

A Generic Model of “the” Education System for the Purposes of Making Critical Comparisons and Policy

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Abstract

The education system per se, despite its central position in the field of study proclaimed by the scholarly community of Comparative and International Education, has never taken a central stage/role in Comparative and International Education scholarly enquiry. Through the various stages of its history, Comparative and International Education research has either focused on the societal-contextual forces (geography, demography, social system, economy, political system, religio-philosophical viewpoints) shaping education or on the societal outcomes/effects of education, to such an extent that the education system has always remained the blind spot in the centre of the field. A model explaining the structure of the education system which shows the components of “the” education system and their interrelationships has resultantly not been developed. This article attempts to address this shortcoming by discussing and outlining the structure of the education system on the basis of recent epistemological developments. Four components of the education system, along with their elements, are identified: education system policy, organisation and administration, structure for teaching, and support services.

Key words: *Comparative Education; education; education system; post-modernism.*

Introductory Remarks

The argument offered in this article has a two-fold thrust. We firstly argue that the study of the phenomenon (*the structure of*) education system as such has been neglected to the extent that, being a subject of study and research in Comparative Education –

located as it actually should be at the center of the field of Comparative Education—has suffered from the “black box syndrome”. The first part of the article will be devoted to an elucidation of this problem. In the second part, we will attempt to address the problem by reflecting on how we could approach and describe *the education system* in modern-day parlance, in a manner that would be appropriate for the post-modern and even post-post-modern social and cultural conditions and practices in which comparative educationists nowadays live and ply their trade.

The “Black Box Syndrome”

The term “black box syndrome” refers to the fact that the phenomenon *the education system* as such seems to be suffering from the tendency in the past among scholars in the field to show a preference for focusing on what goes on outside of the education system rather than attending to the development of knowledge about the system as such, as a researchable phenomenon in its own right (cf. Kelly, Arnove, & Altbach, 1982; Wolhuter, 2008). Their emphasis has always tended to be either on the surrounding community and social conditions as formative influences on the nature and structure of the education system, or conversely, on the effect of the education system on society. The education system *per se* has never taken the center stage in Comparative Education scholarship despite being widely recognized as a subject of Comparative Education. A model explaining the essential structure (components and their functions and interrelationships) and features of the education system has resultantly not been developed. In the post-World War II period, for instance, the attention has been rather on the impact of the education system on economic growth and on national and international modernization.

The fact that – since approximately halfway through the 50 years of the existence of the *Comparative Education Review* (1957-2006) – the number of discussions about the shaping forces and the effects of societal forces on education and the education system has eclipsed those dealing with education and education systems *per se*, also attests to the existence of the “black box syndrome” as far as the study of *the education system* is concerned. Our contention that a model explicating the structure of education has never been developed is supported by the fact that EBSCO Host, Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus as well as Google Scholar searches for the period from 2010 to 2014 yielded no articles with the phrase “structure of the education system” in their titles. To some extent, this tendency might be the continuation of a long-standing preference among scholars in the field. During the first half of the 20th century, Hans, Mallinson, Kandel, Schneider and other exponents of Comparative Education seem to have preferred to focus on the societal forces that determined the nature of education systems, such as geography, demography, social composition, economics, politics, religion and so on – and seldom on the structure of the education system as such.

The above should not be construed, however, that we are claiming that no work at all has been done on the phenomenon referred to as *the education system*. Scholars in the field of Comparative Education have always been interested in the functional-structural

characteristics of education systems (referred to as “issues in the education system”) (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007), but this has seldom been their main focus of interest.

This relative lack of particular interest in the structural characteristics of education systems and their constituent parts (Wolhuter & Popov, 2007) could possibly be ascribed to the fact that scholars tend to conflate the notions *school system* (institutional fabric/education ladder) and *education system*. The leaflet entitled *The Structure of the European Education Systems 2014/15: Schematic Diagrams* (Vansteenkiste, 2014), for instance, states: “...the diagrams show the mainstream education programmes considered to be the most representative in each country. This encompasses early childhood education provided in publicly subsidised and accredited centre based settings for children from the youngest age of enrolment. Primary and secondary education programmes follow and these largely comprise the period of compulsory education in all countries. Finally, the diagrams show post-secondary non-tertiary programmes as well as the main programmes offered at tertiary level”. This conflation is also observable in the *Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction* (2010) of UNESCO’s International Institute for Education Planning. In Chapter 33, thereof, entitled *Structure of the Education System*, the authors provide definitions of the education system that cover decentralization, community support of schools, local control as the names given to the transfer of authority (and responsibility) for the financing or governance of schools to a sub-national agency. The *Guidebook* clearly focuses on the education system and its management (IIEP, 2006). This approach is typical of many recent studies into the structure of education system: it enumerates a few aspects of a schools system, not all the various constituent parts of the entire education system and their co-functioning.

However, notwithstanding the reasons for the lack of research into the requirements for successful education system structures, it is important to revisit and reopen the debate about the structure of education systems and the characteristics of “the” education system. This ought to be done to strengthen our insight into the fabric of education systems in order to shape them to meet the challenges of modern-day education.

The previously somewhat neglected focus on the structure of education systems has also become important since the world in which education systems function has changed. New technologies have an impact on the types of education on offer, such as distance education, blended learning, and implementation of information and communication technology in learning. New management approaches tend to affect control structures in the education system, new competencies tend to have an impact on teacher and learner support, and on teaching and learning settings. A renewed focus on the structure of education system has also become necessary to inform education planners with the best current practices about the various facets of an education system and complex integrative nature of its constituent parts. Take, for example, an education planner charged with the task of planning a curriculum in a particular education system. S/he must be able to master the best practices available to the curriculum design, and s/he can only do this by considering the components

of the education system that could have an influence on the curriculum design, such as education levels, nature of education institutions involved, implications of her/his work for pre-service and in-service teacher education, nature of learner qualifications, language of teaching and learning, and required physical facilities – and s/he can only do this if s/he constantly focuses on different parts of the education system. (The lack of such a focus can arguably be blamed for a failure of the outcomes-based education system that was introduced in South Africa in 2005. It arguably failed due to insufficient planning in terms of, among others, the required teacher training, as well as the provision of learning materials and physical facilities.)

Another reason for revisiting the phenomenon *the education system* as such is to see whether we are on the right track as education system scholars and planners in view of the rise of some new epistemological developments in the form of post- and post-postfoundationalism. As will be argued below, an examination of what should be regarded as essential or generic features of “the” education system gives us an opportunity to examine the issue of universals and particulars from a new vantage point, and also to ask a number of critical interpretive and social-constructivist questions about how education systems on the ground, in actual practice, could be used and abused, applied and even exploited.

In order to revisit the phenomenon *the education system* as such, we structured this article as follows. The next section attempts to clear up some of the methodological and conceptual undergrowth, and then an exposition of a structural-functional model of “the” education system follows, after which the structural-functional generic model is assessed from a social-critical viewpoint.

A Few Notes on the Method: Post-postfoundationalism, Concepts of Universals and Uniqueness, Interpretivism, Social Constructivism and Criticism

The task of describing an education system in general or universal terms confronts scholars with an interesting conundrum. Recent epistemological developments have led to the scholarly orientations that have become known as post-foundationalism (closely associated with post-modernism and post-structuralism) and post-post-foundationalism (an epistemological reaction to post-foundationalism). The technicalities of these distinctions need not concern us here¹; suffice it to say that these epistemological developments have led to difficulties regarding the problem of the relationship between universals and individuals or particulars.

¹ Space does not allow a detailed discussion of post-postfoundationalism. After the peer review of this article, this footnote will be replaced with one containing references to other publications by authors of this article in which foundationalism, post-foundationalism (post-modernism) and post-postfoundationalism are discussed and contrasted, and shown how they respectively impact on pedagogical theory and praxis. This article merely needs to touch on the effect of post-postfoundationalism on research into the phenomenon *the education system* in an attempt to explain why research into this phenomenon nowadays tend to differ from those in the previous eras.

Post-foundationalists and post-postfoundationalists tend to reject universal(istic) claims –in this case with regard to “the” education system – because of their renouncement of the so-called grand narratives that do not take into account contingent contexts (Wilber, 2000, p. xi). Van Goor, Heyting and Vreeke (2004) put this insight as follows: “Claims of unity, certainty, and universality ... are always [in the opinion of post- and post-postfoundationalists] taken up and protected by situated, embodied persons. They are thus ... not possibly universal, ultimate, or certain.” What this means for the problem at hand, namely description of “the” education system, is that doing so in general or universalistic terms has come under attack, particularly when such descriptions overlook and negate the contexts in which particular education systems can be found and where they function in real life. According to this orientation, there can be no positivistic objective description of “the” education system; all systems are context-bound, contingent and particular.

In view of the above, post-foundationalists and post-postfoundationalists suspect scholars who still entertain the possibility of formulating universals of thinking along foundationalist lines, in other words they tend to think in terms of *certain and firm* claims that can be rationally justified on the basis of founding principles that are deemed to be self-evidently true (Van Goor, Heyting, & Vreeke, 2004). Post-foundationalists and post-postfoundationalists, in reaction to such a modernistic-rationalistic approach, tend to emphasize the local contextual basis of any claim about education systems. They prefer not to make claims about universals *per se* (here generalized statements about education systems in general) but rather to see each claim about an education system as related to a particular context and with a view to its practical impact on the ground, i.e. where it serves a certain group or community.

Less radical post-foundationalists and post-postfoundationalists, including the authors of this paper, are prepared to retain conditionally the notion of universals. In their opinion, “denying universalism does not necessarily mean [only] particularism; ... rather, emphasizing the embedded [i.e. contextual] nature of knowledge [including claims about universals] draws attention to the interactive dimensions of justification” [i.e. appeal to a certain principled foundation] (Van Goor, Heyting, & Vreeke, 2004). However, the validity of all claims of a universalistic nature in the end depends on the contextual nature of such claims (Van Goor, Heyting, & Vreeke, 2004).

Apart from the fact that there has recently been a controversy about whether one should approach the problem of universals and particulars from a foundationalist, post-foundationalist or post-postfoundationalist epistemological orientation, a study of the theory regarding universals shows that there has also been a long-standing controversy about whether universals indeed exist, whether they have an ontological status or are just the names for categories created by the human intellect (Smollett, 2002, no page number), whether they are instantiated or non-instantiated constructs, whether Platonic or Aristotelian Realism or (Trope) Nominalism is the correct approach to thinking about universals, or whether universals are *ante res*, *in res* or *post res* (before the things, in the things or after the things).

For purposes of the investigation reported in this article, we approached universals as useful tools for drawing theoretical inferences, but we decided to approach them from a post-postfoundationalist vantage point. To put it differently, we accepted the usefulness of the notion of “universals”, but we did not see them as ontological entities that can exist in and of themselves in any objective or hypostatic manner (i.e. as essential and independent realities all on their own). For example, the universal *tree* exists as a notion or theoretical construct, but not as a concrete “thing” that one would encounter in real life. One only finds pine trees, apple trees, orange trees, marula trees and so on in real life: the universal only appears in a concrete, contingent and contextualized form. Put in the parlance of recent epistemological discussions, we do not associate ourselves with a rationalistic-modernistic-foundationalistic orientation in terms of which we could speak of *the education system* as if it indeed existed. On the basis of our post-postfoundationalistic epistemological orientation, we accept and work with the universal *notion of the education system*, but we immediately add the rider that such a phenomenon is nowhere to be found in real life – only in the context of a particular education system, such as the Malaysian education system or the Zambian education system.

There is yet another pre-theoretical and methodological problem to deal with when one refers to the notion of “the” education system, and that is the question, from what is it derived? Is the *notion* regarded, foundationalistically, as a kind of Platonic ideal type, conceived in the mind of a theoretical thinker about education systems, or has it been derived inductively from the observation of education systems as they appear contingently and context-bound in real life? In the present case, our notion of “the” education system was reached on the basis of the latter approach, namely planned, systematic observations making use of analysis and synthesis. We agreed with the point, made more than a century ago by Pichler (1912), that science, in this case education systems studies, would be generally impossible without the recognition of universals. Without such a recognition, science would be degraded to the description of successive impressions or to “barren Empiricism and Materialism”. We avoided this pitfall by drawing a universalized or generalized picture from our observations of all kinds of education systems on the ground. Our post-postfoundationalist orientation, particularly our wish to reach a wide reflective equilibrium (optimal communal understanding), enabled us to steer between absolutism in terms of universals on the one hand, and the possible relativism inherent in focusing only on one particular education system and/or the respective and widely diverse contingent contexts of many particular education systems, on the other (Muller, 2011; Van Huyssteen, 2006).

The essence of *in casu* the education system is expressed in the form of abstract “objects” or terms (Smollett, 2002). Universals, as MacLeod and Rubenstein (2006, no page number) observed, are a class of mind-independent “entities” postulated to ground and explain the relations of qualitative identity and resemblance among individual persons, incidences or circumstances. Universals as such, as mentioned

before, therefore do not exist; they only appear in a concretized, particular and individual form as this or that particular education system.

As a result of the approach above, the outline of the structure of “the” education system below at first might appear to be based on a positivistic structural-functionalist perspective; this can be ascribed to our view that each community constructs an education system for the specific purpose of providing effective education to its own members. We would therefore argue that there is also a place for a structural-functionalist perspective regarding education systems. According to this, an education system should serve the interests and education needs of all the members of the community in which such an education system functions; it must strive at the social good, at making society collectively stronger, at raising social vitality (Wright, 2009). However, while we see a place for a structural-functionalist view of education systems, we have at the same time to be critical of how education systems could be abused to serve the interests of the powerful in a particular society, such as those who wield political or economic power. Therefore, our portrayal of the education system below should not be construed to mean that we overlook the possibility of individuals and interest groups abusing the education system to serve their interests to the detriment of the less powerful. We are critically aware of the danger of the education system being used as a tool of social control wielded by the powerful for self-aggrandizement, a tool that might even numb the less powerful to be aware of how they are being exploited (Wright, 2009).

So, what we are in fact saying is that, although we are able to describe the structural-functional characteristics of a universal, general or generic education system and although we insist that such a system should be functional in that it serves all the concerned in a socially just manner (Rawls, 2007), we do not assume that we can offer a model that is valid in its “objectivity”, in its being “value-free”. This brings us to another ramification of our post-postfoundationalistic orientation, namely that we have to approach the issue from an interpretivist and social-constructivist perspective.

Our interpretivist and social-constructivist approach leads us to understand that education systems are observable and analyzable only in their concrete, contextual and contingent situations, where they are supposed to be functional and serve the interests of all the concerned groups in a particular community. It is in this concrete, actual appearance that an education system might be abused by the powerful in a community. Our position is one of critical realism (Erickson, 2001): although we work with a reality that has to be structured for functionality, we have to remain critical of how it can be used or abused on the ground. Difficult as it might be, we will have to keep this critical attitude in abeyance for the period while we are looking at the structural and functional characteristics of “the” education system as a universal construct. This is not to say that we will not be critical in places, but we will return in full force to our critical attitude in the research phase thereafter. We agree with Schuls (1999) that we cannot think and act except through an engagement with our particular social

situation, culture and tradition. Our task is thus to stand in a critical relation to our situationality (and that of our particular education system). Our critical attitude in itself is not without its own assumptions, beliefs and practices (Carr, 2013). It is one of the basic tenets of a post-postfoundationalist orientation to scholarship that every observation, every form of criticism and every practice presupposes a framework of values and beliefs, and that this framework should be allowed to constantly work in the background (and not up-front as used to be the case according to a modernist foundationalist approach).

Let us then briefly look at the proposed universal structuralist-functionalist model before embarking on a critical review of our findings.

Findings with Regard to the Structure and Functioning of “the” Education System

This section contains the results of our examination of a variety of real education systems for the purpose of discovering those essential features of “the” education system that in the end have to be reflected in actual education systems on the ground to make them effective in serving the interests and education needs of their particular communities. These results were reached due to recognizing that the universal construct ‘the’ education system is observable and analyzable only in concrete, contextual and contingent situations.

Unsurprisingly, our first finding was that the term “education system” embraces a structure with its interrelated parts, such as education laws, ministry of education, department of education, school councils, different kinds of education institutions and different education support services, such as libraries and technical-didactical support. We secondly concluded that, in order for an education system to be an effective entity, these parts must inter-relate according to an overarching plan. Without such a plan, the various parts would not function properly and effectively in an integrative manner towards the achievement of the overarching goals of the system. Each part of the structure must function in tandem with all other parts in order to ensure an effective output (i.e. effectively and efficiently providing education(al) needs to the target group) of the education system as a structure.

We thirdly discovered that the structural parts or sections of “the” education system fall into four main categories as ‘components’ of the education system, namely: education system policy, education system administration, structure for teaching and education support services. These four structural components each embrace the following sub-parts or elements.

The component ‘Education System Policy’ represents the juridical foundation of an education system, and usually includes three elements, namely: *vision, mission and aims, policy format* and *policy-making procedures* (Compion, 2011; Raikane, 1987). Policy would normally include guidelines about the following: personnel, finances, external relations, administration, support services, nature of teaching and approach

to teaching, which in turn tends to embrace the following: policy concerning the nature and content of teaching programmes (levels, differentiation, curriculum and curriculum development, evaluation and certification), policy regarding learners (admission, age, gender, discipline, dress, conduct), policy concerning the teaching personnel (qualifications, number, age, teacher-learner relationship), policy regarding the provision and maintenance of facilities, and policy on the medium of instruction. *Policy-making procedures* tend to refer to the strategies to be followed and adherence to relevant principles, such as transparency and democracy.

“The” education system secondly requires the component ‘Education System Administration’ as management and administrative structures to ensure that effective education is provided, i.e. that the components ‘Structure for Teaching’ and ‘Educational Support Services’ are effectively employed (Makoanyane, 1989; Steyn, Steyn, De Waal, & Wolhuter, 2002). This component tends to embrace the following three elements: *organizational structures* regarding the managerial and administrative personnel, policy-making and policy implementation responsibilities of these officials and the links between these officials and other functionaries in the education system, as well as other education interest groups. Managerial philosophy reflects whether a centralized or decentralized style will be employed. This component will also cover the *financial framework and budgeting* as an element including the financial framework and systems applicable, guidelines for school fees per learner, budget management, cost calculation, communication, as well as procurement of additional sponsorships and financial support. The third element of this component embraces the *internal and external liaison* amongst management, staff and learners, as well as the liaison with parents and other interest groups regarding, for example, the making of policy, education services to be delivered and governance in the system.

“The” education system thirdly usually embraces a ‘Structure for Teaching’. The provision of effective teaching and learning opportunities to learners is at the heart of “the” education system (Barkhuizen, 2014, pp. 90-91) and embodies the following elements: different *education levels* and the linkages across the levels, such as pre-primary, primary and secondary education; *education institutions* and the relationships between institutions, such as primary schools, secondary schools, technical schools, combined schools or schools for the mentally disadvantaged learners; *curricula and programmes* and *educators*, including their training, qualifications and demography; *learners*, including, for example, their demography and rules of conduct; *language of teaching and learning*, including the level of the mother tongue of learners used in teaching and learning, and *physical facilities* required for effective teaching and learning, along with teacher-learner ratio, number and quality of classrooms, text materials and electronic support.

“The” education system finally embraces a component known as ‘Education Support Services’ which include learner *support services*, *educator support services* and *support services in the teaching/learning situations*. The system requires some specialized

support to assist in reaching its aim, such as libraries, visits to places of interest, computer facilities to access the internet and/or vocational guidance services, feeding schemes and medical and dentistry services. Learners with physical, psychological or mental disadvantages need specialized services, such as ortho-pedagogic, ortho-didactic and socio-pedagogic, as well as speech therapy (Steyn, 2014).

Our normal inclination would be to insert a diagram here to explain how all of the above dovetail form an education system. We are hesitant about doing so due to our stated post-postfoundationalist orientation, as outlined above. There are, in our opinion, just too many contingencies, pedagogical and social nuances and imponderables to generalize about education systems and to portray them in a simple diagram. In a typical post-postfoundationalistic fashion, we view the system as a gradually unfolding structural response to ideas or notions that the education system developers tend to have at the back of their minds (i.e. not rationalistic, up front, in your face, preconceived systematic ideas that are expected to be rigorously put in practice, and that can be presented in a flow-chart), among others, that the system, even at the most basic levels (in a town or rural village, for instance), should be functional in that – while it serves the immediate pedagogical needs of its users (parents, community, teachers, students) – in the final analysis it should also serve the education needs of the country or the state. In addition, it should be simple, adaptable, functional, user-friendly, easily understandable and manageable (as tiny as possible) and affordable. All of these small pedagogical provisions, in the end, should constitute an effective provincial (state) and national education system².

In the fourth instance, we concluded that “the” education system has to function in a particular manner to be effective. On the one hand, the various components and elements of “the” education system have to inter-function optimally. On the other hand, we concluded that the “outside forces” or so-called external determinants (the nature of the target group, as well as the influence of the exterior milieu, such as the demographic or geographical milieu, socio-economic, technological, political and philosophical orientations of those involved) of the education system have a direct and measurable impact on the functioning of “the” education system. (Like all the other conclusions in this discussion of “the” education system, this finding is context-bound, and will hence differ in content from one concrete education system to the other) (Van Rhee Van Oudtshoorn, 2014)

The fifth conclusion that we drew was that education tends to be provided in both the national, provincial and regional public system and in the private school system provided, amongst others, by religious denominations and commercial companies (Meyer, 1989; Steyn & Wolhuter, 2008; Van Nieuwenhuizen, 1993). It was also possible to draw a distinction between large-scale national operations and small(er)-scale pedagogical operations, sometimes referred to as “mini-education systems”

² We nevertheless inserted a tentative diagram as an appendix at the end of the paper. It has to be read, however, against all the provisions that we offer in the article itself.

(Mochwanaesi, 2001; Steyn, 2014) in which the essential structural components of “the” education system might arguably be more easily observable than in large-scale structures. Such mini-education systems tend to be instituted by private companies, religious denominations and other interest groups which feel that large-scale national structures would not adequately meet their unique education needs.

Our sixth and final conclusion was that a distinction was possible between dependent and independent education systems. A system that is expected to provide constantly changing needs to its target group can be termed dependent, and vice versa. In the case of the latter, the education system provides its programs as it sees fit, and the target group makes use of its services if it finds that doing so could help its members reach its own education aims and targets. The latter system is not expected to constantly supply in the needs of various and varying target groups (Steyn, Steyn, De Waal, & Wolhuter, 2011).

Discussion

The above outline of what we termed “the” education system is clearly somewhat sterile in that it contains only references to generic elements, i.e. elements that one could expect to be present in all education systems on the ground. Despite this shortcoming, it serves the important goal of helping education system experts and education policy-makers know what components and elements to consider when, for instance, studying or constructing a new education system for a specific community and/or target group. Having said this, however, the above outline of “the” education system does not claim that every conceivable universal and essential element of “the” education system has been reflected. Scholars in the field will probably be able to add a number of other elements, making our picture of “the” education system as a theoretical construct more complete. Another challenge is for scholars to constantly try and develop new elements that will increase the effectiveness of “the” education system.

As mentioned, the picture of “the” education system above is a theoretical construct or universal that has to be translated into this or that particular system on the ground by giving some contextual content to different components and elements. It is in this process that our interpretive and social-constructivist approach has to play its role. This is also where our post-postfoundational orientation in the form of contextual justification comes into play. During the last few decades, scholars have come to realize that the creation of, for instance, a system of education can only be justified in terms of local and contingent factors, and that the contingent or local justification can be done in one, two or three of the following forms: contingency in terms of personal viewpoint, personal commitment and/or personal corporality or embeddedness (Van Goor, Heyting, & Vreeke, 2004). Contextual justification stresses the local nature and relevance of any justification for creating a particular social system, such as a system of education. The purpose of scholarship, in this case regarding the development and maintenance of an education system, is not in the first place to just describe “the” education system “objectively” in supposedly neutral terms, but to evaluate the place

and role of a particular system critically in order to contribute to a more ethically empowering world for people to live in. In the process, one has to be aware of the way in which power is being mobilized in such a system: is it being mobilized for purposes of human liberation or for suppression (Van Goor, Heyting, & Vreeke, 2004)?

Several questions surface on the basis of this context-justification orientation. The first is: who possesses the power to bring a particular system about, and whose interests is the system expected to serve? The second question is: does a particular system reflect all the structural elements outlined above, or have any of them been negated because of being detrimental to the interests of the powerful who instituted the system? The third critical question is: are the resources being invested in this particular system to serve the interests of all in a socially just manner and to create social capital from all the potential in the community (or state, as the case may be), or are they being used so as to serve only the interests of the powerful?

Critical questions such as these should constantly be asked, questions about agents acting to serve certain interests, decisions made, power, available resources, dominance, suppression, inequality and discrimination, and so on (Young, 2007).

The point here is that the developers of a particular education system, whether dependent or independent, as well as the critics of such a system, have to ask themselves some critical interpretive and social-constructivist questions. The answers that the developers of a system provide generally give a shape to the system, whereas the answers that the critics of a system give to such questions determine, to a greater or less extent, depending on the prevalent power-relations, how the system further unfolds. As Wright (2010) correctly remarked, a critical student (of, in this case, “the” education system and of particular education systems based on that universal concept) is far more likely to be able to participate in informed and intelligent discussions of what an education system should be and what should be achieved by such a system than an uncritical person who has been “force-fed” with the idea of, for instance, a “neutral”, “objective” education system based on positivistic assumptions.

In order to ensure a socially just society, it is important constantly to ask critical questions about a particular education system. The particular education system – reflecting the essential and universal components of “the” education system above – should never be allowed to serve only the interests of its developers or powerful interest groups, but should always reflect a critical pedagogy open to the challenges posed by social pluralism and cultural diversity (Wright, 2011)

Conclusion

This paper, particularly because of the notion of a “mini-education system” that enables education system experts to more readily observe and recognize the universal elements or essential features of education systems, has a number of advantages. By taking a step back in the history, it reminded us of the importance of structure and function. It also revealed the shortcomings of sterile descriptions of education structure and functioning, a realization which forces education system experts to

launch a critical evaluation of what could and should be achieved by developing an education system on the ground. The exercise also demonstrated the value of some of the most recent epistemological developments. The post-postfoundationalist orientation with its concomitant feature of working with a contextual justification not only enables but also inspires the scholar to go beyond universals and to look at power relationships on the ground as far as the running of an education system is concerned.

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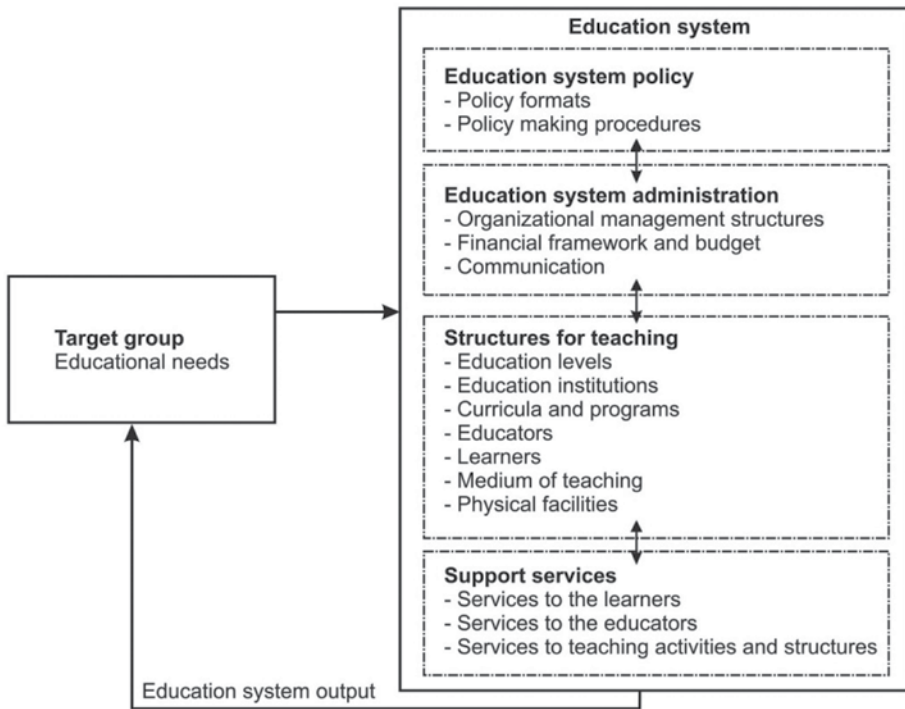
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Appendix

Illustration of the structure of the education system (Steyn, 2014)



Generički model „obrazovnog sustava“ za potrebe kritičke usporedbe i kreiranje politike

Sažetak

Obrazovni sustav per se, usprkos svojoj središnjoj ulozi za koju se zauzimaju stručnjaci unutar Komparativne i međunarodne edukacije nikada nije bio u žarištu znanstvenih istraživanja u spomenutom području. Istraživanja unutar Komparativne i međunarodne edukacije do sada su, u različitim razdobljima svoje povijesti, bila usredotočena ili na društveno-kontekstne snage (geografiju, demografiju, društveni sustav, ekonomiju, politički sustav, religijsko-filozofski svjetonazor) koje oblikuju obrazovanje ili na ishode/učinke obrazovanja na društvo do te mjere da je obrazovni sustav uvijek ostajao nejasan u odnosu na glavni dio toga područja. Stoga još uvijek nije razvijen model koji bi objasnio strukturu obrazovnog sustava prikazujući komponente „obrazovnog sustava“ i njihove međusobne odnose. U ovom se radu nastoji istaknuti taj nedostatak putem rasprave i prikaza strukture obrazovnog sustava na temelju novijih epistemoloških razvojnih ideja. Identificirane su četiri komponente obrazovnog sustava, kao i njihovi elementi, a to su: politika obrazovnog sustava, organizacija i administracija, struktura potrebna za nastavu i službe podrške.

Ključne riječi: komparativna edukacija; obrazovanje; obrazovni sustav; postmodernizam.

Uvodna zapažanja

Argument koji je ponuđen u ovom radu ima dvostruki protuargument. Najprije tvrdimo da je istraživanje fenomena (*struktura*) obrazovni sustav kao takvog zanemareno do te mjere da kao predmet analize i istraživanja u području Komparativne edukacije – smješten kao što i treba biti u samo njegovo središte – pati od „sindroma crne kutije“. Prvi dio rada bit će posvećen pojašnjenju spomenutog problema. U drugom ćemo dijelu rada nastojati pokazati kako bismo mogli pristupiti fenomenu *obrazovni sustav* i opisati ga na suvremen način, onako kako bi odgovaralo postmodernističkim, pa čak postpostmodernističkim, društveno-kulturološkim uvjetima i praksama u kojima nastavnici danas žive i djeluju.

„Sindrom crne kutije“

Termin „sindrom crne kutije“ odnosi se na činjenicu da fenomen *obrazovni sustav* kao takav po svojoj prilici pati od nastojanja relevantnih stručnjaka koji su se u prošlosti prije usmjeravali prema onom što se događa izvan obrazovnog sustava, vodeći računa o razvoju znanja o sustavu kao takvom, kao fenomenu koji je sam po sebi moguće istraživati (usp. Kelly, Arnove i Altbach, 1982; Wolhuter, 2008). Njihovo je težište uvijek nastojalo biti ili na zajednici koja ga okružuje i društvenim okolnostima kao formativnim utjecajima na prirodu i strukturu obrazovnog sustava ili, obratno, na utjecaju obrazovnog sustava na društvo. Obrazovni sustav *per se* nikada nije zauzimao središnje mjesto unutar komparativne edukacije unatoč tome što je bio široko prepoznat kao predmet istraživanja komparativne edukacije. Stoga još uvijek nije razvijen model koji bi objasnio suštinsku strukturu (sastavni dijelovi, njihove funkcije i međusobni odnosi) i obilježja obrazovnog sustava. U razdoblju poslije Drugoga svjetskog rata, primjerice, pozornost je bila usmjerena uglavnom na utjecaj što ga obrazovni sustav ima na ekonomski razvoj i na domaću i međunarodnu modernizaciju.

Činjenica da je, tijekom pedesetak godina koliko je postojao *Comparative Education Review* (1957.-2006.), broj rasprava o oblikovnim snagama i učincima društvenih sila na obrazovanje i obrazovni sustav zasjenio broj rasprava o obrazovanju i obrazovnom sustavu *per se* također potvrđuje postojanje „sindroma crne kutije“ kada je riječ o istraživanju fenomena *obrazovni sustav*. Našu tvrdnju da model čiji je zadatak objasniti strukturu obrazovanja nikada nije razvijen potvrđuje činjenica da baze podataka kao što su EBSCO Host, Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus i Google Scholar, za razdoblje od 2010. do 2014. godine, ne nude nijedan rad koji u svom naslovu sadrži sintagmu „struktura obrazovnog sustava“. To bi donekle moglo predstavljati nastavak dugogodišnjih sklonosti stručnjaka u spomenutom području. Čini se da su se tijekom prve polovine 20. stoljeća Hans, Mallinson, Kandel, Schneider i ostali predstavnici komparativne edukacije češće okretali društvenim snagama koje su određivale prirodu obrazovnih sustava, kao što su geografija, demografija, društveni sastav, ekonomija, politika, religija i ostalo, a rijetko na strukturu obrazovnog sustava kao takvog.

Ipak, navedeno ne treba shvatiti kao da tvrdimo da se fenomen nazvan *obrazovni sustav* uopće nije istraživao. Oduvijek je među znanstvenicima u području komparativne edukacije postojalo zanimanje za funkcionalno-strukturalna obilježja obrazovnih sustava (poznato kao „problematika obrazovnog sustava“) (Bray, Adamson i Mason, 2007), ali rijetko je upravo ono bilo u žarištu njihova zanimanja.

Takav relativni nedostatak posebnog zanimanja za strukturalna obilježja obrazovnih sustava i njihove sastavne dijelove (Wolhuter i Popov, 2007) mogao bi se vjerojatno pripisati činjenici kako znanstvenici nastoje povezati pojmove *školski sustav* (institucijski ustroj/obrazovna skala) i *obrazovni sustav* u jedan. U letku pod naslovom *Strukture obrazovnih sustava u Europi 2014./2015. godine: Shematski dijagrami* (Vansteenkiste, 2014), primjerice, navodi se: „... dijagrami pokazuju da se središnji

obrazovni programi smatraju najreprezentativnijima u svakoj zemlji. To podrazumijeva predškolsko obrazovanje omogućeno djeci od najranije upisne dobi u sredinama koje su javno subvencionirane i akreditirane. Nakon toga slijede programi za osnovno i srednje obrazovanje, koji uglavnom obuhvaćaju razdoblje obveznog obrazovanja u svim zemljama. Konačno, dijagrami prikazuju programe koji se realiziraju poslije srednje škole, ali nisu dio visokog obrazovanja, kao i glavne programe koji se izvode na razini visokog obrazovanja“. To se spajanje također primjećuje u *Uputama za planiranje obrazovanja u hitnim situacijama i pri rekonstrukciji* (2010) Međunarodnog instituta za obrazovno planiranje organizacije UNESCO. Tako autori, u poglavlju 33 pod naslovom *Struktura obrazovnog sustava*, navode definicije obrazovnog sustava koje obuhvaćaju decentralizaciju, podršku koju škole dobivaju od zajednice, lokalni nadzor koji podrazumijeva prijenos ovlasti (i odgovornosti) za financiranje škola ili njihovo vođenje na neku agenciju na nižoj razini. Dokument je jasno usredotočen na upravljanje obrazovnim sustavom i upravljanje unutar njega (IIEP, 2006). Riječ je o pristupu koji je tipičan u brojnim novijim istraživanjima strukture obrazovnog sustava: nabraja samo nekoliko vidova školskog sustava, a ne sve brojne sastavnice cjelokupnog obrazovnog sustava i njihovo međusobno djelovanje.

Međutim, usprkos razlozima zbog kojih se nedovoljno istražuje ono što je potrebno da bi obrazovni sustavi imali uspješnu strukturu, bitno je ponovno podsjetiti na raspravu o strukturi obrazovnih sustava i obilježjima „obrazovnog sustava“, te ju ponovno otvoriti. To je potrebno učiniti da bismo učvrstili naše spoznaje o ustroju obrazovnih sustava kako bi ih se oblikovalo tako da odgovore na izazove današnjeg obrazovanja.

Prije donekle zanemaren fokus na strukturu obrazovnih sustava postao je također važan jer se svijet u kojem obrazovni sustavi funkcioniraju mijenja. Nove tehnologije utječu na to koje će se vrste obrazovanja nuditi, kao što su učenje na daljinu, kombinacija tradicionalnog i elektroničkog modela učenja i primjena informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije u obrazovanju. Zahvaljujući novim upravljačkim pristupima nastoji se utjecati na strukture koje provode kontrolu unutar obrazovnog sustava, novim se kompetencijama nastoji utjecati na podršku za nastavnika i učenika, kao i na nastavno okruženje. Obnovljeno središnje zanimanje za strukturu obrazovnog sustava postalo je također nužnost da bi se oni koji planiraju obrazovanje upoznali s trenutno najboljim praksama u pogledu različitih strana obrazovnog sustava i složene integrirajuće prirode njegovih sastavnih dijelova. Uzmimo kao primjer jednog takvog planera čiji je zadatak isplanirati kurikulum za neki obrazovni sustav. On/a mora biti u mogućnosti ovladati najboljim postojećim praksama pri izradi kurikula, a to može jedino ako uzme u obzir sastavne dijelove obrazovnog sustava koji bi mogli utjecati na izradu kurikula, kao što su: razine obrazovanja, priroda relevantnih obrazovnih institucija, posljedice njegova/njezina rada na obrazovanje budućih i nastavnika koji se obrazuju uz rad, vrsta učenikovih diploma, jezik na kojemu se izvodi nastava, potrebni fizički uvjeti – i on/a to može jedino ako je stalno usredotočen/a na različite dijelove

obrazovnog sustava. (Nedostatak takve usredotočenosti može se argumentirano okriviti za neuspjeh obrazovnog sustava utemeljen na ishodima, koji je uveden u Južnu Afriku 2005. Uvjerljivo nije uspio zbog nedostatka planiranja u smislu, između ostalog, potrebnog stručnog usavršavanja nastavnika, osiguranja nastavnog materijala i fizičkih mogućnosti.)

Drugi razlog zašto bi trebalo ponovno razmotriti fenomen *obrazovni sustav* kao takav jest da se može vidjeti jesmo li na pravom tragu kao stručnjaci za obrazovni sustav i oni koji ga planiraju s obzirom na nove epistemološke razvojne ideje u obliku postfundacionalizma i postpostfundacionalizma. Kao što će poslije biti navedeno, istraživanje onoga što bi trebalo smatrati esencijalnim ili generičkim obilježjima „obrazovnog sustava“ omogućuje nam istraživanje pitanja univerzalnog i partikularnog s novog povoljnog stajališta, kao i postavljanje brojnih kritičko-interpretativnih i socio-konstruktivističkih pitanja o tome kako bi se obrazovni sustavi na terenu, u stvarnoj praksi, mogli upotrijebiti i zloupotrijebiti, primijeniti i čak iskoristiti.

Da bismo ponovno razmotrili fenomen *obrazovni sustav* kao takav, pripremili smo sljedeći podsjetnik. U nastavku ćemo nastojati donekle pojasniti osnovnu metodološku i konceptualnu zbrku, nakon čega najprije slijedi predstavljanje strukturno-funkcionalnog modela „obrazovnog sustava“, a zatim vrednovanje strukturno-funkcionalnog generičkog modela iz društveno-kritičke perspektive.

Nekoliko riječi o metodi: Postpostfundacionalizam, koncepti univerzalija i jedinstvenosti, interpretativizam, društveni konstruktivizam i kriticizam

Zadatak opisivanja obrazovnog sustava općenito ili univerzalnih pojmova suočio je znanstvenike sa zanimljivom zagonetkom. Noviji epistemološki razvoji doveli su do znanstveno-orijentirane formulacije poznate kao postfundacionalizam (blisko povezan s postmodernizmom i poststrukuralizmom) i postpostfundacionalizam (epistemološka reakcija na postfundacionalizam). Tehnička strana njihova razlikovanja ovdje nas ne treba zabrinjavati³; dovoljno je reći da su ti epistemološki razvoji izazvali poteškoće s obzirom na problem odnosa između univerzalnog i individualnog ili partikularnog.

Postfundacionalisti i postpostfundacionalisti nastoje odbaciti univerzal(ističke) tvrdnje – u ovom slučaju s obzirom na „obrazovni sustav“ – zbog svojeg odricanja od takozvanih velikih narativa koji ne uzimaju u obzir neizvjesni kontekst (Wilber,

³ Prostor ne dopušta detaljniju raspravu o postpostfundacionalizmu. Nakon recenziranja rada ova će fusnota biti zamijenjena referencama koje se odnose na publikacije u kojima autori ovog rada raspravljaju o fundacionalizmu, postfundacionalizmu (postmodernizmu) i postpostfundacionalizmu te ih uspoređuju, pokazujući kako svaki od njih utječe na pedagošku teoriju i praksu. U ovom radu treba samo spomenuti učinak postpostfundacionalizma na istraživanje fenomena *obrazovni sustav* kako bi se objasnilo zašto se njegovo istraživanje danas nastoji učiniti drugačijim od istraživanja provedenima u prijašnjim razdobljima.

2000: xi). Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke (2004) ovako navode: „Tvrđnje o jedinstvu, izvjesnosti i univerzalnosti ... uvijek [po mišljenju post- i postpostfundacionalista] zauzimaju i štite specifične osobe, koje su u to duboko uključene. One vjerojatno nisu tako ... univerzalne, konačne ili izvjesne.” To za problem koji je u pitanju, tj. opisati „obrazovni sustav“, znači da je praksa opisivanja u općenitom ili univerzalnom smislu napadnuta, osobito kada takvi opisi previde i zanemare kontekste u kojima se određeni obrazovni sustavi mogu naći i u kojima funkcioniraju u stvarnosti. Prema ovoj orijentaciji pozitivistički objektivni opis „obrazovnog sustava“ nije moguć; svi su sustavi povezani s kontekstom, neizvjesni i posebni.

U svjetlu navedenoga postfundacionalisti i postpostfundacionalisti sumnjiče znanstvenike koji se još uvijek zabavljaju mogućim formuliranjem univerzalija mišljenja na fundacionalističkome tragu, drugim riječima nastoje misliti u kategorijama *izvjesnih* i *čvrstih* tvrdnji koje se mogu racionalno opravdati utvrđivanjem načela koja se smatraju sama po sebi istinitima (Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke, 2004. Postfundacionalisti i postpostfundacionalisti, reagirajući na takav modernističko-racionalistički pristup, nastoje istaknuti lokalni kontekst kao osnovu kada je u pitanju bilo kakva tvrdnja o obrazovnim sustavima. Manje predlažu tvrdnje o univerzalijama *per se* (u ovom slučaju uopćene tvrdnje o obrazovnim sustavima općenito), a više promatraju svaku tvrdnju o obrazovnom sustavu u odnosu na određeni kontekst i njezinu praktičnu implikaciju na terenu, to jest tamo gdje ona služi određenoj skupini ili zajednici.

Manje radikalni postfundacionalisti i postpostfundacionalisti, uključujući autore ovog rada, spremni su uvjetno zadržati predodžbu o univerzalijama. Prema njihovu mišljenju „poricati univerzalizam ne znači nužno [samo] partikularizam; ... nego naglašavanje ukorijenjene [tj. kontekstne] prirode znanja [uključujući tvrdnje o univerzalijama] upozorava na interaktivne dimenzije opravdanja” [tj. poziva se na izvjesnu principijelnu osnovu] (Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke, 2004). Međutim, valjanost svih tvrdnji o univerzalističkoj prirodi na kraju ovisi o kontekstnoj prirodi takvih tvrdnji (Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke, 2004).

Osim činjenice da se u novije vrijeme pojavljuje prijepor o tome treba li pristupiti problemu univerzalnog i partikularnog s obzirom na fundacionalističku, postfundacionalističku ili postpostfundacionalističku epistemološku orijentaciju, istraživanje teorije univerzalija pokazuje da već dugo postoji također kontroverza o tome postoje li uistinu univerzalije, imaju li ontološki status ili su to samo nazivi za kategorije koje je stvorio ljudski intelekt (Smollett, 2002: nema broja stranice), jesu li to oprimjereni ili neoprimejereni konstrukti, je li platonski ili aristoteljski realizam ili (Trope) nominalizam pravilan način razmatranja univerzalija, ili jesu li univerzalije *ante res*, *in res* ili *post res* (prije nečega, u nečemu ili poslije nečega).

Za potrebe istraživanja u ovom radu pristupili smo univerzalijama kao korisnim alatima za donošenje teorijskih zaključaka, ali smo se odlučili za povoljnu postpostfundacionalističku poziciju. Drugim riječima, prihvatili smo korisnost predodžbe o „univerzalijama“, ali ih nismo promatrali kao ontološke entitete koji

moгу postojati u sebi samima i od sebe samih na objektivni ili hipostatički način (tj. kao potpuno samostalni esencijalni i neovisni realiteti). Primjerice, univerzalija *stablo* postoji kao predodžba ili teorijski konstrukt, a ne kao konkretna „stvar“ na koju čovjek može naići u stvarnom životu. U stvarnom životu nailazi na stablo borova, jabuka, naranči, marula i tako dalje: univerzalija se jedino pojavljuje u konkretnom, nepredviđenom i kontekstualiziranom obliku. Ako upotrijebimo rječnik novijih epistemoloških rasprava, nećemo se dovesti u vezu s racionalističko-modernističko-fundacionalističkom orijentacijom u čijem bismo smislu mogli govoriti o *obrazovnom sustavu* kao da on doista postoji. Polazeći od naše postpostfundacionalističke epistemološke orijentacije prihvaćamo i koristimo se univerzalnom *predodžbom o obrazovnom sustavu*, ali odmah dodajemo da se jedan takav fenomen neće nigdje naći u stvarnom životu – samo u kontekstu partikularnog obrazovnog sustava kao što je onaj malezijski ili zambijski.

Postoji pak još jedan predteorijski i metodološki problem koji treba riješiti kada se misli na predodžbu o „obrazovnom sustavu“ i kada se postavlja pitanje iz čega ona nastaje. Smatra li se *ta predodžba*, fundacionalistički, nekom vrstom platonskog idealnog tipa, začetog u umu nekog teoretičara obrazovnih sustava ili je pak induktivno izvedena iz promatranja obrazovnih sustava jer se oni u stvarnosti pojavljuju neizvjesno i povezani su s kontekstom? U ovom slučaju naša predodžba o „obrazovnom sustavu“ zasniva se na potonjem pristupu, tj. planiranim, sustavnim promatranjima uz primjenu analize i sinteze. Slažemo se sa stajalištem koje je prije više od jednog stoljeća iznio Pichler (1912) da znanost, u ovom slučaju proučavanje obrazovnih sustava, uopće ne bi bila moguća bez priznavanja univerzalija. Bez takvog priznavanja znanost bi bila degradirana na opisivanje jednog dojma za drugim ili na „uzaludni empirizam ili materijalizam“. Izbjegli smo tu klopku tako što smo predočili univerzaliziranu ili generaliziranu sliku, polazeći od promatranja svakovrsnih obrazovnih sustava na terenu. Naša postpostfundacionalistička orijentacija, osobito želja da postignemo veliku refleksivnu ravnotežu (optimalno zajedničko razumijevanje), omogućila nam je kretanje između apsolutizma u smislu univerzalija s jedne strane i mogućeg relativizma kojemu je svojstveno usredotočiti se samo na jedan obrazovni sustav i/ili odgovarajuće i vrlo različite, neizvjesne kontekste brojnih partikularnih obrazovnih sustava s druge strane (Muller, 2011; Van Huyssteen, 2006).

U biti *in casu* obrazovni sustav izražava se u obliku apstraktnih „objekata“ ili termina (Smollett, 2002). Univerzalije, kao što primjećuju MacLeod i Rubenstein (2006: nema broja stranice), predstavljaju klasu umno neovisnih „entiteta“ čiji je cilj pružiti temelj i objasniti odnose između kvalitativnog identiteta i sličnosti među pojedincima, pojavama ili okolnostima. Univerzalije kao takve, već je prije navedeno, dakle ne postoje; one se pojavljuju samo u konkretnom, određenom i individualnom obliku kao ovaj ili onaj partikularni obrazovni sustav.

Zbog ukratko predstavljenog pristupa struktura „obrazovnog sustava“ mogla bi se dalje prikazati najprije s pozitivističkog strukturno-funkcionalnog stajališta,

što se može pripisati našem mišljenju da svaka zajednica konstruira obrazovni sustav radi specifične potrebe svojih članova za učinkovitim obrazovanjem. Stoga bismo spomenuli da ima također prostora za strukturno-funkcionalno stajalište o obrazovnim sustavima. Prema takvom stajalištu obrazovni bi sustav trebao služiti interesima i edukacijskim potrebama svih članova zajednice u kojoj sam funkcionira; on mora težiti društvenom dobru, čineći društvo kao kolektiv snažnijim, podižući društvenu vitalnost (Wright, 2009). Međutim, promatrajući potrebu za strukturno-funkcionalnim pogledom na obrazovne sustave, moramo biti također kritični prema načinima na koje bi se obrazovni sustavi mogli zloupotrebjavati da bi služili interesima moćnih u društvu, kao što su to oni koji imaju političku ili ekonomsku moć. Dakle, naš prikaz obrazovnog sustava koji slijedi ne bi trebalo shvaćati tako da mi zanemarujemo mogućnost da pojedinci i interesne skupine koji zloupotrebjavaju obrazovni sustav služe svojim interesima na štetu onih drugih koji imaju manju moć. Kritički smo svjesni opasnosti da bi se moćnici mogli koristiti obrazovnim sustavom kao alatom za društvenu kontrolu kako bi povećali svoju moć, alatom koji bi čak mogao omamiti manje moćne da uopće budu svjesni toga kako su iskorištavani (Wright, 2009).

Premda možemo opisati strukturno-funkcionalne karakteristike univerzalnog, općeg ili generičkog obrazovnog sustava te ustrajemo na tome da takav sustav treba biti funkcionalan kako bi služio svima na društveno pravedan način (Rawls, 2007), zapravo želimo reći da pretpostavljamo kako ne možemo ponuditi model koji bi bio „objektivan“, „vrijednosno neutralan“. To nas dovodi do još jedne posljedice za našu postpostfundacionalističku orijentaciju, a to je da moramo pristupiti spomenutom pitanju iz interpretativističke i socio-konstruktivističke perspektive.

Zahvaljujući našem interpretativističkom i socio-konstruktivističkom pristupu mislimo da se obrazovni sustavi daju promatrati i analizirati samo u svojim konkretnim, kontekstnim i neizvjesnim situacijama, u kojima se pretpostavlja da su funkcionalni i služe interesima svih zainteresiranih skupina unutar određene zajednice. U takvom konkretnom, stvarnom pojavljivanju oni koji imaju moć unutar zajednice mogli bi zloupotrijebiti obrazovni sustav. Naše stajalište jedno je od onih u sklopu kritičkog realizma (Erickson, 2001). Premda se bavimo realnošću koja se mora strukturirati zbog funkcionalnosti, moramo i dalje biti kritični prema tome kako se obrazovni sustav može koristiti ili zloupotrijebiti na terenu. Bez obzira na to koliko to bilo teško, morat ćemo zadržati to kritičko stajalište neizvjesnim na neko vrijeme dok razmatramo strukturne i funkcionalne karakteristike „obrazovnog sustava“ kao univerzalnog konstrukta. To ne znači da ponekad nećemo biti kritični, ali ćemo se energično vratiti našem kritičkom pristupu poslije u istraživačkom dijelu. Slažemo se sa Schuls (1999) da ne možemo misliti ni djelovati bez angažmana u određenoj društvenoj situaciji, kulturi i tradiciji. Zadatak nam je, prema tome, da uđemo u kritički odnos s našom situacionalnošću (i onom našeg partikularnog obrazovnog sustava). Naše kritičko stajalište samo po sebi nije bez svojih pretpostavki, uvjerenja i praksi (Carr, 2013). Upravo je jedna od temeljnih pretpostavki postpostfundacionalističke

orijentacije prema znanju da svako promatranje, svaki oblik kritike i svaka praksa pretpostavljaju određeni okvir vrijednosti i uvjerenja te da tome okviru treba dopustiti stalno djelovanje u pozadini (ne u prvim redovima kao što je bio slučaj s modernističko-fundacionalističkim pristupom).

Pogledajmo stoga ukratko predloženi strukturno-funkcionalni model prije nego što damo kritički osvrt na naše nalaze.

Nalazi s obzirom na strukturu i funkcioniranje „obrazovnog sustava“

U ovom se dijelu nalaze rezultati našeg istraživanja raznih obrazovnih sustava u stvarnosti, čiji je cilj bio utvrditi esencijalne karakteristike „obrazovnog sustava“ koje se u konačnici moraju reflektirati u realnim obrazovnim sustavima na terenu da bi postali učinkoviti služeći interesima i edukacijskim potrebama svojih partikularnih zajednica. Do tih se rezultata došlo priznanjem da se univerzalni konstrukt „obrazovni sustav“ može promatrati i analizirati samo u konkretnim, kontekstnim i neizvjesnim situacijama.

Naš je prvi nalaz, bez iznenađenja, pokazao da termin „obrazovni sustav“ obuhvaća strukturu međusobno povezanih dijelova, kao što su zakoni o obrazovanju, ministarstvo obrazovanja, odjel obrazovanja, školska vijeća, razne vrste obrazovnih institucija i razne službe za pružanje edukacijske potpore poput knjižnica i tehničko-didaktičke pomoći. Zatim smo zaključili da oni moraju biti u suodnosu prema nekom krovnom planu da bi obrazovni sustav predstavljao učinkovit entitet. Bez nekog takvog plana različiti dijelovi ne bi pravilno i učinkovito funkcionirali na integrativni način u smjeru postizanja sveukupnih ciljeva sustava. Svaki dio mora funkcionirati zajedno sa svim ostalim dijelovima da bi osigurao učinkovit ishod (tj. zadovoljavajući edukacijske potrebe ciljne skupine učinkovito i efektivno) obrazovnog sustava kao strukture.

Treće, otkrili smo da strukturni dijelovi ili elementi „obrazovnog sustava“ pripadaju četirima glavnim kategorijama kao „komponente“ obrazovnog sustava, a to su: politika obrazovnog sustava, administracija obrazovnog sustava, struktura potrebna za nastavu i službe za edukacijsku potporu. Svaka od te četiri strukturne komponente obuhvaća sljedeće poddijelove ili elemente.

Komponenta „Politika obrazovnog sustava“ predstavlja pravni temelj obrazovnog sustava i obično uključuje sljedeća tri elementa: *viziju, misiju i ciljeve, politički format i postupke određivanja politike* (Compion, 2011; Raikane, 1987). Politika bi normalno obuhvaćala upute o sljedećem: osoblju, financijama, vanjskim odnosima, administraciji, uslugama podrške, vrsti nastave i pristupu nastavi; to pak nastoji obuhvatiti: politiku koja se odnosi na prirodu i sadržaj nastavnih programa (razine, razlikovanje, kurikulum i razvoj kurikula, evaluacija i izdavanje diploma), politiku koja se odnosi na učenike (upis, dob, spol, disciplina, odijevanje, ponašanje), politiku koja se odnosi na nastavno osoblje (stručna sprema, broj, dob, odnosi nastavnik – učenik), politiku koja se odnosi na nabavu i održanje opreme, politiku koja se odnosi na sredstvo poduke. Postupci određivanja politike nastoje obuhvatiti strategije koje treba slijediti i relevantna načela kao što su transparentnost i demokracija kojih se treba pridržavati.

„Obrazovni sustav“ također zahtijeva (Van Huyssteen, 2006) komponentu „Administracija obrazovnog sustava“, poput upravljačkih i administrativnih struktura, da bi se omogućilo učinkovito obrazovanje, odnosno da „Struktura potrebna za nastavu“ i „Službe za edukacijsku potporu“ učinkovito funkcioniraju (Makoanyane, 1989; Steyn, Steyn, De Waal i Wolhuter, 2002). Ta komponenta nastoji obuhvatiti sljedeća tri elementa: *organizacijske strukture* s obzirom na upravljačko i administrativno osoblje, njihovu odgovornost za određivanje i provođenje politike, njihovu povezanost s ostalim subjektima u obrazovnom sustavu, kao i s ostalim interesnim skupinama u obrazovanju. Upravljačka se filozofija odražava u tome hoće li se primijeniti centralizirani ili decentralizirani stil. Ta će komponenta također pokriti *financijski okvir i planiranje* kao element koji obuhvaća financijski okvir i dostupne sustave, upute za učeničke školarine, upravljanje proračunskim sredstvima, izračun troškova, komunikaciju i priskrbivanje novih sponzorstava i financijske potpore. Treći element te komponente obuhvaća *unutarnju i vanjsku povezanost* između uprave, osoblja i učenika, kao i povezanost s roditeljima i drugim interesnim skupinama u odnosu na, primjerice, određivanje politike, buduće edukacijske usluge i upravljanje unutar sustava.

Treće, „obrazovni sustav“ također obično obuhvaća „Strukturu potrebnu za nastavu“. Omogućiti učenicima učinkovitu nastavu u srcu je „obrazovnog sustava“ (Barkhuizen, 2014, str. 90-91), a podrazumijeva sljedeće elemente: različite *razine obrazovanja* i povezivanje razina kao što su predprimarno, primarno i sekundarno obrazovanje; *obrazovne institucije* i odnose među institucijama kao što su osnovne škole, srednje škole, tehničke škole, kombinirane škole ili škole za učenike s mentalnim poteškoćama; *kurikule, programe i nastavnike*, što uključuje njihovo usavršavanje, kvalifikacije i demografiju; *učenike* s njihovom, primjerice, demografijom i pravilima ponašanja; *jezik na kojemu se izvodi nastava*, što uključuje razinu na kojoj se učenik koristi materinskim jezikom u nastavi, i *fizičke uvjete* potrebne za učinkovitu nastavu, što obuhvaća omjer u broju nastavnika i učenika, broj i kvalitetu učionica, nastavne materijale i elektroničku podršku.

Konačno, „obrazovni sustav“ još obuhvaća komponentu poznatu kao „Službe za edukacijsku potporu“, što uključuje *službe za učenike, službe za nastavnike i službe za nastavne situacije*. Sustav zahtijeva specijaliziranu podršku kao vid pomoći za ispunjenje svojih ciljeva poput knjižnica, posjeta zanimljivim mjestima, računalne opreme koja omogućuje pristup internetu i/ili službi za profesionalnu orijentaciju, plana prehrane, medicinskih i stomatoloških službi. Učenicima s fizičkim, psihološkim ili mentalnim poteškoćama potrebne su specijalizirane usluge, kao što su orto-pedagoške, orto-didaktičke i društveno-pedagoške, kao i govorna terapija (Steyn, 2014).

Bilo bi normalno ovdje predstaviti dijagram radi objašnjenja kako sve navedeno točno odgovara jedno drugome da bi se formirao neki obrazovni sustav. No, oklijevamo to učiniti s obzirom na našu postpostfundacionalističku orijentaciju, kao što je već opisano. Jednostavno smatramo da ima previše slučajnosti, pedagoških i socioloških nijansi, kao i nepredvidivosti kako bi se donosili opći zaključci o obrazovnim sustavima i predstavljalo ih se u obliku jednostavnog dijagrama. Na

tipičan postpostfundacionalistički način mi promatramo spomenuti sustav kao postupan strukturni odgovor na ideje ili shvaćanja što ih oni koji su zaduženi za razvoj obrazovnog sustava nastoje držati u podsvijesti (tj. neracionalističke, otvorene, izravne, unaprijed stvorene sustavne ideje za koje se očekuje da će rigorozno biti primijenjene u praksi, a mogu se prikazati s pomoću dijagrama toka), a to je, između ostalog, da takav sustav čak na najosnovnijim razinama (u gradskoj ili u seoskoj sredini, primjerice) treba biti funkcionalan dok zadovoljava neposredne pedagoške potrebe korisnika (roditelja, zajednice, nastavnika, učenika) i da u konačnoj analizi također treba zadovoljiti potrebe za edukacijom u zemlji ili državi. Nadalje, treba biti jednostavan, prilagodljiv, funkcionalan, lako provediv, vrlo razumljiv i upravljiv (što je manje moguće), dostupan. Svaka od tih malih pedagoških odredbi treba u konačnici konstituirati učinkovit obrazovni sustav na razini provincije (države) i nacije⁴.

U četvrtom smo primjeru zaključili da „obrazovni sustav“ mora partikularno funkcionirati kako bi bio učinkovit. No, različite komponente i elementi „obrazovnog sustava“ moraju međusobno funkcionirati na optimalan način. Zaključili smo, međutim, da „izvanjske snage“ ili takozvane vanjske determinante (narav ciljne skupine kao i utjecaj vanjskog miljea, kao što su demografski i geografski, zatim društveno-ekonomska, tehnološka, politička i filozofska orijentacija onih koji su uključeni) obrazovnog sustava imaju izravan i mjerljiv utjecaj na funkcioniranje „obrazovnog sustava“. (Kao i svi ostali zaključci u ovoj raspravi o „obrazovnom sustavu“, ovaj nalaz je uvjetovan kontekstom, pa će se pritom razlikovati u sadržaju od jednog do drugog stvarnog obrazovnog sustava) (Van Rheede Van Oudtshoorn, 2014).

Peti zaključak do kojeg smo došli je taj kako se nastoji omogućiti obrazovanje ne samo unutar nacionalnog, županijskog i regionalnog javnog sustava nego i unutar sustava privatnih škola, dostupnih zahvaljujući, između ostalih, religijskim denominacijama i komercijalnim tvrtkama (Meyer, 1989, Steyn i Wolhuter, 2008; Van Nieuwenhuizen, 1993). Bilo je također moguće povući razliku između djelovanja velikih razmjera na nacionalnoj razini i pedagoškog djelovanja malih (manjih) razmjera, što se ponekad naziva „mini obrazovni sustavi“ (Mochwanaesi, 2001; Steyn, 2014) u kojima bi se ključne komponente „obrazovnog sustava“ mogle uvjerljivo jednostavnije uočiti nego kada je riječ o velikim strukturama. Takve mini obrazovne sustave nastoje osnovati privatne tvrtke, religijske zajednice i ostale interesne skupine koje smatraju da velike nacionalne strukture ne bi zadovoljile njihove jedinstvene edukacijske potrebe na odgovarajući način.

Naš šesti i posljednji zaključak odnosi se na to da je bilo moguće razlikovati ovisne i neovisne obrazovne sustave. Sustav od kojeg se očekuje da zadovoljava stalno promjenljive potrebe svoje ciljne skupine može se nazvati ovisnim i obratno. U potonjem slučaju obrazovni sustav nudi svoje programe onako kako ih smatra prihvatljivim, a ciljna se skupina koristi njegovim uslugama ako shvati da bi joj to

⁴ Ipak smo uključili provizorni dijagram kao prilog na kraju rada, ali ga treba čitati kao suprotnost svim uvjetima koje navodimo u samom radu.

moglo pomoći pri ostvarenju vlastitih edukacijskih ciljeva i zadaća. Od takvog se sustava ne očekuje da stalno zadovoljava potrebe raznih promjenljivih ciljnih skupina (Steyn, Steyn, De Waal i Wolhuter, 2011).

Rasprava

Jasno je da je navedeni prikaz onoga što smo označili kao „obrazovni sustav“ donekle sterilan po tome što se referira samo na generičke elemente, tj. elemente koji bi se mogli očekivati u svim obrazovnim sustavima na terenu. Usprkos tome nedostatku, on služi važnom cilju, a to je pomoći stručnjacima za obrazovni sustav i onima koji kreiraju obrazovnu politiku da spoznaju koje komponente i elemente treba razmatrati kada, primjerice, proučavaju ili konstruiraju novi obrazovni sustav za neku specifičnu zajednicu i/ili ciljnu skupinu. No, gornji prikaz „obrazovnog sustava“ ne pokazuje da se baš svaki zamisliv univerzalni i esencijalni element „obrazovnog sustava“ reflektira u njemu. Znanstvenici u ovom području vjerojatno će moći dodati određeni broj drugih elemenata i tako učiniti našu sliku o „obrazovnom sustavu“ kao teorijskom konstrukt potpunijom. Drugi izazov koji stoji pred njima je stalno težiti razvijanju novih elemenata koji će povećati učinkovitost „obrazovnog sustava“.

Kao što je već spomenuto, gornja slika o „edukacijskom sustavu“ predstavlja teorijski konstrukt ili univerzaliju koja se mora prevesti u ovaj ili onaj partikularni sustav na terenu tako što će dati kontekstni sadržaj različitim komponentama i elementima. U tom procesu naš interpretativni i socio-konstruktivistički pristup mora imati svoju ulogu. Osim toga, ovdje u igru ulazi također naša postpostfundacionalistička orijentacija u obliku kontekstnog opravdanja. Posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća znanstvenici su shvatili da se kreiranje, primjerice, obrazovnog sustava jedino može opravdati u pogledu lokalnih i neizvjesnih čimbenika, te da neizvjesno ili lokalno opravdanje može biti realizirano u jednom, dva ili tri od sljedećih oblika: neizvjesnost u smislu osobnih stajališta, osobna predanost i/ili osobna tjelesnost ili ukorijenjenost (Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke, 2004). Kontekstno opravdanje naglašava lokalnu prirodu i važnost bilo kakvog opravdanja za kreiranje partikularnog društvenog sustava kao obrazovnog sustava. Svrha znanja, u ovom slučaju u odnosu na razvoj i održavanje obrazovnog sustava, nije samo u prvom redu opisati „obrazovni sustav“ „objektivno“ koristeći se navodno neutralnim pojmovima, već kritički vrednovati mjesto i ulogu partikularnog sustava radi osiguranja etičnijih ovlasti za ljude koji u svijetu žive. U tom je procesu potrebno biti svjestan načina na koji se moć mobilizira u jednom takvom sustavu: mobilizira li se zbog ljudskog oslobođenja ili zatamljivanja (Van Goor, Heyting i Vreeke, 2004)?

Na površinu izlazi nekoliko pitanja kada se polazi od takve orijentacije utemeljene na kontekstnom opravdanju. Prvo pitanje glasi: tko ima moć uvoditi neki partikularni sustav i čijim će očekivanim interesima on služiti? Drugo je pitanje: odražava li neki partikularni sustav sve prikazane strukturne elemente ili su neki od njih zanemareni jer nanose štetu interesima moćnih koji su taj sustav osnovali? Postavlja se treće

kritičko pitanje: ulažu li se u partikularni sustav resursi koji će služiti interesima svih na društveno pravedan način i stvarati društveni kapital pomoću ukupnog potencijala zajednice (ili države, kao što može biti slučaj) ili ih se koristi samo u interesu onih koji su moćni?

Potrebno je stalno postavljati takva kritička pitanja – o subjektima koji djeluju tako da služe određenim interesima, donesenim odlukama, moći, raspoloživim resursima, dominaciji, zatamljivanju, nejednakosti i diskriminaciji, itd. (Young, 2007).

Poanta je u tome da oni koji razvijaju partikularni obrazovni sustav, bez obzira na to je li neovisan ili ovisan, kao i oni koji ga kritiziraju moraju sami sebi postavljati određena kritička interpretativna i socio-konstruktivistička pitanja. Odgovori koje na takva pitanja daju oni koji razvijaju sustav zapravo oblikuju sustav, a odgovori koje na njih manje ili više (uvjetovano dominantnim odnosima moći) daju kritičari sustava određuju kako će se taj sustav poslije razvijati. Kao što Wright (2010) točno primjećuje, učenik sklon kritici (u ovom slučaju, dakako, „obrazovnog sustava“ i partikularnih obrazovnih sustava zasnovanih na univerzalnom konceptu) bit će vjerojatno mnogo sposobniji sudjelovati u inteligentnim raspravama o tome što bi obrazovni sustav trebao biti i što bi se trebalo postići pomoću jednog takvog sustava u usporedbi s učenikom koji nije sklon kritici nego je „našopan“ idejom o primjerice „neutralnom“, „objektivnom“ obrazovnom sustavu utemeljenom na pozitivističkim pretpostavkama.

Da bi se osiguralo društveno pravedno društvo, važno je stalno kritički preispitivati partikularni obrazovni sustav. Nikada se ne bi trebalo dopustiti nekom partikularnom obrazovnom sustavu – koji odražava ključne i univerzalne komponente „obrazovnog sustava“ – da služi samo interesima onih koji su taj sustav razvili ili interesnim skupinama koje imaju moć, nego bi on uvijek trebao reflektirati kritičku pedagogiju otvorenu izazovima koji proizlaze iz društvenog pluralizma i kulturne raznolikosti (Wright, 2011).

Zaključak

Ovaj rad, osobito zbog uvođenja pojma „mini obrazovni sustav“ koji omogućuje stručnjacima za obrazovne sustave da spremnije promatraju i prepoznaju univerzalne elemente ili ključna obilježja obrazovnih sustava, ima brojne prednosti. Pogled u prošlost podsjetio nas je na važnost organiziranja i funkcioniranja. Međutim, otkrio je još nedostatke sterilnih opisa obrazovne strukture i funkcija, shvaćanje koje prisiljava stručnjake za obrazovni sustav na to da se prihvate kritičkog vrednovanja onog što bi se moglo i trebalo postići razvijanjem nekog obrazovnog sustava na terenu. Osim toga, ukazao je na vrijednost nekih od najnovijih epistemoloških razvojnih pravaca. Postpostfundacionalistička orijentacija s popratnim obilježjem kontekstno opravdanog funkcioniranja ne samo da znanstveniku omogućuje pogled dalje od univerzalija, uvid u odnose moći na terenu pri funkcioniranju obrazovnog sustava, već ga u tome i inspirira.