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PARENTS AND TEACHERS AS CO-PRODUCERS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: BETWEEN THE INSTRUMENTAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE KINDS OF CO-PRODUCTION? EVIDENCE FROM POLAND¹

A b s t r a c t

The paper presents co-production, understood as a relationship between two traditional co-producers groups (in Ostromian understanding)—service users (parents) and service producers (professionals—teachers) that requires their direct involvement in the tasks performed by primary schools and their providers, in Poland. The main hypothesis in the study assumes that two types of co-production, i.e. instrumental and transformative one, can be observed in primary schools depending on the type of the provider, i.e. communes and third sector organisations. The study is based on a teacher and a parent survey conducted in the schools of both types of educational service providers in 2019.

K e y w o r d s: co-production, education, parents, teachers.

¹ The article presents the results concerning parent and teacher studies which are fully developed in Anna Ciepielewska-Kowalik, *Obywatelska polityka edukacyjna. Koprodukcja i współtworzenie* (Cracow and Warsaw: Nomos and ISP PAN, 2022).

INTRODUCTION: LINKING CO-PRODUCTION WITH EDUCATION

In recent years, co-production understood as ‘a relationship between a paid employee of an organisation and (groups of) individual citizens that requires a direct and active contribution from these citizens to the work of this organisation’² has become one of the most extensively explored concept in public administration and management studies.³ Undoubtedly, co-production is now expanding new topics, new fields of studies, and new methods of research.⁴ This also slowly is taking place in the regions, such as CEE countries, which compared to Western Europe, clearly lack evidence about citizen engagement in public services.

However, despite the growing interest in co-production from both academics and governments, some fields, including primary education, remain out of reach this concept.⁵ This might surprise knowing that education has been used by researchers to show the participation of citizens in public services in two ways.⁶ On the one hand, student participation is inevitable in the education process.⁷ It is obvious that

² Taco Brandsen and Marlies Honingh, ‘Distinguishing Different Types of Coproduction: A Conceptual Analysis Based on the Classical Definitions’, *Public Administration Review* 76: 3, 2016, pp. 427–35 (p. 431), <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12465>.

³ Elke Loeffler, ‘Public Governance in a Network Society’, in Tony Bovaird and Elke Loeffler, eds, *Public Management and Governance*, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 207–22; Victor Pestoff, *Co-production and Japanese Healthcare: Work Environment, Governance, Service Quality and Social Values* (New York and London: Routledge, 2021).

⁴ See e.g. Sinah Kang and Gregg G. van Ryzin, ‘Experimental Methods for Investigating Co-Production’, in Elke Loeffler and Tony Bovaird, eds, *The Palgrave Handbook of Co-Production of Public Services and Outcomes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 639–57.

⁵ Marlies Honingh, Elena Bondarouk and Taco Brandsen, ‘Co-Production in Primary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review’, *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 86: 2, 2018, pp. 222–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852318769143>.

⁶ See e.g. Robert Bifulco and Helen F. Ladd, ‘Institutional Change and Coproduction of Public Services: The Effect of Charter Schools on Parental Involvement’, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16: 4, 2006, pp. 553–76, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muj001>; Gina Davis and Elinor Ostrom, ‘A Public Economy Approach to Education: Choice and Co-Production’, *International Political Science Review* 12: 4, 1991, pp. 313–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251219101200405>; David O. Porter, ‘Co-Production and Network Structures in Public Education’, in Victor Pestoff, Taco Brandsen and Bram Verschuere, eds, *New Public Governance, the Third Sector and Co-Production* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 145–68; W. H. Voorberg, V.J.J.M. Bekkers and L.G. Tummers, ‘A Systematic Review of Co-Creation and Co-Production: Embarking on the Social Innovation Journey’, *Public Management Review* 17: 9, 2015, pp. 1335–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2014.930505>.

⁷ Porter, ‘Co-Production and Network Structures in Public Education’; Gordon P. Whitaker, ‘Coproduction: Citizen Participation in Service Delivery’, *Public Administration Review* 40: 3, 1980, pp. 240–46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/975377>; Roger B. Parks, Paula

there would be no educational progress if there was no collaboration between the teacher and the student. Thus, education perfectly portrays co-production from a public service logic perspective.⁸ On the other hand, a student-teacher nexus can successfully expand to other service users, in particular parents. Participation of parents not only contributes to educational success of their children, but also improves educational services. A vast body of literature on education, pedagogy and sociology proved that interlinks between home and school remain essential for both student environments.⁹ Other authors, like, e.g. Epstein,¹⁰ have built typologies of relations between parents and teachers, including the types which stay close to co-production arrangements. Thus, parental participation in education is regarded an alternative institutional tool that is used when market and state hegemony turns out to be ineffective,¹¹ and education perfectly portrays co-production in public administration and management studies.¹²

Parental involvement in education can be also explained by the nature of this service. First, education services are referred to as long-term or enduring welfare services.¹³ This means that they affect all citizens for the most part of their lives when they attend school as children or when their loved ones are in the education system. It is believed that services of such nature create the best options for co-production, because citizens are in more stable and long-term positions which make co-production of greater sustainability.¹⁴

C. Baker, Larry Kiser, Ronald Oakerson, Elinor Ostrom, Vincent Ostrom, Stephen L. Percy, Martha B. Vandivort, Gordon P. Whitaker and Rick Wison, 'Consumers as Coproducers of Public Services: Some Economic and Institutional Considerations', *Policy Studies Journal* 9: 7, 1981, pp. 1001–11, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.1981.tb01208.x>.

⁸ Stephen P. Osborne and Kirsty Strokosch, 'It takes Two to Tango? Understanding the Co-production of Public Services by Integrating the Services Management and Public Administration Perspectives', *British Journal of Management* 24: S1, 2013, pp. S31–S47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12010>.

⁹ See e.g. James S. Coleman, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1966); Audrey Addi-Raccah and Rinate Arviv-Elyashiv, 'Parent Empowerment and Teacher Professionalism: Teachers' Perspective', *Urban Education* 43: 3, 2008, pp. 394–415, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907305037>; Alma Harris and Janet Goodall, 'Do Parents Know They Matter? Engaging All Parents in Learning', *Educational Research* 50: 3, 2008, pp. 277–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131880802309424>.

¹⁰ Joyce L. Epstein, 'School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children we Share', *Phi Delta Kappan* 76: 9, 1995, pp. 701–12.

¹¹ See e.g. Davis and Ostrom, 'A Public Economy Approach to Education'.

¹² Porter, 'Co-Production and Network Structures in Public Education'.

¹³ Victor Pestoff, 'Collective Action and the Sustainability of Co-Production', *Public Management Review* 16: 3, 2014, pp. 384–401, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2013.841460>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Second, education services suffer from great uncertainty being a result of information asymmetry.¹⁵ This means that service users are not able to evaluate education services while they use them.¹⁶ In fact, different school rankings based on the results of student exams, could be beneficial when making a choice between service providers. However, a real evaluation of the quality of the service is possible once the education in a particular school is completed. Thus, parental involvement in educational services somehow helps to ease a poor possibility of education evaluation. Similarly, parental involvement in educational services could benefit when it comes to high transaction costs in education, when parents cannot easily switch providers—schools when they are dissatisfied or try to improve services,¹⁷ and when education as a public domain is now becoming more and more unstable¹⁸ due to both global and inner-country changes. One must have in mind that over the last two years, we have witnessed how the COVID-19 pandemic has been influencing education at both the individual (service users and professionals) and institutional (schools and service providers) levels. As a result, education, especially in primary schools, has become one type of public service that desperately needs citizen participation to continue in a stable form during COVID-19,¹⁹ and the time of so called ‘new normal’ after the pandemic. Furthermore, in Poland, between 2015 and 2023 when the right-wing government (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Law and Justice) took over, education at the primary level was affected by the results of the set of reforms that dramatically changed the school system and negatively affected the whole education eco-system that started gravitating towards more centralist mode.

In general, the mode of primary education governance, which was established in Poland after 1989, is commonly known as a government-local-government-market hybrid with a strong position of teacher trade unions as education policy realm stabilisers.²⁰ Nevertheless, with

¹⁵ Henry Hansmann, ‘The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise’, *Yale Law Journal*, 89: 5, 1980, pp. 835–98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/796089>.

¹⁶ Gina Davis and Elinor Ostrom, ‘A Public Economy Approach to Education’.

¹⁷ Pestoff, ‘Collective Action and the Sustainability of Co-Production’.

¹⁸ Cf. Valentina Blandi, *Customer Uncertainty: A Source of Organizational Inefficiency in the Light of the Modularity Theory of the Firm*, PhD Thesis, University of Trento, 2018.

¹⁹ Trui Steen and Taco Brandsen, ‘Coproduction during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Will It Last?’, *Public Administration Review*, 80: 5, 2020, pp. 851–55, <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13258>.

²⁰ Przemysław Sadura, ‘Od centralnego planowania do współzarządzania? Polski system edukacji w epoce zmiany paradygmatu administrowania’, *Zarządzanie Publiczne* 35: 1, 2016, pp. 47–57; Ciepielewska-Kowalik, *Obywatelska polityka edukacyjna*.

its tidal gravitation towards New Public Management (NPM) and once having kept numerous elements of Traditional Public Administration (TPA), this mode does not leave much room for citizens. Neoliberal approach in Polish education is seen in the instruments and solutions implemented in the 1990s. and early 2000s., including in particular mentioned above decentralization and the introduction of market mechanisms to education. According to the latter, education was then subject to 'choice' and 'competition' rules implemented to the way how schools were being financed (in line with a rule 'money comes with the student'), chosen by service users (parents/student could make decisions about the school, while public primary schools from the circuits were entitled to accept all students living within the boundaries of the circuit) and evaluated (based to the results of student exams provided by external educational institutions).

Despite a sharp turn to NPM in the 1990s., some elements that were elevated from traditional public administration were kept in Polish education. As a result, the central government (themselves or through the agency of public administration and local agencies known as chief education officers) is responsible for the design of education, including the school system, financial issues, curriculum, teacher employment regulations, and school supervision in terms of pedagogy dimension. As service providers, local governments (communes) run primary schools, and as partners, they may collaborate in the areas pertaining logistics with non-state actors, including in particular third sector organizations.

Over the years, local governments were made to add more and more own sources to complete those provided by the central government, once educational subsidy given by the central government to communes had lost its subsidizing character and gravitated into a donation covering mostly the costs of hiring teachers instead of all local primary education. This started a typical blame game between the central government and local governments, which lasts until today. With no doubts, however, despite its vulnerabilities, the direction of modernisation Polish education was clear, with the belief that giving communes and non-state actors, mainly communities, right to decide about how schools functioned.

Changes implemented by PiS after 2015 made the relations inside primary schools and the whole educational eco-system unstable and highly complicated, and suffered from numerous rough processes. First, teacher and school autonomy were constantly limited by

numerous regulations, including the one which subjected schools to stronger control of chief education officers who represented the central government. For instance, they gained influence on the shape of local school networks and could decide whether to transform the so called small public school (attended by no more than 70 students), even despite the plans of the local governments, who for instance planned to transfer it to third sector organisation for demographic/economic reasons.²¹ This change is seen as a contradiction in the way how Polish educational system was expected to be modernised in democratic era that begin in 1989, when politicians agreed that decentralisation become one out of three (the other two are democratisation and de-monopolisation) fundamental rules in education. Educational reforms carried out by PiS, especially the one which after 18 years of their existence erased gymnasiums (lower secondary schools) from the educational system, and sent back children at the age of 14 and 15 again to primary schools, brought massive turbulence in staff stability. One should mention that this change was implemented against the great majority of the Polish parents and teachers, and against the results of PISA research which showed that gymnasiums not only contributed to improvement of educational abilities of Polish students, but also helped to ease great educational inequalities, which prey on Polish education. Moreover, low remunerations in accordance with a constant political criticism of teachers in the public sphere discouraged them from this profession. As a result, schools are now struggling with a total personnel shortages, which are especially intense in the case of such specialists as early educators, foreign languages specialists, and science teachers.²²

All these changes together exposed schools and teachers for parental frustration and rising expectations which existed as an unspoken citizen powerlessness in education. Moreover, there is not an exaggeration when it is said that parents and teachers have never been so polarised even if joined by the common case, which is

²¹ According to the rule 'money follows the student', small schools attended by a small number of students, are given smaller education subsidy. Thus, they are often planned to be transferred by local governments to third sector organisations. This kind of change enables communes to transmit only education subsidy (which then becomes education donation) to a non-state provider instead of supplementing education subsidy with own sources of the local government to maintain a small school.

²² Anna Ciepielewska-Kowalik, '(Un)intended Consequences of the 2016 Educational Reform on Early Childhood Education and Care in Poland: The Story of a Few Applications That Led to Significant Disorder', *Policy Futures in Education*, 18: 6, 2020, pp. 806-23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210320923158>; eadem, *Obywatelska polityka edukacyjna*.

effective and user-friendly education. In this situation, the question about the shape of co-production in primary schools in Poland becomes significant. Thus, this study is aimed at answering the question how parental involvement in primary schools looks like? Whether, similarly to early education in other CEE countries,²³ it is aimed at filling gaps in daily school existence due to the shortages of education system and its providers? Thus, in this case, co-production is a kind of instrumental manner, which helps services provided by the school to continue, but contributes to no inner school relations change: parents and teachers still exist as two separate camps, which focus on different goals and realise different tasks. Or, maybe parental involvement transforms inner school relations, making them symmetric (based on putting parents at the heart of decision-making) and gathering around joint parent-teacher goals and tasks? Thus, in this case, co-production has strong transformative potential, which challenges the common top-down managing style in Polish schools.

CONCEPTUALISING CO-PRODUCTION IN THE STUDY

Based on the previous studies expressing that citizen participation may look different depending on the school regime,²⁴ the study is aimed at the following research question: do the schools run by different type of providers, i.e. communes and third sector organisations, display different co-production mode?

Posing this kind of question seems to be justified in Poland, while schools run by local governments in 2015–23, were being subject to a governmental control much stronger than schools run by non-state providers such as third sector organisations.

To investigate the assumption about the existence of two different modes of co-production depending on the type of provider, a theoretical model of different variables that function in existing scholarly literature has been constructed. The variables are as follows:

- Reasons for choosing a school provider: instrumental and autotelic motivations. Instrumental motivations relate to objective features of schools, such as: location, staff, results of external student exams that determine place of school in external ratings, or school

²³ See e.g. Victor Pestoff, *A Democratic Architecture for the Welfare State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

²⁴ See e.g. Bifulco and Ladd, 'Institutional Change and Coproduction of Public Services'.

prestige. Autotelic motivations relate to subjective opinion of service users and professionals about the school, including the abilities of co-producers to cooperate with each other, their influence of how the schools function, and values and methods utilized by the school.

- The way in which self-efficacy, understood as co-producers' subjective opinion on their influence on public services in particular school,²⁵ is implemented in the school.

- The way in which citizen literacy²⁶ defined as skills, competences, and tools, which enable citizens to actively function in public services, is implemented in the school.

- What satisfaction with service quality looks like among service users and professionals.

- How professionals and service users mark their expectations of influence in the school.

- The way how representational legitimacy²⁷ understood as the right to represent school and education issues outside the school and in the public sphere, works: either prescribing representational legitimacy solely to professionals, or enhancing it to service users as well.

- Types of tasks performed by service users in the school²⁸: supplementary (aimed at secondary functions of the school, which are not related to knowledge acquisition or managing the school) or core (aimed at leading/main functions of the school, related to knowledge acquisition and managing the school), and tasks prescribed to the four dimensions, i.e., economic, pedagogic, political, and social.²⁹

- The way in which service users are involved in the decision-making process in the school.

Also a construct of a participatory triad, i.e. inform-consult-co-decide, has been provided in the study. It consists of the opinion of

²⁵ Mette Kjærgaard Thomsen, 'Citizen Coproduction: The Influence of Self-Efficacy Perception and Knowledge of How to Coproduce', *The American Review of Public Administration*, 47: 3, 2015, pp. 340–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074015611744>.

²⁶ John Alford, *Engaging Public Sector Clients: From Service-Delivery to Co-production*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Morten Jakobsen, 'Can Government Initiatives Increase Citizen Coproduction? Results of a Randomized Field Experiment', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 23: 1, 2013, pp. 27–54, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mus036>.

²⁷ Nicole P. Marwell and Maoz Brown, 'Towards a Governance Framework for Government-Nonprofit Relations', in Walter W. Powell and Patricia Bromley, eds, *Nonprofit Sector* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), pp. 231–50, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503611085-014>.

²⁸ Brandsen and Honingh, 'Distinguishing Different Types of Coproduction'.

²⁹ Pestoff, *A Democratic Architecture for the Welfare State*.

parents as service users on how they are involved: whether they are informed about the issues by the teachers, consult the issues or co-decide about the issues hand in hand with the teachers on different tasks prescribed to four fields: school organisation, staff, finance, and teaching. Two of the four fields, that is, staff and teaching, have been regarded in the study as ‘teacher strongholds’, i.e. the fields which have much in common with professional judgment, and thus have traditionally been reserved to teachers (nor parents or other school stakeholders).

The variables above may be classified to two different groups, and as such will be proceed in the further part of the paper. First group consists of variables describing co-production practices (incl. tasks performed by parents in schools or the way in which parents are being involved in the decision-making in schools through the use of participation triad), while second regards the way how citizen involvement is being perceived by service users and service providers (incl. self-efficacy, reasons for choosing a school provider, citizen literacy, service satisfaction, service expectations and representational legitimacy).

The study assumed that the way theoretical variables are recognized predestines the kind of co-production implemented on the school.

The study analysis has been conducted according the three assumptions. First, it is known that co-production can be institutionalised in different ways by the school.³⁰ It can be simply *described* (when public service organisations relay on citizen input to produce and improve public services), or *recognized* (co-production as a way of valuable and usually no-cost input from service users who are seeking to create better channels to shape services), or *institutionalised* (when service user involvement is a lever for reconstruction of relations inside the school). Second, public services can be classified either as flexible or standardized. Educational services in Poland are highly standardized, but due to the changes after 2015, they are getting more and more unstable and unpredictable. This could increase a need of more service user participation.³¹ Finally, according to the previous arrangements,³² co-production contributes to numerous benefits. It

³⁰ Catherine Durose, Catherine Mangan, Catherine Needham and James Rees, with Matthew Hilton, *Transforming Local Public Services through Co-production* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2013).

³¹ Blandi, *Customer Uncertainty*.

³² See e.g. Pestoff, ‘Collective Action and the Sustainability of Co-Production’; Tony Bovaird, ‘Beyond Engagement and Participation: User and Community Coproduction of Public Services’, *Public Administration Review* 67: 5, 2007, pp. 846–60, <https://>

can be simply used to freeze schools/providers spendings on the tasks realised, or contribute to broader social aims. In the first situation, co-production is a kind of managerial tool, which mobilizes parental input, such as time, effort, knowledge, and money, to optimize the tasks, while in the second, it supports parent empowerment and democratizes relations within schools by putting parents in the heart of decision-making process. One should, however, remember that despite its normative approach, co-production may have some dark sides by generating some social costs,³³ and even leading to public value destruction. In Poland this relates to the unfavourable impact on the teacher's position, affecting their time constraints, earnings, and professional burden depending on the type of a school provider.³⁴

TABLE 1
Instrumental and transformative co-production

	Instrumental co-production	Transformative co-production
Reasons for choosing a school provider	Instrumental	Autotelic
Representational legitimacy	Belongs to professionals	Belongs to professionals and service users
Participatory triad (inform-consult-co-decide)	Mostly informing and consulting	Mostly co-deciding
Co-production institutionalised	Description and recognition	Transformation
Emphasis on...	Citizen input	Citizen input + outcome
Citizen literacy	Weak	Strong
Self-efficacy	Weak	Strong
Adequate for public service	Standardized	Flexible, liquid, unstable
Tasks performed by service users	Supplementary teachers' strongholds excluded	Supplementary and core teachers's strongholds included

Source: own elaboration.

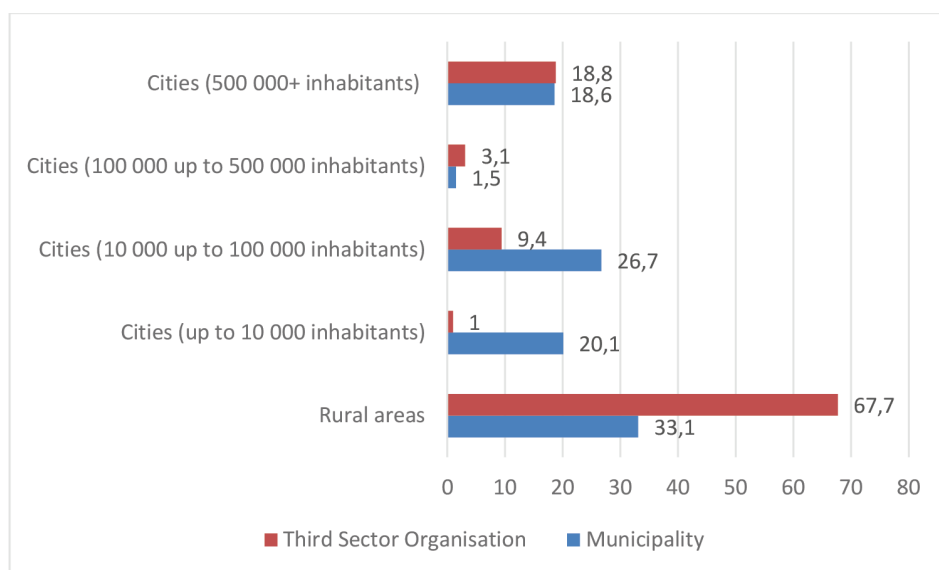
doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00773.x; Tina Nabatchi, Alessandro Sancino and Mariafrancesca Sicilia, 'Varieties of Participation in Public Services: The Who, When, and What of Coproduction', *Public Administration Review* 77: 5, 2017, pp. 766–76, <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12765>.

³³ Eva Sorensen and Signy Irene Vabo, 'A Public Innovation Perspective on Change in Local Democracy', *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* 25: 1, 2020, article 1, <https://innovation.cc/document/2020-25-1-1-introduction-a-public-innovation-perspective-on-change-in-local-democracy/> (access: 25 March 2024); Stephen P. Osborne and Kerry A. Brown, *Managing Change and Innovation in Public Service Organisations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

³⁴ See more in Anna Ciepielewska-Kowalik, 'Between Constraint Co-production and Real Co-creation of Public Services: Citizen Involvement as Public Service Innovation. Lessons from Poland', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 33: 1, 2025, pp. 198–215, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2024.2363872>.

This study relies on data collected in two surveys: a teacher survey (n=165) and a parent survey (n=295) conducted in 2019. Both teachers and parents were involved in commune or third sector schools located in all types of communes (villages and smallest cities up to 10,000 inhabitants, cities of 10–50,000 inhabitants, cities up to 500,00 inhabitants) in four voivodeships in Poland (Figure X1 and Figure X2). The voivodeships have been selected according to the previous arrangements claiming that different historical traditions of Polish regions determine patterns of civic involvement, which, in turn, can influence on different aspects of socio-economic existence of the society, including education.³⁵ Tables in this study indicate the difference in the percentage of positive answers (Dif.) for teachers and parents in the schools run by communes and third sector organisations.

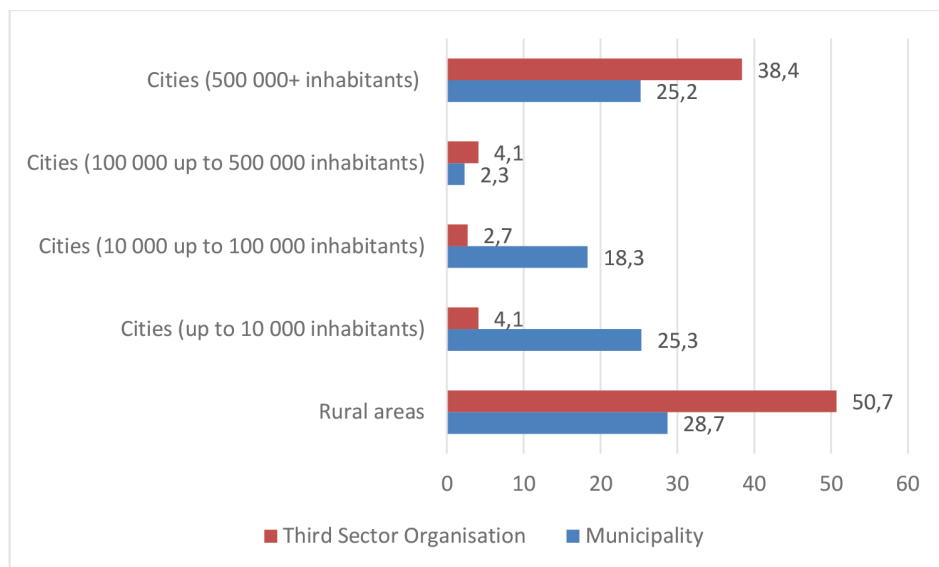
FIGURE X1
Proportion of parent questionnaires in schools carried out by municipalities and third sector organisations due to the school locality (type of the commune) (%)



Source: own calculation based on parent study.

³⁵ Jerzy Bartkowski, *Tradycja i polityka: Wpływ tradycji kulturowych polskich regionów na współczesne zachowania społeczne i polityczne* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie 'Żak', 2003).

FIGURE X2
Proportion of teacher questionnaires in schools carried out by municipalities and third sector organisations due to the school locality (type of the commune) (%)



Source: own calculation based on teacher study.

FINDINGS

REASONS FOR CHOOSING SCHOOL PROVIDERS, SELF-EFFICACY, LITERACY, AND SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE QUALITY

Parents and teachers, irrespective of the type of the provider, agree that location is the most important factor when choosing a school provider, and the difference between parents and teachers depending on the type of provider is small (Tables 2 and 3). However, when analysing other factors determining the school choice, one can find two distinct patterns for choosing the school provider by parents and teachers. First, there is expressive motivation linked to the methods and values utilized by schools, including those that allow parents and teachers to participate in decision making on how the school operates and whether to cooperate with each other. These expressive motivations are significantly more important for parents in schools run by third-sector organisations than those whose children attend commune schools. For parents in commune schools, instrumental

values, including school location are most important when choosing a school. At the same time, other instrumental values, such as service quality measured by the result of student exams and the place of school in the educational rating published by regional institutions, are equally important to parents in the schools of both providers.

TABLE 2
Reasons for choosing a school provider (parents)

Reasons for choosing a school	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Location	65,7	69,7	4,0
Living within a particular school circuit	74,0	50,5	23,5
Results of students exam	20,1	39,4	19,3
Staff	15,4	40,4	25,0
I've known the school before	14,8	32,1	17,3
School works as expected (timetable, etc.).	10,1	38,5	28,4
Values and methods used with students	9,5	38,5	29,0
Infrastructure	14,8	26,6	11,8
School prestige	9,5	24,8	15,3
Social conditions, e.g. students' transportation	11,8	17,4	5,6
Education is free	7,7	19,3	11,6
Recommendations of family and friends	6,5	19,3	12,8
Parents may decide about how the school operate	0,6	19,3	18,7
Particular needs of children, for example, health, care, etc.	1,8	5,5	3,7
Provider	1,2	2,8	1,6
By coincidence	1,2	0,0	1,2

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the parent survey.

When discussing teachers' motivations for choosing a school, one can see that only those from third sector schools indicated autotelic motivations, understood as the possibility of cooperating with service users, as important when deciding where to start work. However, such a factor is not the most important when choosing a work place by teachers. It is the location that plays a major role while the teacher is making a decision where to start work.

TABLE 3
Reasons for choosing a school provider (teachers)

Reasons for choosing a school	JST*	TS**	R***
Location	56,3	47,9	8,4
Employment conditions	16,1	15,1	1,0
Results of student exam	28,7	17,8	10,9
School works as expected (timetable, etc.).	24,1	16,4	7,7
Values and methods used with students	17,5	25,0	7,5
Infrastructure	19,2	13,7	4,5
School prestige	20,7	12,3	11,6
Family and friends recommendations	9,2	16,4	7,2
Cooperation with parents is stronger than in other schools	0,0	4,1	4,1
Teachers can decide how the school operates in a more extensive way than in other schools	1,1	6,8	5,7
Provider	12,0	6,8	5,2
The only school which hired me	12,5	32,5	20,0
By coincidence	20,7	17,8	2,9

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the teacher survey.

The results between the schools of both providers also differ in the case of self-efficacy (Table 4). Parents in third-sector schools, more often than those in commune schools, declared having significant influence in the four fields of school operation, i.e. finance, staff, teaching, and school organisation. The analysis also revealed that only parents from third sector schools regarded their influence as significant in the field of staff issues. This means that third sector schools can improve parental self-efficacy even in 'teacher strongholds', i.e. staff and teaching. Parents in commune schools, contrary to the third sector schools, regarded their influence neutral or modest in four fields studied; not more than 2% of parents of such schools declared their influence significant (Table 4).

A similar situation occurred among teachers. Those in third sector schools, compared to their colleagues from commune schools, more often defined their self-efficacy as significant in 3 of the 4 fields defined in the study (without teaching) (Table 5). However, the difference between teachers in schools run by both providers was not as significant as in the case of parents. The teaching field is the one

in which teacher self-efficacy in third sector schools was weaker than in commune schools. This means that a kind of zero-sum game can be observed here: the improvement of parent self-efficacy is always taking place at the expense of teacher self-efficacy.

TABLE 4
Parent self-efficacy in four fields

	Finance			Staff			Teaching			Organization		
	JST*	TS**	Dif.***	JST*	TS**	Dif.***	JST*	TS**	Dif.***	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Modest	51,8	39,5	12,3	65,6	42,3	23,3	55,0	33,3	22,0	59,3	40,0	19,3
Neutral	46,4	43,0	3,4	34,4	46,4	12,0	43,2	56,3	13,2	39,5	51,2	11,7
Significant	1,8	17,5	15,7	0,0	11,3	11,3	1,8	10,4	8,6	1,2	8,8	7,6
Overall	100	100	x	100	100	x	100	100	x	100	100	x

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the parent survey.

TABLE 5
Self-efficacy of teachers in four fields

	Finance			Staff			Teaching			Organization		
	JST*	TS**	Dif.***	JST*	TS**	Dif.***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Modest	59,1	51,9	7,2	72,1	55,8	16,3	28,2	16,9	11,3	33,7	18,8	14,9
Neutral	36,4	38,5	2,1	26,5	34,9	8,4	42,4	59,2	16,8	53,0	60,9	7,9
Significant	4,5	9,6	5,1	1,4	9,3	7,9	29,4	23,9	5,5	13,3	20,3	7,0
Overall	100	100	X	100	100	X	100	100	x	100	100	x

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: your own elaboration based on the results of the teacher survey.

Schools of both providers differ when taking into account the satisfaction of parents and teachers with service quality. Third sector schools, by engaging parents in their daily routines and key decisions, significantly enhance parental satisfaction (20 pp difference between the providers). However, greater teacher autonomy and their real influence on how the schools function do not contribute to improving teacher satisfaction. Teachers in third sector schools, compared to their colleagues in commune schools, describe service satisfaction as neutral, and seldom they are satisfied with services. Such a situation

may suggest that in third sector schools, sharing decision power with parents is weakening teacher satisfaction with service, even despite the fact that in these schools teachers seem to have a stronger influence on the schools operation.

TABLE 6
Parent satisfaction with service

	Finance			Staff			Teaching			Organization		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Dissatisfied ^{a)}	6,6	6,4	0,2	13,8	4,6	9,2	10,1	4,6	5,5	9,2	4,1	5,1
Neutral	44,9	23,9	21,0	39,5	23,1	16,4	38,1	18,4	19,8	45,8	24,4	21,4
Satisfied ^{b)}	48,5	69,7	21,1	46,7	72,3	25,6	51,8	77,0	25,2	55,0	71,5	16,5
Overall	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the parent survey.

TABLE 7
Teacher satisfaction with service

	Finance			Staff			Teaching			Organization		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Dissatisfied*	15,3	14,5	0,8	14,1	4,3	9,8	7,1	0,0	7,1	11,6	4,2	7,4
Neutral	31,8	34,8	3,0	22,4	39,1	16,7	8,2	8,7	0,5	19,8	31,9	12,1
Satisfied**	52,9	50,7	2,2	63,5	56,6	6,9	84,7	91,3	6,6	68,6	63,9	4,7
Overall	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>	100	100	<i>x</i>

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the teacher survey.

Regarding literacy, one can see that third sector schools enhance literacy stronger than commune schools. In third sector schools, no parents who declared their inactivity in school tasks, explained such a state by lack of civic knowledge. On the other hand, however, third sector schools may simply be more attractive for those who are more educated in civic issues, and for this reason more likely to take part in school tasks.

TABLE 8
Parent literacy

Reasons of inactivity	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Lack of knowledge	11,0	0,0	11,0
No time	59,8	50,0	9,8
Ideological factors	1,2	2,1	0,8
No representative legitimacy in school/education for parents	3,6	2,1	1,5
Do not feel like being involved in school tasks	24,4	45,8	21,8
Overall	100	100	<i>x</i>

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the parent survey.

TABLE 9
Literacy of teachers

	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Lack of knowledge	3,3	4,5	1,2
No time	33,3	59,1	25,8
Ideological factors	0,0	9,1	9,1
No representative legitimacy in school/education for teachers	40,0	4,5	35,5
Do not feel like I am involved in school tasks	23,3	22,7	0,6
Overall	100	100	<i>x</i>

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the teacher survey.

CO-PRODUCERS' EXPECTATIONS, AND REPRESENTATIONAL LEGITIMACY

The study revealed significant differences in third sector and commune schools when referring to parents' and teachers' expectations of influence. As Table 10 shows, parents from commune schools expect more influence in the four fields studied much more often than those from third sector schools; while those from third sector schools seem to be more satisfied with the level of influence they already have. It might suggest that parental involvement in the third sector schools in the four fields studied, correlates with parental expectations in the case of user influence.

Important is also that a scant percent of parents declared no parental representational legitimacy to represent school and education issues, and the difference between the school providers is not significant in any of the fields. This suggests that parents in Polish primary schools, regardless of type of the provider, perceive themselves as education representatives, they are ready to confirm their responsibility for school tasks, and do not regard professionals as the sole representatives of schools and education.

Results in parental representational legitimacy did not correlate with the teachers' results. As Table 11 shows, most teachers can easily find fields / tasks which shall be booked for them, but not for parents. These are the tasks related to 'teacher strongholds' such as working conditions, teacher evaluation, and methods / curriculum, but also school finance.

TABLE 10
Parents' representative legitimacy in 4 dimensions

	Finance			Staff			Teaching			Organization		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
More influence	47,6	16,0	31,6	34,3	14,8	14,5	54,5	22,6	31,9	43,4	18,9	24,5
No change	43,9	75,5	31,6	51,8	71,3	19,5	43,1	74,6	31,5	50,6	75,5	24,9
No representative legitimacy	8,5	8,5	0,0	13,9	13,9	0,0	2,4	2,8	0,4	6,0	5,6	0,4
Overall	100	100	x	100	100	x	100	100	x	100	100	

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the parent survey.

TABLE 11
No representational legitimacy for parents: according to teachers' view

	JST*	TS**	R***
Working conditions	61,1	46,2	14,9
Teacher evaluation	11,1	30,8	19,7
Methods and curriculum	22,3	15,4	6,9
Finance	5,5	7,6	2,1
Overall	100	100	x

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: Own elaboration based on the results of the teacher survey.

BRINGING RESOURCES TO SCHOOLS: TYPES OF TASKS PERFORMED
BY SERVICE USERS

When co-producing, parents and teachers make a contribution to the school. However, their input differs when the type of provider is taken into account (Table 12). Schools run by communes and third sector organisations involve parents in a similar way in economic, organisational / social, and pedagogy fields, but significantly differ in the political dimension of parental involvement. It must be said that the social and economic dimensions of parental involvement are most common in Polish schools, regardless of the provider, but they do not offer parents a real impact on how the schools function. Parental involvement in both dimensions in Poland, similarly to other CEE countries,³⁶ should be treated as user input improving poor resources of primary schools. Parental input in the case of economic dimension (especially when time and effort to fix and clean a school building are contributed) is extensively used by third sector schools, of which the great majority operate in poor rural areas.

As shown in Table 12, parents usually perform supplementary tasks which form economic, social, and political dimensions. The pedagogy dimension is, similarly to other European countries,³⁷ hardly exists in Polish schools. This is a result of a strong standardisation of education services in Poland, where the central government regulates how the curriculum looks like and what kinds of skills are determined for teachers and other staff in schools. This definitely does not leave much room for service users to step into teaching and spending time with students at school.

When discussing the political dimension of parental involvement, one can indicate that parents have a different real impact on services, and gain different opportunities to participate in supplementary and core services depending on the provider (Table 13). It is the political dimension that offers parents the greatest participation in the decision-making process, including strategic issues in schools. Schools run by third sector organisations offer parents the opportunity to decide in the form of control and management councils, while schools run by communes focus on traditional forms of citizen participation in the form of parent councils or softer forms, which—after Pestoff³⁸—can be

³⁶ I. Dandalova, *Participation and Democracy in Childcare Services in Eight European Countries. Case Study: Bulgaria* (Liege: EMES International Research Network, 2003).

³⁷ See e.g. Pestoff, *A Democratic Architecture for the Welfare State*.

³⁸ Ibid.

classified as discussion spaces. Parental involvement in the political dimension in third sector schools can be explained by their willingness to develop their potential and the ability to share responsibility for services and schools. In this case, a school choice can be simply a new start to realize your expectations of participating in the tasks of the school and the provider.

TABLE 12
Tasks performed by parents in schools

Dimension	Type of involvement	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
Economic	Paying fee	1,2	28,4	27,2
	Paying other fees, in particular, for parents' council budget	85,8	73,4	12,4
	Collect things that needed at school	23,1	27,5	4,4
	Fixing and cleaning a school building from time to time	5,9	27,5	21,6
Social	Assisting in school events	47,9	56,0	8,1
Pedagogy	Teaching and caring for children (teachers' assistance)	0,6	0,9	0,3
Political	Submitting comments about the school to teachers or principal	1,2	5,5	4,3
	Give teachers some feedback when bringing the child around	23,1	37,6	14,5
	Being active in parents' meetings	59,2	53,2	6,0
None	No participation	0,6	2,7	2,1

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: own elaboration based on the results of the parent study.

TABLE 13
Political dimension of parent participation

	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
All forms	23,9	54,2	20,0
Control & management bodies	1,1	15,9	14,8
Membership	4,3	15,9	11,6
Active support without control or membership	18,5	22,4	3,9
None	76,1	45,8	30,3
Overall	100	100	x

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: own elaboration based on the results of the parent study.

A similar situation occurs among teachers when it comes to the political dimension (Table 14). Those from third sector schools are significantly more often involved in the political dimension. I assume that the greater influence of teachers on how tasks are performed and the functions of schools contribute to their positive attitude toward parental participation.

TABLE 14
Political dimension of teacher participation

	JST*	TS**	Dif.***
All forms	33,3	75,3	42,0
Control & management bodies	3,3	9,6	6,3
Membership	10,0	30,1	20,1
Active support without control or membership	20,0	35,6	15,6
None	66,7	24,7	42,0
Overall	100	100	<i>x</i>

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** Difference between schools in the common and third sector (percentage points).

Source: own elaboration based on the results of the teacher study.

PARTICIPATION OF SERVICE USERS AND PROFESSIONALS: SHARING DECISION-MAKING

The study revealed that parents frequently used the triad informing-consulting-co-deciding in the field of finance, school organisation, and education, but rarely used the triad in the staff field (Tables 15, 16, 17 and 18). Parents decide about the staff in a very low extension, regardless it is informing or consulting or co-deciding about the tasks. This means that the field of staff remains beyond parental participation, which can be explained by the dominance of managerial style in Polish schools, and the unwillingness of teachers to share the professional issues with parents. The staff field is also the one in which the difference between schools run by third sector organisations and communes is the most significant. Third sector schools more extensively explored the participatory triad in the staff field. Furthermore, they enable parents to co-decide in the staff field more often than in commune schools (the difference between schools is as follows: 18.7 pp in the case of parental participation in the principal evaluation; 14.4 pp in the case of teacher evaluation;

ca. 55 parents from third-sector schools decided about hiring teachers, while in commune schools parents had no impact on this subfield).

TABLES 15
Parents in the participatory triad (finance)

Task	Informing			Consulting			Co-deciding		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Spending money	23,7	39,4	15,7	8,3	7,3	1,0	1,8	4,6	2,8
Financial plan	16,4	28,4	12,0	5,3	6,4	1,1	1,8	5,5	3,7
Purchase and school renovation	19,5	36,7	17,2	8,9	10,1	1,2	0,6	12,8	12,2
Money collected by parents' body	16,0	16,5	0,5	11,8	11,0	0,8	14,2	35,8	21,6
Fee	5,9	15,6	9,7	2,4	6,4	4,9	0,6	3,7	3,1
External projects	14,8	34,9	20,1	2,4	2,8	0,4	0,6	2,8	2,2

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** The difference between the commune and third sector schools (percentage points).
More than one answer was possible.

Source: own elaboration based on the results of parent study.

TABLES 16
Parents in the participatory triad (staff)

Task	Informing			Consulting			Co-deciding		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Principal evaluation	11,2	12,8	1,6	4,1	8,3	4,2	0,6	19,3	18,7
Teacher evaluation	8,9	11,8	2,9	8,3	15,6	7,3	3,0	17,4	14,4
Staff hiring	13,6	35,8	22,2	1,2	5,5	4,3	0,0	4,6	4,6
Terms of employment	8,3	22,9	14,6	1,2	1,8	0,6	0,0	4,6	4,6

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** The difference between the commune and third sector schools (percentage points).
More than one answer was possible.

Source: own elaboration based on the results of parent study.

The study also revealed that there exist significant differences between third sector and commune schools in the field of teaching, in particular in the case of consulting and co-deciding about methods and curriculum—the difference is 16.8 in the case of consulting and 7.1 in the case of deciding. A similar situation occurs in the finance field, in particular in the case of spending money on schools (the difference from 2.8 pp in the case of co-deciding to 15.7 in the case of informing).

This shows that parents from third sector schools could have more influence on the field that belongs to professional judgment, such as methods and curriculum.

TABLES 17
Parents in the participatory triad (teaching)

Task	Informing			Consulting			Co-deciding		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Pedagogical experiments	14,2	23,9	9,7	4,7	7,3	2,6	0,0	6,4	6,4
Methods and curriculum	17,8	21,1	3,3	7,1	23,9	16,8	1,2	8,3	7,1
Extracurricular activities	16,0	17,4	1,4	14,8	19,3	4,5	7,7	24,8	17,1
Preventive-pedagogic programme	33,1	26,6	6,5	28,4	55,0	26,6	7,1	14,7	7,6
School evaluation	15,4	19,3	3,9	3,0	11,0	8,0	1,2	5,5	4,3

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** The difference between the commune and third sector schools (percentage points).
More than one answer was possible.

Source: own elaboration based on the results of parent study.

TABLES 18
Parents in the participatory triad (school organization)

Task	Informing			Consulting			Co-deciding		
	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***	JST*	TS**	R***
Social issues (e.g. student transportation)	18,2	18,3	0,1	6,5	13,8	7,3	3,0	13,8	10,8
School plan (e.g., days off, school calendar)	23,7	23,9	0,2	3,6	21,1	17,5	1,8	5,5	3,7

* Commune schools (%)

** Third sector schools (%)

*** The difference between the commune and third sector schools (percentage points).
More than one answer was possible.

Source: own elaboration based on the results of parent study.

The above results can be explained twofold. First, third sector schools, in particular in rural areas, are run by parent associations. As such, membership in these associations, or even being a part of control and management councils, enables parents to decide about how the school functions and is strictly connected with the political dimension of parental involvement. Second, the parental position as clients of third sector schools seems to be untouched. Third sector

schools are subject to consumerism. Parents can vote on their feet at any time and change providers. Therefore, parent participation in the decision about methods and curriculum should be treated as the basic mechanism that protects against the exit option.³⁹

DISCUSSION: DO TWO TYPES OF CO-PRODUCTION REALLY EXIST
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN POLAND?

The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis that two types of co-production can be observed in primary schools in Poland, depending on the provider concerned. Schools run by third sector organisations stay closer to transformative co-production, while commune schools have more in common with instrumental co-production. Such a difference between the schools can be proved by several observations.

First, both teachers and parents represent autotelic rather than instrumental values in the third sector schools. This, of course, does not mean that instrumental values are not important for professionals and service users in third sector schools. It is obvious that such instrumental factors as school location (for teachers and parents), service quality measured by results of external student exams and school prestige, staff qualifications (for parents), and working conditions (for teachers) are equally important for co-producers in the third sector and commune schools. However, autotelic values related to methods and values in schools are considerably more important for teachers, and significantly more important for parents in the third sector than commune schools. Moreover, parents from third sector schools declared more often that they valued co-deciding when choosing the school. These were also teachers from third sector schools who declared the ability to develop cooperation with parents as significant factor in a school choice. The difference between school providers in terms of autotelic values can be consistent with the opinion that these are third sector schools which offer the best connection between the school and the house.⁴⁰

Second, commune and third sector schools offer different levels of participation of parents and teachers in the core and supplementary tasks. The study revealed that not only did third sector schools use the participative triad more often than commune schools,

³⁹ Albert Otto Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁴⁰ See e.g. Sjoerd Karsten, Guuske Ledoux, Jaap Roeleveld, Felix Charles and Dorothe Elshof, 'School Choice and Ethnic Segregation', *Educational Policy* 17: 4, 2003, pp. 452-77.

but they also guaranteed parents real participation in the service content through co-deciding instead of informing and consulting. Furthermore, in third sector schools, parents even consult and co-decide issues belonging to the fields that can be referred to as 'teacher strongholds', including teaching (in particular methods and curriculum) and staff (in particular staff hiring, working conditions, and teacher evaluation). This shows that third sector schools, but not commune schools, share both supplementary tasks related to the school organisation (in particular co-organizing school events) and core tasks related to knowledge acquisition. However, it must be stressed that more extensive parental involvement in the teaching field in third sector schools does not relate to parental enhancement in the pedagogical dimension of co-production. In Poland, similar to other countries, the pedagogical dimension of co-production discussed as direct participation of parents in teaching, performing the role of assistant teacher, or being on duty in school, is not well developed. This situation is attributed to the high standardization of educational services, which does not offer much room for stakeholders who are not professionals.

The study also showed that commune and third sector schools involved parents in economic, organisational, and pedagogic tasks in a similar way, but they significantly differed when the political involvement of parents was discussed. It must be said that these are the economic and social dimensions that are most developed in Polish schools, regardless of the type of the provider. Parental involvement in this case is a kind of mechanism that improves the poor staff and financial resources of Polish schools. Political dimension of parental co-production is related to control functions in the schools, and it is concerned only by third sector schools. Political parental involvement in commune schools is limited to traditional forms, such as parental councils and discussion spaces, which do not offer a real impact on service content. Third sector schools, by offering control functions to parents, contribute to sharing the decision-making process on service design and provision between professionals and service users. On the other hand, parental involvement in the political dimension in third sector schools can be explained by the need to develop parents' eligibility for co-responsibility of how the school functions. And in this case, whether parents decide to choose the third sector school, it is a starting point how they are planning to realise their coproductive needs and expectations.

Third, the self-efficacy of parents and teachers is different in the third sector and in the commune schools, and it is obvious that parents of the third sector schools declared more influence in the four fields studied. This means that when offering control functions to parents, third sector schools enhanced parental self-efficacy, even in the fields regarded as ‘teacher strongholds’. Similar situation exists in terms of teachers. Those from third sector schools declared stronger self-efficacy than those from commune schools. However, the difference is not as significant as in the case of parents. The interesting thing is that the teaching field is the one in schools in the third sector, in which teacher self-efficacy was weaker than in commune schools. This might suggest that, in the case of core tasks related to teaching, zero-sum games occurs: when parental self-efficacy is improving, teacher self-efficacy is declining. However, such a correlation is not strong, while inviting parents to the staff field, which is a second professional stronghold, does not interfere with strong teacher self-efficacy in third sector schools.

Fourth, the third sector and the commune schools differ when it comes to service satisfaction, and the difference between providers is significant. Schools are also different in terms of service user expectations in their influence on the four fields studied. As shown above, third sector schools seem to respond better than commune schools to parental expectations, which is attributed to the way they involve parents in school tasks. Important is, however, that commune and third sector schools do not differ in representational legitimacy: regardless the provider, parents in Polish primary schools see themselves as those who are eligible to represent schools and education with equal rights to professionals. However, this cannot be confirmed by professionals, who refused to give parents representational legitimacy in the tasks referred to as ‘teacher strongholds’, but also in school finance.

Finally, third sector schools seem to enhance literacy stronger than commune schools. It is confirmed by the fact that only in third sector schools, those who were not involved in the schools tasks, did not indicate lack of knowledge how to participate as the factor explaining their inactivity. This suggests that third sector schools, indeed, enhance literacy, but also may attract those with better citizen literacy.

The differences discussed above between the providers of educational services confirm that being a teacher and a parent in a commune and third sector school does not mean the same. Stronger parental

participation, as well as greater teacher openness to parental involvement in third sector schools, are the result of mutual readjustment.⁴¹ When co-producing, parents and teachers see how the school functions in different aspects, take up joint initiatives, and work out joint solutions to particular problems. Unlike commune schools, parents and teachers from third sector schools cooperate with each other even in the fields referred to as 'teacher strongholds', such as teaching and staff. This mutual readjustment in third sector schools is taking place due to the stronger political participation of professionals and service users, in particular their participation in decision-making bodies instead of traditional consultative bodies common in commune schools.

Without a doubt, third sector schools guarantee the relocation of power between parents and teachers. Relations between the groups of co-producers became more symmetric, democratic, and more flexible. Third sector schools not only recognize parental *input*, but they underline the *outcome* of parental involvement, which is making the system inside the school democratic. This does not mean that parental input is not significant for third sector schools. It is, indeed, in many cases, crucial for the daily existence of the school. In some third sector schools, usually in rural areas, it compensates for poor staff and finance resources. However, in third sector schools, parental involvement is linked to the reciprocity rule that combines input from parents with the service co-design. In commune schools, parental input is instrumentalised and limited to making services more effective and efficient. In other words, parental involvement in third sector schools not only contributes to patching school shortcomings, but transforms relationships inside the schools. In this case, parental involvement in third sector schools lets parents be agents of change: their involvement in decision-making gives them the right to define and design services instead of being solely a part of a production process. Thus, co-production in third sector schools contributes to user-led innovation.⁴² In commune schools, parents participate in the operation level of production services. It is a result of parental involvement in co-construction when they express their opinions about current services in their day-to-day contact or in discussion spaces, and in participative co-production, when they consult (but not decide) about the school.

⁴¹ Durose, Mangan, Needham and Rees, *Transforming Local Public Services*.

⁴² Osborne and Stokosch, 'It takes Two to Tango?'

By and large, third sector schools not only describe or recognize, but also institutionalise co-production.⁴³ Institutionalisation is linked to the approval of co-deciding, partnership and sharing responsibilities as fundamental rules in internal school systems. Commune schools, on the other hand, simply describe or at best recognize co-production, which means that they simply appreciate parental involvement in the case of service improvement. Unfortunately, they do not treat co-production as a factor which changes the internal relations between parents and teachers. This means that parents and teachers in commune schools operate within the existing management paradigm. They, indeed, improve it, but not transform it—as it occurs in third sector schools. The study confirmed that breaking the current modes of management in third sector schools, which is done through transformative co-production, enhanced parents as service users, but—what is important—does not invade much in the position of professionals. As a result, in third sector schools, new representational legitimacy for the teachers can be discussed. It neither significantly weaken teacher positions nor deprofessionalize the teacher's profession, but extends what Whitty⁴⁴ calls democratic professionalism, which—similarly to co-production—is a synonym of repealing power asymmetry inside the school system.

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