

MODERN CONCEPTS OF CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF SCHOOL'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Social structure is composed of interrelations, distances and hierarchies among people who create formal and informal social groups. The factors which unite individuals into groups are social interactions and relations that naturally lead towards integration processes. The analysis of social integration and desintegration in various contexts is the field of indirect or direct interest of all researchers of collective life forms of people. The issue was analysed by Claude Henri Saint-Simon in his concepts of the society of industrialists and idlers (non-working people). Integration was also an area of interest for a nestor of scientific sociology, Auguste Comte, in his view of the future society based upon a consensus and the formation of a social unity. The founder of the theory of social evolution, Herbert Spencer, went so far as to claim that the evolution of social life consists in a transformation from the state of looseness and desintegration into cohesion and integration¹. Following such a pattern of evolution, a society in a phase of formation, despite its state of internal diversity and division of functions, undergoes a change from the state of uniformity to the one of integrated diversity.

Emile Durkheim saw the sources and mechanisms of integration as one of his areas of interest. In his doctoral thesis - „De la division du travail social”, published in Paris in 1893, he emphasised the importance of work division and growth of specialisation, on this basis establishing the distinction of mechanical and organic solidarity² (the above-mentioned classification will be mentioned while discussing the issue of social bond). It is modern societies that are more and more dominated by organic solidarity characteristic for large, heterogenic, spatially and socially mobile communities, the kind of solidarity which enables an individual to save their distinctiveness and individual autonomy. In essence, the whole history of mankind can be perceived as a sequence of ever-evolving forms of intergration.

The very term of *integration* (łac. *integratio* – odnowienie) is used to describe processes of consolidation, bonding, creating a whole out of fragments, as well as consequences of such processes. From the view-point of praxeology, integration refers to actions, activities and objects. It signifies their consolidation in a manner most fit for the purpose and requiring “special favourable conditions or protective actions”³ in order to keep the whole intact. “In the sociological sense, integration refers to social system - as understood from the reistic stand point - as a certain collective of people, but also from the non-reistic one in which a social system is a specific system of behavioral patterns, interactions and relations, which constitutes an attribute of a social”⁴. Thus, integration refers

¹ S. Kamińska, Struktura organizacyjna polskich przedsiębiorstw przemysłowych a integracja pracowników (Organisational structure of Polish industrial companies and the workers' integration.), In: Analiza struktur i zachowań w przedsiębiorstwie (The analysis of structures and behavioral patterns in an enterprises), red. W. Jacher, Katowice 1991, p. 82.

² J. Turowski, Zagadnienia rozwoju społecznego (The issues of social development), In: Socjologia. Wielkie struktury społeczne (Sociology. Big social structures) ed. by J. Turowski, Lublin 1994, p. 84.

³ T. Kotarbiński, Traktat o dobrej robocie (Treatise on the good job), Wrocław 1975, p. 186-187.

⁴ W. Jacher, Zagadnienie integracji systemu społecznego. Studium z zakresu teorii socjologii (The issue of social system's integration. The study on the theory of sociology), Warszawa-Wrocław 1976; compare: A. Radziewicz-Winnicki, Pedagogika społeczna. W obliczu realiów codzienności (Social pedagogics. Facing the realities of everyday world), Warszawa 2008, p. 447-448.

to people and relations among them – relations that are formed in the course of contacts, interaction, mutual actions and social relations⁵.

The issue of integration of a social system should be perceived as one related to *social bond*. It is understood as a consciousness of a social connection, a set of psychological attitudes characteristic for members of a given community and finding expression in views, assessments, attitudes and actions of this community's members – in their collective activities⁶. Social bond is formed and maintained both through similarities and differences between people. Therefore, integration “does not signify a unity in the sense of uniformity, it is a unity in diversity”⁷. According Gordon Marshall, the very usage of this term does not presuppose that the discussed interpersonal relations are harmonious, because they can refer to both harmony and conflict⁸. Moreover, *social integration* as “a fundamental notion of functionalism means a relation among components of a system owing to which they act so that on the one hand they can counteract against the system's desintegration and keep it intact, and, on the other hand – “cooperate” while keeping it intact”⁹.

Modern perspectives concerning the theory of social integration are divided by its researchers into two definition classes on the basis of - emphasised by those researchers - elements determining the discussed phenomenon. In the first of them, integration is defined through the factors of *axio-affective order*¹⁰, i.e. through those factors that endow a group with a sense of attractiveness, which can eventually be traced back to certain common motivations. Authors who perceive social intergration through the aspect of group's attractiveness argue that the capacity of a given group to be integrated with an individual is a function of a given individual's needs and traits of a specific group, and then proceed to define the term of “integration” as a resultant of all forces influencing the members to stay within the group¹¹. The theories of Robert Bales, Leon Festinger, John R. P. French and John J. Hurwitz – co-authors of “Group Dynamics”¹² – are representative of this trend of thought.

The second modern set of definitions of the social integration places an emphasis on socio-operative factors (as fundamental factors of integration), i.e. factors that concern organisation necessary so that a given group can fulfill set goals¹³. In this case attractiveness as an integrating force - both for a group and an individual - appears when acceptance into a group is free from any forms of pressure. Among the authors who define integration in accordance with the socio-operative approach are: Morton Deutsch, George C. Homans, Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Sherif, Werner S. Landecker, Robert C. Angell, Jan Szczepański, Władysław Jacher.

Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, while analysing organisational structures, pointed out the issue of the so-called “functional requirements” of a social system. According to this

⁵ J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii* (Basic concepts of sociology), Warszawa 1974, p. 158-170.

⁶ W. Jacher, *Zagadnienie integracji systemu...*, op. cit., p. 29-31.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁸ G. Marshall (ed.), *Słownik socjologii i nauk społecznych* (Dictionary of sociology and social sciences), Warszawa 2004, p. 127.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 127.

¹⁰ S. Kamieńska, *Struktura organizacyjna...*, op. cit., p. 82.

¹¹ W. Jacher, *Zagadnienie integracji systemu...*, op. cit., p. 18.

¹² D. Cartwright, A. Zander, *Group Dynamics – Research and Theory*, Ewanston 1953; compare: W. Jacher, *Zagadnienie integracji systemu...*, op. cit., p. 17-22; B. Chelstowski, *Pojęcia, wskaźniki i korelaty integracji grupy w literaturze socjometrycznej* (Concepts, indexes and correlatives of group integration in sociometrical literature), “*Studia Socjologiczne*” 1967, no 1.

¹³ S. Kamieńska, *Struktura organizacyjna...*, op. cit., p. 82.

theory, all social systems – in order to retain their *integrity*, durability in time and efficiency in functioning – are forced to solve four fundamental problems:

- 1) realization of goals, i.e. establishing the purposes and mobilisation of means to achieve those purposes;
- 2) integration, i.e. establishing and organising a set of bonds among parts of the system which would serve as a means of coordination and consolidation of those parts' actions;
- 3) latency, i.e. preserving in time motivational and cultural patterns characteristic for a given system;
- 4) adaptation, i.e. the process of the system's adjustment to requirements of the environment while simultaneously actively transforming the external situation¹⁴.

Among the studies of Polish researchers on the subject, the ones that stand out are the theories and interpretations concerning the phenomenon of social integration by Władysław Jacher and Zdzisław Kosyrz. The former points out the problems that are caused by unequivocal definition and "measuring" of social integration. He argued that while the process of a break down – desintegration – is relatively easy to notice, integration perceived as a positive phenomenon is much harder to detect and requires a special attention. In connection to this, it needs to be assumed that the notion of integration is felt subjectively and non-formal. This assumption appears to be very convincing because - in its general sense - integration is a process of coordinating and uniting various elements into a whole which is an extremely complex task.

Zdzisław Kosyrz, on the other hand, conducts an analysis of the concept of *integration* from the point of view of pedagogy, proving that this process forms the basis of interpersonal upbringing and the core of integration is constituted by "mostly group members, goals achieved by the very participation in a group as well as a positive assessment of respective members or a group by outsiders"¹⁵. Complexity and multiple levels of human relations in the modern reality in a way forces a proper preparation for the social life. Hence the clear growth of the role of interpersonal upbringing and the function of opposition against atomization of social groups which is forced by the development of industrial civilization. Relations among people are becoming more and more expanded and complex due to the processes of urbanization and industrialization. They can only function properly if the people are sufficiently prepared for social life. According to Zdzisław Kosyrz, the subject of interpersonal upbringing should be the kind of educating activity the purpose of which is to form a man who is able to coexist with other people on a multilateral basis¹⁶.

The scientific studies concerning this subject distinguish the following categories of perceiving the phenomenon of social integration: *behavioral integration*, which consists in combining a few separate behaviours into a coordinated whole; *functional integration* emphasising functional, operational aspects of the consolidation process; *group integration*, in which the analysed system is a group of individuals forming an organised structure; *cultural integration* combining clashing cultural traits as a result of which a new integrated system is created; *social integration* – term used in two slightly different meanings, as a consolidation process of completely different elements or groups into one coherent group and as the acceptance on the part of an individual of a given group's standards as a

¹⁴ D. Katz, R.L. Kahn, Społeczna psychologia organizacji (Social psychology of organisation), Warszawa 1980, p. 204-206.

¹⁵ Z. Kosyrz, Wychowanie interpersonalne (Interpersonal upbringing), Warszawa 1993, p. 40.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 19.

consequence of which the individual is included into the said group¹⁷. In reality, all the types of integration mentioned above permeate one another and jointly contribute to this process.

In the context of cultural intergration one needs to define a basic term of *culture*. In a common analysis of social reality there are numerous definitions of it. At the turn of the century the range of this term's usage widened: initially it was used in philosophy, and now also in social sciences and socio-political life. Different manners of perceiving culture were formulated within the scope of the anthropology of culture, sociology or pedagogics of culture. Compiled paradigms refer to main aspects of culture such as: fundamental values, attitudes, world-view, language, non-verbal and verbal communication, norms and rules, action, temporal orientation, spatial relations, social organisation, cultural legacy as well as art.

I believe that in order to fully understand the whole wealth of the phenomenon of culture one needs to search for configurations characteristic for complex cultural entireties overflowing onto all spheres of life of given societies. Without jointly experienced cultural content and aspirations connected to them, no social life would be possible. It is a firm assumption that without the common wealth of cultural legacy, similar references to certain values a social group cannot possibly exist¹⁸. Each culture is "among other things, a set of relationships, a collection of organised and interrelated components. Those components do not constitute a cause of the whole, but contribute to the building of the whole – not necessarily in the sense of perfect *integration*, but as something that can only be separated from it through abstraction."¹⁹

It appears to be justified to refer to a definition by Antonina Kłoskowska, according to which "culture is a relatively integrated entirety, encompassing people's actions conducted according to (commonly accepted by a given community) patterns established and assimilated in the course of interaction and containing products of such"²⁰. In this sense, a culture is a product of human coexistence, it is created during their interaction and cooperation. A man who remains in isolation, in conditions that are exclusively biodynamic, is unable to reach the cultural legacy on his own²¹. An individual who participates in culture is gaining both a declarative (descriptive) knowledge of it and a procedural one (system of rules, instructions and strategies), simultaneously learning constitutional rules. In this way, they can form an internal representation of the world of culture which changes together with the development of intellectual and material legacy of the mankind²².

The participation in culture exerts an influence on the professional work, and above all, it is conducive to the forming of common ground for people from different cultural circles and establishing of ties among individuals and groups. "And therefore the culture has a place, consisting of permeating (...) numerous others; it creates space as a consequence" – as

¹⁷ A. S. Reber, Słownik psychologii (Dictionary of psychology), Warszawa 2000, p. 271-272; compare: P. Sztompka, Socjologia. Analiza społeczeństwa (Sociology. The analysis of a society), Kraków 2002, p. 190-192.

¹⁸ P. Rybicki, Struktura społecznego świata: studia z teorii społecznej (The structure of the social world: studies on the social theory), Warszawa 1979, p. 120-121.

¹⁹ W. Wątroba, Socjologia. Wstęp do praktycznej wiedzy społecznej (Sociology. Introduction to the practical social knowledge), Wrocław 1998, p. 69; compare: A. Kłoskowska, Socjologia kultury (Sociology of culture), Warszawa 1981, p. 75.

²⁰ A. Kłoskowska, Kultura masowa. Krytyka i obrona (Mass culture. The critique and Demence), Warszawa 1980, p. 40.

²¹ M. Filipiak, Socjologia kultury (Sociology of culture), Lublin 2003, p. 28-29.

²² J. Koziński, Transgresja i kultura (Transgression and culture), Warszawa 2002, p. 20-27.

Maria Mendel emphasises. According to this author, culture “constitutes “a place of places”, interrelating within numerous human perceptions of it”²³.

The complexity of the social structure without a doubt influences a degree of *culture's integration*. Culturally-defined roles not only show the individuals the proper manners of behaviour in specific social situations, but also allow to predict the reactions on the part of partners in the interaction. The awareness of the fact that official values and norms are commonly accepted provides a feeling of safety and stabilization²⁴.

Culture can be presented in *valuating* and *descriptive* manners. According to Marian Filipiak, the valuating understanding of culture concerns the assessment of various cultures of given human communities. In this perception, the culture “is understood as a phenomenon influenced by the process of development in the course of time” and achieving higher and higher level in this course of development as a gradable phenomenon. In the descriptive, “neutral” perception, on the other hand, the concept of culture is understood as “collection of numerous diverse phenomena, the mutual relations of which, as well as dependencies can be described and analysed, but not assessed”²⁵. The author also refers the concept of culture to the space-time dimension both in the attributive and distributive sense. In the first meaning, as the author emphasises, “culture is a permanent trait, which means it is an attribute of the mankind (in global understanding) or a particular individual as a representative of universal human community (in individual understanding). In the attributive sense the term of culture may appear exclusively in a singular case: one can only speak of culture, and not cultures. In the distributive sense, the culture is understood as a collection of traits and phenomena characteristic for a given community”²⁶, it contains – in my view – a concept of integration and coherence of cultural elements.

An important syndrome of factors causing socio-cultural transformations is *culture diffusion*²⁷. It signifies transformations taking place in the structure and culture of a given society, modifications that happen through mutual contacts. In the theory of culture diffusion are included warnings against social isolation, as the innovations taking place in other societies do not cross over to the isolated ones which may lead to stagnation. Members of isolating society are likely to assume a conviction that their own cultural system is sufficient and they form barriers from the surrounding influences by the force of habit. Culture diffusion takes place through the change in the attitudes of people, their personalities and transformations within communities in which given individuals live. In order for the new structures to be internalised, the presently-functioning ones need to be superseded. In such a case, there may appear states of temporary disturbance or even *desintegration* – but one of a positive nature, which concludes with the acceptance of innovations. The effect of transgressing from the territory of one's own culture into a foreign one may be – according to Alexander Thomas – the appearance of one of four forms of reaction:

- 1) *escape* (xenophobia), consisting in the feeling of fear of foreignness;

²³ M. Mendel, *Spółeczeństwo i rytuał. Heterotopia bezdomności* (Society and ritual. Heterotopia of homelessness), Toruń 2007, p. 9.

²⁴ A. Kłoskowska, *Kultura masowa*, op. cit., s. 55-56.

²⁵ Za M. Filipiak, *Socjologia kultury* (Sociology of culture), op. cit., p. 20.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 21; compare: M. Golka, *Socjologia kultury* (Sociology of culture), Warszawa 2008, p. 39.

²⁷ J. Turowski, *Socjologia. Wielkie struktury społeczne* (Sociology. Big social structures), Lublin 1994, p. 99–101; compare: E. Nowicka, *Podstawowe pojęcia antropologii* (Basic concepts of anthropology), in: *Wprowadzenie do pedagogiki* (Introduction to pedagogice), ed. by T. Jaworska, R. Leppert, Kraków 1998, p. 261–264.

2) *domination*, which is an attempt to make one's own orientation system dominant over a foreign culture and a partner of interaction of a foreign origin, forcing him or her to accept one's own norms, values and rules of the world perception;

3) *adaptation*, consisting in an accommodation to a new culture – it may find an expression in uncritical glorification of everything foreign (*xenophilia*) together with an abandonment of one's own system of orientation;

4) *integration* as a particularly important effect of an intercultural process of learning – because it comes down to trans-national empathy, cultural synthesis²⁸.

In the two latter forms of reaction to a foreign cultural orientation there transpires – according to the authors of scientific studies – an appropriate intercultural education. The higher the level of empathy becomes due to this education, the better the perspective of experiencing of what is foreign – and by no means does this entail the necessity of abandoning one's own cultural identity. Anthony Giddens is of a similar opinion when he claims that “culture plays an important role in consolidating values and norms of a given society, but on the other hand it also provides essential opportunities for creativity and change”²⁹. Zbyszko Melosik and Tomasz Szkudlarek are right then in their assertion that education constitutes a proposition of accessing the world of numerous realities. It shapes a habit of “jumping between worlds”. Other cultures do not have to be perceived as a threat, but as “new spaces”, which, in essence, are opportunities to enrich forms of the reality perception we have acquired so far. Education may constitute a form of “leading a man outside of the circle of his experience”, a specific “journey outside the limits of a particular experience”³⁰.

Culture belongs to a category of open systems – susceptible to other (occasionally foreign) influences. Ludwik Ostasz emphasises that in order to analyse and interpret culture, one needs to distinguish within its scope: a material culture, objectified one, internal-spiritual one (beliefs, convictions, strategies) and the culture of announcements, intersubjective (social information, language). The complicated and long-term process of the mutual permeating of cultures is possible owing to the following, common elements: religion, morality, art, social organization, law and customs, and education³¹.

Between the social system and a cultural one there exists a specific interrelation. Social system does not only include the group members and their relations, but also certain phenomena from the sphere of social awareness (for example, normative systems) as well as specific social roles and positions. Robert K. Merton claimed that *a social system* is “an organised collection of social interrelations in which – in multiple ways – are entangled the members of society or a group”. *Cultural system*, on the other hand, is a “collection of normative values that governs the patterns of behaviour – and is common for the members of a given society or group”³². Cultural system fulfills an integrating and normative function in relation to social system. Owing to culture, human individuals enter into relations and interactions of numerous types with one another. Culture understood as a system of social

²⁸ Za B. Śliwerski, *Współczesne teorie i nurty wychowania* (Modern theories and currents in the sphere of upbringing), Kraków 1998, p. 298–299.

²⁹ A. Giddens, *Socjologia* (Sociology), Warszawa 2006, p. 48.

³⁰ Z. Melosik, T. Szkudlarek, *Kultura, tożsamość i edukacja: migotanie znaczeń* (Culture, identity and education: flickering meanings), Kraków 1998, p. 37.

³¹ L. Ostasz, *Rozumienie bytu ludzkiego. Antropologia filozoficzna* (Understanding the human existence. Philosophical anthropology), Olsztyn 1998, p. 313–316.

³² R. K. Merton, *Teoria socjologiczna i struktura społeczna* (Sociological theory and social structure), Warszawa 1982, p. 225.

communication does not function in a void, it is always somebody's culture, one of a specific group of people who create it and communicate through it.

If a social life is perceived as dynamically created social relations in which people – simultaneously created by their culture and shaping it – take an active participation, then a culture understood in such a manner may fulfill a double role. The first of those roles is a modulating-regulatory one (imperative, arbitral), where the surrounding world is perceived as an ordinary, “tame” one, and things that others do in our circle is in accordance with our perceptions. The second role presupposes the culture to be a factor indicating social and subjective differences; cultural traits distinguish certain individuals from others. In such a perception, culture assumes a personalistic character, it takes into consideration such factors as subjectivity, the process of interiorization of truth about a man³³.

The concept of culture is treated in a similar fashion by Władysław Tatarkiewicz, who describes culture as a state which is “subjective, psychological, internal, individual, different for everyone, but on many levels similar for various people, especially those who live at the same time and close to one another”³⁴. In this author's understanding, culture is above all an attribute of a human being, “a higher form of human existence”³⁵, it is an expression of the commandment of one's nature as well as a striving for perfection. Cultural phenomena constitute an integral element of human behaviour and existence in a given social community. Human behaviours cannot be empirically isolated from social phenomena.

According to Talcott Parsons, culture mediates in the interaction between actors, integrates personality and social system. It also exists independently in the form of knowledge, symbols and ideas. The author is favourable in relation to cultural determinism, emphasising the symbolic character of culture and effortlessness of its transmission which makes it possible to control “(sub)system of personality and social (sub)system”. He also pays attention to integration inside each of the systems of functioning, analysing the integration process resulting from the connection of culture and personality system with the social one³⁶. The author believes that the most permanent element of the social system are the normative standards upon which the social integration is based. He claims that the norms are created in the situation when given actors have to accommodate their orientations in largely unspecific processes of interactions encompassing taking up a role, role systems and exchange. Further on, he claims that the norms established by general cultural patterns are created as a means of mutual adaptation of orientations of respective operating subjects³⁷. He also drew attention to a diversity between the cultural systems and social ones as well as the integration-related problems that were their consequence. According to him, each stadium of evolution creates a new set of integration-related problems concerning the relations between society and culture, as those systems “become both more internally complex and more different from each other”³⁸. The main integration-related problem concerns the way in which cultural patterns may contribute to the upkeep of social order and balance. Talcott Parsons differentiates two ways through which this happens: 1) certain cultural components,

³³ P. Bortkiewicz, *W stronę etosu zjednoczonej Europy* (Heading towards the ethos of united Europe), In: *Poszukiwanie Europy. Zjazd gnieźnieński a idea zjednoczonej Europy* (The search for Europe. Gniezno meeting and the idea of united Europe). *Studia Europaea*, vol. I, ed. by A. W. Mikołajczak, L. Mrozewicz, Poznań 2000, p. 110.

³⁴ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Cywilizacja i kultura* (Civilization and culture), Warszawa 1980, p.79.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

³⁶ Za J.H. Turner, *Struktura teorii socjologicznej* (The structure of sociological theory), Warszawa 1985, p. 106-109.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 104-105.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p.116.

such as language, are the basic “means” necessary for an interaction to happen (without the symbolic means social communication would not be possible, and neither would interaction); 2) culture influences the interaction conducted through the content of “ideas” included in cultural patterns (values, convictions, ideologies etc) – forming common convictions or traditions allow for the course of interaction with the smallest possible degree of disturbance³⁹. I believe that culture – in this perception – constitutes for the members a specific symbolic universe. Under its influence, the participants shape their view of themselves and the world, the values and norms as well as reactions and actions.

Hence exceptionally important for the analysis of the problem of cultural integration became the distinction introduced by Pitrim Sorokin, who basing on the assumption that socio-cultural phenomena do not occur randomly but form coherent collections, claimed that the rule behind their integration is *culture mentality*. He distinguished ideational, idealistic and sensualistic forms of culture expression, i.e. three its dimensions: symbolic, social and material. Ideational culture is based on meanings and values of suprarational nature, learned by the way of intuition. In sensualistic culture, on the other hand, the reality is what can be experienced through senses. Idealistic culture combines sensual and ideational features - subordinating them to reason⁴⁰. In each cultural phenomenon one can distinguish four fundamental aspects: material, behavioral, psychological and axionormative. The material dimension of culture consists of all the *carriers*⁴¹ owing to which the culture is externalised, established and transmitted in the process of socialization. However, “the behavioral aspect of cultural phenomena for many researchers – as Ewa Nowicka points out – is their essence; it is the actions that are the essence of culture - and not their material background or norms that guide them”⁴². In the psychological perception, the basic layer of culture is composed of such elements as: assessment, estimations, attitudes, motives, meanings assigned to material objects or actions by an individual. In culture, one may also distinguish the axionormative dimension, i.e. the norms and values that are frequently interpreted through the prisms of individual experiences and emotions. Such a distinction may be perceived as a specific sign post for a new orientation in the research concerning cultural integration.

Władysław Jacher draws attention to interesting conclusions from empirical studies conducted by numerous renowned scientists in order to define the specificity of the term of cultural integration. Those studies provide the following information:

1. “Extremely high degree of cultural integration may have an inhibitory influence and act against other values essential for a given community” (for instance, creativity or innovations).
2. In the course of the development of civilization, there increases a conflict between the objective and subjective culture.
3. Those cultures that are intergrated to a lesser degree “possess a larger capability to adopt in case of the introduction of new cultural elements”.
4. “Cultures – despite their fragility – are characterised by the capability to survive. They possess inherent abilities of “regenerative” nature which allow them to produce new cultural forms or patterns. “What a participant or observer of culture describes as a desintegration” may very well – when put under detailed analysis – turn out to be only

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 108.

⁴⁰ P. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, t. I, New York 1962, p. 55.

⁴¹ P. Sorokin, *Social Philosophies of the Age of Crisis*, London 1952, p. 188-189.

⁴² E. Nowicka, *Podstawowe pojęcia...*, op. cit., p. 231.

another phase of adoption within the process of cultural reintegration (see: Alfred L. Kroeber⁴³).

5. Early observations concerning the process of cultural integration “were burdened with errors of normative nature, and the sociological approach had a marginal character marginesowy”⁴⁴. In the past, the area of interest was whether the cultural integration was “by its nature” of any value or not, “today’s questions concern primarily the issues like: what kind of integration is dealt with, what elements are included in it, what kind of consequences are inherent in cultural integration or for whom they are essential”.

The review of scientific studies concerning this subject reveals that the opinions about “what is to be integrated” are as diverse as those concerning the issue of “how it is supposed to be integrated”. It appears that at least two aspects of this diversity need to be taken into consideration. One of them concerns the presently-existing multiculturalism, the second – diversities of analytically distinguished systems within given cultures. This is why so many researchers are aware of the existence of not only different forms of cultural integration, but also of the diversity of its aspects⁴⁵.

Cultural integration, in a significantly narrower perspective – can also refer to more specialised social structures – *organisations*. Organisational culture is always a group phenomenon appearing among people living in the same environment who have the possibility to communicate with one another and realise tasks that were commonly accepted – which provides them with the sense of identity. Organisational culture is under the influence of constant dynamics – all its elements undergo systematic and evolutionary transformations, are created by the participants of the organisation depending on the changing conditions.

In the context of school, cultural integration will be a state of conformity between various cultural patterns clashing within the scope of one organisation. The foundation of the theory of social integration in educational institutions is the assumption that individuals functioning in them agree with one another basing on a certain social compromise which encompasses primary goals of their activity and the relation to the others. The concept of *school culture* is complex as it includes multi-level dimensions of communication: sociability (friendly or cool), work division, tolerance for innovative ideas (open or reserved), methods of solving conflicts (direct or indirect) as well as emotional support⁴⁶. Educational institutions differ in many areas of functioning, as each of them possesses a culture characteristic only for itself, created through the values and experiences that are brought inside it by respective individuals, through the methods of work on the part of its workers and their mutual contacts, as well as through the accomplishments that they leave behind.

It is my conviction that one cannot underestimate the importance of interpersonal relations in school culture, and in particular, the shaping of the atmosphere of kindness, respect and understanding. If individuals are able to satisfy their needs and feel satisfaction and gratification flowing from the fact of staying at a given institute, then the level of school culture shall rise, which, in consequence, would have a positive impact on its effectiveness. On the other hand, the phenomenon of school community’s polarization into the categories of teachers and pupils inhibits a comprehensive integration of school as a social system. Pupils tend to form their own subculture, and teachers are prone to identify with cultural

⁴³ Zob. A. L. Kroeber, *Istota kultury* (The essence of culture), Warszawa 1989, p. 46.

⁴⁴ W. Jacher, *Zagadnienie integracji systemu ...*, op. cit., p. 55.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

⁴⁶ R.B. Adler, L.B. Rosenfeld, R.F. Proctor, *Relacje interpersonalne. Proces porozumiewania się* (Interpersonal relation. The process of communication), Poznań 2006, p. 460.

standards of their own environment. In such a situation one can distinguish a cultural-normative integration of pupils' community and the one of teachers', and not the cultural integration of the whole school organisation. Arbitrary indoctrination of a young person with everything that a teacher deems essential results in a situation that an individual begins to react with opposition which has its roots in a resentment to undertake an effort to transform their own cognitive structures as well as in a feeling of ambivalence in relation to the proposed patterns and values. Pierre Bourdieu was the first researcher to make the observation that "all the cultural messages, all educating activities are, in a way, a specific form of symbolic violence"⁴⁷. Therefore, a culture which makes it a point to enable the implementation of "socializing interest" in the form of forming the commonly-accepted norms, needs a proper will on the part of a subject – "the kind of will which shall accept the collective interest as one in accordance with the one of their own"⁴⁸. In reference to the above assumptions, I concur with the opinion of Alicja Anna Kotusiewicz that "the most meaningful and valuable in the educating culture of a teacher is his or her autoreflexive, non-dogmatic thinking combined with a specific kind of sensitivity to the needs, fears and expectations of the subject of the educating process"⁴⁹.

For a long period of time, the Polish school - as well as teachers who represented it – functioned, to use the words of Dorota Klus-Stańska, in conditions of a considerable unequivocality of culture – both that of a generally social character and the school one. The author believes that the modern culture undergoes a deep transformation, losing its hitherto prevailing homogeneity and gaining the features of multidimensionality and pluralism. Thus, school needs to recognize new conditions, understand its own place within them as well as evolve in accordance to appearing tendencies. Strategies of functioning should be developed that would enable pupils to acquire competences that should make it possible for them to find their own place in a new reality to a satisfactory extent.⁵⁰ It is becoming more and more necessary to combine within the scope of a teacher's duty a non-directive orientation with enriching identity, mobilising the pupils to the effort of self-education, showing them life alternatives and their consequences while emphasising humanistic values, promoting certain personal patterns together with the approach of the teacher himself as well as discovering and developing individual traits of a pupil combined with the enrichment of cultural consciousness⁵¹.

Among the most fundamental problems of education in the modern world one can enumerate: the question of upbringing as a path to personal and social maturity (the ability to keep an active distance in relation to meanings created by the media culture) as well as the

⁴⁷ Za M. Golka, *Socjologia kultury (Sociology of culture)*, op. cit., p. 85.

⁴⁸ W. Prokopiuk, *Kultura pedagogiczna jako wartość społeczna i indywidualna (Educational culture as social and individual value)*, In: *Kultura współczesna a wychowanie człowieka (Modern culture and man's upbringing)*, red. D. Kubinowski, Lublin 2006, p. 356.

⁴⁹ A.A. Kotusiewicz, *O niezbywalności autorefleksji w praktyce edukacyjnej nauczyciela akademickiego (On the inalienability of autoreflexion in an educational practice of an academic teacher)*, In: *Nauczyciel akademicki w refleksji nad własną praktyką edukacyjną (Academic teacher reflecting upon his own educational practice)*, ed. by A.A. Kotusiewicz, G. Koć-Seniuch, Warszawa 2008, p. 23.

⁵⁰ D. Klus-Stańska, *Nauczyciel wobec utraty jednoznaczności kultury. Podjęcie wyzwania czy ucieczka (Teacher in relation to the loss of culture's unequivocality)*. In: *Spoleczno-kulturowe konteksty edukacji nauczycieli i pedagogów (Socio-cultural contexts of the education of teachers and educators)*, ed. by H. Kwiatkowska, T. Lewowicki, Warszawa 2003, p. 47.

⁵¹ D. Kubinowski, *Cechy konstytutywne naukowego systemu pedagogiki kultury (Constitutive features of the scientific system of the pedagogics of culture)*, In: *Kultura współczesna a wychowanie człowieka (Modern culture and man's upbringing)*, op. cit., p. 31.

concept of identity understood as a search for the balance between needs of one's own individual development and obligations towards specified communities. Culture constitutes the basis of integral upbringing, guides towards its most important function of "moulding a man inside a man". In this perception, what is emphasised is the connection between culture and the world's transformation – in other words, its constant improvement⁵². Observing education and culture from the perspective of modern times requires – according to Irena Wojnar – a reference to meaningful traditions which find an expression in the concept of *pedagogics of culture*, i.e. a subcategory within the science of pedagogics which defines the process of education as a meeting between a human individual and objective values. "A path that connects a man with culture would lead not so much through a contact of a free (...) personality with traditional values, but rather through a man's participation in modern forms of cultural life and activity, including the social and professional ones". In the context of presently transpiring transformations both in education and culture, there seems to appear an idea of cultural education defined by two categories of its usefulness: an objective education – which emphasises education's role in the process of deepening integration and social identity – as well as the subjective one, which places an emphasis on the role of education in an individual's preparation to participate in culture as well as to achieve necessary life skills, and deepen the ability to experience this life's sense and value⁵³. Hence, one of the possible ways to make the process of culture's deconcentration less severe "is the relation of compromise between tradition and modernity (postmodernity) and creation of a new quality – culture within which one cannot distinguish "the better or the worse one". It can be achieved through a simultaneous selection of values from the area of traditional culture and values accepted by the present generation⁵⁴.

If we are to characterize the integration of school's social system in the cultural dimension, we have to conduct this analysis – following recommendations by the authors of scientific studies – on two levels. First of all, on the level of a uniform and consistent attitude of all members of a school community in relation to tradition, goals and their own activities. Secondly, on the level of diversity in terms of beliefs of school community in relation to respective elements of the school life. It is only once we have those two mutually complementary perspectives that a relatively reliable view emerges of the level of cultural integration in a school environment⁵⁵.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to quote Lech Witkowski, whose observation is a specific appeal made to the whole society responsible for the cultural education of a young generation: "More and more frequently we realise that education became at the end of the century (*my note: is that way also today*) a fundamental screen of culture and it is us that are responsible for what is screened on it, and the educational thinking is a screen of a humanistic culture of a society – in relation to thinking about education, of this spontaneous type, present in our everyday roles (as parents and educators) and the one coming from

⁵² F. Adamski, *Kultura w refleksji pedagogicznej* (Culture in educational reflection), In: *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku* (Educational encyclopedia of XXI century), ed. by T. Pilch, vol. II, Warszawa 2003, p. 960.

⁵³ I. Wojnar, *Humanistyczne intencje edukacji* (Humanistic intentions of education), Warszawa 2000, p. 125-133.

⁵⁴ W. Drózka, *Dylematy współczesnego wychowania a nowe oblicze nauczyciela, wychowawcy klasy* (Dilemmas of modern upbringing and a new appearance of a teacher, edukator), In: *Spoleczno-kulturowe konteksty edukacji nauczycieli i pedagogów* (Socio-cultural contexts of education of teachers and educators), ed. by H. Kwiatkowska, T. Lewowicki, Warszawa 2003, p. 101-102.

⁵⁵ R. Schulz, *Szkoła jako organizacja* (School as an organisation), Toruń 1993, p. 45 and the following.

various academic specialties – seemingly separated from educational issues, and, finally, the one based on an in-depth, specialist educational reflection (...)”⁵⁶.

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⁵⁶ L. Witkowski, *Edukacja i humanistyka. Nowe konteksty humanistyczne dla nowoczesnych nauczycieli* (Education and the humanities. New humanistic contexts for modern teachers), Warszawa 2000, p. 15.

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In the case of school as a social institution, factors of cultural nature constitute one of more important aspects of integration. They provide, especially on the higher levels of education, rather strong identifications: with educational activity perceived as a certain form of social service, with a specific school and its traditions, with a professional community and the one of pupils. Those ties, the basis of which is formed by participation in common activities and acceptance for established goals and values – impact the degree of integration with school.

An important role in the process of enculturation is played by an educational culture of a teacher, which stems from rules and mechanisms of a scientific theory of work organisation understood as a system of values, methods of work and behavioral patterns – and which influences a specific standard of interpersonal relations. An increase in the level of educational culture may constitute a basis for increasing professional independence, expanding the scope of a teacher's autonomy as well as appreciating the meaning of professional success – an essential factor in the process of shaping professionalism and increasing the effectiveness of teaching and educational activities⁵⁷. It is particularly important in a period when reality constantly undergoes qualitative transformations. In a similar fashion, the ways of thinking, ethics and responsibility constantly acquire new contexts and meanings, and, at the same time, they require innovative methods of shaping as well as the processes of cultural integration.

Key words: *integration, culture, social system.*

⁵⁷ J. Szempruch, Nauczyciel w zmieniającej się szkole. Funkcjonowanie i rozwój zawodowy (Teacher in a changing school. Functioning and professional development), Rzeszów 2001, p. 174.