

National and Supranational Education Policy from a Lithuanian Perspective

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Abstract

This article deals with the problem of national education policy, which subject to the recommendations of international organizations and supranational powers that observes and control the development of democracy and social movements world-wide, so consequently it is perceived as a new regime. Lithuanian educational changes are discussed using scientific literature interpretation, educational document analysis and meta-analysis of empirical research and applying critical theory instruments for recognition of supranational and local power constructs, identifying the methods of social reproduction in Lithuanian education. The main focus is done on the analysis of contemporary Lithuanian education, which has to survive in the conditions of regimes, when new one is built on the relicts of the Soviet, the old one. Explication of the right wing direction in Lithuanian education policy declaring the progressive tasks, with a fear of the leftist position, especially critical pedagogy, is given. The value of critical pedagogy theory from the perspective of a country experienced in the soviet regime is discussed.

When discussing various problems of education, researchers use the concept of educational policy, but often put a very different meaning into it. Traditionally, education policy is understood as education strategies development and implementation or as a set of principles, guidelines, and planned actions necessary to solve particular educational problems and to achieve the desired results. Quite often it is understood as the process of preparing educational documents necessary to ensure the efficacy of the education system (Radó, 2001; Trowler, 2003),

but it could also be understood as the invisible ideology and educational practices necessary for indoctrination.

Educational politicians of a young Lithuanian state (having been independent for only 20 years) have little experience in independent and professional policy development. The use of previous experiences from Soviet times, when education policy decisions made by the central authority had to be implemented in a top-down manner by local education administration, is not effective. New ministers of education changing with each election promise innovations and improvements in education, but in reality the dissatisfaction of society with education reforms is steadily increasing (Želvys, 2009). It is difficult to provide a single answer for the explanation of such a situation. Authors analyzing education policy issues may provide some “prompting” answers. For instance, Burbules, Torres, Apple, McLaren, Trowler and others, who for many years have analyzed the problems of national education policy in the context of globalization, may offer certain clues for our understanding. In order to understand the problem of small state education development, it is important to consider and provide answers to important questions: What is the power of national education policy in the era of globalization? What are the transnational and supranational features of contemporary education that influence national education? And what future developments should be expected in view of a different education policy approach?

It seems that the situation is fully controlled by national politicians who follow the strategies of different European or world organizations and at the same time try to respond to the local needs of the state. The national education strategy was thereby created and is periodically adjusted according to the social development of the state. Therefore, it becomes evident that despite the existing strategic attitudes to develop a national egalitarian policy, it is subject to the challenges and influences of a globalized world. Due to the growing impact of globalization, it not only allows nations to share their experience with other states, but also in the conditions of growing internationalization to compete in the international education market.

Nations participating in international comparative surveys on student achievement (such as PISA and TIMSS) become aware of the performance levels they attain in different school subjects and whether they have acquired the necessary skills. Gradually, education becomes more structured to meet the market needs and standards that are necessary for successful competition in the world market of human resource (Morrow & Torres, 1999). The standards are ensured using different control mechanisms of not only national but also supranational policy. The control and supervision of the education process is conducted by national education policy bodies but, at the same time, “Though the state channels transnational influences, it cannot fully control their relation to local practices” (Morrow & Torres, 1999, p.108). So the state becomes less able to protect na-

tional policy for the sake of local interests. Following Apple (1955, 2000), the process of globalization and new national education policy and management works to ensure everyone is “more efficient and productive.” This primarily serves the interests of international business companies whose networks span the globe. Education is oriented toward the needs of the world market, namely ensuring the labor force is equipped with only the necessary competences.

On the one hand, we can say that national policy—whether it is socialist, liberal, or conservative — is innocent and not responsible for global processes and their impact on local life, especially for the growth of economic domination and the dictation of other social fields. On the other hand, education politicians in these nations should somehow react—ignore, fight, correct, etc. — but not cheat or perform any tasks if they do not understand the consequences of the process of globalization and global control of the national policy, which every year grows larger and paralyzes efforts to ensure that local education needs are met as well as freedom of choice and the interests of individuals. While some researchers find explanations of such a situation in the domination of the “combination of neoliberal and neoconservative policies” (Apple, 1995, p. xvi), others take greater leaps and invite neo-Marxist insights to “open new dimensions in the discussion of the state” (Morrow & Torres, 1999, p. 93).

In some sense, we can agree with House (2000), who stated that education politicians are confused with ideologies and make inconvenient decisions, keeping in mind only one criterion – educational efficacy, which is very important for the future of the state economy and the welfare of society. It is based on attitudes that education policy directly depends on the economy and provides for it. The moral and spiritual aspects of welfare are forgotten (House, 2000, p. 18), and the state moves “from the Welfare state to the Neoliberal state” (Morrow & Torres, 1999, p. 95).

This article therefore deals with the problem of national education policy, which serves some interest groups, subject to the recommendations of international organizations and supranational powers that observe and control the development of democracy and social movements world-wide, and how such a situation is criticized by left-oriented researchers. In this article, in analyzing Lithuanian educational changes in a broader context, there is an attempt to find an answer to the question: what is the direction of Lithuanian education policy —is Lithuania reasonably frightened by the left position, especially critical pedagogy, even when it produces some very useful ideas? In this sense, the value of critical pedagogy theory will be discussed from the perspective of a country experienced in the Soviet regime.

EDUCATIONAL TRAJECTORY: IDEALIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC WORLD

In rethinking the education policy situation of Lithuania through the critical perspective, we have to look back to the past. Lithuania as a state has gone through quite a long history (in 2009 it celebrated its thousandth anniversary), during which it has won many political and territorial battles: it was merged with Poland for many years; afterwards, it was occupied by Czarist Russia, then Poland again, and finally by Soviet Russia. The 20th century was for the most part a period of lost independence, except for the 32 years between WWI and WWII (1918–1940) and the current period starting from 1990, following the collapse of the Soviet regime when Lithuania regained its independence.

The period of Soviet occupation was marked by the loss of Lithuanian people, as well as the main intellectual capital and the stolen or destroyed cultural heritage. But the main problem is the broken conscience of the nation, which has become frightened, not faithful, and conformist.

It is paradoxical and unbelievable to realize that after the “wall” between the east and west worlds collapsed and the strong stream of new information flowed and continues to flow, Lithuanians are still placed in a situation similar to the past: regimes continue to exist. Of course, they have another image, which can be defined in a Foucauldian sense: they exist in free societies. For Lithuanians during the Soviet regime, democratic states looked like a miracle, an ideal life to dream about. That can be proven by the fact that after regaining independence in 1990, many Lithuanians immigrated to other countries, looking for *happiness*. Later, it became clear that emigration is a continuous process and this was not only because of the better life in democratic countries—better economy, education, social relationships, and protection of human rights—but because of a pessimistic view towards the future of Lithuania, believing that it cannot rid itself of the features of a regime implemented during the Soviet era. Thus, in an attempt to start building a new democratic state, old regime features were gradually mixed in with the features of a new–global–regime, precisely as described by Foucault (1972, 1995) and later on by Bauman (1998), among others. So now is the time for the democracy of a double regime, where the old regime with its mental relics is mixed with a new regime, which is typical for every social structure in contemporary society.

In trying to solve social and educational problems in this situation, it seems that the best method is the development of the traditional-conservative model of state protection, which fights against the influence of globalization that invisibly works for the implementation of new mechanisms of a modern regime. Lithuanian social policy according to the typology of change can be defined as *restitution*, *continuation*, *imitational* and *innovational* (Šaulauskas, 2000). Lithuanian politicians, according to Šaulauskas, have done a lot by applying *continuation* and

restitution models of social changes, with a task of returning to the old traditional values and former good practices of Lithuania at the time of independence before the Second World War. That was very easily accomplished in education, even moving one step further toward modernization—to *imitational* models of change (looking abroad). But politicians did not show an increased ability for *innovational* change, except for the new education conception of the national school, which was prepared by M. Lukšienė and a group of scientists in the beginning of independence, and assessed by OECD experts as very unique (Reviews of National Policies for Education, 2002). Unfortunately, it was gradually transformed and phased out. Lithuanian sociologist Norkus, in analyzing Lithuanian political transformations, believes that only one personality from the post-Soviet states was able to create something really new: it is the genius of Žižek—renowned Slovenian thinker and critical theorist (Norkus, 2008). So one can imagine how large an intellectual offence was done in the period of Soviet times. Therefore, it is interesting to discover that it was Žižek alone who was capable of developing the theory of old and new regimes.

Based on such assumptions about social changes in Lithuania, it is important to evaluate Lithuanian education policy in the context of the theoretical analysis and interpretations of the education global policy: What is the trajectory of Lithuanian education policy? What has been achieved in 20 years since independence and what is now on our state education agenda? What is really being done for the sake of Lithuanian society and what is just an imitation of reasonable process and higher achievements? Being acquainted with critical theory and critical pedagogy helps us analyze the Lithuanian situation and interpret it. It is also useful to re-think Lithuanian perspectives and to criticize some view points toward reformation of education.

First of all, it is important to give some insights on Lithuanian education. In spite of many efforts to change education for the better, such as altering documents in compliance with EU requirements, adopting new models of administration, and many structural and content changes, Lithuanian education, in some aspects, is still lagging by approximately half a century in comparison with more progressive countries (Duoblienė, 2011). This could be explained by the Soviet occupation, which took a period of 50 years. Furthermore, according to investigations by Duoblienė, the most evident examples of lags in education are certain phenomena that are very important for the transformation of education, which were discussed many years ago in other countries, but still lack the appropriate attention in Lithuania, such as: interpretative and constructive philosophy in education, critical and reflective thinking, media and intercultural education, Dewey's experiential education, critical theory, and critical pedagogy. The last is mostly evident. Critical theory, which has been very important since the middle

of the 20th century and made a very strong impact on progressive education, is still ignored for fear of neo-Marxist viewpoints.

New, modern trends in education that analyze phenomena of bureaucracy, social control and reproduction in education had no place in Lithuanian educational sciences discourses until the last decade (Želvys, 2009). The problem of social control and the phenomena of indoctrination through the media, described by Lithuanian philosophers in conferences and academic publications, have been put off without further attention from the educationalists' side. It seems that new progressive literature is very slowly discovered and accepted by the educationalists. The reason can be that despite the fact that Lithuanian investigators in the educational field are well prepared, the nation's consciousness, including educationalist scientists and practitioners, is influenced by the Marxist tradition from the Soviet era, and the neo-tomist and positivist tradition from the interwar period of independence. Both are in hidden forms embodied in official policy, so it can hardly be open for alternatives, especially with the current prevalence of neo-Marxism. It is important to keep in mind the paradoxical situation, when every socialist and Marxist idea is treated as a betrayal of furthering the independent principles of the state, but at the same time these ideas can be found hidden under other beliefs and ideologies such as those held by neoliberals and neoconservatives. We can thus understand these as two different Marxist ideologies: the old ideology, which is not tolerated in the state because of its difficult past, and the new progressive one, which is questioned because of its association with the first one. Both are usually perceived in the society as a negative despite having a lot of differences.

Therefore only one part of innovations that come from foreign democratic countries is accepted, specifically the suggestions and requirements of powerful international organizations that have formal approval of the Lithuanian Ministry of Science and Education or institutions governed by the ministry. Mostly these innovations are oriented toward new ways for the standardization of students' achievements or the unification of education according to internationally accepted criteria. They are easily approved by the experts of the Ministry of Science and Education and regarded as significant and useful (Modernization of the Education and Training Systems, 2005). Unfortunately, the acceptance of trends that recommend the fostering of teacher and student competences for critical thinking, autonomous analysis and personal responsibility, according to a survey conducted in 2008 (Duobliene, 2009), is very rare. It is obvious that there cannot be an increase in the quality of education by performing imitative actions, such as the "copy-paste" approach with aims to be like other countries, without reflecting on what those changes really mean and what the consequences may be. As a matter of fact, such actions can negatively impact education specialists' ability to create a unique trajectory for education. The problems arise from the fact that the national education policy follows the recommendations of international or supra-

national organizations, which are to be integrated into a broader educational net, but at the same time cannot correctly evaluate the challenges of globalization or find the best method for state education development.

Following the advice of Morrow and Torres, close analysis could be performed to try to explain the processes of approaching national and supranational policies from a neo-Marxist position and especially critical pedagogy, as its popularity is growing considerably in the world. Some attitudes of critical scholars such as Freire, McLaren, Giroux, Kincheloe, and Apple are attractive, easily accepted and integrated into practice, but other attitudes are more radical and thus invite teachers and students to actively perform in the political arena. However, it may also be very risky, especially when we consider students who do not have enough experience or the ability to analyze political problems and are not able to see things in that perspective. Despite McLaren (1999a, 1999b, 2007) claims that the purpose of his theory is “to draw public attention to the social conditions of the disaffected students who lived in the nearby public housing units under terribly oppressive circumstances” (2007, p. xviii), and to give students the “opportunity to acquire a dialectical consideration of social life” and “genuine dialogue” (p. 32), some statements towards “revolutionary critical pedagogy” (p. 312) seem to be very assertive when we try to evaluate them from the post-Soviet traumatic perspective. But in McLaren’s critique, we can find very useful thoughts for the explanations of a regime that have many things in common with the regime of the Soviet Union and with practices described by Foucault (1995) as *Panopticon*. The difference of McLaren’s ideas is his identification of the sources of power. In other words, he, like other authors of critical pedagogy, is not talking about Foucauldian governmentality, but instead about governance. While Foucault emphasized anonymous process, critical pedagogues try to find those who are responsible, so they blame right-wing and neo-liberal governments (Foucault, 1991; Apple, 1995; McLaren, 2007).

Courage and justice, these values, such as the ones we find described by Aristotle, are reborn in the critical theory and critical pedagogy. Suggestions by critical pedagogy theoreticians for active participation not only in theoretical contexts, but also in practice, as well as serious participation in school and the broader political life are quite different from the suggestions of liberals to imitate particular practices that will be useful for participation in their future social lives (Walzer, 2004). Links with reality, not in the imitative stage, are more interesting and effective for students and their teachers, especially those who have enough courage and are quite conscious of the relative issues. There is a counter-argument that criticizes critical pedagogy for its huge attention to the theory but with very little practice (Keesing-Styles, 2003). It is obvious that critical pedagogues talk about the necessity to prepare people (teachers and students) primarily as good theoreticians (Kincheloe, 2008) and only then allow them to practice. However, from a

Lithuanian perspective, critical pedagogy seems quite revolutionary and radical, open to the rebirth of unsuccessfully experimented ideas and practical actions.

Another thing that raises doubt, looking from a distance at critical pedagogy, is their critique of ideologies, when the critique of ideologies itself can be seen as an ideology. Žižek perfectly stated that every viewpoint can be treated as ideology. Every inversion of ideology is ideology and it works “as generative matrix that regulates the relationship between visible and non-visible, between imaginable and non-imaginable, as well as changes in this relationship” (Žižek, 1994, p. 1). In all situations we function under it, even when we try to escape it.

Invitations to recognize ideologies and to resist them, especially to criticize neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism can be more unjust according to the attitudes of critical pedagogy: this means an invitation to accept only critical pedagogy theory or anything close to its leftist theory in attempting to understand its separateness. Political engagement of students and teachers in all cases divides them into separate groups with different and probably contradictory political attitudes. This is not only a matter of segregation and indoctrination, but also a violation of personal values and decision-making to identify oneself according to one's own attitudes.

In spite of different philosophical and ideological perspectives of education policy, we see that the future of education is more and more ambiguous, transferring all responsibility from the head master to the teacher and from the teacher to the student and his personal choice (Trowler, 2003). So it is obvious that every educationalist as well as teacher and student has to create their own position, has to be familiar with the changing world phenomena, its structure and contemporary challenges, to know not only the experiential world, as Dewey suggests, but also its theoretical interpretations. First of all, teachers have to be able to recognize different theoretical attitudes. One must agree with Kincheloe's (2008) suggestion to extend the studies of teachers with a number of modern courses, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis, gender studies, poststructuralist studies and others. But the responsibility for chosen attitudes toward theories falls on every person who behaves in compliance with attitudes.

To accept or criticize any ideology is to necessarily be acquainted with it. Unfortunately, Lithuania, among vast amounts of educational literature translations, has only one translated book by an author of critical pedagogy, Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed.' It is announced, read and cited by users very carefully and analyzed usually in different educational contexts, except in the political context. This shows the recognition and understanding of the ideas as valuable, but the neo-Marxist context is avoided. Other authors of critical pedagogy are not analyzed and cited, so it seems that their time is yet to come. New left-wing movements in Lithuania have become more visible and have increased their popularity, with the possibility of appearing as apologists for critical pedagogy, although these

kinds of educational ideas are unfortunately discussed very rarely and fragmentarily.

LITHUANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION: REACTION TO EDUCATION POLITICS

The influence of globalization on national state policy is evident all over the world, including Lithuania. Gradually, Lithuanian society has become addicted to the word *globalization*: it threatens one part of society while tranquilizing the other, such that nobody is indifferent to it. We can find skeptics, neutralists, optimists and nihilists. Nonetheless, this relationship with the challenges of globalization in Lithuania is quite pragmatic, because many educationalists think of how “to cheat globalization” while benefiting from it, or conversely to suspend or deny its disadvantages. Such conclusions we can draw from various investigations into Lithuanian educational science. Not many scientists are worried about the invisible aspects that abide the stream of globalization. Economic and political segments, impacting national policy, have a double-directioned influence and cannot get away from the consequences of globalization. Lithuanian education policy, in attempting to keep its national identity and at the same time strive for more powerful transnational organizations, pushes the state into contradictions. It emphasizes national moral and religious values and a distrustful viewpoint toward multiculturalism—measures meant to protect the state from the negative effects of globalization. These artificial “boundaries” for the sake of the state lead to new problems in cultural communications and the framing of the individual’s life through the limitation of choices and gradually creating a regime of violence. In this sense, Morrow and Torres’s explanation that “the power of the state can reflect a specific political project, a class alliance, or a coalition of specific economic, social, cultural, or moral interests” where “[t]he state appears as an alliance or *a pact of domination*” proves very useful (Morrow & Torres, 1999, p. 93). Unfortunately, very often the state policy becomes an arena for contradictions. A suggestion can be made for the lower levels of state structure as invited by critical pedagogy: for all participants in education to be active citizens, to criticize the double-faced interests of education official policy, the hidden ideology, and the indoctrination of students.

In trying to describe the specificity of a Lithuanian teacher’s consciousness towards hidden curriculum, we can give as an example the research of Vilnius university group, conducted by Duoblienė (2009), the investigation into teachers’ understanding of the general curriculum. The problems of understanding can be diagnosed from the fact that teachers who are more experienced and qualified evaluate the curriculum as less understandable than those teachers who have just started to work. It can be inferred that young teachers are more intelligent and

clever, or on the contrary, that they are sufficiently familiar with the curriculum in comparison to the older teachers, who state that the document is not convenient for understanding or implementation. The second hypothesis is more probable. Therefore, the investigation of curriculum content and structure evidently has shown that the renovation of core curriculum every year is more complicated, with many new tables and new descriptions of competencies. The number of narrow competencies grows with each new curriculum written by Education and Science Ministry specialists. The curriculum is renewed every two years but in the end we can find that the instrumentation is very good for control, but not for education. This reminds us of the process of *reskilling* and *deskilling*, described by Apple (1995). The document of general curriculum is compulsory for every teacher. Such curriculum paralyzes the behavior and thinking of teachers and does not allow them to work creatively and independently enough. Content analysis of the general curriculum in different subjects of social education has shown that the key words *critical* and *dialogue* are used very rarely, while other words, such as *globalization*, *Europe*, and *Lithuania* are used more frequently (Duobliene, 2009).

How do Lithuanian education politicians reflect the consequences of globalization in the Lithuanian context? Which policy and philosophy do they apply? Toward what trends are they oriented?

We can provide a long list of documents published after Lithuania regained independence (1990), and after it became an EU Member State (2004), at which time it started to interact with various international networks. Politicians tried to react to all the new challenges, recommendations and strategies coming from abroad, such as LLL, adult education, education for sustainable development, the recommendations of World Bank experts, UNESCO, OECD, UNICEF and others (Modernization of the Education and Training Systems, 2005). Of course, the behavior of Lithuanian politicians was unavoidable in the accumulation of such imitational innovations, (despite their contradicting one another in the Lithuanian context or not fitting to it at all) and after some years many problems surfaced. As was mentioned above, Lithuanian social policy according to the typology of change in the last decade can be defined as *continuation* and *imitational*, but not *innovational*. Norkus thinks that after regaining independence, the situation was not very convenient for innovations. On the one hand, at the time Lithuania had better starting positions than other Baltic states because of a quick and radical changing of parties and policy (conservatives came to power), and a good ethnic situation (many Russians left Lithuania or were easily awarded citizenship), but unfortunately very soon the left came to power, and in such a post-Soviet situation, it proved to be a step backwards (Norkus, 2008).

The analysis of the situation of political changes shows that Lithuanian right parties act more slowly and carefully than the left ones—social democrats, who promised more radical reforms, which quickly won them popularity. This means

that parties behaved at the time contrary to their mission of changing Lithuania's life (after the collapse of the Soviet regime it disposed of right parties, who then had to perform as the avant-garde, contrary to their original mission). So if conservatives were quite careful and not brave enough, social democrats, used as instruments of liberals, were more oriented to marketization and commercialization, but for which they applied the old methods of corruption and relationships of the old Soviet nomenclature (Norkus, 2008). It became more difficult to identify the parties' political orientation after their declaration to work in coalition. The beginning of this process, according to J. Dementavičius, was in 2000, when social democrats went to the elections with declarations of "acting together," inviting other parties to a closer cooperation and changing negative political discourse into positive (Dementavičius, 2008). The process was complicated even further when new populist parties were created and publicly started to criticize all politicians in Lithuania, arguing that traditional parties could not do anything valuable for Lithuanian society. In spite of such ideological transformations of political parties, Dementavičius assessed the values of all Lithuanian parties quite positively, finding their clear orientation into 'Sąjūdis' (the movement for Lithuanian independence) ideals. This could be easily expressed by the words "we fight for another Lithuania," which is still on the agenda of all Lithuanian parties that continued to serve these ideals and disallowed a decrease in the process of democratization. Therefore, all state problems, and the economic and political crises in the country, is explained by Dementavičius as a process of globalization, honestly declaring that a "powerful ship is going" (Dementavičius, 2008, p. 78), a phrase borrowed from Leonard Cohen which reminds us of Bauman's allegory of a ship sailing without a captain (Bauman, 2000; Hayden & el-Ojeili, 2009).

After regaining independence in 1990, Lithuanian education policy started its work according to aims to ensure democracy in the state and to protect humanistic values and national culture ("National School," 1998; "General Concept of Education in Lithuania," 1994). Over the years this policy has changed its orientation for the sake of international organizations, associations, and unions' experts, worrying about competitions in the international field, educational standards, and unification and at the same time losing a national path. The conference 'Change of Education 1988-2008' held in Vilnius on 19-20 February, 2009, summarized the problems of Lithuanian education through twenty years of independence, raised many questions, and defined the many reasons for political mistakes: an overpowering political orientation to strengthen the administration, which nonetheless was chaotic and did not reflect the specificity of the context or the rapid social changes (Būdiene, 2009). In the process of permanent national reform, it was not popular to talk about national specificity, except for those situations in which national features were very important for representing the state in an international context or to discuss the situation from a comparative perspec-

tive. Leftist declarations about welfare, social justice, and education for all, mixed with liberalization used by liberal parties, and conservative declarations about the standardization of achievements in education as well as egalitarian schooling, were both ideologically incomprehensible and led to ambiguity in education. Only in 2009, when right parties in coalition with liberals came to the government and more strongly declared national values, did it sound fresher and more progressive, while looking historical, reactionary and even old-fashioned. Unfortunately, such progressiveness continued for a very short time. In spite of a new coalition declaration of democracy and education for all, this conservative policy was clear about Christian teaching, traditional family policy instead of sexual and gender education and declarations about fostering the national identity instead of intercultural education. At the same time, the orientation towards fostering students for market, leadership and consumerism became priorities. More radical changes have started to form in higher education, such as the liberalization and marketization of universities (“Law on Higher Education and Research,” 2009). Evidently neoconservatives and neoliberals went side by side.

Until the work of this new coalition, neither ideologies in education nor education philosophy were very well recognizable. Problems of philosophy and methodology of education in Lithuania became very important and more often discussed publicly (Targamadžė, 2010). “The Educational Development Guidelines”—the document that was the basis for “The Provisions of National Education Strategy 2003-2012” (2003) and “Law on amendment of the Law on Education” (2003)—has defined Lithuanian education trends and perspectives until 2012 with precision and professionalism. However, it did not avoid too thorough a self-evaluation of Lithuanian education potentiality, declaring that “education serves its purpose best when its advancement leads the overall development of society”—or in other words: education realizes its tasks best when its development is faster than the common social development. (“Education Development Guidelines 2003-2012,” 2002, p. 4; “Law on amendment of the Law on Education,” 2003). Such a leftist statement was unexpectedly borrowed by anti-leftist oriented education politicians. Strategic documents were embodied in real life, but was successful mostly on paper, because the educational change results, summarized in the booklet and issued by specialists of the ministry in some educational fields, did not always correspond to real life (How to Implement Government Education Strategy Attitudes?, 2007). Some problems were not addressed and there were a lot of unsuccessful outcomes of education: high dropout rates, low teachers’ reputation and an increase in emigration, school bureaucracy, massification, and decreased quality of higher education, shadow education, the dissatisfaction of parents, and so on. Paradoxically, these problems were identified simultaneously with the approval of new documents on increasing the autonomy of schools, on social and psychological help for students and teachers, the development of teach-

ers' competencies, new curriculum, and new descriptions for learning outcomes. Unfortunately these documents and real life lost connection with each other. A rather famous and often criticized statement, "education serves its purpose best when its advancement leads the overall development of society," written in the main documents could become a reality, as Būdiene (2009) has noted, but not in the best sense: it will probably occur in the contrary, in a crucial moment for the Lithuanian democratic sense, the manifestation of authoritarian policy, or educational control of discipline according to the routine of political regime.

CONCLUSIONS

Different states have a similar experience of being part of a bigger community within a globalized world and having certain specific cultural features. Besides their own tradition of "reading ideas," those features migrate throughout the world and help to transmit experience. Critical pedagogy which spreads all over the world and provides many answers for educators is very useful for a Lithuanian state looking for its own method of education in the era of globalization and trying to solve problems between the global and the national. Unfortunately, difficulties and obstacles may very well increase when critical pedagogy ideas are applied in new cultural contexts, especially within the post-Soviet space.

In summarizing the last 20 years of independent Lithuanian education policy, it can be said that there is a rather strong tradition of praising the best outcomes and hiding the worst results. This is quite natural for every human being or sovereign state, but at the same time hiding actual results and providing merely a simulation of progress and stability shows the relics of the old methods of imitation embodied and developed during Soviet times. This tradition was not broken either by left or right parties. Such behavior by Lithuanian education politicians was described by Želvys, who stated that these positions and imitative features are very typical all over the post-Soviet world (Želvys, 2009). In such contexts, a new generation of educational specialists emerged whose discourse very often have the same specificity of the "edu-babble" style (McLaughlin, 1997). That has nothing in common with postmodern ironic discourse, but shows the problems of the conscience of the educational community, which is not ready for critical understanding of educational policy development.

It is obvious that Lithuanian independent education policy has lost its path or perhaps never found it in the context of various ideologies. It has started to orient itself to the arena of international competition and production, fighting for a higher position on an international level, while omitting expectations for real education quality and justice that must be described as moving in the neoliberal direction. Regulation of national education policy according to recommendations of experts from the supranational organization (the World Bank, OECD, UNI-

CEF and others) have increased contradictions between global and national interests in education, the unification of education and respect for individual. There is also a mix of ideologies: the ideology of traditionalism minutely influenced by feminism and liberalism only gave a hint of progressivism and, finally influenced by globalization, pushed education specialists into the frames of a very narrow function—the administration and determined forgetting of other functions such as analysis, reflection and forecasts. That is useful for the bureaucratic and obedient educational organizations and their leaders. Moral responsibility for the state and education in such cases only became an empty declaration. In trying to avoid the redistribution of power, politicians made no headway, stamping in or around the same place. It can be described as the product of the old Soviet regime covered by a modern regime, understood in a Foucauldian sense, or merely following Bauman and his interpreters' (Bauman, 2000; Hayden & el-Ojeili, 2009) explanation of it as a process of globalization and post-modernity. Unfortunately, society asks for responsibility from authorities, as well explanation and reasoning of new plans and actions, and unexpected results.

In 2009, when the coalition of liberals and conservatives came to power, Lithuanians expected progressive education policy and reforms. That year, a reform in higher education was initiated, although this reform was not as successful as its authors expected, having received a lot of criticism. General school reform for education for the market and consumer society was initiated together with a policy towards protecting national values. This raised the ambitions of the national majority, but it did not give a clear direction for the teachers about educational process development for democracy. Still there are a lot of questions to be posed, such as: for whom is this reform most useful—the banks and businesses or the welfare of society in general? According to critics, it is useful for banks and businesses, but people and especially teachers do not have an instrument for the recognition of hidden ideology. They cannot use leftist instruments and neo-Marxist ideas because of the pervading and scarred memory of Soviet ideology based on Marxism.

Lithuanian official educational documents claim that “education serves its purpose best when its advancement leads the overall development of society.” Critical pedagogues also think that, in such a way, education is an avant-garde of social life in which it is possible to avoid a lot of problems related to the global economy, its policy, culture, and social life (Hill & Boxley, 2007). Such declaration allows for the fostering of society to be critical and conscience in a world of global consumer ideology. This could only be embodied if radical reforms in the education system are carried out, based on the leftist ideology. It is not understandable how such a formulation appeared in the Lithuanian context, anomic to all kinds of leftist obligations. For countries such as Lithuania, it could be very useful in some aspects, but at the same time it seems to be very risky and ineffec-

tive because of the very deep, critical experience undergone for state results, and, in combination with revolutionary movements of the Soviet regime and Marxist ideology, education moves toward the avant-garde.

What is the best way forward for a post-Soviet country and a post-traumatic society that feels danger coming in from both neoconservatives and neo-Marxists? If neoconservative policy together with liberal policy frightens only a small section of Lithuanian society, neo-Marxist policy with radical reforms still frightens the larger section. So evidently, critical pedagogy theory and practice comes into different countries with a different approach to their views. In spite of open communication and access to information in modern societies, the perception of critical pedagogy ideas depends on the state cultural, political and educational context. Most of their ideas in new contexts have unexpected appearances and impacts. The main principles transferred into another space are vain or even dangerous if there is no tradition for the recognition of these ideas and, of course, if there is no way for their implementation. Critical pedagogy is still waiting to be discovered in Lithuania. Therefore, Lithuania is still waiting to be discovered by critical pedagogy as a country with unique experience.

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