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EDUCATION AGAINST/ OR FOR THE AGGRESSIVE MARKET'S ROLE IN POST - MODERN SOCIETY

OBRAZOVANJE PROTIV/ILI ZA AGRESIVNU ULOGU TRŽIŠTA U POST-MODERNISTIČKOM DRUŠTVU

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Abstract

In the worldwide situation, provided by the rapid global process which have created a new social and cultural environment with unusual and adverse attitudes and antagonisms, the market has become a new educator: between family, school and social environment. Focused on population in strongly consumer oriented society, education for consumer behaviour about the rules of the market and social organisation of the sphere exchanges are of central importance to their individual and global social order. This is clearly the case in mass media debates on discussions on consumer learning, activities and sites. The author considers the main theories and suggests possible models on the pertinent social relationship and cultural influences in which consumption is embedded. She draws attention on, that favours consideration of a broader range of social relationship and cultural and contextual influences and points out how consumption-related learning for active education may originate outside the aggressive market behaviour.

Sažetak

Posljedice koje su pokrenuli i prouzrokovali procesi globalizacije svjetskih su dimenzija, pa se je uobličila nova društvena i kulturna okolina s posve novim i i često neoubičajenim i neočekivanim običajima i suprotnostima, u kojima je tržište postalo novi odgajatelj: između obitelji, škole i socijalne okoline. Tržište i njegovi činitelji agresivno pritišću na populaciju, koju ne žele samo privući ka što većoj i nekritičnoj potrošnji, već ju brojnim nametnutim mehanizmima (podsvjesno) agresivno odgajaju u svoje potencijalne potrošače. Takav agresivan način djelatnosti tržišnih mehanizama pak pokreće nastanak prividnog svijeta potreba, pripadnosti, obezbjeđivanja vrijednosti društva u kojem žive. Autorica utvrđuje kako većina teorija o potrošnji, potrošače ne obrađuje kao misleće i slobodne pojedince koji (moguće) posve autonomno odlučuju o načinu i vrsti zadovoljavanja svojih (ne)realnih potreba, nego što s agresivnim socijalnim i ekonomskim modelima pritiskuju na razvitak njihove potrošačke orijentiranosti. Na njih ne pritišće samo sa iznimno šarenom i agresivnom ponudom, već i pomoću mas medija.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Development Report 2002 calls attention that globalisation is integrating consumer markets around the world and opening new opportunities, but in the same time it points out, too, that it is also creating new inequalities and new challenges for protecting consumer rights... Ever expanding consumption puts strains on the individuals and environment and turns the affluence of some into the social exclusion of many. As globalisation refers to a wide range of discrepant phenomenon, it is also commonly portrayed in singular and economic terms as reflecting an evolutionary, inevitable and irreversible phase of social development. The expansion of national economic systems into an integrated, interconnected, borderless, but also

competitive global market place is constructed as a "natural" periodisation of human civilization, progressing from agriculture to industrialism and post-industrialism with its attendant advancements in information and communication technologies and transport /1/.

2. GLOBALISATION AS ORIGINATOR OF NEW MARKET SITUATIONS

Recent research on globalising processes and global flows have: acknowledged the disembedded and disembodied quality of many theoretical accounts of globalisation and highlighted the power and knowledge relations implicit in how the people, living as the member of the global society and as an individual imagine and theorize

and accept the global /2/, /3/; stressed mobility and interconnectedness and regard flows of people and flows ideas and ideologies as obliterating the tyranny of distance so that "relationships between people in disparate locations is to be formed as easily as people in proximate ones /4/; created new transnational connections and new forms of commodification are noted to assist "boundary crossings" and to hasten the formation of cultural hybridities; replaced the national/local as an identity referent, thus establishing conditions for freeing subjects from fixed identities while reducing the possibilities for cultural domination and imperialism; transformed the conditions of people's lives producing new ways of doing business and working, new forms of identity and politics, of everyday life, time, space, new forms of sociability /5/.

But in the sometime some critics of globalisation pointed out the tendency of disarticulate understanding of flows; including the troubling labour mobilities of women and children, "travelogues" of asylum seekers and refugees are subsumed into the discourse which shows flows of people as benign, smooth and unmediated by structural problems such as poverty, war, failed of existing ideologies and forms experienced by several inflict populations. However, the free floating, fleet-footed less is problematically, premised on the dispositions, aspirations and opportunities of expectation of a better offer of post modern global market which presents in a complex field of products many opportunities to satisfy the plurality of real but also artificial individual's needs. But in the sometime it argues with the main global tendencies of such processes as increasing population, drastic growth of food consumption, flying urbanization, degradation of nature resources, pollution of environment and possibility of global warming etc. As such globalisation has become part of our living conditions as this circumstances have a huge impact on the lives of parents and (especially) children, households they are living in and (other) individuals. Parents and children within their households are consumer decision-making units in the civil society to whom consumption is both: a way to construct meaning but also a fundamental need for them, as consumption has to cover their fundamental and basic needs for housing, food, cloths etc. But in the post-modern societies consumption raises a wide range of dilemmas in their everyday life: theoretical, practical, economic oriented, aesthetical, emotional, ethical etc. Consumers often have the feeling of consumption as the only place with the freedom where only by themselves they decide, what for the majority is understood, when not as "velvet repression" but furthermore as do-it-yourself

dependency, because people gladly, willingly, joyfully enter the dependency relationship with market companies, with experts, technological or scientific, psychologists, psychiatrists etc. as comfort and tradition, too, are concerned again /6/. However, people living in family and it's nets agree to limit consciously their free will only because they depend on each other in the process of needs' satisfaction, what could be explained through one of the most interesting characteristics of self-organizing systems autology, what, generally speaking, is a feature of those concepts that can be applied to themselves and, in some case, are a necessity for their own existence.

3. NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAUSE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS FOR CONSUMERS

Different conditions and criteria influence the life quality of family the people live in. Those choices sometimes depend not only on personal aims and priorities but also on the social system in which the family lives. In educating children for the responsible citizenship the question "Who is a consumer?" can be answered by turning the idea of two subject positions that the children growing up in the global post modern society are presented to as the consumer is a subject position suggested by contemporary global capitalism post-modern society of today, and he is understood also as citizen and as subject and as person belonging to a certain state.

In the first case there is no doubt that one of the challenges the children face is globalisation, taking place in several different spheres of each post-modern society, but understood (mainly) by adults in the economic sphere as finance and production are, as well as consumption, a part of one global post-modern network. As also discussed by Biesta /7/ the consumer of post modern global capitalist society is dedicated follower, a child or an adult, of fashion trends, the subject who lets its wants be defined by the real and more often by the unreal needs of contemporary production for constant expansion. Global post-modern world capitalism is not interested in individual differences – other, that is, than for the creation of new niche markets or the invention of new trends and fashions. Following Ockenden /8/ a consumer can be a under age or adult person that sees the fellow humans as economic and social antagonists, competitors for limited natural resources and social, economic and individual power. For whom a protecting lifestyle and social position is vital and the struggle to do so fosters individualism and nationalism. He/

she accepts different others, young and adults, as threats and for him diversity is not valued. Furthermore: it is ignored or even exploited! Respect is not a prime concern, nor is the welfare of the other individuals, families, communities and the environment outside his own society. In the second case consumer is understood as person's belonging to a state and according to different political options in a sense of belonging to a political community and thus citizenship appears as the sharing of common civic life, loyalty towards the homeland, the predominance of civic duties over individual interests, as the individual's human freedoms and rights all are regarded equal and are depositories of inalienable rights that can not be revoked by any political or social institution. This understanding is very close to the European definition of Consumer Citizenship: "Consumer citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and future conditions. It involves taking responsibility, local and family scale when securing one's personal needs and well-being /9/. However, children and youth of today, presented diverse role, understand on their own way. Following Kolenc Kolnik /10/ for them multiple perspectives are embraced and cultural diversity is valued. There is no doubt as they speak of his/her role within the global village, world citizen, sharing the natural resources, lead critical discussion on ecological, social and economic problems and as they demand the responsibility of each individual in processes of not only solving them but also in sharing responsibilities with others). As growing up today is being presented to the two subject positions, which both can be seen as "images" of the world citizen: the consumer and the citizen, citizenship education is for the child and youth one of those very important criteria what determines the life quality – attitude towards themselves, selection of friends, in society and within the family she/he lives in. That is why the settled question "for/or between the citizenship and consumption" must be discussed and surveyed exactly from the educational aspect.

4. NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAUSE NEW MARKET'S ROLE IN AGGRESSIVE EDUCATING FOR THE SOCIETY OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Consumption is a type of "free activity", it is a way to learn, to manage and to inspire improvisation within (and outside) rule governed behaviour. While there is a technology of consumption in play, which relates to the pleasure gained from such

an activity, it is essentially also a learning activity, part from wider educational process. The focus of the phenomenon of postmodern consumption, and children's especially, has overwhelmingly been on the role of the market as educator of children. Especially, as we recognize market as the main and most powerful protagonist in shaping learning patterns in "commercial cosmopolitanization" of their values. On the basis on citizenship education is the idea of free, creative and responsible personality development in family, in school and in the society somebody is living in. Even than when a society is at the crossroads between cultural creator and consumer society.

Following Giddens , the individual as contemporary individual is confronted with a "plurality of choices", a consequence of the increasing salience of methodological doubt in his life project; and as contemporary consumer is confronted with significant levels of anxiety and the adopting "traditional" lessons that teach appropriate modes of conduct is no longer sufficient to assuage uncertainty. But when regarding children, as prolonged childhood became increasingly constructed in the frame of post-modernity and distanced from the economic with children being valued increasingly in emotional and sentimental sense on one hand, this construction of the childhood was far removed from the profanity of the market, creating difficulties for entrepreneurs who recognized in children "new opportunities", "a new niche" to expand markets. The market adds to contemporary uncertainty on one hand, but also suggests that the child as consumer can moderate uncertainty by the adoption of lifestyles, which routinise everyday choices on the other. This new technologies determine market as a "new educator", even stronger as other as the market nowadays produces a raft of "educational" materials (such as magazines, TV programmes, websites, computers, toys, popular culture etc.) and "forces" children how to learn about culture more generally through consumption practice. So for the child consumption is akin to communication: goods are better than teachers' or parents' explanations in making visible the categories of culture and the relationship between the market. As children's consumption seems to be particularly focused on the idea that the market teaches children in informal ways, children are taught about exchange values. By appealing to and knowing about the kind of children like, the market has been successful at capturing children's attention and communicating with them permanently. This has "allowed" the market to "educate" children into immanent culture making this "as a normal aspect of their lives". Through this market has transformed

children's general expectations with respect to the quality and manner in which information is brought to them /11/. But as Martens et al. pointed out, that this has had and still has significant implications for children's education, in family and school. Because the efforts of commercials have not been neutral, market discourses have generated and stimulated oppositions between market/commerce on one side and parents/family/school/teachers on the other side. The corollary is that children in the commercials-field are conceptualised as framed and integrated in consumer culture analogous with the image of the full adult consumer citizens represented by their parents and other adults. This by the children is very often understood also as the opposition between fun and education, between them (children) and adults (parents). Parents may value consumer culture in different ways, even if they not always are necessarily critical of the efforts of commerce in relation to their children and in the case that domestic consumer culture may vary. Therefore parent's suitable educational strategies in the work with children should include: individual and group counselling, creating the atmosphere of openness and trust, with physical, emotional and cultural support for all family members; a common bond from which to relate to the "outside world", regular family interaction, sharing opinions and leading discussions about what they really need, and what they wish (but could miss) and could effort; creating informal social environment for cultivating family roles, friendship, reconciliation and personal conflict resolution; discouragement for incorrect and unwished behaviour (stealing, drinking, drugging, using bad words etc.); children's access to the means for family economic sustainability and involving them into household occupations, creating the experience of spending household money and household time; and a sense of place, heritage and continuity.

The necessity that such strategies for assisting parents and children in meeting educational citizenship goals must be linked to the wider social and cultural context of their lives also outlined Martens et al. /12/, as among the broader networks of social relationships envelops the children who grow up in a consumer post-modern society, among them especially several social actors (parents, children, peer groups, relative networks etc.), institutions (market, school system, teachers), cultural discourses on "good hoods" (which includes understandings and constructions of successful parenthood and childhood), household contextual issues (single or two parents family) and individual biographies (of all family members) inform the consumer cultures specific to households with children. But however,

infused with power dynamics, some indications are that market with all its commercial power at the moment has the upper hand. Even when what motivates and frames the consumption of parents, children, children and social networks remains largely unexplored. Especially, as the market features in the double-way relationship: with school and with parents; separately but in the same time and less interested in communicating with parents about the consumption of the children. They are taught how to be "a successful consumer", what he/she needs to "be inn", how to get in "the clique" etc. Fortunately, there are some children who seem to be immune to such requests. We assume that their families equipped them with specific consumer culture, attitudes and values. But others are victims of post-modern society values, of material culture and post-modern fashion trends, etc.

The role of the education therefore, be in the family be in the formal education system, is that the children should recognize and understand the purpose and success of commerce in tapping into their minds and for parents and teachers to utilise these methods in family and formal educational settings as a means to fight back, recapture and enliven children's interest in family values and formal education. Following Kenway and Bullen success in this effort requires an acknowledgement that what it means to grow up in contemporary consumer post-modern society and culture has undergone irreversible changes: therefore parents and teachers need to relinquish outdated understandings of "prolonged" childhood that incorporate an understanding of the relationship between children and their parents on one hand and children/pupils and teachers on the other as one in which adults (parents, teachers, politicians etc.) control children. As so many children spend more and more of their daytime in formal educational settings, while at the same time being much more involved in consumer culture than past generations, the parents and the teachers should be interested in advancing understanding of the nexus between children, consumption and citizenship education.

5. CONCLUSION

Our objective in this paper was to stimulate thinking about unquestioned links between new technologies, education and globalisation in educating individuals for their responsible consume. We also draw attention to the question if someone's educational chance should be understood as for or between citizenship and consumption. Especially, as the complexity of the global post-modern society has impact on the situation of the citizenship education for and in the society as the present term

"citizen" is being added in various ways to the term "consumer", whose concept, therefore, has little bearing on situations where self production is widespread and world market is becoming "local". Even then, when a limited range of products are requested by stable consumption pattern or where families live at subsistence level and only a small elite has access to choice, or simply where families reject the "Western-American way of life", citizen as consumer is playing a role in giving conditions of the society he/she is living in. As in post-modern society lifestyle preferences are becoming increasingly important (but never the sole) determinants of behaviour, both, the consumer and the citizen, are just roles a real person may play, by two different standard interpretations of his/her prevailing aspects in given social and also familiar circumstances. Preferences do not express themselves in a vacuum, but within a particular post-modern social and economic context, within a particular system, to use the macro-level terminology adopted earlier and this system will help to determine overall outcomes. Housing and housing policies form part of the context which children and their families implement preferences. Parental cultural capital has a great impact at all on children's perception of real and unreal needs, attitudes and values, which are shaped partly by their education and partly by wide access to the mass media and other sources of information and socialization processes that homogenize commercial values. For successful education standard interpretations are needed, for the individual to communicate: frequently occurring situations are given a pattern where roles exist for his/her behaviour, and roles are given names: citizen and consumer. And further more: they bring two new aspects "consumer-citizenship" and "global-citizenship" face to face. While the first is a term that itself may represent a distinct, independent concept of no territorial border and be put to the global market, the second may be addressed to get rid as a claim for solidarity be implemented towards any people, young and old, children and parents, employees and employers etc.

In sum, perhaps the most important finding is that human capital theory assumptions about citizenship education reflecting to consumption actually deals with adult learning about unfamiliar consumption activities and sites rather than child learning. Even though, as the post-modern entrepreneurs have recognized in children new opportunities to expand their "markets" and therefore sow two solutions in (re)defining commodities as beneficial/functional for children (for goods become framed as "useful" they must be situated directly in the child's growth and development), and individuals

themselves as persons who have the wherewithal and the right to be desirous of goods. People, adults and children, become treated more or less as autonomous, volitional subjects, they lose part of the cloak of sacredness and are enfranchised as participants in and through the marketplace. Although we have recognized the importance of education for "normal" consumption (what ever it positively means), we recognized, too, that our commenting on someone's consumption choose to sketch the wider cultural trends do by filtering through information that effectively comes from the market, from discourses generated in the sphere of production, commercial and exchange rather than by parents and children as consumers. Even more: the literature also effectively ignores the children and parent consumer. Last, but not least: therefore new educational goals and aims to exceed skewed understanding on the social post-modern processes that form the social and economic context around which people learn to become free consumers and free citizens, are needed. Consumption is more than pleasure, social learning or symbolic expression. Turner /13/ already in eighteens noted that consumption as (p) lyfulness is a volatile sometimes explosive essence, which cultural institutions seek to bottle or contain in the vials of games...in models of simulation... and controlled disorientation.

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