih oblika rada, uvođenjem pojedinačnog ili grupnog rada (Riddle, 2003, str. 343). Dok u mnogim zemljama Europske unije postoji bogato iskustvo kada je u pitanju privatno obrazovanje i nemogućnost izbora unutar javnoga sustava obrazovanja, do kraja 20. stoljeća pitanja vezana uz privatno i alternativno obrazovanje također su privukla i zemlje u kojima je odgojno-obrazovni i školski pluralizam do tada bio potisnut.

Zapravo, mnoge su zemlje srednje Europe (Mađarska, Poljska, Češka Republika, Slovačka Republika) započele proces uvođenja privatnog obrazovanja zajedno s procesom tranzicije (Milutinović, 2011). Te su zemlje istaknule privatni odgoj i obrazovanje kao političko i građansko pravo, smatrajući ga doprinosom pluralizmu u postsovjetskom društvu (Sliwka i Istance, 2006). U tom je smislu cilj ovoga rada raspraviti koncept privatnog i alternativnog odgoja i obrazovanja te njihovih međusobnih odnosa i interakcija. Naglasak je na istraživanju iskustava u privatnom i alternativnom osnovnom (obaveznom) obrazovanju u kojem se poseban značaj daje

brojnim primjerima u praksi. Cilj je takve prakse u određenim zemljama srednje Europe promicati i provoditi pravo roditelja na izbor škole.

Privatne i alternativne škole

Jedna je od osnovnih značajki pluralistički orijentiranoga društva da nudi alternative u svim područjima, uključujući i područje odgoja i obrazovanja. Dakle, u društvima s razvijenom demokracijom pluralizam u odgoju i obrazovanju razvio se paralelno s političkim pluralizmom. To znači da, osim javno osnovanih i financiranih škola, škole mogu osnivati i pojedini građani, građanske i nastavničke udruge, vjerske zajednice, kao i lokalne samouprave i druge pravne osobe (Matijević, 2009). Dok se školski pluralizam odnosi na rad privatnih i alternativnih škola, važno je imati na umu da ta dva pojma nisu istoznačna, te da pojmovi "privatni" i "alternativni" odgoj i obrazovanje nisu istovjetni.

Pojam "privatni odgoj i obrazovanje" često se koristi za označavanje odgoja i obrazovanja koje ne ulazi u kategoriju javnog odgoja i obrazovanja. Međutim, pojam privatnog odgoja i obrazovanja pokriva širok raspon različitih odgojno-obrazovnih situacija. Prema najčešćem tumačenju, izraz "privatni odgoj i obrazovanje" odnosi se na oblik odgoja i obrazovanja koje osnivaju i financiraju pojedinci, nevladina tijela ili udruge koje podliježu relevantnim zakonskim odredbama (*Private education in the European Union: Organisation, administration and the public authorities' role*, 2000, str. 10). Međutim, unutar tog sektora razlikuju se *privatni odgoj i obrazovanje u najužem smislu* i *odgoj i obrazovanje uz potporu države*. Dok privatni odgoj i obrazovanje u najužem smislu u potpunosti financiraju pojedinci ili nedržavna tijela, odgoj i obrazovanje uz potporu države dobiva određenu financijsku pomoć (koja može i ne mora biti značajna) od državnih vlasti.

Na temelju utvrđenih odnosa između privatnog obrazovanja i državne vlasti, zemlje EU mogu se podijeliti u tri kategorije (ibid.). Prva kategoriju čine zemlje (npr. Grčka, Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo) u kojima privatne škole ne primaju financijsku pomoć od države. Međutim, izostanak financiranja ne isključuje kontrolu državnih vlasti nad privatnim odgojno-obrazovnim ustanovama. Također, crkvene škole u Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu dobivaju određena sredstva od države i smatraju se dijelom javnoga odgoja i obrazovanja. Drugu kategoriju čine zemlje (Francuska, Italija i Portugal) u kojima su veze između privatnih škola i državne vlasti uspostavljene različitim vrstama ugovora. Ovisno o vrsti ugovora, škole dobivaju više ili manje značajnu financijsku pomoć od države. Konačno, treću kategoriju čini najveći broj zemalja u kojima privatne škole koje primaju potporu od države imaju mnogo toga zajedničkog s javnim školama. U Belgiji, Danskoj, Njemačkoj, Španjolskoj, Irskoj, Luksemburgu, Austriji, Finskoj i Švedskoj privatne škole koje primaju potporu države rade u sličnim uvjetima kao i škole u javnom sektoru. U Nizozemskoj je primjerice financijska jednakost privatnih škola koje primaju potporu od države i škola u javnom sektoru odgoja i obrazovanja zajamčena Ustavom.

Što se tiče alternativnih škola, valja napomenuti da su postale osobito popularne nakon kritika postojećeg javnog sustava odgoja i obrazovanja za koji se obično smatra da ne uspijeva ispuniti društvene ni individualne potrebe (Vrcelj, 2000, str. 34). U tom se kontekstu neki od modela školskih reformi iz prve polovine 20. stoljeća do danas, zajedno s modelima koji su nastali od 1960-ih i 1970-ih naovamo, najčešće identificiraju kao alternativne škole. Dakle, naglasak je na tumačenju pojma "alternativne škole", koji je prilično nejasno i dvosmisleno definiran u stručnoj i znanstvenoj literaturi. To ne iznenađuje, posebno s obzirom na to da su od svog osnutka alternativne škole podržavale vrlo različite ideje (Milutinović, 2011). Treba napomenuti da su osnovane i osmišljene s različitom namjenom, pri čemu se i njihovo djelovanje međusobno prilično razlikuje.

U tom kontekstu bilo bi neprecizno definirati teorijsku orijentaciju na temelju koje su se pojavile alternativne škole, iako su se u 1960-im i 1970-im mnoge od njih oslanjale na ideje humanističke psihologije, kao i teoriju i praksu progresivnog odgoja i obrazovanja. U tom razdoblju pojavio se smjer koji je naznačen u literaturi kao "temeljne škole" ("osnovne škole"). Osnovane uglavnom na zahtjev roditelja, te su se škole okrenule najkonzervativnijim tradicijama odgojno-obrazovnog procesa (Mijatović, 1999; Neumann, 1994). Škole za učenike iz rizičnih skupina druga su vrsta škola koje se razlikuju od konvencionalnih modela.

S obzirom na njihovu namjenu neki su autori (Raywid, 1999) izdvojili tri vrste alternativnih škola: (1) alternativne škole s korektivnom funkcijom namijenjene su ponajprije rizičnim skupinama učenika; (2) alternativne škole koje imaju inovacijsku funkciju, uključujući i uvođenje inovativnih kurikula, provedbu nestandardnih metoda, partnerstvo u obrazovanju te stvaranje pozitivne psihosocijalne klime u učionici; (3) alternativne škole čija je namjena uvođenje sustavnih promjena u obrazovanje kako bi se posredstvom niza odgojno-obrazovnih mogućnosti omogućila varijabilnost. Neki autori (Riddle, 2003) ističu da bilo koja škola ili pokret mogu biti alternativni u odnosu na neke druge pokrete ili škole, ovisno o gledištu, pristupu ili kriterijima koji su odabrani kao odlučujući. U ovom se radu termin "alternativne škole" koristi u širem smislu. U užem smislu, pojam se donosi samo na škole koje su označene pojmom "alternativne" još od 1970-ih, u vrijeme javnog nezadovoljstva sadržajem i organizacijom javnog obrazovanja i osnivanjem škola na temelju percepcije određenih društvenih skupina. Iz te perspektive glavni je kriterij pri definiranju pojma "alternativne škole" sam pedagoški pristup. Alternativne su škole one koje razvijaju partnerski pristup prema učenicima i uvažavaju njihove individualne percepcije, bez obzira na vrstu škole (javna ili privatna).

Navedene definicije i klasifikacije ukazuju na to da postoje dvije različite koncepcije alternativnog odgoja i obrazovanja: formalna i supstancijalna. Prema formalnoj definiciji, svaka škola koja je dostupna i koju korisnici mogu birati u diferenciranom školskom sustavu smatra se alternativnom. Naglasak je na raznolikosti i slobodi izbora. Dakle, pedagoška je orijentacija nevažna, što znači da se i slobodne i temeljne

škole (u kojima je naglasak na povratku osnovama) mogu smatrati alternativnim školama. Definicija supstancijalnog odgoja i obrazovanja u velikoj se mjeri oslanja na definiciju formalnog odgoja i obrazovanja, značajno ga dopunjava ističući da alternativne škole karakteriziraju određeni oblici pedagoškog usmjerenja (Raywid, 1983). Dakle, možemo govoriti o dva "vala" u uspostavi alternativnih škola. U prvom valu javlja se Jena-plan škola, Waldorfska škola, Freinetova škola, kao i mnoge druge koje su se pojavile kao odgovor na znanstvene smjerove 19. stoljeća. U kasnim 1960-ima pojavio se novi, snažniji pokret alternativnih škola u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama (Maleš, 1995). Presudan utjecaj imao je "Sputnik-šok", koji je svjedočio o intelektualnoj nadmoći Sovjetskog Saveza.

Naime, u 1950-ima jasno je naznačena razina intelektualnog opadanja američkog obrazovanja, a pojavili su se i određeni zahtjevi koje bi odgojno-obrazovni sustav trebao ispuniti kako bi rezultirao boljim uspjehom učenika. Iz toga je proistekao birokratski, izuzetno organiziran i programiran odgoj i obrazovanje, preopterećen kurikulumom s neznatnim mogućnostima za slobodu i kreativnost pojedinca (ibid.). U tom ozračju javni se odgoj i obrazovanje radikalno kritizira i osnivaju se mnoge alternativne škole sa ovim karakteristikama: (1) naglasak je na razvoju bliskih međuljudskih odnosa između sudionika odgojno-obrazovnog procesa; (2) nastavni plan i program često nije podijeljen u nastavne predmete, već odražava integriranje tema koji omogućuje učenicima stjecanje znanja iz različitih znanstvenih disciplina; (3) naglasak je na aktivnom učenju, odnosno učenju preko djelovanja i iskustva; (4) promiče se samovrednovanje i samoocjenjivanje učenika; (5) obično se određuje tek nekolicina školskih pravila, uz značajnije sudjelovanje učenika u individualnom i zajedničkom donošenju odluka.

Prema supstancijalnoj definiciji, alternativne škole očito funkcioniraju na modelu škola koje su razvijene tijekom reforme pedagogije početkom 20. stoljeća (Milutinović, 2011). Te škole potvrđuju ideale nastave usmjerene prema učeniku, naglašavaju važnost osobnih iskustava i odbacuju stav prema kojemu postoji samo jedan najbolji način učenja za sve učenike. Unutar toga okvira neki autori (Kellmayer, prema Nagata, 2006, str. 1) predlažu sljedeće zajedničke osobine alternativnih škola: (1) kritički stav prema javnom odgoju i obrazovanju; (2) osobnost i individualnost učenika su u središtu odgojno-obrazovnog procesa; (3) obiteljska atmosfera; (4) nastavnici, roditelji i učenici dijele zajedničku viziju odgoja i obrazovanja; (5) suradnički duh i osjećaj pripadnosti grupi; (6) kultura skrbi; (7) aktivno sudjelovanje učenika, roditelja i ostalih sudionika u životu i razvoju škole (škola je "živa zajednica"). Osim toga, alternativne se škole često definiraju kao škole s malim brojem učenika, škole u kojima je uloga nastavnika proširena, oni postaju savjetnici i pružaju podršku kada je to potrebno te u kojima se uvode inovativne nastavne metode i sadržaji koji pružaju odgovarajući nastavni program. Dok su prema nekim autorima (Neumann, 1994) te vrijednosti alternativnih škola općeprihvaćene, ideje vezane uz specifičan pristup, kao na primjer škola demokracije i autonomije, nešto su manje prihvatljive.

Općenito, značenje je pojmova “alternativno obrazovanje” i “alternativne škole” promjenjivo i ovisi o mjestu i vremenu. Ti su pojmovi mnogostruki i imaju brojna obilježja, što znači da ih je teško definirati. Uzevši sve navedeno u obzir, pojam alternativnog odgoja i obrazovanja u daljnjem će se tekstu odnositi na oblik odgoja i obrazovanja koje se razlikuje od obrazovanja koje zastupa država. Alternativne škole uglavnom djeluju kao javne ili privatne škole s određenim, često inovativnim nastavnim planom i programom i fleksibilnim programom koji se temelji na interesima i potrebama učenika.

Iskustva srednjoeuropskih zemalja

U srednjoeuropskim zemljama obrazovne reforme pokrenute zajedno s procesom tranzicije, političke demokratizacije i pluralizma u društvu, uključivale su ponovno uspostavljanje privatnog odgoja i obrazovanja i pokretanje alternativnih škola. Uvođenje pedagoškoga i školskoga pluralizma u regiji uglavnom predstavlja pokušaj otklona od državne konfekcijske škole tipične za prethodni školski sustav. Važno je napomenuti da u mnogim zemljama regije osnivanje privatnog sektora obrazovanja nije bilo isključivo političko pitanje. Zahtjevi za osnivanjem privatnih škola također su uvjetovani i određenim nezadovoljstvom javnim obrazovanjem i potrebom za alternativnim oblicima odgoja i obrazovanja (Klus-Stranska i Olek, 1998, str. 237). Stoga se, kao posljedica političkih i odgojno-obrazovnih težnji, pred privatni odgoj i obrazovanje postavljaju velika očekivanja utemeljena na pretpostavkama kvalitete privatnog sektora odgoja i obrazovanja i mogućnosti samostalnog uvođenja promjena unutar odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Također je jasno da su u razvoju privatnog sektora odgoja i obrazovanja srednjoeuropske zemlje slijedile donekle specifičnu odgojno-obrazovnu politiku.

U Slovačkoj Republici centralizacija u načinu upravljanja školama, koja je obilježila prethodno razdoblje, nije više odgovarala ni zahtjevima novoga društva, ni tržištu. Od 1989. zakonskim su odredbama stvorene pretpostavke za otvaranje privatnih i alternativnih škola, čime je omogućena daljnja decentralizacija odgojno-obrazovnog sustava i razvoja u sferi privatnih škola (Sliwka i Istance, 2006). U Slovačkoj postoji tendencija verifikacije svih modela alternativnih škola bez obzira na to jesu li u pitanju škole koje su provjerene i potvrđene od međunarodnih strukovnih udruga (primjerice Waldorfska škola, Montessori škola) ili nove alternativne škole koje proizlaze iz domaće tradicije. Na temelju evidencije Ministarstva školstva, znanosti, istraživanja i sporta za 2000. brojne alternativne škole djeluju na području Republike Slovačke, no uglavnom su javne: zdrave škole, škole koje primjenjuju program “Integrirana tematska nastava”, vrtići i osnovne škole koje primjenjuju program “Korak po korak”, “regionalne škole” i autorski razredi. U sklopu projekta “Change” (Promjena) primjenjuju se modificirana Montessori i waldorfska pedagogija (Matulčikova, 2003). Nešto su rjeđi mađarski Tolnai i Zsolnai projektni programi, a u provincijskim školama s nekoliko razreda primjenjuje se model Dalton plana. Waldorfska i Montessori škola službeni su nazivi nekih škola u Slovačkoj.

Najčešći modeli alternativnih škola u toj su zemlji: 1) "regionalne škole" koje predstavljaju Slovački projekt alternativnih škola čiji je cilj omogućiti djetetu da razvije vlastiti identitet preko znanja o nacionalnoj povijesti i poštivanju nacionalnih tradicija; 2) škole i razredi u sklopu "Integrirane tematske nastave" (ITN), najčešći inovativni (alternativni) program koji uvodi značajne promjene, kako u nastavnom procesu tako i u izradi nastavnih sadržaja; 3) "Korak po korak" program koji nije alternativna škola u pravom smislu riječi, već inovacija čiju je primjenu u državnim školama potvrdilo i odobrilo Ministarstvo školstva, znanosti, istraživanja i sporta (ibid.).

Valja napomenuti da je Državni pedagoški zavod Republike Slovačke proveo istraživanje s ciljem praćenja alternativnih škola. Osnovni cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi kakav uspjeh postižu učenici alternativnih škola tijekom nastavka školovanja na višim razinama obrazovanja. Rezultati su pokazali da se učenici alternativnih škola, za razliku od učenika tradicionalnih škola, nisu osjećali preopterećeni zahtjevima koje pred njih postavljaju škole. Također, učenici alternativnih škola imali su veći stupanj pozitivne motivacije za rad u usporedbi s učenicima tradicionalnih škola. Prema mišljenju roditelja, prilagodba djece iz alternativnih škola bila je nešto teža od prilagodbe djece iz tradicionalnih škola. Prema procjeni nastavnika, učenici iz alternativnih škola bili su zreliji samo s obzirom na razinu samopouzdanja, dok kod ostalih individualnih osobina (aktivnost, izražajne mogućnosti, praktične vještine, želja za stjecanjem znanja i sl.) nije bilo značajnih razlika u usporedbi s učenicima iz tradicionalnih škola (ibid.). Općenito, u Slovačkoj Republici roditelji danas imaju pravo birati između različitih škola na osnovnoj razini odgoja i obrazovanja, uključujući i one s alternativnim stavovima. Željeni smjer bio bi daljnji razvoj studijskih programa čija je svrha pružanje potpore inovacijama u odgoju i obrazovanju širokom ponudom kojom se roditeljima pruža mogućnost izbora.

Odgoj i obrazovanje u Češkoj Republici općenito je obilježeno tendencijom decentralizacije nadzora nad odgojno-obrazovnim procesom i ishodom odgoja i obrazovanja. Na početku procesa tranzicije ta je zemlja zakonski ponudila mogućnost otvaranja privatnih i nedržavnih škola. Transformacije u odgoju i obrazovanju obilježilo je otvaranje i liberalizacija sustava i ograničavanje državne kontrole (nadzora) nad određenim segmentima, kao što je razvoj institucionalne strukture odgojno-obrazovnog sustava. Glavne promjene uvedene od 1989. mogu se sažeti na sljedeći način: 1) depolitizacija odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i osposobljavanja; 2) afirmacija prava učenika i njihovih roditelja na odabir načina školovanja; 3) eliminacija državnog monopola u području odgoja i obrazovanja; 4) decentralizacija metoda upravljanja (Rydl, prema Daun, 2006, str. 88). Dakle, promjene pokrivaju strukturu cijelog sustava, kurikulum, zakonodavstvo, upravu, administraciju, sustav financiranja i škole, kao i stvaranje nove škole.

U školskoj godini 2000./01. u Češkoj Republici bile su 32 privatne osnovne škole i 19 osnovnih škola koje su osnovala vjerske institucije. Tijekom tog razdoblja djelovalo je i sedam Waldorfskih škola, jedna privatna Montessori škola, pet škola utemeljenih

na Dalton planu (nastava na tri razine složenosti, napuštanje frontalnog pristupa poučavanju i sl.) te još dvadesetak škola koje su usvojile elemente Dalton plana (Matijević, 2001). Tijekom posljednjih nekoliko godina broj privatnih škola koje se osnivaju svake godine gotovo se udvostručuje (Daun, 2006, str. 89). U isto vrijeme u toj zemlji postoje očekivanja prema kojima bi privatne škole postale tržišno orijentirane i informirale roditelje o svom obrazovnom profilu.

U Poljskoj su, eliminacijom državnog monopola nad odgojno-obrazovnim sustavom 1990., otvorene raznolike mogućnosti izbora, tj. pojedincima, institucijama, crkvama i udrugama zakonski je omogućeno otvaranje škola. Umjesto zakonske obveze upisa u najbližu školu, roditelji i djeca dobili su pravo odabira odgojno-obrazovne institucije. Rasprava o kvaliteti obrazovanja započela je nakon osnivanja prvih privatnih škola 1998. Prema nekima je primarni cilj škole smanjenje nejednakosti u obrazovanju, dok su drugi prihvatili mogućnost da privatne škole financiraju isključivo roditelji (Sliwka i Istance, 2006). Razlike između dviju strana u tim raspravama odražavaju dvije vrste nedržavnih škola – građanske i privatne.

Privatne škole u Poljskoj mogu se podijeliti na sljedeći način: 1) potpuno privatne škole u vlasništvu pojedinaca ili privatnih subjekata; 2) građanske škole u vlasništvu civilnih udruga; 3) privatne škole vezane uz određenu vjersku orijentaciju (ibid., str. 53). Većina privatnih osnovnih škola klasificirana je kao građanske škole koje djeluju kao neprofitne organizacije i uglavnom ih vode roditelji i nastavnici. Poznate su po brojnim izvannastavnim aktivnostima i inovativnom nastavnom planu i programu. Roditelji koji se odluče za građanske škole vjeruju da su u tim školama bolji odnosi između nastavnika i učenika, da one mogu zadovoljiti osobne potrebe pojedinaca u razredima s malim brojem učenika i nude bolje odgojno-obrazovne mogućnosti. Škole u privatnom vlasništvu, s druge strane, pokrivaju ukupne troškove iz školarina koje plaćaju roditelji. Te su naknade vrlo visoke kako bi se osigurao obogaćen program za učenike i udobne učionice koje zadovoljavaju očekivanja roditelja s obzirom na njihova ulaganja.

Kada se analizira razvoj privatnog odgojno-obrazovnog sektora u Poljskoj i njegov doprinos procesu demokratizacije i kvaliteti obrazovanja, neki autori (Klus-Stranska i Olek, 1998) zaključuju da je privatno školstvo u toj zemlji pridonijelo uspostavi raznolikih odgojno-obrazovnih programa i uvođenju odgojno-obrazovnih inovacija u školski sustav, osobito u usporedbi s prethodnim razdobljem. Međutim, rezultati su pokazali da je taj utjecaj ograničen gospodarskim, društvenim, političkim i obrazovnim čimbenicima. Što se tiče odgojno-obrazovnih inovacija, podaci su pokazali da mnoge škole u privatnom sektoru imaju sposobnost nadoknade određenih nedostataka prisutnih u javnom sektoru. Unatoč političkim i drugim ograničavajućim čimbenicima, studija pokazuje da općenito privatne škole nude drugačiji pristup odgojno-obrazovnom procesu u usporedbi s uniformnim i "konfekcijskim" državnim školama.

U Mađarskoj lokalne vlasti financiraju alternativne škole. Najveće alternativne škole su Waldorfske škole, dok neke škole rade prema modelu Celestina Freineta,

Marije Montessori i Carla Rogersa. Podaci dobiveni istraživanjem jasno pokazuju da postoji korelacija između obrazovne razine roditelja i njihovih očekivanja i ponašanja prilikom odlučivanja o obrazovanju njihove djece (Sliwka & Istance, 2006, str. 49). Roditelji s višim stupnjem obrazovanja u većini slučajeva odabiru školu zbog razloga koji se ne temelje isključivo na udaljenosti škole od mjesta stanovanja (princip odabira škole koja je najbliža), pa su stoga skloniji upisati svoje dijete u drugu školu ako škola koja im je najbliža ne ispunjava njihova očekivanja.

Razvoj privatnog školstva u Hrvatskoj započeo je 1991. osnivanjem privatne tvrtke za pružanje intelektualnih usluga "Pitagora" u Puli. Iskustva dobivena tijekom djelovanja "Pitagore" omogućila su transformaciju tvrtke u prvu privatnu osnovnu školu "Juraj Dobrila", koja je počela s radom 1993. godine na temelju odluke Ministarstva kulture i prosvjete Republike Hrvatske. Nakon osnivanja prve privatne osnovne škole "Juraj Dobrila" uslijedilo je intenziviranje procesa privatizacije u hrvatskim školama. U školskoj godini 1996./97. djelovalo je pet privatnih škola u osnovnom obrazovanju (Krbec, 1999). Prema novijim podacima (Rajić, 2008) u Hrvatskoj djeluje jedanaest privatnih škola, od kojih se u tri poučava prema alternativnom pedagoškom konceptu.

Osnivanje privatnih škola u Republici Hrvatskoj pod kontrolom je državnog odbora za nadzor ili posebnih nadzornih tijela koja djeluju na državnoj razini. Osim toga, privatne osnovne škole dijelom financira i država (ibid.). Dakle, osnivanje i rad "privatnih škola s pravom javnosti" ograničeno je određenim formalnim uvjetima: 1) na razini zadovoljavanja pedagoških standarda – nastavno osoblje, objekti, oprema; 2) uključivanje u nastavu obveznog nastavnog plana i programa; 3) osiguranje (minimalnih) kvalitetnih odgojno-obrazovnih ishoda koji se smatraju odgojno-obrazovnim postignućima, a mogu se izmjeriti standardnim oblicima testiranja i evaluacije (Krbec, 1999, str. 271). Međutim, neki autori (Maleš, 1995) smatraju da, unatoč činjenici da je zakonskim odredbama omogućena uspostava privatnih škola u Hrvatskoj, te škole još uvijek nisu zastupljene u dovoljnom broju.

Naime, rezultati istraživanja (Rajić, 2008) čiji je cilj bio utvrditi razinu znanja o privatnim i alternativnim školama, kao i stavove o razvoju privatnih i alternativnih škola u Hrvatskoj, pokazali su da učitelji u nižim razredima osnovne škole, nastavnici u višim razredima osnovne škole i roditelji nemaju ni izrazito negativno, ni izrazito pozitivno mišljenje o odgojno-obrazovnom djelovanju privatnih i alternativnih škola. Istraživanje je također pokazalo nedostatak znanja o alternativnim obrazovnim konceptima u sve tri skupine ispitanika. "Korak po korak" i waldorfska pedagogija najpoznatiji su koncepti, Montessori koncept prepoznat je u znatno manjoj mjeri, dok je Freinetov koncept posve nepoznat među učiteljima u nižim razredima osnovne škole. Istovremeno, nastavnici u višim razredima osnovne škole procjenjuju svoje znanje o alternativnim odgojno-obrazovnim konceptima kao loše. Roditelji ističu waldorfsku pedagogiju kao najpoznatiji koncept nastave i također iskazuju potpun nedostatak znanja o Freinetovu konceptu. Sve tri skupine ispitanika vjeruju da u sljedećih deset godina neće doći do značajnog razvoja i povećanja broja privatnih i

alternativnih škola u Republici Hrvatskoj. Na temelju istraživanja može se zaključiti da postoji potreba za podizanjem svijesti nastavnika i roditelja o aktivnostima privatnih i alternativnih škola u cilju stvaranja preduvjeta za razvoj odgojno-obrazovnog i pedagoškog pluralizma u Hrvatskoj.

Općenito, istraživanja su pokazala da je privatizacija obrazovanja u mnogim zemljama srednje Europe tijesno povezana s političkom demokracijom i pluralizmom u društvu. Uvođenje tržišnog pristupa u odgoj i obrazovanje sigurno je ostavilo više prostora za slobodan izbor škole i proširilo ulogu roditelja u donošenju odluka i upravljanju školom. Dakle, pokretanje alternativnih škola u regiji uglavnom je regulirano zahtjevima roditelja. Stoga to može biti shvaćeno kao znak povećane spremnosti da izraze jasne zahtjeve u području odgoja i obrazovanja.

Zaključne napomene

U sadašnjem europskom odgojno-obrazovnom okruženju mogućnosti odabira između različitih škola, kako unutar javnog sustava, tako i između javnog i privatnog sustava, uglavnom su pravilo, a ne iznimka. Međutim, važno je napomenuti da je pitanje izbora škole pomalo kontroverzno, jer su perspektive koje se odnose na oslanjanje na mehanizme slobodnog tržišta u odgoju i obrazovanju jasno polarizirane i izrazito subjektivne.

Kritičari mogućnosti izbora škole vjeruju da obrazovanje nije “potrošački proizvod”, već javno dobro s pomoću kojega društvo ostvaruje svoje ciljeve (Savićević, 2000, str. 189). Stavovi onih koji se protive mogućnosti roditelja da nesmetano izaberu školu također se temelje na uvjerenju da uvođenje načela slobodnog tržišta u odgoj i obrazovanje produbljuje postojeće klasne i društvene razlike (Boyd, 2005). Doista, neka europska iskustva (Ambler, 1994; Butler i van Zanten, 2007) ukazuju na to da mogućnost izbora škole može povećati obrazovni jaz između povlaštenih i deprivilegiranih. Problem naravno proizlazi iz činjenice da se društveni slojevi znatno razlikuju po svojoj motivaciji, trudu i vremenu uloženom u dobivanje informacija o odgojno-obrazovnim mogućnostima, kao i po sposobnosti razumijevanja i vrednovanja prikupljenih informacija. U tom kontekstu čini se da izbor škole doprinosi socijalnom raslojavanju pružanjem mogućnosti bolje informiranim roditeljima da upišu svoju djecu u najbolje škole.

S druge strane rasprostranjeno je uvjerenje da je mogućnost odabira škole važno sredstvo poboljšanja kvalitete odgoja i obrazovanja (Milutinović, 2011). Prema pristalicama slobodnog izbora škole pristup po kojemu se škole dovode u poziciju da dobivaju učenike prema principu tržišne ekonomije predstavlja raznolikost u jednolikom sustavu odgoja i obrazovanja i time rješava probleme prosječnosti u javnom obrazovanju uzrokovane državnim monopolom. Osim toga, zagovornici privatnih škola ističu da izbor škole podržava prava etničkih i kulturnih skupina i njihov identitet (Boyd, 2005). Također se smatra da izbor škole potiče uključivanje roditelja u obrazovanje njihove djece i povećava odgojno-obrazovne mogućnosti za

neke siromašne i deprivilegirane učenike (Škole i kvaliteta, 1998, str. 165). U tom kontekstu rezultati istraživanja (White i Coleman, prema Randall, 1994) pokazuju da je, zahvaljujući aktivnom sudjelovanju roditelja, vjerojatno da će učenici iz privatnih škola dobiti odgovarajuću edukaciju. S druge strane većina argumenata u korist izbora škole temelji se na stavu da je mogućnost izbora temeljno načelo pluralističkog demokratskog društva.

Napokon, u zemljama u kojima se odgoj i obrazovanje smatra javnim dobrom s posebnim naglaskom na jednakosti (npr. u nordijskim zemljama) također se ostvaruje i promiče pluralizam u odgoju i obrazovanju. U slučaju kada je odnos između kvalitete i jednakosti u suprotnosti, rezultati *Programa za međunarodnu procjenu učenika* (PISA, prema Sliwka & Istance, 2006, str. 57) sugeriraju da je na razini odgojno-obrazovnog sustava moguće istodobno realizirati oba aspekta: u zemljama u kojima je uspjeh učenika na najvišoj razini (Finska, Japan, Koreja) najniža razina nejednakosti izmjerena je također s obzirom na društveno podrijetlo učenika.

Važno pitanje u mnogim zemljama srednje Europe jest održavanje različitih odgojno-obrazovnih programa (škola), pod uvjetom da se osigura pravo na obrazovanje, kao i na kvalitetu obrazovanja. Istraživanja su pokazala da su reforme u području odgoja i obrazovanja (proces i ishodi) u toj regiji uvjetovane specifičnim kulturnim obilježjima svake pojedine zemlje i njezinih lokalnih zajednica. Međutim, uobičajena je pojava u većini zemalja da zakonodavstvo regulira privatni odgoj i obrazovanje na samom početku tranzicijskog procesa. Također, relativno nova situacija u zemljama regije pretpostavlja značajan razvoj pravne i građanske svijesti i odgovornosti s obzirom na izbor škole i stupanj obrazovanja roditelja. Na primjer, u Slovačkoj Republici, prema Matulčikovej (2003), tekuće pitanje izbora škole zapravo odražava nedostatak iskustva kod roditelja u odlučivanju i izboru škole za svoju djecu među ponuđenim tipovima škola koje su često atraktivne, ali još uvijek nedovoljno prepoznate. Dakle, predlaže se da bi država trebala riješiti problem sustavno posredstvom upravnih odgojno-obrazovnih odjela. Potrebno je stvoriti preduvjete kako bi roditelji mogli odgovorno donositi odluke, ali je također važno pratiti i vrednovati obrazovne inovacije i podupirati kreativnost zaposlenika u odgojno-obrazovnom sustavu.

Promjene u društveno-političkom okruženju rezultirale su potrebom za prilagodbom školskog sustava zahtjevima novoga doba u Srbiji. S obzirom na razvoj pedagoškog i obrazovnog pluralizma koji se ispituje preko postojanja privatnih i alternativnih škola, može se reći da je Srbija još uvijek na samom početku. Dakle, potrebno je proučiti povijesni razvoj, ali i uspjehe i neuspjehe privatnog školstva u Srbiji. Pozitivna iskustva, posebno u zemljama koje imaju zdravu ekonomiju, treba vrednovati komparativnim pristupom. Također, treba uzeti u obzir moguće načine primjene tih iskustava u Srbiji, na različitim razinama obrazovanja (Savićević, 2000). Činjenica je da zemlje zapadne Europe slijede nešto drugačiju politiku obrazovanja kada su u pitanju privatne i alternativne škole (npr. postoji razlika u iznosu financijske potpore koja se u pojedinim zemljama dodjeljuje privatnim i alternativnim školama).

S obzirom na sličnost situacije iskustva tranzicijskih zemalja vrlo su važna kako bi se izbjegli slični nedostaci u razvoju obrazovne politike. U cilju poboljšanja pedagoškog i obrazovnog pluralizma vrlo je važno i s empirijskog aspekta ispitati razinu svijesti roditelja, kao i stavove roditelja i nastavnika prema privatnim i alternativnim školama. Rezultati takvog istraživanja mogli bi pomoći razvoju privatnog i alternativnog odgoja i obrazovanja, tj. promicanju prava roditelja na izbor škole te poboljšanje kvalitete odgoja i obrazovanja.

Napomena

U radu su prikazani rezultati projekta „Pedagoški pluralizam kao osnova strategije obrazovanja,” br. 179036 (2011.-2014.), čiju provedbu financira Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije.