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THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY IN PEDAGOGICAL THINKING

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The article aims to illustrate how pedagogical authority has changed against the backdrop of the developments in our concept of the relationship between children and adults. It maps out selected concepts of authority in pedagogy (the platonic, democratic and patriarchal models), follows the transformations of the parent-child relationship in a psychohistorical context, and outlines the distinctions between authority and authoritarianism. Further arguments relate to the necessity of partnership in the model of pedagogical authority and demonstrate the shift from the disciplinary to the personalizing code of education, in conjunction with Bernstein's concept of invisible pedagogy. The text also deals with the contradictions and paradoxes that characterize contemporary childhood and complicate any clear-cut notion of pedagogical authority. The conclusion is that the current ambivalence surrounding pedagogical authority requires a renewal of the debate about educational ideals, especially the humanizing goal of education in post-industrial society.

Key words: authority, models of authority, pedagogical relationship, invisible pedagogy, socialization, complex humanity

Introduction

Authority is an essentially human phenomenon, which also means that it is social and historical. It always presupposes the existence of a society which, unlike an animal herd, affords us the possibility to freely react and implies a history as opposed to simply biological, natural evolution.¹ In a political sense, this is a relation of power whose chief aim is to legitimize

¹ A. Kojève, *La noción de autoridad*, Buenos Aires 2005, p. 71.

existing power structures.² Without authority, it is difficult to imagine the functioning of society or the state. As shown by M. Weber in the now classic differentiation between force and mastery, a necessary prerequisite of the social efficacy of authority is its internalization by those who are its subjects. It is a specific case of dominance and submission, in which part of one's personal freedom is sacrificed for the benefit of others, and in return obtain the securities given by authority – protection, access to public goods and services, etc. When authority is felt to be legitimate, it elicits a strong experience of inner obligation in the individuals and social groups in the sphere of its influence. This psychological mechanism makes the social relation of authority one of the most powerful tools of control.

Do these presuppositions also apply to pedagogical authority? To what extent can children and adolescents freely and willingly decide to accept the demands of authority as legitimate? If pedagogical authority is an indisputable constant of the educational relationship and a basic condition of making the educational process effective, as most experts as well as lay educators seem to agree, how is it possible that so much attention is paid to the weakening or even crisis of authority today? The relation of teachers to learners is intrinsically connected to the character of the school as an institution and to its social goals at the given moment, to the understanding of the social roles of the teacher and the student, the adult and the child – that is, to factors that are culturally, socially and economically determined. Is it only the historically conditioned models of authority that change, while the basis and the need for authority remain the same?

Concerning the Models of Pedagogical Authority

Plato's founding paradigm of education and pedagogy shows that the authority of the teacher is less determined by the method of teaching and more by *what* is being taught. In this philosophical tradition, authority is based on the teacher's orientation towards the truth.³ With Plato, the truth stops being "the child of a well managed dialogue" as it had been up to the sophists, but "a mutual opening up to the demands of the *logos*". The art of the teacher who understands what is beneficial to the soul is not simply a matter of transmitting truths, but of giving meaning to facts and laying foundations of inner life. In this sense, true education is principally the care

² M. Weber, *Autorita, etika a společnost. Pohled sociologa do dějin*, Praha 1997.

³ R. Palouš, *K filosofii výchovy. Východiska fundamentální agogiky*, Praha 1991.

of the soul. Pedagogical authority enables people to become even more human; it brings people to themselves, as the truth must be found through some internal understanding.⁴ The teacher becomes a companion who offers dialogical help in an individual's journey towards the truth. At the same time, equality of all participants has been a key assumption in this model of pedagogical authority, as can be inferred from the extant fragments of Plato's dialogues.

With the introduction of school education and its possibility to accommodate numerous cohorts of child populations, a new attitude to children formed that conceptualized them as uncivilized animalistic creatures who require leadership and discipline in order to internalize the moral norms expected of a citizen of the secularizing state. This pedagogical model, initially based on a strong element of authority and later giving way to an awareness of moral responsibility of the autonomous adult, is deeply entrenched in pedagogical thought due to the legacy of such thinkers as J.F. Herbart, G.W.F. Hegel, I. Kant, E. Durkheim and others. The problem is that it no longer corresponds to either the transformed relationship between adults and children as articulated e.g. by the new sociology of childhood, or to the needs of the state which can no longer reliably secure the lifelong prospects of its citizens, and as a result demands not so much obedience and responsibility as competitiveness, initiative, flexibility and the willingness to take risks.

Struggles with authority are characteristic of the postmodern era, in which the traditional hierarchies of social structures have weakened. In another way, however, this process is not only typical of the past few decades: it has been underway in Western society since at least the start of the modern period. According to American progressive pedagogue J. Dewey, politically and economically liberal thought has dissolved hierarchical authority by elevating individual freedom and by gradually spreading its criticism of traditional institutions (the church, the state, etc.) to all forms of authority. As a result, modern liberal thought has effectively separated the spheres of authority and individual freedom, considering them to be mutually incompatible: "Where there is authority, there is no freedom; where individual freedom is realized, the influence of authority is excluded"⁵

⁴ Ibidem, p. 54-55.

⁵ J. Dewey, *Autoridad y libertad*, Revista de la Universidad Bolivariana 2005, No 4, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=30541003>> ISSN 0717-6554 (Authority and Liberty. Survey Graphic 1936, Vol. 25, No 11), [10.04.2016].

Personal initiative and individual freedom are not, in Dewey's view, at odds with authority, but democratic society is based on mutual, cooperative social confirmation. As a committed democrat, Dewey argued not for the return of traditional forms of hierarchical authority (which, in Weber's terms, could be called charismatic or patriarchal), but for such a concept of authority that would result from rational cooperation among free human beings. These human beings would together create democratic cohesion (in this vein, Dewey is also a significant name in social pedagogy). Dewey's model of authority informed by cooperative rationality became the blueprint of the democratic model of pedagogical authority, a prerequisite to living in any democratic society. School as a social institution should represent democracy on a smaller scale: not an institution slotted between childhood and adulthood with the sole purpose of preparation to a future social life, but social life itself.

The role of teachers also changes in the democratic model of pedagogical authority, no longer presenting unequivocal and finite ideas and interpretations, but encouraging children's interest in cooperative solutions to problems, supporting the development of their conative (social, creative, research and artistic) instincts, and motivating them to activity. Teachers become, on the one hand, advisors, guides and facilitators of the learning process organized into small cooperative groups, and on the other hand and no less importantly in Dewey's view, guarantors of the scientific method in getting to know reality. In this model of pedagogical authority, students are at once individualized and socialized in the process of cooperative research activity. Dewey contends that this moment creates the most suitable conditions for the "development of the spirit of social cooperation and shared living" as an aim in itself of education.⁶

In the post-war era, H. Arendt called for the return of obedience into education, in sharp contrast to the democratic model of pedagogical authority. Drawing upon Hegelian philosophy, Arendt argues that while authority in pedagogy is not the application of force, it is also completely different from persuasion by rational arguments, as rational argumentation presupposes the fundamental equality between actors. Such equality between adults and children is illusory considering their differences in mental and social maturity. Children should therefore be treated in a radically different manner from adults, and a strict division between the child's world and the public sphere is necessary to establish, while the world remains protected from a premature invasion of children's unrestricted instinctual behavior.

⁶ J. Dewey, *Škola a společnost*, Praha 1904, p. 19.

However, a return to purely patriarchal authority in education is difficult to support today. Although the notion of unlimited personal superiority of master to slave had shaped the concept of the relationship between parents and children – the educators and the educated – for centuries, today it is being radically challenged. It cannot sufficiently react to the evolution of these relationships towards partnership and mutual respect. From the perspectives summarized above, it is also clear that pedagogical authority and its concrete forms continue to change throughout history, in tandem with the changes in the relationship between adult and child.

Transformations of the Relationship between Adults and Children in Western Society

In antiquity, children were understood not as people but as property that could be treated in any way their master wished.⁷ This patriarchal moment of rule over the child fueled ideas of pedagogical authority for centuries. Even today, we still encounter the notion that children are a purely private matter of the family. In medieval and early modern times, children were considered perverse and corrupt creatures born out of sin and needing to be ruled by discipline and punishment. However, childhood itself was not afforded any special social status, and so children were grouped in with adults from the moment they could communicate and work.⁸ As evidenced by portraits of aristocratic children of the era, a child was viewed as a little adult (a homonculus); the children portrayed did not look in any way “innocent” to modern eyes in terms of social, psychological or sexual attributes. If they were depicted in paintings and sculptures, it was precisely to highlight their adult social status.⁹

It was only in the 17th century that Western society began to think of children as human beings with specific developmental needs and natural inclinations that needed to be controlled, cultivated and developed. Among those pedagogical thinkers whose work shows a keen awareness of this situation is J.A. Komenský, who already employed metaphors of development. In his work, a child is likened to “a sprouting seed”, “a divine sapling” or

⁷ At the same time, there was a perceived need to protect children from bad morals tied to the idea of shame, which according to Postman (1982) was necessary for the “invention” of childhood.

⁸ P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, New York 1962.

⁹ A. Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*, New York 1998.

“a fledgling bird”. These phrases also indicate that children had attained social value in their own right and were now counted in the grand theories of the general improvement of humankind. This led to the rising importance of childrearing and education for the future. Komenský is not afraid to use truly “great” metaphors, extolling the child as “a pearl of the heavens” or “a jewel of the homeland and the church”.¹⁰ Despite this, childhood was still perceived as a sinful period in many church circles, with a prevailing idea that “[childhood] is the worst, most revolting and most reprehensible state second only to death”.¹¹

Only during the Romantic (and pre-Romantic) period do children begin to be seen as pure, unspoiled beings, tying in with the idea of childhood as the golden age of human life: liberated, carefree and full of joy. From this moment, children are expected to be innocent, asexual, happy beings whose principal duty is to play and to have no worries.¹² To what extent, however, has this myth of innocent childhood contributed to the dismissal of violence against children, to silencing children’s thoughts, to denying them love and to exploiting child labour, all so prevalent even in the most advanced societies until as recently as the past century? The question only began to be asked after the second half of the 20th century, and it still deserves attention. From the perspective of today’s accepted paradigm of children’s rights, it appears almost unbelievable that in the past, most cultures and families resorted to such practices as infanticide, incest, and overt or covert sexual aggression. There seems to be little exaggeration in what deMause, the founder of psychohistory, has observed: that the history of childhood is a nightmare from which humanity has only just begun to wake up.¹³ In his study of a multitude of sources including diaries, autobiographies, medical records and ethnographic reports, deMause provides evidence of the aforementioned phenomena and interprets this dark side of human history as a hidden psychological mechanism that for centuries allowed parents to project their own unmanaged fears and anxieties onto their children.

This somewhat shocking image of the child as a container of toxic adult experiences would explain why child suffering and exploitation have beco-

¹⁰ J.A. Komenský, *Velká didaktika*, [in:] *Vybrané spisy Jana Amose Komenského I*, Praha 1958, p. 37, 291.

¹¹ P. de Bérulle in: *El concepto de infancia a lo largo de la historia*, L. Enesco, Madrid 2012, p. 2.

¹² M. Wyness, *Childhood and Society. An Introduction to the Sociology of Childhood*, New York 2006.

¹³ L. DeMause, *The Evolution of Childhood*, [in:] *Foundations of Psychohistory*, New York 1982.

me such powerful rituals in human history. It also offers an understanding of the parent – child relationship as a kind of psychotherapeutic process whose success depends on the ability of new parental generations to relive childhood trauma through their own children. If a child is well cared for, the adult receives the child's emotions; for instance, a good mother helps her child manage their impulses and "detoxify" dangerous emotions.¹⁴ On the other hand, if girls who were abused in childhood then become mothers, they carry on their trauma and without this being resolved, history enters an emotional "freeze". The abuse and exploitation of girls, who have generally been treated worse than boys and killed more often throughout history, thus poses a particular risk to the fate of humanity as a whole. There is vast historical evidence for the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and women, which was considered a matter of course and even a source of amusement in e.g. ancient Greek comedies.

DeMause's studies of childrearing outline six psychogenic phases that show the extent of emotional closeness between children and parents:

- The *infanticidal mode* (antiquity – 4th century CE): all ancient cultures at the dawn of human history evidence the phenomenon of killing infants and children, be it as a burden, a mode of sexual gratification, or as a sacrifice to the gods in a bid for absolution or for future success;

- The *abandoning mode* (4th - 13th century): killing was replaced by abandoning or "donating" the child, who was considered an evil creature and in some cases, such as when a child cried more than others, even possessed (St. Augustine, Luther). Although leaving children at convents gradually became less common, abandonment remained a widespread social experience for centuries (as recently as the 1900s, some 90% of infants born in Paris were passed onto wet nurses in the countryside);

- The *ambivalent mode* (14th - 17th century): first public lectures dedicated to childrearing appear; moralists begin to warn against pedophilia, especially in churches. Some parents start practicing an ambivalent mode of childrearing, which no longer views the child as completely corrupt at birth but only with immoral proclivities that should be overcome. Disciplines such as pediatrics and the philosophy of education are established;

- The *intrusive mode* (18th century): childrearing is conceptualized as a permanent civilizing and disciplining pressure with the ultimate aim of breaking the child's will. The process of civilization and discipline would begin in the child's early years and focused on impulse control: hygienic habits, the suppression of child sexuality and self-control training (children

¹⁴ Ibidem.

would learn to fear the belt and to cry silently so as not to interfere with the running of the household as early as at one year old). The intrusive mode was typified by pitting the image of a strong adult who, despite sympathetic feelings and almost against their own will, would conscientiously fulfill their childrearing duty to a sacred authority, against a naughty child who requires punishment in order to internalize good (civilized) manners, discipline and self-control. The intrusive mode is also linked to the quasi-educational phenomenon of so-called "tough love", which demonstrates the core ambivalence of a childrearing practice that defends physical and psychological punishment by pointing out the necessity of looking after the child's own good ("he who loves his children will punish them" might as well be the motto of intrusive childrearing);

- The *socializing mode* (19th century - first half of 20th century): the image of parents as those who terrorize, beat and sexually assault their children is no longer acceptable. A different model emerges that takes advantage of softer psychological methods and aims to socialize rather than discipline the child. Mothers come to be seen as teachers and mentors while fathers are perceived as breadwinners and protectors; the child is then a being who can gradually acquire the parents' goodness and personal attributes. The parents' message to the child becomes "we will love you if you achieve our goals." This conditional mode of education, however, does not take children as they are, and as a result leaves feelings of frustration related to rejection and lack of understanding;

- The *helping mode* (second half of 20th century onwards): parents are characterized as people who are accompanying their child through the process of childhood and adolescence with empathy. The core message is "we love you and will help you achieve your aims." The childrearing process becomes therapeutic as the concept of children's rights is articulated.¹⁵

As deMause's genealogy illustrates, the history of humanity can be seen not only from the perspectives of social progress or the liberation of the human spirit, but also from the perspective of the development of the parent - child relationship in the direction from parental immaturity or inadequacy to the ability to accept children's emotions and experiences. Western society has undertaken a long journey from incest to love, from tyranny to empathy.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

Authority and Authoritarianism

It is crucial to differentiate authority from authoritarianism in pedagogical practice. Generally speaking, this difference became a pressing issue after WWII with rising interest in the phenomenon of so-called authoritarian personalities. In this context we may mention E. Fromm's studies, in which he outlines rational and irrational authority, meaning humanistic and authoritarian conscience.

An individual respects rational authority, as it has assimilated certain powers given freely and with the person's awareness. Irrational authority is forced by a fear of punishment. Whenever a child comes under the influence of irrational authority, their curiosity and independence are stunted by fear. The child grows into a conformist adult unable to solve problems or to handle the uncertainty and ambivalence of life; an individual fully dependent on outside authority and eventually prone to failure. Irrational authority denies a person the right to know and determine what is best; as a result, the creator of these norms must be a source of authority that almost magically outclasses the individual. The magical power of authority usurps decision-making in every important area while individual judgement is underestimated, all of which fosters a sense of inadequacy and dependence. Irrational authority with foundations in power and fear is primarily only concerned with its own aims: "It always exploits, even as it affords the individual significant psychological or material gains".¹⁶

According to Fromm, authoritarian personalities in particular have internalized the demands of irrational authority and the law of their unquestioning acceptance, without the ability to subject these demands to critical reflection. They become trapped in their demanding, alienated authoritarian conscience, which floods their inner self with anxiety at the smallest transgression until this conscience becomes inescapable. This may explain why many educated people still find themselves in the clutches of a dynamic that forces them to worship authority as something superior to their own will and reason, to the extent that they obey its orders regardless of the contents.¹⁷

Against this authoritarian conscience stands the non-alienated conscience of the humanist discourse, being the "voice of our total personality, which expresses the demands of life and growth". People do not only perform their

¹⁶ E. Fromm, *Budete jako bohové. Radikální interpretace Starého zákona a jeho tradice*, Praha 1993, p. 13.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

responsibilities for the sake of an inner authority, but they feel responsible for realizing their potential because “they answer to the world, of which they are part as living, internally active human beings”.¹⁸ The question of pedagogical authority is then not concerned with whether or not to have authority, but how to encourage activity and responsibility without employing pressure or blind obedience. A possible solution to this dilemma is the paradigm of non-hierarchical authority in the form of a supportive, open relationship without manipulation.

The Psychological Necessity of a Partnership Model of Authority in Pedagogy

The question of non-hierarchical authority in pedagogy is often considered to be nonsensical; the authoritative relationship has traditionally been hierarchical by definition. However, Weber’s model of rational-legal authority, Fromm’s rational authority, Dewey’s democratic pedagogical authority and various psychological interpretations of democratic educational styles amply demonstrate that the question posed is legitimate. After all, even Piaget’s research has shown the critical importance of a child’s exposure to a democratically cooperating peer group during the “moral in-between stage” (around 10 years of age) to the development of moral autonomy.

C.R. Rogers has provided empirical evidence supporting non-directive approaches to authority in education in the field of psychology and pedagogy, including an analysis of the entire pedagogical system. Unlike the critical stance taken by emancipatory theories (e.g. anti-pedagogy and new sociology, which focused on changing the status of children and childhood in society), Rogers had no aspirations to radical social change; his theory and practice has mainly provided proof that non-hierarchical relationships in education work. In humanist pedagogy, the role of the teacher is to facilitate learning and to adapt such an approach to students that enables them to learn in an atmosphere of safety, without any fear of negative judgements or reservations about expressing their authentic opinions and feelings.

To Rogers, an important facilitator of learning is the unconditionally accepting relationship, which is described as “the appreciation of every student, appreciation of his or her feelings, opinions and personality. It is the acceptance of the other’s individuality as an independent human being, re-

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 43-44.

specting the other, which has value in and of itself".¹⁹ It is also vital for a teacher to cultivate an *empathetic understanding* of the student's world and to be able to express that understanding. Empathy requires a sensitive and accurate understanding of what a child is experiencing, feeling, and how that child sees the world. This enables the child to realize the meaning of their feelings in every situation without denying or hiding them, without the fear of potentially negative reactions and judgements. When a child interacts with a teacher who does not analyze and evaluate, the fear of failure is reduced while the motivation for learning and personal development increases.

The most important attitude in Rogers' view is the authenticity of the teacher. This is expressed by congruence between lived experience and behavior, meaning that the teacher enters into the relationship with students as a welcoming, sincere human being:

If the facilitator is a real person, the person he [sic] truly is, if he enters into the relationship with students without hiding behind any mask or facade, it is highly likely that he will succeed. This means that the facilitator's feelings are available to his consciousness and he is able to live, to be and, if needed, to express these feelings.²⁰

It is this authentic stance that allows teachers to encounter learners on a human-to-human level: rather than being emotionally unavailable, the facilitator is trustworthy and understandable.

In person-centered pedagogy, part of the responsibility for learning is given to students themselves. This responsibility is aided by methods and forms of work that support self-directed behaviors (educational contracts, working on projects, group work, shared responsibility for the management of the class and the school, etc). Children must rely on themselves to a much greater extent in terms of choices, decision-making and internal self-evaluation, but they are also paradoxically more motivated to perform as their energy is not blocked by fear and failure avoidance in such a supportive climate. Instead, they can concentrate on their own aims chosen without excessive worry. On the other hand, Rogers himself was aware that even at this point, negative experiences can be already formed to such an extent in a child that they can effectively block the willingness to take responsibility.

¹⁹ C.R. Rogers, *Způsob bytí. Klíčová témata humanistické psychologie z pohledu jejího zakladatele*, Praha 1998, p. 224.

²⁰ Ibidem.

From Discipline to Facilitation: the Postmodern Shift in Code

The latent conflict in contemporary views of pedagogical authority can be illustrated by the shift from the socializing (normalizing or disciplining) approach to childhood as articulated by E. Durkheim and H. Arendt to the helping or supportive approach that has been gaining ground since the 1960s. In his piece on the interplay between so-called visible and invisible pedagogy, B. Bernstein offers an analysis of this transition: the mental structures within an individual result from how social structure (the “outside”) interacts with the formation of subjective consciousness (the “inside”). Learning (socialization) therefore occurs as a kind of internalization of the given system of cultural codes, the complexity of which is determined by the social environment inhabited by the individual.²¹

“Visible” pedagogies have precisely and strictly defined areas of the curriculum, whereas “invisible” pedagogies employ more flexible, diffuse borders without clear boundaries. The former curriculum is likened to a puzzle, while the latter is termed the integrated curriculum. The puzzle-type curriculum is characterized by a closed educational code, which secures the transmission of fully-formed, closed contents and the cultivation of clearly and unequivocally delineated perspectives; the integrated curriculum uses a more open educational code that allows for overlap, blending and broadening of different knowledge areas and perspectives. This trend can be observed in the loosening of the curricular framework of education by means of so-called transversal topics, the establishment of integrated educational areas, and in abolishing some traditional subjects.

The difference between visible and invisible pedagogy is how they define the boundary between what can be communicated at school and what cannot. The clearer and stricter this division, the more rigid the framework in which education occurs, and the less influence can teachers and students have on the selection, organization and timing of what information is to be transmitted at school. In clearly delineated, strict frameworks, time is divided into clear segments and the transmission of knowledge happens in a logical step-by-step succession. Any extracurricular knowledge the teacher or students may possess is strictly excluded from the school knowledge corpus. There are explicit criteria of evaluation and public norms of what a student should know at any given point of school attendance, so both parents

²¹ B. Bernstein, *Pedagogías visibles e invisibles*, [in:] *La enseñanza: su teoría y su práctica*, Ed. Gimeno Sacristán, A. Pérez Gómez, Madrid 2008.

and students can easily judge how successfully or unsuccessfully socialization is progressing at school. The framework of visible pedagogy is also typified by a clear, concise and unchanging relational hierarchy that determines who is the educator and who the educated. In effect, the relationship between the teacher and student is underpinned by superiority and subordination.²²

By contrast, invisible pedagogies employ a less rigid framework with more implicit than explicit hierarchies; subordination to teachers is not overt and both teacher and student have a greater degree of freedom in organization, choice of activity and communication methods. Assistance and adaptation replace order and submission. The theories that form the backbone of invisible pedagogy have almost no use for explicitly presented models and examples; they prefer implicit formation of social relations and their hierarchies while power and control remain hidden and opaque. The presentation of specific types of tasks and their solutions is supplanted by facilitating the processes of learning. Socialization and education take place under the influence of situations, prepared environments and problem-solving; abilities are almost exclusively judged on the basis of spontaneous expressions of children's activity.

These two aspects, the internal ("ability") and the external ("activity") are connected by the concept of 'the disposition towards doing things'. The teacher deduces the degree of a child's development by what activities the child partakes in: this degree is related to an ability demonstrated at a particular time, which makes it possible to estimate future development.²³

Spontaneity is key to invisible pedagogy, which expects the child to give original answers to stimuli as an autonomous expression of personality. This is why game and play are such important concepts to invisible pedagogy (and a likely reason why this approach took off much faster in preschool and primary-level education). Play is understood to be a basal activity in which a child's potential has the best opportunity to develop, and it gives the child a way to externalize the development of their abilities to the teacher.

In pedagogies based on invisible power, the role of the teacher in the learning process is a facilitating one; it is also necessary to have expertise in the theory of learning and child development, as traditional knowledge-testing is not sufficient to assess individual development. According to Bernstein, this is the moment when psychology becomes the real frame of

²² *Ibidem*, p. 55-57.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

reference in pedagogical activity. Psychological theories that diagnose, explain and interpret both progress and failure, predicting future possibilities of development in the process, allow total but invisible control of children when they are applied to every one of their “spontaneous” expressions. Neither parents nor children are usually familiar with the criteria of this evaluation, in contrast to visible pedagogy whose norms may often be vague and seemingly unfounded, but still public. In its way, invisible pedagogy retains a greater amount of power over a child, even if objectively speaking, it serves the more progressive pedagogical and social ideas. As a result, Bernstein argues that although invisible pedagogy works deeper in one’s personality using softer methods, its influence on society is no more democratic than that of pedagogies relying on a teacher’s authority, order and discipline.

Bernstein was primarily interested in what social change was responsible for this paradigm shift. Invisible pedagogy is, in his view, an expression of the rise of a new middle class that defined itself in the process of the cultural division of labor. As opposed to the older economic labor division, which enabled the middle class as such to be formed, cultural labor division is characterized by the creation of professions within the service industry²⁴ and by the emergence of new forms of symbolic power dealing more holistically with one’s entire personality, by which the middle class strengthens its influence. Flexible cultural codes that relate to the knowledge needed for the rise of the new middle class, which finds itself in sharp contrast with the old middle class and its inflexible cultural codes based on strict hierarchies and clearly legible relations of power, are the consequences of this process.²⁵ Invisible pedagogy corresponds to a new type of organic solidarity that, unlike individually oriented solidarity as described by Durkheim during the industrial phase, has a personalized character.

While the modern concept of discipline and individualization was oriented towards the formation of a specific identity and the acceptance of unequivocal social roles, the concept of personalization focuses on ambivalent identity and meeting the demands of flexible roles. The rise of invisible pedagogy is thus tied to the post-industrial society and the necessity to prepare young people for a future where, considering the dynamic boom of technology and constantly emerging new forms of economics, there is no place for a one-sided approach to forming one’s professional and life perspectives.

²⁴ Today this includes not only the third sector, i.e. the service economy, but also the fourth sector represented by the helping professions.

²⁵ B. Bernstein, *Pedagogías visibles e invisibles*, p. 58-59.

These circumstances demonstrate how Western society has changed since the 1970s, which has been interpreted against the backdrop of such diverse concepts as “liquid modernity” (Bauman), information society (Castells), network society (Van Dijk) or most recently knowledge society and knowledge economy.

Neoliberal Childhood and Authority

The coexistence of children and adults in post-industrial society is characterized by a number of paradoxes. According to Qvortrup, a prominent critic of the ongoing structural disadvantages facing children in Western society, adults are aware that it is desirable for parents and children to be together, but live their lives in increasing separation; they declare children a priority but continue to make political and economic decisions without regard for children; parents agree that children should be educated towards freedom and democracy, but social standards are imposed from the position of control, management and discipline.²⁶

Much more than in the past, parents appreciate autonomy in their children, as well as creative abilities and cooperation. These values have overshadowed past norms and aims couched in discipline, obedience and order,²⁷ but there is also an expectation of high performance and resilience in hopes of securing children’s future success in the competitive workforce. While the ideal of the so-called normalizing or socializing approach was a disciplined individual who responsibly upheld the duties of the citizen of the modern secular state in accordance with Kantian morals, today the role of the state is being replaced by the demands of the neoliberal economy and its ideal of flexible, entrepreneurial subjects whose competence elevates them to the upper segment of society as defined by the knowledge economy. The “gold collar” has become the metaphor of choice for this type of worker.²⁸ This produces a completely new neoliberal concept of childhood, in which the competent and business-minded “superchild” is encouraged to compete as part of necessary training for a performance-based but otherwise wholly

²⁶ J. Qvortrup, *Childhood in Europe: a New Field of Social Research*, [in:] *Growing Up in Europe Contemporary Horizons in Childhood and Youth Studies (International Studies on Childhood and Adolescence)*, Eds. L. Chisholm et al., Berlin - New York 1995.

²⁷ M. Fölling-Albers, *Soziokulturelle Bedingungen der Kindheit*, [in:] *Handbuch Grundschulpädagogik und -didaktik*, Eds. W. Einsiedler et al., Bad Heilbrunn 2005, p. 155-166.

²⁸ O. Kaščák, B. Pupala, *Deti medzi emancipáciou a sociálnou využitelnosťou: nová sociológia detstva a „našepkaná emancipácia“*, *Sociální studia* 2012, 2, p. 23.

unpredictable future. Parents are no longer satisfied with the mere attainment of developmental norms, but consistently ask their children to surpass them.

The new discourse of the “norm-busting superchild” has ceased to define parental care as assistance with meeting the normative standards of human development, but as never-ending incitement to intellectual competition and surpassing the norms a little sooner than adequate to the child’s age, based on the findings of developmental psychology and biology. At the same time, children and adolescents are still viewed through the lens of the psychosocial moratorium, which attempts to protect them yet also renders them socially invisible. If our very concept of childhood is this ambivalent, how can pedagogical authority be unequivocal and balanced? Are we as pedagogues conscious of this profound paradox?

Conclusion

If pedagogical authority is to have meaning at all in the current age, we need not only educators, teachers and parents who are capable of being accepting partners and role models for children, but also to renew the interest in the discussion of the pedagogical ideals that are supported by authority. Are these ideals truly inspired by economic imperatives alone, such as competitiveness and entrepreneurship? According to French philosopher and sociologist E. Morin, the task of education is to be informed by a complex humanist ideal and to work with an awareness of our complex anthropological situation in globally uncertain times. In the conditions of a world threatened by numerous conflicts and misunderstandings, a world of political, cultural and religious barriers, it is necessary to educate towards a truly complex concept of humanity to enable global ethics and global culture. In other words, education should focus on the ethics of humanity. This presupposes an orientation towards democracy and humanity as our global fate, towards understanding, subjective openness to difference and the internalization of tolerance, along with the elimination of obstacles to this understanding such as ethnocentrism, egocentrism, sociocentrism, reductive and exclusionary thinking.²⁹ The humanizing role of education takes into account the bio-psycho-socio-noological situation of the person in the circumstances of global society; it also asks questions about what kind of pedagogical authority is fit for this education. Is it the authority of the leader, the

²⁹ E. Morin, *Los siete saberes para el futuro (7 place de Fontenoy)*, Paris 1999, p. 1-4.

judge, the master, or tradition? The authority of commonly accepted values, reason, science, or faith? The authority of expert competence or one's own conscience?

One cannot be led to humanity by inhumane means. This thesis draws attention to the fact that the meaning of authority based on respect, recognition, expertise and adequate leadership has not yet disappeared from the educational process. Authority of well-informed personalities is needed in pedagogy, of those who will resist the lure of a "firm hand" in education, politics and public life; who will not be swept away by tempting populism in educating the young generation or intimidated by accusations of pseudo-humanity, so common today. They will offer children and youth humanely convincing, internally grounded authority, one that is not afraid of being tested by the outside world and thus will never need to resort to the practice of authoritarianism.

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