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“Studia Pedagogiczne”: its relationship to changing times

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ABSTRACT

For almost seven decades, “Studia Pedagogiczne” has witnessed the development and transformations of Polish pedagogy. The first issue was published in 1954. The period between 1954 and 2018 has been a time of global change, and also change in Poland, affecting all spheres of life, be it political, economic, social or cultural. The journal accompanied those transformations and documented many of them, and so it also serves as evidence of these changes. The purpose of this presented text is not to analyse the content of the journal. Instead, it is to approach the topics discussed in it, the areas tackled by the authors and the changes in the perception of the educational reality in Poland from the perspective of passing time and with consideration of their variety.

KEYWORDS:

“Studia Pedagogiczne”, “Polish Journal of Educational Studies”, history, changes, educational reality, Poland.

Introduction

This volume is the beginning of a new phase for “Studia Pedagogiczne”: a journal published since 1954. The journal has always been a scientific witness to educational reality, with its transformations, developments, and social consequences.

By choosing some sentences from the Introduction to the first issue of the journal, we can prove its timeless and universal character. The first editor, Bogdan Suchodolski, claimed: “The aim of «Studia Pedagogiczne» ...is to publish the findings of research efforts, and thus to arouse scientific discussion, motivate towards further research, and

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contribute to the improvement of the methodological level of studies and thereby reach more relevant results" (Introduction, 1954, Vol. I, p. 7). He added: "hopefully, in the course of further research work, young teachers will develop and mature as scholars" (ibid).

The volume for the year 2018 changes the previous image of the journal. First of all, the "Polish Journal of Educational Studies" is designed to cater to a broader group of readers than before, because it will be published in English. In addition, the online version will make the content of each issue more accessible. In this way, we hope to reach out to all of those who engage in research in education. The latest, modified issue is mostly created by young researchers. The directions of their research are a litmus test for the condition of the contemporary world. However, just as importantly, they are an attempt to continue the discussion of issues and narratives which began in the past.

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For almost seven decades, "Studia Pedagogiczne" has been there to witness the development and transformations in Polish pedagogy. The first issue was published in 1954. The period between 1954 and 2018 has been a time of global changes, and also change in Poland, affecting all spheres of life, be it political, economic, social or cultural. The journal accompanied those transformations and documented many of them, and so it also serves as evidence of these changes. A full overview and detailed analysis of the scale of these transformations and the content of the journal that reflects them cannot be successfully included in such a short introduction. The purpose of this presented text is therefore not to analyse the content of the journal. Instead, it is to approach the topics discussed in it, the areas tackled by the authors and changes in the perception of the educational reality in Poland from the perspective of passing time and with consideration of their variety. Nearly seven decades of existence and the abundance of materials provide a solid basis for conclusions, reflections and generalisations. My interpretation of the content is not only based on an obvious research interest. My intention is also to express respect for the work of others and to reflect on it with a sense of responsibility for continuing the work of other scholars. It is also a great intellectual experience for any educational specialist and researcher.

I have returned to each volume with a humble attitude and I have tried to display understanding when reading again and again about the challenges of what were then "contemporary times", in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and later. I look at the fading ideas and contents and the circumstances in which new challenges have emerged. The few pages of this text are definitely not enough to present reflections based on several dozen volumes. Therefore, for greater clarity, I would like to draw out three components of this specific study. These are the development of the topics mentioned in the journal (including the presentation and perception of the problems discussed), changes in the

content and narratives resulting from the history of Poland and global transformations, and other changes, which in a way «accompanied» the journal and its readers.

Perception and presentation of the discussed problems

This text is divided into decades to ensure greater clarity for this specific review. Obviously, this division is only a convention, since different periods tend to overlap: after all, political, social, cultural and other changes are not based on decades but driven by other factors. However, the use of a calendar-based approach to this time of dynamic transition in our country over the last several decades gives this period of complex changes, which is still the subject of disputes and reflections, some more clarity in terms of time and discussed problems.

Let us begin with the year 1954. Since the end of WWII, Poland had been in the zone of influence of the Soviet Union and its ideology. Introducing socialist system principles was the priority for the authorities, Many representatives of society had changed via the war and its aftermath. The period also evoked resistance and multiple controversies, which could only be revealed and verbalised through the combination of superficial approval and minor objections, even in scientific publications. Therefore, the current interpretation of the texts of that time must take into account the specific sense and semantic ambiguity of the expressed opinions. We need to be aware that in the 1950s, the lack of a clear declaration of support for certain political decisions or documents in a scientific text could result in objections on the part of censors or those who supervised the political correctness of academic circles. Therefore, the appearance of “*Studia Pedagogiczne*”, issued by the Committee on Education Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, was an achievement for the circle of education specialists, proving their scientific importance and allowing them some autonomy to engage in intellectual reflection, to the extent that was possible at the time.

The first three volumes included content pertaining to different areas, mostly pedagogy, psychology and history (especially the history of education). The following volumes were more or less profiled for certain topics. The issues under discussion were related to pedagogic sub-disciplines or significant areas of interest, such as social pedagogy, special needs education, didactics, history of education, lifelong learning, early education, childcare pedagogy, comparative pedagogy, pedeutology, educational management and pedagogy of work.

The discussed topics changed, recurred and overlapped. However, they were never the same due to the changeability of political periods and the development of different areas of life. The authors noticed and discussed problems of general importance, often referring to issues related to education, e.g., in volumes: *Oświata*

i pedagogika w Polsce i w świecie. Rok 1969 [Education in Poland and Abroad: the Year 1969] (Vol. XXII, 1971); *Współczesne innowacje w systemie oświaty i wychowania* [Contemporary Innovations in the System of Education and Childcare] (ed. Romana Miller, 1976, Vol. XXXVII); *Kierowanie oświatą i szkołą* [Education and School Management] (ed. Kazimierz Podoski, Vol. XLII, 1980); *Společne oczekiwania wobec szkoły – szkoła wobec oczekiwań społecznych* [Social expectations towards schooling – schooling in the face of social expectations] (ed. Zenon Gajdzica, Vol. LXVII, 2014).

These issues were supplemented with texts concerning the role of schools in shaping reality (both current and desirable), e.g., *Z zagadnień organizacji szkolnictwa w Polsce Ludowej* [Elements of Organization of the Educational System in People's Republic of Poland] (ed. Mieczysław Pęcherski, Vol. XXXV, 1975) or *Szkoła i perspektywy kultury* [School and Cultural Perspectives] (ed. Heliodor Muszyński, Vol. LII, 1988); *Edukacja szkolna w zmianach? Zmiany w edukacji szkolnej* [School Education in the Course of Change? Changes in the Course of School Education?], (ed. Maria Dudzikowa, Sylwia Jaskulska, Vol. LXIV, 2011).

Attention was often given to the teacher, the interpretations of whose profile, development and tasks changed over the years. This issue was mentioned i.a., in the following volumes: *Nauczyciel, tradycje, współczesność, przyszłość* [The Teacher. Traditions, Contemporary Times and the Future] (ed. Stefan Wołoszyn, Vol. XXXIX, 1978); *Warunki pracy nauczycieli* [Teachers' Working Conditions] (ed. Tadeusz Wiloch, Vol. LIV, 1989); *Nauczyciel i problemy jego kształcenia w okresie zmiany społecznej 1991–1992* [The Teacher and the Problems of Teacher Education in the Period of Social Change, 1991–1992] (ed. Heliodor Muszyński, Vol. LX, 1994).

Subjects based on comparative analyses were introduced slowly but more and more frequently. Initially, the comparisons only referred to the Eastern Bloc, but after the borders were opened, these referred to a much broader area. These were included, in the volumes: *Kwalifikacje i kształcenie kadr pedagogicznych w świecie współczesnym* [Teachers' Qualifications and Education in the Contemporary World] (ed. Tadeusz Wiloch, Vol. LVI, 1991) and others.

Another important area of analysis, closely connected with teachers and the education system, was the didactic aspect of teachers' work. For example, the 1973 issue was devoted to new tendencies in didactics (Vol. XXV). Another one, titled *Nowoczesny podręcznik. Problemy, propozycje, badania* [A Modern Coursebook. Problems, Proposals, Research] (eds. Czesław Kupisiewicz, Zofia Matulka, Vol. XXXVI, 1976), referred to more detailed issues, mostly focusing on didactic literature. At the same time, editors concentrated their attention on the problems and development of the students. This trend in reflection was documented by the following volumes: *Rozwijanie aktywności uczniów* [Developing Students' Activity] (ed. Wincenty Okoń, Vol. XI, 1964); *Poziom umysłowy i zainteresowania młodzieży* [Adolescents' Intellectual Level and Interests] (ed.

Bogdan Suchodolski, Vol. XIII, 1965), *Rozwój i wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym* [Development and Education of Preschool Children] (ed. Barbara Wilgocka-Okoń, Vol. XLVIII, 1985). However, almost until the end of the 20th century, the texts usually referred to students, their stages of development and possible support, not to children and childhood. These kinds of subjects have only begun to be addressed in the last decade.

On many occasions, "Studia Pedagogiczne" has discussed issues related to the human living environment, especially the social environment. The academic circle of social education specialists prepared volumes such as: *Organizowanie środowiska wychowawczego. Zbiór rozpraw z pedagogiki społecznej* [Organising the Education Environment. A Collection of Studies on Social Pedagogy] (eds. Ryszard Wroczyński, Tadeusz Wujek, Vol. XV, 1967); *Funkcjonowanie systemu wychowawczego w środowisku* [The Functioning of Educational Systems in the Environment] (Vol. XXXII, 1974); *Pedagogika społeczna – poszukiwania i rozstrzygnięcia* [Social Pedagogy: Research and Findings] (eds. Tadeusz Pilch, Barbara Smolińska-Theiss, Vol. XLVI, 1984).

The idea of a community school emerged in texts published in the journal. It introduced new, autonomous actions into schools, innovative in comparison to the traditional model established by official policy. The school was perceived as a factor shaping local social forces. This was a completely new idea, which might even be called revolutionary, since the monopoly on shaping social attitudes and forces belonged to completely different bodies and institutions. By taking into account these symptoms of independent thinking and projects, that were courageous for the time, we can therefore express our recognition for the members of the pedagogical circle, who, under conditions of complete control of social behaviours, were able to uphold valuable ideals and ideas originating from Enlightenment humanitarianism, instead of the doctrinal socialism of the period.

As already mentioned, ensuring proper conditions for development is also an expression of care for the good living conditions of children and adolescents. Topics concerning care (childcare pedagogy) were therefore discussed in the journal, e.g., *Problemy opiekuńcze. Zbiór rozpraw z pedagogiki społecznej* [Care-Related Problems. A Collection of Studies on Social Pedagogy] (ed. Bogdan Suchodolski, Vol. XII, 1964); *Pedagogika opiekuńcza – podstawy metodologiczne i wybrane kierunki opieki nad dzieckiem* [Childcare Pedagogy: Methodological Foundations and Selected Directions of Childcare] (ed. Edmund Trempała, Vol. LVIII, 1992). The publications referred to the problems of children from dysfunctional families and care institutions. A lot of attention was also given to disabled people, although this topic only began to feature following almost twenty years of the journal's existence. It is worth pointing out that some volumes of the journal were the result of work performed by Research Teams appointed by the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The work

resulted in volumes that were closely related to the teams' areas of interest. For example, in the case of the Special Needs Pedagogy Team, these were: *Współczesne teorie i tendencje wychowania i kształcenia specjalnego* [Modern Theories and Tendencies of Special Needs Education] (ed. Aleksander Hulek, Vol. XL, 1979); *Funkcja pedagogiki specjalnej w systemie oświatowo-wychowawczym* [The Role of Special Needs Education in the Educational System] (ed. Aleksander Hulek, Vol. XLV, 1983); *Kształcenie i wychowanie dzieci i młodzieży niepełnosprawnej a służby socjalne – zadania pedagoga* [Disabled Children and Adolescents Education and Care vs Social Services: the Tasks of an Educational Specialist] (ed. Aleksander Hulek, Vol. LIX, 1992).

Since the beginning of its publication, the journal's importance has been demonstrated by references to works by philosophers, historians, psychologists, cultural scientists, etc. These have included texts written by representatives of those disciplines. This output by many authors shows how pedagogical issues have been interpreted very broadly. Texts by outstanding representatives of these fields were published in many volumes. One example is the splendid volume XXI, titled *Problemy współczesnego człowieka w filozofii – wartość, wolność, odpowiedzialność* [Philosophical Problems of a Contemporary Human: Virtue, Liberty, Responsibility] (ed. Bogdan Suchodolski, Vol. XXI, 1971).

Some volumes included content closely reflecting the character and area of interest of a specific discipline and its sub-disciplines; others presented articles from various fields or ones that would now be called interdisciplinary. The presence of non-pedagogical specialities in educational science shows that the authors understood the need to perceive the world in a multidimensional way and ensure an interdisciplinary and supra-disciplinary dialogue. This not only enriched the subjects under discussion but also made it possible for pedagogical narratives to exceed imposed patterns of thinking and the unidimensional world of values.

In the journal we can see how the socio-political system affects the narrative of certain issues and phenomena, their understanding and interpretation. By analysing changes in the content of scientific reflection and its function in shaping the social reality even more deeply, we reach an important generalisation: in authoritarian systems, the role of scholars concentrates on describing facts, processes and phenomena with a very narrow margin for intervention and modification, whereas in liberal democratic systems within a strong civic society, the role of scholars also involves diagnosis and initiating changes to the unwanted reality. This can be observed in the message of "Studia Pedagogiczne" in its early years and after the transformation. It is obvious that the true mission of science is the latter strategy. In my opinion, this truth discovered in the journal is of great cognitive and axiological value for our discipline, which serves society and shapes the future more than any other.

"Studia Pedagogiczne" from the perspective of changes

Even without a thorough study of the texts included in each volume, we can clearly see evolution in several areas, such as political views, scientific thought, theoretical background of research, areas of interest, analyses and discussions. Political involvement was obvious in the first thirty years of publishing (in the 1950s, 60s and 70s); the Editorials and papers in some volumes included references to socialist duties, and the narratives were clearly developed around them. According to the first chief editor, Bogdan Suchodolski, the philosophy behind publishing the journal was "to develop Marxist pedagogical theory in Poland" (Introduction, Vol. I, p. 6). It was also mentioned that "the starting point for deep cultural revolution, occurring in the new conditions in science, art, education and childcare, was overturning the capitalist system and building the foundations of socialism in our country, whereas the changes and achievements of the People's Republic of Poland in education and childcare are of special importance" (Introduction, 1954, no. 1, p. 1). These words reflected the political situation in post-war Poland. For almost four decades, "Studia Pedagogiczne" was published under conditions of censorship, being part of the socio-political system. As such, censorship reflected its axiology, oftentimes forcing writers to express approval for the existing order.

The author of the Introduction overtly pointed out the objective of education at that time: it was to develop a socialist person building a socialist country thanks to education and childcare activities. In a three-page-long preamble, B. Suchodolski also wrote: "science can only develop in the atmosphere of creative discussion arising out of cognitive passion and the desire to purposefully control the processes of reality" (Introduction, 1954, No. 1, p. 7). This well reflected the intellectual moods and the perception of social and educational reality mentioned above. The analysis of issues of the journal from the next decades shows that later the above-mentioned "atmosphere of creative discussion" and "cognitive passion" led editors and authors in a completely different direction, towards more open-minded thinking.

In the 1970s, a new kind of narrative began. For example, the Editorial of volume XXI titled *Problemy współczesnego człowieka w filozofii – wartość, wolność, odpowiedzialność* [*Philosophical Problems of a Contemporary Human: Virtue, Liberty, Responsibility*] (1971), written by Bogdan Suchodolski, hints at completely different topics. "Problems of a contemporary human" appeared for the first time, confronted with values such as liberty and responsibility. It was claimed that "philosophical reflection on the world and humanity is ...one of the fundamental elements of pedagogy and should be treated as an equal component of the discipline" (Ibid).

In the same period, in volume XXX titled *Osobowość w społeczeństwie i kulturze* [*Personality in Society and Culture*] (1974), B. Suchodolski (the chief editor of the journal and

the author of the Editorial) confronted traditional pedagogy with new challenges, with “the new dimension of educational processes and educational needs emerging in the contemporary conditions of existence” (Ibid, p. 6). It was the first mention of the area that Suchodolski called “the problem of education for existence” (Ibid, p. 6). It was also the first time that the topic of developing reflectivity, manners and a culture of social coexistence in educational activities, in confrontation with consumerist attitudes which “reduce the value of human life every time they go beyond limits” (Ibid, p. 6), was raised. Suchodolski argued that modern education should not only involve occupational elements and social skills, but also aim to teach people how to live a “complete, happy life” (Ibid, p. 6). The title for that issue and the selection of texts were based i.a., on the book edited by Edgard Faure, *Learning To Be. The world of education today and tomorrow*, (Unesco, Paris, 1972). New educational ideas and tendencies slowly emerged, especially since in the 1970s and 1980s, Poles began to travel abroad, to a limited extent but much more often than before. It was the time when contact with foreigners became easier. This contact resulted in collaborative scientific projects, reported e.g., in volume III, *Szkoła i perspektywy kultury [School and Cultural Perspectives]* (ed. Heliodor Muszyński, 1988), carried out as a result of an international Polish and German seminar.

In the 1980s and 1990s, some new issues were discussed by the authors, e.g., in volume XLVIII titled *Rozwój i wychowanie dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym [Preschool Children: Development and Care]* (1985). This kind of topic, directly referring to preschool education, had never been discussed before. The title of volume XLI, *Kwalifikacje i kształcenie kadr pedagogicznych w świecie współczesnym [Teachers' Qualifications and Education in the Contemporary World]* (1991) was also interesting, since a broad subject like that, concerning global phenomena, had never been formulated before.

One more, crucial change resulted from the system transition and the opening of the Polish borders. In volume LX titled *Nauczyciel i problemy jego kształcenia w okresie zmiany społecznej 1991–1992 [The Teacher and the Problems of Teacher Education in the Period of Social Change, 1991–1992]* (1994), the editor Heliodor Muszyński admitted that the texts included therein “refer to the vast repertoire of issues related to one of the most vital problems faced by the educational system: the problem of preparing teachers to work in the new schools under new conditions, for the benefit of the new, emerging society” (H. Muszyński, Editorial, 1994, p. 5).

Quoting O. Anweiler (1991), Muszyński listed the main “directions of transformations that need to take place in socialist countries so as to build fully democratic societies there” (H. Muszyński, Editorial, 1994, p. 7). These included: “from a centrally controlled society towards a decentralized one, ... from a society based on centralization towards one based on participation”, as well as other important changes (O. Anweiler, 1991). It was argued that this level of democracy cannot be achieved “without good education ... and without a ‘new’ teacher” (H. Muszyński, Editorial, 1994, Vol. LX, p. 8).

Another change is also clearly visible. There is no caesura to mark it, but this change has occurred recently. It results from Polish scholars tackling subjects that have broad, global applications. Thus, in addition to volumes focusing on specific areas, some have referred to more universal topics, especially after the accession to the European Union in the year 2004, e.g., volume LXX, 2017, titled *Wokół wyzwań pedagogicznych* [Around Pedagogical Challenges] (ed. Zenon Gajdzica).

Changes in the biography of the journal were also evidenced by other examples, unconnected with the topics under discussion. These include references to literature. In many texts from the early period, citations were limited to authors from other socialist countries. It must be stressed here that access to so-called Western literature was difficult, and referring to sources other than those accepted by the authorities was impossible. However, even in that period (though more often in the 1970s and 1980s), many authors managed to avoid this kind of narrative. Some of them, for example, referred to classical philosophers. Others presented the results of their own studies, analysing them against secondary data. Some analyses were also based on historical facts, using the available sources.

Texts related to the authors' international experience gradually began to emerge. For example, as early as in 1963, in volume X titled *Środowisko i wychowanie. Zbiór rozpraw z pedagogiki społecznej* [Environment and Education. A Collection of Studies on Social Pedagogy], the first references to Western literature appeared, the volume editor, Ryszard Wroczyński, having taken part in the Pedagogical Congress in Oslo in 1961.

These once unusual practices have recently become commonplace for Polish researchers. The studies they now undertake, both in the country and abroad, are closely related to current fields of interests. The issues raised in 'Pedagogical city' (Miasto pedagogiczne, ed. Maria Mendel, 2016) or 'Childhood and early education: controversy, issue and prospection' (Dzieciństwo i wczesna edukacja: kontrowersje, problemy i poszukiwania, eds. Dorota Klus-Stańska, Grażyna Szyling, 2015) serve as perfect examples of this phenomenon.

These areas of change are obviously only selective. Yet, even the ones mentioned above show how diverse the journal has been in many aspects. During all its years of existence, it has included a vast range of thoughts and viewpoints, but above all, it is proof of the development of pedagogy in Poland. The past years have been a time of individual stories in each volume as well as a common, comprehensive image of the journal. The discussed areas of theory and practice included in the journal are just a modest proof of the multiplicity of issues tackled in it. Their value, and the importance of the journal, is undeniable, especially in that the authors of many texts were great representatives of the scientific world, such as Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Stefan Szuman, Maria Grzegorzewska, Bogdan Nawroczyński, Maria Przetacznikowa, Wincenty Okoń, Jan Konopnicki, Czesław Kupisiewicz, Ignacy Sza-

niawski, Irena Wojnar, Aleksander Kamiński, and Lucjan Turowski. "Studia Pedagogiczne" was also the first journal to publish texts by outstanding contemporary educational specialists, e.g., Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, Tadeusz Pilch, Wiesław Theiss, Bogusław Śliwerski, Maria Dudzikowa, Henryka Kwiatkowska, and many others.

The journal has been affected by all of the metamorphoses and turbulences that have occurred in Europe. It has specifically reflected transformations in the areas of education, childcare, changing ideas about pedagogy, institutional patterns and ideas. It is a document of the times in which it has been published, providing material of great cognitive value. It may be a system of reference for axiological analyses, with consideration of determinants typical of the period. It has produced an inspiring and influential canon of theoretical and research capital, which I strongly believe will continue to be added to.