

Part III

COMMUNITY BONDS AND INSTITUTIONS

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COMMUNITY TIES AND EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION OF SCHOOL

The diversity of relationships between people and different levels at which the links between them operate leads sociologists to search not only for formal (structural) similarities within their framework. Let's think in this article whether we can find features in common between the family and the school - two social structures playing a key role in socio-educational process. Does the fact that they both share the same aim bring them together? A family, providing that it functions as a community, is a home for its members. Does the "school" also contain the elements found within the "home-community"? Does it allow the possibility of realizing the manifold needs? Does it stimulate satisfying social contacts? Does it create an appropriate framework for activities especially for the realization of its educational function?

If we want to answer these questions we should first consider the term "home-community" trying to find its general sociological meaning and then search for common features of home and school.

The results of empirical investigations show that the term "home" most often connotes "family life" which is still one of the most highly valued social groupings. The world - wide existence of family ties promotes home as the object of man's desires, highly esteemed in almost all types of societies.

Nowadays we can observe the changes in meaning of, and em-

phasis upon, the different elements which comprise family life. The most important of these are the various needs of its individual members, which govern the workings of the family. Equipped with material goods and the opportunity for action the family becomes the vehicle for the fulfilment principally of the psychological needs of its members for such things as security, emotional understanding, affiliation and the free expression of the ego.

A second meaning of the term "home" refers to its physical dimension. The differences in connotation referred to here are evident in the use of two terms in English "home" and "house" and also in German "heim" and "haus" (a differentiation which is not present in Polish). These different connotations are, however, only partly separable. The home as a physical structure constitutes the framework for family life. In this respect the formal and concrete aspects of the family as an institution become important. Thus the term, in its narrow sense, indicates a lodging place and its standards and, in its wider: the material status of a family in terms of such things as household possessions, clothing, food and other items.

The complexity and diversity of the elements which go to create a "home" make it difficult to define this term precisely and explicitly. In this article we have assumed that the members of a family will use the term "home" from a shared acceptance of the social ties and organisational features it presupposes [Trawińska, 1977].

Thus a home is a social group or institution in which the existent human relationships emotionally satisfy its members, where their needs are both generated and met, and where a variety of different activities or operations take place. Therefore it is apparent that the home has both a physical and a spiritual side and should not be considered exclusively in terms of its ideological and non-material significance following S. Ossowski who defined it as: a correlation of psychological attitudes which together constitute the culture heritage [Ossowski, 1967]. According to his definition, the term "home" refers only to common feelings, ideas and values, inherited throughout the

course of history, and to the psychological links binding members of one community.

It seems likely that phrases such as: "we are really ourselves at home", "this is our own space", "we create reality and ourselves", "we are open", we feel secure arise, on the one hand from the internalization of rules and values and a strong identification with them, and, on the other, from the material conditions experienced by the group or institution. Thus the term "home" signifies something of valuable, manifold, and diverse social content. The material and structural elements external to the individual are bound up with his own desires and self-expression. Actions promoted by a shared experience of certain material conditions are interwoven with spontaneous and emotional reactions arising from personal interaction.

It is difficult to answer the question about common features of school and "community-home" in sociological sense since the term "school" is a generalized abstraction. It is a general term covering schools of different types and levels both now and in times past. Hence, using the term "school" we employ a sort of notional abbreviation. In our considerations school denotes a group or institution, which in addition to the family constitutes a basic and large component of young persons social sphere. Its characteristics are important for us in respect of the role it plays in the process of socialization, and also from the point of view of the teacher attempting to fulfil his professional goal (that is of passing on knowledge).

One of the fundamental features of "the home" in its sociological sense is the bond which joins its members. This bond is present both in a family and at school. It is created and strengthened through everyday contacts and direct encounters. This "bond" is manifested by an individual's awareness of unity, that is of having something in common with other individuals and of distinction that is by being somehow apart from other groups. As human relations are based on face-to-face contacts the mechanisms of social control operates both in the family and at school, and therefore in both cases it is difficult to isolate oneself or become anonymous. The domination of physical and formal

ties in a family or school as well as a system of dependences between individuals allow the two groups to lose the features of a "home-community" and acquire the characteristics of an "institution-association".

If we assume that another property of the home is common life then a community tie will be characteristic of those groups with a widespread influence in the lives of their members. Associations on the other hand bring their members together only in certain spheres of their activity [R y b i c k i, 1979]. The opposition of communities and associations in respect of group life is not an arbitrary one, and therefore particular types of families and schools can be placed at different points on the scale. For example a school, which as result of definite aims, joins teachers and pupils only in some fields of their social activity and engages only a part of their personality will be an "association" or even only a "one-tie group". Following the model of J. H. Pestalozzi and J. F. Herbert the introduction of a larger range of interests which go beyond the framework of the traditional roles of teacher and pupil changes a "school-association" into a community.

In today's world we observe the opposite tendency i.e. a shift in the organization of social life from communities to associations. This process taking place in many groups including schools does not concern the family which primarily constitutes a community. Although its influence does not extend to all aspects of the life of its members, it is still based on personal ties, and not on physical goods.

The effectiveness of a school in the realm of education is directly dependent upon the presence of "community-type" bonds which join one individual to another. The weakening of personal ties and a regard for the individual render educational processes less effective. The more, a school loses its features of a home-community, the less effective in the process of education it is.

If we examine past and present forms of the school we will observe that it is a "home-community" for pupils and teachers only when its main goal resulting from macrostructural dependences i.e. its rules aims or values imposed upon it from outside by

superior groups (such as the Government) is the training of the character of its pupils. School-communities separate children and young people from a family group and train them to be a member of a non-family group; a class, caste, country or nation. They neither continue nor complete the familial education, they totally negate it. The school will have an active influence in most of the fields of action and almost the whole personality of teachers and pupils. They are communities concerned with "living" and not only a place for teaching and learning. Even though the tie between teachers and pupils is not a natural one originating from birth or of the character of an association based on free choice but is rather imposed containing the element of pressure, it does not determine the character of the "school-community". If formal and physical elements dominate, a school changes into an institution degrading the personality. If it becomes a social group of teachers and young people then it effectively trains the personality, preparing pupils for their future roles in society according to the demands of superior groups on whose behalf they act. "A school-community" (of which Makarenko's communes are the best example) consciously uses the group as an educational tool contrary to a family community which plays an important educational role but in the larger process of socialization. "A school-association" described by J. Chałasiński [1969] as a "techno-teaching" one has a different social context. It is a specialized group focusing its interests exclusively on the teaching of definite skills. It engages only part of the personality of pupils and teachers and (placed beside the family) plays only a subsidiary and complementary role in the process of youth education. In the case of rural societies it strengthens the ties with family and local inhabitants and in the case of urban societies- with the state. It prepares an individual for a ready-made place in the society outside the school gate [Chałasiński, 1969]. Its graduates are given social roles strictly dependent on the type of school and the period of attendance. Thus such a group mainly functions as a stabilizer of social order (in support of the status quo) i.e. it rather reproduces the existing structures than changes them.

Current socio-educational practices show a decrease in the

effectiveness of school education although the period of learning becomes longer and longer. As a result young people are not well-adopted to life in society, showing a resistance towards accepting existing social relations and principles of coexistence. [Adamski, 1976]. This is why the latest criticism of school referring to the "school crisis" concentrates on fulfilment of the school's academic function. Didactics clearly takes precedence over the school's caring and socializing functions. Education is bound up in red tape. The realization of the educational function is neither promoted by the working conditions nor by the training of teachers, nor by the selection of teachers, often referred to as a "negative-selection". Large contemporary schools (usually with a few hundred pupils) where after a year specialist-teachers most often do not remember the names of their pupils, can be compared to plants producing mass standardized personalities equipped with a similar range of skills and knowledge. A school like that as the basic social milieu of young people according to many pedagogues rather creates problems than solves them [Youth, Transmission to Adulthood, 1978]. A secondary, unintentional effect of the large bureaucratic school is the growing influence of youth culture on socialization processes. Grouping a large number of pupils divided into age-dependent classes facilitates the formation of a quite separate world for young people. Simultaneously growing specialization in teaching (subject division) weakens the influence and control of teachers. Pupils will work effectively and obey the rules teachers impose on them providing their group codes call for the same behaviour. Hence, it is especially important today, when the invasion of youth culture can be observed at schools, to create an educational system interesting for the pupils, and group rules which support school's education. One of the symptoms of crisis of contemporary school is a growing reluctance of children and young people to this institution. The causes of the crisis lie, among other things, in changes of cultural superstructure of modern societies i.e. mainly in the principles of evaluating the relation between individual and society. In traditional societies norms of obligation and subordination of individuals to group were generally obeyed. These norms were also

universally accepted in case of school and compulsory school attendance.

Nowadays it is emotional identity and not sense of duty which is highly valued. Therefore obligatory school attendance is felt as a pressure. This inadequacy between the character of contemporary school and social expectations implies once more the need of searching new, institutional form of school. New ideas and new social contents must result in creation of new institutions. Modification of the past structures brings only partial or no results.

Therefore the idea of more natural forms of education copying family patterns and enabling the formation of communities within schools, are still much alive in pedagogics. Originated by Cecil Reddie and taken up in England by Neill, Curre and Dora Russel and in Germany by H. Lietz, Wyneken and Geheeb, this idea is still current.

Those changes which have turned today's school into a highly formal and bureaucratic institution dominated by the "mania of assessment are also illustrated by the altered role and function of a teacher [Attleslander, 1971]. It is known that the methodes of fulfilling a role that is behaviour imposed on individuals by the institution they work for, depend among other things on the nature and character of the institution and on the possibilities and means the institutions provide for its members [Bucher, Sterling, 1977; Berger, Luckman, 1967]. It is usually knowledge not education in its broad sociological sense that determines the essential function of today's school as well as actions and role of a teacher. First of all the theoretical and actual model of a teacher (confirmed by the research data) stresses the preeminence knowledge and methodical skills. The role of a teacher is more and more restricted to the transferring of knowledge. The teacher is mainly the object of didactics and the pupils - its subject. The lack of structural balance in the school that is in the interaction of the two parties-teacher and pupil often means that the realization of the school's highest goals, that is education in its widest sense of its members is often limited to the dry acquaintance of knowledge. The relations teacher-pupil are do-

minated by techno-intellectual activities connected with the realization of didactic and not educational aims. The pupils intellectual development seems more important than his emotional one. Knowledge, however, does not necessarily mean virtue, and passing on facts does not mean that school has succeeded i.e. has truly prepared the younger generation for their life outside school life. The teacher's inherent motivation to work derived from his realization of the possibility of building a child's character according to a socially accepted model is very rarely found.

Even if it is present, it cannot be given on entirely free rein because of the structural features of a school, its methods of operation and so on. The teaching profession seems attractive for those within it (according to our investigations) because it consists of a small number of hours working directly with young people and much additional free time in the form of holidays, at Christmas, Easter and during the summer. This extrinsic motivation for action limited by orders and control in the case of teachers, and compulsory attendance in the case of pupils, additionally limits the possibility of school existing as a home in the sociological sense.

Pupils and teachers are not united through participation in the same institution (that is the school) and by common goals. School education, induced by social requirements is often restricted to formal-administrative actions. Young people adapt themselves to the outside regime imposed by the school or teacher and are even sometimes said to be "well-behaved". This, however, gives rise to a double morality in the pupils a quite different pattern of behaviour and values at school from that outside it. The realization of individual and group aim through common actions of the group members certainly leads to the formation of those ties at school which R. K. M e r t o n [1982] has called organizationally induced ties. The ties created at school do not link the two basic parties in the school structure-teachers and pupils-but operate only within the structures themselves.

We shall now try to summarize our considerations. The question of whether today's school can function as a home for teach-

ers and pupils i.e. make them "feel free" and "in their own space" must be answered with the negative. More often than not a contemporary school is not the place where teachers and pupils feel good. The sphere in which they can feel free is confined to their interests for pupils its their voluntary participation in clubs, and other extra-curricular activities. Institutional pressure-reduced by various factors like a love for ones profession and the incentive contacts within age groups goes beyond everything else in placing the school far from "the home-community". To a greater and greater extend this pressure affects the authentic and spontaneous behaviours of teacher and pupils, and limits the number of needs which can be met within the school's framework.

Today's school neither liberates positive emotional motivation for the participation in it nor creates strong ties between teachers and pupils. The school population is divided according to the scheme: them and us. All through history school has always been a kind of association rarely a home-community. Shaped by external social forces and controlled by them, school is never able to become a home for its members. The movement which tried to make the school a kind of home-community did not gain strength and remained only experimental in its operations. Nevertheless a highly bureacratic school and its evolution towards being an association will have further negative consequences even in the realization of didactic aims. Already today's school is said to lack the general concept of education.

If school cannot possibly become "home-community" outright it is necessary to make it less formal. Its structural features must be changed so that the secondary socialization processes within its framework bring the incorporation of wilder educational activities into the work of teachers. Only then will the gap between the theoretical and actual functions of the school be narrowed.

The changes at school should be encouraged by outside social forces such as the state and the ministry of education and certainly this is not a matter of passing a new law but of continuous search for the optimum models of functioning for a school under existing social conditions. These conditions are defined

by the transformation of position and role of individual in social life, and it is there where today more than ever he looks for his emotional identity.

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#### WIĘZI WSPÓLNOTOWE I FUNKCJA WYCHOWAWCZA SZKOŁY

Artykuł podejmuje problem charakteru więzi tworzonych w szkole z punktu widzenia jej zadań wychowawczych i dydaktycznych. Szkoła stanowiąca obok domu - wspólnoty najważniejszą instytucję socjalizującą musi spełniać określone warunki, aby proces (socjalizacji) wychowania był zgodny z założonymi oczekiwaniami. Perspektywa historyczno-socjologiczna zastosowana w artykule pozwala postawić tezę, że warunkiem tym jest m. in. wspólnotowy cha-

rakter więzi funkcjonujących w szkole. Tymczasem szkoła współczesna przybiera coraz bardziej charakter zrzeszenia co ogranicza możliwość wypełniania zadań wychowawczych, a także dydaktycznych przez tę instytucję. Więzy występujące w szkole współczesnej mają w większości charakter rzeczowy a nauczyciele i uczniowie tworzą dość wyraźnie oddzielone zbiorowości połączone wewnętrznymi, rzadko krzyżującymi się więziami pozytywnymi. W rezultacie szkoła współczesna nie wyzwala pozytywnej, emocjonalnej motywacji do uczestnictwa w niej, coraz bardziej ogranicza sferę autentyczności i spontaniczności zachowań, ograniczając również sferę potrzeb, które mogą być w jej ramach zaspokajane.

Z tego punktu widzenia niezbędnym wydaje się przynajmniej częściowe odformalizowanie szkoły. Konsekwencją takich zmian strukturalnych byłoby poszerzenie ról nauczycielskich o funkcje wychowawcze i wzrost poczucia podmiotowości u uczniów.