

IWONA PASZENDA

University of Wrocław

SUCCESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE¹

Success is an integral part of culture, one of the core social values which are universally binding and oblige us to make concrete efforts. The term can be interpreted in various ways, which makes it extremely capacious and difficult to define unambiguously. It is commonly perceived as synonymous with an accomplishment, with achieving an intended goal. It implies satisfaction, happiness and prosperity, whereas its lack is associated with failure. According to the *Słownik języka polskiego PWN* (*PWN Dictionary of the Polish Language*), success means “a favourable outcome of an endeavour, the achievement of an intended goal”, as well as the “gaining of fame, wealth and a high social position”². Many people, not only young ones, have made success the content and meaning of their lives, sacrificing for its attainment some other values, such as family, friends, health, etc.³.

¹ Originally published: Iwona Paszenda, “Sukces w życiu codziennym”, [in:] *Sukces jako zjawisko edukacyjne*, Vol. 1, ed. M. Humeniuk, I. Paszenda, W. Żłobicki, Instytut Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2017, p. 25–40, <https://repozytorium.uni.wroc.pl/publication/84245> (available: 1.06.2020).

² *Sukces*, [in:] *Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, <http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/sukces;2576536> (available: 17.07.2014).

³ See B. Jedlewska, “Pokolenie niewolników sukcesu? O fenomenie sukcesu we współczesnej literaturze i aktualnym wymiarze zjawiska zwanego ‘wyścigiem szczurów’”, [in:] *Edukacja. Moralność. Sfera publiczna*, ed. J. Rutkowiak, D. Kubinowski, M. Nowak, Lublin 2007, p. 682–683.

A brief definition of success necessitates a broader review of this category in its social and educational aspect. It is therefore worth asking whether and how the way of thinking about success has changed, what categories of thinking about it are dominant and what the implications for education of a specific approach to it are.

In this article I will try to answer the above and other questions. In order to obtain a broader perspective, I will refer to the theoretical assumptions of the course of cultural processes formulated by the American philosopher of education, Theodore Brameld, i.e. to the idea of subjectivity and the concepts of determinism and indeterminism.

THE WAY OF THINKING ABOUT SUCCESS AT THE TIME OF THE BIG SHIFT GENERATION AND IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

Analysis of relevant literature shows that for the Big Shift Generation⁴, who entered adult life after 1989, and in the postmodern era, success was not and has not been a stable social construct, since it is contingent on social factors and first of all on the values espoused by a given society. This phenomenon is aptly illustrated by three trends⁵. The first of them reveals that at the time of communism in Poland, success was solely the domain of sports, culture, sometimes science. However, it did not have a market character, and it did not cover business and politics. The freedom and development of the market brought about a change; new categories and activities emerged where it was possible to achieve success. There was rivalry in sales departments, promotion on the rungs of the corporate ladders and success achieved by companies rather than individuals. Currently, there are even more of these areas. People compete against each other in sports and their passions, fulfilment of life's ambitions or family welfare⁶. These conditions often induce mutual competition for more and more consumer goods. The most important factor is satisfaction arising from prestige; a new car,

⁴ See P. Rabiej, O. Janiak, "Ukaszeni wolnością. Portret Pokolenia Wielkiej Zmiany, Projekt Re-definicje", Thinktank, *Malmén* monthly, 2013, http://www.redefinicje.pl/download/TT16_RE_DEFINICJE.pdf (available: 17.07.2014).

⁵ Ibidem, p. 31.

⁶ Ibidem.

fridge or TV set is not only supposed to serve people, but also to make a powerful impression on their neighbours. This is why many people believe that it is not enough to have a car, but it must be better than the one owned by one's neighbour. Similarly, it is not enough to build a house; it should be more impressive than those of others and one should spend their vacation in more attractive places than those their friends visit. You should also have more expensive clothes than your colleagues or friends⁷.

The above contributes to the emergence of a phenomenon known as successholism⁸. It occurs when the human being seeks the approval of the environment by all available means. Two categories of people are especially susceptible to it. One is made up mainly of those who try to build up their self-esteem through success. The other consists of people who, through the euphoria given by the acceptance of their environment, become dependent on success, so that their bodies produce large amounts of adrenaline. Adrenaline acts as an inner drug and is addictive. As a result, a successful person is no longer driven by his or her new goals and visions, but by the pursuit of this inner drug. This leads to a paradox: even though the individual has achieved his goals, he does not know what to do as he misses the adrenaline and euphoria that he has delivered himself while striving for success; this leads to self-torment.

Addiction to success very often means addiction to approval and applause⁹. This applause and other people's raptures boost the sense of self-worth, which makes people seek approval merely to be seen. Others, in turn, would go out of their way to rivet others' attention to themselves and be approved by an audience which they recognise as their authority. When those addicted to success lose their audience, they became sarcastic and frustrated, which not infrequently has a negative impact on their loved ones. For example: children of success-addicted parents routinely experience emotional betrayal. An addicted parent prioritises his or her own addiction over the needs of

⁷ See B. Więckiewicz, "Konsumpcjonizm jako nowy styl życia współczesnego społeczeństwa polskiego", [in:] *Przemiany wartości i stylów życia w ponowoczesności*, ed. J. Daszykowska, M. Rewera, Warszawa 2010, p. 184.

⁸ See B. Pawłowicz, "Uzależnieni od sukcesu", *Zwierciadło* 2015, No. 5 (2023), p. 123-124.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

the child who then hears the following message: “Work is the most important thing for me; I have a chance to get promoted, leave me alone, I will hire you a tutor, a tennis instructor or I will have your classmate play with you, but I don’t have time for you today”¹⁰. Treated in this manner, the child feels unimportant and abandoned, which affects his or her sense of self-worth.

This has further negative consequences. Success depends most often on people who, as children, did not receive reliable feedback on the importance of their achievements, who were underestimated and humiliated, or conversely – overestimated and excessively praised. Both these extremes “produce” perfectionists who are unable to accept failure or defeat. They feel compelled to be deserving of the longed-for praise that usually never comes. As adults, they feel unworthy of standing ovations, glamorisation, awards, and distinctions. There is no amount of success that would ease their doubts about being worthy of recognition and love, and such a conviction leads to a sense of loneliness¹¹.

The other trend illustrates the phenomenon of the transition from material to non-material indicators of success. This process began in the early 1990s, which, thanks to training companies and the American management model, brought a renaissance of the term success. In those times, a promotion, which took years to achieve in other countries, was quickly achieved by Polish society. Americans visiting Poland paid attention to the young age of CEOs and managing directors of companies. In the States people often achieved similar success as a result of hard and long work at the age of 50.

It was not difficult to succumb to the magic of success. Its achievement had tangible outcomes, such as a good position, a company mobile phone, a car, and a credit card. In private life it earned one a flat, a car and a consumer lifestyle. Apart from these tangible indicators of success, also intangible ones quickly became important. Research conducted regularly by the Public Opinion Poll Centre CBOS (1994–2010) shows that the top three life goals of Poles are: love and friendship, a successful family life, and a job in line with one’s interests¹². The latest

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 124.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² See P. Rabiej, O. Janiak, “Ukąszeni wolnością”, op. cit., p. 33.

analyses reveal that since 2005 the hierarchy of values adopted by Polish society has remained relatively stable – family happiness and good health have always been the top priorities¹³. Success and fame rank low and are indicated by a mere 1 percent of the polled population¹⁴. For half of them (from the Big Shift Generation) both personal and occupational success is precious, but the former is more appreciated. Interestingly, the “rat race” as a category seems to be on the wane. Close to 80 percent of the polled population claim that they would not devote anything for success. Today, it is not only with wealth and professional status that one can prove to oneself that one can achieve a specific goal. Nowadays, one can experience success, for example, thanks to the good projects they implement in their lives rather than thanks to their money and renown¹⁵.

Because of this diversity, a man of success has become a complex being. In the past, success was measured mainly by money and thus a man of success was invariably an affluent person. Today, when asking which Pole has achieved success in life, one can hear names ranging from Maria Skłodowska-Curie, through Adam Małysz to Doda. The lesser-known people who do not fit into the common definition of success, e.g. those with success in a narrow field, are also considered to be successful¹⁶.

The third trend allows us to discover that in the postmodern era, what counts more is what man himself considers a success than its definition according to others. An inner, gut feeling is more important than an external yardstick. Research conducted in 2012 by the THINK-TANK Dialogue and Analysis Centre and *Malmen* magazine shows that success is measured by a happy family and the realization of one’s own passions. Further indications include: work and professional achievements, self-satisfaction, relationships with the environment, one’s education and material goods. Popularity and fame are at the end of the list¹⁷. These observations reveal that vying for success, comparing

¹³ See Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, *Komunikat z badań*, BS/111/2013, Warszawa 2013, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_111_13.PDF (available: 17.07.2014).

¹⁴ A study carried out in July 2013 on a representative sample of adults Poles (N=1005).

¹⁵ See P. Rabiej, O. Janiak, “Ukąszeni wolnością”, op. cit., p. 32–33.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 32.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 34.

oneself to others, searching for points of reference are no longer that important. This is probably due to the fact that the pressure to succeed was greater in the 1990s than now. The shift is due to the overcoming of social and class barriers after 1989. For this reason, internal success indicators seem to be more important than external ones. However, it should be noted that external measures are also subject to evolution. The material criteria still remain in vogue. Thanks to mass culture, factors like popularity, fame and recognition have been added to wealth and professional achievements.

The shifting way of thinking about success makes it impossible to measure it by means of a single yardstick, because it is subjective and variable. Although everyone understands success on an individual basis and refers to their own experiences, it is possible to distinguish two categories of success:

1. Success as the development of one's own potential and achieving an ambitious and difficult goal results in getting to know oneself, developing one's own skills and becoming aware of one's goal. It involves accomplishing what one wants and what is within one's reach and at the same time seems hardly reachable. This kind of success is measured by a test of one's influence, of how much strength and skills one has to change the reality;
2. Success as an aspiration to gain market values – it becomes present in specific aspects of modern life, for example in successholism and consumerism. Within its framework, man experiences himself as a thing that can be successfully used on the market and manipulated. In private life, this leads to suffering from isolation and loneliness. The alienated individual loses much of his or her sense of dignity, which is characteristic of man even in the most primitive cultures. First of all, one loses the sense of one's own self, the sense of oneself as a unique and inimitable personality.

The two categories of thinking about success demonstrate two opposing forces at work in culture. One helps to build one's humanity and the other leads man to self-destruction. As a result, culture generates opposing values, which trigger much tension and many crisis of everyday life.

CULTURE AS A GENERATOR OF CONTRADICTING VALUES – THEODORE BRAMELD’S DIAGNOSIS

Culture as a generator of contradicting values was scrutinised by the sociologist of education, Theodore Brameld. In his works, he critically analysed American society, which set standards of behaviour for other cultures. Brameld conducted research on the mental condition of man, so he was interested in human tensions, both internal and external, which manifest themselves in social groups from a normative position. Although he was not a pedagogue, due to his education he adopted the scientific perspective of pedagogy. He diagnosed social reality, set specific goals for its development and referred practically to real problems occurring in everyday life¹⁸. The results of his anthropological studies on the condition of US culture, he concluded that it was in a state of profound crisis. An important manifestation of this crisis was a kind of “schizophrenia” of American society, manifesting itself in the simultaneous adherence of its members to contradictory values, resulting in a series of tensions in their daily lives¹⁹. These occurred, among other things, between self-interest and social interest or between a person turning against himself and a person acting for his own good²⁰. Brameld interpreted these tensions as a crisis of culture, a violation of the axiological orientation which had previously marked this culture. This, in turn, leads to destabilisation, i.e. disturbances in the functioning of fundamental institutions, in the sphere of customs, practices and attitudes within a given culture. For this reason, the members of these cultures feel puzzled, lost and deracinated²¹:

The old ways of believing in the good life as they regarded it are no longer adequate. Consequently men become deeply disturbed, confused, indeed

¹⁸ See H. Zielińska-Kostyło, “Zdrowie – społeczeństwo – edukacja. Koncepcje Ericha Fromma i Theodore’a Bramelda”, *Rocznik Andragogiczny* 2014, No. 21, p. 157–171, <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/RA.2014.011> (available: 17.07.2014).

¹⁹ See H. Kostyło, P. Kostyło, “Edukacja jako narzędzie rekonstrukcji kultury”, [in:] T. Brameld, *Edukacja jako siła*, Bydgoszcz 2014, p. 21.

²⁰ See *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²¹ See T. Brameld, *Education as Power*, New York, London 1965, p. 10.

often emotionally ill, because the value orientation to which they have been accustomed is torn from under them²².

This observation led Brameld to ask a number of questions: What happens in culture when the traditional axiological orientation is falling apart? What happens to the efforts of people who want to understand and control their own ways of life? In response, he came to the conclusion that people present very different ways of responding to situations in which old guidelines for a good life do not provide the direction or goals that they need, regardless of cultural circumstances and conditions. Brameld identified six alternative models for people's responses to cultural crises²³:

1. skepticism – its followers believe that there is no way out of the culture as it is;
2. eclecticism – this philosophy denies the possibility of finding answers to life's problems by taking only one perspective. Eclecticism is open to many different types of meanings. It becomes a kind of intellectual opportunism, in which everyone can follow different philosophies of life, one after another. The eclectic can be satisfied with the fact that he does not have to engage in any matter until the end. However, he or she is never a truly integrated person, as they lack role models that could impart meaning to both their own lives and the lives of their cultural environment;
3. conservatism – another possible approach of people living at a time of destabilisation of culture. Conservatists primarily aim to retain and strengthen their own legacy. They often claim that the culture they have encountered is not bad, but people have forgotten its foundation and core. These should be returned to, recalling the patterns of modern history. We need to fight and preserve our cultural heritage;
4. regressivism – it is summed up by a statement: 'We cannot merely preserve cultural heritage. We need to look much deeper into the future in order to get to know the most primordial sources of culture and thought';

²² Ibidem, p. 21.

²³ See Ibidem, p. 22–24.

5. liberalism – a position that strongly opposes conservatism and regressivism. In this approach, the human response to the crisis is to move forward, experiment cautiously, try and then modify one's earlier habits, attitudes and practices in the one's own life. Within this position, people support a kind of prudent planning of one's own life and gradual development;
6. radicalism – people who identify themselves with the last pattern of reaction to the crisis claim that it requires big, radical actions and setting an equally great goal. It is therefore necessary to rebuild and redirect the entire existing system.

FROM RADICAL DETERMINISM TO INDETERMINISM. ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF HUMAN REACTION TO THE CRISIS OF CULTURE

There are also other alternative ways in which people can react to a cultural crisis. They depend on whether the individual appears as an object or object of a cognitive relation. Among the many views referring to the idea of subjectivity in the history of philosophical thought, three main positions can be distinguished²⁴. According to the first, defined as radical determinism or fatalism, man is not a subject, “never and in no respect”²⁵. Thus nothing can be changed in one's life. Here the individual is perceived as passive, controlled from the outside, deprived of responsibility for his own life and deeds, an object manipulated by external forces (nature, destiny, fate).

The second position, called moderate determinism or activism, assumes a certain margin of human freedom, pointing to a partial dependence, but not a complete dependence, as is the case in radical determinism. According to the idea of moderate determinism, the individual is at times the subject and at times the object of change, to a certain extent free with respect to certain power systems, and subordinate to others. Man has to take into account in his conduct and planned changes the concrete reality and objective facts, which he

²⁴ See J. Lipiec, *Wolność i podmiotowość człowieka*, Kraków 1997, p. 16.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

has no influence on, if he wants to effectively pursue his own goals. However, the awareness of the existing limitations does not (or at least should not) prevent taking an active approach to constructing one's own life.

The third position, referred to as indeterminism or voluntarism, indicates an absolute autonomy of the human being. According to this idea, man is "always and in every situation a subject, regardless of the degree to which he or she achieves his or her intentions, and he or she alone is entitled to subjectivity"²⁶. Man can therefore be seen as an entity under the dominant influence of internal forces. Regardless of external factors, he consciously pursues specific goals and assumes responsibility for his actions. He or she has unlimited freedom of choice and relation to the occurring phenomena, including their changes, for example by modifying his or her attitude towards them.

Man's reactions to the crisis of culture are also connected with the meaning imparted to everyday life. In social sciences, the notion of everyday life appears as a dimension of the social space in which an individual lives and moves and as "a definition of a subjective world of meanings and knowledge about the world, addicted to changing social contexts"²⁷. It can therefore be said to be a kind of "habitus, which consists of the ways of thinking, feeling and acting observed in the form of social practices"²⁸.

The understanding of everyday life changed with the development of culture. In the past, it was associated with routine, monotony and boredom. Each day resulted from the previous one and gave an outline of the next one. It gave a sense of security, certainty as to what would happen and what could not happen, what could not be done and what could not be avoided. In the past, "everyday life was the enemy of everything that was unusual"²⁹. In postmodern culture, completely different terms are associated with the concept of everyday life. From

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ M. Dzięgielewska, "Teorie życia codziennego – poszukiwanie znaczeń", [in:] *Edukacja a życie codzienne*, Vol. 1, ed. A. Radziewicz-Winnicki, Katowice 2002, p. 51.

²⁸ E. Hałas, "Powrót do codzienności? Szkic problematyki socjologii życia codziennego", [in:] *Barwy codzienności. Analiza socjologiczna*, ed. M. Bogunia-Borowska, Warszawa 2009, p. 57.

²⁹ Z. Bauman, "Niecodziennność nasza codzienna", [in:] *Barwy codzienności*, op. cit., p. 77.

what happened today, it is not clear what will happen tomorrow. The time “has fallen apart into beads of episodes”³⁰. Everyday life is combined with surprise and chance. These are the only experiences that are repeated routinely, day by day³¹. This observation indicates that everyday life is dominated by various patterns, which are the source of completely different worlds of human life. We can distinguish three variations among them³². In one, everyday life is “enclosed into objectifying oppression which one cannot break free from; it is then frequently embroiled in melancholy, resentment, determination, uniquely excessive and exaggerated”, while man is “subject to the pressure of hopelessness and a mechanism of resignation from the subjective opposition to it”³³. The second variation involves:

processes of active balancing, counterbalancing the struggle to maintain a minimum balance in the field of tension and pressure. The effort of life requires a strategy of survival, active compromise in the face of the pressure of the present moment. The reality in which people are stuck becomes dual and torn apart. The subject is stretched between extremes with which he can play a game, which for a time brings change and a sense of complicity in stimulating it³⁴.

In the last, third variation, the individual opens himself up “to a perspective in which everyday life is subordinated to a long-term plan, in which [...] he finds a sense associated with distant tasks and deferred gratification”³⁵.

The above typology of everyday life reveals that on the one hand it is an opportunity for a human being to learn, a context of creative, satisfying actions, a way of realizing dreams and goals, and on the other hand it is a limiting everyday life which fails, pushes man to a margin, condemns him to loneliness and excludes.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 78.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² See L. Witkowski, “Codziennosc i jej pedagogiczne przekleństwa”, [in:] L. Witkowski, *Między pedagogiką, filozofią a kulturą. Studia, eseje, szkice*, Vol. 3, Warszawa 2007, p. 280–281.

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 281.

³⁵ Ibidem.

IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTING A SPECIFIC PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS

The influence of cultural processes on the way of thinking about success presented in this article has specific implications. An individual who identifies success with the pursuit of market values and builds his or her life according to the concept of radical determinism together with the vision of everyday life locked in objectifying oppression, as well as with a regressionist and conservative attitude, is condemned to passivity. Such behaviour leads to the resignation from the subjective opposition to cultural tensions and crises. A negative attitude towards change triggers a withdrawal from managing one's life and renouncing oneself. Such a course of action triggers a sense of helplessness and fear. The phenomenon of existential anxiety paralyses its causative function and constricts its development. The individual is convinced that activity does not matter for the changes taking place both in himself and in the environment. The consequence of such orientation is resignation from one's own aspirations and expectations in order to meet the expectations of other people, to succumb to the course of events which, from the point of view of the individual, can neither be changed nor controlled.

A person who, in the understanding of the concept of success, navigates between thinking about it as self-development and striving for market values and who creates his world in accordance with the concept of moderate determinism, eclecticism and the attitude of active balancing, in the field of life tensions and pressures, despite the declared willingness and readiness to introduce changes in his life, does not always decide to take the related risk. This manner of conduct, as Margaret S. Archer points out, is characteristic of the personality of someone with a "fractured reflexivity"³⁶. This mechanism is present in the case of individuals whose inner conversation does not lead to action but intensifies their disorientation. Individuals who are unable to continuously verify life projects become "losers of reflexivity" of globalization or its victims³⁷.

³⁶ M. S. Archer, *Structure, Agency and the International Conversation*, Cambridge 2003, p. 298.

³⁷ See L. Scott, "Reflexivity and Its Doubles. Structure, Aesthetics, and Community", [in:] U. Beck, A. Giddens, L. Scott, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics*

Those who think of success as an aspiration to develop their own potential and who create their everyday world in accordance with the concepts of indeterminism, liberalism and radicalism, with an open perspective in which everyday life is subordinated to a longer-term plan, have systematic control over their own lives. They appreciate the importance of their own aspirations and goals as well as value self-knowledge and self-assessment. Taking such a viewpoint allows people to adapt flexibly to a changing world and to engage consciously in the process of personal development. At this stage, they are no longer externally controlled and assume their own responsibility for their own humanity.

CONCLUSIONS – IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

In conclusion, it should be noted that the impact of cultural processes reveals simultaneously man's greatness and futility. On the one hand, it triggers in man the attitude of "engaged subjectivity"³⁸, which is responsible for single-handedly choosing "methods" and establishing "values to be attained", which sets goals for itself, demands of itself and tries to meet the challenges of the world in which one has to live and act. On the other hand, man rationalises the social pathologies (consumerism, successholism) and makes them a norm or even a necessity. This irregularity gives rise to an unquestioned acceptance of reality without any further verification. As a result, man becomes passive and identifies himself with market values, becoming a constant consumer or trader. He has transformed himself into a commodity and treats his own life as capital to be invested with profit. If he makes it, he succeeds and his life makes sense; if he fails, life becomes a failure. As a result, man's self-esteem is closely linked to market attractiveness and depends on such external factors as one's own success and others' assessment. It follows that the market determines the character of a person. He experiences himself not

in the Modern Social Order, Stanford 1994, p. 127.

³⁸ A. Bielik-Robson, "Wstęp. My, romantycy – źródła romantycznego modernizmu Charlesa Taylora", [in:] C. Taylor, *Źródła podmiotowości. Narodziny tożsamości nowoczesnej*, ed. T. Gadacz, Warszawa 2001, p. xxi.

as an active manager of his own strengths and intentions, but as an object dependent on other external objects. When transformed into an object, man is full of fear and anxiety and stands on the edge. No one imposes a meaning of life on him and he does not have the courage to take responsibility for constructing it himself. He is unaware of the importance of reflection in his life. Yet the individualised culture of everyday life demands that man should increasingly perceive, interpret and manage the opportunities, threats and ambivalences in his life³⁹. This obligation indicates that reflection is a prerequisite for a better understanding of the world and oneself, as it minimises a sense of uncertainty⁴⁰.

Researchers reveal that in postmodern culture the everyday life of human beings is largely free from reflection and concern for their own humanity⁴¹. Man poses no questions about the meaning of life as this life is deemed meaningless, which in effect leads to a “death of humanity”⁴². In this context, everyday life is “a pedagogical challenge”⁴³. Having as much potential as it does threats, it must focus on the emancipatory skills of students⁴⁴. The honing of these skills is the fundamental task of education seen as “all activities, processes and conditions conducive to human development; where development is defined as a superior understanding of oneself and one’s relations with the world”⁴⁵, of one’s own place within this world, a preferred lifestyle, and a sense of agency with respect to external phenomena. Under these circumstances, education is obliged to help people regain their jeopardised humanity. It has a duty to support them in their search

³⁹ See U. Beck, “The Reinvention of Politics. Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization”, [in:] U. Beck, A. Giddens, S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization*, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴⁰ See L. Scott, “*Reflexivity and Its Doubles*”, op. cit., p. 111.

⁴¹ See L. Witkowski, “Codziennosc i jej pedagogiczne przekleństwa”, op. cit., p. 290.

⁴² H. Romanowska-Łakomy, *Droga do człowieczeństwa. Usłysz wewnętrzny nakaz bycia człowiekiem*, Kraków 2001, p. 15–16. See also M. S. Archer, *Being Human. The Problem of Agency*, Cambridge 2000, p. 1.

⁴³ L. Witkowski, “Codziennosc i jej pedagogiczne przekleństwa”, op. cit., p. 288. See also M. J. Szymański, “Problematyka codzienności w badaniach pedagogicznych i społecznych”, [in:] *Codziennosc szkoły. Uczeń*, ed. E. Bochno, I. Nowosad. M. J. Szymański, Kraków 2014; I. Orzelska, *W stronę pedagogiki istotnej egzystencjalnie. Życie i jego trudności z energią duchową jako wyzwanie pedagogiczne rezydów tożsamości*, Kraków 2014.

⁴⁴ See L. Witkowski, “Codziennosc i jej pedagogiczne przekleństwa”, op. cit., p. 290.

⁴⁵ T. Hejnicka-Bezwińska, *Pedagogika ogólna*, Warszawa 2008, p. 467.

for answers to the difficult question of how to live wisely in states of uncertainty, tensions and crises.

If education is to teach people how to live smartly, then today's preferred and implemented model of the ideology of success is no longer sufficient. Novel ways of thinking about education are needed. This demand was addressed by Theodore Brameld, who in his philosophical reflection developed an innovative concept of education known as social reconstructionism. Assuming that education is the most significant medium of social change, he developed a new way of thinking about it. In his opinion, traditional education is too broadcast-oriented. Anaesthetized by education, we do not understand our culture and our lives in their current, problematic functioning. We remain in the culture as given and offered for adaptation, without any possibility to change it. Reconstructionism convinces us that culture is a living creation. This perception opens the way to reflection and offers a sense of being able to influence it. Brameld stresses that the reconstruction of any element of contemporary culture must be carried out through democratic procedures and the universally accepted principles of social life⁴⁶.

Against this background, the implementation of social change requires the curriculum in schools to be adapted accordingly⁴⁷. First of all, most students need to learn to use academic methods much more effectively than they have done before. To date, most young people have not learned to adequately absorb natural science methods. Young people, at most, learn what is called natural sciences by learning formulas, axioms, principles, and equations. They do not learn this method as a universal way of analysing problems arising from experience. If they do, they refer this method to a narrow section of reality, treated in isolation. As a result, many young people graduate from high schools and universities having internalised only partially the academic method. Therefore, in educational practice, teachers should help young people to understand how to use academic methods not only in relation to natural sciences, but also in relation to personal and social life. A social shift calls for adopting school

⁴⁶ See H. Zielińska-Kostyło, "Zdrowie – społeczeństwo – edukacja", op. cit., p. 170.

⁴⁷ See T. Brameld, *Education as Power*, op. cit., p. 53.

curricula accordingly⁴⁸. School should become a centre of constant experimentation, where children learn to think and act academically from the very beginning, not only in physics and biology, but above all in all in human relations. The problem is that most people do not know how to think and act academically in relation to solving human problems. Many representatives of culture, which is in a state of crisis, do not know what to believe and what is good, desirable and purposeful. They face so many conflicting choices that they often lose confidence in what to do. Pursuit of new, firm values and their presentation to learners and teaching them how to live are some of the priorities of education. Human life must be targeted and have clear goals. In this context, the main task of education is to formulate, apply in practice, verify such goals and search for axiological orientation. This requirement is justified in so far as the world has been divided into warring camps, which devote most of their energy to sustaining hatred to one another and striving for mutual destruction. These anti-values are often more visible in everyday life than the values of love, cooperation and creativity. In this context, another important goal of education is to practice the procedures of democratic axiological orientation. Within this orientation a person believes in himself, in his ability to make decisions about his own life and in the ability to navigate interpersonal relations. A democratic axiological orientation boils down to a deep conviction that ordinary people have more common sense and sound judgment of what is good for them than anyone else. If teachers do not develop within themselves a profound confidence in this social self-fulfilment of most people, they will never accept democracy⁴⁹.

It should be remembered, however, that human rationality has its limitations and therefore man needs support and adequate preparation through education. The question of assessing and analysing whether contemporary schools inscribe in the educational process and education at various levels care for the acquisition of vital competences and preparation for everyday life, as well as whether and to what extent teachers are open and ready to accept such broadly defined tasks, remains open.

⁴⁸ See *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ See *Ibidem*, p. 37.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archer M. S., *Being Human. The Problem of Agency*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000.
- Archer M. S., *Structure, Agency and the International Conversation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003.
- Bauman Z., "Niecodziennosc nasza codzienna", [in:] *Barwy codzienności. Analiza socjologiczna*, ed. M. Bogunia-Borowska, Scholar, Warszawa 2009.
- Beck U., "The Reinvention of Politics. Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization", [in:] U. Beck, A. Giddens, S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1994.
- Bielik-Robson A., "Wstęp. My, romantycy – źródła romantycznego modernizmu Charlesa Taylora", [in:] C. Taylor, *Źródła podmiotowości. Narodziny tożsamości nowoczesnej*, ed. T. Gadacz, PWN, Warszawa 2001.
- Brameld T., *Education as Power*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, London 1965.
- Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Komunikat z badań*, BS/111/2013, Warszawa 2013, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_111_13.PDF (available: 17.07.2014).
- Dzięgielewska M., "Teorie życia codziennego – poszukiwanie znaczeń", [in:] *Edukacja a życie codzienne*, Vol. 1, ed. A. Radziejewicz-Winnicki, Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2002.
- Hałas E., "Powrót do codzienności? Szkic problematyki socjologii życia codziennego", [in:] *Barwy codzienności. Analiza socjologiczna*, ed. M. Bogunia-Borowska, Scholar, Warszawa 2009.
- Hejnicka-Bezwińska T., *Pedagogika ogólna*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008.
- Jedlewska B., "Pokolenie niewolników sukcesu? O fenomenie sukcesu we współczesnej literaturze i aktualnym wymiarze zjawiska zwanego 'wyścigiem szczyrów'", [in:] *Edukacja. Moralność. Sfera publiczna*, ed. J. Rutkowiak, D. Kubinowski, M. Nowak, Verba, Lublin 2007.
- Kostyło H., Kostyło P., "Edukacja jako narzędzie rekonstrukcji kultury", [in:] T. Brameld, *Edukacja jako siła*, Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2014.
- Lipiec J., *Wolność i podmiotowość człowieka*, Fall, Kraków 1997.
- Orzelska I., *W stronę pedagogiki istotnej egzystencjalnie. Życie i jego trudności z energią duchową jako wyzwanie pedagogiczne rezyduów tożsamości*, Impuls, Kraków 2014.

- Pawłowicz B., "Uzależnieni od sukcesu", *Zwierzciadło* 2015, No. 5 (2023).
- Rabiej P., Janiak O., "Ukąszeni wolnością. Portret Pokolenia Wielkiej Zmiany, Projekt Re-definicje", Thinktank, *Malmén monthly*, 2013, http://www.re-definicje.pl/download/TT16_RE_DEFINICJE.pdf (available: 17.07.2014).
- Romanowska-Łakomy H., *Droga do człowieczeństwa. Usłysz wewnętrzny nakaz bycia człowiekiem*, Wydaw. "A", Kraków 2001.
- Scott L., "Reflexivity and Its Doubles. Structure, Aesthetics, and Community", [in:] U. Beck, A. Giddens, L. Scott, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1994.
- Sukces, [in:] *Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, <http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/sukces;2576536> (available: 17.07.2014).
- Szymański M. J., "Problematyka codzienności w badaniach pedagogicznych i społecznych", [in:] *Codziennosc szkoły. Uczeń*, ed. E. Bochno, I. Nowosad, M. J. Szymański, Impuls, Kraków 2014.
- Więckiewicz B., "Konsumpcjonizm jako nowy styl życia współczesnego społeczeństwa polskiego", [in:] *Przemiany wartości i stylów życia w ponowoczesności*, ed. J. Daszykowska, M. Rewera, Żak, Warszawa 2010.
- Witkowski L., "Codziennosc i jej pedagogiczne przekleństwa", [in:] L. Witkowski, *Między pedagogiką, filozofią a kulturą. Studia, eseje, szkice*, Vol. 3, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, Warszawa 2007.
- Zielińska-Kostyło H., "Zdrowie – społeczeństwo – edukacja. Koncepcje Ericha Fromma i Theodore'a Bramelda", *Rocznik Andragogiczny* 2014, No. 21, p. 157-171, <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/RA.2014.011> (available: 17.07.2014).

Abstract:

The aim of this article is the analysis of influences of the cultural processes on the way of thinking about success in everyday life. The foundation for the reflections is constituted by the results of survey research reflecting transformation which took place within this area from the end of the 1980s up to the post-modern period. The research results prove that the category of success is not a stable social construct and the society members assign contradictory values to this notion. Those disadvantageous lead to number of tensions. The article presents alternative ways of human's reaction to these tensions and consequences such approach entails. The conclusions drawn with regards to education provide a summary for the overall reflections.

Keywords:

determinism, education, indeterminism, subjectivity, success, Theodore Brameld, everyday life