

FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOLS IN A HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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During their existence, schools, as social institutions, have undergone a number of partial reforms which, however, not only failed to meet expectations but they even were labeled as "unsuccessful progress" thus becoming a burden rather than an improvement of the school. In spite of that, the current attempts at school reforms as well as theoretical disputes concentrate on how the school should be like. New requirements and claims as concern its qualities emerge. Requirements for humanization of the school are now presented with great intensity and urgency.

Using varied perspectives, methods and procedures, current analysis of the school as an institution emphasize and criticize negative phenomena. Therefore a great variety and diffuseness as well as contradictory opinions appear. A number of things are claimed to be the greatest evil of the current school. On one hand, it is the size of schools, negative effects of one-sided differentiation or curricula, on other hand, it is negligence of esthetic or ethical dimensions in teaching, lack of freedom, lack of respecting individual pupils or, generally, suppressive elements at the school or in the society. Frequently, things that are pointed out are: negative influence of social-political factors, sterility of the school, gap between the school and the life, the world of work and profession, as well as the achievement principle, as well as other functions of the school. New opinions emerge on how the school should look like, what functions it should serve, etc. In connection with criticism and negative opinions, a variety of requirements and proposals were presented aiming to improve or reform the school.

The current theory of the school tries to judge the negative phenomena, requirements and suggestions based on genetical-causal as well as functional-structural analyses, and to make methodological, theoretical and methodical aims and interpretation objective. Much attention is paid to functions the school should take.

Since its beginning, the school has taken a number of functions. Primarily, they were derived from needs of the society, social groups or individuals, that, however, constantly change as a result of a variety of factors. Therefore, in the past a number of different factors dominated. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was the religious function that dominated, in the 18th century the social-political function dominated, while in the 19th and 20th centuries qualification function dominates (Ballauf, 1984).

However, an in depth analysis of school functions have been done only in the second the half of this century.

Functions of School: An Interpretation

Nowadays, the school is analyzed as an institution which serves the society (as all institutions established to meet needs of the society). School fulfills its aims prescribed by laws, rules and regulations, whereby some administration bodies are used.

Functions of the school are hierarchized in several manners. The number of these functions vary from three to forty or more. The most frequently emphasized functions are: socialization, personalization, qualification, selection and legitimation.

The socialization function of the school is most frequently conceived as integration of children and youth into the society by teaching them abilities which enable them to fulfill tasks needed in profession and life (Parsons), or as a social-individual integration (Sharmann, Rossel) or simply as an integration into existing conditions (Klafki).

School is a main instrument for secondary socialization, which represents a process in which an individual becomes able to live socially in a society, and a process of social forming of an individual. An individual in this process gains basic orientation to behave in social entities which help him/her to co-exist with other individuals within a social entity (cf. Geist, 1992).

Frequently, it is emphasized that school socialization means integration and initiation of children and youth to specific positions and roles of age, gender and occupation by means of learning specific cultural orientation and values (Brinek, 1993). Furthermore, it is emphasized that it is a kind of social learning or social-interaction by means of which an individual learns relevant factors of a social entity which he/she belongs to (Geist, 1992).

The school extends possibility of individuals belonging to small groups so that they can function in large groups. Also, it "standardizes" different views and attitudes of small groups and enforce those norms of the school, state, nation, etc. that are valid for many people or for all of them (Oblinger, 1976).

Socialization at schools means accepting children and youth to the society that established the school. It creates preconditions for integration into professions, associations or other social entities, and makes them possible to learn about the policy of a state and to follow it. It makes individuals and groups to follow social values, norms and rules, and, at the same time, it makes them immune against influence of odd ideas, groups or cultures. It makes a road for pupils to enter the society, it shows them possible life directions, aims and prospects as well as dangers and stumbling points of social life.

By teaching children to fulfill social tasks the school reduces freedom of behaviour. At the same time, it makes the current state legitimate, it pushes children to affirmation of this condition and helps them acquire socially accepted behaviour. It can be said that school socialization guides pupils into a general structure of expectations as well as into troubles of everyday life. At the same time, it reduces needs and wishes of an individual or a group, it selects and channels them. That is why it is emphasizes that

socialization at school is of a benefit for both the social entities in which an individual is integrated into as well as for him/herself (Ballauf, 1984).

Socialization tasks of the school are determined historically and regionally by political aims and aims of the school. Therefore, the school can educate man to be devoted to the state power, political party or social system, to be a good countryman or a chauvinist, a subject or a free citizen.

In some countries, tasks of the school are set by constitution and by school laws. Every society survives because of preservation of its culture, i.e., preservation of a system of opinions and abilities, which have to be learned. They are not genetically inherited by individuals.

The importance of school socialization is judged in a number of ways. It can be appreciated, or tolerated, or refused. Humanistic education poses strong objections against it. School is blamed that it jeopardizes an individual. It exposes him/her to a standard way of thinking, and, consequently, of standard feeling and acting. A man is educated in order to be an efficient and obedient citizen of a state. It has been pointed out that though an individual is taught to understand what is or is not useful or good and what is freedom of man, however, this is done without possibility to ask questions at school. uniqueness, autonomy, independent thinking, going own ways seem to be excluded from schools (Ballauf, 1984).

Personalization function of the school is creation of conditions for a successful personalization of pupils by supporting their uniqueness and potentials, and by developing their spiritual and psychological powers in a grater degree than it can be done at home or in the public life. The school helps pupils in gaining spiritual cultivation by means of change in knowledge and feeling and by means of independent thinking (Oblinger, 1976).

Personalization of an individual is a complex process of creation, forming and developing of a personality which takes place simultaneously with integration of an individual into the society. It is a process of "self-forming" and "self-control" of an instinct structure as well as of meaningful and coordinated impact of a subject on social or cultural factors (Wurzbacher, 1963).

In the process of personalization (individualization) a human being is transformed to be someone who observes, distinguishes and evaluates, coordinates and transforms the environment according to his/her wishes - and becomes a personality. Therefore it has been pointed out that personalization is forming and using of abilities of man to integrate social and cultural plurality, to compare, and to select anticipated modifications of behaviour for his/her personal value system. Based on this, he/she gains inner freedom as concerns social determinants and measures for integration into socio-cultural relationships in accordance with his/her needs, interests and beliefs, and at the same time, he/she acquires a possibility to participate actively in transforming them.

In the past, aims and tasks of personalization were changing. However, in spite of differences in opinions, it was an "individual man" and his/her own inner fulfillment and development rather than social integration or practical education that stood in forefront. Also, the current aims and targets of personalization follow this principle. It has been stressed that the school should provide assistance in personalization. School

should be a place of offers. In addition to provision of required information to pupils it should enable free options according to an individual's needs and aims. It should respond to questions that pupils are interested in. It should respect pupil's expectations. It must be open for creative ideas, for spontaneity, novel situations, etc.

When these tasks are being accomplished variety of difficulties occur. The process of personalization of an individual is affected by certain social entities in which the person was born or is integrated into. Sociocultural norms of these groups set the framework in which cultivation of a personality may take place. The school, though being an institution of personalization, may protect itself against these influences only in a degree allowed by groups that manage the school. The society that establishes and finances the school restricts its freedom in personalization in order to avoid that some forms of personalization would turn against interests of the society and also because the school is not able to provide broad differentiation in personality development (cf. Wilhelm, 1969).

School personalization is limited by many factors. Instruction is mostly a large-group activity. Therefore teacher-pupil relationship is factual and impersonal and teacher's relationship to the pupil as an individual is restricted. Due to this fact individualization is reduced. On the other hand, socialization and uniformity increases.

Information explosion beyond the school and overload of subject matter, as a consequence of it, requires more demanding processing of new contents. However, large-group activities do not allow to accomplish it. Because of this reason spiritual development of an individual suffers and the process of becoming an individual is restricted.

Overestimation of the use of measurable outcomes and use of inner qualities, which are requirements of the current utilitarian society, are serious factors that restrict personalization at school, which, in turn, results in over-representation of qualification at the expense of becoming an individual.

Persisting traditions and socio-cultural norms of the current society are reflected also in a shift in motivation of pupils. In many cases, school education does not serve to inner enrichment of pupils. An individual does not learn because of longing for knowledge but because of acquiring a symbol of a certain status or certification that is linked to it.

Another negative factor affecting personalization nowadays is that "general education", as provided by many schools, increasingly acquires features of introductory vocational education or training (Oblinger, 1976).

Retraining (qualificational) function of the school is forming qualification of a young man. Qualification is a set of competencies serving to perform a profession. It is a dynamic system of stable structures of abilities, knowledge, habits and aptitudes as well as emotional, volitional, trait and other personal qualities that are preconditions to successful employment.

The school teaches an individual knowledge, habits and experiences that enable an individual to live in a society, to make the living. It helps to form a viable man who is an expert in a profession, who can manage his/her life. It provides professional qualification ranging from acquisition of cultural skills (reading, writing, computing) to functional qualification (learning of professional knowledge) and to extra-functional

qualification (willingness to achieve good results, responsibility, diligence, persistence, etc.).

Qualificational function of the school is determined by the level of advancement of a society and by needs for its further development. What is enough to know nowadays to manage life will be insufficient in the future. Therefore requirements and tasks of qualifications are changing. Nowadays, in many countries learning practical abilities and competencies (handwork, workshop skills, etc.) are preferred. In many schools of general education typewriting, shorthand, secretarial skills, and technical drawing are taught.

A need of flexible and many-sided qualification is prevalent nowadays. It is characterized by professional knowledge, habits and competencies that can be widely used. De-qualification of simple and medium-qualification jobs on one hand and increase in qualification of some top jobs on the other hand requires to acquire more general qualities, such as adjustability, adaptability, independence, decisiveness, cooperativeness and the like.

Opinions on the quality of the school's fulfilling qualificational function differ. There are many objections concerning the content and forms of education. The most frequent objection concerns a gap between the school and working life, which has become wider due to broadening industrialization. It has been pointed out that there is a gap between what young people expect to learn at school and what they actually learn. Another gap is between what they learn at school and what they will actually use in practice. School is rich in provision of "information" but poor in practical activities. A pupil who mastered verbal and abstract rituals is rewarded (receives excellent grades). However, a pupil who can use the knowledge will not get excellent grades (cf. Coleman et al., 1974).

Preference of needs of working life in education, orientation of reforms to labour market, making space for better communication and integration into society, especially into the world of labour, are items listed among requirements for improving the qualification function of school (cf. also Husén 1979). It is necessary to ensure that an individual could learn concepts and cognitive abilities that would orientate him/her in new conditions as well as making him/her understand scientific disciplines, management, art and literature. In addition to cognitive and social abilities, it is necessary to teach intellectual abilities and foundations of sciences that are applicable in a variety of tasks and situation. Also it is necessary to teach the ability to learn new things, etc. The school has to abandon a standpoint that qualification is solely a matter of profitability. In the opposite, qualification concerns also welfare of an individual and general welfare. Therefore, it must be conceived not only as a preparation for a certain social function but also as a global preparation for life.

Selective function of the school means classification of pupils according to school achievement and placement of them at higher levels of a school system or work according to this achievement. The importance of this function is justified by examinations and by issuing school reports that accredit an individual to act in specific social structures. However, it "gives" chances for taking some social positions according to school achievement and not according to belonging to some social strata. This is because in the past, the school primarily stabilized needs of a social status of some

social strata. A selection of a school by an individual took place in accord with the strata an individual belonged to. School achievement did not determine nor changed a social status. In the opposite, the school confirmed it.

Because the school is considered to occupy a central point in distribution of life chances, its function is sometimes overestimated. This is true especially of a possibility of the school to distribution of social positions. In this distribution it was not an inherited social origin and lineage but rather academic abilities, that an individual has learned, that are important. Many research studies, both older or the recent ones, indicate that a relationship between social origin and acquired level of education is still strong and that real distribution of life chances by the school either discriminates an individual or privileges him/her (Fend, 1980).

It has been proved that the proclaimed educational chances are in fact misleading proclamations (Fend, 1980, p. 34). Schools have only limited capacities to reduce differences through teaching, and the predominant number of social advantages (income, power, prestige) are not set by the school. It has been proved that the pupil's position at school (either favourable or unfavourable) correlates with social origin. Parents transfer about a half of their advantages to their children (Fend, 1980).

There are pessimistic views of whether or not the school can change this relationship. So far there have not been identified qualities of the school that increase cognitive abilities of pupils, and, in turn, educational chances of pupils from lower social strata in a considerable degree. Inequality outside the school is transferred to inequality at school and then in after-school life. Therefore Fend states that in spite of different results, it seems that "a school system does not provide for a new distribution of life chances between generations" (Fend, 1980, p. 37).

Legitimation function of the school is assistance, especially by forms of school life, in creation of adequate relationship to a political system. This enables reproduction of the existing structure of values of society, and, consequently, restoration of governing relationships in a new generation.

Legitimation function of the school was first identified by Durkheim (1957) and Weber (1947) who consider educational system to be the main institution for stabilizing a society. This is done by teaching attitudes and behaviour that is needed for supporting and preserving certain social relationships.

There are many critical objections against legitimation function of the school - coming especially from leftist analyzers of the society. For instance, Habermas (1973) proves that this function is determined by increasing the importance of the state as an institution of control - from which new functions have been derived. Therefore it needs to legitimize existing social relationships that require legitimation of unequal distribution of property and recognition of political institutions (power institutions).

Inequality in distribution of property is legitimized by ideology of achievement, according to which this inequality results from unequal effort and qualities (abilities) of people. Therefore, it is necessary to make the social order legitimate through a system of education.

According to Fend (1980), the school in fact represents a system of distribution. It creates a system of rules for a range of different positions. In the course of school attendance pupils must accept inequality in school assessment. Each day they see that

evaluation depends on achievement and therefore they accept an idea that their position is a result of their effort and ability. Therefore even a low-position pupil finally feels that he/she is justfully taken care for and that he/she is evaluated according to achievement and ability.

According to Fend, it is important to distinguish which political relationships are being legitimized. Are these relationships of unfreedom or is it a free democratic system which is being justified?

From the above outline it can be summed up that analyses that have been done so far - and interpretations of the school derived from them - are not accepted without objections. Some authors consider them to be flatly descriptive. They emphasize that relationship between the school and the state power are more complex and more dynamic than it is in interpretation of the above functions (Leschinski - Roederer, 1981). Therefore, there is a quest for more complex analysis of the issue that will bring new solutions and justifications. Requirements of humanization of the school are the most urgent.

The concept of humanization of the school started to be frequently used when many partial reforms failed to meet expectations. Still, this concept is not conceived unequivocally. Most frequently, humanization is defined as making the school humanistic - bringing education closer to the human substance, to human nature, to a longing to be man with all attributes that belong to the phenomenon of mankind (Walterová, 1991, p. 327), or that education at school should be "...a synonym of cultivation of humanity of educable individuals and creation of valuable human experiences" (Švec, 1991, p. 343).

Ambiguity in the definition of humanization is not only manifested in identification of humanization goals of the school but also in saying what should be humanized, how to humanize and who should be humanized. However, ambiguity, or even contradictions, are also manifested in requirements of humanization of the school.

Starting Points and Requirements for Humanization of School

The requirement to humanize the school is not a new one. It has been discussed in depth already at the beginning of the century. However, current discussions are more intense and more urgent. These discussions originate from a variety of philosophical and theoretical views. Therefore formulations of requirements are varied or even diffuse, sometimes they are opposing and contradictory. On one hand, it is required that education "should be adapted to life" and "should meet immediate needs" (Hutchins, 1953), on the other hand, it is claimed to refuse "pragmatism" and "instrumentalism" and adopt "development of inner potentials" (self-development and self-actualization) of pupils and successful their integration into the society.

Many requirements aim at abolition of suppressing character of education, which still persists in this country. Strong objections are directed against education conceived as managing of and control over children, or integration of an individual into social structures that were created by previous generations. It has been emphasized that an aim to educate a well-integrated personality cannot be set because integration requires

from an individual such a balance of powers that it does not, or should not, exist in the society because these powers are unequal (Adorno).

In opposition to social determinism, development of "Self" and an absolute freedom is posed, whereby "Self" is defined as a monade equipped with uniqueness which cannot be derived from nor determined by anything. Therefore any regulation would denote an adverse determination and, consequently, abuse of an individual (cf. Geissler, 1984).

Requirement of freedom and teaching of critical thinking is closely bound to that one of self-development and self-determination.

Nowadays, freedom is claimed to be identical with self-determination. It is being emphasized that anything which is repressive, manipulative, estranging, or pressing prevents from self-determination. Self-determination can be achieved only when an individual energetically opposes anything what has not been determined "by itself", while he/she acts freely (Geissler, 1984).

Freedom is manifested in a right to "take" the freedom vigorously. An individual has a right to be aggressive towards existing regulations because fight with the existing world is a negation of negation, and an abolishment of imperfect things. An individual has a right to oppose not only by arguing but also by doing, or if needed, by physical violence ("destroy everything what is destroying you").

Criticism in the notion of theory of emancipation becomes a criterion in judging situations and phenomena, especially the social ones. Therefore nowadays education of critical thinking and of "critical ability" acquires a different meaning: it is not a self-critical reflecting of person's own knowledge, but judging the world while using criteria that are claimed politically correct. Criticism should manifest itself as a political will, and it should explain things that are accidental and unjust under given circumstances, and it should contribute to their replacement.

Notion of work is linked to this notion of freedom. Work is claimed to be "a fight that emerged from a need". It is characterized by constant suffering and, though it reduces poverty, it becomes a big burden. Therefore such social conditions should be created which would enable living without pressure, suffering and fear, that would make life free from all burdens. Only then we can refer to it as freedom (cf. also Geissler, 1984).

Other conceptions view a need of school humanization from different perspectives, and they set different requirements. For instance, conceptions based on existential philosophy and humanistic psychology emphasize estrangement and de-personalization of man. They see a solution in an escape into an inner world, into isolation of man from the society, in organizing of contact relationships between individuals. Goals of general education are based on the principle of self-realization and self-actualization. "The goal of education is to become humanistic or man-like beings, not automata. The goal is to train thinking, feeling, living and acting, to train people who will be able to love, feel and expand the inner "Self", and continue in self-education" (Goodland, 1983).

In connection with this, a conception of relevance is being emphasized. It means that the content of education is linked with personal meanings of a learner. Knowledge is useful only if it helps in development of an inner world of the child, in development

of his/her senses and emotions, only if it helps in understanding himself/herself (Weinstein - Fantiny, 1970; Müller, 1974).

On the other hand, humanistic conceptions based on personalism claim that education is not a process in which solely development of inner, immanent preconditions (self-realization) takes place, but rather it is a creation and protection of human dimensions at the level of existential living. School is humanistic if education is a particular component of ethics, if assistance and orientation is provided on the way to individualization and personalization, rather than socialization, enculturation and interiorization of norms, or adaptation.

The goal of education is to return the lost feelings of value, freedom and individuality to man, to awake positive value orientation, trust, moral power in him/her in order to restore social relationships (Krankus, 1992).

These requirements for humanization of school result in a number of theoretical problems and stumble on many practical difficulties. Discussions that have taken place so far provided only few answers. Therefore we come across with many objections to these requirements or claims.

One of the most serious problems is the relationship between integration of an individual to social circumstances and his/her individualization. It has been emphasized that one-sided interpretation of the concept of "Self" results in solipsism, and it admits only such education that rests on "Self" and refuses really existent determinants. However, inclusion of individual life of man to social determinism and degradation to be a function of given social entities is equally unacceptable. Negligence of the "Self" category is equally unhumanistic as is a soliptic absolutism. Therefore humanism in school should be determined by a balance which is not constant forever, but which changes from one case to another case, from one task to another task, from one pupil to another pupil. Setting this balance in a unambiguous way would result in restriction that would lead to de-educationization of school.

A serious problem is in understanding of freedom with respect to self-determination. Indeed, a human being does not live or develop in vacuum. Since birth, a monade of "Self" is not able to persist independently. He/she requires care, leadership, management and control. Lives of other people (parents, teachers, neighbours, partners) interfere with life of man. Therefore individuality can be interpreted only with reference to other people. An individual must respect assistance of other people in order to take responsibility for them, and to act in this sense.

Freedom of man is not in doing whatever he/she wants. Freedom is being able to choosing goodness without pressure. This is, however, based on individual knowledge and experiences acquired by an individual gradually. In the beginning, initial lack of individual knowledge and judgments is compensated by care from people, including teachers, who educate an individual. Therefore school cannot be considered to be humanistic if it refuses leadership and control over an individual; on the other hand, a school is humanistic if it balances a position of "as little of society as possible" (individualistic position) and a position of "as little individuality as possible" (collectivistic position) (Geissler, 1984). This ensures equilibrium of a requirement of "being like others" and a requirement "not to be like others".

Problematic is also one-sided criticism which leads to negation of anything that exists, and which supports monopolization of an approach of an individual, who thus becomes the only criterion of what is correct and incorrect, or good and bad.

Besides the above pessimistic understanding of work, which understates human dignity, there exists an optimistic notion which gives work human value and attributes it beneficial power (Weinstock). Therefore one-dimensional understanding of work is considered to be incorrect and morally irresponsible. Similarly, not all things that at first glance seem to be pleasant and hopeful, or such work that an individual is capable of doing, can be considered to be humanistic. In spite of burden and embarrassment, work is inevitable for community and for an individual. Human life cannot develop without culture, and in turn, culture does not develop without work. In order to persist, culture must be kept and preserved by work (Geissler, 1994).

From it follows that school must prepare the youth also for life situations that are characterized by work. It is being emphasized that the those who will abandon this quality "will humanize society for a short time only - until the time the capital accumulated by predecessors is spent (Geissler, 1994).

According to relationship to work, humanism can be categorized on a continuum from ascetic humanism to naive hedonism, in which orientation to pleasure is emphasized. Therefore a humanistic school must take a balanced position between the two extremes.

It can be seen that even after many decades of efforts to humanize school there does not exist an unambiguous answer to the question of "which qualities the present school must have". Therefore it is natural that the issue of humanization generates hope and expectations as well as doubts and distrust.

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Resumé

FUNKCIE ŠKOLY V HUMANISTICKEJ PERSPEKTÍVE

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Príspevok vychádza z analýz venovaných v rámci teórie školy najdiskutovanejším funkciám súčasnej školy a poukazuje na diskrepanciu medzi tým, aká súčasná škola je a aká by mala byť z aspektu požiadaviek na jej humanizáciu. Uvádza charakteristiku piatich najviac diskutovaných funkcií školy i námietky, ktoré sú voči nim vznášané z pozícií humanizácie, načrtáva možnosti, poukazuje na problémy a ťažkosti pri humanizácii školy v celku i v niektorých jednotlivostiach. Na základe toho iniciuje potrebu dôslednejšieho vedeckého bádania a teoretického rozpracovania koncepčných a metodických otázok humanizácie školy v súčasnosti a najbližšej budúcnosti.