Social control as the central concept of sociology and social pedagogy

Abstract
This article focuses on the issue of social control, which is discussed here from different points of view within sociology and social pedagogy. Social control deals with prevention as well as with responses to deviations from desirable behavioural patterns, and in the centre of its interest are interrelationships and sometimes rather inconsistencies between the individual and society. This is connected with the question of what are actually "desirable patterns of behaviour" and who are the concrete authors of this norm, i.e. in whose interest (individuals or groups) are introduced the norms of behaviour. The authors point out the fact that the usual reference to society conceals only the decisive context, i.e. social norms have in fact very often ideological function which also influences significantly the area of social pedagogy which (like other sciences or more precisely their knowledge) can become a mere instrument of any ideology, i.e. of the ruling class or group.

Keywords: social control, social pedagogy, society, education, human potential, utilitarianism, social norms, criminalization, free market

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Introduction

"No society can exist without social control. Even a small group of people who meet only occasionally must develop own control mechanisms; without it the group will fall apart in a very short space of time."

Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology

Peter Berger (1991) expressed in these words the knowledge already made by classics of sociology, who pointed out that the society cannot exist without social control. Lack of social control threatens the social community with disintegration and chaos; its excess entails the risk of total supervision over members of the society. Any society that wants to persevere, reproduce its culture, its norms and values, necessarily needs mechanisms for own regulation.

In Czech language the term "control" has very narrow meaning, because it mainly expresses the supervision over the process of actions and evaluation of the results (i.e. checking if the results correspond to the requirements).

In sociology is the concept of "control" understood in the same way as in English. The meaning of this word is associated with the term power - with the ability to manage people, to control and educate them, and in some ways to supervise and change their social behaviour.

The concept of social control can be understood very universally. We start from the fact that sociology itself arises as an attempt to re-establish control over the society that radically changed its form.

The establishment of sociology is connected with the transition from traditional society to modern society. In the traditional society social control was ubiquitous. It completely dictated the behaviour of people from birth to death. Earthly life was usually spent in a community of intimate people, social mobility was minimal. The situation was radically changed with the industrial revolution, with the development of the modern society.

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3 Social control is a term whose meaning varies despite its very strong frequency in sociology. The term social control was first introduced in the sociological literature by Albion Woodbury Small and George Edgar Vincent in 1894 in the book "Introduction to the Study of Society" published in New York. The author of the first work dedicated to the subject of social control is American sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross (Social Control, 1890).

4 The first social control studies were influenced by the negative experience of the absence of control in the case of immigrants in large American cities. The interest in the mechanism of social control was more noticeable in American sociology, especially at the beginning of the 20th century, and became the starting point for the concepts of authors such as Charles Horton Cooley (1902 and Social Organization, 1909) and Albion Woodbury Small Sociology, 1924).
The modern society is characterized by new technical inventions, new science, new forms of economic and political power that strengthened social mobility, set up various social groups, and established new life patterns as well as new life values. The Industrial Revolution caused a huge social turnaround. The "Great Transformation" broke the traditional conditions. In the industrial system dominates economic considerations. There is an increase in the complexity of human relationships and there is a threat of devastation of the natural environment of humans.

Gradually socialization mechanisms have been splitting. Family, school, group of peers, mass media, etc. often create contradictory socializing pressures, and these tendencies are particularly pronounced at present, which is called since the 1960s as the time of late modern or postmodern society, reflexive modernity.

Just as modernity has formed a radical separation from traditional societies, postmodernity represents a basic distinction from modernity. "In postmodernism the sense is loosing its great “S” (Descart's cogito ergo sum is questioned) the sharp boundaries of science are sharpened and knowledge is seen as (con) textual, limited, and relative."(Lyon 2002: 16) Postmodernism is actually a response to dissatisfaction with the state of interpretation of reality and the resulting treatment with the individual parts of reality that are interesting for us.

In general, it is also a response to the ever-deepening knowledge that casts doubt upon valid knowledge, reveals their gaps, reveals new dimensions of reality that bring new insights when old ones are no longer fitting. We will try to look at social pedagogy in this a rather unusual way.

Social pedagogy in the context of social control
Social pedagogy is a special science discipline connecting the field of education with the area of society. Social pedagogy can be understood as a science on the border between pedagogy and sociology, as the social context of education is emphasized. For social pedagogy, society is a mean of education, which is close to the sociological concept of socialization. (comp. Velký sociologický slovník 1996: 762)

5 The term "the Great Transformation" was used by Károl Polányi, according to whom the greatest impact on the change had "big machines" and the fact that the original motive of livelihood was replaced by the motive of profit.
6 The close connection between pedagogy and sociology emphasized É. Durkheim and F.W. Znaniecki. Durkheim even constituted the sociology of education as a special sociological discipline.
Education itself can be understood as an effort to control, i.e. to influence, to manage, to correct all important areas of social life. The institutions that create the educational environment are schools, clubs, leisure time associations, etc. The current social pedagogy wants to integrate the influences of the socio-cultural environment into the educational process, and so sociology is very close to social pedagogy and can be helpful in many ways. Although the concept of social control in social pedagogy is not so often used as in sociology and social pedagogy operates more often with concepts such as upbringing and education, the concept of education as a social control gives pedagogy the opportunity to look at issues of education from a sociological perspective and to bring even a critical view on the subject of social pedagogy.7

It is precisely sociology that allows us to approach the subject of education and the education itself in a sociological way: i.e. to express the genesis and transformation of education and upbringing by the influence of social factors. It is possible to "think over education" from the less common point of view. It is the sociological approach "that enables us to see in the new light the same world in which we have lived for our whole life." (Berger 1991: 28) Education can be perceived as a social phenomenon and explained by other social phenomena and by the nature of reality itself (Durkheim 1969). This sociological approach can be characterized as complex, systemic, systematic and theoretically empirical.

Therefore, we will try in our text to look at the education through the sociological concept of social control.

When defining social control, we can accept the idea of P. Berger (1991) according to which social control systems are concentric circles and in their centre is a human - his thinking, acting and behaviour are controlled by these systems. Of course, there are many social control systems. The main ones are: law, morality, customs, traditions, religion, ideology, occupation, family, peers, etc. None of these systems come out completely apart from each other, but the control mechanisms intertwine and complement each other.

Then the social control structure can be created by partial social control systems, each of which has its own controllers (e.g. parents, neighbours, peers, teachers, social workers, etc. are involved in education). The strategies of these factors can take the form of preventive or repressive ones, linked with positive and negative sanctions.

7 The sociological perspective is characterized by the words "to see through the game", "not to let other people to cheat us", "not to believe blindly everything that is preached in the church or said in school, or what is spread through mass media", i.e. to bring the art of mistrust and to assume that things are not always what they seem to be.
Social control is realized in normal everyday activities and in social relations, very often unintentionally and spontaneously. Social groups influence through social control their members, from whom they expect adequate behaviour. The individual internalizes social norms and values, develops his/her self-concept, and establishes the psychic mechanism of self-control. It this way the individual gains sustained responsibility for his/her behaviour, and it is one of the main goals of social control and education. A consciousness that is formed in the process of socialization, when are internalized social norms and values and internal control is created, plays a very important role.

The active participation in social control processes is related to social responsibility. Lack of social control is seen as a reduction of sensitivity to undesirable, norms breaking values. This state leads to the decomposition of the normative system - to the anomie.

Social control dealing with prevention and reactions to deviations from desirable behaviour must take into account the relationships and sometimes the disagreements between the individual and the society. Already the cliché "desirable ways of behaviour" provokes the question, who are the authors of the norms and whose interest this normalized behaviour expresses. The common reference to the society only hides the crucial context and has very often an ideological function.

However, thinking over the social control can not be solved without highlighting a number of social control problems that can be inspiring for social pedagogy as well.

**Active social control**

The active social control means those mechanisms that prevent unwanted behaviour. The active social control can work for example as reward for desirable behaviour (sugar and whipping method), while the most important mechanism of building internal control is the involvement of individuals in institutions and the legitimacy of these institutions. This is also related to the problem of socialization, which in its content brings these elements that legitimize a certain social structure. As a final product, socialization should bring the will of individuals to do what is wanted by the society, i.e. "wanted conformity". The active control influences motivation through the interpretation of incentives. Thus, conformity with social norms is regarded as natural, because it is taken as the fact or as purpose-rational behaviour because it corresponds to our own material and ideological interests of being, while manipulation with them would be again regarded as a result of the active control, e.g.
consumerism as the result of social influence. Conformity can also be rationally based because it corresponds to the learned belief in what is right and good.

The active social control can also be achieved by giving the actors a limited knowledge in a particular situation, and information about other alternatives is denied; simply expressed: by holding them in ignorance. The tactics of holding in ignorance can use both censorship and motivation for over-information, where the important issues are covered with the unimportant ones. Thus, the individual does not know about possible alternatives, and this factual limit forces him/her into conforming behaviour.

Another important way of active social control is spreading of fear, which is a part of every society (even democratic) but it reaches various intensity and it is the basic characteristic of any dictatorship. This situation is concisely described by Kabát in his book Psychology of Communism (2011: 13): "The regime creates special living conditions in which the element of pervasive fear is integrally included. Fear simply cannot stop for a moment, just like awareness of the limitations of own rights, of the level of communication to others, of the limited movement, etc. ... Another sign is the penetration of fear into every tiny detail. Fear is an automatic part of everyday activities: visiting any office or authority, a doctor, going to school, opening a letter, meeting a neighbour ... People then still have the focus of fear in themselves, and they constantly supply themselves with a sufficient dose of fear, to which is risky to resist.

**Reactive social control**

The reactive social control includes those mechanisms that follow unwanted behaviour. The reactive social control can be divided into formal and informal.

In common speech, as well as in the legal terms the social control is understood mainly as the formal control. But sociologists and social psychologists often stress informal social control often because they see the need to pick up neglected aspects of informal control.

The informal control is executed by partners of interactions in groups whose primary purpose is not the control. Its sanctions can be psychological, physical and economic. It is precisely the economic sanctions that today appear to be important factors that make people behave in conformity. The informal control is normalized by informal norms, customs, tradition, morality, reciprocity etc.
The formal social control is carried out directly by established instances for this purpose such as police or correctional institutions; in special cases also by the army. Its means are also diverse, but in the end there is always coercion behind them.

Although the effect of control measures is taken into account, it appears that the border between formal and informal control cannot be defined precisely: formal control reaches its achievements often because it stimulates informal control, but the sanctions of this form of control are not less feared. For example a sentence of imprisonment is linked to the loss of social status and sanctions of all kinds. Sometimes the end of the criminal career is supported with more informal control connected with job positions, marriage, worrying about someone else who would be alone if the person was imprisoned, etc.8 Moffit (1993, 1997) in her theory distinguishes “adolescent-limited offenders” who begin their antisocial careers in adolescence and at the end of adolescence they “grow up” from it and “life-coursepersistent offenders”, who manifest antisocial behaviour usually in childhood and this behaviour is relatively stable throughout life). Giordano and Cernkovich (2001) conclude that a group of delinquents living at home all the time represents more “adolescent-limited offenders”, while the group from the detention centre is formed mostly by “life-coursepersistent offenders”. These and other results (see Dundelová, 2011) support again the importance of emotional positive family environment for the prevention of delinquency.

However, all social control measures, both formal and informal, should be more relevant to prevention than to repression. Which specific control responses from a wide range of sketched options apply in individual cases depends on sub-cultural specifics and cultural habits.

"Diagnosis" depends on the actual behaviour but also in the definition procedure, but decisive is the determining power of the "controllers". This definition power - and here again we can distinctly feel the governmental aspect of social control - is decisive and it defines what is the deviation and who will be controlled, respectively who will be educated.

Criminalization, medicalization, neutralization

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8 The Austrian sociologist Roland Girtler even pointed out at his lectures at the Faculty of Law at Masaryk University that he had witnessed the end of the criminal career of an "inconsolable" recidivist due to his little kitten. The recidivist himself stated that his return to prison would mean a cat's shelter for his kitten, and he would not allow it. Where experts could not help, the pet helped.
Responding to deviations can take the form of criminalization, medicalization, and neutralization. The most important difference between them is in the degree of responsibility. A criminal is called to account for his actions, the patient is cured from his/her unwanted state, and for the period of his/her illness his/her misconduct is forgiven or can be overlooked - neutralized, i.e. it is tolerated. The legislator may decide if the strange behaviour is a disease or a criminal act.

If it is not necessary to assert the criminalization of some generally undesirable, deviant behaviour (i.e. generally breaking behavioural norms), and if this behaviour is not defined as pathological, the neutralization - as mentioned above - can be the third response.

Neutralization means limiting the behaviour of a particular group of people to a particular social context. Within this defined framework the deviant behaviour is tolerated, isolation eliminates its threatening peaks. This attitude represents a totally subtle but very effective control measure. If there are crossed-out the boundaries, an individual brings such unwanted behaviour into banned areas, or if there is a risk that such behaviour will become a mass phenomenon, then reprehensible forms of control are rapidly emerging.

Criminalization, medicalization and neutralization can alternate, or some "controllers" can use simultaneously or concurrently different forms. Lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists and other professionals are sometimes inconsistent in the choice of criminal or medical responses. For example both lawyers and public opinion often discuss whether a spray painted wall is a creation of a work of art or a criminal offence.

However, the intervention of controlling instances can also have contraproductive consequences to the preventive function of the punishment. The stigmatizing effects of criminal bring a reduction of the chances of legal action for perpetrators, promote their identity change in the sense of self-understanding as criminals, push them into criminal roles, and catalyze the development of multiple secondary deviations.

The positive function of crime and punishment was already accepted by Durkheim, including, among other things, highlighting standards, refreshing the feeling of collectivism, consolidating group solidarity with law enforcement, and compliance with conformity can become effective thanks to concealing a real quantitative scale of breaking norms. On the other hand, extensive and complete information could harm the validity of standards. "Protection" of the members of higher society and the lack of prosecution for their typical

9 Medicalization is defined as a process where originally non-medical problems are classified and treated as medical problems.
criminal acts often prevents the system from being discreditable and does not undermine its legitimation; on the contrary, defining the members of the lowest level of society as dangerous can stabilize the existing order. However, this again points to the ideological background of social control and hence to education, because it also focuses on individual groups in the context of the social situation, currently defined social problems and, of course, the state social security system.

Conclusion

Taking all of these factors into account, we can ask whether social pedagogy should not focus also on completely different groups, subcultures, in the future, because pedagogy is concerned with intentional and systematic influence on people with the aim to change them in a certain direction. The aim of these changes is "good", and educational activity is even some sort of moral act. The goal of pedagogy is to develop in people their human potential and lead them to live a responsible life. Should not be politicians, lawyers, police officers, etc. be in centre of interest of social pedagogy? Some forms of social action of some people (fortunately still only of individuals) would certainly deserve to provide them educational help to manage their life in society and to help them to have empathy for social solidarity - the self-discipline, which was also emphasised by Durkheim and which is based on the sense of reciprocity of collectivity. The individual can be grateful to the collectivism for everything he has become. Nowadays, in the time of networks, the self-control has a different dimension: the individual does not owe others, but only himself/herself. Individualism, which was linked to social responsibility and obligations in the Durkheim’s concept, in the Czech Republic - according to I. Možný - "has run wild", because there arose an individualism without responsibility. Pride from individualism has disappeared, leaving only "cunning utilitarianism and selfishness" (Možný 1999: 18). Therefore, is not necessary to educate people through all social classes to eliminate it? And is not just this the role of social pedagogy?

Liberal economic conditions have allowed the emergence and dynamic development of a specific social class of "competent", which Karel Kosík calls "Lumpenbourgeoisie" (Kosík 1997: 148 et seq.). Its members are characterized by two characteristics: never-ending greed and calculating sense - regardless of whether they are financiers, middle entrepreneurs

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10 In a similar form we can find individualism in Rousseau’s concept and it is also expressed in the Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights (1789). Similar meaning has individualism in works of A. de Tocqueville, whose concept is based on the perception of individualism, as willingness and ability to sacrifice some of own interests for the benefit of others. (comp. Mečiar 2005: 149 et seq.)
or tradesmen. The basis of their morals is profit - in all circumstances. Under the conditions of property inequality, the right of every citizen to a higher material standard is now to be governed only by the value of his/her abilities which will appreciate by the free market. These with higher evaluation parameters, i.e. these "competent" should be a guarantee of continuous progress. The less competent are allowed only to pick up crumps provided by the more successful ones (Keller 1995: 92 et seq.). They are redundant; but is "being redundant" the main reason for becoming the main subject of social pedagogy? Is not it very simplifying? How can social pedagogy be used for the development of society? And how can it be misused? We think that social pedagogy of the 21st century is facing all these - above mentioned - issues.

References:


The term deconversion French sociology define as a situation where a certain part of the population becomes redundant in the system. "Those who survive in the suburbs are not interesting from the point of view of the labour market or purchasing power." (Keller, J. Právo 12.11.2005, p. 7). These people simply were born on the wrong address. As Keller states, the recommendation that they should study to have better life is a mere naïve expression. The French education system produces more graduates each year than the economy is capable to accept. So the financial and recovery programs do not help much, it is necessary to change the system - a system that is - according to Keller - based on maximizing of private profits. Big investments in the social field could weaken the country's ability to compete, so it is illusory to wait for expensive "rehabilitation" actions when the worsening of the welfare state is on the agenda.


