

підготовку фахівця, прагнучи до того, щоб ця мета стала частиною власних цілей і завдань самих здобувачів вищої освіти.

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#### **POLISH EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 2016 REFORM: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

*The aim of the paper is to discuss the features of the education system in Poland with a special focus on its recent reform in 2016 and the social implications of the reform on the functioning of the contemporary young generation. The paper is built on the concept of social capital of such authors as Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and, above all, Robert Putnam, from which the issues of bonding type social capital and bridging type social capital are taken. The issue of human capital in social sciences is extensive, however, it is worth emphasizing the lack of studies on the social capital of students, especially the bridge-type social capital in the context of education of the young generation.*

**Key words:** *Polish education system, education reforms, social capital, youth*

## Introduction

The paper aims to present the main assumptions of the 2016 education reform and its social implications with a focus on young people. In the first part, the features of the educational system in Poland over the years will be discussed, including the basic premises of its functioning from 1999 as well as from 2017 to the present. Therefore, the current shape of the educational system in Poland with a particular focus on the structure, curricula and changes in the primary school after the reform of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Subsequently, the author presents the social implications of the changes in the educational system from the perspective of the concept of social capital, especially the issues of bonding type and bridging type in combination with the positive and negative consequences of such great changes for the contemporary young person. Due to the limited possibilities and the volume of the paper, this paper will not touch the issue of financing the educational system in Poland, education management or the profiles of teachers and school management at different levels. A comparative analysis of the juxtaposition of the two types of social ties shaped in the area of school structure may be an interesting source of further analyses as well as a point for a dialogue in this respect, a dialogue which focuses on the student, and not on the system of differences resulting only from curricular, i.e. educational changes.

### Assumptions of the educational reform in Poland

It is worth to mention that there is compulsory education in Poland, which was introduced by the Duchy of Warsaw (Chamber of Public Education) in 1808. This gave rise to the functioning of education, which was being reformed over time, e.g. in 1961 when the eight-year primary school education program was introduced. This was followed in 1991 by the introduction of the legal act on education system<sup>34</sup> and in 1999 during an extensive reform of education. The new principles of the school system were laid down in the legal act dated 25 July 1998 on the amendment to the act on education system<sup>35</sup>. It was intended to introduce comprehensive and long-term changes in the process of teaching and upbringing, and consequently in the education and attitudes of Poles<sup>36</sup>. It was also planned to reduce the proportion of students entering vocational schools from 30 percent to 20 percent over a period of 10 years as well as to increase the proportion of those wishing to enter general secondary schools and technical secondary schools from the initial 60 percent to 80 percent. Additionally, it was to increase the number of tertiary education students to 50 percent<sup>37</sup>.

Each year approximately 5 million children and youth (13 percent of the country's population) attend primary and secondary schools in Poland, spending several hours a day in them. Each reform of the education system arouses great interest in the public opinion due to the fact that it has far-reaching consequences and concerns a significant part of citizens sending their children to schools. The establishment of three-year lower secondary schools in 1999 and their subsequent liquidation after 18 years of functioning, implementation and withdrawal of the compulsory education for six-year-olds, and changes to the core curriculum (1999, 2008, 2012, 2017) had impact on the conditions and principles of teaching in Polish schools. Taking into account the length of the

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<sup>34</sup> A. Jeżowski, *Finansowanie publiczne oświaty niepublicznej*, Warszawa 2014, p. 34–38.

<sup>35</sup> The legal act dated 25 July 1998 on the amendment to the act on education system (Journal of Laws of 1998, no. 117, item 759 as amended).

<sup>36</sup> E. Wosik (Ed.), *Zmiany w systemie oświaty: wyniki badań empirycznych*, Warszawa 2002, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> M. Zahorska, *Sukcesy i porażki reformy edukacji*, „Przegląd Socjologiczny” 2009, vol. 58, no. 3, p. 119–142.

educational cycle, it can be concluded that the current student generation experienced practically permanent changes which might create uncertainty and additional stress not only for children and youth but also for their parents and teachers – as stated inspectors from the Supreme Audit Office (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, *NIK*)<sup>38</sup>. Furthermore, the core curriculum was changed at that time, i.e. several curricula were prepared for each subject, which made it necessary to choose between them and relevant textbooks. In addition, the teachers might work according to a program which they drew up independently and which was later to be approved by the school board. At the same time, the curricular reform was accompanied by the slogan of the so-called “slimming down” of the educational material, i.e. switching from a large amount of memorized material to the practical exercise of skills.

There are four systems in the educational system: school (from kindergartens to higher education), extracurricular (including all institutions conducting, to a greater or lesser extent, educational and upbringing activities), family, and post-school education. The 1998 reform abolished the system of the eight-year primary school with four- and five-year secondary schools (ending in the matriculation examination) or three-year vocational schools. The reform implemented external examinations for pupils in the sixth year of primary school and at the end of the third year of lower secondary school. The exams were to be the basis for comparability of assessments, objectivity, accuracy, and they were developed by the Central Examination Commission (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna, *CKE*). The assumed effects of this type of exams were as follows: (1) to standardize the practice of teaching differentiated due to curricular pluralism, (2) to release a higher-level school from organizing an entrance examination, (3) to provide knowledge about how Polish schools work and what the money invested in the educational system bring, (4) encourage teachers to care for the state of students’ minds, not only to process the material<sup>39</sup>. Teachers were trained to create equal conditions for children/youth according to the principle that every pupil/student is equal and therefore a child who comes from a different background or a different primary school has no right to feel inferior to others. At that time, the teacher who helped to compensate for the deficiencies used the pool of hours received from the management<sup>40</sup>.

The education reform of 1999 established the following levels of education:

- six-year primary school;
- three-year lower secondary school;
- three-year general upper secondary school;
- four-year technical upper secondary school;
- three-year basic vocational school;
- post-secondary non-tertiary education.

In 2014, the Ministry of National Education lowered the age of compulsory schooling from 7 to 6, which, however, one year later was restored to the original level of 7. On 1 September 2017, the Polish legislator restored an eight-year primary school existing before 1999<sup>41</sup>. Graduates of the 6th grades of the six-year school to date continue their education in the 7th and 8th grades of the eight-year school from the 2017/2018

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<sup>38</sup> Najwyższa Izba Kontroli. Departament Nauki, Oświaty i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, *Zmiany w systemie oświaty. Informacja o wynikach kontroli*, KNO.430.002.2019, Warszawa, 20 May 2019, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> J. Kraś, *Reforma systemu oświaty w III RP: założenia i realizacja*, “Resovia Sacra, Studia Teologiczno-Filozoficzne Diecezji Rzeszowskiej” 2007/2008, no. 14/15, p. 306.

<sup>40</sup> Centrum Prawa Miejscowego. Federacja Związków i Stowarzyszeń Gmin i Powiatów PR, *Reforma edukacji 1999. Zadania i kompetencje samorządu terytorialnego*, Kraków 1998, s. 79.

<sup>41</sup> The legal act dated 14 December 2016 Educational law (Journal of Laws of 2017, no. 59 as amended).

school year. On the other hand, starting from the 2018/2019 school year, 8th-grade pupils of primary school take the general external eighth-grade examination. After the changes introduced in 2017, the levels of education are as follows:

- eight-year primary school;
- four-year general secondary school;
- five-year technical secondary school;
- three-year stage I sectoral vocational school;
- two-year stage II sectoral vocational school;
- post-secondary school offering programs of 1 to 2.5 years<sup>42</sup>.

According to the authors of the reform, its main goal was to create a perfect school where every pupil/student would feel safe. It was also emphasized that the school in which the student will feel comfortable will not pay attention to someone's origin, material status or health condition<sup>43</sup>. The abolition of the middle school brought a lot of speculation, however part of the public considers the introduction of the reform as a positive element. This is one of the reasons why it is necessary to face relatively new challenges in order to adapt once more to the old system<sup>44</sup>. Elements of teaching have also been changed such as the choice of required reading, classes in geography, social studies and history<sup>45</sup>. Significant differences are also included in teaching of mathematics<sup>46</sup>.

### **Social implications of school reform in Poland**

The concept of this study refers to theory of social capital which originated in the early 1920s after Henry James in his novel *Golden Bowl* (1904) described woman's social capital as her social resources that determined her character. On this basis, a definition of individual social capital emerged as a set of certain attributes possessed by an individual, such as charisma, language or communication skills. In 1916, Lynda L. Hanifan used this concept to describe the impact of ties on the functioning of rural schools in West Virginia<sup>47</sup>. In general, social capital refers to the analysis of social ties that make people's lives more productive. According to Hanifan, social capital is a tangible substance that connects people in everyday life, including goodwill, companionship, sympathy and mutual relations between each other, forming a community, since each person, by entering into relationships with other people, accumulates social capital, which facilitates his or her own and other people's needs<sup>48</sup>.

For the purposes of this paper, I have built a concept based on the social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. The first of these authors writes: "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership

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<sup>42</sup> E. Kolanowska (Ed.), *The system of education in Poland*, Warsaw 2018, p. 12–13.

<sup>43</sup> M. Zahorska, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>44</sup> R. Naprawa, A. Tanajewska, J. Wenta, *Nie jesteś sam. Programy edukacji dla dzieci i młodzieży z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym, znacznym i głębokim*, Warszawa 2012, p. 45–58.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> H. Lewicka, M. Kowalczyk, A. Drążek, *Program nauczania matematyki w klasach 4–8 szkoły podstawowej*, Warszawa 2017, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> W. Bokajło, *Amerykańskie korzenie kapitału społecznego*, in: M. Klimowicz, W. Bokajło (Eds.), *Kapitał społeczny: interpretacje, impresje, operacjonalizacja*, Warszawa 2010, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> L.J. Hanifan, *The rural school community center*, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science" 1916, vol. 67, p. 130–138.

in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them”<sup>49</sup>. James Coleman believes that social capital is the relationships between individuals that become an important resource of a community. Same as physical capital, human capital, or labor resources, it creates the potential for social development. According to the Coleman, social capital includes the following elements: trust, norms and bonds between people, which improve their actions, thus facilitating the creation of a social community<sup>50</sup>. According to Robert D. Putnam, social capital refers to “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them”<sup>51</sup>.

Developing Putnam’s theory, it becomes significant to distinguish between bonding capital and bridging capital. In his initial formulation, social capital may actually be both a “private good”, i.e., a certain resource of the individual allowing him to pursue his own interests, as well as “public good”, affecting the effectiveness of the entire community. He distinguished two types of capital. The first one is bonding capital (bonding, in Poland also translated as “integrative”), i.e. exclusive capital that strengthens small groups that oppose other groups. It is, as Putnam writes, a sociological “superglue”. The second is bridging (or inclusionary) capital, creating bonds between different groups and their members. It is, on the other hand, a social “supergrease”. To sum up, it should be stated that bonding capital refers to being rooted in the lowest level social structures from the family level to the small local community. Their feature is that all members of the community are familiar with each other personally and their mutual trust is based on close social ties, frequently of the nature of blood ties. Bridging capital refers to trust and the ability to cooperate with people one does not know personally, whom one does not have direct contact with<sup>52</sup>. At this point, we should examine the approach of Mark Granovetter, who distinguished between weak and strong social ties<sup>53</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Going back to the reform of 1999, when lower secondary schools were established, the most important objective of this reform was to reduce various educational inequalities, which at the same time was the most exposed objective by the reformers. It was, therefore, reducing the inequalities of beginning between children from rural and urban areas, from less and more privileged environments. It should be noted that the Polish population was divided in this respect, as there was a noticeable division between the poorer areas of large farms in the eastern part of the country and more developed areas of central Poland and western Poland with access to the western labor market and infrastructure.

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<sup>49</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The forms of capital*, in: J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research of sociology of education*, Westport 1986, p. 249–250.

<sup>50</sup> J.S. Coleman, *Social capital in the creation of human capital*, “American Journal of Sociology” 1988, vol. 94, Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure, p. 97.

<sup>51</sup> R.D. Putnam, *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*, New York 2001, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> M. Ziółkowski, *Kapitały społeczny, kulturowy i materialny i ich wzajemne konwersje we współczesnym społeczeństwie polskim*, “Studia Edukacyjne” 2012, no. 22, p. 13; T. Zarycki, *Dwa wymiary kapitału społecznego w kontekście polskim*, “Pomorski Przegląd Gospodarczy” 2008, no. 2(37), p. 49–52.

<sup>53</sup> M.S. Granovetter, *The strength of weak ties*, “American Journal of Sociology” 1973, vol. 78, no. 6, p. 1360–1380.

The establishment of lower secondary schools in 1999 enabled to combine children from different localities (frequently one large middle school in the commune, where all children from the neighboring villages were brought), which enabled to form new relations and new variants of classes, develop interests (directional), passions (e.g. sports), or at least simple experience of moving and learning new realities of life of a modern man: mobile, open-minded, comprehensively developed with broad horizons. On the other hand, the main change in the 2016 reform implemented the new school structure with leaving children in their regions of origin, where they will participate in relations, values as well as norms of social co-existence typical for a given place.

The aspect of leaving young people in the regions of their birth is not without significance for their functioning, as the implementation of one's own well-established visions of community activity on the basis of its internal norms and values may therefore cause inconvenience in the situation of the desire to implement slightly different beliefs or values as well as consequently lead to a conflict of values. This may certainly indicate dissonance between in-group beliefs and feelings in the realization of one's own life strategy, disconnection, exclusion from the group, in-group sanctions for the violation of norms and – as a consequence – alienation from the group. Solving problems just within the family and groups of common origin may imply a multitude of uncomfortable situations since the individual has no possibility to seek professional help from external institutions or impartial persons as well as has limited possibilities to gain knowledge of other mechanisms to solve their problem. This obviously implies a lack of prospects for personal and emotional development. Being locked in a group of individuals with a common identity (family, ethnicity) may as well imply numerous barriers to professional or social development. On the one hand, the arguments about disruption of identity, the rooting of the individual and the impact on the development of local communities are valid. On the other hand, there is the fear of creating individuals with strong ethnic or cultural ties, who, according to the binding capital, will not be willing to develop civil society in future. Frequent changes of school through primary school, followed by a change of environment in middle school as well as an additional change in upper secondary school may result in a widening of the circle of acquaintances with friends – which in turn may awaken in a person the natural need to react to changing life conditions along with the need to establish contacts and develop social networks<sup>54</sup>.

The problem of two types of ties mentioned in the concept is well described in the rich literature on amoral familism. It proves that strong social bonds built on the basis of in-group values, identity, norms and opinions do not influence the economic development of a community, do not influence cooperation, openness or the formation of social capital of a bridging type – connecting norms, values or relations, conducive to openness to others, the need to realize one's own preferences or even aspects of education. Nowadays, in the era of pandemics and social isolation, the confinement of young people at home in one environment these problems may grow. Going to another school is not only about knowledge, it is also about moving around, transporting children from localities to middle schools, as well as increasing peer relations. It is also an increase in activity, going out to cafes, bars, sports facilities due to their greater distance. It is an increase in mobility and therefore an increase in (fuelled) economic prosperity. In addition, teachers and other education workers are also embedded in various social contexts, thanks to which pupils/students broaden their own perspective of seeing the

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<sup>54</sup> M. Szast, *Amoralny familizm – negatywny kapitał społeczny w obrębie rodziny*, „Pedagogia Ojcostwa” 2017, no. 14(1), p. 51.

world, but also teachers themselves have a chance to notice any students' problems and help them<sup>55</sup>. Cultural diffusion, the flow of information or changes in mentality cannot be stopped by preventing the younger generation from widening the contacts. A person who spends his entire childhood, youth and adolescence in one locality may be less open and unwilling to develop further in the future. Therefore, the assumptions of the 1999 reform, which introduced middle schools and shortened the length of secondary schools with more emphasis on equalizing development opportunities, may be suspended or slowed down in the case of the new reform.

On the other hand we have the prevalence of strong ties in the domain of rural communities "who seem to enjoy diversity more but are more cautious in their views"<sup>56</sup>. Strong ties have a beneficial effect on the health of individuals, their well-being and the overall condition of their quality of life, however, on the other hand they imply alienation from the world that a young person can somehow escape. In proper development, not only mental, but also socio-economic, it is important to "see more" than one's own person as well as those closest to him/her. Thus, we are able to see that staying in smaller centers gathering young people in a town, village, far away from a big centre (once a secondary school) can be a kind of barrier to further development. It will remain interesting in this respect to see how individuals graduating from lower secondary schools and those graduating from eight-year primary schools compare with the completion rate and self-fulfillment on the labor market. Whether these individuals will pursue their own life strategy or merely follow the paths trodden by their siblings, family or primary school teachers.

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<sup>55</sup> P.T. Nowakowski, *Cracks in education: alternative schooling in cultic groups*, "Roczniki Kulturoznawcze" 2021, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 104.

<sup>56</sup> A. Gilchrist, *Dlaczego relacje są ważne? Networking w rozwoju społecznościowym*, transl. A. Unterschuetz, Warszawa 2014, s. 38.

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### **УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ МЕТОДІВ НАВЧАННЯ ЛАТИНСЬКОЇ МОВИ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ**

*Стаття присвячена аналізу сучасних методів навчання латинської мови у закладах вищої освіти. Виділено методи, які є найбільш ефективні для вивчення латинської мови. Розглянуто вплив інтерактивних методів навчання на оптимізацію навчального процесу для формування базових знань майбутніх фахівців з фонетики, граматики та лексики латинської мови.*

**Ключові слова:** *методи навчання, латинська мова, термінологічна компетентність, ефективність навчального процесу.*

*Статья посвящена анализу современных методов обучения латинскому языку в высших учебных заведениях. Выделены методы, наиболее эффективные для изучения латинского языка. Рассмотрено влияние интерактивных методов обучения на оптимизацию учебного процесса для формирования базовых знаний будущих специалистов по фонетике, грамматике и лексике латинского языка.*

**Ключевые слова:** *методы обучения, латинский язык, терминологическая компетентность, эффективность учебного процесса.*

*The article is devoted to the analysis of modern methods of teaching Latin in higher education institutions. The methods that are most effective for learning Latin are highlighted. The influence of interactive teaching methods on the optimization of the*