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Integration of Education Entities in the Axiological Perspective as a Priority Task of the School

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study below is to show the essence of the integration of education entities around values. The basic problem is formulated by means of the following question: In what areas of school work is there an urgent need to integrate educational entities to fully fulfil the school's functions, thereby building a space of an expanding axiological horizon. In the solution to the above problem, analytical and synthetic methods were used.

The school should be perceived as an important subject of civic education. In this respect, the tasks undertaken by the school should focus on acquiring and transferring knowledge and civic skills to students through experience and practice of specific civic activities, or on solving social and local problems. An important task the school should undertake is cooperation with the socio-cultural environment. It should be done by inclusion of young people, inter alia, in the implementation of institutional programs or projects of socio-civic activity.

KEYWORDS

social integration,
education entities,
values, types of social
integration, tasks in the
aspect of integration of
school entities

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The analysis shows the theoretical outline of social integration, paying attention to its types; showing priority tasks in the aspect of the integration of school entities. Three tasks were distinguished: integration around the implementation of the overarching goal of the school, integration for building an environmental school, integration supporting civic education.

Social integration – outline

The concept of integration is specified by such expressions as: the state of coordination, consistency, harmony, or value. In *Encyklopedia aksjologii pedagogicznej [Encyclopaedia of Pedagogical Axiology]* we read: “Social integration, perceived as a feature of a social system or the process of creating and improving its consistency, constitutes a property of the social system as a separated whole consisting of different kinds of elements which, as constituents, are interdependent and work together to achieve clearly specified objectives”¹.

From the sociological perspective, integration means “unifying and harmonizing the elements of social community. The basis of social integration is the intensity and frequency of contacts among the members of a particular community, as well as the acceptance of the common systems of values, norms, evaluations and ways of solving problems”². Mikołaj Winiarski believes that the term integration is usually understood in two ways. First, it specifies a state of the proper organisational structure of collective action. Second, integration means the process of purposeful, conscious actions aimed at the creation of a consistent, internally harmonized organisational and functional system³.

Integration is a part of the world of values. In many interpretative suggestions related to the scope and content of integration, the problem of the way in which values function is analysed. The values may function as postulated, acknowledged, felt and actual values. Discussing the problem of the place and role of values in the process

¹ F. J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna*, in: *Encyklopedia aksjologii pedagogicznej*, ed. K. Chałas, A. Maj, Radom 2016, p. 435.

² *Encyklopedia Powszechna*, Warszawa 1984, p. 291.

³ See M. Winiarski, *Współdziałanie szkoły i środowiska*, Warszawa 1992, p. 34.

of integration seems justified due to the transformation of educational objectives in which the implementation of values for following, understanding and fulfilling is treated as the supreme objective. Władysław Jacher believes that the degree of integration depends on the common values, social norms and identification with the group expressed in the sense of belonging. According to this author, the system of values is the essence of integration⁴. Thus, integration is constituted by: values – their fulfilment; community in which non-antagonistic relations occur; common patterns of behaviour, common goals, common ideals; harmonization of particular elements into a consistent whole. On the basis of the above, we can conclude that the integration of the entities of education must be based on social relations characterised by the dominance of national clarity and axiological orientation based on the hierarchical structure of values supporting the person's development, the acceptance of free expression of a personality, the acceptance and promotion of individuality "immersed" in the individual good integrated with the common good, and the promotion of personality patterns that are worth imitating.

In literature, especially the sociological one, four kinds of integration are distinguished:

- cultural,
- normative,
- functional,
- communicative one.

Cultural integration means the consistency, harmony between values and cultural norms, i. e. between different cultural elements. It means the unity of reality (of a pluralistic nature), taking into account different threads and agreement as for the basic principle(s) that determine(s) the borders of cultural identity⁵.

Franciszek J. Lis and Robert Lis pay attention to the fact that "in the horizontally organised system, the activities of its members are carried out in the condition of equality and community, as they do not aim at getting anything with the use of others, contrary to others or along with others. What is important is the rationality

⁴ W. Jacher, *Zagadnienia integracji systemu społecznego*, Warszawa 1976, pp. 100–101.

⁵ See M. Winiarski, *Współdziałanie szkoły i środowiska jako droga do uspołecznienia szkoły*, "Edukacja" 1990, No. 2, p. 35.

of the connections among the elements of culture which refers to logicalness, non-contradiction and coherence of, inter alia, systems and norms”⁶.

The above mentioned kind of integration constitutes the “core” of upbringing in the culture of the environment and building such culture. The idea of linking the school with the culture of the environment is reflected in the works of the Expert Committee in charge of National Education directed by Czesław Kupisiewicz. The authors of the report emphasize that the school has to be open to its own environment with which it should build various social bonds. They think that the school should perform cultural and supportive functions for its environment.

Such idea is reflected in the Catholic social thought according to which “the school is a kind of a centre in the results and achievements of which families, teachers, and different organisations supporting cultural, religious, national and social life should participate”⁷. A lot of pedagogues (E. Trempała, M. Jakowicka, M. Winiarski, S. Kowalski, J. Szczepański, W. Wroczyński) believe it is necessary to connect education with the culture of the environment and to use the environment as a natural place of didactic-upbringing activity in which its social forces can be gathered, and in which educational tasks can be fulfilled due to various forms of collaborating with the family, organisations, institutions and educational places other than schools.

Normative integration is understood as “the degree of the compliance of values and norms followed by particular group members with the norms and values accepted by the whole group or community”⁸. F.J. Lis and R. Lis pay attention to the fact that “normative integration is strictly connected with cultural integration – both refer to social values and norms. The only difference is in the placement of the emphases. In the cultural integration, the emphasis is put on the connections among different elements of culture, and in the normative integration such emphasis is shifted to the relations between values and norms of a given system and the personalities and

⁶ F.J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna*, op. cit., p. 438.

⁷ II Sobór Watykański, *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, Poznań 2002, p. 318.

⁸ J. Turowski, *Sojologia. Małe struktury społeczne*, Lublin 1993, p. 131.

behaviours of its members”⁹. Thus, the existence of a uniform system of values and patterns of behaviour related to common issues – a uniform opinion with this regard, is the basis of such integration. “The stability of the system integration is facilitated by the level of autonomous acquisition of the system of social values and norms included in the individual’s mentality as a result of practice and experience in the process of socialisation and upbringing. A person follows a given norm because they find it proper and compliant with their system of values. If they do not follow the norm, they feel remorse and they have the impression that what they do is immoral. The higher the level of integration of a given social system, the more of its members behave according to the autonomous system of norms and values shaped in their personalities”¹⁰. Referring the problem of social integration to the contemporary school, it is worth to emphasize that according to the reformers’ intention, the school is to be an upbringing institution. There is no upbringing without values. Building the axiological basis for the school functioning is the most important task. The basic factor of the fulfillment of this task is normative integration that conditions building and fulfillment of the proper hierarchical structures that guarantee the integral development and education of the man in dialogue, as well as in autonomous, subjective actions.

Functional integration occurs in skilful and efficient collaboration in the fulfilment, by a given community, of particular tasks, ways of carrying them out, as well as values and norms promoted by those tasks. Thus, it refers to making the system values real. The condition for such realisation is the creation of optimum conditions for the fulfilment of tasks that – ultimately – are of axiological nature. In the functional integration, the axiological aspect is included in the fulfilment of values expressed in human behaviours at different levels of social structures. The organisation and management of human resources deserve special attention in this respect¹¹.

Communicative integration boils down to the skilful mutual communication, exchange of ideas and establishing them in a given community through different forms of interpersonal

⁹ F.J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna*, op. cit., p. 438.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 439.

¹¹ Ibidem.

communication, its codes and information systems that include particular values and norms¹². This last kind of integration is connected with the above mentioned types of integration: cultural, normative and functional one, and the integrating link are values. It is included in cultural integration “because the connections among values, their popularization and diffusion are only possible through their reflex in different messages”¹³. Taking into account the normative integration, we should emphasize that “the relation of units to those values and norms, their internalization in the process of socialization and upbringing, is expressed in different forms of communication”¹⁴. Communication is the basis of human actions that boil down to making the values real. Without communication it is impossible to build social life.

Integration of the school entities – selected priority tasks

Social integration is of axiological nature. Values are its basic pillar and condition the degree of its maturity. On the other hand, through social integration axiological space is built in which individuals, as well as social groups and communities function.

The factors that determine the degree of the system integration are:

- “establishment and fulfilment of the objectives and tasks;
- maintaining and reinforcing internal consistency;
- developing the relations with the external environment;
- solving possible tensions and conflicts”¹⁵.

The main question is: in which areas of the school’s work, in its leading objectives and tasks, is there an urgent need for integrating the entities of education to better fulfil the school’s functions and build the space of the extending axiological horizon?

The three leading tasks are as follows:

- integration around the fulfilment of the school’s main objective;

¹² F.J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna a wartości*, Lublin 1987, p. 8.

¹³ F.J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna*, op. cit., p. 438.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 439.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 435.

- integration for building an environmental school;
- integration that supports civil education.

The main objective of the Polish school, included in the Core Curriculum, is an integral development of the student. There is no upbringing without the answer to the question: who is the man? In the main objective of the school, the law-giver did not specify who the student is. It is worth mentioning that it was clear in the Core Curriculum which is colloquially described as the curriculum of minister Handke – the school's main objective was the integral development of the student. Thus, what we need is the integration of education entities in order to restore the anthropological basis for education. In order to fulfil this objective, we need to adopt a specific theory of integral education. Among the theories accepted in pedagogy, there is the layer theory of the integral development and education by Stefan Kunowski. This theory assumes that “the external (genic) factors are varied in terms of their kind, and they spontaneously come to the fore at the proper time and in a given order, creating different bases for education in which both quantity and quality changes take place”¹⁶. In the general human development, the author enumerates five separate layers. They include:

- biological layer which creates our organism;
- psychological layer that develops our psyche;
- sociological layer that forms the social person of the student;
- culture-forming layer that creates the active recipient of culture;
- purely spiritual or worldview layer that fully shapes the person's spirituality and spiritual-moral aspect¹⁷.

In each of those layers, specific dynamisms that determine educational influences exist. Bios is the dynamism that exists in the biological layer; logos – in the psychological layer; etos – sociological layer; agos – culture-forming layer; and los – in the spiritual layer. From the point of view of the meaning in the integral development of the entities of education, it is worth to emphasize the functions of agos in the scope of satisfying the constant and developmental needs.

Such functions, ascribed to particular layers, are as follows:

¹⁶ S. Kunowski, *Podstawy współczesnej pedagogiki*, Warszawa 2004, p. 195.

¹⁷ See *ibidem*, p. 197.

- *sanare*: the carer’s supervision over the child’s bios and health;
- *edocere*: comprehensive intellectual education;
- *educere*: upbringing protection over the activity of etos, i. e. the life of the social environment;
- *educare*: supervision over the child’s spirituality and directing them into the ideal;
- *christianisare*: preparing the child for the meeting with God – Jesus Christ (Christocentric education)¹⁸.

In the light of the suggested theory, we can ask: what is the place of social integration and what functions can it perform? Well, it is easy to notice that particular kinds of integration are naturally connected with particular functions.

Normative integration matches the functions of *educere and edocere*; cultural integration – the functions of *educare*, communicative and functional integration permeate all the functions.

The basic condition for the integral development is the fulfilment of values that are, by nature, “ascribed” to particular layers. Their structure is presented in the following table¹⁹.

No.	Type of layer	Type of value
1	Worldview layer	Human happiness; religious values: faith in God, religion, hope, love, prayer, and happiness
2	Cultural (culture-forming) layer	Values included in art, poetry, music, fine arts; values specifying the nation’s culture, rooted in national traditions, history and folk culture
3	Sociological layer	Moral values – righteousness, faithfulness, sense of responsibility, respecting truth, kindness Social values – dignity, Homeland, nation, Church, patriotism, independence, law-abidingness, tradition, freedom, peace, tolerance, justice, social equality, democracy, solidarity Values of everyday life – family, reliability, honesty, honour, home, community, responsibility, obedience, self-control, patience, courage, friendliness, purity, independence, the ability to be oneself, loyalty, persistence, truthfulness, work, diligence, gentleness, trustfulness, kindness, timeliness, orderliness, discretion, sincerity, constancy of opinions, respect, respect for life, humility, forgiveness, self-denial, almsgiving, good manners

¹⁸ See *ibidem*, pp. 248–250.

¹⁹ This scheme is applied in many of my works. See K. Chałas, *Wartości w programie wychowawczym szkoły służące integralnemu rozwojowi i wychowaniu ucznia*, Warszawa 2017.

No.	Type of layer	Type of value
4	Psychological layer	knowledge, science, wisdom, invention, creativity
5	Biological layer	Hedonistic values – freedom, sex, fun Vital values – health, food, air, movement, rest, geographical-natural values Material values – all the goods that make life easier and support our existence – money, house, means of transport, technical equipment

Following the above mentioned structure requires the unification of the forces of students, teachers, parents and representatives of the social and cultural local environment. The subject of integration shall include looking for the knowledge of values, carrying out the dialogue on the function of values in the man's life, looking for the ways of fulfilling the values, taking up axiological actions.

The above mentioned structure should become an axiological aspect of the integration of the school entities. Unifying different actions in the above mentioned context should determine the intensity of the integration of students, teachers, parents and other people related to the school. This way, there is a chance for the fulfilment of the supreme objective of the school, i. e. the integral development of a student.

Another important aspect of building the integration of the school entities is transforming the place into an environmental school. Mikołaj Winiarski pays attention to the importance of integration in environmental education. Analysing the meaning of the concepts: "integration", "integrate", "integral", he understands integration (as a specific type of activities) as unifying different caring and educational actions into one whole, which warrants the optimisation of upbringing objectives. Thus, integration shall be a necessary condition for the effective upbringing and educational action²⁰.

It should be emphasized that the same author believes that integration is the main, most important type of integration, i.e. the fundamental direction of the environmental activity in the environment. The following of his arguments confirm that opinion:

- most elements of normative and communicative integration are included in functional integration. These two types of

²⁰ See M. Winiarski, *Współdziałanie szkoły i środowiska...*, op. cit., pp. 32–35.

integration are *sui generis* conditions for the effectiveness of functional integration,

- functional integration (reflected in collaboration) is, by nature, close to social pedagogy and theory of upbringing. It is considered as an important factor (means) of optimising the social-upbringing activity,
- collaboration organically connected with coordination is the basic direction for integrative activity²¹.

Integration is treated as a constitutive feature of each system of upbringing (as well as the school micro-system), and the condition for the development of school as an upbringing micro-system is the collaboration with the environment. And collaboration is the causative factor of integration²².

As for the collaboration between the school and the environment, the above mentioned author distinguishes the following principles:

- bottom-up initiative and voluntariness,
- equality and respect for the partners,
- complexity and collaboration,
- correlation of objectives and actions,
- reality of objectives and tasks,
- plans of collaboration,
- continuity and systematic work,
- flexibility and diversity of forms and methods of work,
- principle of innovativeness in the environmental work
- gradual extension of the scope of collaboration²³.

Taking into account the inclusion of the social environment of the school into the upbringing-didactic process, it should be emphasized that “developmental systems, which are mature with the force of their integration, are more prone not to exclude dysfunctional and neutral elements, but to support their participation. Such elements may stimulate the system to reproduce and create the functional forces and mechanisms securing its dynamic balance, as well as developmental efficiency (...). It is important to improve the structural and functional consistency through positive assimilation of destructive

²¹ See *ibidem*, p. 65.

²² See *ibidem*, p. 35.

²³ See *ibidem*, p. 11.

and neutral actions, as well as internal system forces and external forces”²⁴.

This implies specific tasks for the entities of education:

- building the community that creates the chance for developing the subjectivity and personal identity of its members;
- creating the opportunities to develop the fullness of humanity through the fulfilment of common values and objectives, and taking up common actions.

The leading idea is co-deciding by the students, teachers and parents, which environmental problems shall be the subject of teaching and working on their solution. This way, in the course of deepened understanding, the opportunities are created for constructive actions and one’s own development through creating one’s identity.

The fact that such integration is right is reflected in the opinion that cultural identity in one’s little homeland has to be perceived in the perspective of the general cultural identity, because otherwise the continuity and dialogue with the “other” – sometimes the “alien” is broken. While considering the integration of education entities, we should emphasize an important issue and, at the same time, a task that boils down to keeping the dynamic balance of unity in diversity in the school system²⁵.

Building the environmental school through the integration of its entities should start from the world of the student’s values – from his/her experience. As Renata Nowakowska-Siuta says, “this increases the sense of security in going from what is known to the unknown”. Starting from the child’s present time, we are decreasing the discrepancy between the knowledge gained in the past and the future in which such knowledge shall be needed. Focusing on the future makes it possible to direct the child’s knowledge with the support of the current scientific and social events”²⁶.

The third area in which the integration of the entities of education may be expressed is civil education. In this respect, integration plays a double function. On the one hand, it is the “micro-school” of

²⁴ See F.J. Lis, R. Lis, *Integracja społeczna*, op. cit., p. 436.

²⁵ See ibidem, p. 435.

²⁶ R. Nowakowska-Siuta, *Kamień na kamieniu – o zasadzie kompletności w pracy szkoły*, in: *Szkoła w metaforze militarnej. Co w zamian*, ed. M. Dudzikowa, S. Jaskulska, Warszawa 2016, p. 215.



civil education; on the other hand, it is an important external factor that encourages one to various actions related to being a citizen. The integration of the entities of education should be oriented at:

I. The development of individual, social, civil and political awareness:

- gaining anthropological-philosophical knowledge; the reply to the questions: who is the man?, where does he go?, who can he become?, who should he become?;
- gaining knowledge on the man's obligations and rights;
- gaining the knowledge on social, national and non-government institutions;
- the analysis of conditions that facilitate the integral development of the man; sustainable development;
- gaining the knowledge on the constitution and other key legal acts of national importance;
- promoting the value of cultural and historical heritage of the local, regional, national and European range;
- promoting the respect for other national and ethnic cultures.

II. The development of critical thinking, shaping attitudes, fulfilment of values:

- shaping the abilities necessary for the active participation in social life:
 - openness to another person and treating them as the objective and not the means;
 - the ability and skill to communicate;
 - the ability to cooperate with another man, group, community;
 - the ability to deal with problem and stressful situations;
 - the willingness to voluntarily work in different kinds of organisations;
 - the involvement in tasks that had been taken up;
 - innovative attitude.
- shaping the respect for oneself and others/respecting the dignity of oneself and another person in order to facilitate mutual understanding;
- the fulfilment of individual, social and moral responsibility;

- reinforcing the spirit of solidarity in order to build social/community/group bonds;
- upbringing for personal, social, moral, and cultural values, taking into account different social perspectives in the light of the axiological objectivism and personal (subjective) reference;
- shaping the attitude of friendship and positive attitude to another person;
- shaping the ability to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner;
- shaping the pro-ecological attitude expressed in caring for the environment and sustainable development;
- shaping more active strategies aimed at fighting with racism and xenophobia.

III. The promotion of the students' active participation:

- creating the opportunities for activity through the involvement in the actions of the school, local, national and international community;
- creating the opportunities of gaining democratic experience at school;
- creating students' groups and communities²⁷.

Axiological education and upbringing for values matches such civil education. The axiological basis is constituted by four circles of values:

- values that "describe" a human being;
- values that condition the integral development of the man;
- the values of the environment in which the man lives and functions;
- the values that constitute the European community of the spirit.

In a broad sense, the objective of civil education is not only the obtainment of knowledge of the world, but also understanding the social reality and developing/increasing young people's ability to participate in social life. Thus, it focuses on: knowledge, skills, as well as values and attitudes²⁸.

²⁷ Cf. E. Potulicka, *Wychowanie obywatelskie – nowy przedmiot nauczania w Anglii*, in: *Wychowanie. Pojęcia. Procesy. Konteksty*, vol. 4, ed. M. Dudzikowa, M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Gdańsk 2008, p. 58.

²⁸ See *ibidem*, p. 40.

Eugenia Potulicka, on the basis of the analysis of English literature, indicates three categories of civil education:

- education on citizenship – transferring proper knowledge, understanding national history, the knowledge of the structures of power, the processes of governing and political life.
- education through citizenship – gaining experience, learning through action, active participation in the school, local and non-local community.
- education for citizenship – the equipment of students in a set of tools (knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, values) making it possible for them to perform roles and responsibilities required in adult life²⁹.

The assumption related to citizenship is: the above educational triad should have its place in the upbringing and didactic process. In the context of the subject of this article, education for citizenship deserves special attention. It links the values, knowledge and skills among which the skills aimed at playing an active role in the society on the local, regional, national and international level are very important. Such skills are related to social skills among which special attention is paid to the ability to listen, formulate issues in a structural manner, recognising and formulating problems, recognising values and building an axio-sphere through their fulfilment, discussing, debating, encouraging the society to take up social-civil actions, organising actions, evaluating the effects and – on their basis – building further programmes of civil activity³⁰.

Such civil education integrally connects:

- “social and moral responsibility;
- involvement in community actions;
- political awareness”³¹.

We should emphasize that such civil education introduces the students into the space of social, moral, and cultural values – in experiencing and fulfilling them.

The school is an important subject of civil education. Its responsibility in this respect should mainly focus on gaining by its entities

²⁹ See *ibidem*.

³⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 43.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

(students, teachers, parents) the knowledge and civil skills through experiencing and practicing civil actions, solving particular social and local problems, or participating in the institutions of civil participation (but the starting point should simply include re-activating the true student and school self-government, and the actual work of the parents' council, which shall not occur without giving those institutions proper competences)³².

The second important task is the collaboration of the school with the social and cultural environment (local government, social organisation, the media). It means the inclusion of the youth into the fulfilment of institutional programmes and the school's preparation of social-civil projects in which local and non-local institutions can also be involved³³.

Within the above context, the following programmes deserve attention:

- the school in the environment – the school plays an active part in the environment;
- the school for the environment – the school offers programmes of civil education.

The third task includes activation apprenticeships of the youth: in the local media, non-government organisations and self-government institutions³⁴. This form of civil education refers to student practices carried out in the history of Polish education. In this respect important aspects include bottom-up initiative, trust, care, solidarity, responsibility and creative approach to problems.

“Civil education should (...) include transferring a certain scope of theoretical knowledge, ‘applied’ knowledge, practical experiences, as well as what may be called the process of educating for values (formation). Theory has to be transferred in a quite synthetic and simple way (removing unnecessary elements of the curricula), but it should also include modern foundations of knowledge on the non-government sector (on the basis of the role of that sector in democracy, the idea of social economy, or the principle of helpfulness). ‘Applied’ education should teach the students’ practical civil skills, efficient

³² Ibidem, p. 198.

³³ See ibidem.

³⁴ See ibidem.

dialogue, mediation, orientation in the world of democratic institutions or solving various civil tasks”³⁵.

Within this context, social integration of the subjects of education is the trajectory of civil education which conditions shaping conscious and active citizens.

The presented material only outlines the issue included in the main topic of the article. I included a much broader discussion on the integration of the entities of the environmental school in two books: *W poszukiwaniu szkoły wiejskiej [In Search for a Rural School]*, Lublin 1997; *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości szkoły wiejskiej [In Search for the Identity of a Rural School]*, Rzeszów 1994. This work is based on the fragments from those books. The issue of civil education is discussed in details in the article: *Przyszłość należy do świadomych obywateli. Jakie konsekwencje są niezbędne świadomemu i aktywnemu obywatelowi? Jak skutecznie je kształtować? (Perspektywa aksjologiczna) [The Future Belongs to Conscious Citizens. What Consequences are Necessary for a Conscious and Active Citizen? How Can We Shape Them? (Axiological Perspective)]*, in: S. M. Kwiatkowski, *Kompetencje przyszłości [Competences of the Future]*, Warszawa 2018 (I used fragments of this article). The problem of integral development and upbringing was described in the book: *Wychowanie ku wartościom wiejskim jako szansa integralnego rozwoju ucznia [Education for Rural Values as the Chance for the Student's Integral Development]*, Lublin 2007. The integration of the entities of education in the axiological perspective requires thorough theoretical elaboration and extensive empirical research.

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³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 199–200.

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