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Selected problems of the application of sociological theories in the theory of education

Wybrane problemy aplikacji teorii socjologicznych w pedagogice

Abstract: The importance of sociology for the theory of upbringing is obvious. The pedagogue can use it in several ways. The first is the “encrusting” of the pedagogical text using sociological quotes and terms. Another is the use of sociology to characterize social and cultural factors of education. You can rely on it completely and uncritically. Hide behind the authority of sociological fame. The pedagogue can also critically analyses sociological theories, determine their paradigmatic assumptions, including ontological and epistemological assumptions. Everything is fine when the sociological idea is independently developed by the educator, the author takes responsibility for the “theoretical scaffolding” he uses, and does not shirk responsibility by hiding behind the back of a “famous” sociologist. The most valuable, but very demanding way of using sociological knowledge by a pedagogue is the interdisciplinary ability to independently (although of course based on existing concepts and research results) of sociological thinking by the theorist of education. However, this requires creative mastery of sociology. We find such cases in scientific practice. You can also go without sociology at all, but then the subject of the study becomes an artefact, “preparation” wholly taken out of reality. You can also go without sociology at all, but then the subject of the study becomes an artefact, “preparation” wholly taken out of reality.

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Introduction

You may not reach for sociology at all. But then we skip this extremely important fact that all upbringing is always entangled in a social and cultural context. A scholar who devotes himself to this kind of practice, he diligently gets a preparation, which is something that does not exist in reality. Most often, however, he (or she) talks about the thing itself, and not about the artifact he created. Of course, it is possible to develop theoretical models that reduce reality to some aspect. Either way, each theory reduces something and gives priority. But, first of all, you have to realize what you are getting thanks to this model and what you lose, what is reduced, and what benefits and damage such reduction causes. Secondly, reduction makes sense if we temporarily annul what is less important for the most important.

It is also bad if you “encrust” your text using someone else’s “golden thoughts”. This allows the author to “shine” alleged erudition, fills the painful gap of the “theoretical part”, and simulates interdisciplinary abilities. Pedagogues do not have a monopoly here. Many sociologists quote, most often third-hand, famous sentences of famous scholars, or they introduce terms that are both fashionable and “scholarly”, which are sometimes used beyond their real meaning. This is often intended to cover the author’s intellectual emptiness and give him the appearance of a well-read person who keeps up with the rapid currents of modern science. Fashions for popular quoters are also changing. Postmodernists were fashionable, such as Zygmunt Bauman or Richard Rorty, Anthony Giddens, Karl Marx, Jürgen Habermas, etc. etc. If you quoted any of them, it means that you are an educated person - an intellectual. You just have to keep up with what’s fashionable. Today, it is no longer a matter of pride to recall some memorable sentence by Talcott Parsons, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Margaret Mead, etc., once indispensable in every “theoretical chapter”.

Theory is an indispensable source of interpretation and evaluation of the results of empirical or theoretical research (then other theories are the reference point). It creates the so-called explanatory layer. According to Kurt Gödel’s non-contradiction theorem (Gödel’s second theorem), proof in science (the scholar spoke about mathematics) can only be found in a more general theory than the level to which the sphere of facts or statements that are subject to proof belongs. This also applies to explanation and legitimate interpretation. Therefore, those educational theorists who refer to more general sociological theories do not make a mistake. However, for this to make sense, you need to understand this theory (or theories) well, including

their foundations, criticize it and possibly overwork it to consider it as your own explanatory layer.

Dangers of sociological sources of educational theory

The fundamental question is whether theory is possible at all in our sciences, i.e. social sciences, i.e. humanities. I am convinced that in the meaning given to it by August Comte - no. Jan Woleński wrote:

Since the Greeks separated philosophy from mythology, the concepts of knowledge and science have permanently entered the repertoire of methodological and epistemological reflection. Plato and Aristotle conducted systematic studies on episteme, i.e. certain knowledge, the paradigm of science at that time, and also separated it from doxa, i.e. mere opinion. Plato, however, saw that an opinion can be more or less justified, which became the prototype of the inquiry into what opinion is properly justified (Woleński, 2009, p. 163).

Since both pedagogy and sociology remain in the realm of doxa, the importance of good theory is even more important. There is no final evidence here, only more or less justified opinions and assumptions. The reason is not the ignorance of scholars in these fields of science, nor their “inferiority”, but the ontic nature of man, culture and society and the epistemic capabilities of man, including the scholar. Theoretical discussion referring to theoretical thought is the most valuable context justifying both empirical and theoretical proposals.

A common mistake made when reaching for a theory, especially from another field of science, is reducing it to one or several maxims. But even when we recall its more important assumptions, we can make a serious mistake. It takes place when we abstract from its ontological and epistemological foundations. Thanks to the concept of paradigm introduced by Thomas Kuhn, we can understand theories more deeply and compare them, including their foundations. Criticism of the theory I have just written about must also include its sources. A situation in which certain elements of the theory's construction are in obvious contradiction with others puts the theorist in an embarrassing position. Nevertheless, it is not rare at all. It often happens that the author of a scientific concept does not intend to deal with its basics. In some scientific orientations, it is sometimes considered a virtue to avoid philosophizing. Just because someone doesn't consciously make these kinds of assumptions doesn't mean they don't have them at all. It is impossible. And ignorance of them discredits the author.

Everything we think and know has its source in what I call reference horizons. This applies to every person. A scholar too. It follows from the nature of man and the necessity resulting from his situation in the world that consciously or not, shallowly or deeply, in an orderly or chaotic way, we organize various judgments, information and observations that we constantly collect. They usually create a certain structure. Some result from others, there are those that orient our entire activity, including cognitive. Every person wants and must explore the world and understand it. At least to some extent. This is the *sine qua non* of human existence and mental health. The image we create in connection with this, the mental representation of this world, are the above-mentioned reference horizons. Within them, I will analytically distinguish the ontic, moral and epistemic horizons.

A scholar knows and thinks like every other person. However, it can be done in a way that is as conscious, critical, orderly and confronted with other concepts as possible. We require from a scholar that the individual levels of his theory, with the ontological and resulting epistemological assumptions, remain consistent with the statements of the theory at the lower levels of their generality. Ignorance of paradigmatic frameworks usually leads to internal contradictions. When theories include ethical issues, it is important whether such statements do not contradict explicit or deeply hidden (sometimes from their owner) ontological and ethical assumptions at the paradigmatic level.

Therefore, when an educational theorist looks for inspiration in sociological concepts, he should criticize them in their entirety, precisely with their ontological, epistemological and ethical foundations. Only when sociological theory was overworked by pedagogy in this original way! he can incorporate it into his theoretical work. Once he has accepted a given belief (in its entirety or worked through), it is already his in some way. Now it is the educational theorist who takes responsibility for the theoretical sociological instruments he uses. The above-mentioned absurdities and contradictions within specific sociological theories have happened and still happen to even the most outstanding scholars. They are probably unavoidable at all. Therefore, you cannot trust any theory, even if it has the greatest authority behind it.

An example is Auguste Comte's concept, which stemmed from his desire to make sociology a science as precise and certain as natural sciences. His beliefs regarding this discipline of knowledge, as well as man as such and society and culture, were most often deeply wrong. His views were based on the assumption that the subject of research in the social sciences does not differ fundamentally from the objects of the natural world. Comte had a very naive belief in natural sciences. Many theories in the natural sciences,

contrary to the beliefs of Comte and naturalists, do not provide absolutely certain knowledge resulting strictly from the analysis of empirical data. This is even less what we can expect from the social sciences.

Émile Durkheim believed that there really are social facts that leave an imprint on people's minds, ultimately shaping them. He also presented a very interesting concept of *homo duplex*, i.e. man divided between the sacred and the profane. [Durkheim 1914] Upbreaking, on the other hand, would take place in educational institutions (schools, families, church, etc.), where it would be applied to children who were naturally recalcitrant towards the sacred, most of whom prefer to remain in the profane. But if things were simply as Durkheim suggested, why would there be such differences between people as they do so often, since they are subjected to uniform and final processing by the same culture? The French scholar also wrote an extremely important work on suicide. [Durkheim 2006] In it, he proved, in accordance with his assumptions, that with the disintegration of three social environments (family, local and religious), man's motivation to endure the hardships of life decreases. This disintegration, in his opinion, would be the result of progress, especially economic progress. This, he claimed, is:

„has mainly consisted in freeing industrial relations from all regulation” (Durkheim, 2002, p. 215).

Earlier, as he wrote:

„Temporal power, in turn, restrained the scope of economic functions by its supremacy over them and by the relatively subordinate role it assigned them” (ibidem).

Therefore, Durkheim believed, it was right to abolish this power. This means that progress, especially economic progress, is a value superior to man, family, religion and neighborly ties. Its source seems to be the ideology of industrialism, which has no connection with the essence of man, humanity, human communities and culture. He wrote:

industry, instead of being still regarded as a means to an end transcending itself, has become the supreme end of individuals and societies alike. Thereupon the appetites thus excited have become freed of any limiting authority. By sanctifying them, so to speak, this apotheosis of well-being has placed them above all human law. Their restraint seems like a sort of sacrilege (Durkheim, 2002, p. 216).

The great French sociologist wrote that man needs something greater than himself to have the strength necessary to live. Therefore, everything is decided at the level of institutions and social groups, he maintained. But not

everyone commits suicide. Why? What is greater in the family, parish and neighborhood group that, as it turns out, makes life worth living? We have an important theoretical break here. If an educational theorist wants to apply Durkheim's work, what does he agree with and what does he disagree with? It is worth asking whether, when everyone commits suicide, this paradise of industrial prosperity will finally come? The scholar himself admitted that in order to live, man needs something that probably belongs to the fleeting sphere of imponderables and cannot be defined otherwise than as something greater than man, and specifically his ego, which apparently needs something that does not come from industrial prosperity.

Other cases of fundamental self-contradiction can be found in Max Weber. One of his main theses, which he adopted from the philosophers of the Enlightenment, and then especially from Friedrich Nietzsche, was that of the disenchantment of the world. He thus concluded that the world is chaos, devoid of order and harmony, ongoing in the eternal and inevitable struggle of people for their particular goals and subjective reasons and values. No God, no religion, no tradition, no meaning, no other foundations for life, only struggle and chaos (cf. Szacki, 2002, p. 519). Disenchantment of the world of the 19th and 20th centuries also means faith in its rationalization, which, contrary to promises, does not make - I think - more free, because on the contrary it enslaves, but in a different way, nor does it save from the feeling of meaninglessness. Especially if we remember two world wars, bloody and counterproductive revolutions and terrible totalitarian regimes. Weber wrote that intellectualization and rationalization:

are not ruled by mysterious, unpredictable forces, but that, on the contrary, we can in principle control everything by means of calculation. That in turn means the disenchantment of the world. Unlike the savage for whom such forces existed, we need no longer have recourse to magic in order to control the spirits or pray to them (Weber, 2004, p. 12-13).

Therefore, according to Weber, the knowledge that the world is in fact chaos, that there are no objective values that could regulate people's lives, frees science from the obligation to discover them. Moreover, a scholar who tried to learn the principles that order the world and give meaning to human existence would strive for mystification and enchantment of the world, which is not the scholar's calling.

Anyone who would undertake this would act as a sorcerer for the savages. However, let us draw attention to the fact that the theorem about

the disenchantment of the world resolves the supposedly rationalistically unresolvable (at least according to Weber) dispute about the nature and cause of the world, the meaning of human life, the essence of culture and society, and the source of values. Since we cannot know all this through reason, we can assume that Weber must have had some other premises for his beliefs. Didn't the great sociologist, in fact, propose to us to exchange the charm for the choke-damp? And has the enchanted world, this time in a skeptical and instrumentally rationalistic manner, really become more enchanting? Beyond doubt, he contradicted himself, which creates a certain difficulty for anyone who refers to this great scholar.

Talcott Parsons was drawn to educators and sociologists who imagined the social world as a system of logically interrelated systems (Parsons, 1954, p. 386). He made the concept of social action the key to understanding man, society and culture. He wasn't overly original here either. This was previously done by Weber and several other scholars.

Social systems, according to the scholar, would be guided by functional imperatives, and the essence of it

... concerns the situation's significance as a source of consummatory goal gratification or attainment. A goal state, for an individual actor or for a social system, is a relation between the system of reference and one or more situational objects which (given the value system and its institutionalization) maximizes the stability of the system (Parsons and Smelser, 2001, p. 17).

Ultimately, it's about system integrity. But to whom? The system is somehow anthropomorphized here. Of course, we see here sociological reminiscences of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's idea of natural systems, famous at that time. However, such a view hides naturalism, which was ontologically false even in Comte's works and nothing in his favor happened later. Rather the opposite...

If among humanistic theories we distinguish an objectivist and subjectivist paradigmatic group (and I distinguish a third one - dialectical synthesis), and I have already discussed examples of the first one, it is worth dealing with the second one as well. Here we can mention, among others, symbolic interactionism. The very position of interactionism must be questionable. In fact, it reduces man, culture and various social forms to the social dimension, and even narrows it down to interactions between individuals. This is conflation from below - as Margaret S. Archer wrote, and it reduces the subject of sociological research so radically that in fact only direct

face-to-face contacts remain. If this were really the case, there would be no culture that, although created and recreated in interactions, also persists relatively independently of specific people at a specific time. As Elżbieta Hałas, an expert in this orientation, writes:

“This theory assumes that social reality emerges from interactions – interactions between individuals and communities” (Hałas, 1998, p. 353).

If we add to this that they are shaped

“...by meaning communicated through symbols” (ibidem).

We are already on the ground of symbolic interactionism. In the famous textbook by George Ritzer and Barry Smart we read:

“The first and most distinctively American sociological theory was symbolic interactionism, a perspective on social life that is now more than sixty years old. Symbolic interactions is clearly linked to American intellectual traditions and, many would argue, to the American belief in the power of individual agency in the face of social structure.

Historically, symbolic interactionism emerged out of the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism, an approach elaborated in the late nineteenth century by Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey. These thinkers challenged the mechanistic world-view and dualistic assumptions of classical rationalism, the dominant philosophy of their time. Unlike the rationalists, they saw reality as dynamic, individuals as active knowers, meanings as linked to social action and perspectives, and knowledge as an instrumental force that enables people to solve problems and rearrange the world” (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine, 2003, p. 217).

These are the main assumptions of this orientation, presented by Herbert Blumer. [Blumer 1969: 2.]. But it also has its philosophical basis, more or less recognized by symbolic interactionists. These include the assumption that human behavior

„... is thus distinctively different from that of other animals or organisms, who act in a more instinctive or rebased manner” (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine, 2003, p. 218).

We learn that we are different from animals, which is not a surprising revelation. The problem is that - when it comes to man - we have a non-substantial ontological assumption. The point is that, according to this position, the peculiarity of a human being is defined by certain features (e.g. it is claimed that people's actions are less – by how much? – instinctive). I do not want to go deeper into this issue, but an excellent polemic with this attitude can be found in the work of Robert Spaemann, entitled *Personen. Versuche über den Unterschied Zwischen <etwas> und <jemand>*, Klett – Cotta,

Studgart 1996. There, the German philosopher opposes this concept with a substantive assumption. He explains that the category of a person, inherent in a human being, is related to the species, and not to having or not having any features or properties. Everyone who is born from a human being is a human being, although everyone is a different person. You can also read in the above-mentioned work that, in fact, the development of the asubstantialist assumption, as it is done in scientific literature, leads to the removal of many people from this category. The question is whether an educator who uses the theory of symbolic interactionism really wants to exclude any human son or daughter from humanity? An educational theorist must also consider whether he is really convinced that education consists in interaction (educator - student?) through symbols.

I do not aspire here to exhaust the basic flaws of the mentioned theories. I am only providing selected examples. Let us also mention post-modernism, in an exceptionally intellectually advanced version for this orientation, that of Zygmunt Bauman. Again, I will just give an example. Bauman recommends us a postmodern ethics of postmodernity. It frees modern man from the traditional world order and life grounded in the past, when the world was already ready. A person could only grow into it. Bauman proposes an orientation towards the present, showing how always looking for justifications outside oneself at a given time limits a person, includes him in the course of a foreign narrative, and deprives him of the freedom to decide about himself. A pedagogue and developmental psychologist, and I think every intelligent person, probably realizes that for a child to achieve maturity, which is a condition of human freedom, someone (parents) must allow themselves to be included in the course of a foreign narrative and do the same to the child.

And yet Bauman claimed his opinion. He was aware of the difficulty, and perhaps even impossibility, of living according to the postmodernist recipe. He understood the suffering of man who must be free because no restriction of his freedom can be justified. On the contrary, any concept that seeks the reason for its action outside the subject makes the prospect of taking up the challenge of freedom more difficult. Not to mention the fact that it is therapy through falsehood. The source of suffering is the ambiguity of postmodernity, which violates the desire for order. But postmodernity frees man from both mythology and utopia. However, this makes him a nomad in time and space, whom Bauman forces to live in a fluid identity. "Nomads", if they create their identity, it is from case to case - "for today" (Bauman, 1996, p. 144). As he wrote:

Modern man goes through many uncoordinated, often divergent, and sometimes contradictory social worlds in his life. Moreover, at every moment of life a person inhabits several such divergent worlds at the same time. As a result, he is <uprooted> from each of them and is not <at home> in any of them. It can be called a “universal alien” (Bauman, 1995, p. 134).

But why should we cause ourselves such suffering? Bauman believes that it is a good reason that the more we choose the path of freedom and solitude, the more we enter the path of truth and authenticity. As a result, the self is burdened with restoring the lost integrity of the world, a task in which it must suffice itself (Bauman, 1995, p. 135). Therefore, Bauman recommends taking on the problem of one’s own identity. To do this, we must accept our strangeness and its inevitability, understand that we are all devoured or vomited permanently by the illusion of order, which each of us must now constantly create for ourselves. We all must continually re-anchor our drifting identity in the full awareness that it is our choice, valid only temporarily. Life in postmodernity consists of these choices, and they also determine the perspective of freedom and subjectivity - we ourselves create and constantly recreate, or rather creatively process ourselves according to our choice, under our responsibility.

However, one may ask whether Bauman’s recipe is human-scale. The scientist knows that this overloads the subject beyond his capabilities, but he prefers to draw the conclusion that the sense of freedom (quite specific, because it is freedom from - and this is debatable - not to) is more important than mental health. The courage that Bauman requires from a person, when it concerns a child, must block the developmental abilities and the maturation of humanity in a person. But Bauman does not accept himself as a developmental psychologist. Given the many advantages of the concept of this outstanding sociologist and philosopher, the educator must ask himself whether he feels that he has the right and will to introduce it with the “benefit of the inventory” to work with real children. And I will also ask whether this is not a totalitarian proposal, but a rebours?

Benefits from sociological sources of educational theory

But, of course, despite the necessary caution when using sociological theories in the theory of education, it is worth and even necessary to do so. Without a doubt, sociological theories are among the most important sources of this science. And this is a very rich source. It would probably take several volumes to exhaust this topic. Therefore, I will only refer to examples.

Despite the caution previously recommended, there is much to be gained by exploring Durkheim's writings. Matters of upbringing, especially in the later phase of his work, were of great importance to him. If we agree with the thesis about a great post-industrial civilization crisis (see: Wielecki, 2012) in which we live and the huge problems we have in connection with this upbringing, we will understand how much it is worth looking into the writings of an outstanding scholar who tried to understand and indicate positive paths in times of the previous such crisis - industrialism.

He saw clearly that the social division of labor associated with industrialization causes, in addition to its positive effects, also social disintegration. It violates the social cohesion provided by the mechanical solidarity typical of earlier eras. This made development possible. However, the organic solidarity that replaced it created many new serious problems (Durkheim, 2012). Among other things, the above-mentioned suicidal tendencies of a disturbingly large number of people. Durkheim also wrote about the expansion of clientelism and its disastrous consequences for the human psyche and the communities they create:

Ultimately, this liberation of desires has been made worse by the very development of industry and the almost infinite extension of the market. So long as the producer could gain his profits only in his immediate neighbourhood, the restricted amount of possible gain could not much overexcite ambition. Now that he may assume to have almost the entire world as his customer, how could passions accept their former confinement in the face of such limitless prospects? Such is the source of the excitement predominating in this part of society, and which has thence extended to the other parts. There, the state of crisis and anomy is constant and, so to speak, normal. From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned, but so too is possibility abandoned when it in turn becomes reality. A thirst arises for novelties, unfamiliar pleasures, nameless sensations, all of which lose their savor once known. Henceforth one has no strength to endure the least reverse. The whole fever subsides and the sterility of all the tumult is apparent, and it is seen that all these new sensations in their infinite quantity cannot form a solid foundation of happiness to support one during days of trial. The wise man, knowing how to enjoy achieved results without having constantly to replace them with

others, finds in them an attachment to life in the hour of difficulty. But the man who has always pinned all his hopes on the future and lived with his eyes fixed upon it, has nothing in the past as a comfort against the present's afflictions, for the past was nothing to him but a series of hastily experienced stages. What blinded him to himself was his expectation always to find further on the happiness he had so far missed. Now he is stopped in his tracks; from now on nothing remains behind or ahead of him to fix his gaze upon. Weariness alone, moreover, is enough to bring disillusionment, for he cannot in the end escape the futility of an endless pursuit (Durkheim, 2002, p. 216-217).

I allowed myself this long quote to show a certain way of sociological thinking that can be very useful for an educational theorist, especially when he analyzes the social aspects of pedagogical processes. But it is also worth paying attention to the diagnosis which, for reasons impossible to explain here, is worth taking into account today, both by sociologists and educators. The scholar attributed these disturbing phenomena, as we read, to the civilization crisis that he associated with industrialism, which he otherwise welcomed with hope. He also wrote:

We may even wonder if this moral state is not principally what makes economic catastrophes of our day so fertile in suicides. In societies where a man is subjected to a healthy discipline, he submits more readily to the blows of chance. The necessary effort for sustaining a little more discomfort costs him relatively little, since he is used to discomfort and constraint. But when every constraint is hateful in itself, how can closer constraint not seem intolerable? There is no tendency to resignation in the feverish impatience of men's lives. When there is no other aim but to outstrip constantly the point arrived at, how painful to be thrown back! Now this very lack of organization characterizing our economic condition throws the door wide to every sort of adventure. Since imagination is hungry for novelty, and ungoverned, it gropes at random. Setbacks necessarily increase with risks and thus crises multiply, just when they are becoming more destructive (Durkheim, 2002, p. 217).

This state of civilizational crisis, as the French scientist claimed, poses the problem of moral education as absolutely fundamental. He wrote:

It is within the framework of our traditional, national educational system that the crisis to which I have alluded before reached

particularly serious proportions. [...] Anything that reduces the effectiveness of moral education, whatever disrupts patterns of relationships, threatens public morality at its very roots. [...] Such a change could not take place without disturbing traditional ideas, disrupting old habits, entailing sweeping organizational changes, and without posing, in turn, new problems with which we must come to grips (Durkheim, 1968, p. 3).

Therefore, it is worth for an educational theorist to read Durkheim, but critically and on “his own terms.” What I propose as a principle that cannot be waived in all relations between educators and sociologists. It is similar with the symbolic interactionists cited here. Regardless of the inconsistencies or even serious errors at all levels of the construction of their theoretical assumptions, they are also right about many things. When, for example, Sandstrom, Martin and Fine write:

Humans learn what things mean as they interact with one another. In doing so they rely heavily on language and the communicative processes it facilitates. In essence, they learn to see and respond to symbolically mediated ‘realities’ - realities that are socially constructed (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine, 2003, p. 218).

Then of course they are very much right, but not entirely. They ignore the natural order, culture, and everything that Margaret S. Archer wrote about (Archer, 1989) similarly when we read that:

People become distinctively human through their interaction. Symbolic interactionists assume that people acquire distinctively human qualities, and become capable of distinctively human behavior, only through associating with others. According to interactionists, these uniquely human qualities and behaviors include the ability to use symbols, to think and make plans, to take the role of others, to develop a sense of self, and to participate in complex forms of communication and social organization (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine, 2003, p. 218).

However, when we find out that

Interactionists do not believe that people are born human. Rather, they presume that people develop into distinctively human beings as they take part in social interaction. While acknowledging that people are born with certain kinds of biological ‘hardware’ (for example, a highly developed nervous system) that give them the potential to

become fully human, interactionists stress that involvement in society is essential for realizing this potential (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine, 2003, p. 218).

We must protest vehemently, for the reasons I have already mentioned, referring to Spaemann.

Likewise, selectively, but also reaching deeply into their theoretical foundations, it is necessary to include in pedagogy the theories of even such outstanding leaders of sociology as Jürgen Habermas, who wrote about open communication (Habermas, 1984, 1987), which can be very useful in the educator's relations with pupils and in managing social contacts within the educational team. He himself gave beautiful examples of the attitude he recommended. Representative of the so-called of the third Frankfurt school, certainly under the spell of Marxism, the atheist was able to say:

For the normative self-understanding of modernity, Christianity has functioned as more than just a precursor or catalyst. Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of a continual critical reappropriation and reinterpretation. Up to this very day there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we must draw sustenance now, as in the past, from this substance. Everything else is idle postmodern talk (Habermas, 2002, p. 149).

His comment about *the post-secular era* is also significant, which in his opinion would be *unsuccessful and at times, morally failed*, which would mean that instead of ideological war it is worth striving for dialogue in peace, valuing coexistence, and *a new peaceful dialogue and coexistence between faith and reason must be sought in order to learn mutually* (see: Habermas, 2014). Here we have open dialogue practiced in an impressive way.

This does not change the fact that one of his most important ideas - a community based on such dialogue as a source of negotiated values - exceeds the ontological capabilities of a person and a social group, just like the idea of such communication itself. Excellent as an ideal worth keeping in mind, but impossible to achieve. And this is what Habermas firmly demanded, even claiming that it is enough for a single participant in the discourse

to break away from the blessed principles of openness to destroy the entire communication community.

Summary

I did not intend to give an exhaustive lecture on the fundamental mistakes made by outstanding sociologists, nor to write extensively about the valuable lessons that educators can gain from reading these authors. I only wanted to express the view that sociology can be a valuable source of educational theory, but requires a critical approach. This criticism should cover all levels of theory, including ontological, epistemological and ethical assumptions. I also pointed out the basic mistakes that a scientist of any specialization may make when relying on any theory from the field of humanities, including social sciences. Of course, this also applies to the relationship between educational theorists and sociology.

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