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## THE MAIN ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL POLICY: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

### Introduction

The educational policy is an important problem of social philosophy that refers to many other problems with methodology of analysis, organizational principles and functioning of educational systems. Methodological problems focus our attention to the definition of “educational policy” and possibilities of philosophical analysis of education, results of which could be realized in practice. The problems of organization and functioning of educational systems are staying actual in the context of modern condition and changes of educational practice.

The philosophical reflections on the educational policy are particularly relevant for post-communist countries that are experiencing a kind of crisis of education. This crisis is manifested by a number of contradictions. On the one hand, we are witnessing awareness of the need for openness, pluralism, and transformation the education into an important social component of statehood, increasing the state role in the world, and development of social capital. On the other hand, there is a kind of “hang” of innovations and implementations of educational reforms through the use of inefficient and formal approaches to the formation of educational policies. As a result, education focuses on the reproduction of the social system with all its social and political pathologies, and not for its transformation and change. The deeper causes of the political importance of education are necessary to add. If we want to explain these problems, it should be mentioned Hannah Arendt’s reflection on the crisis of education in America. She

states that education acquires political significance when a society establishes the idea of a new order. In European countries with established political traditions that are recognized and respected, especially by the older generation, to realize the political potential of education is not so easy. Often those who have such an intention will have to establish a version of tyranny, displacing the carriers of old value systems from the political order. There is a political paradox. On the one hand, those who are trying to establish political order through education, avoid coercion and violence. But, from the other hand, sooner or later they will come to, as Hannah Arendt writes, “Platonic terrible conclusion” about the need for removal of old people<sup>1</sup>. In the United States, which, according to Hannah Arendt, is a country of immigrants, education is not only the education of children but also their parents. This situation generates the feeling, according to which the new order applies to all and you must forget about the old order. However, in reality, we are dealing only with a illusory pathos of new. Such illusion can be found in post-communist societies, manifested in the discourse of “democratization”, “modernization” etc. Illusory opportunities to transform education into a political tool are complemented by the establishment of a new uncritical perception of modern theories and methods in the field of pedagogy. Therefore, one of the objectives of social and philosophical analysis of the problems of education is a reflection of the situation in the education sector that is evident in the conditions of the

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1. Х. Арндт, *Між минулим і майбутнім*, Дух і літера, Київ 2002, с. 185.

social and political transformation. We also need to explain the possibilities of using foreign experience of educational policy formation and implementation. Philosophical analysis of education policy focuses primarily on three major issues, namely: the essence of educational policy (education and politics are defined as important functional subsystems of society, because educational policy trying to determine through their interaction, which is designed to further the common good and effective functioning

of the social system); methodological principles of educational policy (attempt to demonstrate the interdisciplinary analysis); practical aspects (definition of tools to develop and implement educational policy). We also need to add the attempts to conceive of educational policy in terms of its emancipative ability. It is connected to the problem of humanization of political world. Educational policy can become effective emancipative project that is able to specify ways to achieve this.

### The main approaches to the study of educational policy

The most developed approaches to the study of educational policy, represented in contemporary Ukrainian social philosophy, are as follows:

**Approach, based on discourse analysis.** It includes discourse analysis and policy discourse analysis. This approach was developed and applied to educational policy in the work of V. Andrushchenko and V. Saveliev *Education Policy (review agenda)*. Educational institutions are regarded as “complex platforms” that were formed through discourse. Accordingly, critical discourse analysis, based on the experience of post-structuralism, realizes the deconstruction of discourses, analysis of language and rhetorical structures, in order to track the educational practices that occur in different policy areas<sup>2</sup>. This approach also has special importance for the formation of interdisciplinary direction, which the authors outline as education policy study and education policy analysis.

**Sociocultural and socio-historical approach** to understanding educational policy. It is presented in works of V. Galpierina<sup>3</sup>. The essence of this approach is defined by the unity of three components: the individual, society and culture. Education policy in this study is defined as “... the field of relations between different social groups, individuals over the use of government institutions to implement their interests and needs in one of the most important areas of public life – education”<sup>4</sup>. This definition refers to government institutions that are not quite appropriate for modernity. Obviously, it is associated with

the author’s focusing on state educational policy, the analysis of which is devoted a significant part of the study. In my opinion,

educational policy in a modern (or even post-modern) societies should be based on the understanding of power as a strategy that permeates all social relations. It is the concept of microphysics of power as it presented in the writings of Michel Foucault. This concept, in particular, rejects the premise of power localization, according to which it belongs only to state authorities. The term “power institutions” refers to the understanding of power as an entity of institutions. Although the current state of the political world shows that power appears rather as strategy (or technology) which determines the order of system to which all social and political institutions (including the state) involved. Besides these two approaches of educational policy analysis it could make sense using **interpretive analysis of the political world**. The primary importance of this analysis is related to the consolidation of the concepts for research and educational activity. I assume that educational policy is an important tool for strengthening the system senses that motivate political practices and promote the formation of effective political institutions. Moreover, thanks to an educational setting the educational policy is a precondition for relations in the political world, which included rational motives and interests. Traditional dimensions of education related to the reproduction of social and cultural systems, provide a neces-

2. В. П. Андрущенко, В. Л. Савельєв, *Освітня політика (огляд порядку денного)*, “МП Леся”, Київ 2010, с. 9-10.

3. See: В. О. Гальперіна, *Освітня політика в трансформаційному суспільстві: соціально-філософський аналіз*. Автореф. дис. на здобуття наукового ступеня канд. філософ. наук, Київ 2003, 19 с.

4. Ibid., p. 10.

sary part of education to attract individuals to the common good. Naturally, we come to the problem of political “neutrality” of educational policy: is it possible to form such an educational practice that

### The politics of education

For the study of educational policy it is important the distinction between “polity”, “politics” and “policy”. A lot of publications are dedicated to emphasizing this problem. For example, relying on already existing achievements of social philosophy, philosophy of education and political theory and studying the principles of educational policy, V. Galpieri defines “politics” as a form (*polity*), activities (*politics*) and content (*policy*)<sup>5</sup>. Recognizing the feasibility of such distinction and seeking the way to understand the educational policy essence, I should like to present it as a series of politics. Actualization and features of these politics are connected to the principles corresponding to the present. Among them I highlight and analyze the following politics.

The first one is *politics of subjection*. Perhaps, it is the most important aspect of education policy, because “to be subject” can be considered as a kind of meta-narrative of pedagogy and education. Referring to the politics of subjection, there is reason to give a definition of educational policy, educational policy – a policy of distribution of knowledge, values and meanings, which aims to adaptation, enculturation, or the emancipation of the subject. Accordingly, the educational process is an event the dominant possibility of which is formation and manifestation of subject. Education is seen as “modern” project each time. However, the question arises: what subject? Or even rather “subject” in what sense? These issues are particularly important in times of “death of the subject”, “fluid”, “mosaic” or even “modular” identities. The end of the twentieth century is characterized by proclamation of the need to replace the prospects of subjectivity by the intersubjectivity perspective. It is also evident the “blurring” of subjectivity by statements of anonymous social and political structures. We can even state that at this time there is move away from anthropocentrism,

would be ideologically neutral, which seemingly corresponds to the ideal of secular, postnational (or multicultural in some sense of the term) state?

which presents the kind of post-anthropological decentralized subject.

In the context of an educational policy of subjection the human arises as person who understands the meaning of his actions and can act rationally. In other words, we can state that subject has willingness and ability to participate in politics as creation, recognition and promotion of common meanings to support the public good. This subject is generated in a special way. V. Gerasimov writes: “The subject is not what is given from the beginning. We can say that the subject appears as a result of certain events (Badiou), including his own actions (Tourette, Foucault): self-discovery, break with social order, gathering himself”<sup>6</sup>. However, the creation of the subject can be made in two ways: 1) by the police practice of subjection (it integrates the human into political system of status quo and forms the non-genuine manifestation of subject that allows to control his actions); 2) educational politics of subjection (formation of human capabilities and broadcasting of knowledge, which will allow for people to realize their importance and opportunities in the context of individual self-fulfillment and the common aspirations of the good). The police practice of subjection forms the total disciplinarity which is opposite to free manifestation of political senses. Therefore, the term “politics” should be taken with a particular specification and an indication of the convention refers to the phenomenon. I write about the police in the sense as it was understood by Jacques Rancière<sup>7</sup>, when he says that police is structuring space and time. Police is opposed to the political structuring and not focused on the search for alternatives and new opportunities. In the extreme expression the police practice of subjection degenerates into a totalitarian practices of de-subjection.

5. Ibid.

6. *Политики субъективации в университете: образовательное событие*, Изд. центр БГУ, Минск 2008, с. 17.

7. J. Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, Verso, New York 1995, 107 p.

Educational policy, focused on the formation of the subject and its essential potential and opportunity, is lead to becoming the emancipated person. Of course, if education focuses only on enculturation, the socialization of the individual and broadcast knowledge, it can take the form of establishing disciplinarity. In this case, the person has to learn specific set of qualifications and knowledge in order to become a good specialist and effectively perform its function. But education can be also the human interaction with others, which leads to creation himself as subject. From the position of subject education becomes “care of the Self”. I use this concept of Foucault’s philosophy, because thanks to it is possible to formulate an act of subject formation through pedagogical impact. In the course of lectures *Hermeneutics of the subject* Foucault refers to antiquity and notes that “care of the Self” can only be with teacher. He writes that teacher is a person who cares about how his student cares of himself, and who loves his student in a way to take care of his care of himself. Teacher has selfless love for students and he gives them an example of care about the self as a subject<sup>8</sup>. Educational interaction between student and his teacher starts the process of enlightenment and transformation that reaches subjectivity and thus forms the subject.

The second politics is *politics of sense*. The world of “post-” (postmodern, post-ideology, post-science, post-politics...) is characterized by nihilism that leads to the end of sense. Therefore, an important principle of educational policy must be searching and transfer of sense. To explain what was going on, I want to draw attention to the definition of education as a transmission of value. In society the social values (which can more broadly be seen as social significance of ideas and things) are transmitted and spread through education. They provide continuity and stability of sociocultural system. This definition actualizes the reflection on the changes required by contemporary education. These changes point to an-

other essence of education, instead of transmission importance they are targeting to sense. The value that is often derived from the instrumental value, is only one aspect of sense. Focusing only on the value is associated with instrumental rationality, and education outcomes are defined as “competency”, which are suitable for a particular activity.

The third is *politics of knowledge*. It caused by the change of mode of existence of knowledge in modern culture. J.-F. Lyotard paid attention to this change in his famous report, which was published under the title *The Postmodern Condition*<sup>9</sup>. The “end of metanarratives”, which is analyzed in Lyotard’s report, causes the phenomenon of technological production of knowledge. Also in this situation the knowledge receives technological meaning. We live in society, which encourages overproduction of knowledge. As a result, we get the selection of immaterial values as fundamental values in culture. For example, Polish scholar B. Gofron writes that cognitive society based on the division of knowledge and cognitive phenomena caused by interpersonal relationships without boundaries. It became possible thanks to globalization and spreading the immaterial values<sup>10</sup>. Also we can see establishing a kind of ideology of “knowledge society”, in which the attempts to describe the nature of modern society are visible. As it is stated in the UNESCO report, the knowledge society gives the opportunity to discover, develop, convert, distribute information to obtain and use the knowledge needed for human development<sup>11</sup>. Acquiring a global nature, this new dimension of community is directed to perform functions of humanizing globalization, which betrays its ideological aspect. Based on the last statement we have reason to talk about policy, which is focused on ensuring “human development”, “empowerment”, “ensure the effective fight against poverty”: “Political, economic and social dynamics that supports the flourishing knowledge society, demonstrates the inextricable link that unites the struggle against poverty and

8. М. Фуко, *Герменевтика субъекта. Курс лекций, прочитанных в Коллеж де Франсе 1981-1982 учебном году*, Наука, Санкт-Петербург 2007, с. 75.

9. See: J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1984, 110 p.

10. Б. Гофрон, *Головні пріоритети освітньої політики XXI ст.*, “Філософія освіти/Philosophy of Education”, Київ 2006, № 1(3), с. 174, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

11. *К обществам знания. Всемирный доклад ЮНЕСКО*, Изд. ЮНЕСКО, Париж 2005, с. 29.

the protection and promotion of civil and political freedoms”<sup>12</sup>. Since education is directly related to knowledge institutions that are able to form and maintain modes of knowledge, it must find a place in the policy aimed at the development of “society of knowledge”. However, educational policy should avoid excessive indoctrination and technologizing. It should provide a reflexive and critical dimension of politics of knowledge.

The fourth is *politics of institutions*. It is associated with ensuring transparency of educational institutions, openness of educational policy that allows access to its formation and implementation of all participants in the educational process. In addition, the current sociocultural situation requires to take into account the dynamics of institutions and readiness to respond adequately to the challenges. Of course, the previous observation should not be treated as an final in itself. Educational institutions must find harmony between its traditional identity, which is built on the basis of constant values formed for many generations and recognized in this society, and the extraordinary intensity of social, economic and cultural processes that caused liquid modern.

Thus, politics of institutions, as part of educational politics, have to pay attention to the functional capacity of the institutions related to education. This issue refers, for example, to discussions about the quality of education. It appears particularly acute for today’s Ukraine. The Ukrainian education shows a kind of “vicious circle” which is concerns the inefficiency functioning of educational institutions: “The rulers and teachers every year complain of lack of funds for education, but

at the same time they continue to implement costly educational programs that are not safe reliable mechanisms for compensation money allocated to education”<sup>13</sup>.

Educational policy in higher education should be focused on the formation of academic culture. Educational institutions are public spaces. That is why they rely hope associated with finding a new spirit of community.

The fifth is *politics of equality*. It is associated with the problem of understanding the experience of marginalization and exploitation of certain groups of individuals in contemporary societies. Contemporary educational institution should be the space where manifestations of diversity that reveals different ways of living are possible. Politics of equality is aimed at finding ways of ensuring equality and justice for obtaining access to education. Models of politics of equality include: a) paying attention to social differences, their nature and origin (eg, neoliberalism provides that social differences are natural, and equality of access to education should be primarily provided through access to educational institutions and services); b) define the equal “starting position” for all members of society; c) outlining the principles of equitable distribution of educational benefits; d) identification of opportunities for targeted actions aimed at reducing inequalities and injustice in access to knowledge and education. Depending on the characteristics of understanding of these issues in contemporary social and political philosophy and the development of programs of educational policy we can produce different strategies for realization of politics of equality.

### **Educational policy and reformatting of public space**

Educational policy, focused on a special kind of activity (according to H. Giroux, it’s called “educational activity”), should be directed to reformatting the public space. Actually it is perceived as a way of political change and emancipation. This may be even the creation of alternative public sphere that acts as an ideal of social life and the basis of the democratic project. Finally, we can see that the resistance move-

ments to authoritarian regimes that have recently occurred (eg, “Occupy Wall Street”, “Occupy Gezi”, “Euromaidan”), naturally gave rise to educational projects (for “Open University Maidan” in Kyiv in early 2014). The idea of alternatives is the result of everyday experience of sociality, arising from new cultural communications and interactions. Of course, this raises the question of how this idea can be real-

12. Ibid., p. 30

13. З. Самчук, *Світоглядні азимуту освітньої навігації в умовах сучасного суспільного простору*, “Філософія освіти/Philosophy of Education”, Київ 2005, № 2, с. 105, <http://www.philosopheducation.com>

ized and become the stable social and political institutions. Z. Bauman said that “people admired streets hoping to find an alternative society. And still only found ways to get rid of the existing society; or more precisely, eliminate one of the features of the society in which scattered instantly directed their resentment - resentment, irritation, anger and rage”<sup>14</sup>. However, analyzing the generation of alternative ideas, I note that due to it emerging relationship between private and public, which causes sensitivity to the political problems of society, manifested in the horizon of everyday practice. H. Giroux, defining the purpose of radical pedagogy in the similar way, emphasizes that its achievement involves a combination of what is personal and what is political, so as to understand how does the power reproduce itself and how is it implemented into everyday’s communication<sup>15</sup>. Educational activity is not only training, but also acquiring social and political experience, and the use and dissemination of scientific and expert knowledge, which contributes to competence. In general, we can talk about the creation of a network of engagement in cases that are significant in social terms.

Along with well-known projects as the pedagogy of the oppressed (P. Freire), the transformative learning (J. Mezirow), critical pedagogy (H. Giroux), antipedagogy (I. Illich), feminist critical pedagogy (C. Luke, J. Gore) it is possible to release the emancipation on the basis of Jean-Joseph Jacotot’s universal method. In contemporary philosophy of education this method is updated by French political philosopher Jacques Rancière. It is important to say that this method of learning has anthropological implications. It is based on understanding the human will, which obeys the mind. I should notice that there is no reason higher or lower. As J. Rancière writes that pedagogical myth divides the world in two ones. More precisely, it divides the reason in two ones. Pedagogical myth argues that there are two kinds of intelligence: lower and higher. The first randomly captures the feeling, assimilates, interprets and repeats empirically in a close circle of habits and needs. The second reason knowing things with reasoning, it is served

by the method ‘from simple to complex, from parts to the whole’. It allows the teacher to transfer knowledge to adapt it to the student’s intellectual abilities and verify that the student is well understood that studied<sup>16</sup>. The new method relies on training the reason and will. “Will is myself, my soul, my strength, ability. I feel this will, it is me, it is myself”, as Jean-Joseph Jacotot wrote in his works. We perceive the importance of knowledge, depending on whether the will increases force of the reason. In some sense it is a rethinking of Cartesian anthropology of *cogito*, because “... instead of thinking subject who knows himself only freed from any senses and any bodies, we are thinking of a new entity, conscious of itself through action that it performs on himself and other bodies”<sup>17</sup>.

Emancipation is the ability to create the identity by our own effort, and not passively accept the identification created by the models, which are thrown by society. The universal education has emancipative potential because it opens up huge possibilities for changing society. The universal method of learning has task to raise those who consider themselves intellectually lower, give them leave the swamp in which they are stuck: it’s a swamp of ignorance and disrespect themselves as rational being. We must emancipate people and inspire them to emancipate the others<sup>18</sup>. We need to realize this task because the social world is often a world in which the fate of individuals could be distorted. As a result, people dissolves in anonymous *das Man* (if to recall the definition of unreal existence in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger). J. Rancière gives rather sharp characteristics for society: a world of madness, fallen activities which are obsessed by passion of inequality. In the social world we meet with comparisons that create inequality. These inequalities tend to get almost natural status or social axioms. The learning through explanations can be often used as means of such natural status and social axiom of inequality. It initially establishes that the teacher is smarter than student. Drawing attention to the ubiquity compare one person to another, J. Rancière says that this is the

14. З. Бауман, Л. Донскіс, *Моральна сліпота. Втрата чутливості у плинній модерності*, Дух і літера, Київ 2014, с. 143.

15. H., Giroux, L. Witkowski, *Edukacja i sfera publiczna. Idee i doświadczenia pedagogiki radykalnej*, Impuls, Kraków 2010, s. 143.

16. Ж. Рансьєр, *Учитель-незнайко. П'ять уроків із розкриття розуму*, Ніка-центр, Київ 2013, с. 23.

17. Ibid., p. 72.

18. Ibid., p. 121.

result of irrational elements that codifying by institutions. In this situation the mission of universal education gets sense. It can be a background for creation of equal community.

Based on the given thesis about universal method, we can affirm that education is similar to freedom: it is not given, but rather acquired. J. Rancière warns that we should not expect that society will introduce a universal method in schools and universities. Perhaps one of the “progressive” educators try to do use the universal method at present public school, but as a result we get only the manipulation of the concepts of “universal method”, “intellectual emancipation” etc. Such implementation of universal method can update the principles of inequality: the new division will include those who have a diplo-

ma acquired the old method, and those, who educated through universal education.

Particular politics, shown in the present article, demonstrate the context, in which is formed and implemented the general educational politics as an integrity of form, operation and meaning. The philosophical reflection on these politics gives a possibility to understand their essence, and thus opens the possibility of conceptual “construct”. It will demonstrate education as one of the measurements implementation of cultural policy that have social (following the common good), anthropological (human approval as a free entity, capable of self-development and realization of the self) and moral (overcoming the “moral blindness”, as outlined by Z. Bauman) consequences.

