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Parent–teacher conferences as opportunities for educational partnership: A conversational analysis across three historical models of partnership

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Abstract

Research objectives (aims) and problem(s): This study focuses on the concept of educational partnership, understood as the relationship between teachers and parents as reflected in their conference interactions. Three components of such partnership were examined: trust, a sense of collegiality, and a sense of the common good (Mendel, 2002, p. 53). The aim of the study was to diagnose the educational partnership as manifested in conversations recorded during parent–teacher conferences. The research questions were:

1. In what situations, and in what ways, does trust manifest during parent–teacher conferences?
2. In what situations, and in what ways, does a sense of collegiality manifest during parent–teacher conferences?
3. In what situations, and in what ways, does the common good manifest during parent–teacher conferences?

Research methods: The study was conducted using conversational analysis, which seeks to describe methods of producing orderly social interactions. This approach emerged from Garfinkel's ethnomethodological program and his analysis of "human" (ethno) methods (Silverman, 2009, p. 190). Conversational analysis is a well-developed, internally coherent method (…) particularly suited to examining professional practices as action processes (Granosik, 2013, p. 10). To examine the parent–school partnership from this perspective, conversational analysis was

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applied to 22 parent–teacher conferences in grades 1–3 held in public schools. A conference is a pedagogical practice that maintains existing order and tradition (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2018, p. 55).

Process of argumentation: The article consists of a theoretical section and a research section. The theoretical section presents three historically shaped models of parent–school relationships: participatory relationships (in the Second Polish Republic), asymmetric cooperation (during the communist period), and simulated democracy (in the Third Polish Republic). The research section presents the method and findings, showing contemporary images of partnership: how mutual trust, community, and the sense of the common good are expressed in the context of conversational analysis.

Research findings and their impact on the development of educational sciences: Trust manifests primarily in conversations about children. It appears as an attitude directed toward parents (in the expectation that they will exercise parental control). Both parents and teachers tend to distrust children. Collegiality manifests in formal and organizational matters; for example, when parents elect the class parent board to discuss organizational issues. A sense of the common good appears in teachers' references to benefits for the entire class and to class events organized jointly.

Conclusions and/or recommendations: The contemporary relationship model identified on the basis of conversational analysis of parent –teacher meetings is one that is dominated by the teacher, focused on meeting the school's needs, oriented toward cooperation for the benefit of the school rather than the child, based on class achievements rather than individual ones, simulates democracy within schools, generates distrust toward pupils, and leaves parents largely on their own.

Introduction

The family–school system forms a shared educational community and mirrors the general principles of social life (Gulczyńska, Rybińska Segiet, 2020, p. 350). The current model of parent–school relations is described by teachers, parents, and researchers as difficult and marked by tension and conflict. Both teachers and parents note that the focus on the child is diminishing in these bilateral relationships. System-related factors, the lack of specialist support, mutual distrust, and opposing positions are becoming increasingly significant. This shift is striking given that not long ago, parent–school relations were viewed as successful,

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if not exemplary. Looking back just a century reveals a period when schools maintained strong, positive relationships with parents.

The concept of partnership for education (Mendel, 2002, p. 53), understood as a special relationship centered on the child and based on mutual trust, a sense of the common good, and collegiality (cf. Mendel, 2000, p. 6), serves as the theoretical background for the historical and scholarly reflections presented below.

I. Theoretical background

It is proposed that the current state of educational partnership in Polish schools be examined through three relationship models, each illustrated by a distinct historical period: the Second Polish Republic, the communist era after World War II, and the present day in the Third Polish Republic. A fourth, contemporary model will incorporate a research component that depicts current relationship patterns.

Model one: Participatory relations

Participatory relations in Polish schools began to develop shortly after the partitions, during the rebuilding of the state after the restoration of independence. The Second Polish Republic was a period of forging the foundations of an independent Polish school system, marked by enthusiasm after 123 years of foreign rule. In addition to fundamental changes in teaching concepts, the ideas of New Education were based on the assumption that the school was a community of teachers, children, and parents (Zasada, 2000, p. 166; Jakubiak, 1995, p. 77; Mendel, 2000, p. 63). Cooperation with parents took place in multiple contexts: in the social dimension, it involved caring about society's living conditions, legal protection for women and children, raising parents' awareness, and engaging them in school activities (Segiet, 1999, p. 20).

Changes in the understanding of cooperation were also tied to the new position of the family, which came to be viewed as a social partner (Okrasa, 2013, p. 219). The efforts of many actors were directed at raising

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a new generation equipped to live in society (Malinowska, 1937, p. 30). In alliance with parents, the school offered hope for social change in the newly independent nation, and completing one's education became a path to upward mobility (Mauersberg, 1988, p. 88). Parents became co-creative participants, jointly responsible for matters concerning schoolchildren (Bzowski, 1930, p. 23). Both the family and the school were regarded as equal and equivalent entities. Family-based and social (pedagogical) forms of education coexisted (Rowid, 1936, p. 31).

Educational practices in the Second Polish Republic were oriented toward pursuing community interests. Greater attention was paid to developing social capital than to meeting individual needs, expectations, or aspirations (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 152). Parents acted as partners, patrons, and representatives of the school. Family–school relations during this period exemplified the participatory model, which emphasized interpersonal relations, their quality, the building of mutual respect and trust, and the development of new forms of communication (Zasada, 2000, p. 173). This syntonic harmony between school and family, stemming from teachers' humanistic (pro-family) orientation and parents' pro-school attitudes, protected the educational process from monopolistic management and political pressure (Tchórzewski, 1993, p. 111).

Educational participatory relations in the Second Polish Republic were more than a framework for cooperation between parents and schools. They extended beyond these relationships, constituting a new quality in the space between parents and the school: a space in which social forces emerged, a sense of empowerment developed, and opportunities for choice and mutual responsibility were created.

Model two: Asymmetrical cooperation with parents

The postwar years and the new social order shifted emphasis and responsibility from parents to educational institutions. The pedagogical achievements of the prewar, didactically modern school were replaced by an ideological project designed to shape a "new human" (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 253). Family–school relations no longer arose from

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genuine need or motivation; instead, they were the result of politically imposed, centrally controlled regulations (Winiarski, 2000, p. 75).

The objective of the postwar social order was to transform the family's social position by "attempting to place it under the influence of a school that can be controlled" (Janke, 1995a, p. 9). According to Marxist pedagogy, the school served the interests and ambitions of specific social groups (Muszyński, 1980, p. 7). Publications dedicated to home–school cooperation emphasized that "Marxist science demonstrates that a person is shaped mainly through education, work, and struggle" (Czerwiński, 1953, p. 16). The blending of ideology with science became a defining feature of the new Stalinist social order (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 194).

Pedagogization and the activities of parent–teacher associations became tools through which schools exerted influence over parents (Lewin, 1966). Attendance at parent–teacher conferences became a means of control, particularly over the parents of troublesome children. "When a lack of home care is noticeable, it morally forces the parents of troublesome children to attend such conferences regularly. The class tutor may require some parents to attend these meetings" (Gałecki & Sędziwy, 1967, p. 297).

Change began in the 1980s with the establishment of the Polish Pedagogical Society, the Child's Rights Protection Society, and the Teachers' Trade Union "Solidarność" (Śliwerski, 2013, p. 30). Shifts also appeared in legal regulations concerning school–parent relations. Toward the end of the socialist era, a ministerial regulation was issued on forms of cooperation between parents or guardians and schools and school supervisory bodies. In theory, it restored parents' right to have a say in matters important to the school—though unfortunately only on paper, as it never took effect.

Parent–school relations during this time were **instrumental**, subordinated to Marxist ideology, and marked by a separation between school and family. Cooperation was andragocentric[5] (Winiarski, 2007b, pp. 441–446), characterized by asymmetrical relations and teacher dominance that ignored the principles of partnership.

[5] Based only on adult—i.e., parent–teacher—relations, disregarding the children (Winiarski, 2007b, p. 443).

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Model three : Simulated democracy

The period of political transformation brought hope for change. This transformation, in line with the principle of social empowerment, was accompanied by the socialization of schools and the inclusion of parents in principal issues related to teaching and education (Jakubiak, 1992, p. 111). However, it soon became clear that despite expectations of radical reform, "there is and there will continue to be a need for making dramatic choices in the face of inertia and an increasingly complex reality" (Radziwiłł, 1994, p. 35).

The 1999 reform assumed greater teacher autonomy and an expanded role for parents in curricular decisions in schools (Rura & Klichowski, 2011, p. 31). Parents were empowered, included in school activities, and granted a voice in educational matters that had previously been closed to them. Yet despite sound intentions and a well-designed plan, the poor condition of the state and the tragically low share of national income allocated to education (Rura & Klichowski, 2011, p. 31) thwarted hopes for substantive changes in the concept of school education.

Studies of shifts in parent–school relations during the 1990s showed that "these were only apparent processes of democratization between the family and the school at this stage" (Janke, 1995, p. 283), and parents did not "take matters into their own hands." It is possible that, aside from the condition of the state, the problem lay with the people themselves, as "they were unable to comprehend the new symbols provided to them by the unknown, global everyday reality" (Rura & Klichowski, 2011, p. 32). Or perhaps responsibility rested with the "schizophrenic awareness" of educational staff, whose attitudes were unstable and easily reversible (Kwieciński, 1985, p. 40). It may also be that the "old order" persisted in people's minds and mental change remained "frozen" or blocked due to ideological entanglement (Kwieciński, 1985, p. 40).

In the hierarchy of school actors, "the needs of the school and school staff prevail over the needs of students and their parents" (Śliwerski, 2015, p. 277). Unfortunately, "deconstruction of senses and meanings continues, even though the system that favored it, and even enforced it, has disappeared" (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 195). In the Third Polish Republic,

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the long-awaited and much-desired participation was replaced by an authoritarian approach deeply rooted in the Polish People's Republic, according to which relations among educational actors must be based on the authority of those higher in the power hierarchy, to whom obedience and submission are expected (Śliwerski, 2024, p. 113).

Model four: Contemporary relations between parents and the school

In order to continue the historical overview of parent–school relations presented above, I undertook research to examine what the current model of these relations looks like in the 2020s. Do historical contexts allow us to draw lessons from the past as we search for an optimal model? Is the current model one of participation characteristic of the Third Polish Republic, the subordination of the Polish People's Republic, or the simulated democracy of the Second Polish Republic? Or has a new model emerged: one suited to the modern world? To answer these questions, I conducted research on parent–teacher meetings in order to diagnose the current state of relations between parents and schools.

II. The research component: Contemporary partnership in Poland in light of parent-teacher conferences

To observe the parent–school partnership from this research perspective, conversational analysis was applied to 22 parent–teacher conferences in grades 1–3 held in public schools. A conference is a pedagogical practice that maintains existing order and tradition (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2018, p. 55). It plays a vital role in "passing information, streamlining communication, improving cooperation, and maintaining control within an organization" (Rancew-Sikora, 2007, p. 97).

Most conferences (19) were recorded in towns with populations of up to 5,000 inhabitants, and three were recorded in cities ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 inhabitants. Purposive sampling was applied. The choice of grades 1–3 was based on earlier research (e.g., Mendel, 1998), which

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identifies early education as the most favorable period for building relationships with the school. The methodological concept of the study was based on ethnomethodology, understood as a research perspective that seeks "to describe methods persons use in doing social life" (Sacks, as cited in Silverman, 2009, p. 103). Ethnomethodology regards everything that becomes an object of interest as an organized, competent social practice (Garfinkel, 2007, p. 46).

The study used **conversational analysis**, which aims to describe the methods through which orderly social interactions are produced. This method developed out of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological program and his analysis of "human" (ethno) methods (Silverman, 2009, p. 190). Conversational analysis is a well-developed, internally coherent approach (…) particularly suited to examining professional practices as forms of action (Granosik, 2013, p. 10). Most socially significant phenomena manifest themselves in conversation; thus, examining conversations means **examining social life and professional activities** (Granosik, 2013, p. 35).

Studies employing conversational analysis are founded on empirical material[6] recorded as natural audio or video data (Peräkylä, 2015, p. 333; Granosik, 2013, p. 31). In this study, only audio recordings of the conferences were permitted.[7] The raw data collected consist of ethnographic recordings of actions and interactions captured in audio format (Rapley, 2013, p. 29).

The aim of the study was to diagnose the contemporary model of relations between parents and schools as manifested in conversations recorded during parent–teacher conferences. Partnership for education is based on mutual trust, a sense of the common good, and collegiality (Mendel, 2002, p. 53), a special relationship built with the child at the center (cf. Mendel, 2000, p. 6). Therefore, the object of this study is the partnership for education, understood as the relationship between teachers and parents as reflected in their conference interactions. Three compo-

[6] Natural—based on the principle of non-interference by the researcher (Granosik, 2013, p. 31).

[7] Headteachers, teachers, and parents showed strong resistance when asked to grant permission to record a school conference for the study.

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nents of this partnership were examined: trust, a sense of collegiality, and a sense of the common good.

Maria Mendel does not define these components in detail, and in my analysis I have only attempted to touch upon their description, aiming instead to explain them in a descriptive manner. I analyzed conversations from parent–teacher conferences in which these three components appeared, described the contexts in which they emerged, and considered how they illustrated the relationships between parents and teachers. This constituted the theoretical foundation for the research questions:

1. In what situations, and in what ways, does trust manifest itself during parent–teacher conferences?
2. In what situations, and in what ways, does a sense of collegiality manifest itself during parent–teacher conferences?
3. In what situations, and in what ways, does the common good manifest itself during parent–teacher conferences?

Mutual trust

Conversational analysis helps identify responses in which speakers express trust or lack of trust towards pupils, parents, and teachers. Trust is a form of social capital and a social fact that helps reduce uncertainty through the assumption (an axiological expectation) that others will act for one's benefit, or at least not act against it (Sztompka, 2002, p. 310). In every recorded conference, both parents and teachers made statements about the social fact of trust as it related to pupils.

In each conference, teachers asked parents to supervise their children and check whether they completed their schoolwork at home. By making such a request, the teacher assumes that pupils cannot complete tasks independently. The teacher (T) asks this of the parents (P), trusting that parental supervision is a guarantee of the child's success, of catching up, and of mastering subsequent stages of education:

T. *And look, I'd like to ask you to supervise them, because they're in third grade, to keep an eye on them. (…) As I say, you need to watch them*

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because, you know, when they're in first grade, everyone stresses the need to assist the child, and in third grade it seems like some try to be more independent. But, you know, they still need someone to watch them, to see how they're doing their tasks, right? It's not that they should do it entirely on their own: the parents need to check what they do so that our cooperation is better (laughing), so to speak.

[Conference 5; 479-500][8]

Here, the teacher expresses trust in the parents, while her trust in the children regarding school tasks is limited. At each conference, statements made during the individual conversation phase reveal trust, or distrust, toward the child. In the exchange below, both the parent and the teacher accuse the child of lying:

P. *But now, when I tell Janek[9] that he's writing something incorrectly, he says, "No, the teacher didn't say anything, the teacher said it's right." And I say, "Oh really?" "No."*
T. *Right!*
P. *So I'm leaving it to you then.*
T. *Yeah, right—and then the parent comes to me about it.*
P. *And that's how we just go around in circles and nobody knows anything.*
T. *Yes. Because that's how it is. When they talk to me, they say their parents—their mom—told them to do something. I say, "Are you sure your mom told you to do it.*

[Conference 8; 1523–1530]

In this conversation, both the teacher and the parent express doubt about what the pupil is saying. They do not trust the child, and neither the parent nor the teacher believes him. Their lack of trust demonstrates

[8] This is how I record the "bibliographic address" of a statement: the conference number and the transcript line numbers from which the quoted conversation fragments are taken.

[9] All the names have been changed.

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disloyalty to the child. Yet in their view, the child is ultimately the one who benefits from this relationship. In Conference 3, the teacher explains to parents what she believes is the problem with children bringing unnecessary items in their school bags, and she asks the parents to intervene:

> T. *So my request to you is to check their school bags, because sometimes your children, out of convenience or…*
> P. *Because they're lazy.*
> *T. It's just that… yes, they can be lazy, but some children also worry a lot that they'll forget something, English, religion notebooks, because it's happened to them before.*
>
> [Conference 3; 64–68]

The teacher asks parents to help with packing, while the parent interprets the situation as the child's laziness (not bothering to remove books that they will not need the next day) and holds the child responsible for failing to prepare their school things. The teacher does not fully agree with the parent's interpretation, which undermines trust in the child by attributing everything to laziness. She continues her earlier point, which the parent had interrupted, and expresses confidence in the child, saying, *"They are very concerned about forgetting something."*

There was another statement concerning trust during Conference 8, when a parent described a conversation with her child and assumed that the child intentionally lied:

> P. (loud/animated) *And my Tomek, sometimes he says, "Ms. Zosia said something about me." And I say, "Don't lie," and then he starts crying. And when I call you, it turns out to (incomprehensible 1:12:41) be a completely different story, and Tomek is so emotional.*
>
> [Conference 8; 1533–1533]

The parent does not trust the child and insists that she is correct because she contacts the school to confirm that the child has lied, thereby exposing him. Paradoxically, although she remarks on the child's emotional

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sensitivity, she fails to recognize the inconsistency between acknowledging his feelings and assuming "foul play" when he reports what the teacher allegedly said in class.

A summary of the conversational analysis focused on trust reveals a strong belief among parents that they can effectively support the school's objectives. However, there is a noticeable lack of trust from parents toward their children, as indicated by both teachers' and parents' statements. Interestingly, one parent did express trust in her child, revealing a contradiction between recognizing the child's abilities and simultaneously feeling a lack of trust.

Collegiality

Collegiality in an organization stands in contrast to managerialism: "managerialism is underscored by hierarchy, collegiality by lack of hierarchy; managerialism writes off failure, collegiality learns from failure; managerialism codifies behavior, collegiality accepts behavior" (Sawyer, Johnson, and Holub, 2009, p. 12). Collegiality, understood as an organizational principle in decision-making, was marginalized. Parents rarely had the opportunity to make decisions together.

In the meetings observed, collegial decisions were made only when discussing organizational matters and events, especially decisions about meals (during trips, Christmas event menus), gifts, or purchases. In Conference 13, the teacher raised the topic of organizing the Boys' Day celebration. The parents suggested that they would buy some treats (on behalf of the girls), which would be shared with everyone during the celebration:

T. *Well, I don't know; we can do it however you'd like. I mean, we won't collect money; everyone can just bring something…*
P. *(all together) Yes!*
P. *And then we'll all sit at the table and eat…*
P. *Yes… yes…*

[Conference 13; 448–452]

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During that same conference, the teacher discussed with the parents the starting time for the end-of-third-grade grill gathering:

T. I'm fine with any time after 1 p.m., because that's when I finish work.
P: Five p.m.
T: Five p.m.?
P: So that Lila can make it.
T: Is anyone not okay with that?
P: Lila, you can take a day off.
P1: You get back at ten; you won't be in Naruszewo,[10] until 3:45, no earlier.
P: An hour is a long time for a grill party—an hour is a lot.
T. Well, yes.
P: I'm going to work, so…
T: Alright, then—5 p.m. it is.

[Conference 13; 491–501]

Collegial decisions were also made during the September conferences when parents were elected to the parents' board (the class board, whose leader automatically becomes a member of the school parents' council). Collegiality in parents' statements appeared in the following exchange during Conference 5:

T. You can decide here how we want to handle this so that everything works well and the board can support our children. Please sign the attendance list. I'll pass around the class register and you can sign it.
(…)
Well, if we're preparing a report, then we can ask for the results (silence, quiet talk: so it has to be written down).
P. Any objections? No.
P. Sylwia, can you read it and keep it brief?
P. Well, there was Ms. Kowalska, Ms. Kozłowska.

[10] Proper names of all the places mentioned in the conversations have been changed.

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T. The class parent board for Group 2f will consist of the same people as last year; we'll just note the number of votes cast. So that's the report, okay, we have 15 people, thirteen votes for Ms. Kowalska, and the fourteenth as well. You're accepting the group that has been working; you're accepting the choice. The board did well in Group 2, and it will do well now (?).
[Conference 5; 20–41]

During this conference, the teacher asked parents to choose the same board as the previous year. She left the classroom and, after the election, returned to announce that the individuals she had proposed were elected. Thus, collegiality in this conversation resembles an election convention imposed by the teacher, with parents, who want to go home quickly, accepting the choice that she suggested. Another conference involved a collegial decision to organize an event for children to celebrate Boys' Day. The teacher brought up the topic during the meeting:

T. Maybe it would be better to go see a movie, and then, I don't know, the children could bring some candy, or would you rather buy something? Because—
PP (murmur): No, the girls will bring something… for the boys.
T. (silence)
PP: Something sweet, so they feel special that day.
T. Yes!
P. (treasurer) The girls will bring something sweet.
P: Yes.
P: For the boys.
PP: (murmur of approval)
T. That's fine.
PP: So they'll all eat together—great.
[Conference 22; 1053–1065]

This conversation shows the need to make a decision regarding a class event. When asking the parents, the teacher proposes a ready-made solution, and the parents approve it.

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In summary, collegiality in these discussions appears in the organization of events and the selection of representatives for the parents' board. Most decisions are initiated and steered by the teacher. Parents willingly participate and express their views; however, the final decisions are ultimately made beyond their control, as they are shaped by the teacher's preferences.

A sense of common good

The sense of the common good is a guiding principle in the Polish constitutional order, closely linked to the fundamental values that participants in social life must uphold: justice, truth, and morality (Brzozowski, 2006, p. 22). In the analysis of the meetings, the sense of the common good was emphasized through the teacher's identification with the students' achievements. When discussing pupils' accomplishments, the teacher, acting as the class teacher, stressed her emotional involvement, presenting their success as the outcome of joint efforts. A sense of the common good was evident in these conferences when the teacher spoke about the achievements of the class:

T. *Some of them did so well that I was honestly shocked.*

[Conference 9; 27]

Elsewhere, the teacher describes the children as a collective treasure that must be supported:

T. We really should help the children—they're our shared treasure, and they need our support.

[Conference 9; 98–99]

Acting for the common good also involves, as explicitly stated by the teacher, the need to support children:

T. And the boys… well, boys will be boys—a little lazy, so they need a bit of encouragement.

[Conference 9; 107–108]

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During many conferences, teachers answer parents' questions about their children and acknowledge pupils' achievements, recognizing the parents' interest in their child's progress:

P. Well, I can see that my little star is doing quite well in Polish, right?
T. (loudly) *No! Not just in Polish—she's doing well in everything.*
[Conference 6; 176–177]

The common good also includes activities related to extracurricular contests, where the number of votes can influence the class's overall score:

T. On Facebook Rerum—teaching aids—there are several student projects posted. You need to find ours; they're labeled as being from Lubomino. Click 'Like,' and that counts as a vote.
P. No, no… (3)
P. I think we took third place last year, didn't we?
[Conference 6; 194–198]

The common good, in the teacher's statements, also involves parents fulfilling their responsibilities. At Conference 22, the teacher reminds the parents that they were unreliable (failing to act for the common good) during preparations for the Christmas Eve event, and she asks that this never happen again:

T. And… we weren't able to put together the Christmas Eve event, as I've already mentioned.
P. True.
T. I hope it's going to be different this year, because someone promised to bake cookies and didn't, and that was two parents. Someone else promised to bring tablecloths and didn't either…
[Conference 22; 1103–1108]

In conclusion, the common good appears in the conversations analyzed through statements about pupils, actions supporting their

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achievements, efforts to organize class events, and voting to help the class achieve a high score. The components of partnership identified in the statements—trust, collegiality, and acting for the common good—are understood in a specific school context. Trust toward students is lacking, collegiality appears only in decisions with limited impact on students, and the common good is defined primarily by pupils' achievements and their participation in organizing school events.

Conclusions

What is the diagnosis of educational partnership in the contemporary model of relations between parents and the school, as manifested in conversations recorded during parent–teacher conferences? Educational partnership is a special relationship built on mutual trust, a sense of the common good, and collegiality (Mendel, 2002, p. 53), centered on the child (cf. Mendel, 2000, p. 6). If we understand educational partnership through the lens of the triad proposed by Professor Maria Mendel—trust, collegiality, and a sense of the common good—then, based on my analysis of the recorded conversations, the following conclusions can be drawn (in response to the research questions: *In what situations do trust, collegiality, and the common good manifest themselves during parent–teacher conferences?*).

Conversation analysis allows us to formulate the following findings:

1. Both parents and teachers express a lack of trust in children.
2. Trust is expressed only toward parents (when the teacher appeals to them for supervision and control of their children).
3. No decisions related to education are made collectively.
4. Collegiality manifests itself only in formal and organizational matters.
5. Parents collectively decide only on the selection of the class representative and on organizational issues related to outings, trips, and similar events.
6. Parents engage actively and enthusiastically in conversations aimed at collegial decision-making.

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7. The teacher's understanding of the common good includes the broadly defined well-being of the child, the joint undertaking of school tasks, the good of the whole class, competitions (voting) undertaken for the benefit of the class, and jointly organized class events.
8. The common good is understood in a highly instrumental way, which overlooks the child's educational or developmental success, the building of relationships between educational actors, or the joint efforts of parents and the school in the upbringing and education of future generations.

Final Remarks

In the considerations presented here, through the analysis of cooperation models (set against their historical contexts), I sought to examine the current model of relations from the perspective of parent–teacher meetings. The model of relations presented in the three historical images shows that the Second Polish Republic embraced a participatory approach and created opportunities for fruitful cooperation between parents and schools. The communist era, by subordinating parents to the goals of socialism, squandered the achievements of the prewar school in this regard and introduced an asymmetrical model subordinated to the interests of the school. The simulated partnership of the Third Republic offered hope that ultimately was not fulfilled.

Based on the research conducted, the current relations between parents and the school:

– are dominated by the teacher,
– are focused on meeting the school's needs,
– emphasize cooperation for the benefit of the school rather than the child,
– are based on class achievements rather than the achievements of individual children,
– simulate democratic processes within schools,

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– generate distrust toward pupils,
– leave parents largely on their own.

This partnership more closely resembles that of the communist period than that of the Second Polish Republic, where—despite lower levels of social awareness—the participatory process was democratic: parents were allowed to take part in decision-making, relationships were built on trust among educational actors, decisions were made collegially, and actions were taken for the common good, benefiting not only pupils but also their parents. The current partnership for education is a distorted reflection of what existed in the Second Polish Republic: it is dominated by the teacher, based on actions that mainly benefit the school, and simulates democratic processes in the educational system.

One can only regret that we are unable to draw on the lessons of history, as, after all, *historia magistra vitae est!*

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