

**Edu World 2016**  
**7th International Conference**

**AXIOMATIC FOUNDATIONS OF RUSSIAN MODERN  
PEDAGOGY. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGY**

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**Abstract**

The paper aims to identify the epistemic structures of modern Russian pedagogy, with its two current branches: social pedagogy and psychological pedagogy, represented by the world-renown educational theorists A.S.Makarenko and L.S.Vîgotski. We focus on the treaties of A.V.Lunacearski and A.S.Makarenko, representatives of the socio-centrist paradigm in education, initiated by Paul Natorp in Germany (*Social pedagogy*, 1999) and by Emile Durkheim in France (*Education and Sociology*, 1922). Our diachronic analysis envisages fundamental concepts and axioms of education in terms of curriculum paradigm and identifies Russian's educational theorists' contribution to the clarification of issues related to: finalities, methods in education, methodical organization of the collective educational process, educational action etc. The involvement in the community problems and the writings of the theorists that are representative for social pedagogy developed in a specific historical setting and in an exceptional cultural model in which contents prevails over the forms. If their writings have been ideologies and ignored for a long period of time, recently, Russian pedagogy attracted scholarly attention in the Western space, proving the actuality of these theoreticians. Trying to avoid the risks of subjective approaches, we have reanalyzed the writings of Russian pedagogues. More exactly, our use of educational axioms in the interpretation of the chosen writings has emphasized the epistemic valences of the Russian social pedagogy.

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**Keywords:** Social pedagogy; axiomatic fundaments; education aim; collective; methods.

## 1. Introduction

The paper proposes a foray into modern Russian social pedagogy, which came into obscurity unduly lately, after being excessively politicized in another stage. Significant aspects of the work of

pedagogues who contributed to the development of social pedagogy are discussed. The promoters of this worldwide teaching current were Paul Natorp, Georg Kerschensteiner, John Dewey, Emile Durkheim.

The social paradigm promotes, supports and develops an educational model “which focuses on the most important and objective norms of society, whether it be political, economic, ethical, considered superior to individual psychological needs.” (Cristea, & Stanciu, 2010, p. 69) This branch “that studies the social determinism of educational training process, conceived as a process modeling human social behaviour”, bears the generic name of social pedagogy (Langa, 2008, p. 32).

## **2. Purpose, Methodology and Results of the Study**

### **2.1. Objectives**

The objectives of the dissertation are: the analysis of base concepts, education, functions of education, structure and goals of education, general contents of education, means, context, pedagogical sciences, pedagogical research; the analysis of particularizing concepts in pedagogy, pedagogy treaties and categorizing educational sciences.

### **2.2. Theoretical Significance**

The significance of the paper lies in: the concepts listed; capitalizing on the strengths of rationale of Russian pedagogy for the epistemic development of the science of education. This research has endeavored to solve scientific issues of particular importance: the identification and interpretation of epistemic valences of Russian pedagogy from the perspective of epistemic grounding of the science of education with reference to the philosophy and theory of education and curriculum theory.

Relevance and importance of the topic addressed.

The theme is topical in the postmodern society in which globalization requires knowledge of relevant aspects of the most important pedagogical literature. The orientation towards the West in recent decades has led to the neglect of pedagogic texts in the Eastern area, which are due to resume their rightful place in exegesis. On the other hand, there is controversy regarding the status of pedagogy as independent subject or as an accumulation of several disciplines whose object of study is education.

### **2.3. Methodology**

The methods used in the research were: text analysis - method used in the study of representative works of specialists under discussion; comparative method, performed by investigating educational problems, from a synchronous-diachronic perspective; hermeneutical method, based on interpreting historical facts in relation to the history of institutions and products, prioritizing the later.

Interpretation was performed using two concepts: paradigm - approach to theory, concepts, axioms; historical -epoch to identify stages (pre-modern, modern and post-modern).

We made a text analyses—original and translation- of pedagogical works representative for Russian social pedagogy and of the most important dictionaries of pedagogy in both countries. Using the diachronic perspective, we found a place for the representatives of Russian social pedagogy among the

great names of world pedagogy. In order to delimitate the epochs we resorted to the classifications made by Russian pedagogues V. Zenkovski and M.A.Mazalova, but especially to the periodization made by the Romanian pedagogue Sorin Cristea (the pre-modern, modern and post-modern periods). The hermeneutic method helped evaluate the results of the activity of social pedagogy representatives. They were analysed using a grid containing concepts and axioms, grid proposed by Sorin Cristea.

### 3. Theoretical Foundation

Russian modern pedagogy has two branches - social pedagogy, represented in Russia by Makarenko and psychological pedagogy illustrated by Viġotski. In Russia, the evolution of theory, methodology and conceptualization, based on accumulated criteria leads to an open attitude towards a new paradigm, the curriculum paradigm.

The concept of historical epoch taken from historiography, is defined by Sorin Cristea in a given socio-economic and social model. From the perspective of "the epistemic level reached as normal science within the matrix of the base subject matter", Sorin Cristea (2010, p. 29) identifies three stages of evolution in the history of pedagogical thinking and education: the pre-modern, modern and post-modern stages. We use the following chronological separation of Russian pedagogy: K. D. Uşinski, L. N. Tolstoi for the pre-modern period, A. V. Lunacearski and A. S. Makarenko, representatives of social pedagogy, L. S. Viġotski, P. I. Galperin, D. B. Elkonin, representatives of psychological pedagogy in the modern period, I. K. Babanski, I. P. Podlasii for post-modern period.

The modern stage of pedagogy begins with the definition of fundamental concepts and their articulation within theories outlined by general pedagogy (see Cristea, 2010, 2015). Modern pedagogy is marked by the conflict which emerged in the late nineteenth century, intensified in the former half of the twentieth century, extended into the present, between psychocentric and the socio-centric paradigm.

In Russia the two paradigms were represented by scholars such as Viġotski (psychocentric paradigm) and Makarenko (socio-centric paradigm). Worldwide, the attempt to solve this conflict initiated in the postmodern stage - mid-twentieth century – launches the curriculum paradigm.

Epistemological foundations must be emphasized in social and humanistic studies because they are still new and having a more complex object of research, they still do not have a very solid conceptual apparatus. Our interest in Russian pedagogy is justified by the fact that it addresses epistemic specificity. We believe that pedagogy is a specific and distinct subject of study.

There are few fundamental concepts, forming the discipline matrix. Its base is relatively stable. The fundamental concepts have a certain variability in relation to empirical reality reduced to 0 (Cristea, 2015).

The operational concepts are subordinated to the others and vary in relation to empirical reality. The fundamental concepts form the matrix: they are hinged in ideal models or types (Max Weber) and form axioms (Подласый, 2009 cited in Cristea, 2010). Axioms are fundamental truths that are well known, are established by way of reference to fundamental concepts. Axioms evolve in response to historical stages and can be built only if there is discipline matrix.

According to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Pedagogy* (Cristea, 2015), matrix forming concepts are:

- Education;
- The most general education function that is objective - training and personality development;
- Basic structure of education;

The first three concepts constitute objective dimension of education, and the last four constitute its subjective dimension.

- Aims of education - value orientations;
- General contents of education: moral education, intellectual, technological - applied, aesthetic, physical and mental.

They are based on universal human values: moral good, scientific truth, the utility of truth, beauty, health.

- General forms of education:
  - Organized
    - Formal;
    - non-formal.
  - Non-organized
    - Informal - through spontaneous influences, including school-related ones.
- The context in which the education takes place:
  - The social broadest education system as a construct launched by UNESCO;
  - The education system;
  - Specialized context, static;
  - The process of education, dynamic;
  - Specific activities;
  - Specific situations - to be identified in the relationship between specific activities and work conditions and resources.

These concepts are specific to the representatives of Russian social pedagogy and their analysis is undertaken in this dissertation.

### **3.1. A.V. Lunacearski's (1875-1933) Contribution to Social Pedagogy**

A significant representative of Russian social pedagogy is Lunacearski, an intellectual, translator, author, literary critic, art critic, who opposed the ideas of Kurpskaia regarding productive work in school, the system becoming less influenced by politics and ideology. As he believed "school is still school", he acted as a bridge between the east and the west, contacting the most prestigious intellectuals: Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Romain Rolland, St. Zveig and so on.

The principles upon which he relies most are: educational system, goals, principles, content, education, organization, methodology, culture, and educational crisis. He suggests a model of a unique school, a solution to society's issues in 1920.

Anticipating Makarenko, he states that the basis of discipline must be the group. In a group the teacher can find smaller groups that will help him create the required discipline. In this way he can develop the sense of honor.

The principle of work school, according to the scholar, is that the student must acquire practical knowledge through educational work, i.e. "in an active, live process. [...]"

After all, work is a joyful thing, as long as it does not turn into overwork", says Lunacearski. On the other hand, work school suggests not only acquiring knowledge through work but "learning to work by the children" (Lunacearski, 1978, p. 19).

Work school must eliminate learning by heart and can give the child the opportunity to shape, to develop abilities "at first by playing and then by turning the game into simple work processes and, finally, into more complex fruitful processes that give practical knowledge". Thus, the school will train the student to acquire practical knowledge and skills "through direct perception of reality under conditions of intense activity of the whole body" (Lunacearski, 1978).

#### Final aims

Final aims are presented by Lunacearski in terms of objectives. He tries to answer the question - "What educational goals do we have?" His response refers to our desire to educate man as harmoniously as possible, morally and spiritually, to have solid general knowledge, to be able to learn any skill, showing high craftsmanship. In this way, we want to create a man eager to work with others. The model is evoked in Greek antiquity.

#### Education

He states that education fulfills a fundamental social role to the extent that "man is almost entirely a creation of education". Thus, from the father and mother, the child inherits what, incorrectly, is considered to be a *tabula rasa*; "in fact, here are included all general human characteristics, all organic functions characteristic of the human species. But all the child will believe everything he will know, everything he will have, 90% of his personality will depend on education" (Lunacearski, 1978, p. 54).

"In all languages (*Bildung*, education etc.), education is related to the following representation: the child is headed for a particular purpose, is educated in accordance with certain ideals. In education, the child is the raw material, the material to be shaped, which must get a certain finite form. "

The notion of education comprises two methods: instruction and education. Instruction is the transmission of certain knowledge while education means organizing the character.

#### Instruction

The Russian word *obrazovanie* (education), as well as the German one *Bildung* both originate from the word *obraz* (face). "Most likely, when the people had to decide what one should do for himself and what society should do for one, he used to model, from whatever substance, the human face." (Lunacearski, 1978, p. 76)

The goals that the instruction must follow are to tackle the transformation of "the man mutilated by contemporary society" in a beautiful human being, ready to exercise all its powers. Humans must develop a harmonious body, so a part of all others must not impede the other parts. "Just as in the body of an educated person, each cell lives and acts for the good of all the others and everything merges into a feeling of happiness, so in society, everything must serve the common purpose, and each individual must submit a maximum creative effort, so that everything should blend together in perfect harmony". This

harmony, which we call culture, is the real instruction, and school is the one which has to serve such training, says the scholar.

Like Tolstoi, Lunacearski addresses the issue of freedom in education. It challenged the discipline imposed in school that teaches the child to believe that he is a person deprived of liberty, unable to do almost anything, “that he is a subordinate placed under the supervision of a stern teacher ready to scold and instill the idea that he will become a humble subject, whom the State could call to order at any time” (Lunacearski, 1978, p. 56).

Russian pedagogical thinking, historically located in the modern period, is represented by V.V. Zenkovski who outlines three main directions: 1) pedagogical naturalism 2) pedagogical idealism, 3) current pedagogical-religious (Зеньковский, 1960, p. 171).

The soviet direction of the naturalism teaching mentioned by Zenkovski is divided by Mazalova in two stages: a) 1917-1930 - b) 1930-1980 (Мазалова, & Уракова, 2006).

The most representative name in the period 1907-1930 is the teacher and writer A.S.Makarenko. The central tenet of the school in Soviet Russia is the school of labor. This principle appeared in Russian pedagogy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Krivenko’s book – *Physical labor* - a necessary element in education, then in K. D. Uşinski’s, L.N. Tolstoy’s and A.S. Makarenko’s books. In the pre-revolutionary years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the principle was developed rapidly. During the soviet period the slogan became official and compulsory, being offered extended coverage by the newspaper Free Education.

In the '30s, pedagogy begins to lose its scientific aspects, due to ideology. Meanwhile, at this stage studies of psychology, applied in education by L.S. Viġotski gain momentum.

### **3.2. A.S. Makarenko’s (1888-1935) Contribution to Social Pedagogy**

Being concerned with shaping a concept of education through and for work, A.S. Makarenko created the foundations of labor pedagogy. He argues that labor is a positive factor in education only if the activity envisages the creation of values. Socially recognized his pedagogical concepts, the result of experiments in Maxim Gorky Colony and in Dzerzhinsky Village, have led A.S. Makarenko to a specific pedagogical paradigm, social pedagogy based on an objective determination of goals and the means of education, focusing on community resources.

A.S. Makarenko is one of the outstanding pedagogues whose legacy is reassessed. He is the author of the theory of the individual education group, which was dominant in Soviet pedagogy until 1980. This theory postulated the idea of education in the community and through the collective, which sets out the basic principles of education, pedagogy and subsequently recovered by Western social pedagogy. The main factor in the team development is dynamism. In formal education, A.S.Makarenko stressed the importance of social relationships in school groups (group work, class, school). Group pedagogy, in his conception, is primarily pedagogy of school peers.

The work of A.S. Makarenko, ignored in Romania in the last 3 decades, is being studied with great interest in Western Europe. For instance, the doctoral dissertation *La dialectique pédagogique: vers une épistémologie des discours pédagogiques à travers l'étude de l'œuvre d'Anton Makarenko* (author - Jean Rakovitch) is noticed in France. Additionally, worth noting are multiple articles in English magazines: Caskey B. (1979). The Pedagogical Theories of A. S. Makarenko: A Comparative Analysis Comparative

Education. *Disparities and Alternatives in Education*, 15(3), 277-286, and presentations held at conferences: Terje Halvorsen, *Key Pedagogic Thinkers: Anton Makarenko*, University of Nordland, Norway.

Pedagogical writings in the manner of literature are appreciated by pedagogical historians, being mentioned in established dictionaries: (Cristea, 2010; 2015; *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation* 1998).

It is noted that the idea of "using a group as a means of generating social experience for the child" is implemented by A.S. Makarenko in particular circumstances. With regard to this study, the focus will be on analyzing studies and articles part of Makarenko's "Chosen Pedagogical Works", volumes 1-3 (Makarenko, 1951). This diachronic analysis will approach fundamental principles of education with regard to curriculum paradigms. Consequently, we will pinpoint A.S. Makarenko's contribution to clarifying some issues regarding the purpose of education, educational methods, organizing the educational process in a group, the educator, the educational act, and the structure of education.

#### The Purpose of Education

A.S. Makarenko's understanding of this is what we call today macro-structural, long-term result. Hence, the purpose of education defines one's ability to educate oneself as to attain a larger perspective, a broader sense of orientation. The general purpose of education is neither abstract nor limited, but a product of social life, involving one choosing the means through which it is achieved.

Makarenko (1951, pp. 27-38) notes that, during the 1930s, "In the theory of pedagogy, the purpose of education has become, however odd, an almost forgotten issue". Subsequently, "it may be believed that this issue is completely unrelated to scientific pedagogy".

Makarenko (1951, p. 27) also notes that the source of this phenomenon is the fact that in philosophical pedagogy "only the goal of education is discussed." As for social pedagogy, Makarenko considers that pedagogy must not only attend to the goal of education, but also to the means that lead to it. The purpose of education must be, hence, deduced from the goal of education and "the means through which we approach this purpose".

Surprisingly, he contests not only philosophical pedagogy, but critiques experimental pedagogy, which sways education towards a biological approach.

#### Educational Methodology

Makarenko (1951, p. 79) builds a model comprised of the effective pedagogical means of education, model which is based on: "Pedagogy - regarding education, as a science, which practically must ensure that the objective exists and it is clear and derived from social needs"; the purpose and goals of education - which should be elaborated by pedagogy, through a sociological perspective. Consequently, these statements "can start from neither biology, nor psychology, but from pedagogy's "social history"

Approaching the methodology of education through social paradigms assists Makarenko in noticing a significant issue of pedagogical theories, "being mistaken first and foremost with regard to the purpose". He notes that there are 3 types of errors: "deductive stating", "fetishism" and "isolated means". His solutions, based on social pedagogy, propose overcoming the 3 errors.

Makarenko's contribution to eliminating a pedagogical, error that of isolating one single, allegedly superior method, is significant. "No method, generally speaking, can be considered good or bad if we judge it independently", he states. (Makarenko, 1951, p. 82)

Somewhat anticipating the curriculum paradigms, Makarenko emphasizes the fact that the most important matter is "establishing the purpose of education."

Organizing the education process in a group

Through social pedagogy, Makarenko introduces a concept defining the group of students that share a positive attitude towards the institution and its purpose. Using the premise that "the true stimulus of human life is the joy of tomorrow," Makarenko defines education as a means through which perspectives should be formed for its subjects. This principle is one of his most significant ones.

The Educator

The work of the educator is criticized by Makarenko, due to it being "dictated by the heart" and "being misleading". In his final analysis, he states that educators should perfect themselves as creators that commit to their students, this commitment being something special.

Despite objections to A. S. Makarenko's pedagogical system (findings based solely on observation without using complex methods of pedagogical research, restricting groups to those organized in orphanages etc.), his contribution to the development of pedagogy is considerable.

#### 4. Results

The results of the research are in fact a re-reading of the fundamental texts of Russian social pedagogy which was for a long-time ideologized and later on forgotten. We applied an analytic grid which made subjective interpretations impossible. Applying the axioms of education, the fundamental concepts of education to the texts of the Russian pedagogues under analysis, we demonstrated the epistemic aspects of modern Russian social pedagogy.

#### 5. Discussion

A.S. Makarenko's work is analysed in the history of Romanian pedagogy by Ion Gh. Stanciu, who emphasizes the merit of the author who focuses not on the individual child, but also on groups of children. It is to be noted that the idea "of using the group as a way of building a child's social experience" is exploited by Makarenko in a specific historical setting, but this idea is presented and "accepted" by many other theoreticians of education as early as the 1920's and 30's: R. Cousinet, C. Freinet, Kurt Lewin etc.

As already said, it is particularly the pedagogy of A.S. Makarenko that currently arouses interest in the West, rather than the ideas of A. V. Lunacearski.

Papers published recently in Russia on this issue examine especially the current aspects of Russian social pedagogy: Мудрик, (2013) *Социальная педагогика*. Москва: Издательский центр „Академия”; Sorochinskaya, (2014). *Prognostic Mission of Sociological Knowledge in Development of the Theory of Social Pedagogy*. In Guryanov (Ed.) *Social Pedagogy in Russia: On the Cutting Edge of Time: monograph*. pp. 175-188. Moscow. Saint Petersburg: Institute of Social Pedagogy of the Russian Academy of Science, Nestor-Istoriya.; Aliyeva, (2011). *Development of Social Pedagogy and System of Professional Education of Experts of Social Sphere in Modern Russi*. Candidate's Thesis in Pedagogy, Moscow.



Our work places the studied phenomenon in historical context, but identifies at the same time, the epistemic structures of pedagogy.

## 6. Conclusions

The conclusion that emerges from the analysis of representative works of modern is that Russia is an exceptional cultural model in which internal contents are predominant in relation to external forms. We noticed the spiritual valences, multiple valences of specialists' personalities and therefore their involvement in community problems. Among them, we can note important writers (Radișcev, Novicov, Ușinski, Cernișevski, Rozanov, Tolstoi, Makarenko, Suhomlinski), scholars (Lomonosov, Ţiolkovski), theologians (Zenkovski) etc. Their inspiration seems to thrive "in that space of inner freedom that the Russians have always found between their motherland and the infinite horizon" (Nivat, 2004, p. 217). The Western World, where books and dissertations are written on Russian pedagogy, becomes increasingly interested in Russian social pedagogy.

The scientific novelty and originality of the research are due to its nature - historical, hermeneutic, theoretical, targeting the identification of pedagogical structure which invest practice with stable value, dynamism and efficiency.

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