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Modernisation in local communities: social and educational struggles (the perspective from Poland)

Abstract

The process of system transformation starting in the 90s and continuing its consequences since more than a decade directs to the functioning in the mentioned context of social actors with the specific scope of demands, related to their adaptation to the liberal and democratic reality. The demands are directed to the individuals as well as to the different institutions, among others to the educational ones. The process of adaptation to new social conditions and reaching more actual qualities, in the criteria of the highly advanced in specific aspects societies or communities, can take on the form of modernisation. In the paper there are analysed the characteristics of the actual social realities of pluralistic, liberal, democratic every-day conditions, their consequences for the spheres of the individuals' functioning and directions of the possibilities of utilizing the resolves implicated by the theory of modernisation in creating the educational and extra-educational reality.

Keywords: system transformation, postindustrialism, modernisation, local community, adaptation, education

In fact by the end of the 1990s Poland became capitalist democracy. Its economic and political freedom place it among the few success stories of post-communist transformation. Its main indicators (capital flows and foreign direct investment, banking, wage and price system and the whole economic regulation, political and civil rights) suggest that in terms of building market democracy Poland - with Hungary and Czech Republic - represent the maximum of success any former state socialist country could achieve in 1990s (Johnson, Holmes, Kirkpatrick, 1999; Groskovitz, Bohle, 2001, pp. 5-6).

Another questions could arise at this background connected with development ideologies, social order, social policy and/or historical analogies.

Does that mean, that to break through the barriers of stagnation we are able to ignite the imaginations of men and place their energy in the service of the new order?

In this paper we attempted to arouse the reader's interest in selected theories of modernisation. Familiarity of these theories is, in our opinion, particularly significant in the situation of formation of a new social and economic order. Comprehension of the subject-matter discussed here may be of assistance for the creator (educator) in taking certain steps, both within the school and extra-school educational environment that would contribute to the achievement of the goal intended, expected by the person taking up a project, in compliance with the ideology of modernisation, modification, or an innovative educational system implemented, assumed at the beginning.

The sub-division has been prepared with the view to the psycho-social dimension of the social formation transformation process, taking place in Poland. Commonly recognized are the inevitable conflicts, tensions and animosities of the transformation period. They directly influence the feelings of various individuals and social groups. Too many people currently have a sense of social, economic, or political degradation. Many representatives of various groups experience a feeling of being lost in this world of new rules of conduct. Many cannot understand the meaning of current standards or currently promoted values. Analysts of the post-communist society often indicate two groups defined as "winners" and "losers" of transformation, these two patterns implicate existence of different social interests as well as representation of different attitudes toward the state of transformation and connected with it transgression into the free-market economy (M a r o d y, 2002, p. 252). As sociological analysis indicates, the rules of social advance become in Poland more and more adopted to the rules of meritocracy (Wang, 2002, pp. 57-77). The idea of requisition of power and the clash with elitist concept of the school and education tasks become an open debate with more economic considerations concerning the amount of resources that a society can use to improve the conditions of the underprivileged through education.

It is worth starting by recalling the authoritative opinion by Professor Tadeusz Lewowicki, the author of many widely known works, who has been for many years promoting the introduction of the "new educational ideology" in our country. The adoption (or enforcement), in his opinion, of a given ideology, leads to certain manners of bearing that change the educational system (or at least aimed at its change).

New ideologies, possibly competing with, opposing to, or alternative with regard to those prevailing currently, favor changes radical and comprehensive in their nature. As far as an educational policy is concerned, this points to shaping new principles of such a policy, while the ideological political messages are most distinctively addressed at the sphere of the goals and tasks of the educational system, or a kind of educational philosophy. This requires an ideological re-orientation of the teachers (L e w o w i c k i, 1994; Bielska, 2001, **pp.38-44**).

That modernisation of various areas of the domestic educational system should become the subject of a particular interest of pedagogical sciences nowadays, seems an obvious question. The notion of modernisation itself, interpreted in a wide analytical context, is a notion relatively newly introduced in the domestic pedagogical subject literature (Radziewicz-Winnicki, 1995; Puślecki, 1993). It was much earlier introduced in scientific literature in Poland by sociologists and political scientists who recognised that in spite of numerous controversial interpretations, as well as an ambiguity of the notion itself, its usefulness for the analyses of the course of dynamics of the social change is doubtless (Szczepański, 1993, pp. 13-30; Szczepański, Rosół, 1993; Wróbel, 1995,pp. 9-39).

Questions like the modernisation of school and extra-school educational environments, modernised community, modern society, modernisation of educational areas, etc., should be given much space by the contemporary Polish pedagogy

We believe that the term "education" itself requires some rectifying for the purpose of the analyses we conduct. In its basic sense, the notion should be generally understood to mean the work of preparing children, youths and adults for an active participation in the process of change taking place, frequently unclear as to their direction and often unforeseen and startling for one.

The world's first serious research into the social system of modernisation processes was conducted in the 'forties and 'fifties of the past Century. The development of the modernisation theory, in spite of a multitude of interpretations, the controversial nature of the axiological criteria employed, the different theories of cognition and methodological orientations has been recognised by world science as one of the more original and particularly proliferous ones, in view of the implications for the theory of cognition of the discussions of the social change processes. This state of things was significantly influenced by the lack of other constructive theoretical concepts concerned with the changes taking place and tackling with them from a similarly wide historical perspective. Within the framework of the theory discussed, it has become feasible to generally describe and explain a model pertaining to

both the historical and contemporary cases of the dynamics of development of a given state, society, region, local community, etc. (Wróbel, 1995, p. 9). The term "modernisation" itself means simply "rendering more modern". It is frequently substituted with other terms, such as "modification", meaning, in turn, a change, sample, improvement, alteration, transformation, variation, or a given variant. In its simplest meaning this is a replacement of old objects and the ways of operation with other new ones. In its slightly different meaning of the interpretation possible, modernisation becomes a notion clearly valuating the actions taken and the state of things prevailing, leading towards modernity, progress, or are connected with some novel idea and progress. The difficulties existing in a precise use of this notion are, probably, the result of the fact that it sometimes is, in one perspective, used for the description of an empirical reality, while in another it is very frequently utilised for interpreting this very reality in a certain narrow and specifically directed manner (Szatkowska, 1985, pp. 80-81). While in the common social opinion the notion of modernisation means all forms of modernisation of technology, of the way of life, social organisation, as well as art and/or manufacture, in scientific processes, the notion analysed is given a different content, and a very varied one at that.

M.J. Levy, for instance, assumes that modernisation is a phenomenon (a process) which may take place in a given society with a larger or smaller intensity. The degree of advancement of the modernisation processes is the larger in the production process basing on the machine (inanimate) forces, literally speaking, basing on the non-biological forces, with respect to strictly biological (animate) ones, i.e., those human and animal, and the more the tools used by people in this process contribute to the multiplication of the production results, the more we can speak of the introduction of a higher degree of the modernisation process. Based on the above criteria Levy puts certain societies and nations (elected by himself) in different sections of the proposed general continuum of modernisation. It seems that in his adopted proposal Levy has ranked the various communities in a rather arbitrary manner, distinguishing those where modernisation is very advanced and those that have been subjected to the modernisation processes to a merely slight degree ("relatively modernised and relatively non-modernised societies") (Levy, 1966; Chodak, Kleer, 1967, p. 35; Giddens, 1990, p. 176).

For R. Bendix, modernisation is primarily connected with social changes, taking place mainly in the countries of Western civilisation. Modernisation always consists in the changes taking place within the economics and social structure of the given country. The internal changes were the consequence of a general international situation, as well as of a striving for equating the developmental level with that of a model country. In all the modernisation

processes, in the opinion of this distinguished scholar, the state plays a particular role, centrally taking a number of initiatives, stimulating development of the processes described. Obviously, a number of differences emerge as far as using different methods, as well as the very areas of particular interest to the central authorities. The larger the distance between the developmental condition of the model and the follower-countries, the larger the role to be played by the state in intense planning of these processes. In view of the expansion of means of communications, general (scientific) education of an individual acquires a particular significance within the modernisation processes, more easily acceptable as a modernisation means than, for instance, obtaining capital necessary for its undertaking. Therefore, the countries presently taking up intensified steps towards modernisation strive to first of all overcome their retardation, and achieve equalisation with the model countries via a development of education (Bendix, 1967).

One can also assume that modernisation as seen from the perspective mentioned above signifies a process of constant perfecting ("improvement") of the already achieved level of development of the society, the country, or a certain domain of life so as to reach a more perfect and more modern condition, frequently to a condition already achieved before by other societies. Thus, modernisation is an automatic developmental evolution, frequent adoption of foreign models, a striving for equalling one's development with the highest and the most modern achievements in a given field. Modernisation processes develop via the spread of innovations which are the creation of a given society, or else are adapted (assimilated) to its own needs, being at first a borrowed element or a product of another community. Modernisation, thus, may be boiled down to processes termed by social anthropologists as "acculturation".

Any modernisation is the result of either an individual striving towards an improvement of general conditions of existence of a given community, or the result of a social recognition of the need of implementation, i.e., diffusion of innovations, with the view of the good of the group as a whole (Bertrand, Wierzbicki, 1970, p. 314). The processes and phenomena of the modernisation changes may encompass different spheres of life, e.g., economic, social organisation, culture, education, political systems, etc. Evaluating the contribution of various scientific disciplines and analysing different directions of research on innovation diffusion one can say that cultural anthropology threw light on the problem of social groups as the subject of any kind of novelty, as well as to inter-group contacts rather than intra-group contacts. A significant similarity with the sphere and method of modernisation exists.

Z. Bauman, while discussing institutions of any society, distinguished those that serve the continuation of the order existing and those that serve

the adaptation of the society to constantly evolving living conditions. In each society institutions ("mechanisms") of both the former and the latter type must exist. Each developmental society differs from traditional societies in that it is more innovativeness-oriented than is oriented to the tradition. Social relations are in such cases regulated more by the mechanism of modification than, as is the case with traditional societies and cultures, by mechanisms of conservation of the existing order (these more stable). It is worth noting that society is usually ready to accept changes in the field of technology (manufacture), production, especially accepting ready products (fruits) of foreign culture, as well as innovation favourable to a more effective functioning of various social structures, but only those that do not require a change of the currently prevailing system of values (Bauman, 1964, pp. 66-67).

Important works systematically presenting knowledge in the field discussed began to appear by the end of the 'sixties. They were a consequence of a relatively common conviction, mainly among the non-marxist theoreticians, that modernisation processes constitute the basic form of acculturation in the contemporary world, and that they signify inclusion in the international economic, political, educational, etc., systems, of many different, primitive and frequently archaic civilisations. In the opinion of many, the states included in and conventionally termed as the Third World, should reform their own political systems and inevitably rationalise their social organisation, emancipating it from the traditional culture. As the result of these propaganda activities was to be, in the opinion of the theoreticians and promoters of modernisation, a relative well-being, automatic economic growth and a fuller sovereignty. The model for the activities to undertake was to be found in the well-off and well-developed countries of the European cultural zone, North America and Australia. The majority of researchers began to create visions (models) of traditional society in opposition to a completely different (new) form of a modern society, the ideal one. Based on the analysis of theoretical works of, among others, W. Moore, L.W. Pye, N.S. Einstadt, D. Apter, D.N. Smith, K. Zagórski and other authors, phenomena and processes, as well as typical reactions within various social structures, composing the general picture of a traditional society may be presented (Wróbel, 1995, p. 15). Such a model in its attractive and well-developed form was presented by the previously quoted author, S. Wróbel, a political scientist. Quoted below is an excerpt from a description of the traditional society, prepared by this author. As far as economics is concerned, such a community is characterised by a prevalence of agriculture within the general picture of social life. It is based on groups, frequently tribal forms of control over land, slowly and only gradually substituted by private ownership. Service and small business sectors are secondary. Also, the level of development

of the market mechanisms within the social structure sphere is low. A high degree of internal cohesion commonly prevails, as opposed to a small number of specialities existing within the framework of various social roles played by the members of a given community. A hierarchy within the social positional system prevails. The role of the traditional authorities seems specially important. Social mobility has been limited to inter-generational exchange. Domination of ethnic tribal structures and the prevalence of family ties are characteristic of the comprehensive picture of the structure discussed. Significant divisions within the global structure exist. A low level of social mobility is observed. The amount of Intelligentsia, Bourgeoisie, Middle Classes, as well as industrial workers within the social structure as a whole, are insignificant. Among the members of such a community direct ties dominate. As far as culture is concerned, a traditional way of life is observed. A prevalence of cultural models based on religious systems leads to a rigidity (as well as partiality) of functioning of values and standards current in the society. (Frequently found in studies are terms like "provincial, country, parish", etc., to describe various phenomena observed.) As far as the system of educational background of the members of the community described is concerned, a high degree of illiteracy is notable, usually accompanied by an extremely low degree of the educational infrastructure, as well as a very small number of teachers. Educational background exceeding primary education is, usually, in a society like this of an exclusive nature. A village is, as far as living locations are concerned, a dominant living unit, hence a prevalence of inhabitants of rural areas over those living in towns is observed. Incomparably low levels of concentration of the number of inhabitants in town makes towns centres significant for the authorities. As far as mass communication is concerned, a low level of its development is notable. The flow of information, as a result of a limited number of information channels available, is in compliance with the divisions within the social structure. The transfer of information itself is usually accompanied with strong emotional factors.

As far as the spheres of individual personalities are concerned, they are marked by faith, religion, traditionalism, etc., particularism, individualism, as well as distinguished by a set of mechanisms forming the so-called "closed" type of personality. The elements described make impossible, or at least extremely difficult, the diffusion of any innovations, internalisation of new and/or different values, etc. What is relatively frequently observed is a low level of the need of achievement, empathy and wide life aspirations, dominance of a tendency to an irrational and simplified perception of the reality around one. Frequently manifested is a belief in an inevitability of fate, loss and of the course of events (fatalism). Particularly significant seems the influence of tradition and the autobiographical experience of an individual upon current attitudes and

conduct. As far as politics is concerned, power is most frequently legitimised by tradition or a charisma of power. The scope of recruitment of candidates for playing political roles is always narrow, and sometimes it has a strictly clan-oriented nature. Also low is the level of institutionalised political life, while on the other hand the political role of the state administration and the army becomes very important. Observed are sacralisation, symbolisation and the ceremonial nature of the political life.

Assuming the criteria presented above to be the reference group for all analyses conducted, one has to clearly emphasise that the researcher (generally) faces a social structure that would be a full exemplification of the model (pattern) described above. Part of the components (properties) described and typical of traditional societies, although was found in the world in their fully developed and described above form, but others include the components presented in an incomplete, frequently residual, form. In many cases modernised transformations have been started by both social forces and newly established institutional bodies (organisations, associations, etc.). They, in turn, led to an adaptation of external models - at an early stage - in order to continue the developmental program, characterised primarily by the introduction of change mechanisms different from those characteristic of a traditional society.

The notion discussed is a certain abstract construction, composed of various values and models, individually preferred by the researcher, and in his own (autonomous) proposals forming a certain model of modernity. Thus, it takes on a sense of a vaulting notion, used on the level of normative considerations. The notion discussed becomes sometimes just a propaganda noise, a realisation program, an ideal type of a generally denned modernity. Such a semantic form has a strong ideological tone to it. The overlapping of various semantic strata of the notion of "modernisation" constitutes the source of uninterrupted discussions, but also frequently of controversy.

Many researchers believe that in Poland elements of a traditional system may still be found in many cases.

In post-industrial societies economic branches creating various services dominate, as well as certain cultural symbols. A decisive percentage of inhabitants represent non-agricultural professions. Productivity level is high, as well as the flexibility of economic systems as far as any inventions are concerned. A mobility of economic roles becomes a characteristic alteration. Domination of private property obviously prevails, as well as usually a uniform level of economic development of various regions of a given country. The professional structure is dominated by a constantly increasing category of white-collar jobs, with groups of highly qualified experts and intellectuals growing in numbers, simultaneously gaining a certain significance for the

social cultural development of the existing system. In a modern post-industrial society class/stratum structures dominate, ties based on real relations prevail. Within the sphere of culture modern models of the way and manner of life are found. One can speak of a universalism and pragmatism as of the philosophical social systems (attitudes) represented by the majority of the society. The process of modification of local environments, education included, becomes a constant and permanent phenomenon. It is conducted in compliance with the principles of universality, flexibility and continuity. The system of university education and research institutes is well-developed (Bielska, 2001). Science is a stimulating factor for economic growth and social, cultural, consciousness, etc. transformations. The level of education of people is very high, exceeding the current and temporary needs of the economy. Education to a degree larger than ever becomes an autothelical goal of human activity, to a lesser degree linked with the instrumental function an individual plays within industrial society. Egalitarisation of educational systems is observed in education, concerning, among others, an ample access to manifold forms of education, as well as to a high level of education, satisfactory for people (as well as the conditions accompanying the course of education themselves). Economic markets play a much less significant role than is the case with the traditional society, in favor of an increased share of social policy and regulatory function of state administration. Direct material consumption begins to loosen its once basic meaning as a factor stimulating professional employment or individual business, in favor of an increased activity towards supplying one's material needs (Zagórski, 1985, pp. 27-42). This is an obvious result of modernisation processes construed as a chain of changes of a traditional society, conditioned with the type of technology and economic and social organisation, characteristic of industrial civilisation. The role of an external environment in the constituting of local communities increases. Natural environment, in connection with the urban structure created, forms the basis for the establishment of a sense of cultural community within a certain area, hence, the role of social control, operating within a given environment increases. The type of society described is characterised with a significant prevalence of inhabitants of urban areas.

As far as mass communication is concerned, a system of mass information is developed, at the central as well as the regional and local levels. As far as personality is concerned, in most cases individualism is observed, based on the mechanisms of social life, combined, however, with a capability of collective collaboration. The structure of personality is definitely "open", with an obvious flexibility as to any innovations. Also, the level of life aspirations is high. As far as political life is concerned, proper legitimisation of power exists with the prevalence of mass social participation models, an extensive range of

recruitment of candidates for the fulfillment of various social rules. Also high is the level of political life, the obviously constituted division of power within the state, the operation of competent and qualified civilisation services (Wróbel, 1995, pp. 37-38).

Modernisation theoreticians already long ago learned about the significance of another revolution, the information revolution, for the processes of intense social development. Special modernisation cycles have even been elaborated for the various periods of changes taking place. For instance, until the end of the 'seventies, usually the following four-stage modernisation cycle was assumed, also constituting an important criterion of the division adopted: traditional (pre-industrial) societies; semi-modernised (partially traditional and partially industrial) societies; modern (industrial) societies; industrial (post-industrial) societies.

Within this latter area in subject literature another term may be found, namely, "computer society". The notion quoted is treated by many authors as a completely new and different stage of development within the evolution of the post-industrial society taking place. Simultaneously, theoreticians maintain that this stage of development as described has been attained by merely a few countries. And so, the modernisation cycle, modified in the 'eighties, may be substituted, in the opinion of sociologist M.S. Szczepański, with phases taking place in five consecutive developmental stages: a pre-industrial (traditional) society; a partially industrialised (semi-modern) society; an industrial (modern) society; an industrial (post-modern) society; a computer (industrial) society (Buchner-Jeziorska, 1993, p. 35).

A brief review proves that the theory and concepts of modernisation were formulated within various theoretical orientations. According to the course of analysis we adopted, a cursory summary may be proposed. A social change is primarily a change of prevailing system of values. It is also a change encompassing the prevailing typical ethical orientations and preferences. Any social change directly and indirectly influences the social sciences concerning education and primarily the practice of educational activities.

Irrational behaviours of individuals, obviously being the effect of the socialisation processes of the past period, frequently result in emotional activities taking place that are void of any logic as far as anticipation and prediction of consequences possible as the result of a certain behaviour of an individual concerned, or as far as taking up by the individual (a group) of determined solutions. In this context, three years after the introduction of significant changes to the economic system, an analysis of the social system from the point of view of the condition of **social modernisation** seems hard to be overestimated.

And for N.H. Friedland this is a necessary skill of a modern society, consisting of the passing to another stage of development and accepting new challenges. Any modernising society has to manifest its ability and aptitude to adjust to any changes (Friedland, 1969; Buchnę r-Jeziorska, 1993, p. 36; Szczepański, 1999, pp. 268-274).

Modernisation is a notion also found in psychology. In its psychological sense the notion means a transformation of the personality of an individual as a result of educational activities, participation in the social labour division, whilst simultaneously subordinating to the bureaucratised forms of social life. This process as seen from the perspective of acting as a psychologist (or a pedagogue) requires the taking up of definite modernisation activities within the area of properties of people in such a way as to make them its conscious participants and subjects, not merely objects of an influence, and not merely means of modernisation. The problem of modernisation appeared when it turned out that the adjustment of an individual to the new conditions is insufficient (or impossible) in a situation, when the changes took place too fast in one's surrounding, or when the prevailing *status quo* became impossible to maintain any longer. Thus, in building a strategy of modernisation we should take into consideration the facts, principles, human behavior and attitudinal prediction models, determined during the investigation of determined innovation situations, as well as the principles governing social development. The strategy of modernisation so construed would first of all take into consideration the kind of resources and operating means in favor of the development of attitudes and progress that people constitute in any collective activity.

The man, however, would be in each case treated not merely as a means, enabling the introduction of changes on a macro scale, but simultaneously as a subject posing certain goals before himself and efficiently achieving these goals. In view of the constantly increasing structural complexity of modern societies, a necessity of intensification of human capability of responding to the complexity of the environment also increases. Thus, modernisation on a social scale constitutes a good for an individual, when while ensuring him an autonomy of choices and actions, it leads to a transformation of personality. An accurate examination of the inter-relations of human development and the development of the world, however, requires empirical research and profound theoretical reflection (Rajtaczak, 1980, p. 289).

The above opinion complementing the integrative strategy of formation of contemporary educational environments within the process of modernisation is certainly commonly accepted and approved by pedagogues. In fact, a procedure of formation of the educational environment in the place of residence, learning, or employment of an individual has been included in it. Therefore, it is

worthwhile that the animators of the formation of educational environments pursue certain classic theories of modernisation. The social political reality Polish society has faced since 1989 constitutes for today's generations a new situation, not experienced previously, a situation when the structures of mutual links and social, economic and political mechanisms are in a process of formation. The rapid changes taking place resulted in a necessity of making sometimes radical changes in the way of thinking and comprehending the reality. The manners of functioning that had been shaped over a period of nearly half a century during the former system brought about certain habits and rules of thinking about a creation of reality. They are frequently useless today, having no developmental value in the new situation of our society. Very frequently, indeed, this leads to the fact that where new reality of the state functioning has come into being, a situation of chronic instability or even chaos ensues. Within the process of alteration of any system (particularly one so strongly stabilized as was that of the People's Poland), an unbalance in the functioning of the various structures is a natural phenomenon. Yet equally natural is the expectation that developmental tendencies should point to stabilisation. Nowadays the society of Poland already has a couple of years of experience of an uninterruptedly dynamically evolving political, economic and social situation. An aggressive rivalry concerning power and domination within various spheres of social life, an unsettled situation of the domestic economy, the accompanying lack of local initiatives towards finding compromise solutions, as well as other questions connected with our present, result in a sense of chaos and instability. More and more clearly Polish society manifests already the need of balancing its own existence. People are more and more troubled by the prolonged period of constant changes, political combats, controversies over the priorities of values, lack of stability. More and more frequently the attention in an average Polish home is diverted from common social questions and interests. Out of a necessity in the current situation people today concentrate rather around their own individual everyday problems. This is primarily linked with the more and more clearly manifest living difficulties.

Economic transformation has resulted in a seriously disproportionate distribution of goods. Effects of this fact can be clearly seen in the deficits of realisation of needs of the society. This is true of very many levels of social functioning.

Economic evolution in our country has significantly modified and differentiated models of style of life. More and more apparent becomes the contrast between all-increasing (and reaching extreme forms) poverty on the one hand, and the notable wealth of the new rich men on the other. National budget difficulties have a strong impact on investment preferences and

changes with respect to various institutions, economic spheres and forms of functioning of the society. Contemporary society primarily operates based on the development of the social world values. We have in mind, here, a specific structure of interrelations between people. Within this structure a specific interdependence and an interchange between its components exist, and the subject of such an interchange are mutual benefits in the form of social world values. The benefits construed constitute a wider notion than that of the profit in the economic world. The contemporary society has already completed its industrial stage that had made its functioning dependent on the rhythm of industrial cycles, technology, goods distribution and demand. Thus, a human being is no longer a value merely supplementary for the system of a mighty technological-industrial-market machine; he should presently be the subject in thinking of the value of the society. Therefore, the intent of thinking has to focus around the interest of the social values world. The present-day society heads towards a harmony at the level of social exchange.

The need for a development of society is not limited merely to the achievement of favorable production-market proportions. In the way of the evolution of society from the industrial stage, a system based on organizing within the structure of inter-personal exchange comes into existence. Such a modernisation of the reality that aims at strengthening internal ties and the mutual supplementing of social elements, is of a communal nature. This should result in a modification of the consciousness of society, the structure of mutual ties and interdependent organizations, groups and individuals coming into existence, renders them more active with the view of maintaining a harmony and avoiding deficit. An absolute conviction of the necessity to maintain interpersonal exchange relationships appears in the consciousness of the society. The thinking about development is going to be the more effective, if it should focus around the values of social order. That is why in the consciousness of society the conviction should form concerning a responsibility to obtain and prefer primarily those values that are favorable for progress within these aspects of social development. By limiting thinking to merely differentiation of interests within an economic context, we are constituting only a symptom of regression and destruction. Tendencies towards the achievement of an absolute economic balance within the activities of a developing society are not decisive in the true sense of this process.

In the contemporary society whose functioning is based on inter-personal exchange, the different parties must take into consideration social results of this relationship, since mutual inter-linking of all components of the complete structure results in a shifting of the exchange effects onto other spheres of the structure, not connected with it directly. In Poland, the system of the inter-

relationship between the parties rendering the exchanges has not yet stabilized, indeed, the parties have not yet adopted a stable and obvious form. The still dynamic changes make the stabilisation of a uniform intention of thinking concerning the development and autonomy of the society impossible. Significant discrepancies in benefits gained and a general chaos bring about antagonisms of interest of the various groups. This results in a notable diversification of thinking intentions. They concern individual interests rather than a global benefit of society. In the current situation it is even hard to determine the global social benefit. Apart from elementary existential values, significant difficulties are observed in a uniform determination of a global developmental tendency. This is true primarily of such areas as culture, the political system, education, etc. (Mańka, Roter, 1997, pp. 39-40).

In the changing social contexts of transformation appears a problem of responsibility of chosen social objects directed to the sphere of education. Of the major science disciplines, perhaps none has devoted less of its resources to the study of education than political science. In contrast to sociologists and educators, whose investigations of education and social background have illuminated the relationship between class structure and schools, and economists, who have undertaken inquiries into the problems of schooling and the changing labour market, political scientists especially in Poland - have failed to produce in recent decades a serious body of research in the politics of education. However, we should remember that the political scientists' lack of interest in education may be attributed in part to their susceptibility to a myth that appears to scholars and politicians, that schools are not political institutions (Cohen, Lazerson, 1977, p. 367). The idea that education should be kept out of politics and politics out of schools now draws our attention to some unique features of Polish experiences after the Second World War. The academic study of educational policy-making has not been dominated in the Polish tradition.

In the contexts of modern western European capitalist society - directing all the preferences towards the rules of democracy, especially toward the egalitarianism and equality of access to participation in services offered by existing in the state institutions - specific importance is ascribed to the education. In the frames of society functioning in accordance to the rules of meritocracy, where social, occupational, economical status of individual in a great scope is adequate to the level of education appears an importance of ensuring an equal access to free education, which is anticipated as a mean of nivelation of the consequences of social reproduction - reproduction of the status of underprivilegemen (Radziewicz-Winnicki, Syrek, 2001, pp. 11-22; Radziewicz-Winnicki, Roter, 2001, p. 83). We also face the

challenge of improving the state of educational institutions, modernisation of curriculum, redefinitions of the role of pupil, teacher and the relation existing between these two actors of school every-day reality, opening the symbolically understood "doors" of schools for the interested in their functioning subjects especially for the pupils' parents, promoting the patterns of opening the schools on the cooperations with public and social institutions acting in the local community. School in modern industrial or post-industrial society faces a social postulate related to the forming in the educational process competence and patterns of mind-openness, flexibility, ability of cooperation, creativity, communicational competence, competence of using the information, analytical and synthetic thinking, competence of coping with the consequences of stress, abilities of acting in the situations of competitiveness (Seebauer, 2002). As was rightly observed by Prof. B. Mach, one presently faces an animated **education of capitalism**. According to the ideological statement, both the parents and the children should be more independent (self-controllable) today in promoting certain views, values, authorities and standards within the family educational constellation, as compared with the previous system. The quoted author proposed two basic questions: "Firstly, has the Polish society of the Post-Communist Capitalist era really become less authoritarian and more self-controllable (and thus, less conformist) in the values declared, than the Polish society of the socialist state time?, and secondly, how efficient, as compared to the previous period, is presently the inter-generational transmission of values within the self-control vs. conformity dimension, and the transmission of authoritarian attitudes?" (Mach, 1994, pp. 29-30). Although the results of Prof. Mach's research suggest many positive changes to have taken place within the authoritarianism problems studied, nonetheless, numerous facts indicating that for the young generation, the parental values have not ceased to constitute a strong correlate of alternative choices, can still be noted. These, primarily, concern a certain kind of authoritarianism and the evaluation of one's own social standing, as confronted with that of other individuals and social groups, especially when one's situation in his or her own opinion is viewed as the source of relative deprivation, instead of that of relative satisfaction (Radziewicz-Winnicki, Roter, 2001, p. 98). The process by which people attain high economic status in modern industrial or post-industrial societies is a complex one. In pre-industrial society (as we mentioned above Poland presents a few of factors classifying this country to traditional pre-industrial societies, however, most of them decide about its industrial character) inheritance or ascription of occupations and status were the norm. Capitalism and industrialism required a more effective utilisation of talent. Ideally jobs are to be allocated according to the match between competence and task. Formal education should be the

key instrument of such matching. Family status is an important predictor of economic status, for what goes on in families and relationship of families to the labour market, seems to translate into more schooling and success in the labour market even when schooling is accounted for (Taubman, 1995, p. 270; Radziewicz-Winnicki, Syrek, 2001, p. 15). Logically, improving the quality of schooling should have a positive impact on economic performance by improving the cognitive learning that goes in a given amount of the time in school.

There is no doubt that tradition thus conceived ceases to be the synonym of the entire amount of the educational and cultural element inherited from the past, or, less frequently, contents acquired through inter-group transmission. But then again, with the presence of a subjective element, tradition is assimilated, implemented or rejected when somebody cancels out any temporality of the structure. The "modernist" illusion of breaking away, discontinuity and change as the opposition to tradition is refuted in the approach entirely. As it turns out, it is the subjective element which plays the decisive part - the attitude of the bearers of culture to cultural form, evaluation of these forms as something particularly worth accepting (or even location of these forms in the realm of sacrum) (Kempny, 1996, pp. 10-11; Radziewicz-Winnicki, Roter, 2001, p. 98).

All modernisation theories constitute an extremely original perspective for the analysis of developmental processes, although usually they are void of a concrete, decision-based implementation program. Also, it is hard for isolated assumptions of the theoretical sphere to face up to the requirements of social development. Thus, without over-simplification that might lead to misconceptions concerning the possibility of transformation of the reality around us within a program of psychological-social (intentional) intervention, we present this text to representatives of sciences tackling with education (both theoreticians and practitioners declaring their will to modernise numerous educational areas of today's Poland). We also recommend getting interested with modernisation theories by those in power, competent representatives of the highly qualified civil services in our country, partly responsible for the formation and determination of social policy goals and fully responsible for their successful realisation. Expressing some moderate optimism as to the urgent question of cooperation of many parties, the following explanations may be quoted: the two groups (responsible for the creation of a new model of society) have been until now divided into: a lack of knowledge and a lack of interest in the values prized by the partners mutually offering various goods. The paper presented should, therefore, also facilitate orientation to the feasibility and necessity of such a cooperation. A familiarity with the theoretical knowledge

of the questions described briefly above may, too, contribute to a certain inter-personal valuation, constituting an important and indeed significant mechanism of equilibrium within social structures. For instance, in the psychology of personality, substantial space is devoted to the questions of self-evaluation and the factors determining its level, the influence of self-evaluation on one's aspirations during realisation of diverse tasks, fulfilling numerous roles, both within the process of learning and rendering various services, the role of self-evaluation for the perseverance of the human individual in face of various kinds of stresses, and in particular in conditions of intense social change. The taken up topic seems to be representative for our Polish collective memory and its democratisation as well as for the collective forgetting.

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