Title: Family - child - school : continuity and change of cultural transmission in the borderland environment

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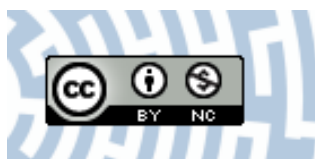
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Family – Child – School.
Continuity and Change of Cultural Transmission in the Borderland Environment*

Abstract

What has been outlined in this study are the achievements, problems and prospects of cultural transmission in family and school environments in the Polish-Czech borderland. Referring to the results of the studies conducted with the use of the panel method made it possible to focus on the issues of family and school in pedagogical intercultural studies, on the transmission of values in the contemporary Cieszyn family, as well as on the transmission of culture and educational knowledge in borderland school.

Kew words: *family, school, borderland, multi – and intercultural education, cultural transmission*

The development of pre-figurative cultures will depend on whether entering the dialogue with the young generation will be successfully attempted and whether this generation, capable of acting due to their will, can lead the older towards the unknown future. Only relying on the young, the older generation can get access to new experimental knowledge, without which no reasonable plans can be arranged. Only in the direct contact with the young generation, who make use of their source of knowledge on exclusive rights, we will be able to build a sensible future.

Margaret Mead

Introduction – borderland as the life space of family and school community

Both family and school communities, created by parents, children and teachers, are always situated in a particular time and space which in the social experience is neither universal nor abstract but given with 'the humanistic factor' (Hałas, 1998, pp. 35–36). Referring to the currently developing research orientation called humanistic geography enables not only analyzing and describing cultural artifacts in space (by mapping them), but first of all specifying the ways in which individuals experience and at the same time valorize the space given to them, which in this way acquires symbolic meaning (Bukowska-Floreńska, 2001, pp. 65–80; Ostrowska, 1991). Family home and school become such spaces (both individual and common) for parents, teachers and the child. Through the values experienced, accepted and implemented in these spaces, children shape their identity and enter particular relations with other members of the community.

The location of family home and school in culturally differentiated environments, such as borderland space, can broaden the range of experiences gained by the child. However, on the other hand, it can hinder the process of integration in the local community due to national or religious diversification which occurs within it.

In the conducted analyses, borderland should be understood in its cultural-symbolic sense, it implies the social space in which borders and borderlands between groups and cultures are often indicated in a symbolic way and are not related to historical residence areas of particular communities (Babiński, 1994; Nikitorowicz, 1995; Rusek, 2000, pp. 146–153; Witkowski, 1991). Applying such an understanding of borderland allows for describing, in the distinguished aspects, the family and school environment in the borderland. It is in these environments where similar processes occur, as well as mutual dependencies and relations, which all result from functioning in a particular close family or school space and a further space – the socio-cultural space of the borderland.

Family and school in pedagogical intercultural studies

Although Polish intercultural research into family and school has been developing intensively only since the nineties of the previous century, it refers to the rich tradition and well-ordered network of notions concerning forms and functions of family and school that have been worked out by the leading Polish research centres – in Lublin, Poznań, Warsaw and Silesia. These centres gave rise and then

orientations to nationwide studies on family and school and they have consistently popularized the research results, which contributes to their interdisciplinary examination.[1]

Studies on family and school in culturally differentiated environments were initiated and have been continued by three major scientific centres, which carry out the research in the Polish-Belarusian – Lithuanian borderland (Jerzy Nikitorowicz's team)[2], in the Polish-Czech borderland in Cieszyn Silesia (Tadeusz Lewowicki's team)[3] and in the Polish-German-Czech-Slovak borderland in Opole Silesia (Zenon Jasiński's team).[4] Particular theory-cognitive significance is attributed to thematic studies (Lewowicki, Suchodolska, 2000; Lewowicki, Szczurek-Boruta, 2000; Nikitorowicz, 1992; Nikitorowicz, 1997; Nikitorowicz, Halicki, Muszyńska, 2003) which both present the issues of family and school education in multicultural communities and prepare the recipients of education for mutual drawing from cultural wealth, for cooperation with others and for cross-generation transmission of the cultural heritage of the borderland. These publications, as well as the remaining treatises on family and school issued in numerous edited books dedicated to multi – and intercultural education,[5] constitute a valuable output in the field of pedagogical intercultural studies and add life to scientific reflection upon the condition of Polish pedagogy of family and school. What is undertaken in these studies are, among other things: the issues of the axiological aspect of socialization and education in family and school; their relation to the development and shaping of the identity of parents, children, teachers; nationally and/or religiously mixed marriages; the continuity and change of cross-generation transmission of language, tradition and cultural heritage; the intercultural dialogue and transformations of

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[1] Family and school are the subject matter of many scientific disciplines, e.g. philosophy, cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, ethnology, theology, law or economy.

[2] Works by J. Nikitorowicz, M. Sobecki, T. Bajkowski, D. Misiejuk, J. Muszyńska and E. Czykwin.

[3] Works by T. Lewowicki, E. Ogrodzka-Mazur, A. Szczurek-Boruta, B. Grabowska, A. Różańska, J. Suchodolska, A. Szczypka-Rusz, J. Urban and I. Bukowska-Floreńska, T. Kania, W. Korzeniowska, I. Panic, H. Rusek.

[4] Works by Z. Jasiński, J. Kosowska-Rataj, E. Nycz.

[5] So far, the following have been published: 45 studies in the series 'Intercultural Education', prepared by the Social Team for Studies on Borderland Education and Culture and the Department and Chair of General Pedagogy at the University of Silesia (the Faculty of Ethnology and Education); 12 studies prepared by the Chair of Intercultural Education of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the University of Białystok and 18 studies issued by the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences of the Historical-Pedagogical Faculty at the University of Opole.

contemporary family and school in the borderland resulting from integration and globalization processes.

## Cieszyn family – parents' system of values and children's axiological preferences[6]

Establishing axiological preferences of the examined parents and children from the Polish-Czech borderland was based on the analysis of Scheler's Personal Values Scale – SPVS (Brzozowski, 1992, pp. 329–338; Brzozowski, 1995, pp. 14–15; Brzozowski, 2007)[7], which enabled both specifying the rank of particular values and their category (group) and comparison to Scheler's model hierarchy. Each SPVS value was evaluated independently of others on a 101-point rating scale (in individual examination of children, 25 values and an 11-point scale were taken into account). Referring the obtained raw data to sten norms allowed for outlining the profiles of values accepted by parents and for specifying how much, in comparison to the normative group, they appreciated particular values. Statistical analyses of the rating of values declared by children were based on raw data.

The results of the studies conducted in the environment of Cieszyn families (Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2007, pp. 191–270; Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2011, pp. 33–43) and comparing the parents' system of values to axiological preferences of their children confirm overstating the rating of values appreciated by the children in comparison to parental evaluations (cf. Figure 1). The effect of overstating is particularly evident in ratings of lower values – hedonistic, vital and esthetic.

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[6] Studies into Cieszyn family, which functions in the Polish-Czech borderland, have been carried out regularly since 1990 at the University of Silesia, at the Faculty of Ethnology and Education (earlier the Pedagogical-Artistic Faculty). The research has involved parents, teachers and children at various ages who attend all types of school in this area. The collected empirical material has been presented in the series 'Intercultural Education'.

[7] Scheler's Personal Values Scale (SPVS) consists of 50 values which make up 6 basic scales comprising the values: /H/ hedonistic (affluent life, erotic love, possessing, pleasure, life enjoyment, comfort, rest, life full of experiences); /V/ vital (resistance to fatigue, physical strength, fitness, body flexibility, ability to suffer cold and hunger); /E/ esthetic (elegance, taste, harmony, order of things, proportions of shape, regularity of features, hierarchy); /T/ truth (intelligence, logical conduct, wisdom, objectiveness, open mind, understanding, broad intellectual horizons, knowledge); /M/ moral (good, honour, love of others, peace, helping others, truthfulness, reliability, frankness, kindness, good-heartedness); /H/ holy (God, country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism, faith, salvation, eternal life).

Figure 1. Profiles of values appreciated by parents and children from Cieszyn (raw data – basic scales)
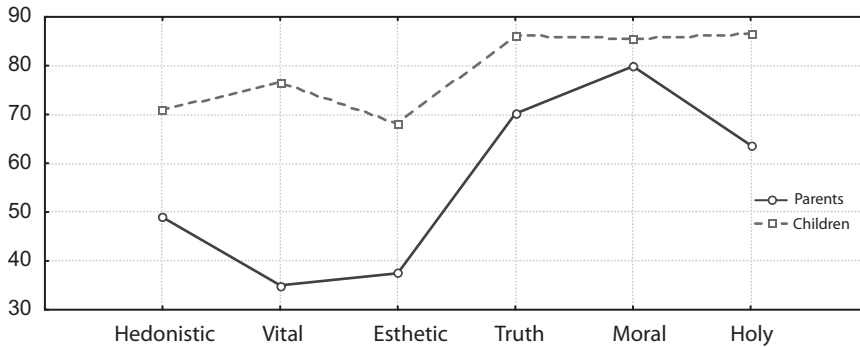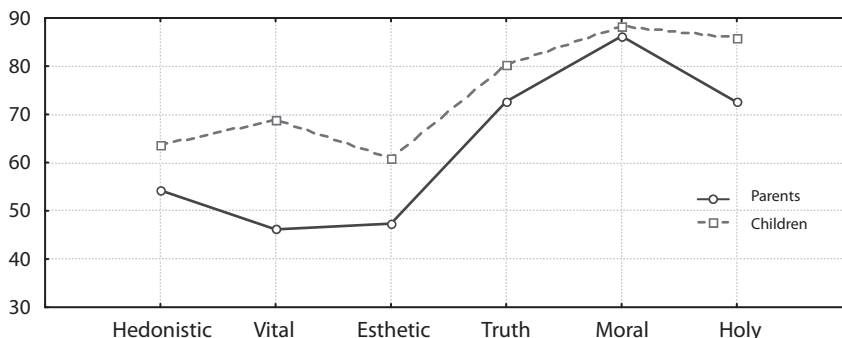

Source: author's studies

In order to specify the degree of similarity for profiles of values appreciated by the examined parents and children from Cieszyn, the results were subjected to an analysis which consisted in calculating Kendall's tau correlation coefficient and which confirmed a lack of statistical significance (for both correlations Kendall's tau=0.33) in comparing the profile of values accepted by the parents to the profile of values appreciated by the children. A similar result was obtained in examining the compliance of axiological ratings, which also confirmed statistical significance of differences between the groups of parents and children (χ^2=96.04525; df=5; p < 0.00) and, in this way, indicated a lack of similarity between the parents' system of values and the children's axiological preferences.

In the Czech part of the borderland, the results of the groups of parents and children examined in regard to the similarity of systems of values turned out to be different from those in Poland. Calculated average ratings of basic scale values for the respondents indicated: firstly – a lack of the children's overstating of ratings of particular value categories, and secondly – a difference between the profile of values appreciated by the parents (cf. Figure 2) and the profile of values accepted by the children (the quantity of Chi-square distribution indicates the significance of differences in comparing the parents-children groups due to the result χ^2=20.04727; df=5; p < 0.001).

The outlined characterizations of values (appreciated by the parents and children) concerning the significance of particular value categories allow for an attempt to specify the key features in the description of axiological preferences of communities inhabiting the Polish–Czech borderland:

Figure 2. Profiles of values appreciated by parents and children from Czech Cieszyn (raw data – basic scales)

Source: author's studies

- what occurs in the examined environments is a large differentiation of the contents and ordering of values among both parents and children. In the range of lower values (hedonistic, vital and esthetic), the respondents' axiological orientations are directed towards fulfilling pleasure (hedonistic), material and individual-private (autotelic) values. What ranks particularly low in the ordering structure are esthetic values, towards which the respondents express no need for implementation or fulfillment,

- the values of truth and moral values, highly appreciated by all the groups of respondents, gain an appropriate place in the structure (concordantly with the objectivistic approach to values represented by Max Scheler's phenomenological concept), which confirms their universal character,

- holy values have undergone an evident redefinition – religion does not indicate the entire attitude to the world any longer, as used to take place in traditional societies, but it becomes a segment of the individual's experience (Ziółkowski, 2000, pp. 80–81). Thus, religion and religiousness are more and more frequently chosen values by the individual personally – yet, they lose the rank of values 'inherited' only by 'being' a member of a particular family or socio-cultural community (Mariański, 2008; Mariański, 2010),

- the values of lay sanctities (e.g. country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism) are undergoing a kind of crisis. In the social awareness of the respondents (especially adult ones), these values ceased to be significant elements and basic consolidation mechanisms for particular social groups. Therefore, an evident tendency appears, namely seeking a new semantic for-

mula (in both their linguistic and symbolic layer) of this group of values in the context of systemic, social and cultural transformations of our country, Europe and the world,

- what is clearly marked among the examined community of parents is the occurrence of different forms of contemporary axiological transformations (reductionism, differentiation, absolutism, exploitation, redefinition) determined by shaping a new social order, within which distinction should be made between transformations of values occurring in life and transformations of values that are objectivized in culture and contained in the objects created in it (Łojewska-Krawczyk, 2001, p. 20; Siemieńska, 2004, pp. 177–204).

School in the Polish-Czech borderland – the dynamics of educational aspirations and plans of children and youth

The studies in the environment of the Polish-Czech borderland, conducted systematically in the years 1990–2008 (Lewowicki, Ogrodzka-Mazur, Szczurek-Boruta, 2009), allow for outlining the dynamics of educational aspirations of children and youth.

In the years 1990–1994, the level of educational aspirations (the third in rank after family and professional ones) of learners from Zaolzie was relatively high – 1.95 (65 points in the 0–100 scale) – and higher than the general level of Polish youth's educational aspirations – about 62 points (Lewowicki, 1987, p. 83; Ogrodzka-Mazur, 1992, pp. 82–93; Ogrodzka-Mazur, 1994, pp. 96–111). Nowadays, as the obtained research results indicate, the young (both girls and boys) similarly declare the need for peaceful family life (rank I) and, in the respondents' opinion, family values have the most chances for fulfillment in life. More significance, however, is attributed to the values of science, knowledge and education (rank II), which the young view as a possibility of finding a good and satisfying job that will enable them to achieve high living standards (Gajdzica, Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2009, pp. 190–225).

The young who continue education in lower – and upper-secondary schools, as in 1990–1994, have more or less crystallized plans for further education. Yet, the rate of declarations concerning university graduation and post-graduate education increased from the level of 62.9% in the 1990 to the level of 88% in the group of Polish learners, 90% in the group of Czech ones and 94% among learners from Zaolzie (cf. Figure 3).

Figure 3. Youth's declarations concerning the
acquisition of particular levels of education
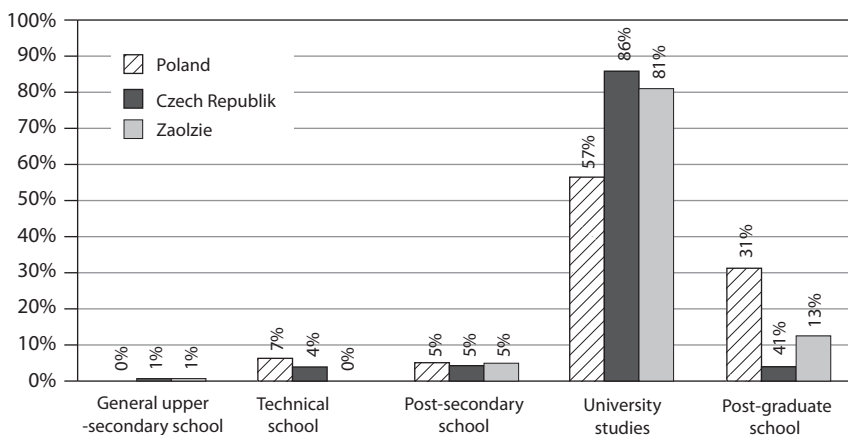
Source: author's studies

The obtained results indicate very high educational aspirations of the young generation inhabiting the Polish-Czech borderland, who relate the level of their education with fulfilling particular life goals. What attracts special attention are the choices of Polish youth (31%), who declare ending institutional education not earlier than at the level of post-graduate studies (respectively: Czech youth – 4%, Zaolzie youth – 13%). According to the respondents, higher education offers the best opportunities of finding an interesting and well-paid job both in the homeland and abroad. A small number of the learners (1–7%) plan to finish their education at the level of technical and post-graduate schools. The intention to continue education in university or post-graduate studies expressed by such a large number of the respondents and the ability to decide independently about their own life is a very positive phenomenon.

The youth's choice of a particular level of education is statistically significantly determined by higher education of both parents of the Polish learners (father – $\chi^2 = 23.2$ for $p < 0.00$; mother – $\chi^2 = 26.1$ for $p < 0.000$), by the type of school (lower-secondary school of the Evangelical Society in Cieszyn – $\chi^2 = 12.6$ for $p < 0.000$; general upper-secondary school in Cieszyn – $\chi^2 = 8$ for $p < 0.005$) and by religion (Polish Evangelical youth – $\chi^2 = 10.6$ for $p < 0.001$). The remaining factors, such as sex and life environment, do not differentiate the examined learners' declared choices.

The conducted studies allow for capturing changeability, otherwise referred to as the dynamics of educational aspirations of the young from Zaolzie. At the end of

the first decade of the new century, much more respondents (31.1% more) than in comparable studies from 1993 (cf. Figure 3) intended to study in higher education institutions and in post-graduate studies. Therefore, acquiring secondary or post-secondary education is insufficient for proper functioning in contemporary socio-cultural reality and for fulfilling their educational plans, including work plans as well. Only 15% of the respondents (in 1994–43%) judge their start into studies as more difficult due to graduating from the Polish secondary school, 57% (in 1993–30%) are of the opinion that their chances are the same in comparison to their peers educated in Czech schools, and 28% of the learners (in 1994–27%) think that graduating from a Polish school will make it easier to acquire higher levels of education. Thus, it might be thought that the young from Zaolzie positively assess both attending the Polish school and the curriculum implemented here, which will enable them a successful start into studies in the Czech Republic, Poland or other countries.

The learners from Zaolzie, who methodically fulfill their educational plans, have certain expectations associated with the development of their personal experiences and needs, which are not always fulfilled in schools with Polish as the teaching language. Like over 16 years ago, they express critical opinions on both the work conditions in schools and teachers' educational activity. The following is most frequently indicated: a lack of adjustment of curricula to learners' individual needs and interests, insufficient preparation for future professions in technical schools, insufficient use of modern information technologies in the educational process, a small number of classes preparing for university studies, the object-oriented nature of mutual contacts of learners and teachers (Ogrodzka-Mazur, 1994, p. 105). The youth's answers present their ability to evaluate objectively the educational activity of the minority school system, whose 'weak' points do not differ from the faults and drawbacks of school education conducted for majorities in the examined countries – the remarks formulated by the Polish and Czech youth were very similar and were critical in character. Contemporary school and the education offered by it still do not sufficiently facilitate the development of youth's cognitive independence, which is *sine qua non* in their preparation for managing their adult life. This takes place despite the suggested transformations and the implemented reforms (Brzeziński, Witkowski, 1994; Kwieciński, Witkowski, 1993; Kwieciński, 2000; Lewowicki, 1994; Lewowicki 2007; Pilch, 1999; Radziewicz-Winnicki, 2004). Therefore, there is an evident need for acquiring new abilities by learners – the abilities associated with constructing school knowledge by, among other things, learning through cultural dialogue and contact.

As most of educational institutions, borderland school – against its declared aims – still fulfills the functions of cultural and social reproduction. In Zbigniew

Kwieciński's opinion, as regards the level and nature of cognitive competences or social orientation, the youth after the cycle of primary education are more similar to their parents than to their peers in different conditions of socialization in family (Kwieciński, 1990, p. 237). A similar tendency can be noticed in the case of the examined learners, who have much higher educational aspirations than their mates examined in 1990–1994. Education is treated by the young, who are conscious of both chances and limitations of life in culturally differentiated environments, as an implementation measure in achieving the desired position in the social and professional structure. Education also becomes a value desired for itself, a constituent and determinant of the quality of life. It is here, among all these factors, that school should find its way and should change so that Kwieciński's diagnosis, formulated in the nineties of the previous century, would not repeat in a recurring cycle – 'education (including school) adapts to significant functions (dysfunctions) of the system, to its »organizing principle«, it perpetuates the sources of crisis, disturbs the processes of (cognitive, moral, identity) development, deepens the situation of anomy treated as axiological vacuum and social disintegration, deepens alienation experiences (feeling of senselessness, helplessness, strangeness in the world, a lack of self-understanding), makes appearances the superior category of life' (Kwieciński, 1990, p. 244). Therefore, what can be noticed at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century are the qualities of pre-figurative culture, in which the reversed relation, that is the socialization of the older generation by the youngest, creates conditions for transformation – for a radical, violent, often crisis raising change of social order. Thus, it seems appropriate to refer to Mead's words again – the development of such a type of culture will depend on whether the dialogue with the young will be established and whether they will be able to lead the older into the unknown future (Mead, 2000, p. 129).

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