

Summary

Two paradigms of thinking about education and its reforms: pedagogical and global-neoliberal

The monograph presents the exceptionally powerful tensions between the paradigms formulated in its title. The first – pedagogical – is analyzed primarily in Chapter 5, entitled “Towards the learning teacher, school and society”; Chapter 6 – “Organizational development of schools – concept and practice of the European Union programme – TERM”; Chapter 7 – “Evaluating the quality of teachers’ work – evolution of objectives, functions and form” and Chapter 12 – “The concept of educating teachers and their preparation as the basis of educational reform”. The pedagogical paradigm forms the basis of a critique of the neoliberal/ global model of education.

In contrast to the author’s previous work on educational reform in Western school systems, this monograph also analyses problems examined in Poland and shows how the neoliberal paradigm has been imitated in this country.

The discussion begins with a chapter including a critical analysis of the axiological aspects of education in the global neoliberal paradigm, in particular its values, the vision of the human being and the effects on humans of being shaped by economism. It presents the unresolvable tension between the rigid political control of educational systems and the pedagogical model of developing pupils, teachers, school and society.

Chapter 2 bears the deliberately provocative title: “Who sorts out our education?”. It presents the mechanism through which the global model for how entire education systems is created and imposed by supranational economic institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the OECD and the European Union. Apart from these institutions, a more covert yet overwhelming impact on education systems is exerted by global corporations in league with business and politicians. Both place themselves in the role of world leaders in education and the World Bank would gladly see itself in the role of the global ministry of education and science. The OECD boasts how it brought about a comparative turn in managing nation states and the world, supranational management through standards, measuring the effects of education and figures (these are only a substitute indicator of quality, although the OECD fails to mention this). This model serves primarily as political control of educational professionals and practitioners. The contribution of educationalists to educational reform is eliminated, and its place is taken by a battle with them and with pedagogy itself as a scientific discipline.

The expansion of the global market system of education, which is to serve big business and bring benefits to its new leaders, encompasses all levels of education and the whole of human life. Corporationism seeks to shape individuals and the beginnings of their lives.

The paradox is that while the neoliberal paradigm espouses civic education, at the same time it eliminates the concept of the citizen dating back to the 1980s. This is replaced by the notion of a client and consumer of educational services. The terminology associated with processes of civic education has changed in the same way as the whole language of education. Pedagogical language has been superseded by economic terminology, as the new leaders of global education believe economics is better at describing and explaining education processes. Even the notion of education is substituted by the term “learning”, in accordance with the neoliberal vision of humans as fully responsible for their situation in life. From the very earliest years onwards we are acquainted with taking responsibility for our learning as the state’s influence in this process (as in every other sphere) should theoretically be at the bare minimum. Changes in the language used clearly reflect the term citizen of the world as a person free from state coercion and its policies. This is a new, neoliberal construct. Not only does neoliberalism limit citizens, it also restricts nation states and their governments, while at the same time transferring citizens’ rights to gigantic private corporations.

Three chapters are devoted to preparing candidates for the teaching profession. Although the author has dealt with neoliberal involvement in education since 1988 (in particular in England and Wales), David Cameron’s education reform in England and Wales brought shock and terror. The teacher is treated by such ‘reformers’ as a craftsman who is to be prepared for their profession directly in schools, and the role of higher education in this process is exceptionally limited. Academics are regarded as “consumers of the results of research serving to develop good practice in schools”, and not as a researcher of the processes of teaching and education. A candidate trained to be a teacher in such a way will teach through imitating, but will not understand what is happening in schools, and will be unable to discern the socio-political context in which schools operate. This is precisely the point.

This “reform” is contrasted with the education model in Singapore. This country is deemed the world leader in training of teachers processes, its National Institute of Education works closely with the Ministry of Education (in contrast to what happens in Poland), and the country sees itself as the creator of a Global School, with Singapore as the hub of world education. Following Singapore’s initiative, the International Association of Leading Education Institute is working on a model for educating teachers (university, master’s degree level). International research in this field taking in countries with the best educational results is conducted by a team headed by the world-renowned Professor Linda Darling-Hammond from Stanford University in the USA. The team has published several volumes so far.

Chapter 11 is devoted to teacher education in Poland in the neoliberal era. The intellectual sources of Polish neoliberalism are presented, those who put this idea into practice in politics and higher education, and the effects of the global model on the quality of education preparing trainee teachers and their working conditions. This chapter is closely related to the final chapter, which deals with higher education reform prepared by Poland’s Minister of Higher Education and Science Jarosław Gowin. Competition between

higher education institutions for finance and prestige is to be a 'recipe' for excellence in our education and science reflected in international cooperation. "Excellence" has been a slogan, a neoliberal buzzword in educational reform since the early 1980s. However, it has nothing in common with true excellence. In the concept of the reform in question, there is no mention of the cognitive motivation of higher education employees, which is the key to scientific research. In accordance with the neoliberal model, a great deal of space is devoted to evaluating the effects of academic teachers' work, with the aim of monitoring these effects and employees. At the same time, many ills and pathologies are seen in this process both here and on a global scale, and examples of these are presented in this monograph. Poland's leading expert in the field of neoliberal evaluation and the head of the team whose concept of reform won the competition for reform concepts illustrates the sense of evaluation in the title of their publications. The emphasis is placed on academic productivity, highly productive academics, the best paid ones and those who generate international prestige and earnings. The term 'production' is constantly repeated in these titles. The author states that he deals with *scientometrics*, measuring academics' productivity, but can the excellence of a scientific work be evaluated by means of numerical indicators?

Gowin's reform reflects the global neoliberal education policy in a rather radical form, without ensuring the necessary conditions for reform.

In the conclusion, the thesis is formulated that neoliberalism wishes to regain its hegemony and once again shape model education systems and the entirety of human and social life. The corporate and entrepreneurial monopoly on science and knowledge is expanding, including that of technical academic capitalism. Jadwiga Staniszkis is right in claiming that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (with the addition of the OECD and EU) lead to the destruction of our education system and human capital. Having until recently operated on the average level in Europe, Poland's science and higher education system now operates in impoverished and marginalized institutions.

The monograph is based on an extremely wide range of sources: documents and reports on neoliberal educational reforms, documents from economic institutions that shape global education policy, observations of education in the UK and USA, participation in the work of the Council of Europe related to preparing an international conference on processes of evaluating pupils, teachers and entire school systems, participation in this conference and others in Cambridge and Stockholm, exceptionally rich scientific literature on relevant subject matter and discussions with eminent researchers: Stewart Ranson, Roland Meighan, specialists in comparative and international pedagogy, Prof. Iveta Silova and Prof. Alexander Wiseman and the expert in evaluation Professor Helen Simons, as well as the author's own evaluation of the EU's TERM programme.

Translated by Rob Pagett