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Problems of upbringing in the sociological perspective, or why pedagogy needs sociology – impressions

Problematyka wychowania w perspektywie socjologicznej albo po co pedagogice socjologia - impresje

Abstract: The text addresses the issue of the relevance of sociological analyses for research and analysis within pedagogy as a science of upbringing. Treating pedagogy as an applied science, integrating the results of research of many basic disciplines, the text presents sociological analyses as one of the sources of knowledge about the processes and contexts crucial for understanding upbringing and proposing practical solutions in this area. Starting from the classical approach of Florian Znaniecki, the key problem areas for the sociological analysis of upbringing processes are indicated - the sociological theory of upbringing, the sociological analysis of upbringing conditions, the sociological basis for pedagogy as a practical activity. In the following part, the specificity of sociological references in pedagogy is presented. The text is an introduction to the discussion on the relationship of research in disciplines basic to pedagogy with the pedagogical discourse.

Keywords: upbringing, sociology of upbringing, pedagogy, social theory.

Introduction

The aim of this text is to look at the relationship between sociological analyses and pedagogy as a science of upbringing. I adopt here a basic definition of pedagogy as an area of scientific activity in which a variety of problematic, conceptual and pragmatic approaches intersect to form a specific nexus of analyses, ideas and doctrines that are directed towards

the practice of education. Pedagogy brings together theoreticians and practitioners, researchers and philosophers, critics of educational endeavors and teachers (see: Śliwerski, 2014). The subject of pedagogy - upbringing - covers so many aspects that it is, in its essence, a scientifically interdisciplinary area. Looking at the problems undertaken in research signed as pedagogical or, on the other hand, analysing the staff compositions of pedagogical institutes and faculties, we will notice that psychologists, sociologists, biologists, philosophers, cultural anthropologists, economists and many others find themselves successfully in this field of research activity. This is undoubtedly because upbringing as a phenomenon is a multidimensional process, entangled in various contexts and systems of reference, and requires such a multi- and interdisciplinary approach (see: Odrowąż-Coates, 2018). Adopting the classic distinction of Stanislaw Kowalski (1979), we can define pedagogy as a science with a multifaceted and integrative character and sociology as a discipline characterised by a single-faceted and descriptive character. This is another term for the division between basic and applied sciences. It includes the thesis that sociology as a basic science, alongside other disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, economics, biology, is the basis for thinking about the practice of educational action. As Brooks, McCormack, and Bhopal (2013, p. 45) note, „The sociology of education offers critical insights into the structures, processes, and outcomes of educational systems, often questioning and deconstructing the assumptions underlying pedagogical practices". Similarly, Apple, Ball, and Gandin (2010, p. 23) argue that „While pedagogy is concerned with the methods and practice of teaching, sociology of education critically examines the social contexts, structures, and power dynamics that shape educational experiences and outcomes". Sadovnik, Coughlan, and Semel (2017, p. 67) observe, „Sociology of education focuses on understanding how educational institutions affect social inequalities, whereas pedagogy primarily deals with the strategies of instruction and curriculum design." Ball (2017, p. 101) further emphasizes that „Educational sociology and pedagogy operate at different analytical levels: sociology addresses the broader social forces influencing education, while pedagogy is more focused on the day-to-day practices and methodologies within the classroom". In the same vein, Hart (2019, p. 150) argues, „A critical sociological approach to education challenges the existing power relations and inequities within the system, which is a broader scope compared to the pedagogical focus on instructional methods and learning outcomes".

At the end of the day, pedagogy ends up in educational practice – whether as an object of reflection and analysis or as a "thing to be done",

i.e. the object of the work of educators. Here, the basic sciences provide a repository of tools that can and should be used when investigating or designing educational processes. In what ways is sociological thinking useful for pedagogical analysis and activity?

In this text, I will briefly indicate the specificity of the sociological approach to analysing the phenomena of upbringing. Referring to the classical interpretations of Florian Znaniecki (2001), I will present the perspective of the sociology of upbringing as a basic frame of reference for pedagogy. Although these concepts date back over a hundred years, they have not lost their relevance. On the contrary, reinterpreting them allows for a more nuanced analysis of contemporary issues. The enduring value of these classical interpretations lies in their ability to provide foundational insights that are applicable to the evolving context of modern education and society. I will present three problem areas for sociological analysis related to upbringing. This will be the basis for considering how the results of sociological analyses can (should?) be taken into account in pedagogical analyses and actions. It is important to note that this text only outlines the problem field concerning the interdependencies between sociology and pedagogy, rather than applying sociological theories to the analysis of certain pedagogical problems. I am aware that this may be disappointing for some readers, but a full sociological analysis of upbringing issues exceeds the scope of this article. This text should be seen as a preliminary work towards developing a coherent concept of the sociology of upbringing in the contemporary world. The main goal, however, is to outline the general framework of how sociology can inform pedagogy.

Upbringing as a social process

"In all times, in all peoples, 'upbringing' consists in certain actions, performed by certain people with the intention of inducing, inhibiting or modifying, immediately or in the further future, certain actions of other people" (Znaniecki, 2001, p. 3).

> The educational activity, directly or indirectly, deliberately or unintentionally, aims at fashioning human individuals who will be able and willing to participate in those collective activities that the social group considers right and desirable. Since all the members that make up a social group at some point in its existence must sooner or later die out, the group, in order to survive, must acquire new members in their place. Well, these new members must be prepared for their role, the cultural resources, abilities and aspirations of their predecessors must be passed on to them, so that the group remains the same despite

the change in its composition, so that it retains the continuity of its cultural life (Znaniecki, 2001, p. 6).

This classic definition outlines the specificity of the sociological analysis of the processes of upbringing. First and foremost, and this is included in the first passage, it indicates that it is an action directed at achieving specific changes in the behaviour of others. Thus, we have a subject who acts and a subject who is influenced. This social relationship that Znaniecki calls the 'nurturing relationship' can itself be the object of sociological analysis. The second passage indicates, in turn, the purpose of this interplay, or relation, which is to prepare the individual to function in a specific group of which that individual is to become a part. The function of upbringing is the survival of the group - it is to the needs of the group that the educational action is subordinated. It is important to emphasise here this unromantic dimension of upbringing from a sociological perspective - the function of upbringing is not the well-being of the individual, but the survival of the group into which the individual is to enter. This is a point worth making in an age of the primacy of individual freedom in highly individualised Western societies.

The task of the sociologist in relation to the issue of upbringing is to analyse the mechanisms of this preparation of individuals for life in the target group(s). This determines two key dimensions of sociological analysis. On the one hand, it is the focus on the analysis of social needs - or more precisely, the analysis of the specific functioning of the social groups for which the individual is to be prepared. Sociological analysis can, in this respect, be taken as the basis for upbringing by providing information to those responsible for shaping the attitudes and values of future members of society for which these individuals are to be prepared. On the other hand, the process of upbringing itself, as a specific social relationship, becomes the object of sociological analysis. As Znaniecki aptly puts it (2001, p. 49):

"Since upbringing is a social activity that prepares individuals (...) for full membership in a given group, so the upbringing theorist must reflect specifically on what the social group is doing to shape the social environment of these individuals appropriately to their collective needs and aspirations". Znaniecki calls this specific social environment in which the formation of individuals takes place the 'educational environment'. In doing so, he identifies two dimensions of this environment, consisting in turn of several key elements. Firstly, there is the dimension of the natural social environments in which individuals function and in which they are subjected to educational influences. These are the family, the neighbourhood group and the peer group. Secondly, it is the dimension of purposeful educational activities,

using planned means and tools of influence. Here Znaniecki points to individual teaching, school institutions and institutions of indirect education. The individual who is the object of educational influence is shaped in each of these arrangements, being a participant in a series of relations and processes specific to each of these social arrangements. Taken together, they form a multidimensional and multicontextual space within which the attitudes and values of the individual are shaped. The specificity of the processes in each of these spheres brings with it specific educational consequences. In doing so, the general model of upbringing as a response to the needs of the social system assumes that these processes and the specifics of the functioning of the respective components of the upbringing environment are relevant to the logic of the social whole for which the new members (children and adolescents) are to be prepared.

Modernizing Znaniecki's perspective requires contextualizing it within contemporary society. Today, upbringing is influenced by globalization, digital environments, and the rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape. Znaniecki's concept of the educational environment includes both natural social environments (family, neighborhood, peer group) and purposeful educational activities (teaching, school institutions, indirect education). However, contemporary upbringing also involves internet, social media, and digital communication platforms. The task of the sociologist, therefore, extends to analyzing the mechanisms of preparing individuals for life in these diverse and dynamic social groups and spheres (Latour, 2017; Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2018; Knorr Cetina, 2017; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Bennett, 2016).

Such an approach needs to be complemented by broader social arrangements influencing processes in specific upbringing environments. Following the classics of Polish sociology of education (Kowalski, 1979; Kwieciński, 1975, 1980; Wincławski, 2004), we will indicate here the arrangements or environmental circles, which can be described as increasingly wider arrangements of structural conditions around a given upbringing environment. These environmental circles are in turn - the local community environment, regional arrangements, society (state), supranational structures (Kwieciński, 1980; see also Mikiewicz, 2016). Integrating contemporary perspectives, Bronfenbrenner (2016), for instance, offers a revised ecological systems theory, emphasizing the layered influence of different environments on child development (see also Hammersley 2017; Macionis and Plummer 2017; Grusec and Hastings 2015; Edwards and Gillies, 2017). Upbringing, as preparation for life in society, thus becomes, in a sense, one of the fundamental topics of sociological analysis. Consideration of the process of

upbringing itself and its conditions, in turn, requires analyses of a wide variety of social systems – from narrowly defined concrete elements of the educational environment, such as the family or the local community, to the macro structures of global society. The description and analysis of practically all dimensions of social life seems to be essential for a full understanding of the educational activity, its effects in specific historical systems and the possible social pragmatics, i.e. the design of educational activities as a response to social challenges.

Sociological questions about upbringing

The outlined analytical model forms the basis for research questions about educational processes. These questions are arranged in several problem settings, designating different analytical fields. Firstly, we will identify questions about the educational processes in the upbringing environment. These can be called questions of a theoretical nature:

1. what does the educational relationship look like, what are its characteristics in the different elements of the educational environment?
2. what are the characteristics of the functioning of the various elements of the educational environment?
3. what are the synergistic effects of the educational activities in the various elements of the educational environment?
4. how, through which mechanisms, do the wider environmental systems affect the processes in the respective elements of the educational environment?

Secondly, there will be questions about the characteristics of specific educational environments in a given historical period.

1. what rules and values organise the educational relationship in the different elements of the educational environment in a given environmental setting in a given historical period?
2. how do the individual elements of the educational environment in a given environment and in a given historical period function and what are their characteristics?
3. what are the synergic effects of the individual elements of the educational environment in a given environment and in a given historical period?
4. what are the characteristics of the given wider environmental systems at a given historical time? How do these characteristics condition the processes in the educational environment?

The third type of questions will be of a more applied nature, directed towards practical action in the educational field:

1. what rules and values should organise the educational relationship in a given environmental setting and historical time?
2. how should the individual elements of the educational environment in a given environment in a given historical period function (or how to support its proper functioning)?
3. how can the synergy effect (coordinating effect) of the different elements of the educational environment in a given environment and in a given historical period be ensured?

It is evident that the third set of questions is value-laden, postulative in nature. In a sense, it is no longer the sociology of upbringing, but rather pedagogy, treated as an applied science, integrating the findings of the basic sciences and proposing multidimensional, synthetic programmes or social interventions.

Integrating modern sociological theories such as Actor-Network Theory (ANT), theory of practices, constructivism, and gender and minority studies can provide deeper insights and enrich the discussion. Addressing these questions in the context of contemporary society, including the impact of digital environments and socio-cultural changes, enhances their relevance (Latour, 2017; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2018; Knorr Cetina, 2017; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Bennett, 2016).

The relevance of sociological analysis to pedagogy

We can label the three thematic areas outlined. The first we will call the sociological theory of upbringing, the second, the sociological analysis of the conditions of upbringing, the third the sociological basis for pedagogy as a practical activity. It seems that the first problem dimension, the sociological theory of upbringing, contains a set of accepted, and rather unquestionable or debatable, concepts concerning the processes of upbringing. Here we will primarily include sociological theories of socialisation (see e.g. Tillmann, 2014), which describe the processes of attitude and value formation as a process of preparation for functioning in specific social conditions. In doing so, it should be noted that socialisation concepts are derived from broader theoretical paradigms, or theories of social action in the strict sense, which provide theorems about the basic mechanisms governing human action in society. Whatever the structural-functional, conflictual or interpretative paradigm, every general theory of society is built on a theory of social action, from the classic works of August Comte, Max Weber, George Simmel, Karl Marx (see

Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2017; Szacki 2023), through the now iconic studies of Talcott Parsons, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault or Herbert Blumer, to the contemporary theories of the constitution of society by Anthony Giddens or Alain Touraine (see Turner, 2014; Calhoun, 2012). Of course, I am not suggesting here that these authors present the same theoretical views, but rather that they are authors of classical concepts that continue to enliven scientific debate on the connections between individual actions and social structures. To this list of classics, we can add several more contemporary authors. As Margaret Archer (2010) theory of reflexivity, Bruno Latour's ANT theory (2005), or Emirbayer Mustafa (1997) concept of relational sociology. The rich sociological theoretical apparatus offers a numerous tools to investigate the dynamic interplay of action and social structure(s). Analysis of this phenomenon are crucial for understanding how education policies and practices are shaped.

In addition, analyses of sociological sub-disciplines addressing specific topics are important for pedagogical thinking. First of all, these will be analyses within the sociology of education (see e.g. Mikiewicz, 2016; Szymanski, 2013) and the sociology of the family (see e.g. Szlendak, 2011), but practically any of the sociological sub-disciplines can offer theses of interest to the pedagogue on the functioning of social structures (from the sociology of politics to the sociology of food)[1].

Following this line of thought, we can say that a good pedagogue should be familiar with the classical and contemporary general theories of society, since the answers to key questions about the functioning of individuals in social structures determine the answers to questions about the practice of upbringing. The various pedagogical doctrines, understood as guidelines on how to shape the attitudes and values of individuals, are consciously or not based on certain social ontologies and theses on the general principles of the functioning of the mechanisms of various social systems (family, school, community, economy, youth, etc.).

The second set of sociological questions, that is, research problems concerning the historical social arrangements associated with upbringing, seem to be even more important for pedagogy. After all, the answers to the set of questions contained in this second problem area are what arouse the

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[1]   The subdisciplinary diversity of sociology is a separate issue. I have tried to address it in a text Edukacyjne konteksty badań młodzieży – refleksja na temat podziałów subdyscyplinarnych (na kanwie doświadczeń współpracy w polskim środowisku socjologicznym) (Mikiewicz, 2022).

most emotion and are the most pragmatic. Diagnoses of specific historical educational arrangements are, in essence, diagnoses of historical societies.

There are basically three analytical discourses going on here. On the one hand, these are analyses concerning past social systems, classical stories about the structures and actions of people in past ages based on analytical tools for the periodization of social description - the now iconic division into traditional, modern and postmodern societies determines how educational solutions were explained in different historical periods (see e.g. Szacka, 2003; Giddens and Sutton, 2017; Therborn, 2018; Featherstone, 2017; Hall and Massey, 2018; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2016).

The second discourse concerns contemporary society, the one in which the researchers live, their own 'here and now', which they try to understand and seek to explain by describing social processes related to upbringing. This second strand is, of course, the most dynamic, debatable and evokes the most emotion. Sociology, in relation to upbringing problems, is expected to answer questions about the key phenomena that define the contemporary demands of the social system. The diagnostic labels provided by sociologists describing the contemporary condition of society are becoming the basis for thinking about the educational solutions proposed by pedagogy. Labels such as the "risk society" (Beck, 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2020; Lupton, 2022) or the society of "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2005; Bauman and Lyon, 2020) or the "network society" (Castells, 1996, Castells, 2021; Fuchs, 2021) have become today's most catchy sociological metaphors influencing the pedagogical imagination. Let us note here that these are not diagnoses aimed primarily at the observation and interpretation of educational processes, but are diagnoses of the general condition of society. From this we can draw conclusion that a good pedagogue must be familiar with contemporary diagnoses of social structures and the conditions of action of individuals in specific historical contexts in order to be able to propose actions adequate to the historical "here and now". Let us add that this also applies to the specific diagnoses made by sociological sub-disciplines - in relation to school, family, youth, economy, etc.

A third strand, or a third sociological discourse relevant to pedagogy, concerns attempts to anticipate the future. Although futurology is not the most developed field of sociology, the acceleration of social change leads to the need for more and more foresight analyses. Particularly at the level of predicting economic change, there is a need to anticipate the needs for skills, competences, habits, etc., i.e. the effects of upbringing, which will ensure the adaptability of successive cohorts of citizens to dynamically changing social

structures. Reports on the risk of automation and the indefinite future of social life under conditions of saturation with digital technologies, artificial intelligence, etc., are particularly stirring to the imagination. (see e.g. Zybertowicz, 2015). Theses about the end of work (Rifkin, 2001), the unexpected consequences of medical developments and genetic control lead to concepts of transforming the world as we know it and set educational tasks (Beck, 2015). For instance, Yuval Noah Harari in his book "21 Lessons for the 21st Century" (2021) offers insights into various future challenges, providing a comprehensive analysis of the technological, political, and social changes that educators need to consider. Klaus Schwab in "The Fourth Industrial Revolution" (2021) discusses the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on economies, societies, and individuals, emphasizing the need for educational systems to adapt to these changes. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee in "The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies" (2021) explore how digital technologies are transforming the world of work and what skills and competences will be needed in the future. Martin Ford in "Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future" (2021) provides a detailed analysis of how automation and artificial intelligence are reshaping the job market and what this means for future generations. Darrell M. West in "The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation" (2021) examines the implications of technological advancements on the workforce and the necessary educational reforms to address these challenges. Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne in "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerization?" (2021) provide an analysis of the potential impacts of computerization on various occupations and the need for educational systems to prepare for these changes. Also the report "The Future of Jobs and Jobs Training" (2021) by Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie explores the evolving job market and the skills required in the future, emphasizing the role of continuous education and training. César A. Hidalgo's book "Why Information Grows: The Evolution of Order, from Atoms to Economies" (2021) examines how information and knowledge drive economic growth and the implications for future educational needs.

These are only examples of sociological future-thinking which become compulsory reading for educators to propose practical solutions for shaping attitudes, values and skills to adapt in an unclear future.

Conclusion

The enumeration of sociological topics important for upbringing presented above shows the indispensability of an in-depth sociological education of the pedagogues. Based on the answers to the two problem areas described above (sociological theory of upbringing and sociological diagnosis of historical societies), adequate practical proposals for upbringing are possible. The third area of questions I have outlined is, as I mentioned above, in principle already pedagogy. It can also be called applied sociology in the field of educational problems. It can be described as the application of sociological language, or to speak in the words of Mills (2007), the sociological imagination, to the politics of upbringing. It is in the area of questions about the pragmatics of educational action that there is room for scientific interdisciplinarity.

It is important to acknowledge that answering all the questions indicated in this text surpasses the scope of any single scientific article. The analytical frameworks presented here merely outline the field for a comprehensive analytical program, aimed at providing a sociological analysis tailored to the needs of upbringing in the contemporary world. This text should be seen as an introduction, setting the stage for an extensive, multidisciplinary project that seeks to thoroughly explore and address the complexities of educational practices through a sociological lens. Revisiting the classic analyses of Florian Znaniecki is a fruitful exercise helping to settle down the frame for analyses of the contemporary world, which can be seen as much more complicated comparing the beginning of the XX century. However, the general sociological theory shows the main dimensions of human actions in the interplay with social structures. Structures are changing, but the logic of human action seems to remain the same, thus the general logic of the upbringing processes also appears to be consistent. Despite the evolution of societal structures over time, the fundamental principles of human interaction and socialization continue to guide the processes of upbringing. Recognizing this continuity allows for the development of educational practices that are adaptable to changing social contexts while remaining rooted in the enduring logic of human action.

At the same time, of course, it must be remembered that pedagogy, as an applied science, draws just as much from research in other basic sciences. Above all, the influence of psychology is evident today, which in itself is also a specific expression of the diagnosis of the functioning of modern Western societies. The strong emphasis on individuality and subjectivity as key values for the contemporary inhabitants of highly developed countries leads

educators to seek explanations in terms of psychology and directs attention towards tools of upbringing aimed at strengthening this individualism. It is worth remembering here, however, that reduction to a single disciplinary optic (be it psychological, sociological or biological, e.g. in terms of neuroscience) will always lead to solutions that are inadequate from the point of view of the entire determinants of human life. Figuratively speaking, the sociological imagination is a necessary complement to the psychological, biological and other imaginations that are (and should be) in use in the field of pedagogical action.

One final remark should be made. The argument presented above holds pedagogy responsible for the assimilation of sociological content (as well as the products of other basic sciences). Undoubtedly, this is one of the tasks in the scientific field of pedagogy. However, pointing out that it is impossible to carry out a social analysis without references to processes of socialisation, therefore without the theses on upbringing, we must note that for the basic sciences themselves, feeding the field of research on upbringing should be an important task. Both sociological theorising, diagnostics of specific historical social arrangements and attempts at futurology have natural consequences for thinking about upbringing, and it is worth seeing these consequences clearly when formulating theses and practical guidelines intended for educators to ensure the effectiveness of interdisciplinary collaboration.

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