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Meta-theory vs. meta-theories of education

Meta-teoria a meta-teorie wychowania

Abstract: The subject of the analysis is the genesis and evolution of the study of the theory of upbringing as a monistic, orthodox subdiscipline of education sciences and its evolution in Poland towards the differentiation of contemporary theories of upbringing. As a result of the lack of meta-theoretical resolution, I propose my own map to define the concept of upbringing, so that on the basis of Rolland G. Paulston's American geography of thought it would be possible to discern the need to construct theories of upbringing which are adequate to these concepts.

Keywords: theory of upbringing, meta-theory of upbringing, general education, mind map, concept definition.

Introduction

The theory of upbringing is a rather young subdiscipline of education, which was established in Poland after World War II. Educators trace its roots to the educational thought of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Górniewicz, 1995a; Jakubiak, 1992; Nowak, 1992; Ratuś, 1992; Suchodolski, 1957; Tchorzewski, 1992). However, in a positivist sense, the discipline has not reached an autonomous scientific level which would be widely recognised and accepted by all professionals in the education sciences. Indeed, the theory of upbringing emerged from general education as that type and scope of theoretical inquiry that presupposed, on the one hand, the positive impact of institutional upbringing activities on people raised in accordance with an accepted model and, on the other hand, was intended to inspire

research thought to contribute to the development of the scientific basis of upbringing through meta-analyses and empirical diagnoses.

It is therefore difficult to separate the dispute taking place on the pages of scientific journals or monographs on the methodological and theoretical identity of education, which occurred after Poland regained full political sovereignty in 1989, from the scientific works of authors who took up only the question of the status of the theory of upbringing as a separate subdiscipline of education. Derived from general education as one of the first educational subdisciplines of the period of the People's Republic of Poland, it was referred to as the theory of general upbringing (Muszyński, 1977) or the theory of a field-based upbringing, e.g. the theory of aesthetic upbringing (Wojnar, 1980), the theory of social and moral upbringing (Muszyński, 1967), the theory of patriotic upbringing (Kotłowski, 1976) and the theory of physical upbringing (Demel, 1980).

The relationship between the theory of upbringing and general education in the time of the Polish People's Republic

In numerous attempts and internal classifications of education as a science, made most often from a positivist perspective, the theory of upbringing holds a place equivalent to general education, as one among its many detailed subdisciplines. It was since the middle of the twentieth century that not only have the boundaries between the two begun to blur, but a process of a clear shift in the dynamics of their development has also been taking place. There was a pronounced inhibition of research work in the field of general education in favour of a greater interest in theories of upbringing, despite the methodological closeness between the two.

Most importantly, in the period of the Polish People's Republic, systemic, ideological and political, administrative reasons, besides scientific factors, determined a noticeably distinct and even divergent or downright mutually exclusive dynamics of the development of both subdisciplines (Górniewicz, 1995b; Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1995). Table 1 shows roughly the historical boundaries of the development of these subdisciplines of education, in the light of which general education developed intensively, until about 1950, and then was marginalised during the middle and final period of the socialist system in Poland, only to be revived again at the beginning of the 1990s. Undoubtedly, throughout the twentieth century, there was an intensive development of education as a science of upbringing with its general education and theory of upbringing. The emergence of the latter resulted

from a process of differentiation and atomisation, which was typical of all mid-twentieth century sciences.

Table 1. Historical frontiers in the development of general education and upbringing theory

Phases of Development			
until 1945	1946 – 1989	1990 – 1995	1995 -
Intensive development of general education as theoretical education	Emergence and dominance in the course of development and differentiation of the education sciences – theories of upbringing	The revitalisation of general education and the decline of socialist upbringing theory	Counterbalanced development of general education and differentiated theories of upbringing and the emergence of research in meta-education and meta-theories of upbringing. Orientation towards the integration of knowledge about upbringing.

Source: own analysis

The emergence of socialist education in the People's Republic of Poland initiated the marginalisation of general education as meta-education in favour of a merely scientific system of theoretical knowledge about upbringing, whose ontological, epistemological, axiological, teleological and methodological assumptions lost their problematic nature with their subordination to the monocentric social order and the Soviet-leaning ideological offensive of state rule. Thus, theoretical knowledge about upbringing was intended to exclude and replace the theoretical approaches previously developed in Western countries, including ideological, philosophical, psychological or theological concepts, which had to be challenged as contradicting the scientific assumptions of progressive, Marxist and Leninist social ideology. In a quasi-totalitarian society, characterised by the drive to unify the elements of the social structure, what was considered obligatory, was a single, monocentric (socialist) theory of upbringing, which legitimised a definitive and unchallengeable ideology of political influence as education while rejecting all alternatives that could only weaken it and disrupt the educational process. It thus fostered the perpetuation of isolation from other currents and movements in the field of upbringing, while simultaneously suppressing the capacity for self-criticism and self-correction. The rejection of the pluralism of theories in the sciences of upbringing was intended to prevent the reasoning that all alternative offers were of different value, while their formation

was closely tied to the existing social order, which had a built-in mechanism of its own legitimacy.

The theorist of upbringing during the socialist era – Heliodor Muszyński – believed that the distinctiveness of the subject of educational research should be sought in the types of dependency which govern the processes of upbringing, which necessarily leads to the problem of the definition of the concept of upbringing and the determination of its scope (Muszyński, 1970). A few years later, he published a textbook on the theory of upbringing, where he stated that education is still dominated by pseudo-philosophical speculation, as a result of which there has been no development of empirical and precise knowledge about upbringing, and thus the science is useless from practical perspective. Consequently, he proposed to construct knowledge about upbringing in an inductive way as a result of “(...) the accumulation of systematised knowledge about upbringing, derived from scientific analysis of practice as well as useful practice of this knowledge” (Muszyński, 1977, p. 7). Therefore, the fundamental term for this discipline of educational science should meet two basic requirements: precision, i.e. an unambiguous formulation of the scientific definition of upbringing and its ability to be translated into a language of related sciences. “(...) the conceptual apparatuses of two sciences close to each other should overlap – in the sense that terms peculiar to each must be used in the same sense within the other” (ibidem, p. 22).

Over two decades had passed, already in a different social and political reality, since Polish society had been freed from the political and ideological violence, and the same author admitted that education had not dealt with the aforementioned problem, and continues to be a methodologically unformed science. “Different approaches to upbringing must often entail quite divergent ideas of education as a science. The discrepancies in the understanding of upbringing, and consequently of a number of related concepts, are so substantial that the overall situation could be described as a conceptual chaos. (...) It is also difficult to talk about constructive creation of scientific knowledge when the conceptual apparatus is far from the necessary unambiguity” (Muszyński, 1992, p. 7). This is hardly surprising, since in the search for an answer to the question of what is the essence of upbringing in mind we have not only the theoretical knowledge of this phenomenon, which includes its purely external justification, embodied in specific views, doctrines, approaches or positions, but also the practical sphere, its everyday dimension inscribed in the history and biographies of individuals, generations, cultures or societies.

For different people, the word 'upbringing' often evokes different intellectual content, emotional states or attitudes, which may not be considered equivalent. According to Stanisław Grygiel, upbringing cannot be defined, because the word denotes (indicates) more than it literally stands for something (Grygiel, 1977, p. 966). Therefore, there are as many denominations of upbringing as there are possible approaches to observation or attempts to interpret this phenomenon in the field of humanities. As such, it is not unusual that until now, the term 'upbringing' has not been given a uniform definition or meaning, and there is no indication that this will ever happen. The meaning given to the term is immensely varied, as evidenced not only by the diversity, but sometimes even the contradiction of theoretical approaches or stances on the matter. Its practical implementation is most often determined by the personal axionormative preferences and personal experiences, in this regard, of both the natural educators (parents), as well as professional and social educators. Every educator is guided in his or her life by a personal ontological orientation, i.e. by his or her somewhat preferred implicit views on the nature of reality. More or less consciously, everyone prefers individual decisions, made for personal use, about the existence or non-existence of upbringing, "(...) not necessarily manifesting themselves in declared views, but rather in more specific assessments, choices and actions taken" (Mudin, 2007, p. 13).

Attempts to systematise theoretical research on upbringing

In the second half of the 1980s, Stanisław Palka advocated for the creation of a theoretical education, which should be:

1. "a meta-theory of upbringing, education, human self-education, thus it should subject different theories of educational processes and different varieties of systematic education, currents and educational directions to theoretical analysis;
2. a discipline which uncovers and organises the regularities and invariables of upbringing, education and self-education of a human being – relatively not limited in time (occurring not only in the present, but in various periods in the past as well) and relatively not limited in space (occurring not only in Poland, but also in other countries, other cultural and civilisational circles);
3. a discipline which analyses and structures the scientific output of practically oriented education sciences, designs directions for major educational research and expresses the educators' position on important social issues (social function);

4. a discipline relatively independent of an ad hoc world-view, cultural, ideological situations on which educational practice and practically oriented education sciences are sometimes made dependent" (Palka, 1987, pp. 21-22).

The theory of upbringing has evolved from a state of subordination to general education to the status of its equal scientific relevance. In order to grasp the convergence and differences between these subdisciplines of education, it is possible to identify the state and scope of creative activity of scientific authorities, who represent one or the other field, the emergence and decline of scientific institutions adequate to their area of research (departments or faculties of general education or the theory of upbringing), the training of scientific personnel in these institutions (development of scientific potential). It is also worth pointing out the changing academic status of these subdisciplines within the subjects of academic curriculum. While general education dominated in educational studies, the theory of upbringing prevailed in teacher education (Górniewicz, 1995a; Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1995; Śliwerski, 2003).

The blurring of the boundaries between the two subdisciplines of the knowledge of upbringing was initiated by Wilhelm Rein who set apart the historical and systematic education and the theoretical and practical education. Theoretical education is part of historical education, which is divided into teleology (the science of the aims of upbringing) and methodology and the science of the means of upbringing. Practical education, on the other hand, constitutes a part of systematic education, which is split into the education of forms of upbringing and school administration (Kierski, 1925, p. 370). General education should study the uniqueness and historical context of certain phenomena, events and facts of upbringing, pose questions about the meaning of human actions, including the status of education and its multiple conditions or connections with educational practice, at the same time strengthening its connections with the history of upbringing (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1995). A slightly different character and scope of the tasks of general education is indicated by Marian Nowak, who considers that its role is to explain the reality of upbringing, to bring to light the fundamental educational categories in such a way that, thanks to them, it is possible to evaluate and relate to the events of upbringing in specific educational situations and, together with other disciplines, to explain and justify their own categories (Nowak, 1995, 2008).

More and more often, scholars argue in their theses that general education should move towards foundational knowledge, introducing the whole

science of upbringing through specialised thinking about this social phenomenon, rather than building theoretical knowledge about it. Through the exploration of the upbringing cognition methods, it could achieve the status of meta-education, i.e. the knowledge which enables:

- description and critical analysis of existing educational sciences and ideologies, doctrines and systems of upbringing,
- description and critical analysis of typical activities of educational sciences (specific subdisciplines of education, including theory of upbringing),
- assessment of the value of what results from educational thought about upbringing (Palka, 1995; Rutkowiak, 1995a; Tchorzewski, 1995, p. 155; Śliwerski, 1993, 1998, 2010).

The meta-theory of upbringing understood in these terms was intended, therefore, to become a subdiscipline of education that would lead it out of the prevailing research chaos and provide it with a unified scientific nature. “Its creation would serve both to raise education to a higher scientific level, to make it an equal discipline to other humanities and social sciences, and to serve the practice by giving it a broader – spatially and temporally – insight into the phenomena of upbringing, education and human self-education” (Palka 1987, p. 22). However, in the ideological perspective of the scientification of education, it would take on a possessive character in relation to the other theories of upbringing that develop within it. The implication would be that through meta-theoreticality, education with its theoretical works would be accepted by all educators. This author defined the meta-theory of upbringing by specifying the object of its research and the intra- and interdisciplinary functions it would have in education, in fact implicitly situating his position in the perspective of positivist criteria of science. The arbitrarily adopted methodological model of scientific character of education was a derivative of the diagnosis of underdevelopment of this field as a science in relation to natural sciences or better developed social sciences (Śliwerski, 1993, 2009).

Theory of upbringing in the education of the Polish political transformation

The change of the social and political system in Poland in 1989 made it possible to open up to new, previously unknown fundamental paradigms in the science of upbringing of open societies. Freed from political and preventive censorship, Polish education joined the debate on the importance of knowledge about upbringing in a pluralistic world. It thus became part

of the worldwide debate among scholars in relation to the pluralisation, inter- and transdisciplinarity of the humanities and social sciences (Chmielewski, Dudzikowa and Grobler, 2012). This is the temporal sphere of the symbolic development of the education sciences, which coincided with the end of modernism and the beginning and evolution of postmodernism in the sciences, taking note of the decline of certain currents and the breakthroughs or reductions taking place therein, eliminations, divisions and the development of their new forms, and at the same time heralding the twilight of postmodernity. In a democratic society, education, including the theory of upbringing, engages in a reflection on itself, on its identity, in order to confront the interrelationship between the self-knowledge of education and the contemporary self-knowledge of science, to revise its previous methodological convictions. Since the essence of civil society is the conflictual interaction of different social groups with distinct interests and mindsets, therefore education itself can no longer avoid disputes and polemics either (Folkierska, 1991, p. 109).

The anti-scientific breakthrough in methodology of social sciences in the 1980s and the anti-authoritarian current in the humanities of the early 1990s fostered the recognition of the fact that scientific rationality is not an ideal feature for regulating matters governed by the assumptions of everyday life and can be challenged as a methodological principle for the interpretation of human actions. At the same time, the problem of the meta-theoreticality of general education resurfaced, within which the phenomenon of upbringing became the fundamental and first conceptual category of the education sciences that justified the need to reflect on its essence, its meaning. Therefore, the treatment of upbringing as a particular kind of social phenomenon dealt with by all educational subdisciplines should lead to general education taking on the task of studying education as education, and consequently upbringing as upbringing.

Already at the beginning of the 1990s, I argued for the development of synthetic, humanistic studies, which would allow, in the period of broadening the knowledge of theories, discourses or directions of educational thought, which were absent in our country at that time, to defer the process of assessment, typical of the past regime, of their value as competitive, alternative to the dominant paradigm of positivist educational sciences. Instead, we faced a dilemma as to whether any theory, educational thought, discourse or idea which was different was more or less valuable than the former. How to resolve this problem when we had no meta-criteria to liberate us from the imposing uniformity of the sciences of upbringing of the past period? Some educators

believed that there is a need to create a scientific meta-theory of the theory of upbringing, i.e. meta-education, while others advocated for a departure from the scientific model in favour of a search, in philosophy, science or contemporary sociology of knowledge, for the possibility of cognition, explanation or comparison of different theories of education and upbringing (Śliwerski, 1993, 1998, 2009).

Since then, a number of excellent theoretical, methodological and scientific literature has appeared, the authors of which have addressed this issue from the point of view of conceptualisation and interpretation of educational rationality research (Kwaśnica, 1987; Piotrowski 2012; Śliwerski, 1998, 2009; Witkowski 2013). Meta-education, when understood in such manner, would become not only “an increasingly specialised form of thinking about upbringing, the aim of which is to search for its meaning and significance, but also (...) a platform of knowledge, thanks to which there is the possibility of the cultivation of detailed disciplines of education sciences with the awareness of limitations and opportunities inherent in cognitive conditions of an ideological, theoretical and methodological nature” (Tchorzewski 1995, p. 154). The role of meta-education, in the view of this author, would be to develop general criteria by which representatives of detailed educational subdisciplines would distinguish mythical and colloquial thinking about upbringing from strictly scientific thinking founded on phenomenological, logical and linguistic or hermeneutic methods.

These methods should serve “to view and describe what is given in the understanding of upbringing as upbringing (understood as a being and a task), as well as to put into an appropriate conceptual and linguistic apparatus, to order, interpret and explain the object of research of education sciences. The meta-scientific character of general education is intended to explain the sense of the statements formulated on the grounds of educational subdisciplines, to unveil their assumptions, to determine the consequences of their development and further differentiation, to carry out discussions and to construct and evaluate arguments leading to important generalisations, which refer to the widely understood phenomena of upbringing, taking the form of social education or social teaching processes” (Tchorzewski, 1995, p. 156). Meta-education should ensure that the ontological and epistemological nature of the theories of upbringing is accurate and precise in their definition of the content and scope of the meaning of upbringing (education) as their object of cognition, and that its definition corresponds to the conditions of strict generality.

As a result, meta-education would guarantee the methodological accuracy of contemporary educational subdisciplines in their construction of "(...) a set of empirical sentences which explain by means of laws and hypotheses, definitions and statements, and judgements that classify various facts, events and processes of the subject of cognition they define. It will thus fulfil its own exploratory and heuristic function" (Tchorzewski, 1995, p. 157). However, this author did not explain what it would involve and why it would be possible for meta-education to carry out a description and critical analysis of the existing education sciences and ideologies, doctrines and systems of upbringing, since there is no possibility to develop a meta-criteria for comparative analyses. Behind every theory of upbringing there are implicit premises of an ontological, epistemological, anthropological and axiological nature. "For a comparison to be drawn between the hypotheses of two incommensurable theories, it would be necessary to have either some third theory to which the two competing theories could be reduced, or to confront each theory with experience" (Folkierska, 1990, p. 44).

General education, analogous to the theory of upbringing, can be approached from two angles, either as one of the subdisciplines of education or as meta-education, i.e. as education that investigates all educational knowledge and with its inquiries points to regularities, principles or norms that are universal to all subdisciplines. The latter approach to general education is a step towards building a comparative and synthetic education, whose findings could aspire to be considered as universally valid and cognitively enriching for all subdisciplines of the sciences of education. For the recognition of education as a science, it is not without significance what position and role we adopt towards the object of research. Indeed, it can assume that of the natural, experimental sciences of the *sophia* type, thus eliminating entirely from the research process subjective factors, such as the personality of the child, its worldview, life attitude, aspirations, political commitment, faith, sympathies and antipathies, etc. One is then guided in his or her inquiries by reliable, objective and therefore meta-theoretical or meta-paradigmatic criteria of insight and evaluation of specific content and related educational practices. Alternatively, a cognitive orientation may be embraced that is characteristic of representatives of the humanities - *phronesis*, for whom it is not entirely possible to 'neutralise' or completely separate subjective factors in the process of cognition, as they also become a presentable component of inquiry?

Joanna Rutkowiak offered to create a horizontal and therefore not hierarchical map of the educational theories that 'pulse' side by side with the

deliberate omission of their temporal dimension. There is no need to isolate and enclose them within a certain time period. In this manner, the map of theories of upbringing developed by researchers can be a symbolic reflection of the equal relative position, existence, presence of diverse theories, currents and discourses of upbringing. "The concept of the map presented here emphasises the possibility of the parallel existence of diverse ways of thinking and the pulsation of phenomena, i.e. their appearance, growth and 'decline', but a decline that is only illusive, since it is possible for concepts to return, be revived and silenced, which does not mean returning to what had been" (Rutkowiak, 1995b, p. 14).

The creation of a map of multiplicity of theories of upbringing understood in such a manner presupposes subjective involvement of its author (cartographer – meta-theoretician) and the recipients in making changes in it (additions, reductions, defence of the status quo) or introducing new interpretations. Thereby negative valorisation of any of the discourses is rejected, and the introduction of some kind of order, an order "in which some ways of thinking would be treated as more perfect and others as less appropriate, is avoided. This does not exclude the potential involvement of the reader, it just gives them the opportunity to get closer to a particular mindset and to make a choice on their own responsibility" (Rutkowiak, 1995b, p. 15).

An example of such an anti-fundamentalist map of theories of upbringing, accompanied by their modes of understanding the essence of this phenomenon, is the meta-discursive map of discursive communities drawn up by Rolland G. Paulston on the basis of a semiotic analysis of sixty exemplarily selected texts from comparative education. It reveals the presence of intellectual groups and their relations, illustrates fields of knowledge, suggests areas of interactive ideas and opens a space for all kinds of offers and perceptions of particular currents and their representations, or their supplementation with hitherto absent ones (Paulston, 1993; Śliwerski, 2010). However, it has not yet been used to situate a concept that is diversely defined, but nevertheless the same. With its use for comparative studies of diverse theories of upbringing, it is possible to see how the different definitions of the concept of upbringing may be located, for which the initial point of reference should be the different paradigms or directions of knowledge of upbringing, situated on a horizontal axis between nominalism and realism and between voluntarism and determinism. The two superimposed perspectives can be confronted with one of two opposing stances towards the principle which organises change in social life, i.e. on the vertical axis between the principle of gradual regulation and the principle of radical change (Rubacha, 2003).

In the diagram below, I juxtapose the four basic models of upbringing, which are subordinated to the four dimensions of their study. Thus, we are able to construct corresponding theories of upbringing. This approach is significantly broader than that of Dietrich Benner, for whom theories of upbringing include only two possible approaches: the individual one, which leads to the construction of a theory of intentional upbringing, and the social one, equivalent to a theory of functional upbringing (Benner, 2001, p. 132). It is too narrow, since it disregards the still significant distinction between upbringing in a subjectivist and objectivist perspective. Since upbringing can be defined in various linguistic forms, depending on the manner in which its constituent phenomena are assigned under given conceptual categories, it is not possible to formulate judgements that evaluate them, as a result of which the superiority of one definition and theory of upbringing would be acknowledged over another. This is because each of them exposes different aspects of the same phenomenon and is equivalent to the others insofar as each is accurate and relevant to the essential characteristics of those objects that share a name. The creator of a map of differentiated theories of upbringing can be guided by his or her own point of view of a given reality and highlight what, in his or her opinion, marks the appropriate outline, but at the same time does not formulate sharp boundaries between presented theories or "(...) lines of thought. The exercise of restraint towards the emphasis of distinctions is related to the problem of the borderland as a particularly significant principle of contemporary humanities" (Rutkowiak, 1995b, p. 15). To see theory as a text, even though it has an author, paradoxically, makes us aware of its absence. After all, the printed word takes on a life of its own. No privileged reading of a theory therefore exists. Every kind of interpretation of it is equally legitimate. In this sense, the author is an insignificant addition to the text he or she has written, nor can he or she be held responsible for what this or that educator might do with such a presented offer in the latter's practical activity. The author risks being misinterpreted (over-interpreted, under-interpreted) or even ignored.

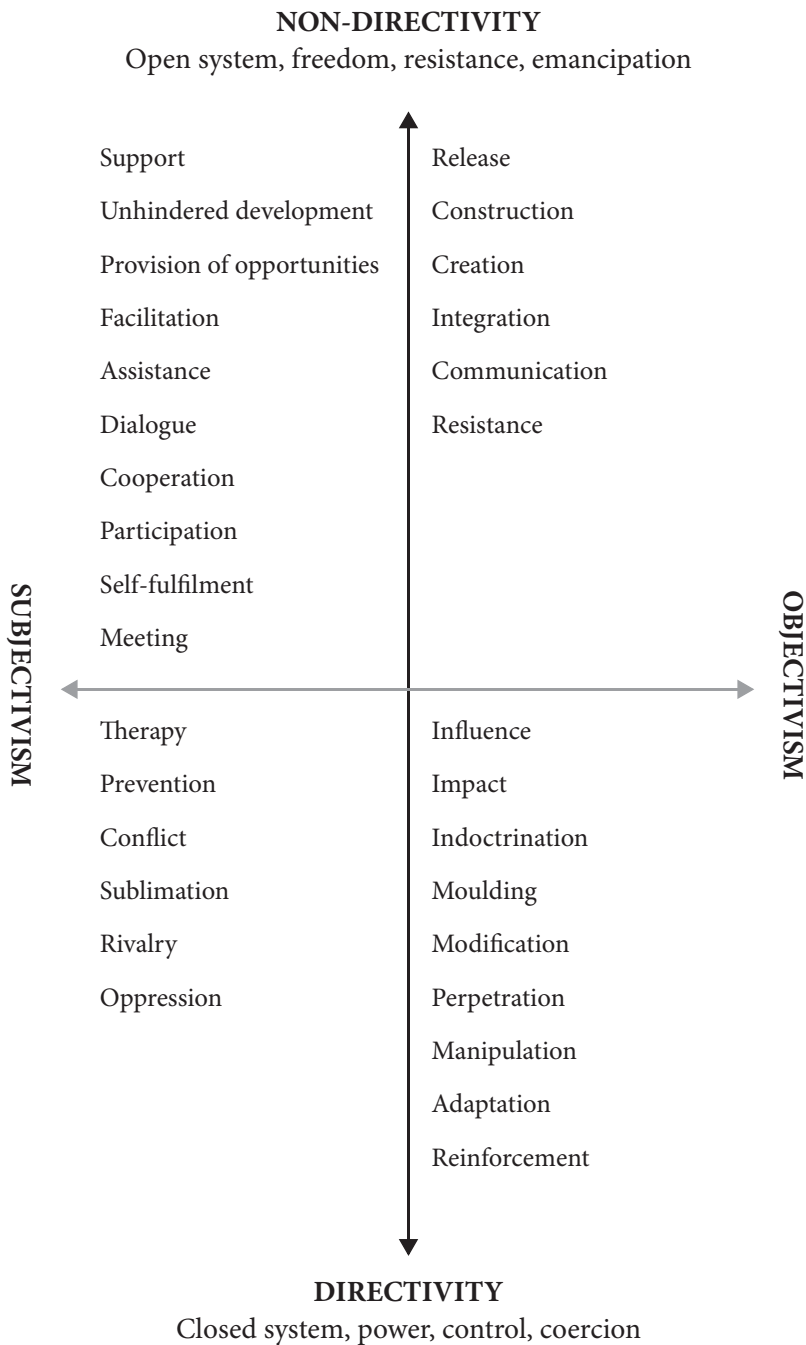


Figure 1. Map of definitions of the concept of upbringing (own material)

The author, who creates a map or a theory, somehow renounces the authorship and accepts the fact that his or her words will never become literal, for they will be supplemented, distorted, rewritten in unpredictable ways by anyone who has access to them. The relationship between the writer and readers is transformed into an open interaction, in which anyone can change, reshape, overturn, erase, do whatever they please with the map they have sketched out.

The literature on education research and theory of upbringing is already abundant to the point that conducting research in the area of each of the above models or theoretical approaches would appear to be an inevitability. However, in drawing on such a vast literature on the subject, we should be aware of the various studies or directions that exist on the subject and the fundamental theoretical assumptions on which research into the phenomenon of upbringing is based. To acquire this essential knowledge, it may be helpful to be familiar with explanatory models and to seek relevant characteristics for a given scope of upbringing, in order to make it transparent which phenomena are to be classified as ‘upbringing’ and which are not. “For the construction of a correct definition, of particular importance are the decisions related to the so-called borderline cases, when certain features would support the inclusion of a given phenomenon in the scope of a given concept, while others would induce the exclusion of such a possibility” (Muszyński, 1992, p. 17).

Alongside the intentional educational acts, there are also intuitive influences in the process of upbringing, which are the subconscious synthesis of known methods of upbringing or an imitation of one of them, often as a result of long years of practice, observation and accumulation of experience. No theory of upbringing can be considered as a distanced, objective form of observation and evaluation of social reality. The pluralism and multidimensionality of social and cultural reality and its virtual counterpart do not allow any theory to claim universality or exclusivity. The pluralism of education became something obvious, natural for the young generation of scientists in the period of the Third Polish Republic, although at the same time it was not easily or willingly accepted by all representatives of education sciences. Not everyone is convinced that this state of fracture, of radical dissociation of Polish humanities from monistic, ideologically degenerated socialist education, will become a permanent accomplishment of the times of social and political transformation and could not be replaced by a theory of upbringing that is inverse towards it, e.g. conservative, liberal or nationalist.

There is no single meta- and theory of upbringing, no single meta-language, because any attempt to elevate a universal project or meta-narrative over the others becomes an illegitimate interpretation of phenomena or theories and a willingness to assert dominance. No single interpretation of them can be superior to another, nor can there be better or worse theories of upbringing. Only the existence of personal, decentralised, heterologous and locally specific forms of truth can be accepted, among which each may be the truth for a different version of the world of upbringing. Neither is it justified by the constant struggle of theoretical discourses for their place at the centre, within the intersecting continua delineated by the antinomies: objectivity vs. subjectivity, universalism vs. relativism, adaptation vs. transformation, order vs. conflict, free action vs. structural enslavement, axiological neutrality vs. values as a basis for engagement (Melosik, 2024).

Conclusion

Not a single theory of upbringing is an axiomatic specific science among the fundamental subdisciplines of modern education, despite the fact that the object of their research is a systematised, coherent and structured knowledge of upbringing, its aims, contents, methods, forms, means and conditions. Thus, multiple variations of theoretical and ideological approaches to the above-mentioned object of research are being developed, which have resulted in numerous theoretical models, options, arguments and mindsets about the essence of upbringing. Wincenty Okoń defines the theory of upbringing in a manner typical for the socialist era, although with no reference to the past ideology, when he writes that it is “(...) a discipline regarded in Poland as one of the fundamental educational sciences, which addresses the issues of the objectives, content, methods and organisation of moral, social, aesthetic and physical upbringing” (Okoń, 1998, p. 401). It is necessary to distinguish between theories of upbringing in the strict sense of the word and colloquial theories of upbringing. Colloquial theories are a kind of personal, common-sense knowledge about upbringing, which is a set of internally connected beliefs or ideas about the essence, genesis, aims, justifications and ways of upbringing of others. Among the characteristics of colloquial theories of upbringing are that they:

- represent the opposite of scientific knowledge,
- are heavily connected to the practice of upbringing,
- arose through pre-scientific cognition, in a natural, biographical manner,

- are addressed in terms of truths, self-evident and acquired through the normal functions of reason,
- contain elements of procedural and declarative knowledge,
- episodic information dominates,
- are articulated through everyday, colloquial language,
- are not fully acknowledged by the author (Leppert, 1996).

The educational literature on research and theory related to upbringing is substantial enough that to conduct research in the area of each of the above theoretical approaches would appear to be indispensable. Having used such diverse sources of knowledge, we should be aware of the various research or directions that exist on the subject and of the fundamental theoretical assumptions on which research into the phenomenon of upbringing is based.

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