

The Contemporary Problems of Children and Youth in Multicultural Societies Theory, Research, Praxis

Edited by
Urszula Markowska-Manista



WYDAWNICTWO AKADEMII PEDAGOGIKI SPECJALNEJ

The Contemporary Problems
of Children and Youth
in Multicultural Societies
Theory, Research, Praxis

Introduction to the series:

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children's and adolescents' development and social adaptation to the conditions of the transforming world are the primary focus of researchers and academics participating in International Summer Schools which have been held by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw since 2006.

By launching a series of academic books we wish to create a space for an interdisciplinary, research and theoretical-practical dialogue addressing issues which are important in the contemporary world. The present series "Development and Social Adaptation of Children and Youth" is a collection of interdisciplinary academic publications. They are intended to present the latest research, theories and praxis revolving around the issues connected with development and the problems of social adaptation of children and youth functioning in various cultural contexts, with a particular focus on migrants and refugees.

The interconnection of academically diverse approaches in the issues addressed and their problematization as well as outlining their practical implications aim towards opening new areas of research explorations to the readers and providing them with new knowledge. They are also intended to serve as an inspiration to improve praxis.

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Edited by
Urszula Markowska-Manista



United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization



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PREFACE

In the present volume we continue the subject of children living and functioning in multicultural societies through the prism of research, theoretical and practical investigations. We are interested in current problems related to the increasing flux of minorities, refugees and migrants. Not only in the European Union countries, but also in the countries of the Caucasus, Arabian Peninsula, Africa and Central Asia. Problems related to the socio-psychological and pedagogical functioning of children, youth and adults in the contemporary multicultural societies (affected by the new quality of migration processes) seem to be particularly important to researchers, academic teachers, education politicians, teachers and practitioners as well as specialists in the area of diagnostic processes and school adaptation of culturally different children in host societies.

The consequences of migration, refugeeism and the processes of global transformations are of equal importance in the dimension of empirical and theoretical analyses. These are processes related to multicultural education as well as intercultural communication at school and in environments that support children, youth and adults. With regard to the topicality of problems faced by people in multicultural societies, we analyse them through the prism of interdisciplinary exchange of research and practical experiences.

The problems addressed in this monograph refer to children and adolescents as well as adults who require support due to their difficult circumstances. These circumstances include a wide range of contexts in which they function, their varied social or developmental situations and finally, their socio-psychological entanglement in ethnic, national, cultural and social – diverse environments of the adult world.

The articles presented to the readers in this publication are an outcome of the 10th UNESCO International Summer School held in Warsaw, Poland between 15th and 24th September, 2016. These summer sessions have been organised

PREFACE

annually since 2008 by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing at the Maria Grzegorzewska Pedagogical University. The academic profile of the Summer School as well as the research interests of its participants allowed us to look at the question of children and adolescents and their living environments from a psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspective. This monograph is a collection of academic articles written by the lecturers and participants, covering both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the subjects discussed within School activities.

I hope that this monograph will be of use for both practitioners and theorists in the areas explored and constitute a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration for further research in the field.

The editor
Warsaw–Potsdam, July 2017

URSZULA MARKOWSKA-MANISTA

INTRODUCTION

At the crossroads of countries, cultures and disciplines

The present book: “**The contemporary problems of children and youth in multicultural societies. Theory, research, praxis**” was prepared within the activities of the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing at the Maria Grzegorzewska University¹. It is an outcome of the 10th International Summer School “The contemporary problems of children and childhood in multicultural societies – theory, research, praxis”, held by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing² at the Maria Grzegorzewska Pedagogical University in Warsaw, Poland between 15th and 24th September, 2016.

The Jubilee Summer School was organised in cooperation with a foreign academic partner: the Faculty of Education at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek (Croatia). Among the supporting partners were: The Polish Commission for UNESCO, Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange – CEEPUS Program, Polish Janusz Korczak Association and the Foundation for Somalia. The Honorary Patronage of the event was assumed

¹ UNESCO/Janusz Korczak Chair: <http://www.aps.edu.pl/unesco-chair.aspx>; Maria Grzegorzewska University: www.aps.edu.pl

² The UNESCO Chair activity is aligned with UNESCO’s priorities in relation to humanities and social sciences and concentrates on the challenges of the modern world, defined in the Millennium Development Goals. The themes of organised events include: sustainable development, cultural diversity, human rights (children’s rights), interculturalism and intercultural education, as well as modern psychological, pedagogical and sociological challenges.

by the Polish Commission for UNESCO, The Polish National Commission for UNICEF, Polish Ombudsman, Polish Ombudsman for Children, International Janusz Korczak Association (IKA) and the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights (Germany).

The School program included selected elements of the program of the 3-day International Special Pedagogy Conference: "PERSON", organised by the Faculty of Special Pedagogy at the Maria Grzegorzewska Pedagogical University, with the UNESCO chair as academic partner. The subjects addressed during the conference related to early intervention and early support for children with various disorders, while the discussions and academic-research experience exchange focused on the following thematic areas: medical conditioning; social, legal and economic contexts of supporting development; family participation; diagnosis of the child's and family's needs and possibilities; methods of supporting development.

The problems addressed during the 10th International Summer School relate to the theoretical, research and practical aspects of children's functioning and the diversified conditioning of their childhood in multicultural societies. They were discussed through the prism of pedagogical, psychological and sociological approaches, hence examined by scholars and practitioners from various countries and academic institutions as an interdisciplinary field of research and practical activities.

Among the participants of the International Summer School were academics, doctoral students, university students and activists of NGOs – specialists in the fields of psychology and pedagogy as well as other social and human sciences. The participants and lecturers came from various countries: Greece, Germany, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia, Italy, Bosnia, Kazakhstan and Hungary. They represented the following universities, institutions and non-governmental organisations: State University of Tetovo, Macedonia, University of Sarajevo, BiH, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia, Faculty of Psychology, South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Education, University of Belgrade, Serbia, Faculty of Humanities, The University of Pécs, Hungary, Special School No 7, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Faculty of Educational Sciences "Riccardo Massa", Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy, Università di Scienze E Tecniche Psicologiche di Torino, Italy, Ocalenie Foundation

in Warsaw, Poland, Foundation for Somalia in Warsaw, Poland, Institute of Psychology, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland, M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights, Free University Berlin, Germany, Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education Sector of Social Theory and Analysis University of Patras, Greece, National Committee of Red Cross Emblem Protection, Poland, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of Bialystok, Poland, Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw, Poland. Polish participants included university students, doctoral students and staff of the Maria Grzegorzewska University. All participants and lecturers deal with various sub-disciplines of psychology, pedagogy and sociology. Many of them are involved in academic work as well as international research and prosocial activity in culturally and socially diverse backgrounds. Among the lecturers (in addition to specialists from Poland) were researchers from Greece and Germany.

The diverse School activities allowed for a broad presentation of the subjects addressed to the participants, who were also provided an opportunity to become familiar with the praxis of institutions supporting children and youth and engage in a discussion on international and intercultural differences in this area. The participants particularly valued the opportunity to exchange best practices and establish academic contacts that can enable them further cooperation in the future within academic and social programs. They also appreciated the encouragement on the part of organisers and experts to undertake common interdisciplinary research.

Addressing the subject of young people's functioning in the so-called "fragile contexts"³ in the increasingly culturally diversified societies in the countries of the European Union, the Caucasus, Arabian Peninsula, Arab and Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, scholars and participants pointed up to children's and adolescents' living conditions and environments of functioning in new places of residence. They also accentuated the impact of this conditioning on young people's further development. Particular attention was paid to contemporary research on the aberrations in children's and adolescents' access to their rights,

³ More: M. Schultze-Kraft, *'External Stresses' and Violence Mitigation in Fragile Contexts: Setting the Stage for Policy Analysis*. No. Evidence Report; 36. Institute of Development Studies (IDS), 2013; H. Haider, "Community-based approaches to peacebuilding in conflict-affected and fragile contexts." (2009); L. Davies, "Capacity development for education systems in fragile contexts." *Report for German Technical Cooperation/European Training Foundation (GTZ/ETF)* (2009).

as children and youth are, on the one hand, two of the most discriminated groups, while on the other hand, exposed (more than adults) to stress resultant from uncertainty and changes, particularly when it is linked to fears and uncertainty of adults who cooperate with and look after them.

Problems related to children's and adolescents' social, psychological and pedagogical functioning in contemporary multicultural societies (affected by a new type of migration processes) seem to be particularly important to scholars, academic teachers, education politicians, pedagogues, teachers, practitioners and specialists in diagnosing the needs and problems of foreign children's school adaptation in host societies. In the dimension of empirical and theoretical analyses, the following processes are of equal importance: migration, refugeeism, processes related to democratic education, intercultural education and communication at school and in environments supporting children, training of teachers and pedagogues to work in culturally diverse backgrounds as well as processes connected to psychological and pedagogical support for children, youth and adults in their integration.

The present book – the second in the series: “Development and Social Adaptation of Children and Youth”⁴, a collection of selected articles by participants, lecturers and invited guests is a lasting outcome of the School. The volume was made possible through valuable contributions of the participating scholars and specialists. The texts included in the present publication are an invitation to reflect on the perspectives of individuals representing the minority and majority worlds in the contemporary global reality as well as a wide range of problems faced by children, youth and adults in multicultural societies, above all in education.

Introduction to the structure and chapters of the book

This edited volume consists of twelve chapters. Every chapter reflects the specificity of a particular environment in which children and adolescents function and the processes found therein, or is a peculiar case study of education referring to children, adolescents and adults.

⁴ The series was launched with a publication following the 2015 Summer School: “The Interdisciplinary Contexts of Reintegration and Readaptation in the Era of Migration – an Intercultural Perspective”.

In the first chapter **Childhood Resilience. A Review of Literature with Implications for Education in a Multicultural Era**, Ina Lekkai discusses key ideas and vital aspects pertaining to the category of child resilience. In the Author's view, the economic, humanitarian and social crises of the modern era demand a new approach to strengthening children's coping capacities. She points to the potential of the newly emerging concept of resilience, providing literature review on the subject with a comprehensive discussion on such aspects as factors increasing the chance for resilience or the necessity to incorporate the notion into educational thinking. She concludes her analysis with a recommendation that in order to confront the new challenges, a fundamental shift is necessary in our approach to children, urging to recognise them as "active agents and experts in their own lives" with potential and skills which they can use effectively to cope with the stresses and challenges of the modern world.

In her contribution **Non-western childhood through a post-colonial perspective. Punishment and reward for children in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, Anna Odrowąż-Coates discusses the colonising effects of western ideology on the perception of childhood in a non-western culture. The analysis is based on the Author's field research conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that aimed to study the socialisation processes and family life of Saudi children and adolescents. Additionally, the paper provides a review of existing literature on the subject, including references to postcolonial approaches.

In the chapter **Introducing Roma children to the world of money**, Barbara Weigl and Magdalena Poraj-Weder discuss the results of qualitative research conducted among the Polish Roma community. They focus on patterns of economic behaviour found among members of this community, identifying such non-normative (in the eyes of the dominant society) ways of procuring financial means as begging, petty theft or trading in "grey zone economy". The Authors also point to the negative consequences of such behaviour, including hostility and fear on the part of mainstream society, but also such problems as excessive debt or the Roma's maladjustment to the realities of the modern world. Finally, the text discusses family-based education pertaining to obtaining and managing money, whose aim is to help young Roma avoid poor decisions in the economic sphere.

Smaranda Cioban's contribution **The exposure of refugee children to marginalisation. Case study: Domari refugee children, Turkey** relates to the topical problem of marginalisation, discussing various factors affecting

a group's vulnerability: legislative proposals, social dynamics and social inequalities. Drawing on theoretical perspectives (e.g. functionalism or conflict theory), the Author draws particular attention to the vulnerability of refugee children in Turkey, whose exposure to marginalisation is described as critical. The paper also signals the representation of the problem in social discourse, hinting to its role in the aggravation of children's marginalisation and lack of participation in the host society. As a conclusion, the Author discusses the role of attitude change to children from paternalistic to more liberal, implying a focus on children's rights rather than needs, which is seen as a possible way of reducing children's marginalisation.

In their paper **The process of social anchoring in the context of siege mentality syndrome on the example of Haitian and Jewish diasporas in the United States**, Urszula Markowska-Manista, Dominika Zakrzewska-Oleđzka and Paulina Chmiel-Antoniuk outline the category and process of social anchoring as well as conditioning that supports and inhibits the formation of social anchors. The analyses were conducted on the example of two groups: Haitian and Jewish immigrants in the United States. The Authors explored the circumstances provoking the migration of these minority groups and indicated factors affecting their relations with members of the dominant social group in the host country. Their investigations were based on the theory of belonging by Nadia Lovell and the concept of social anchoring. This allowed for a multi-faceted analysis of the said phenomenon in two, distinct groups.

In their contribution **Peer Violence and Conflict Resolution among Adolescents in Multicultural Society**, Gordana Stankovska and Słagana Angelkoska draw on their study conducted among students of both mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic schools in Skopje aiming to explore the correlates of peer violence and conflict resolution. Referring to existing literature on the subject, the Authors add to the discussion signalling the types of violence present among adolescents in multicultural societies and indicating that the strategies of conflict resolution vary depending on whether adolescents are part of a mono-ethnic or multi-ethnic educational background. The paper concludes with recommendations for reducing violent patterns of behaviour through prevention and integration programs.

Tatiana V. Lisovskaya's chapter on **The creation of educational conditions for socialisation and social integration of disabled adults living in**

neuropsychiatric nursing homes in Belarus deals with the problem of disability and the present situation of disabled adults (with severe and mental physical impairments) in Belarus. Echoing the general global attitudes towards disabled people implying the necessity to work towards enhancing their independence and participation in the larger society, the Author discusses various methods of education of adults with physical and mental disabilities used in neuropsychiatric boarding houses to aid their socialisation.

In their article entitled **Factors for reducing violence in multicultural education in the Republic of Macedonia, Slogana Angelkoska and Gordana Stankovska** present their reflections on the challenges faced by children living in multi-ethnic societies, focusing in particular on identity development. The Authors discuss such problems as the inability to form a strong concept of self, difficulties in understanding one's affiliation to a particular ethnic group, or limited ability to understand other ethnicities' viewpoints, values and norms of behaviour. Such challenges can lead to aggression or violence. This is followed by reflections on the role of multicultural education in addressing these problems.

Serena Saligari's contribution on **Integration and Art. Bruno Munari's ideas as a new possibility for Intercultural Pedagogy** discusses the role of creativity in approaching cultural differences. Indicating the multidimensional character of educational work with children and youth in the area of intercultural dialogue, the Author outlines the work and influence of Bruno Munari, an Italian artist and pedagogue, on education oriented towards the process of integration. Munari's project is shown as an example of an intercultural project that points to the effectiveness of art in the promotion of intercultural dialogue and contact. As a theoretical basis to her analysis, the Author provides a discussion on the ideas about creativity by Lev Vigotsky and the concepts of divergent and lateral thinking by Guilford and De Bono.

The chapter **Modelling as an (in)effective rehabilitation strategy by Wiesław Nynca and Kamil Miszewski** explores the relations between two participants of the educational process – the educator and the learner. Various methods and techniques used by educators to incite desired changes in learners are discussed. The Authors outline the co-dependencies that affect the effectiveness of educational processes, framing them against a theoretical analysis. The concluding part of the article provides a reconstruction of the model of an

educator and a profile of learners in the axiological dimension of educational attitudes, setting the ground for further studies in the area of the process of rehabilitation.

In the text **Democratic Education in Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda. Can the housing occupation movement provide a forum to develop the values of Democratic Education?**, Paola D'Ursi analyses Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda, a community of about 40 families occupying a hitherto abandoned building that has developed a system of co-existence based on the values of Democratic Education by Moss. This case study serves as an opportunity to explore such aspects of democratic co-existence as integration, participation or commitment to community. In her analysis, the Author refers to Jessor's theory of risk and protective behaviour, the theory of Inclusive Education as well as Philip Zimbardo's Heroic Imagination Project to integrate their premises in the discussion on the principles of democratic functioning both in the community described and the larger society as a whole.

In her article **Advanced academic study programs and their contribution to awareness raising on children and their rights. The example of the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights**, Rebecca Budde outlines the content and impact of the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights at the Freie Universität Berlin and University of Applied Sciences, Potsdam in Germany. Based on the evaluation study of theoretical analyses, the Author reflects on "how scholars, researchers and well-studied practitioners can position themselves, engage in research and take action in view of the difficulties children face in today's societies, multicultural or not". The basic criteria for the evaluation for the said and similar advanced study programs are whether, and to what degree, they can influence the participants' personal and professional lives and contribute to ameliorating the circumstances of particular social groups (in this case- children).

The texts and their subject area pertain to the social and educational reality of children and youth as well as adults in various cultural and national groups. Their interdisciplinary character is reflected in the variety and range of issues addressed. They explore their resilience, varied contexts of childhood, economic socialisation and marginalisation through categorisation. They examine the process of social anchoring, peer violence and conflict resolution, deliberate about educational conditions for socialisation, multicultural education and

intercultural pedagogy via art; they also review rehabilitation strategies and reflect on the impact of study programs in the area of children's rights on ameliorating their lives in multicultural societies.

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Finally, my sincere appreciation is extended to the reviewers: Prof. Claudia Claudia Maier-Höfer from the *University of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt* and Prof. Anna Szafrńska from the *University of Silesia* in Katowice for their time and insightful, constructive remarks.

INA LEKKAI*

*Childhood Resilience:
A Review of Literature with Implications
for Education in a Multicultural Era*

ABSTRACT : In the light of recent world facts related to the economic, humanitarian and social crisis, particularly visible within the EU, strengthening children's social competences and fostering their individual psychosocial resources from an early age becomes of vital importance. The notion of *resilient child* is an emerging concept for understanding children's coping with the modern-day pace of social change and the associated stress. *Resilience* as the ability of an individual to positively adapt in response to adversity is a key competence to be fostered in children living in the present multicultural societies. There is no single path to resilience; the presence, however, of several protective factors might offset risk factors and increase the chances for resilience. A cluster of individual, family, and community factors has been identified that best explains resilience in children. This paper presents a literature review identifying those factors, and discusses how resilience research has and/or should inform educational thinking in the current multicultural society, in order to best support resilience in children. The paper concludes that a paradigm shift is required in educational thinking from old and current trends of pessimistic thinking about students, to acknowledging children of this new modern multicultural era as active agents and experts in their own lives, as possessing strengths and virtues, and innate bouncing-forward skills and mental health.

KEY WORDS : resilience, education, multicultural era, resilient child, risk factors, protective mechanisms

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*What began as a quest to understand the extraordinary
has revealed the power of the ordinary.
Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities,
but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources
in the minds, brains, and bodies of children,
in their families and relationships, and in their communities.*

(Masten, 2001, p. 227).

Introduction

Children living in today's multicultural community face constant change – in their family, community, school etc. Keeping up with these external changes can be a challenging, never-ending process as they often subtly impose internal changes, within children, for which they often are not fully prepared. It is argued that school, where children spend almost half of their day, for many years, can be a protagonist in preparing them for such challenges which may come in many forms, as a result of major events such as social or political conflicts, environmental disasters, disruption of the family structure or routine, and many other causes. These may challenge a child's abilities to cope and interfere with the child's social and emotional development. Nevertheless, nowadays the pace of social change seems so quick that Albert Camus's critical reflection that "school prepares us for life in the world that does not exist" appears to be more relevant and true than ever.

Indeed, in the face of current social, economic and cultural diversity, it is becoming more and more challenging for teachers and education professionals to prepare children for the world in which they will be functioning as citizens after bidding farewell to school. They are lacking indispensable, efficient strategies and policies to enable the safe development and co-existence of children of various cultural and community backgrounds despite these adverse circumstances. In the light of recent world facts related to the economic crisis, and as a consequence the humanitarian and social one, particularly visible within the EU, preserving and reinforcing children's social competences and fostering their individual psychosocial resources from an early age becomes of vital

importance. The notion of *resilient child* is an emerging concept for understanding children's coping with the modern-day pace of social change and the associated stress.

Resilience as the ability of an individual to efficiently implement positive adaptive behaviours in response to potentially disruptive events while enduring minimal stress, figures prominently as a key competence to be preserved and strengthened in children as they face everyday setbacks in the present multicultural communities. Schools are believed to significantly contribute in understanding and promoting resilience in children and youth (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999) and that is why the education arena should become a focus for studies of resilience in school settings.

This paper's focus is to gain a conceptual understanding of the concept of resilience, by picking up on some recent and older dialogues in resilience research in order to detect its implications for education in a multicultural era. But, what is resilience?

When searching for germane literature, a keyword search using the term *resilience* in the Free University Berlin library portal PRIMO resulted in 76.978 titles that matched the term, 1.623 of which were books. Etymologically, resilience (n.) and its verb "resile" comes from the Latin word *resiliens* which means "to rebound, recoil"; *re* "back" and *salire* "to jump, leap" (online) (Harper, 2001–2016). In its initial sense, it referred to:

Resilience is the elastic energy that a material can absorb and release once the load is removed (online) (Fais, 2016)¹.

The physical property of a material that enables it to return to its original shape or position after deformation (such as bent, stretched or compressed) that does not exceed its elastic limit (online) (Resilience, 2016a).

However, when applied to levels of biology and human activity, as it has been historically (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013), the notion of resilience translates

¹ The resilience of a material is argued to be higher as the yield stress increases (Fais, 2016), whereas for human resilience, it is assumed that the greater the severity of trauma and/or the frequency of traumatic experiences, the less likely an individual will successfully respond to those and further develop (Condly, 2006).

into a person's ability to respond to life's adversities and to use them as stepping-stones to further development and success. Thefreedictionary.com defines human resilience as the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune; buoyancy (online) (Resilience, 2016b). In social terms, it is referred to as the capacity of humans to come out of an extreme shock, damage, injury and trauma and get back to normal life. Resilience can also apply to places and social-ecological systems in that it is the ability to absorb change, self-organise, adapt and learn, while retaining some essential function (Adger, et al., 2011). One can postulate that the two aforementioned definitions coming from material science lay the foundation for the application of the concept of resilience to a variety of life areas and disciplines – from science and medicine to sociology (Werner, 1989) and psychology (Milgram & Palti, 1993), nursing, business, ecology (Adger, et al., 2011; Strunz, 2012; Wong-Parodia, Fischhoffa & Strauss, 2015) but also politics, international relation and education (Ellenbogen, Klein & Wekerle, 2014; Theron, Liebenberg & Malindi, 2013).

For this paper, a literature review was conducted from the perspective of its relevance to education, as a consequence of which the present discussion is shaped as follows: to contextualize it, the paper starts with an introductory conceptual framework, followed by a brief reference to the history of the concept and the evolution of the research in the field, but also a short reference to a potentially problematic aspect of the construct of resilience. The next units aim to gain the necessary terminology and explore some key concepts surrounding "resilience" discourse by referring to various definitions of resilience, touching briefly on the risk and protective mechanisms and by providing an overview of what is described as "resilient child" in resilience literature. The guiding question in this theoretical exploration is how resilience research informs (or should inform) the fostering of resilience in educational settings of a multicultural society, therefore the paper ends with a discussion on the ways in which the concept of resilience has been taken up in the literature on education. In discussing all these issues, a common underlying consideration is how we, in education, can strengthen children's personal resilience and best assist them in overcoming environmental stressors.

Historical Context

The scientific interest to understand the individual variations in positive adaptation in the face of adversity is seen to originate from the empirical literature on schizophrenia (Masten et al., 1990). In the 1970s, studies that investigated primarily the maladaptive behaviour among severely disordered patients (Garmezy, 1970; Zigler & Glick, 1986), traced some adaptive patterns of those with the least severe courses of illness that indicated a relative social competence and capacity to fulfil responsibility. Although not described as resilience at that time, “these aspects of premorbid social competence might be viewed today as prognostics of relatively resilient trajectories” (in Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000, p. 544).

Norman Garmezy, the eminent clinical psychologist, is considered as one of the resilience theory pioneers². He was a researcher in the area of schizophrenia and played a major role in research on the study of individuals, especially children who were at risk of the subsequent development of psychopathology and developmental problems, including schizophrenia. This body of studies on children of schizophrenic mothers is considered the genesis of childhood resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). Widely credited with being the first to study the concept in an experimental setting, Garmezy studied how adversity in life affects mental illness and this interest in studying illness states led him to investigate why some children genetically at high-risk status for developing mental illness, who experience stress and adversity flourish in life, while others in the same circumstances languish; the study of resilience.

The most frequent documentation of “resilience” refers to the ability of an individual to bounce back successfully despite experiencing a combination of unfavourable factors and “has clearly established the self-righting nature of human development” (Benard, 1993, p. 44). One of the earliest and largest interdisciplinary studies on risk factors and the roots of resiliency in vulnerable children is Emmy Werner’s on-going, 38-year study of a multiracial cohort of 698 infants born in 1955 on the island of Kauai, Hawaii (Werner & Smith,

² One of Garmezy’s major contribution in the area of psychology is the combination of clinical psychology, child development, and behaviour genetics which resulted in the emergence of both resilience science and developmental psychopathology (Masten & Cicchetti, 2012).

1979). This longitudinal study traced the developmental paths of children who had been exposed to risk factors such as perinatal stress, chronic poverty, and a family environment troubled by chronic discord and parental psychopathology. Its major findings show that one-third of the children who had four or more risk factors during their childhood were doing fine by adolescence whereas, by the age of 32, two-thirds of the children who did develop problems during adolescence were leading successful adult lives (Werner & Smith, 1979; Werner, 1989; Werner, 1993).

Much of early research in the field dealt with identifying personal attributes of those children who qualified as “resilient”, such as autonomy or high self-esteem. As research in the area evolved, researchers acknowledged the contributions of internal and external factors that cultivate resilience in individuals and introduced the concept of protective processes or mechanisms into the framework of resilience research (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013). In his review of stress-resistant children, Garmezy (1985) concluded that a set of three major factors were implicated in the development of resilience in children, located both within the child and in the child’s environment: (1) dispositional attributes of the child, such as autonomy, self-esteem, and positive social orientation (2) family cohesion and warmth, and an absence of discord (3) the availability and use of external support systems by parents and children (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Hanewald, 2011; Rutter, 1987).

Definitions of Resilience

For the purposes of this paper, I concentrate on the meanings of resilience in the socio–psychological context. There was no interest in reviewing literature on resilience from completely different contexts such as ecology or business; rather, the primary focus was on reviewing psychological resilience which has its roots in child development research (Masten, 2001; Werner, 1993; Werner, 1989).

In its essence, resilience refers to positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity, the ability to maintain a relatively stable level of mental health despite being exposed to severe life-situations (Wald, Taylor, Asmundson, et al., 2006, in Herrman, 2011). Resilience is conceptualised as a *personal trait*:

the ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances who are exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event... to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning, as well as the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions” (Bonanno, 2004, pp. 20–21)

or as a *dynamic process* of “positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity” (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). It relates to a variety of topics and is discussed either as a *single dichotomous* variable or as a *continuum* which provides a more accurate framework for understanding resilience.

Masten (2014) rejects the fixed mindset belief of a “trait of resilience” (p. 14) deriving from rare or special qualities, which a child might or might not have (Masten, 2001). She defines the concept not as a single phenomenon, but as a cluster of phenomena “characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (Masten, 2001, p. 228). This definition combines two critical conditions for resilience: (1) exposure to severe adversity; and (2) the achievement of good outcomes despite the serious threat to the developmental process (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

Resilience is better perceived as a label that defines the interaction of a child with trauma or a toxic environment in which success, as judged by societal norms, is achieved by virtue of the child’s abilities, motivations, and support systems (Condly, 2006, p. 213).

Rutter characterises resilience as the positive pole of the variations of developmental outcomes in individuals’ response to stress and adversity (Rutter, 1987; Luthar, et al.). Ungar (2008) offers a contextually relevant definition of resilience as an individual’s response to significant adversity, whether psychological and/or environmental:

...resilience is both the capacity of individuals to the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and... the capacity to negotiate for, health resources on their own terms (p. 225).

However, Masten and Garmezy’s (1985) broader definition of resilience as “the process of, the capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite

challenging or threatening circumstances”, encompasses all these terms and also implies that it is a process of both externalising and internalising difficulties (Wolff & Wolff, 1995, p. 566).

In their narrative review of the definitions of resilience Herrman et al. (2011) detect a lack of consensus on an operational definition of resilience among researchers from diverse disciplines. However, there are various clear definitions in resilience research which partly overlap in meaning, with similarities and differences pretty discernible “yet clearly related” (Tuggy, 1993, p. 273 in Strunz, 2012, p. 113). What they all have in common is the element of *recovery* from aversive events; but they provide little insight into the processes and protective mechanisms against the risk factors associated with adversity, that is *resilience*. There is still a clear “need to unpack the underlying processes” with reference to both risk & protective factors (Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006, p. 107).

The development of human resilience, Benard (1991, p. 18) argues, “is none other than the process of human healthy development – a dynamic process in which personality and environmental influences interact in a reciprocal, transactional relationship”. Similarly, and counter to the temptation of a fixed mindset which views resilient children as extraordinary-kids who stand up well under stress, Ann Masten (2001), another prominent resilience researcher points to the “ordinariness of the phenomena” of resilience which often occurs from ordinary processes of basic human adaptational systems, implying that resilience is encoded in humans regardless of their privileged or underprivileged background.

Conceptual Precision vs. Vagueness

Although the term resilience is variously defined in theoretical writings, it seems that, as a concept, it is often being used as having a rather flexible meaning. In December 2015, the *New York Times Magazine* published an article entitled “The Profound Emptiness of ‘Resilience’”, where the author points out that recently the usage of the word resilience has surged. There is a rapidly growing number of books, articles and international organisations’ agendas incorporating this concept, which is very often poorly translated as being only an individual characteristic of genetic origin, like “character”, thus blurring its

meaning and rendering the concept of resilience “profound and profoundly hollow” (Sehgal, 2015).

But should resilience be so vague a concept? Strunz (2012) philosophically poses the question in the scientific discourse on resilience: *Is conceptual vagueness an asset?* Although he applies his arguments only on resilience in social–ecological systems and not on psychological resilience, Strunz acknowledges conceptual precision to be a prerequisite for sound empirical knowledge but also proposes a “polysemous conceptual structure for ‘resilience thinking’”, which suggests that there could be benefits from relative conceptual vagueness (Strunz, 2012, p. 117). On the other hand, the “accurate definitions and operationalisation of terms” are indispensable for any theory’s wide acceptance, Condly argues (2006, p. 215).

Risk and Protective Factors

Discourse on resilience is often framed with reference to terms such as risk, protection, and vulnerability (alongside others in the field), therefore research on resilience has focused on identifying factors or interactions that indicate those. It is hoped that by gaining a better understanding of the correlates and causes that militate in favour of individuals thriving despite risk and vulnerability factors, will help professionals in the field to tailor specific intervention strategies to help those in need.

The assumption is that if these factors can be identified, then social programs can be designed to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors, thereby reducing the prevalence of vulnerable children (Willms, 2002, p. 23, in Hanewald 2011, p. 19).

However, these highly relevant terms often occur in literature “riddled with complexities, contradictions and ambiguities” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 39).

In general, a risk factor is believed to be any factor or combination of factors that increases the likelihood of a harmful, for a person, outcome to occur. In their report, Mrazek & Haggerty (1994, p. 127) define risk factors as “those characteristics, variables, or hazards that, if present for a given individual, make

it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder” (in Shader, 2004, p. 2). Risk factors occur within the individual, in the environment, or in the individual’s ability to respond to the demands or requirements of the environment (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, chapter 4). For the purposes of this paper, the term risk factor is being used to refer to any environmental factor or combination of factors that render children vulnerable or at risk.

Certain risk indicators are used to identify groups *at risk* and researchers are using risk factors approach to predict the likelihood of future unpleasant life trajectories (e.g. delinquent behaviour). Such risk indicators related to education include: low-income family, learning difficulties, poor performance at school, behavioural disorders, as well as social and emotional problems (Frederick & Olmi, 1994, in Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999, p. 307).

Risk factors for being *at risk* are neither fixed nor static; they change over time depending on “when they occur in a young person’s development, in what social context, and under what circumstances” (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, chapter 4). However, in their significant study of delinquent youngsters, West & Farrington (1973) identify five, present-time still relevant key risk indicators; *low family income, large family size, parental criminality, low intelligence* and *poor rearing techniques* were found to render young boys vulnerable to delinquency (Hanewald, 2011).

Protective factors often explain why individuals who face the same degree of risk may be affected differently and have been viewed in literature as “both the absence of risk and something conceptually distinct from it” (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, chapter 4). However, protective factors counterbalance risk factors in the sense that they “mediate or moderate the effect of exposure to risk factors, resulting in reduced incidence of problem behaviour” (Pollard, Hawkins & Arthur, 1999, p. 146 in Shader, 2004, p. 3).

Lastly, both concepts of risk & protective factors are familiar in public health. Just as risk factors have been identified as cumulative (Condly, 2006; Willms, 2002, in Hanewald, 2011), protective factors may exert the same cumulative effects on individuals’ lives. The more protective factors present in a child’s life, the greater the possibility for resilience to occur (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). Both factors have been described in relation to three broad categories: *individual, social, and community*; they may change at different developmental

stages and may interact. Just like protective factors do not guarantee that a child will become resilient, risk factors do not necessarily cause a child to become vulnerable. They reduce or increase the probability of desirable or undesirable circumstances associated with increased risk, but they do not make them a certainty (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001; Shader, 2004).

The Resilient Child's Profile

A definition of resilience in children pertains to “the ability to recover from traumatic experiences and develop the skills to overcome future challenges drawing from personal external (I have), internal (I am), and interpersonal (I can) resources” (Woznica, 2016).

Masten & Obradović (2006) note that definitions of resilience are framed by specific cultural, developmental, and historical contexts, even if these contexts are assumed rather than made explicit. In the domain of childhood resilience development, Condly points out that although not a fact determined by research, it is nevertheless a common belief that severe trauma affects children more than adults and therefore they need more care and concern (Condly, 2006). Most likely, with children being very dependent upon other people and other systems of influence such as their family and school, most people would assume that children, compared to adults, suffer more from the consequences of traumatic events. Indeed, the age range or developmental period during which a person is exposed to a specific risk factor is crucial. Drawing on developmental psychology and developmental biology, during the critical periods of a child's early years of development, when the brain and the nervous system are especially sensitive to certain environmental stimuli, the effects of certain risk factors may be more accurate (Cynader & Frost, 1999, in Hanewald, 2011) and therefore cause more harm.

The resilient child in literature is often described as the one who “works well, plays well, loves well, and expects well” (Garmezy, 1974; Werner & Smith, 1982, in Benard, 1991, p. 3), or children who cope well despite the stressful life events experienced during their early ages of life (Milgram & Palti, 1993). Benard outlines the profile of the resilient child with four specific attributes: (1) *social competence*, encompasses qualities such as responsiveness, flexibility, empathy, caring, communication skills, and a sense of humour;

(2) *problem-solving skills*, entails having the ability to think abstractly and reflectively, be able to attempt alternate solutions to both cognitive and social problems (*planning* and *resourcefulness* in seeking help from others are crucial skills); (3) *autonomy*, or else having a sense of one's own identity and an ability to act independently and exert some control over one's environment; (4) *a sense of purpose*, meaning having goals, educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, and a sense of a bright future (Benard, 1993, p. 44).

There are many perspectives on the factors that trigger resiliency in children. Much research has examined the correlates and causes of social and psychological pathology, poverty and traumatic stress, but also have looked into the impact of stressors like disease and illness (Condly, 2006). Researchers investigating crime and delinquency interested in understanding their roots and causes, have examined the "adverse" personal and social characteristics which render juvenile boys particularly vulnerable to the likelihood of becoming delinquent (Shader, 2004; Office of the Surgeon General, 2001). From the educational point of view, resilience as a concept has been discussed in terms of understanding the factors that explain academic resilience as opposed to social resilience. In the field of education, findings from resilience research have been translated into guidelines for developing programmes, policy recommendations and practical guides (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999).

In accordance with Garmezy (1985), Werner found several factors within individuals, within their families, and outside the family environment that contributed to their resilience, namely: (1) personality characteristics and attributes of the individual children, (2) family aspects and emotional ties within it, and (3) characteristics of the wider social environment and external support systems (Werner 1989; Condly, 2006; Luthar et al., 2007).

Alongside with other personality variables such as *locus of control*, *social skills*, and *ego development*, *high intelligence* (or else *intellectual ability*) and an *easy, adaptable sociable temperament* are the two most identified individual characteristics used to explain a child's resilience (Condly, 2006; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1989; Wolff & Wolff, 1995). Condly (2006) hints that what these findings possibly imply is that individual characteristics such as *good intelligence* and *easy temperament* constitute the underlying premise for resilience in children. This is because the combination of these two variables evoke more positive reactions from others and reinforce the sense of

self-worth, competence, and self-efficacy that are often recognised as important ingredients of resilience (Wolff & Wolff, 1995). Werner (1989) vividly describes temperamental characteristics of resilient infants as eliciting positive attention from family and strangers.

By the age of one, both boys and girls were more frequently described by their caregivers as “very active; “ the girls as “ affectionate” and “cuddly, “ the boys as “ good-natured” and “easy to deal with” (p. 73).

Some researches investigating intelligence as a moderator variable for resilience, have found that intellectual ability operates as a protective factor (Garmezy et al., 1984). Milgram & Palti’s (1993) research findings indicate that high-achieving children are superior in terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics to their low-achieving peers. As they specifically note:

They possess such cognitive ability enhancing characteristics as being active, reflective, confident, and alert. They also possess such social support seeking and support attracting skills as being able to make friends easily with age peers, relate well to adults, and help others. ...they appear to enjoy a more hospitable home and community environment than do their low-achieving classmates... (Milgram & Palti, 1993, p. 218).

Still in other investigations, interaction effects between intelligence and stress indicated that intelligence was involved as a *vulnerability* mechanism rather than as a protective factor (Luthar, 1991; Masten, 2001). In the Luthar investigation (1991), intelligence and stress indicators were inversely related. At low stress levels, intelligence was positively related to school competence. When stress level was high, intelligent children appeared to demonstrate competence levels more similar to those of less intelligent peers. A suggested interpretation of such findings is that brighter children compared to those who are less intelligent “tend to have higher levels of sensitivity to their environments which may heighten their susceptibility to stressors” (Zigler & Farber, 1985, in Luthar, 1991, p. 611; in Luthar & Zigler, 1991, p. 11).

The research on *locus of control* has shown that high faith in one’s control over the environment contributes to resilience (Werner, 1989). In her

study of high-risk adolescents, Luthar (1991) found that resilient adolescents demonstrated a strong belief that events and outcomes in their external environment were controllable. This internal locus of control was involved in *protective processes* resulting in lower stress levels in comparison to the adolescents with a belief that external environment was determinative. The same study indicated significant protective aspects of high interpersonal skills, in terms of social expressiveness, against stress, but also highlighted ego development as a “robust compensatory factor” positively related to adjustment and mental health (Luthar, 1991, p. 610–612).

Family characteristics such as *family warmth* and *stable significant others* are acknowledged to contribute significantly to children’s resilience while some researchers clearly dispute the role of the family regarding the development of resilience in children (Rowe, 1994). However, prudently as Condly (2006) positions himself in the debate on the relative importance of the family environment for child development, it can be argued that family plays a pivotal role in the development of resilience in children *mainly* during their early years of life.

Addressing the genetic aspect of resilience and pointing to its immediate dialogue with the environment, evidence from genetic studies on resilience show that social experiences can have substantial impact on a person’s gene expression which can in turn later affect later behaviour in that person (Parent, Zhang, Caldji, et al., 2005, in Herrman). The availability of external support systems that significantly reinforce a child’s coping skills, has been specified in two factors: *parental involvement in a child’s life* and *support for the family*. Both have been greatly discussed. The first one, because of a potential dual nature whereby resilience might either be risked or enhanced, depending on the individual characteristics of a child, and the interactions of the greater environment with the child and the family. The latter is discussed in terms of specifying its nature and defining it schematically. Apparently, effective social support must have the at-risk children in centre while including the larger family as a part of a whole system being supported (Condly, 2006).

In conclusion, resilience in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes, social & cultural competences is related to personal and social well-being. In the era of current social changes, where risk indicators such as child poverty, drug abuse, declines in academic performance and fundamental negative

changes in discipline and social behaviour become “poisonous to children’s development” (Garbarino, 1995, in Condly, 2006, p. 214), fostering resilience in children becomes of fundamental importance because in the face of these life stresses, many children develop behavioural and psychological difficulties (Luthar, 1991). It is impossible however to specify the hierarchy of all the features of this range as they are all interdependent and interrelated, and in each case, the emphasis is on the fundamental feature of fending for oneself as manifested by the resourcefulness in seeking social support from others, an efficient impulse control and social skills, the acceptance of personal and circumstantial limitations, and by bouncing forward in life with hope and a sense of a bright future.

Discussion

Researchers have concluded that there is no single path to resilience and note that the presence of several protective factors often offsets risk factors and increases the chances for resilience. Studies also point to the interaction of risk factors, their cumulative effect, “multiplicative in nature, not merely additive” (Garbarino et al., 1992, in Condly, 2006) when multiple risk factors are present, and how certain protective factors may work to offset risk factors. School is believed to be a source of protective factors and contribute significantly to the resilience of children (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). The work of Rutter et al. (1979) delivers the message that school can make a positive difference in resilient children’s lives. In his book *Fifteen Thousand Hours*, Michael Rutter and his colleagues found that children from twelve secondary schools within poor areas of London demonstrated considerable resilient characteristics, not necessarily related to academic achievement, by experiencing positive experiences (change) in school.

Implications from risk and protective factors research

The importance of the findings from *risk and protective factors research* for education is underscored by the fact that certain *intervening factors* which are associated with student behaviour and achievement (Hanewald, 2011) can

feasibly be modified through prevention or intervention programs. When resilience in students does not occur, the model of “blaming the victim” (the deficit model) for those *unalterable factors* over which children have no control (such as sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and family structure) has more disadvantages than positive aspects. The deficit focus in education sees students who differ from the norm in a significant way, and/or their families, as deficient. As a result, educators and policy makers often devise educational programmes aiming to “correct” these deficiencies rather than changing school structures and programmes to meet the students’ needs (Goodlad & Keating, 1990, in Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). From early childhood on, practitioners working with children should focus on those features that can effectively be changed (such as social competence and self-esteem) in order to help children, establish positive relationships with both adults and peers and to foster resilience in them.

There is a further serious problem arising from adopting a deficit model in educational thinking. Rosenthal’s self-fulfilling prophecy theory suggests that teachers have the ability to shape what a student becomes. In 1965, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson conducted an experiment where a small group of random students was labelled as “growth spurters” and teachers were tricked into believing their students were destined for academic growth. The authors successfully prophesied that at the end of the school year, these random students would have a higher intelligence score when compared to their classmates because the teachers would have treated them differently. Indeed, teachers’ high expectations of these students’ greater intellectual development supported their growth accordingly, serving as a self-fulfilling prophecy (see Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, chapter 7).

Back to the deficit model, self-fulfilling prophecies informed by a deficit thinking can be assumed to be harmful in an educational setting. Early labelling of students as vulnerable or at risk often has the effect of lowering teachers’ expectations of what students are capable of achieving (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). Documentation on children from kindergarten through high school shows that teachers’ opinion can underestimate the ability of a child with negative perceptions (such as social stereotypes) (Weinstein, Gregory, & Strambler, 2004). In my understanding, this often results in the undesirable outcome of students being “robbed of their resilience and disempowered by mistaken ideological assumptions” (Sehgal, 2015). Giving

some consideration to this, can practitioners somehow ensure there is a remedy for it (assuming such a remedy is possible)? To my humble knowledge, no empirical evidence has yet proven such an assumption. On the contrary, protective factor research has shown that the development of resilience is based on and “grows out of nurturing, participatory relationships grounded in trust and respect” (Benard, 1993, p. 1).

Lost resilience?

Is it possible that a given environment is so ‘toxic’ that it might lead to children completely losing their resilience? If so, can it be restored? There is relevant literature depicting a fragile nature of resilience as something that can be lost, and/or perhaps regained (Masten & Obradović, 2006). In their cautionary notes, Masten & Obradović (2006, p. 23) underline that resilience might not occur when severe levels of risks and adversities are suffered, and furthermore “recovery is extraordinarily rare or impossible”. As resilience literature dictates, although individual characteristics such as good intelligence and easy temperament are believed to form the underlying premise for resilience in children (Condly, 2006; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1989; Wolff & Wolff, 1995), under conditions of numerous serious threats of cumulative effect experienced in a toxic environment, it is impossible that no harm is caused, no matter how well equipped the child may be temperamentally (Garbarino, 1998). Therefore, for teachers and other educational professionals it is useful to value resilience as a developing capacity to function, which is vital for children living in multicultural societies and to consider it as a continuum across the multiple developmental domains (physical, psychological, interpersonal) of a child’s early years (Hanewald, 2011). What becomes of crucial importance in this respect is identifying the resilience-destroying or the resilience-enhancing factors in educational settings, in order to reinforce those explicit factors that are known to promote mental health, like *locus of control*, *sense of coherence*, *close relations to others* and *secure attachment* (Rutter, 1987). Moreover, educational professionals need to effectively engage in building children’s perceptions of their own *self-efficacy*, i.e. the belief in their sufficient competencies to influence matters that directly concern them,

by exercising autonomous choices and a sense of control, coupled with an understanding of their strengths and limitations (Lekkai, 2016). They should also be aware of the fact that most of these factors are most probably themselves closely interrelated and of cumulative effect, thus building resilience in children is an on-going, long-term developmental process, as it is the development of their social and emotional skills.

When certain clearly recognisable children's backgrounds (e.g. deprived children, poor home situations) indicate an increased probability of future deviating life trajectories, professionals in the field of education should go beyond the mere identification of the likelihood of it. It is true that as teachers we have no control over the risk factors our students are experiencing that inevitably affect their behaviour and perhaps might minimise their potential to achieve, we do however have the power to cautiously recognise students at risk and invest time and resources to adapt, so that their needs are met. Improving schools and further educating school personnel, increasing education in child-rearing and constructively occupy children and youth would be some actions to be taken. Education community should also devote more research and resources to how resilience can be best fostered in children living in current multicultural societies, so that it informs school policies, educational programmes, community-based organisations etc., to become more supportive, caring, and participatory for all.

Whose perspective?

Who has the competence to define who is resilient or at-risk, and who is not? And what are the standards involved in such assessments? This discourse is high in global resilience science's agenda. Ungar (2008) highlights the role of culture and context stressing that resilience depends on the structural conditions, social relations as much as it depends on the individual's capacities. Regarding this issue, from a children's right perspective, the application of the concept of risk in schools may sometimes directly challenge values such as resilience and children's rights, and therefore warrants careful attention. According to Goodlad & Keating (1990), schools often categorise as *at-risk* those students

whose appearance, language, culture, values, home communities, and family structures often do not match those of the dominant culture, suggesting that ideological factors may be implicated in the construction or application of the concept of risk (in Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999, p. 308).

In combination with the above, considering Article 2 of the UNCRC and the general principle of non-discrimination, the construction of the risk concept in schools might sometimes lead to discriminatory incidents or practices that might affect children in a particularly negative way. Presumptions in this regard that are not necessarily based on reality, might be perceived as a denial of children's human characteristics and thus negating their right to be different among other children, who all have equal value. But social-cultural ecologies such as schools and other institutions, have children's rights obligations and in such a case, the interpretation could be that of a clear failure of this specific educational institution, to translate the right to non-discrimination into reality.

In a society that falls short on the dimension of tolerance and respect to cultural diversity, commonplace assumptions with noticeable unjust and prejudicial treatment on the grounds of appearance, language, culture, values etc., carry with them the risk of hindering a child's subjective wellbeing; if oft-repeated they might alert the feeling of learned helplessness and psychological problems (Ungar, 2005). If, for example, educators do not have adequate education on child trauma, they will not understand the reasons behind a "wounded" child's behaviour and actions; they might easily label the child as troublesome or delinquent, therefore at-risk, followed by the consequences for such behaviours (strict limits, deprivation of privileges etc.). Such treatment might affect the children's wellbeing to a great extent, even if they are carried out by just a few staff members in a school environment. Consequently, given the constructed nature of both social competence and "unconventional" behaviour, social contexts (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999) and individual variations in response to adversities are highly relevant. Therefore, it is essential that multi-cultural family backgrounds are mindfully taken into account, and great caution is exercised in constructing and practically applying such labels in educational settings.

From the perspective of a social ecology of resilience, every suggestion for strategies and actions to foster resilience should be shaped by and tailored to the unique local needs and goals, available resources and skilled personnel. They also should consider the different ethnic, religious or social groups within which they are to be implemented (ecological approach) but also meaningfully take into account their values, attitudes and beliefs. In this regard, increasing service providers' and policy makers' knowledge of parents' cultural beliefs about child rearing and normative child development, would also be highly relevant. As parents' knowledge and expectations of children's development, from different social contexts, varies greatly by culture, education professionals can be enhanced by gaining a better understanding of this knowledge. Although it seems hard to isolate specific successful practices, some general principles stand out in literature (Wang et al., 1995 in Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999). One is pointed out by Ungar (2011), who stresses that the socio-cultural ecologies of children, especially of those placed at risk, can potentiate resilience and promote fundamental children's rights by adopting respectful child-related practices and policies (in Theron, Liebenberg & Malindi).

An issue that warrants empirical attention, is how children themselves describe their state of welfare and their ratings of what adults frame as negative or positive life events. The argument that the positive or negative impact of any life event "depends a great deal on the child's appraisal of it" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985, in Luthar, 1991, p. 613) makes it almost imperative for some child-led resilience research. To date, limited comprehensive studies have been undertaken to delineate the construct of risk and resilience from a child's perspective. There only few exceptions that have addressed empirically this highly complex issue (Dryden et al., 1998, in Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999; Lee, Kwong, Cheung, Ungar & Cheung, 2010).

Corresponding angles

In the era of current social changes, it turns out that schools and educational institutions can contribute significantly to children's personal resilience (Theron, Liebenberg & Malindi, 2013). Reviewing resilience literature relevant to education, this becomes quite clear. As Rutter et al.'s study (1979) concludes:

...the results carry the strong implication that schools can do much to foster good behaviour and attainments, and that even in a disadvantaged area, schools can be a force for the good (p. 205).

From examining this body of literature, I came to the realisation, in parallel with Howard, Dryden & Johnson's (1999) thorough observation, that, in fact, the implications for education from resilience research are not far from what work in other areas has dictated throughout the years as effective learning and teaching. For example, Mallak's (1998) report on the effectiveness of resilient behaviour highlights *critical understanding* and *goal-directed solution-seeking* to be a key factor of resilience. Moreover, they seem to complement in many ways what many educators, teachers and parents would consider as natural teaching or upbringing strategies. In this respect, the approach of *positive education* comes to mind, which integrates positive psychology's emphasis on individual strengths and personal motivation into learning strategies. Although resilience research "helped to rekindle positive psychology" (Masten, 2001, p. 235), much earlier John Dewey and Maria Montessori, among other thinkers, had been advocating for positive schooling. In his *Democracy and Education: an introduction to the philosophy of education*, Dewey identifies classrooms as primary institutional settings within which democracy can be developed (Dewey, 1916) whereas the Montessori system, mainly based on the positive psychology's principle of creativity, puts forth the practice of self-directed learning or else the freedom for children to choose how they learn (Montessori, 1988).

From a broader perspective, when discussing incorporating both the individual's strengths and the individual's environment in efforts to promote resilience, the developmental ecology perspective of Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1994) comes to mind. His ecological model views the development of the child as the result of constant change and within a complex system of five socially organised subsystems that guide human functional activity (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). In this model, the environment is perceived as composed of the proximal setting, also called *microsystems* (the child's immediate environment) and describes the exchange between an individual and her/his family, school and peers. The interconnection among the microsystems is referred to as the *mesosystem* and it is claimed to have effects on human development. Parents for

example directly interact with schools which can have an influence on child's development. Moreover, it is assumed that individuals are/can be affected by the *exosystem* which consists of settings which are indirectly connected through other microsystems. For example, aspects of community life and interactions can create stress for parents which would result in changes in parenting behaviour and subsequently affect children. The *macrosystem* refer to the values, cultural beliefs, opportunity structures, customs and hazards which affects all the other systems in the developmental ecology. Lastly, the *chronosystem* of development according to Bronfenbrenner, describes the changes or consistencies over the life course in individual characteristics and environment factors (e.g. family structure socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence).

Can resilience be taught or learned?

Benard claims that fostering resilience in children is not about “teaching ‘resiliency skills’ per se” (Benard, 1993, p. 1), whereas researchers such as Jackson, Firtko & Edenborough (2007) view it as possible for an individual to learn or build resilience once the characteristics that constitute resilience as such are elucidated. It is my conviction that schools can pioneer in implementing programs that build a resilience growth mindset in children, based on the belief that their individual natural qualities are things they can cultivate through their efforts. While fixed mindsetters focus on traits, which are stable and people either have them or not (for instance, intelligent or not, talented or not, etc.), growth mindsetters believe that ability is something that develops through learning, and therefore see failure as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than as a threat to their personal traits. In this perspective, there is an increased likelihood that a growth mindset might potentiate resilience more than a fixed mindset.

Resiliency requires changing hearts and minds (Benard, 1993)

In conclusion, the literature review can lead one to conclude that the characteristic shift in resilience science and research that is: focusing on individuals' assets instead of pointing to their deficits, is a powerful lesson for educators

to be learned. Seeing children of this new modern multicultural era as active agents and experts in their own lives, as possessing strengths and virtues, and innate bouncing-forward skills and mental health, rather than labelling them as problematic, requires a cultural change, which in turn requires a systemic change. As Bonnie Benard (1993, p. 1) poetically puts it, “resiliency requires changing hearts and minds” pointing to the paradigm shift required.

Nevertheless, we need to be prudent and eclectic in our approach as it is true that there are “multiple pathways” (Masten & Obradović, 2006, p. 22) and sources to resilience (including biological, psychological, and dispositional attributes, social support and other attributes of social systems (family, school, friends, and community) which often are interrelated and interact (Masten, 2001). When assessing and teaching children, schools and educators must embrace the child as a whole, unveil the jewels inside each child and then build on those strengths to help children grow; understand their diversity, cherish their individuality, and respect their rights. Encouraging children to experience in positive ways both their differences as culturally diverse people and their similarities as human beings becomes indispensable. The time has more than come for this kind of principles to prevail in educational thinking because it is this way that educators can better serve and assist an increasingly diverse generation of students to function successfully in a multicultural society. As research has proved, when schooling experiences are respectful of children’s rights, resilience processes are promoted (Theron, Liebenberg & Malindi, 2013). Thus, in this respect, further work for teachers and professionals in education becomes reasonable: a) recognising that these culturally rich diverse populations of students can become a positive force in shaping our modern society’s cultural identity, b) acquiring current knowledge of the multi-cultural and socio-economic dimensions of world society, and of the mutual interactions of diverse cultural identities, and most and foremost c) practicing school experiences that support positive child development in child rights-centred ways.

That said, it becomes almost imperative that the education community challenge long held beliefs and constantly reflect on the validity of old and current trends of pessimistic thinking about society, schools and students. Rather than succumbing to the “ever-present temptation to ‘blame the victim’ or ‘fix the kid’” (Benard, 1993, p. 45), professionals in the field should

actively engage in creating partnerships (with family and community) to create and provide environments that will foster the growth and well-being of all the children, and where meaningful resources are offered in culturally relevant ways. Key to this would be to mindfully frame and reinforce those microsystemic factors (*caring and supportive intimate relationships and attachments, positive expectations, and ongoing opportunities for meaningful participation and consideration*) that are correlated and have proved to foster and can further promote the development of children's personal resilience potential.

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Non-western childhood through a post-colonial perspective. Punishment and reward for children in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT : The paper is based on qualitative materials from field research, depicting the socialisation processes and family life of Saudi children and young adults in a country-specific cultural space. Observations took place during a two-year ethnographic research project (2010-2012) carried out in the area in and around Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This paper contains discussions on the colonising effects of western ideology on the perception of childhood in a non-western culture. It also examines the everyday life practices of the cultural formation of children (the positive and the negative reinforcements) in an attempt to tie it with critical theory grounding. Additionally, this paper aims to frame the cultural formation of children with post-colonial discourses.

KEY WORDS : childhood, colonisation, post-colonial, behaviourism, culture

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Childhood resistant to ‘western’ expectations

Since 2012, I have been analysing and framing the vast number of issues encountered during my prolonged stay in Saudi Arabia (2010–2012). My ethnographic research, which included observations in vivo, unstructured interviews and desk analysis of written and visual sources, has been focused primarily on socialisation processes, the creation and reproduction of the social system and the interplay of gender, ethnicity and religion. All of these factors contributed to the creation of a very specific intersectional cultural realm. Every attempt to rework, re-frame or re-construct the data, has resulted in the discovery of gaps and weaknesses in the analysis. This in turn has led to further opportunities to refine, expand and solidify the conclusions. I have found that with time I have grown increasingly critical of my own personal biases and I hope that with a fresh and holistic synthesis of my existing works, I will be able to enrich and broaden the findings of previous interpretations, which were heavily influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, Emile Durkheim and the investigative sociology of Jack Douglas. Classical feminist writers such as Judith Butler, bell hooks or Donna Haraway and critical theorists like Norman K. Denzin or Henry Giroux, often inspired the analytical approach that was taken to categorise and interpret the empirical data. I have previously written about the mechanisms of social control (Odrowąż-Coates, 2014) through childhood into adulthood. I have also written about the socialisation and education that creates certain gender reality and cultural codes, which frame the sphere of women in Saudi Arabia (Odrowąż-Coates, 2015a & b). I discussed the processes through which childhood experiences form an overarching ‘doxa’ and ‘habitus’ embedded into the unconscious of the adult. Therefore, it can be seen that I perceive childhood as the critical period when belief systems about the world are formed.

In this paper I wish to reflect on the modern concept of childhood from a critical perspective of post-colonial studies. Therefore I decided to discuss how the colonising effect of western creeds lands on the distant shores of non-western cultures, dissecting them, thus allowing the analysis of the culture through the lens of western ideologies. This approach resembles Pradeep Dhillon’s (2006) argument about the on-going interrelation between liberal western philosophy and the postcolonial literature that this very philosophy provoked to emerge. This framing seems even more appropriate when confronted with the critical

approach to colonial discourse by Ashis Nandy (1983), who drew similarities between childhood and being colonised. The rights of children, which are considered universal by the western world's dominant powers, are to some extent imposed onto the non-western world. This has a civilising, but also colonising effect due to the imbalance of power and agency on the part of global decision makers in politics as well as its consequences on other countries. In light of this colonisation of childhood, where the traditional family unit is no longer able or allowed to include its children in any domestic labour or engage them in contributing to the family income, some communities may feel stigmatised as 'uncivilised' monsters, who abuse children by giving them domestic or economically necessary chores. Nandy claims that the colonisation of the mind is far more dangerous than physical dominance, causing alterations in the cultural priorities of non-western entities, changing the colonisation process from geographical category into a psychological one, positioned inside the mind (p. XI).

Considering that the English language is now the second official language in Saudi Arabia after Arabic, one may wonder about Lacan's primacy of language over a child's subjectivity, where the exposure to the English language (and therefore the culture as well) compromises the endemic transmission of pure Saudi culture. In Saudi Arabia, knowledge of English has become not only a gateway to western cinematography and literature that was previously inaccessible, but also a necessary condition of professional success and social standing. This may be perceived as an embodiment of Jürgen Habermas's communicative action theory (1987), which bonds language with social change, providing a 'linguistic turn' of sort. Although Saudi Arabia was not geographically colonised by the West and was heavily influenced by Arabic pursuits as well as the Islamic Ottoman Empire and Wahhabi's religious creed, it is increasingly affected by globalisation (Odrowąż-Coates, 2012) and perceived as a neo-imperial execution of western supremacy in the world (Lomba, 2011).

When viewed within the western matrix of children's rights, raising a child within a strictly religious society (if not endemically so, still far from western relativism), sheltered from comparisons and deprived of informed choice, may be a form of symbolic violence and therefore a breach of a child's freedom. Is it ethically sound to conduct research and critically assess the upbringing of children and their wellbeing in non-western communities, when we are considerably tainted by our own 'occidental' point of view and entrapped by our

own cultural codes? Michele Foucault (1980, 1987, 1988, 2001), as a result of his concepts of ‘discourse’ and power, has without a doubt contributed to the advancement of post-colonial studies. However, his works are viewed as Eurocentric and therefore restricting when applied to non-western societies (Vaughan, 1991, pp. 8–10, Loomba, 2011, pp. 68–70). Is it an abuse of parental power to discipline a child into submission, even though this harsh treatment is proven to help the child to function in an obedient way in a social system that requires conformity? What would freedom of choice be if it meant exclusion from one’s own close group and stigmatisation that would endanger a desirable future or even the survival of an individual? Non-western communities are generally more reliant on communal values and a sense of cooperation that often requires the sacrifice of personal freedoms and aspirations for the greater good. This ensures the protection of group interests, such as the survival of a tribe, of a bloodline, of a community, language, culture, customs and religious system.

Issues of childhood in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Compliance is necessary in a post-figurative model of culture (Mead, 1970), to continue as a strong group with strong bonds. In such a system, children and young people rely on elders to guide them in their life choices and to know what is the best for them and for their families. Elders are considered a necessary source of information, the font of all knowledge and are highly respected by those who have placed them at the top of the societal hierarchy. Children are to obey and to respect – respect the adults and respect the rules. Their task is to conform and to continue their lives in a known, approved fashion and not to seek alternative ways of living. Innovation, questioning of the status quo or any form of personal rebellion are not welcome (c.f. Odrowąż-Coates, 2013). This ensures a successful transmission of the existing cultural codes of conduct and allows the codes to survive unchanged for many generations. These codes distinguish the group from others and through common practices, strengthen the bonds between group members, who feel a strong affiliation with their community. This also strengthens and legitimises shared customs and beliefs. In my research of the female space in Saudi Arabia (Odrowąż-Coates, 2015a), I established that women exposed to western culture were more likely to notice

and criticise the discrimination and oppression of women in their own society. This is true in comparison to Saudi women who lacked the opportunity to travel and were therefore unable to make comparisons on the matter. I have also come across cases where women were deeply unhappy in their own cultural space due to previous exposure to life outside the Kingdom. They indicated that the ability to compare the reality of women in KSA to those in western countries was detrimental to their own mental state and their ability to readily comply with and accept the overarching customs and expectations placed on women there (Ibidem, p. 75, 98, 129, 161, 186, 190, 204, 214, 215, 225). These women blamed the West for showing them an alternative lifestyle that they now craved and could not openly pursue in their own country. Thus, in such a closed and traditional community, the successful education and socialisation of children may be considered more straightforward and less conflicting for the emotional wellbeing of women if they are not exposed to western values and cultural alternatives.

The legal right to an education has existed in KSA for some time, with the opening of the first obligatory schools for girls in the 1960s (Odrowąż-Coates, 2012). However, sport has been an area of on-going exclusion for females and has always been absent from the school curriculum in state sponsored education facilities for girls (Ibidem). There is significant evidence that movement and exercise is beneficial for people's health regardless of their gender (Snooks, 2009, p. 97). As such, restrictions placed on children in this particular area of wellbeing may have long-term detrimental effects on their future health (improving fitness, lowering blood sugar and blood pressure), quality of life and life expectancy. A good example in the KSA would be the widespread inability of girls to swim, which ultimately may lead to the loss of life. I note that in discussing this, I may fall into the Western perspective trap where almost everyone is taught to swim during their school years; therefore I make the assumption that not knowing how to swim is a significant disadvantage for a child and puts them at risk. Is this similar to the widely held pre-conception that black Africans not know how to swim (c.f. Hodge et al. 2008) or that black communities in western countries rarely invest in their children's swimming activities in contrary to their white peers (c.f. Howard 2014)? Stereotype follows a stereotype, narrowing the act of reasoning to what is common and considered a 'norm' in western countries and the habitus and doxa

of the researcher. I urge the reader to remain open-minded and think outside the box as I have defined it. As a researcher, I am boxed-in by my own experience, which is not sufficiently comprehensive to account for the multitude of perspectives and interpretative alternatives that exist. Saudi clerics and the vast majority of the Saudi public claim that through public sport activities, women would be subjected to more significant damage than illness or death would cause, i.e. the moral damage. Perhaps these arguments should prevail, as they function in the context in which the discussed limitations take place. However, there is a class and income angle to be considered as well. These limitations are more easily bypassed by members of the community who possess more significant income and have a more open attitude due to their exposure to alternative cultures (Odrowąż-Coates & Stanczak, 2013). This means that sport exclusion rules are most rigidly enforced upon the weakest: the girls from poor backgrounds who, in contrary to their more wealthy peers, cannot afford to go to private schools where sport is more accessible. Then again, in most cultures is it not for the so-called 'masses' to reproduce and preserve the system, by being in the majority? It is interesting to consider the mechanism through which the support of men for a ban on sports for girls is maintained. Would it be fair to say that the lack of financial wealth and political power among working class men may be somewhat compensated for by being given control over the weakest part of society? The weakest part of society being girls of low socio-economic status who are dependent on the politically powerless and economically deprived male guardians related to them. Is this authority of men over the opposite sex sufficient to cause the 'masses' to legitimise and support the 'power' located in the upper strata of the royal family and in spiritual leaders, who bestow, legitimise and enforce the supremacy of working class men over their girls and women in this power matrix? Some may say that such subjugation may be connected to traditional patronage of a stronger leader over weaker tribes, where the tribes provided some tribute to the leader for protection from outside threats. Analogically, a male guardian is expected to provide maintenance and protection for women and girls in his care in return for obedience to the rules and to his guardianship. Would it be a western-centric statement that in every relation with an uneven power distribution there is a large risk of misuse of power, neglect and abuse or is it genuinely a universal possibility?

Punishment and reward in a child's upbringing

Children in KSA are considered precious in many ways. They enable on-going cultural transmission, preserve cultural traditions and religion, care for aging parents and lastly, through marriage they help to build closer ties with strategic partners and distant relatives. Importantly, they hold the potential to strengthen the position of the family and the tribe through marriage. Through the rigid control of a girl's sexuality, Saudi people ensure purity of blood amongst their tribes. This allows some of them to claim that they are direct descendants of prominent leaders in the community. Such purity of blood, which seems so culturally important in Saudi Arabia, is a distinctive phenomenon no longer appreciated in the hybrid western identity. The West is proud of its post-colonial heterogeneity and seems to almost enforce appreciation of this transformative model of diversity onto areas that had opposed it. Therefore, despite its limitations, the behavioural theory by B.F. Skinner (1953) or John B. Watson (1930), where punishment and reward are used to correct children's conduct, may be quite useful to demonstrate the gender differences in expectations placed on children by their socio-cultural environment. Such punishments and rewards are usually expressed by acceptance, approval or rejection and negative reactions from significant others and the wider community. More severe forms of punitive practice, such as separation from the outside world, strict control of movement and social contacts with others, or even corporal punishment, are not uncommon. The boundaries and possible penalties are also clearly set and executed through the overarching Shari'a law, tight social control in the public sphere and a strong sense of self-censoring established in childhood (c.f. Odrowąż-Coates, 2014). Rewards include expressions of love, gifts, social inclusion, participation in public events and often a greater margin of personal freedom, freedom of movement and freedom of choice, which might have been removed otherwise. The rules set for children differ depending on their gender, their age and the status of their family. Punitive measures available to carers of adolescents are more extensive than in western countries. These increase in harshness, ranging from verbal warnings from close family, having financial resources cut or removed, being denied access to the telephone and internet, being held secluded in their family home for extensive periods of time, being sent to closed psychiatric wards,

or married off at a very young age.¹ Moreover, one may be expelled from the family and left without support, which in tribal communities is perceived as the ultimate punishment. (Not to mention being killed to clear family's reputation).

What is viewed as rebellious behaviour may also be dealt with in a more formal manner, including public lashings, imprisonment or public execution. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been questioned by the Human Rights Watchdog about their legal system's attitude towards the prosecution of minors on multiple occasions.² Public executions are supposed to work as a deterrent and a tool to discipline youths. The Saudi media promote fear of ultimate punishment through reports on executions and a strong discourse, which in my view may indicate a greater danger for girls who dare to step across the cultural line.³ A good example of the law in KSA disfavouring girls is the case of a gang-rape victim sentenced to 90 lashes as punishment for allowing herself to be in a situation where she could be raped.⁴

One may observe that from an early age boys learn that they can do more than girls; they can play outside with their neighbours for example or walk to school on their own. Girls are praised for being agreeable, quiet, invisible and compliant, for helping their mothers and for pleasing men in their family by serving and caring for them. They are not encouraged to compete or to bring attention to themselves. They are not allowed to play outside in the street or to walk to school alone. Depending on the father's wishes, normally between the ages of 7-9 female children begin to comply with gender segregation at family gatherings and are expected to stay with the female side of family. Young girls are often keen to wear an abaya or to cover up as they wish to look like their mothers or older sisters and therefore feel as if they are considered an adult. Mothers tend to openly spoil boys, as they anticipate that one day they may have to rely on their sons' kindness as their official guardians. Girls tend to

¹ c.f. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/saudi-arabia/2016-08-10/guardians-gender-gap>.

² c.f. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/17/saudi-arabia-3-alleged-child-offenders-await-execution>; <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-stoning-un-children-united-nations-a7349861.html>.

³ c.f. Odrowąż-Coates 2015a.

⁴ <http://www.jurist.org/dataline/2017/05/Mais-Haddad-arab-world-laws-protect-the-rapist-not-the-victim.php>.

have clearer boundaries set for them as preparation for later life, not to embarrass the family and not to place themselves in danger. Children's stories and fairy tales reflect social order and the social expectations placed on them, with strong references to gender relations (Odrowąż-Coates 2014, p. 48). Thus, children's stories encourage socially approved models of behaviour and indicate rigid punishments for transgression of the rules. To be fair it must be noted that fairy tales with a cultural message are not a Saudi specific development and have been commonly used for centuries around the globe (Bettleheim, 1976). The message always reflects the cultural matrix of the time. The reward for making the right decision is often postponed, replicating the faith based idea of reward after an earthly life. The more religiously focused the child is, the more compliant with the rules. In turn, the more accepting and positive the family and community reaction towards the child is. The reward system in Saudi Arabia that children operate within and are aware of is significantly grounded in religious expectations, where one believes that the final reward is postponed and will be received in paradise. Multiple aspects of life in Saudi Arabia are affected by faith and religious devotion. Attitudes towards safety standards often derive from a deep deterministic preconception that all matters are placed in the hands of God (Odrowąż-Coates & Heland, 2014). Therefore, in the view of many within Saudi Arabia, this means that God decides who lives and who dies and humans have little or no impact on God's will. A western visitor will notice lack of child safety seats in cars or children being transported in open pick up trailers with no seat belts or other protection. As yet, there is no seatbelt wearing culture amongst drivers, cars may be overloaded beyond their capacity, speed limits or other road safety considerations are scarcely obeyed and the reaction of some drivers to the colour of traffic lights seems to be arbitrary. The same applies to safety regulations at work (Odrowąż-Coates, 2015c). They exist but attitudes towards them are somewhat ambivalent.

Being surrounded by people acting and dressing in a uniform manner (traditional outfits when in public, the call for prayers five times a day and shop closures for religious breaks) confirms that the vision of the world internalised in the socialisation process is the only correct path to take. At a young age, copying mothers, fathers and other significant 'others' in their behaviour, their customs and their beliefs is a natural way for children to learn about the world and to aspire to be like adult relatives. In later years the siblings and the peer

group confirm that they also aspire to follow the cultural model of what an adult should look like and what they should do, say and think, further internalising and strengthening the cultural codes.

From a Korczakian children's rights viewpoint, children are active agents of societal and cultural growth, they are a generation that is crucial for the further development of civilisation and for social change. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the socio-cultural structure traps children in a stagnate system, which may be perceived as "unnatural". However, such claims should be approached with great caution, bearing in mind the historical, cultural and time-place perspective of such petitioners.

Conclusions

In the eyes of critical theorists, any knowledge, power and the changes that they provoke in societies of the world, should be continually analysed and critically investigated. The author of this paper fully respects this conviction and has reflected on the issues of non-western childhood from a multi-angled critical perspective, using field research data from a Saudi Arabian context. The paper has followed the paradigm of critical pedagogy, where human identity has been considered as based on individual agency, social relations and historical conditions (Miedema & Wardekker, 2001). Customs and cultural codes related to childhood in Saudi Arabia were studied to identify gender differences in social expectations placed on girls and on boys. Finally, the paper has consisted of critical inquiries into issues of post-colonial globalisation (c.f. Odrowąż-Coates, 2017), which affect matters of childhood in both western and non-western communities.

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*Introducing Roma children to the world
of money²*

ABSTRACT : It is known from journalistic and scientific literature that the Roma often manage their family budgets in unconventional (and occasionally imprudent) ways. Patterns of economic behaviour are automatically “inherited” by the young generation from grandparents and parents, making it maladjusted to the modern, commercialised world, and at the same time perpetuating negative stereotypes of the whole Roma community, which only deepens its alienation. Traditional “wheeling and dealing”, begging, obtaining social welfare benefits under false pretences, petty theft, trading in the “grey economy” are types of behaviour that provoke hostility, fear and contempt in mainstream society. They also make everyday life difficult for the Roma. Proper understanding of economic facts, as well as the acquisition of skills needed to operate in the economic and consumer spheres are the basis for the formation of the opinions, attitudes and patterns of behaviour of the Roma child, which will help the future adult avoid poor decisions and their negative consequences (e.g. illegal means of acquiring money and goods, excessive debt, irrational management of the family budget). The chapter presents selected results of qualitative studies. Their main aim was to fill the lacunae in our understanding of the economic behaviour, and the economic and consumer education in Roma families, deliberate and/or traditional. The data comes from 17 in-depth interviews with members of the Polish Roma community. The interviews were conducted in three locations: Bydgoszcz, Świecie and Koronowo. The sample included individuals differing in wealth (poor vs. well-to-do), gender and age (representatives of two different generations were studied).

KEY WORDS : economic socialisation, economic behaviour, Roma community

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Introduction

The family, peer group, media and educational institutions are the primary sources of economic knowledge for children (Kupisiewicz, 2004; Sobieraj, 2013). The importance of these sources and their impact varies over the life of the individual (Roland-Lévy, 2004). However, research has shown that basic economic knowledge, which becomes a foundation for life as a child advances in age, is acquired at home. Children derive this knowledge from observation of people in their immediate environment – their parents (guardians) and significant others (Bandura, 1969; Goszczyńska & Kołodziej, 2012). A child's mentality, behaviour, socioeconomic status and occupation affect the quality and extent of economic knowledge acquired and shape their later adult life (cf. Harmacińska & Szmelter, 2015; Tarkowska, 2000).

The Roma are often perceived by members of the majority society through the prism of money. They are portrayed as extremely poor or, on the contrary, as rich in jewellery, foreign currency and gold. It was always something of a mystery how the Roma made money. Legal and semi-legal street trading, certain kinds of metalwork, music-making, fortune-telling and petty theft were the proverbial sources of income for the Roma. Today, most Roma adults in Poland are on social welfare. Some hold jobs, mostly as assistants working with Roma students at Polish schools, activists of Roma organisations, instructors at community centres, and members of music and dance ensembles. A small number of young, educated Roma work in other professions, among other employees as do members of the majority society.

The Roma birth rate is positive. It is the only ethnic/national minority in Poland that keeps getting “younger”. How young Roma are prepared for life in the modern world largely depends on the way Roma children are brought up and introduced to the world of business, money, work, wealth management and saving.

The main objective of the present study was to reconstruct patterns of economic education in Roma families.

Method

A qualitative study was carried out on a sample of Roma families. To analyse factors influencing the quality and scope of economic knowledge acquired by Roma children and their parents, the main sources of income and the types of economic

activity undertaken, 17 semi-structured interviews of the kind used in ethnography were conducted with members of Roma families belonging to the Polska-Roma group. The open-ended interviews were conducted in the form of conversations, with digressions accumulating around predetermined themes (Angrosino, 2010; Kvale 2010). As recommended by Angrosino (2010, p. 68), the study:

- was a continuation of earlier field work, focused on more general topics (cf. Popiołek & Weigl & Rycielska & Formanowicz, 2014; Weigl & Popiołek, 2016);
- attempted to answer questions never before addressed in studies of Roma families in Poland (Bartosz & Gancarz, 2016; Grzymała-Kazłowski, 2016; Mirga-Wójtowicz, 2016 – personal communication);
- was relevant to an existing social problem, the topic of journalistic and professional debate;
- sprang from the intention to discover solutions and assist the people being studied through the collection of information that the community may find helpful.

The interviews were held in three locations in northwestern Poland: Bydgoszcz (8 interviews), Świecie (4 interviews) and Koronowo (5 interviews). The sample was diversified in terms of wealth (poor vs. relatively well-to-do), sex and age (members of two generations participated in the study, that is, young parents and grandparents with school-age grandchildren).

Participation in the study was voluntary. Subjects could terminate the interview at any time and refuse to answer any questions they found difficult, awkward or an invasion of their privacy. All participants received limited monetary compensation for their effort and time.

Economic behaviour of the Roma

Children acquire economic knowledge by observing people in their immediate environment (Bandura, 1969), with their parents serving as key models. Therefore, before analysing the patterns of economic education of Roma children, it was necessary to study the economic behaviour of their parents (guardians, grandparents) and the financial circumstances of the families in which they were raised.

The material status and income sources of the families interviewed

Families participating in the study differed from one another in terms of income level. Both poor (with very low income) and “wealthy” families (enjoying higher income from more diversified sources) were interviewed. Nonetheless, the subjects described their financial situations in similar terms regardless of their income level. Subjects rated their financial situation as average or poor, taking the past, and specifically the era of the People’s Republic of Poland (the 1960s and 1970s), when “the Roma had a better life”, as their frame of reference:

I must say our life was better then: we travelled to the GDR, we traded goods... Bought cheaper, sold dearer. And so it went. There was trading in Poland too. As everybody knows – people used to have money, but there was little to buy with it. So I must say that life was pretty good, and we were able to earn more than now (a female representative of the older generation, Świecie).

Analysis of the sources of income of Roma families also leads to interesting conclusions. In the past, trading was the most important source of income (buying and selling horses, gold, jewels, cars and broadly defined luxury goods or their imitations). Traditional Roma occupations were also profitable: tinning of pots and pans or fortune telling. After the transformation of the political system in 1989, these occupations – which used to guarantee financial security in the People’s Republic of Poland – ceased to be lucrative. Even though trading remains the main source of income for the Roma, it is now far less profitable, the goods traded have also changed. This negatively affects the standard of living of the families interviewed and obscures the relation – which was very clear in the People’s Republic – between one’s effort (gainful employment/work) and the financial condition of one’s family. Because of this, some Roma no longer see themselves and their personal efforts as the determinants of the fate of their families. Instead, they assume a passive attitude, marked by lack of initiative and passive hope for “better times”.

Well, we would like the future to be better... We hope it will come somehow.

Moderator: But where can it come from?

Yes, that's the question, where? ... Perhaps from God? Or from people in power, from those who are wiser? (a male representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

The study shows that such an attitude is increasingly common among the younger generation (parents of young children and teenagers) – individuals who suffered financial setbacks in the recent past and currently live in poverty. They speak of the chances of improving their living standard in terms of lost opportunities. This is evidenced, for example, by statements about foreign travel (which, for the more enterprising members of the Roma community proved highly profitable in the past):

If only we had left then... But now? Too late. It's no good in the UK [after Brexit], and will get even worse... (a male representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

A pessimistic outlook stems from current financial difficulties, past personal failures and a growing sense of maladjustment to the requirements of the labour market. Most of the respondents, regardless of age or wealth, shared this experience due to the fact that opportunities have changed with the change of the political system. Models of behaviour (and gainful employment) perfected over many years ceased to be effective. This development affects the process of socialisation in Roma families. Unable to solve their own problems, parents do not know how best to raise their children for good chances of financial success or self-sufficiency in the new system.

It became clear in the course of the interviews that the Roma lacked the resources necessary to be successful in the modern market, mainly education, but also the right qualifications/competence:

We never expected such times when school education is really important. We had our occupations, such as fortune-telling or trading, and they were enough (a female representative of the older generation, Świecie).

In the past, one did not go on [to finish a school] – it was not needed. Trading was good enough... But now times have changed. One must

be able to write, to count... (a representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

Being active in the labour market is also subject to cultural restrictions – Roma traditions exclude them from certain occupations. Therefore, setting up one's own business could be a solution. However, the interviews indicate that the Roma usually lack capital and are often ill-equipped to come up with a business idea suitable for the current day.

Problems with adjusting to the new situation, incomplete education, lack of appropriate skills, capital and sometimes even business ideas systematically exclude the Roma (as a group) from the labour market. As a result, social benefits are an important if not essential source of income (for some families – the only source of income). This is not a stable foundation on which economic socialisation of Roma children can be built. This is particularly true considering that government support such as pensions, financial assistance and benefits engender a passive attitude (as the study demonstrates), which interferes with socialisation. A stable (even if small) income encourages a sense of financial security, which may engender a sense of reluctance in recipients to undertake work that could improve their lot. It may seem surprising that the model of behaviour described here is most common in the younger generation (and among poor families). Members of the older generation, who had to be very resourceful in the past, and who often rely on wealth accumulated during the times of the People's Republic, are coping better. They manage their money more rationally and plan for the future – their own and that of their close relatives.

Sources of income of Roma children

Roma children receive most of the money at their disposal from their parents (as well as grandparents and other members of the extended family). They receive these cash gifts sporadically, as the family can afford it and when a child needs money. A regular, fixed allowance (pocket money) is rare. On the other hand, cash gifts (in domestic currency, in US dollars or euros) are a common source of income. Children receive such gifts mainly from their grandparents and members of the extended family; the amount is usually considerable and the money

is given on some special occasion (such as birthday). Money from the 500 Plus government program² is a novelty of sorts. Sometimes the full amount is given directly to children. In such cases, the money constitutes the child's monthly discretionary income. However, it is more common for parents or guardians to control this money, giving only a fraction to their children – or nothing at all.

Other sources of children's income reported by the respondents – financial rewards for good behaviour and/or grades earned at school, and payments for household chores (window cleaning) or odd jobs (trading) – are less common.

The interviews show that Roma children usually have some money at their disposal, which they can spend or save. Their economic behaviour is influenced by parents (guardians) and the immediate environment. This is a very important process, since it lays down the foundations for economic behaviour in adult life.

Pocket money and occasional income

Researchers consider pocket money to be one of the most important elements in the economic socialisation of children and adolescents (Goszczyńska, 2012). The regular payment of a fixed amount of money forces the child to manage their budget, teaches them to be thrifty and to plan as well as control their expenses (cf. Furnham, 1999, 2001; Miller & Yung, 1990). Nevertheless, parents rarely choose this solution, even if they believe that giving pocket money would have a positive impact on the economic development of their children (Kupisiewicz, 2004, Trzcińska, 2012). The present study confirms such observations. It shows that the practice of regularly giving children pocket money is virtually unknown among Roma families. The socialising function of this practice is also unknown to the Roma. In only two out of the seventeen families who participated in the study did parents (guardians) claim they gave their children pocket money. However, they did not specify how much or how regularly they gave this money. This indicates

² Family 500 Plus is a government program, designed to provide financial assistance to families with children. The benefits are intended to cover some of the child's living expenses and costs of upbringing. Only children under the age of 18 are eligible. The amount is PLN 500.00 per month, per eligible child. The benefit is paid for the second and every subsequent child, regardless of family income. Families are eligible to receive the benefit for the first child only if they meet income criteria stipulated in the terms of the program (source: <http://www.program500plus.pl/zasady-programu.html>).

that there are no clear rules governing the mechanism of giving money to children – if such a mechanism is even used. Analysis of the interviews with members of the Roma community suggests several reasons for this. Firstly, there is no tradition of giving pocket money. Apparently it is not customary for the Roma families interviewed to give children pocket money in the form of a fixed amount, which the child can spend in the long run and which has to be “managed”. The accepted rule is to respond to the child’s current needs, if the family budget permits it: “parents give when children ask”. This is especially true of requests for small amounts (normally 5–10 PLN, less often 20 PLN or more).

We don't give pocket money. It's just not done (representatives of the older generation, Świecie).

When [the child] needs something, they ask for money and get it (a representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

Readiness to respond to children’s needs on a current basis stems from the belief that “this is done”, “this is the way things are”³. This does not mean, however, that giving in to children’s whims is the norm in Roma families. The interviews suggest that parents (guardians) are sometimes unable to meet the financial needs of their children (even the smallest ones). They may not have the money and are forced to refuse the child’s request. This in turn makes them feel they have to give in when they do have the financial resources to do so. It is precisely the lack of financial stability that makes Roma families even more reluctant to give their children pocket money regularly. It is much easier for them to pay small and varying amounts occasionally, depending on available financial resources. This strategy seems all the more appropriate, as the respondents do not believe their children would be able to manage money prudently in the long run:

So, when she has nothing [because she had spent all her pocket money], am I to tell her, “you must wait until next month to buy yourself ice-cream”? Is this how it's supposed to work? Or am I to give her 10 zł once a week? This is not how it works (a male representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

³ Quotations come from statements made by respondents who participated in the study.

Failure to practice a deliberate course of action, designed to teach children how to manage money, is especially common among poorer families. These are usually younger-generation parents of school-age children. When it comes to financial decisions, their horizon is restricted to the present moment; they focus on current needs, often behaving irrationally,⁴ relying on the family of the state for support. In contrast, families enjoying a higher material status (even those experiencing temporary financial difficulties) show greater maturity in their approach to money – though they too are focused on the present. The penetration of banking services is higher among such families,⁵ and they often think about their future and financial security, planning expenses and looking for ways to save money in everyday life. They also think more carefully about the economic education of their children. And although they are similar to other representatives of the Roma community who took part in the study in that they do not pursue any consistent policy of introducing their children to the world of the economy, and do not use pocket money as a means of educating children, they do teach them to be thrifty and save money, and encourage them to make choices that require deferment of pleasure and resistance to temptation:

Our grandson had a bicycle, but wanted a skateboard as well. He gets money from the Centre,⁶ so I would have been able to buy him the skateboard. But I told him instead: “Look, you will need the money in the future (...) You have the bicycle, you can wait for the skateboard (...)”. He must understand that things are not always the way he wants them to be (representatives of the older generation, Świecie).

⁴ In two cases we observed immediately after the interview that respondents, having just received compensation for their participation, called their child/children and handed them the envelope with the money (without even counting the money).

⁵ They use bank accounts, payment cards, etc.

⁶ District Family Support Centre, tasked with disbursing the allowances to which foster families are entitled.

Income from the 500 Plus government program

Studies have shown that the Roma (as a social group) benefit from the 500 Plus program. They receive benefits for children or grandchildren. It is common practice to establish a foster family of relatives, in which grandparents take care of a minor/minors. The financial support received by foster families is often augmented by other allowances (for example, a child disability allowance) or, from 1 April 2016, the Plus 500 government program which was launched then.

The interviews suggest that money received under this program is considered the property of the children. This does not mean they can spend it as they wish. Usually parents (guardians) use it to supplement the household budget, passing only some of it – if any – to the children. However, in some families children receive the full amount and can spend it exclusively to satisfy their current needs. The interviews show clearly that the younger and older generations subscribe to different philosophies of managing this benefit. Younger (and also poorer) Roma families tend to allow their children to spend the money as they see fit, treating it as pocket money of sorts. They do not interfere with how it is spent (or do it only to a limited extent) and do not encourage children to save. Funds received under this program are used only to meet current needs and are not treated (either by the parents or by their children) as capital to secure their future. This is an astonishing strategy, especially that this kind of approach is typical of families who are clearly short of money and whose prospects for a better financial position are rather poor:

So she gets the 500 plus... She's twelve years old, so whether it's a skirt or something... shoes, a jacket... we give her the money, so she can buy things. How could I deny her the money? (...)

Moderator: Haven't you thought of opening an account for your daughter and depositing money in it – for her, for the future?

But how can I open an account when she wants to buy something for herself? I can't take this money, because it belongs to her. If she wants to buy something, let her do it (a male representative of the younger generation, Koronowo).

I give my [17 years old] son the whole amount.

Moderator: And he spends all 500 zł on himself?

Yes, he bought a phone, shoes... He says today one needs such and such for school... [designer shoes]. He's got [money] for small expenses, to buy something to drink or whatever... (a female representative of the younger generation, Bydgoszcz).

Representatives of the older and wealthier generation talk about the 500 plus money in a different way. Like the younger Roma, they consider it the property of the children, but they do not allow them to manage it. They give the children a small fraction of the full amount and save the rest for future needs. In some cases, the entire amount is saved to secure the child's future:

I raise the child, a grandson, as his foster family. This entitles me to a 1100 zł allowance and the 500 plus benefit. This is his money, so I save it – for him. We do not take this money. I save this money for him (a female representative of the older generation, Świecie).

Differences in the approach to money received from the government are largely due to different money management philosophies of these two groups (less rational, focused on the present vs. more mature, forward-looking).

Financial penalties and rewards

The Roma believe that children are entitled to a certain fraction of family income. Therefore, they should not receive money as payment for domestic work or for good grades. Although some of the families interviewed admit to giving financial rewards to children, the clear majority believe that using financial incentives is bad for them:

You would have me pay [my grandson] for cleaning the room? It should be obvious to the child that this is necessary (...)

Moderator: What if he does it on his own initiative, if he cleans the windows, for example?

Then I will commend him for it, but it doesn't mean that money has to follow.

Moderator: What about good grades?

Honestly? On the one hand, perhaps it would be a good idea. Because he would then know that [good grades] are rewarded with money, and he would study more... But, on the other hand, it doesn't seem right... after all, he should study for himself, to achieve something in life (a female representative of the older generation, Koronowo).

Some of the respondents are also opposed to financial penalties: *We don't do anything like this* (representatives of the younger generation, Koronowo). Only very few are of the opinion that it is permissible to punish a child by denying a request for money or by withdrawing promised pocket money. This attitude (stated rather categorically) can be attributed to the special position enjoyed by children in Roma culture and to lenience being seen as a positive value.

Odd jobs

The Roma do not express clear opinions on whether children and teenagers should undertake work for money. They generally believe that small jobs teach self-reliance, resourcefulness and respect for money. They admit that in the past this was the norm – children helped their parents in trading and other traditional Roma occupations. In this way, they earned their own money. Today, the difficult labour market makes it hard for parents (guardians) to create opportunities for children to make money. The young people themselves are reluctant to seek employment and if they do – they fail to find work:

[The young] would like to [work], but what can they do? Street trading is not for them, after all, and nobody will give them a regular job... (a female representative of the older generation, Świecie).

The changed attitude towards education is also a contributing factor, explaining why children and teenagers no longer work for money as much as they used to. According to the parents/guardians interviewed, “education has priority over work now”⁷. It is the foundation for better life prospects and a brighter future.

⁷ Quotations come from statements made by respondents who participated in the study.

It is an investment. Because of their belief in education as a means of acquiring a career, parents/guardians are less insistent that their children should look for odd jobs to make money.

Saving

Possession of money, regardless of its source, allows children to save. Saving as a money management strategy is also used by Roma children. The study shows that parents (guardians) encourage children to save. It should be noted, however, that in most cases they do this largely for pragmatic reasons. Parents find it difficult to take a large sum from the household budget in order to buy an expensive item requested by the child – such as a bicycle, skateboard, phone, tablet or designer shoes. By encouraging the child to save, they postpone the purchase. This mechanism is commonly used in most of the Roma families who participated in the study. Thus, saving is not treated as a socialising factor, but rather as a way of keeping expenditure under control. However, it is certainly educational and should be seen as positive.

Of course, some of the families interviewed do teach saving in a conscious and deliberate way. These are the families that enjoy a higher material status – and often also a higher social status in the Roma community. Among the respondents who took part in this study, these were usually representatives of the older generation.

I tell [my grandchildren] that if they want to possess [something valuable], they have to save money to buy it (a representative of the older generation, Bydgoszcz).

They had a piggy bank and we would give them 2 zł, 5 zł, sometimes just a penny. And they put these pennies in their piggy bank x and saved 600 zł over a year (...) For the whole year they never spent the money on anything, no sweets, nothing... They saved it all (a female representative of the older generation, Bydgoszcz).

The study shows that regardless of their motivation (pragmatic vs. educational), parents who encourage children to save, reinforce such behaviour. If

they can afford it, they put larger sums in their piggy banks, drawers and secret lockers. In this way, they help them save enough money to realise their goals.

Summary

The main objective of the present study was to reconstruct the patterns of economic education in Roma families. To this end, factors influencing the quality and scope of economic knowledge acquired by Roma children and their parents, the main sources of income and the types of economic activity were analysed.

The study has shown that, with regard to finance, the Roma concentrate on the present. They rarely consider the future, especially the financial future. A strong sense of insecurity, coupled with a tendency to invest responsibility for the future of the family in external forces (random events) rather than one's own effort, are not conducive to planning. The results of the study suggest that the money management style typical of the Roma is marked by impulsive behaviour, a focus on current desires/needs, and thus on short term consumption. This is particularly evident in the younger generation. Older Roma exhibit a more rational style of money management, hold thrift in higher esteem, and put thought into securing their own and their families' future more often. However, regardless of the generation to which they belong, the Roma typically manage their household budget with a focus on "survival", without adopting a future-oriented growth strategy. The style of economic behaviour and clear preference for the Present-Oriented (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999; 2009) may be the result of the inability or reluctance to adapt to the rules of the post-industrial society. Resistance to economic processes taking place in the modern world could be the product of the nomadic culture of the Roma, or it could be a deliberate strategy, designed to preserve the Gypsy tradition (Hołub, 2009).

The patterns of economic behaviour shaped by culture and the relatively low level of economic knowledge prevalent among the Roma determine the manner, in which Roma children are introduced to the world of the economy. It was revealed that Gypsies do not attach much importance to deliberate and active economic education of their children. Although money is not a taboo subject in Roma families, children rarely take part in discussions of the family budget, and

their economic education is not systematic. Parents (regardless of their material status) willingly comply with children's desires. They clearly prefer to give money when it is requested rather than paying pocket money regularly, and they rarely teach children money management or expenditure planning and control in a deliberate manner. This laxity in financial matters may be related to the peculiar position of children in Roma culture – to be educated, but also cared for and pampered, even financially.

The study has also shown that the social and economic status of the family of origin is an important factor influencing the quality of the socialising message. Higher status is associated with a more rational and competence-oriented message (for example, the promotion of thrift and saving). This pattern can be observed in the majority society as well (Mortimer et al., 1994). It is also typical of the Roma culture, as well as traditional/pre-industrial cultures, that it is the older, rather than the younger generation, that is able to prepare children for life in the post-modern world more effectively. To use Margaret Mead's expression (2000), the *invaluable ancestors*, that is, the older generation of the Roma, developed models of social behaviour, including economic behaviour, which (despite all the difficulties and even tragedies experienced by this community) helped the community preserve its nomadic mode of life over many years and across continents. Members of the young generation of Roma live in a cultural environment marked by volatility, constantly changing role models, information and modes of social communication; they find it very difficult to adapt themselves to the requirements of the world of consumption and the market. The Roma *mysterious children* are being brought up to live in the *unknown world*. They need to be treated with care and concern, since "*the future is now*".

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SMARANDA CIOBAN*

*The exposure of refugee children
to marginalisation.*

Case study: Domari refugee children, Turkey

ABSTRACT : The present paper dissects the topic of marginalisation, highlighting the way it affects refugee children. Arguing that national policies affect people's attitude towards particular social groups, the paper shows how the degree of marginalisation expands in particular contexts, with an emphasis on the situation in Turkey. Legislative proposals, social dynamics and social inequalities play a significant role in determining the vulnerability rate of each group. In this context, although they cannot be perceived as a unitary group due to characteristics such as: ethnicity, religion and poverty, refugee children are mostly exposed to critical degrees of marginalisation. A detailed account on the way the main theoretical perspectives, including functionalism, conflict-theory and social exchange theory, reflect refugee children's exposure to marginalisation in Turkey is therefore extremely relevant in understanding the implications of war situations and conflicts on children's inclusion into society. Furthermore, the paper signals that marginalisation presents a barrier to social, political and cultural participation of refugee children, which is escalated by the prevalent social discourse. In this respect, shifting from a paternalistic view to a more liberal approach on children, focused on evaluating the rights instead of the needs, adds value in addressing severe marginalisation.

KEY WORDS : marginalisation, refugee children, human rights, communities, children's rights

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Introduction

The problem of refugee children is one of the greatest challenges of contemporary times. Fleeing from their homeland where their lives are endangered, refugee children are exposed to a variety of risks related to their social and economic vulnerability. This paper explores vulnerability resulting from marginalisation, arguing that refugee policies should be oriented towards granting rights, instead of merely satisfying the basic needs of vulnerable groups.

Thus, it illustrates aspects of life in host countries that refugee children are confronted with from the point of view of emancipation theorists, focusing on a rights-based approach that places emphasis on children's right to participation. The first part addresses marginalisation based on a functionalist approach, which states that some groups, including refugee children, are marginalised due to their minimal contribution to social welfare. Grounded in the functionalist approach, the second part illustrates the exposure of Domari communities that migrated from Syria to multiple sources of marginalisation in Turkey. The third part signals that marginalisation is correlated not only to a micro-level, but it also concerns the macro-level. The dynamics of power relations determines which groups present higher vulnerability to marginalisation. The case discussed can be seen as a reminiscence of Post-Colonial policy. The investigation concludes with recommendations for social workers and theorists on how to address children's vulnerability to marginalisation through a rights-based approach. It highlights that children's voices, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups, should be taken into account while drafting policies concerning problems faced by children. Seen from a macro-perspective, the position of distinct vulnerable groups in societies allows the replication of the existent social inequalities, thus answering the society's need to function. As Williams pointed out, vulnerable groups include "street children, children in detention, children with HIV/AIDS, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, orphans, urban poor, landless people and squatters, child soldiers, sex workers, nomadic people, children and youth with disabilities, refugees, displaced people, children in early marriages, hazardous labour or combat; trafficked or indentured children; children affected by armed conflict; victims of abuse and violence; dropouts" (Williams, 2007, p. 3). Functionalist theorists such as Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton view society as a sum of different systems that work in order to keep a balance for the whole. These systems influence one another

either in a direct way or indirectly both in an intended – manifest functions and in an unintended way- latent functions (Robert Merton, 1968).

An influence of the way these functions work is reflected by the gap between how distinct groups of people are perceived in society. Therefore, the marginalisation of particular groups strikes as natural, being regarded as a result of their scant contribution to social welfare. Marginalisation legitimises the exclusion of a particular group of people by devaluing their contribution to a society. In this sense, Young points out that “marginalisation is in some ways worse than exploitation because society has decided that it cannot or will not use these people even for labor” (Heldke & Connor, 2004, p. 37). The same author explains that oppression occurs when certain groups in a society are “treating the others in a dehumanising manner. But, it could also mean denying people language, education and other opportunities that might make them become fully human in both mind and body” (ibidem). The definition by itself is rather problematic, as it implies that people that were exposed to oppression are not anymore “fully human in both mind and body”.

Questioning what being “fully human in both mind and body” means is essential to understanding the note of subjectivity in Young’s definition and approach. Consequently, marginalisation should be viewed as an exclusion of groups that society perceives as inferior, which is a perception rooted in false assumptions. As related to its impact, there are different degrees of marginalisation, with the most severe one being ethnic cleansing. Its severity also connects to the factors that lead to marginalisation. Thus, its multi-dimensional character reveals that a person is more vulnerable to exclusion if it belongs to several marginalised groups at the same time. A child with refugee background and with disabilities is vulnerable because of the society’s perception of the groups he or she belongs to. Further analysing how sociological theories reflect the roots of marginalisation and its impact adds value in addressing the topic.

Key issues

Functionalist scholars state that groups are perceived in relation to their contribution to social welfare. Defined by Young as one of the five faces of oppression, along with violence, exploitation, powerlessness and cultural imperialism

(ibidem, pp. 37–63), “marginalisation occurs when people are systematically excluded from meaningful participation in economic, social, political, cultural and other forms of human activity in their communities and are denied the opportunity to fulfil themselves as human beings” (Jenson, 2000, p. 1). Not only is marginalisation a form of oppression, but it also represents a means for other forms of oppression to occur “by expelling a whole category of people from useful participation in social life. As a result these groups are subjected to severe material deprivation (they do not have access to basic resources) and even extermination (such as genocide)” (Heldke & Connor, 2004, p. 37). In this sense, being a member of a marginal group implies not having the possibility to access basic rights. Exposure to violence, exploitation and powerlessness are prevalent in day to day life due to the society’s tendency to perceive these categories as useless and their lack of possibilities to denounce violent acts. The absence of legislative provisions to protect the rights of these groups and their lack of access to justice due to their illegal status, illiteracy and language barriers are factors that increase the vulnerability of marginal groups in relation to violence.

Still, marginalisation is a complex phenomenon which may be described from multiple perspectives. As Jenson explains, the multi-dimensionality of marginalisation relates to the large number of competing diagnoses that account for the factors that prevent real inclusion. Starting with questioning the main causes that generate marginalisation, Jenson designs a table of diagnoses, which identifies the main problems related to it. As Jenson shows, marginalisation results from being unemployed, being poor and being excluded (Jenson, 2000, p. 4). The present paper unfolds that along with the factors identified by Jenson, the way people perceive these factors escalates marginalisation.

Marginalisation is linked to exploitation. For example, the situations of forced labour present both the dimension of marginalisation and exploitation, as the exploited victims are largely members of marginal groups. According to Young, another form of oppression is powerlessness, which is associated by the author with “the inhibition to develop one’s capacities, lack of decision making power, and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the lowered status” (Heldke & Connor, 2004, p. 38). The characteristics of powerlessness link to the status of being marginal, as marginal groups sometimes feel that they do not have the instruments and competence to change their position. The legitimisation of the position of powerlessness may be viewed as a consequence

of marginalisation and exclusion. Constructing negative images about a community and replicating them in order to depict a one-side story exacerbates the feeling of oppression.

In this respect, even elements that may strike as positive when taken out of context, are perceived as a proof of inferiority, a fact that is revealed as “a culture of the oppressed”. Thus, as Fanon depicts in his book “Black Skin, White Masks” (Fanon & Markmann, 1986), people from marginal communities see their culture as a symbol of oppression and therefore attempt to alienate themselves from it. Starting from the assumption that the group that holds power in a society establishes its norms and values, Young claims that “those oppressed by cultural imperialism are both marked by stereotypes and made to feel invisible” (Heldke & Connor, 2004, p. 39), in the sense that their existence, values and rights are not acknowledged in society. In the “Distinction: A Social Critique to the Judgement of taste”, Bourdieu tackles the same idea of a dominant group that imposes its culture on others.

It follows that persons from marginal communities are statistically registered as “disruptive groups”, while those from the dominant category are perceived in terms of individuality. As a result, Bourdieu asserts that individuals from marginal communities are asked to prove their knowledge and capacities all the time, while the competences of people from dominant groups are taken for granted (See: Bourdieu & Nice, 1986, p. 476).

But, should people be judged in terms of usefulness? Although human rights activists will hold that all people are granted the same human rights, functionalist scholars show that, in practice, some people are seen as valuable, while others are regarded as a burden for societies. Describing Bentham’s “Panopticon”, which was meant to isolate and control individuals during The Great Plague, Foucault holds in his book *Discipline and punish* (1975) that governments control and isolate disruptive individuals, while depersonalising power and restraining communication and interaction.

Analysed by Foucault as a model of disciplinary mechanism, the principle of the building described by Bentham shows how societies exclude marginal groups from the process of decision-making, while creating an acceptance of this practice in individuals:

“Treat lepers as plague victims, project the subtle segmentations of discipline onto the confused space of internment, combine it with the methods of

analytical distribution proper to power, individualize the excluded, but use procedures of individualization to mark exclusion” (Foucault, 1975, p. 221).

Foucault goes even further, assessing that societies exercise control by classifying people based on the antithetic distinction between good or bad, dangerous or harmful and by identifying particular characteristics, such as: identity, distinctive features, social background and other particular traits. For the purpose of conceptualising the latter Foucault developed the notion of “coercive assignment of differential distribution” (See Foucault, 1975, pp. 195–227). The process of marginalisation can be viewed from this angle.

Moreover, not all situations of marginalisation have the same consequences for the groups exposed to it. While assessing the impact of marginalisation, Lewis and Lockheed (Lewis and Lockheed 2006 in: Williams, 2007, pp. 3–4) distinguished four degrees of the phenomenon.

The first category, which encompasses ethnic based slavery and even genocide or ethnic cleansings, is the most severe form of marginalisation. Secondly, severe type of exclusion relates to the refusal to accept particular groups in a society by ignoring their rights and avoiding social contacts with them due to antipathy and cautiousness. The situation of small refugee groups from particularly vulnerable communities, which were marginalised even before the emergence of war, such as the Domari people in Syria is illustrative in this sense. Named as moderate exclusion, the third category of marginalisation refers to a less formal discrimination against marginal groups, but it does not attempt to question the needs of a particular group. A child with a refugee background who has to attend school with the language of instruction that he or she does not understand is a typical example of this kind of exclusion. Fourthly, mild type of exclusion is associated with “individual social preferences” which might cause different treatment of people due to their minority or lower status.

The demarcation between the four types of exclusion is vague, as a milder form may escalate into a severe one because of a particular context. For example, when a marginal group is seen as dangerous and violent, all members of that group may be exposed to a more severe degree of marginalisation further on. Refugees from Muslim countries were perceived with fear and antipathy by citizens from European states after the terrorist attacks committed by Islamic Extremists due to the fact that the refugees were associated with terrorists. This view is exacerbated by media discourse (See: Funk & Parkes, 2016, pp. 1–2).

Children represent a position of vulnerability in relation to adults. Hence, the paternalistic view promoted by society in relation to childhood and children's rights provides children with limited decision making and few possibilities to express their views and protect their rights. The issue of dependency is extremely problematic when children are exposed to risk factors such as abuse, violence, extreme poverty, negligence, and loss of parents. According to Williams (2007), children, teenagers and young people from socially vulnerable groups are more exposed to being marginalised.

These groups are subjected to marginalisation because of social contexts, referring to gender, social, linguistic and ethnic factors. For example, refugee children with disabilities are more exposed to marginalisation than refugee children without disabilities due to a common negative perception of disabled people. Nevertheless, refugee children are more likely to have disabilities as a consequence of their exposure to war, a fact that severely affects their psychological wellbeing. In addition, exposure to war increases the risk of injuries which may result in physical disabilities. These disabilities have serious consequences on the day to day life, social acceptance, schooling and access to justice. Therefore, refugee children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse, negligence, violation of children's rights and basic human rights.

Another example allowing a better understanding of the concept of multiple sources of marginalisation relates to refugee children belonging to small communities that were subjected to marginalisation in their countries of origin. The Domari communities from Syria who migrated to Turkey, Jordan or some other neighbouring countries are illustrative in this sense. The particular situation of exclusion which affects the communities of Domari refugees living in Turkey is explored in articles published by the European Roma Rights centre in 2014 (See: "Invisible and Forgotten: Syrian Domari Refugees in Turkey"; "Domari refugees in Turkey: peace, bread and toilets"). The articles show how the antipathy directed towards ethnic communities perceived as belonging to Roma minority escalates the effects of exclusion as related to the status of refugees. Muller (2014) identified several reasons why refugees from Domari communities did not have access to refugee camps in Turkey. Firstly, most of the camps were inhabited by a single ethnic group and none of these groups wanted to share their camp with Domari communities. This was due to the stereotypes and stigma associated with this minority in the period prior to the conflicts as

a result of their identification with the Roma. Connected to the aspect of non-acceptance by other majority groups was also the fear of Domari refugees that other groups might react violently towards them if they try to access the camp facilities. What is more, in the majority of cases the Domari people were refused entry by the authorities organising the process of admission to the camps, Roma communities being the most discriminated group in Turkey (See: Onder, 2013). Consequently, Domari refugees, who according to statistics count more than 30,000 people (Tarlan, 2016), live in improvised camps with no access to basic facilities, drinking water and healthcare.

In the interplay between ethnic stigmatisation and exclusion, children from Domari communities that live in Turkey are denied essential rights, such as access to education, healthcare and identity, life in decent conditions and participation rights. In this respect, children from Domari communities are excluded and ignored from the community and lack visibility in social policies, authorities failing to address to their needs. Language barrier, which is characteristic of refugee groups, deprives them of the possibility to make their voice be heard and cumulates to antipathy and marginalisation developed because of their ethnic affiliation.

However, not only refugee children from Domari communities are subjected to marginalisation in Turkey, all groups of refugee children are exposed to marginalisation. According to the latest statistics provided by AFAD, the main body responsible at the moment for the coordination of refugee management in Turkey, Turkey represents one of the “largest host countries for the Syrian refugees in the region, hosting, as of March 2016, over 2.7 million of Syrian refugees, around 10 percent of them residing in 26 accommodation centres in 10 cities” (Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016, p. 1). Out of this 2.7 million of refugees, nearly 30% are children (ibidem). The statistics do not provide a detailed account of how many of these children are unaccompanied or how many live with their families and do not offer coverage of how many of them do not have access to basic amenities.

Another problem that refugee children in Turkey face relates to working a large number of hours in very bad conditions for small wages, a case that can be identified as child labour (The Guardian, 2016).

Although Turkey has been a major refugee-hosting country since 2011, Turkish legislation perceived refugees as guests. This basically meant that their stay

was temporary and they did not obtain the official status and rights of refugees. Only after the number of refugees surpassed 100.000 in October 2012 did the Turkish Government issue a Directive which grants temporary protection to Syrian refugees (See: Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016). However, individuals not originating from Syria still could not benefit from international protection (See: Salushev, Juergensmeyer, Clitandre & Lezra, 2014). The following measure undertaken by the government in order to deal with the migration procedures consisted in the adoption of the first law on Foreigners and International Protection in April 2013. The main provision of this law related to the transfer of responsibility for international protection from security forces to a civil authority. At the same time however, Turkey continues to grant refugee status based on geographical limitations invoked in the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention), which implies that only European nationals (Convention refugees) are able to obtain refugee status (See: Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016).

When dealing with the determination of refugee status of non-European nationals (non-Convention refugees), Turkish authorities grant only temporary asylum to such individuals. According to the accepted procedure, the Turkish government works in collaboration with UNHCR to find the citizens of non-European countries a third country for resettlement. According to Memisoglu and Ilgit, in 2016 the procedure underwent minor alterations. In January 2016, Turkey decided to impose visa restrictions on Syrians entering the country and introduced a new provision according to which Syrians under temporary protection required permission documents in order to be able to travel within Turkey. As a result, in February 2016 nearly 70.000 people were blocked at the border and thousands of people were exposed to illegal trafficking because they did not have documents to legally travel across the country (Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016). Considering that Turkey represented a gateway for refugees to reach Europe, the demand for stricter border controls came also from the European Union. Under these circumstances, Turkey and EU signed an agreement with the objective to end irregular migration. The agreement reached in March 2016 defines the scope of cooperation in endeavours to prevent refugees from reaching Europe in large numbers. It also set out a framework to resettle Syrian refugees directly from Turkey and to return irregular migrants in Turkey, as Memisoglu and Ilgit explained in their study. Moreover, the agreement between EU

and Turkey implies a facilitation of Turkish accession to the European Union (For more information on Turkish Legislation on migration and refugee protection, See Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016).

The unclear and ambiguous legislative provisions concerning the protection of Syrian refugees led to many situations in which these groups were exposed to increased vulnerability.

The lack of identification documents, the insufficient number of available accommodation offered by the Turkish government, lack of access to skilled and well-paid jobs, as well as limited or even non-existent access to health-care left refugees in a vulnerable situation. As a result, they were forced to pay very high rent rates for their living space and had no control over receiving a fair wage for their work. Furthermore, the government and the Turkish media framed refugees as a “societal threat”, an attitude reflected also on their perception by the Turkish population (Memisoglu & Ilgit, 2016, p. 9).

Discussion

Understanding how marginalisation occurs has to be analysed also on a macro-level. The vulnerability of refugee minors in Turkey may be understood from the point of view of the dynamic of power relations. As conflict theory renders, society perpetuates the dynamic of relations between groups. The interplay between oppression and the oppressed seems relevant in the 21st century, as society continues to keep the power relations dynamic that have existed in colonial times.

In the post-colonial period, former colonies are still exploited by former metropolises. Natural resources and people alike become commodities that are transported from the poor areas of the world to rich areas, while war and violence are tools used by the groups that hold power to weaken others.

Fanon’s theory asserts that western civilisations see people from other parts of the world as an expression of negative instincts, the uncivilised savage. Starting from the premise that “the confrontation of civilized and primitive men creates the colonial situation and brings about the emergence of a mass of illusions and misunderstandings” (Fanon, & Markmann, 1986, p. 85), Fanon points out that colonialism encompasses the reflection of human attitudes towards these

conditions. The behaviour of people therefore mirrors the way historical objective conditions were perceived, which is proven by the fact that “the Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation” (Fanon, *ibidem*, p. 60).

As reflected on a macro-level, this view stands as a proof of the struggle for power that different political groups use as a pretext for war and violence. Although it seems extremely simplistic, most of today’s wars are related to gaining access to resources or securing power relations. The victims of these conflicts – asylum seekers can be seen as a group subjected to oppression and exploitation in a complex system in which even their right to flee their country of origin is perceived as illegal. In addition, they are particularly vulnerable to being recruited for criminal activities or being abused due to lack of protection.

Although post-colonial scholars add valuable insights to the understanding of conflicts and violence, they do not describe the effects of the refugee crisis in its complexity. Hence, post-colonial view fails to notice that people who experience war and violence may develop agency and resilience, this way managing to overcome difficult situations and being able to continue with their lives. This is extremely important to people who were exposed to traumas, refugees being one of the target group.

While conflict theory identifies asylum seekers with the category of the oppressed because of the need to perpetuate the existent power relations and the struggle of developed economies to obtain more economic resources at the expense of the less developed ones, functionalist theory claims that society’s main goal is to ensure its balance. Consequently, society takes care of the “valuable people”, namely people who ensure its functioning. From this perspective, people are seen as an investment, while the purpose of society is to prepare human capital. Considering that refugees and asylum seekers will be part of a particular society just for a limited period of time, it is not in the benefit of a particular state to invest in their welfare.

As for conflict theory, functionalists agree that unfair treatment in society is common, but they compare the way society functions with the mechanism of the body. In this sense, dysfunctions in the way system works threaten stability, while manifest and latent functions regulate the processes that take place. The failure of protecting asylum seekers’ rights and of integrating them into

a particular society provides an example of how latent functions work, considering that the state will not benefit from investing in people that will leave the system.

Interactionism reveals the role of social interaction in the way refugees and asylum seekers are integrated into a specific community. Symbolic interactionist scholars claim that the interaction between individuals who share the same meanings and symbols is the cell of a society. In this interplay language plays a significant role, creating understanding between individuals. As Habermas (1981) explained, communication is the main tool for creating understanding between communities and constructing identities. Refugees and their values thus play a major role in constructing the identity of a Post-Secular Europe. Therefore, mutual understanding is an asset that should develop in the context of a globalised society.

The social exchange theory hints on analysing the positive role of conflicts, with construction of identity being the outcome resulted from the interplay between rewards and costs. According to this theory, people are capable of making their own choices while calculating the best alternative to maximise rewards and minimise losses. Considering this view, refugees and asylum seekers are agents by themselves and they have the ability to create meaning of their situation and a certain degree of power to determine their lives and livelihoods. A systemic view explores the links between the country of origin and the countries of migration, tracing them back to the historical relations of interdependence between the countries. In addition, the systemic view examines the main factors that give rise to migration, including war and violence in a specific category and the impact on these factors on people and on the receiving countries. The restrictive measures that some countries take and the specific policies have a lot of significance in the movement of refugees and asylum seekers.

The debate about refugees and refugee rights becomes strikingly important while concentrating on the position of unaccompanied minors. Thus, paternalistic views of seeing children as incompetent, the difficulty of children gaining access to the rights stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other specific documents, the inconsistent monitoring of children found in different contexts and the lack of specific government policies that deal with the rights of children with refugee background are the main issues leading to

a situation in which unaccompanied minor children are invisible in countries that do not have clear regulations related to their status, such as Turkey.

Conclusion

Exposure to marginalisation is related both to the micro and macro-level. Thus, legislative provisions may leave room for discrimination and stigmatisation, a fact that leads to marginalisation and exclusion. Children are in a particularly vulnerable position because of the paternalistic approach prevalent in mainstream discourse. Understanding that children have a certain degree of agency revealed by their capacity to act independently and make their own choices is of particular importance in addressing marginalisation. In this respect, children should be viewed as active actors, able to act for their welfare, with specific rights.

Instead of focusing on needs which reflect their vulnerability, the discourse of social workers and theorists should promote active participation of children in getting access to their rights. The first step in providing access of children from socially vulnerable groups to their rights is ensuring their visibility in specific policies. At the same time, children should not be visible only from the point of view of their vulnerability, as this view perpetuates their marginalisation. Considering that perceptions frame behaviour and attitudes, it is of great interest for policy makers and social workers to teach people to see more than a “one-side story”. Teaching children how to be resilient, encouraging their involvement in social programs and community projects and promoting examples of positive inclusion may further contribute to ameliorating marginalisation.

Moreover, factors that increase vulnerability to exclusion, such as refugee status, ethnic affiliation, mental and physical condition, family environment and poverty need to be assessed and monitored in relation to each child as individually addressed, considering that the interdependence of particular factors escalates into severe forms of marginalisation. Hence, persons that are exposed to risk factors should receive better care and be provided with necessary resources in order to be able to survive. For this to be possible, we need more accurate data on the individuals who face difficult situations, including the particular features of each of them.

Exploring the way the conditions of refugees may be conceptualised by different sociological theories represents the main framework for future analysis. Additionally, sociological theories hint on how discourses of marginalisation are constructed and replicated throughout societies. Tackling their assumptions gains particular significance in addressing the vulnerability of particular groups and in framing a counter-discourse to marginalisation, which focuses on promoting rights for all people. This counter-discourse may add more value to the research which attempts to find solutions for reducing marginalisation by addressing the factors that generate it. The diagnoses alone cannot present the complexity of the phenomenon of marginalisation, as the phenomenon further escalates based on people's perceptions and the way they interpret particular traits. Consequently, we need to educate people not to see interaction with persons from socially vulnerable groups as a threat to their safety.

Conceptualising the way different sociological theories explain and reflect marginalisation is extremely relevant in the attempt to create a discourse that promotes the rights of children found in very vulnerable situations that are not able or do not have the opportunity to express their views and talk about their situation.

In a nutshell, this study attempts to present the way multi-faceted dimensions of marginalisation influence people's perception of groups which strike as socially vulnerable and are exposed to becoming subjects of exclusion. The severity of marginalisation is directly linked with the groups' visibility. The evidence from this paper shows that fragmented groups, which largely remain invisible, are the most exposed to severe marginalisation.

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*The process of social anchoring
in the context of siege mentality syndrome
on the example of Haitian and Jewish
diasporas in the United States*

ABSTRACT : The aim of the article is to analyse the process of social anchoring on the example of selected migrant groups as well as to investigate the prevalence of siege mentality symptoms among the said demographic. In the text, we also attempt to determine to what degree the process of adaptation of members of a community regarded as endemic is possible in a new environment. Based on the selected groups of migrants, the authors categorised elements of culture – anchors which have a significant impact on the process of assimilation in a new environment. Analysis results reveal that too rigid anchors among the particular migrant groups can preclude their full integration into the host society and consequently prevent their effective functioning and achievement of a satisfying socioeconomic status.

KEY WORDS : Haitian diaspora, Jewish diaspora, integration, anchors, social anchoring, siege mentality, social identity, national identity

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Introduction

The aim of the present article is to analyse the process of social anchoring on the example of selected migrant groups (Haitian and Jewish migrants in the United States) in the context of siege mentality. The proposed concept of social anchoring refers to the problem of identity, adaptation and social integration with the consideration of individual and sociocultural dimensions of identity. The analysis is intended to reveal how migrants construct key elements of their anchors in the host society and to what extent the process of adaptation of community members regarded as endemic is possible in a new environment. The article presents types of anchors, i.e. points of reference and support crucial for migrants, which allow them to achieve a relative psychosocial stability in the new reality surrounding them. The point of departure for the analysis of social anchoring is Henri Tajfel's *Social Identity Theory* (1987), which explains how group affiliation affects the assessment of self, one's group and other groups. By outlining the historical background and pointing to the main causes of migration of the selected migrant groups, the authors also examine historical factors that affect the formation of siege mentality, which prevents the full integration of an individual into the new environment. The syndrome discussed in the present article refers to *siege mentality* (Bar-Tal, 1992) as a specific personality type and model of culture: the values, rules of behaviour, customs, myths and language that are formed in threat situations. The Haitian and Jewish migrant groups in the USA analysed in the article seek to preserve their cultural and religious distinctiveness and uphold their traditions. As members of communities with a distinct identity, they do not prioritise acculturation or assimilation with the dominant society. However, each of the examined groups is inclined towards integration with the host society to a different extent. For instance, unlike the Haitian diaspora, the Jewish diaspora treats striving towards being perceived as a legitimate part of the American society as an important aim of their social and economic activities.

Migration – integration – identity

Population migration is a natural phenomenon present across all historical eras and on all continents. Throughout centuries, the migration of individuals and groups has been conditioned by a number of external and internal factors. The

unbalanced population growth in various regions of the world, natural disasters, underdevelopment and poverty as well as political instability have intensified the process of population migration. The terms “migration” and “immigrants” frequently co-occur with the term “integration”. (Social) integration is a classic concept used in sociology and migration policy (Marody, 3m Giza-Poleszczuk, 2004) and refers to “a state or process taking place in a society whereby its particular elements display a tendency to fuse into a harmonious and coordinated, functional entity (...)” (Olechnicki, Załęcki, 1997, p. 85). Through an ethnic perspective, it is understood as a process of incorporating various, usually minority social groups, such as national minorities, refugees, migrants or repatriates into the dominant society, which allows them access to rights and services intended for the majority (Kulvesky in: Polakowska-Kujawa, 1999). The concept of “integration” is also the most common term describing the relations between the host society (organised into the structure of a national state) and “ethnic” communities of immigrants.

Modern migration and integration processes in EU countries and the USA are studied by social science researchers mainly in the political, social, economic and cultural contexts. The intensification of migration processes in the 1990s led to the appearance of the concept of “integration policy”. Among its premises are practical activities aiming to facilitate immigrants’ adaptation into the host society as well as pre-integration programs designed to prepare the immigrants to settle in and function within the sociocultural (including linguistic) reality of a particular country. Integration policy principally provides for the recognition of immigrants’ cultural rights, which, on the one hand, allows to avoid altogether or prevent the escalation of ethnic conflict, while on the other hand it is intended to facilitate the equalisation of life opportunities and the preservation of cultural distinctiveness (Kymlicka, 2007). It must be noted that integration theories operating in social sciences acknowledge the question of immigrants’ identity and psychosocial adaptation only to a small extent. The theory of social anchoring presented by Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska and adopted in the present article addresses the problem of identity, adaptation and social integration, taking into consideration the issue of identity and drawing attention to psychosocial resources that individuals can use in their adaptation to a life of emigration (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013). “Social anchoring is a proposal of a concept that, despite its primary

reference to the adaptation of immigrants and their individual identity, also relates to the complex relations of an individual with a society, that is the problem of social integration” (ibidem, p. 48).

The analysis of the terms “anchor” and “anchoring” is the point of reference for the construction of the concept of anchoring. The term “anchoring” marked its strong presence in psychology and economy, it is however less popular in sociology. In his texts, Zygmunt Bauman refers to the metaphor of “anchors” explaining them as points of support necessary for the protection of a person against drifting in the liquid modernity¹ (Bauman in: Urbaniak, 2014). With reference to migration, the terms “anchor” and “anchoring” were first used by a sociologist Keumjae Park in the context of migration processes. In her publications, Park (2007) discusses two strategies of constructing identity. The first strategy involves using identity markers, that is markers which locate individuals closer to the desired position in social hierarchy and privileged groups, such as the knowledge of language, education or economic status. The second strategy refers to the attitude to citizenship and national identity (Park, 2007). Anchors can be divided into two main types. The first type encompasses objective anchors such as legal-institutional forms (e.g. personal documents, legal status, access to formal institutions), economic (e.g. material resources, consumer goods, type of employment) or special-environmental (place of birth or residence) forms. The more subjective and internal anchors are linked to individuals’ personality traits and their self-concept, individually followed ideas and values as well as individual memory. The remaining types of anchors, such as: an individual’s socio-professional roles or the position in power structure and group affiliation, most frequently have a mixed character. Cultural anchors (contained in language, cultural transmission, symbols, norms and values) as well as anchors inherent in present and historic social relations appear to be a peculiar type of “mixed” anchors (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013, p. 55).

¹ Zygmunt Bauman advocates for the idea of “liquid modernity” (Liquid Modernity). This view emphasises the fact of change within society; and it argues that change is occurring more and more rapidly in the “modern” world. See: Urbaniak 2014.

Identity

Studies on identity refer to the complex relations between an individual and society. The category of identity encompasses key social experiences of individuals- it particularly pertains to defining one's place in the world and one's attitude towards "the Other". With regard to the interdisciplinary nature and ambiguity of the term "identity", its most adequate and precise theoretical concepts need to be distinguished. Zbigniew Bokszański states that the word "identity" "has gained the status of a basic concept both in the analyses of empirical materials and theoretical publications" (Bokszański, 1989). The concept of individual identity was introduced to social sciences by Erik Erikson in the first half of the 20th century. For Erikson, the formation of personality is important as much as, for a more profound understanding of this process, the course of history and the development of symbolic culture need to be considered. "In essence, the author argues for the amalgamation of psychology and culturally oriented sociology, which, only when combined, are able to capture the co-dependency between Ego's mental power, the internalised influence of environment, history and culture. These factors impact the formation of an individual's sense of identity, while the crisis of consciousness can be linked not only to an internal struggle, but also disruptions in the external world and a conflict with the society" (Kozielecki, 2000, pp. 42–43).

The concept of *belonging* developed by Nadia Lovell (1998) is the point of departure for defining the concept of identity. The concept in question refers to group identity, particularly its socio-cultural dimension. Lovell draws particular attention to the attachment to and loyalty towards a place, respect for the landscape and memory of the place.

The memory of a place is perceived as an instrument for the construction of collective identities. The concept of belonging defines a certain type of ethos of a place, a peculiar utopia and land of happiness. A place becomes a factor defining affiliation to a particular group. The concept of belonging becomes the point of departure in the process of constructing social and national identity. According to the premises of Henri Tajfel's and John Turner's theory, the sense of social identity is shaped by cognitive mechanisms connected to determining specific traits that distinguish one's group from other communities. The place of origin can be an example of such a trait (Tajfel, Turner, in: Worchel, 1987). The concept of social identity also explains the mechanisms of construction

of social groups as well as the process of social categorisation. The phenomenon of favouring one's group and the devaluation of other communities leads to the development of social identity in individual consciousness. The sense of national or ethnic affiliation and the tendency to stress the value of one's group can be responsible for the development of a propensity for the devaluation of other nationalities. The devaluation of other nationalities is connected to the presence of *siege mentality* in a particular community, which appears as a specific type of personality exposed to a constant sense of threat and a specific model of culture. A cultural model involves values, behavioural rules, customs, myths and language which are shaped in threat situations. Despite being a frequent object of observation, the phenomenon of siege mentality has yet to undergo comprehensive and holistic analyses. The theory of siege mentality was developed by Daniel Bar-Tal in the context of the Israeli nation. As a nation affected by the trauma of the Holocaust, collective suffering and marginalisation, it has spent years constructing an inner fortress aimed at protecting its members against other misfortunes. An ethnic group with siege mentality is characterised by distrust towards aliens, a sense of constant threat (not necessarily real), inaccessibility and isolation (Bar-Tal, Antebi, 1992).

Immigration and the concept of integration in the USA

Immigration to the United States is the greatest movement of emigrant population in the history of the modern world. Several dozen million newcomers from various countries settled on the territory of the USA. The term "immigrant" was first used in 1787 to distinguish between settlers or colonists who had arrived earlier and the newly-arrived foreigners. Faced with the inflow of migrant population, the United States have tightened certain legal regulations limiting the number of immigrants, in particular – to use colonial language: "of a different race". The first legal measure was the 1870 Naturalisation Act that provided the right to enter and settle in the United States to every foreigner who was a "white, free man". Segregation policy towards immigrants was continued until the 1960s. Between 1917 and 1924, a new quota system was introduced based on national origins that extended the category of "excluded" population to the citizens of Asian countries, with the exception of Japan. The

intensified activities of anti-discrimination movements in the late 1960s led to amendments in state legislation. The quota system that in effect selected immigrants based on nationality was abandoned for a fixed, general annual quota (Grzymała-Kazłowska, Łodziński, 2008). One of the concepts in early American studies on integration was *straight line assimilation* developed by Warner and Srole (1945), which envisaged approximating the behavioural models of immigrants to the models of Americans and accepting the American lifestyle. The assumptions of the straight line assimilation theory were challenged by Glazer and Moynihan (1963, 1970), who conducted research on integration processes among immigrant communities in New York. Based on their research results, they developed a cultural melting pot paradigm which showed that, on the one hand, the immigrants indeed move closer towards a common, “American” model of living, yet on the other hand, they increasingly strive towards preserving their ethnic traditions (Glazer, Moynihan, 1963, 1970).

The first Haitians in the United States and the successive waves of immigrants

According to the analysis conducted by the US Census in the years 2009-2013 (United States Census Bureau), there are 915,000 Americans of Haitian origin living in the territory of the United States. Haitians are one of the most populous migrant groups living in this country. There are five main, documented periods of Haitian immigration to the USA: the first two follow the era of French colonisation and the aftermath of the Haitian revolution (1791–1803), when the black inhabitants of the island revolted against slavery and the domination of colonisers. Upon arrival in the United States, they formed enclaves of French-speaking communities in New Orleans, Norfolk, Baltimore, New York and Boston. The third period coincides with the occupation of Haiti by the United States (1915–1934), while the next waves of immigration follow the period of François Duvalier’s regime (1957–1986) and the overthrow of president Aristide (1991). For almost three decades, from 1957 to 1986, when François “Papa Doc” and Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier held power, political persecutions led to increased emigration of Haitian middle-class professionals and students. Haitians emigrated in search of political asylum or permanent residence.

The Haitian immigrants who arrived in the United States in the 18th and 19th century showed strong determination in surviving in the new country. Many of them attempted to gain respect and social advancement through their hard work and perseverance. The first recognised merchant from Haiti was Jean-Baptiste Point du Sable, a trapper who settled by the shore of a lake and founded a trading post on the river which was later to become the *City of Chicago*. Pierre Toussaint, an ardent Catholic, who came to New York as a slave to a French family in 1787, became a distinguished hairdresser of rich patrons in New York. Despite the fact that one of the aims of migration was to acquire higher education, the main motivation was the pursuit of freedom and civil rights. In 1980, a number of Haitian immigrants known as *boat people* escaped the Island of Haiti on makeshift boats and reached the coast of Florida. Later that year, US president Jimmy Carter granted the escapees refugee status within the Haitian-Cuban program. In 1986, 40,000 thousand Haitians who had migrated to the United States were granted permanent residency status and political asylum. Ten years later, when Haitian president Aristide was removed from power following the coup d'état in 1991, another wave of emigrants left the country. Many of them did not manage to reach the US coast. They were turned back to their country or placed in refugee centres. In the years 1995 and 1998, five thousand Haitians were granted asylum and temporary legal status. At present, the greatest number of Haitian immigrants resides in New York, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Boston. Until 1977, Boston was the heart of Haitian America; however, between 1977 and 1981, 60,000 Haitians settled in southern Florida making it the centre of Haitian diaspora (MPI Migration Policy Institute, 2014).

Assimilation problems

As is the case with the majority of immigrants to the United States, Haitians strive towards achieving their “American dream”, that is “making a fortune”, finding happiness through “making a life” for themselves, building a dream house, achieving a sense of fulfilment in personal life in accordance with the norms that are widely accepted and promoted in affluent societies. In Haitian Creole language, there is even a saying that demonstrates a socially approved social

status: “Se vagabon ki Loue kay”, which means “Respectable people don’t rent”. The “American dream” and the dream of a prosperous life go side by side with social problems, homelessness and economic exploitation. Additionally, there are growing challenges faced by illegal immigrants, who live in constant fear of deportation, struggle with psychological problems and a range of emotional disorders brought on by stress. American studies conducted on Haitian immigrants (The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program) reveal that only a small percentage of Haitians access counselling service in the area of mental health (Belizaire, Fuertes, 2011). Another problem lies in health care and health insurance. Many Haitian immigrants fail to use health care services both for religious and economic reasons. Those Haitians who come from rural areas believe in traditional medicine and the healing power of vodou, refusing professional medical help.² The belief system of vodou presupposes that every illness is a consequence of a curse brought on man by spirits (Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse WHO, 2010). Another group of Haitian immigrants unable to use health care services consists of those remaining in the US territory illegally. Prejudices that the American society holds towards Haitians also pose an important challenge for Haitian immigrants connected with sociocultural adaptation. The categorisation and prejudices against alien groups result from the persistence of stereotypes and group representations. A pattern once formed for an alien group can prove to be enduring when every thought about a particular group is preceded by its unconscious, affective confirmation (Jarymowicz, in: Kofta, Jasińska-Kania, 2001). According to Thomas Wenski, director of the Pierre Toussaint Haitian Catholic Centre in Miami, since their arrival in America, Haitians have been excluded due to the “American *negrophobia*”, a fear of black people. In the eyes of Americans, black immigrants appear as “desperate people instead of decent people who struggle” (Waters, 1999, p. 96).

Haitians have been excluded because of their race and economic condition (Waters, 1999, p. 86). In the 1990s, the American Centre for Disease Control listed Haitians as one of four “high risk” groups for AIDS, which ignited a new wave of social discrimination. A number of people of Haitian origin were refused

² Vodou religion involves herbal medicine characteristic to folk medicine. The healer, or vodou priest, possesses knowledge about plants with medicinal properties. Treatment consists in prayer, rituals and providing herbal medications.

employment, flat rent or school enrolment. Anti-discrimination activists working for the black community drew attention to other problems affecting Haitians, such as poverty, malnutrition or unemployment. The National Coalition for Haitian Rights founded in 1982 fights for equal rights and legal procedures as well as granting legal status to Haitians who have applied for asylum in the United States. The Coalition aims towards persuading the society of the necessity to grant Haitians refugee status, increasing the awareness of social, economic and political factors influencing Haitian immigration and reducing prejudices against Haitian immigrants. The prejudices against Haitians held by the American society reduce their chances for a dignified life and effective integration into the new environment, thus preventing them from achieving their “American dream”.

Jewish immigration to the United States – causes and conditioning

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau (State Characteristics Vintage, 2014) show that the United States are home to 7,160,000 Americans of Jewish origin. They constitute approximately 3 per cent of the American population. The history of the migration of people with Jewish background to the USA can be divided into three periods – Sephardic, German and Eastern-European (Wallen, Zollman, 2011). Their names indicate the origin of the majority of Jewish people migrating in the particular periods. The first Sephardic settlers came from Brazil, having been exiled from the country by the Portuguese who had taken over the territory after a period of Dutch rule. In the early 1700s, they settled in New Amsterdam, which would later become New York. In the following decades, numerous families of Sephardic merchants settled in other port towns and cities, which offered the best opportunities for trade, such as Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston or Savannah. The second wave of Jewish immigrants reached the United States in the 1940s (Sarna, 2005). It coincided with the gradual migration of German Jews, who were leaving the country mainly for the United States due to the growing economic crisis and persecutions as well as increasingly strict legal restrictions directed at this national group in Germany. This movement intensified considerably following the outbreak of World War II which forced approximately 250,000 German Jews to leave the country. Having arrived in America,

they settled in towns located along the route of their journey and found employment primarily as hawkers or set up small, gradually expanding shops. The members of this diaspora brought the idea of Reform Judaism, with the city of Cincinnati becoming later its centre. Its members also formed institutions and organisations that played a significant role in the life of Jewish people around the world, such as B'nai B'rith, American Jewish Committee or the National Council of Jewish Women. Eastern-European Jews began their migration to the United States in the late 1900s, motivated by the desire to escape the problem of growing overpopulation in the “Old Continent” that resulted in poverty and hunger, and consequently an oppressive policy towards minority groups and the increasingly aggravating anti-Semitic propaganda. They were attracted to the United States by the “American dream”, a dream of achieving financial success and providing their families with a sense of well-being and a stable social status. Between 1880 and 1924, about 2,000,000 Jews arrived in America from Eastern European countries such as Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Romania, becoming the most populous, yet at the same time the poorest group among the Jewish diaspora in the United States. In the majority of cases, they found employment in factories and inhabited poor districts of such large cities as Chicago, New York, Philadelphia or Boston. They believed in the ideas of socialism and communism as political systems that guaranteed social equality and economic stability. They also brought with them the legacy of the Yiddish culture which soon started to develop in the new conditions in the form of theatres and various literary forms, from journalism to prose. This group of immigrants also remained faithful to the ideas of a conservative and orthodox branch of Judaism, refusing to accept the transformations introduced by the reform movement. At the same time, this diaspora was the origin of the American Zionist movement that called for the creation of a Jewish state.

This intense migration of the Jewish population to the United States came to an end in 1924³. The increasingly restrictive quota migration policy of the United States in the following years resulted in an infamous episode in the history of the USA. Hundreds of Jewish men, women and children saved from the worn-torn Europe were refused entry to the country (Gordon, Morgan-Witts,

³ Timeline in American Jewish History, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, <http://americanjewisharchives.org/education/timeline.php>

2010) and returned to Europe to face certain death in German death camps (Zychowicz, 2016, pp. 344–351). Fearing that anti-Semitic sentiments might arise following the inflow of new immigrants, the decision to accept Jewish war refugees was a difficult choice to make, both for the US government and Jewish organisations in America. The latter were faced with a dilemma between demonstrating their solidarity with other Jews and proving their law-abidingness and affiliation to the American nation. Trying to balance the moral obligation to aid Jews in general, as a group that faced the threat of extermination, and the care for the interests of American Jews, they undertook activities that did not prove effective. This showed insufficient solidarity and lack of mutual support within the Jewish diaspora. It also exposed a sense of distinctness of those Jews who had already established themselves as part of the US society and their desire to dissociate themselves from the newcomers – for fear of losing the rights gained so far.

The process of integration of the Jewish diaspora into the American society

The United States, perceived in contemporary Europe as a global guardian of equality and democracy, pursued a substantially different human rights policy at the time when first Jewish immigrants were arriving in the country. The US constitution of 4th July, 1788 guaranteed equal treatment to Jews and members of other denominations (Sarna, 2005). Despite this fact, as the greatest group of non-Christian immigrants in the United States, the followers of Judaism were subjected to constant social invigilation and treated with distrust. This brought on fear, a sense of instability and lack of confidence about their place in this multi-ethnic society. The question of who can and should be part of the American nation and which groups should be refused this right was still under a stormy discussion (Garland, 2014).

Much like other immigrants seeking the right to enter the United States, also Jews had their “American dream” and a strong motivation to work hard and achieve economic success. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of Jewish immigrants, migration to America was motivated by something more than mere desire to improve their living standard. A considerable part of this group was

dispossessed of their homes due to their origin or left them due to legitimate fears of persecution and already existing or anticipated threat to their lives. Thus, their movement was motivated by a desire to avoid further misfortune, oppression or fear for their health and lives, rather than by the ambition to improve their status. These circumstances, particularly the last, most tragic period of the Holocaust and the pogroms that preceded and followed it, caused the greatest damage to most anchors, both those objective (legal-institutional, economic or socio-environmental), and subjective, that linked members of the Jewish diaspora to their earlier places of residence. During World War II, Jews were divested of the possibility to use national institutions in their countries of residence to the same degree as members of other denominations. Their legal status was suddenly changed and their civil rights taken away. All their property (wherever possible) was seized, they were also deprived of employment possibilities and their position in the professional and social structure. Many of the places they inhabited, particularly the Jewish towns (shtetles) in central and Eastern Europe, disappeared altogether from the maps of these regions or were completely destroyed and rebuilt by new inhabitants in an entirely new form. The majority of relatives that remained in Europe had by that time also emigrated or fell victims to the Nazi genocide.

Along with the immigrants from various places around the world, the Yiddish culture arrived in the United States. However, the Yiddish language soon became a dead language, used only by older people, which additionally inhibited the intergenerational cultural transmission. The new generations were not eager to learn Yiddish, preferring to speak English as a more useful means of communication within the broader society. English, however, was not as fluent among seniors as among children and grandchildren. What remained unchanged were the values connected with religion and the preservation of religious traditions as well as strong social bonds. The latter were strongly influenced by mutual relations between different groups of the diaspora that arrived in America at various times and from various locations, diversified in terms of wealth and the level of religiousness as well as attachment to tradition. The increasing interest of the members of the Jewish diaspora in the United States in visits to European countries as well as an important change of the nature of the visits from martyrology-oriented to sentimental can testify to the importance of anchors, both those existing and those lost. While in the past they concentrated on the subject

and memory of the Holocaust, today the visits increasingly focus on genealogical interests, oriented towards research into family history and a search for related places and documents (Gładys, 2009). One might suppose that this level of destruction to the majority of social and cultural anchors as well as a lack of contact with families remaining in the countries of origin caused that Jewish immigrants integrated into the American society to a much greater extent than Haitians. At the same time, they faced the challenge of recreating their identity in the new conditions or forming it anew, and what follows, developing a new sense of belonging and anchoring.

Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska distinguishes four dimensions of the process of immigrants “entering” the host society (Budyta-Budzyńska, 2011: 44-49). These are: economic dimension (connected with the professional position in the job market and economic situation), cultural dimension (diagnosing linguistic and cultural competences), socio-political dimension (relating to social relations and political activity) and the dimension of identity (referring to a sense of affiliation, community and identification with a particular nationality). In the case of the Jewish diaspora in the USA, as a result of the gradual process of integration and despite the preservation of their cultural and religious distinctness, it is possible to assess their integration on all levels listed above as effective. Among the American Jews, the average level of education is higher than the general American population by 50 per cent.⁴ This situation can be linked to a culturally perceived importance of education in Judaism and the obligation imposed on parents to ensure that children receive education (Syme, 1988). It is also reflected in the growing number of Jewish schools which, apart from high quality general education also offer their students comprehensive instruction in Judaism and Jewish history and frequently also Hebrew language. This facilitates not only the provision of a high level of education, but also the preservation and transmission of the tradition and culture of one’s group to the generations to come. It also allows community members to achieve a good professional position and socioeconomic success. Aside from multi-level education, the diaspora has a broad cultural offer oriented towards children and adults as well as long-term and one-time charity

⁴ A portrait of Jewish Americans, Pew Research Centre, Religion & Public Life, <http://www.pew-forum.org/files/2013/10/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey-overview.pdf>.

and social events. American Jews are also active members of the civic society, involved in political activity and characterised by a strong sense of patriotism and affiliation to the American nation.

The process of social anchoring of immigrants in the United States in the light of the conducted analysis

In the present text, the process of social anchoring of immigrants is discussed with reference to the process of acculturation, defined as achieving fluency in the language of the country of migration and the extent to which the behavioural patterns and values of the host society have been accepted. With the experience of colonialism, American occupation and political regime, the Haitian community approaches the question of integration into the new, different environment with distance and distrust. Haitians live in self-created enclaves based on the pattern of Haitian villages with a number of companies that meet the needs of their fellow countrymen: hairdresser's salons, car service or restaurants specialising in Haitian cuisine. The reluctance and distrust take on the form of siege mentality, which prevents full integration into the host society. As immigrants, Haitians try to preserve their identity and their ancestors' traditions. The national identity of Haitian immigrants is shaped by specific types of anchors. These are primarily citizenship and an extremely strong bond linking them to their home country, family, language and religion. Over 81 per cent of the Haitian population in the United States (at the age of 5 and above) speak Creole language at home. In some schools, this language was included in the curriculum of bilingual classes to facilitate the education of Haitian children. The fact that Creole language is not only an element of identity, but also a binder cementing the ties of the young generation of Haitians with their relatives in Haiti, is of equal importance. However, it is religion that remains the strongest cultural anchor of this group of immigrants. This conclusion can be drawn based on the large number of religious institutions in the US territory that belong to the Creole population, such as Catholic or Orthodox Christian churches as well as places serving as meeting centres for the believers of vodou. It must be noticed that the practitioners of vodou are active at organising places for religious activity in flats, private houses or basements. During religious services, Haitian

Creole language is used more frequently than French or English. The distinct language and religion lead to the isolation of Haitians and their separation from the cultures represented by immigrants from African countries. The traditional cultural and religious values are strictly guarded and passed on to subsequent generations. Rather than attempting to adjust to the dominant American culture, Haitians strive towards preserving the Caribbean lifestyle. Efforts undertaken to provide financial support to family remaining in Haiti are not uncommon. As the US Census report reveals, 80 per cent of income of Haitian immigrants is sent to families in Haiti (MPI, 2014). As results from ethnographic research conducted by one of the authors of the article, Paulina Chmiel-Antoniuk, in the village of La Valee in Haiti in November and December 2016, financial support provided by their families living in the United States is the main source of income for the local Haitians. Among the most common forms of support is to pay for the school fees of the youngest family members as well as send clothing and footwear. Many families in Haiti survive only thanks to the support from relatives living permanently in the USA.

In order to preserve their cultural values, Haitians in the United States try to conduct intensive cultural activities. They own radio stations that promote the Haitian culture, present the latest news from the country and provide advice to immigrants. They also publish their own magazines in Haitian Creole and French language, among them: *Haiti en Marche*, *Haiti Observateur* or *Haiti Progress*. Americans of Haitian origin maintain contact with friends and neighbours. The family networks created by Haitians allow to control the life in their community and provide mutual aid. The stronger the bonds between Haitian immigrants, the more the community is able to preserve its cultural traditions, folklore, Creole language and other aspects of social life. One can observe numerous elements that are common to both Jewish and Haitian diasporas. Among them are: religion- distinct from the beliefs of the dominant social group, strong family and social bonds inside the group as well as efforts to preserve cultural identity and pass on the traditions, customs and approved values to the next generations. Another element linking the situation of Jews and Haitians is the stigmatisation of these groups in the multicultural American society as well as numerous stereotypes and prejudices held against their members.

On the other hand, observation of the history of acculturation of the Jewish community in the United States reveals a significantly different pattern of

integration of this group from the Haitian diaspora. It is worth drawing attention to the differences in social functioning of these two groups. First of all, the knowledge of English language is a crucial issue both in the integration and active participation of immigrants in social life and the development of principles followed in the society. Unlike Haitians, the Jewish diaspora uses English to communicate in everyday situations. Native languages brought from the countries of origin have been marginalised in use, while those that are not necessary in everyday life or religious ceremonies (e.g. Yiddish), are mainly studied by language enthusiasts and those who wish to return to their roots. Hebrew language comes as an exception to this rule- despite the fact that it is not used broadly in private life, it remains the basic language in religious services and a necessary language to study religious texts (Kirsh, 2014). For this reason, it is taught in Jewish schools alongside English. Apart from loanwords from Hebrew, single words or phrases from Yiddish also appear in English used by American Jews (Nove, 2011). Despite the fact that they constitute only a minor addition to English grammar and vocabulary, their inclusion in the language is the reason why the Jewish diaspora in the United States is fluent at communicating with the rest of the society. At the same time, it retains certain elements of anchor in the form of language which distinguishes this group, yet does not separate it from the rest of the society (Bunin Benor, Cohen, 2009).

The Jewish diaspora in the United States is very diversified in terms of the level of religiosity (Lazerwitz, Harrison, 1979). However, the vast majority of the group's members, particularly among the young generation, are not active practitioners, or are irregular practitioners (visit the synagogue only during main religious festivals or several times a year).⁵ Hence, the belief system and religious practices are not sources of obstacles in the adaptation to everyday functioning at school or work. At the same time, English language has an increasing presence during religious services, particularly in reform and more progressive synagogues.⁶ Jews also want to be active members of the society and participate in creating their reality. As social studies reveal (Cohen, Fein, 2001), the question of social justice is of particular importance to the contemporary American

⁵ A portrait of Jewish Americans, Pew Research Centre, Religion & Public Life, <http://www.pew-forum.org/files/2013/10/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey-overview.pdf>.

⁶ Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, Early American Reform Prayer Books, <http://huc.edu/research/libraries/guides/earp#>.

Jews. However, already the early groups of Jewish immigrants, in particular those who arrived along with the third, Eastern-European migration wave, cooperated with trade unions in a common fight for human dignity demanding labour rights to be introduced and observed, and later calling for the equality of all citizens and equal rights for women. As David Grubin (2016) points out, these activities reflected the deeply rooted traditions of social involvement in the spirit of co-responsibility for the construction of the world that surrounds the individual. These were traditions brought from the countries of origin in Europe.

Another differentiating element that needs to be stressed is the fact that Haitians have their own country which either they, or their ancestors left for various reasons. Members of the Jewish diaspora came to the United States from various locations around the world, and there are no material traces of Jewish communities left in the places which their families used to inhabit. The state of Israel was founded long after the majority of Jewish immigrants had arrived in America. This is the reason why there are no clearly defined anchors between Jews living in Israel and the Jewish diaspora in the United States that would inhibit integration with the American society, despite the Jewish diaspora's support for the state of Israel. As Zygmunt Bauman noticed, in the liquid modernity an identity that is too deeply rooted, resistant to changes "throughout the whole life", could become a hindrance, "a ball and chain", a ballast that inhibits movement (Bauman in: Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013, p. 11). It might seem that the Haitian community, still "resistant" to acculturation and integration into the host society, constitutes such a ballast for the United States. It might be worth considering the assumption that perhaps the attitude of immigrants from Haiti is one of the reasons for such a situation. One might also suppose that their refusal to accept changes results from constant, subconscious faith in the possibility to return to their country and a fear that to allow integration means to prevent this return. Without a doubt, such an attitude is strengthened by contact with families remaining in Haiti and the fact their country and family towns or villages still exist physically. In the case of the Jewish diaspora, it was obvious in the majority of cases that such an opportunity as returning back to the country, city or village of origin would never arise due to the material and personal devastation that this community suffered. Hence, "waiting out" was not an option, the only possible choice to make was between integration or marginalisation, which

might have constituted an important factor motivating this group of immigrants to undertake action for the recognition of their group as a legitimate part of the society. By becoming its part, and taking responsibility for the world that surrounded them – an attitude that grew out of the principles of Judaism, Jews had to become actively involved in the life of social structures and invest in their own development.

The concept of anchoring takes into consideration also the sociocultural adaptive flexibility of contemporary migrants and the possibility that individuals have to disconnect from their point of reference (place, group). These processes have repeatedly referred to the history of the Jewish community. The problems faced by the Haitian community and the relatively successful integration of Jewish community indicate that there are a number of factors influencing the possibility of anchoring. These are both internal (a sense of anchoring in a different culture, lack of openness to changes and to the adaptation to the new reality) and external factors, including prejudices and categorisation as well as the specific character of integration policy in particular countries.

Looking at the two diasporas described in the article through the perspective of the definition of anchoring by Grzymała-Kazłowska (2013) and the concept of belonging by Nadia Lowell (1998), we can identify two different ways of group response towards the process of integration with the host society. According to the analyses, the pattern chosen by a particular group is connected to the reasons for leaving the previous place (forced or voluntary), whether the bonds with the place were kept or broken, social situation in the new location and, last but not least, the probability of return. Thus, the pattern of integration depends on whether the anchors connecting the group to the previous place of residence are stronger or weaker than the bonds with the new place. In other words, it depends on which place evokes a stronger sense of belonging in the group/person, or whether the existing bonds and the sense of belonging allow or prevent the group/person from establishing other bonds at a later time.

In the case of the Jewish diaspora, all its bonds connecting it to the original, native country were broken. Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States with a dominant feeling of loss, both material and personal, a deep mourning at the loss of their loved ones, places and social bonds that are irrecoverable. This created the conviction that their return would never be possible while their memories should be erased so as not to cause further sorrow. On the one hand,

this attitude was extremely harmful, on the other hand it allowed the community to direct all its efforts, strengths and resources to creating new bonds and becoming a recognised, successful social group having its place in their new reality.

The example of Haitian immigrants presents a very different situation. Due to the sorely challenging life conditions in their country of origin, they decided to search for a better place to live. Their goal was to improve their quality of life. At the same time, they strove to find a way to support those who had stayed in their homeland. Their bonds with the country of birth, despite all the difficulties faced, are very strong. Their personal identity is created with reference to their native country, accompanied by a sense of belonging to the culture they left behind and hope to return and reconnect with people and places they miss. The circumstances in which they happen to be are understood more as a temporary separation than an irrecoverable loss. As such, the majority, if not the whole community believes their return is possible, hence all their efforts aiming to reconnect to the life they left behind. One of the ways to ensure this continuity is through keeping strong associations and memory, cultivating traditions and separating the group from the broader society. In this case, the strong existing bonds and the sense of belonging prevent the community from integrating fully into the new society.

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*Peer Violence and Conflict Resolution among
Adolescents in Multicultural Society*

ABSTRACT : In modern multicultural societies, high levels of antisocial behavior, including interpersonal violence and aggression, have traditionally been associated with adolescents and early adulthood. A growing body of international literature demonstrates that the experience of violence is a common problem with incidents varying in regard to a number of factors including age, gender, ethnicity and the type of violence. The present paper adds to this body of literature through its focus on the correlates of violence and conflict resolution among adolescents in the Republic of Macedonia. 200 students from Macedonian and Albanian ethnic groups, 100 boys and 100 girls chosen from 2nd and 3rd grade across four secondary schools (two mono-ethnic and two multi-ethnic) in Skopje compose the sampling group of this study. The instruments used in the research were the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire and the Thomas-Kidman Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). The results showed that there were positive and significant relationships between aggression and avoidance ($r = .352, p < .01$), aggression and irritation ($r = .423, p < .01$), aggression and adaptation ($r = .206, p < .01$) and aggression and compromise ($r = .421, p < .010$) among Albanian students. On the other hand, there were positive and significant relationships between aggression and irritation ($r = .325, p < .01$) and aggression and collaboration ($r = .158, p < .01$) among Macedonian students. There was also positive correlation between the level of aggression and type of school ($p = .045$). Adolescents from both ethnic groups who studied in multiethnic schools used all types of conflict resolution strategies while the adolescents who studied in mono-ethnic schools relied on irritation and adaptation. As can be concluded from the results, compared with females, males display a higher level of aggression ($r = .038, p < .01$). In this study, Albanian and Macedonian boys preferred to use irritation and compromise, but in our study it is evident that girls used only irritation as conflict resolution style. On the basis of the obtained results, we will try to provide recommendations for reducing the level of violent behaviour among adolescents and to improve effective prevention and intervention programs.

KEY WORDS : multicultural society, adolescents, violence, conflict resolution, prevention

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Introduction

In modern industrialised societies, high levels of antisocial behavior, including interpersonal violence and aggression, have traditionally been associated with adolescence and early adulthood. Although the risk of involvement in violence continues through all stages of life, the years of adolescence and young adulthood are characterised by high rates of aggression and victimisation (Leon, Carmona & Garcia, 2010).

Whether the link between adolescence and violence can be attributed primarily to the developmental (physiological and psychological) stresses that accompany this period of transition, societal factors have been the subject of continuing debate. Factors ranging from the “excess” energy of adolescents to their temporary detachment from the family and other social institutions have been cited as potential causes of their greater involvement in violence and other antisocial misconduct. The studies suggest that the transition of adolescence to adulthood is more problematic in multicultural modern society than in modern traditional cultures. At the same time, the time span between age 12 and 20 appears to be the peak age for involvement in both minor and major acts of violence and aggression.

Definition of adolescence

The word adolescence is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere* “to grow into adulthood” (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Adolescence is actually a time of “growing up”. The term adolescence can be defined as the developmental period between childhood and adulthood which begins with changes associated with puberty and culminating in the acquisition of adult roles and responsibilities.

While adolescence is referred to as a time of growth from immaturity to maturity biologically, socially and cognitively, it is most often defined by chronological age. The adolescent years extend from age 12 to 22. Adolescence is a biologically universal phenomenon which is characterised by rapid change in the following areas:

- Physical – puberty (physical growth, development of secondary sexual characteristics and reproductive capability)

- Psychological – development of autonomy, independent identity and value system
- Cognitive – moving from concrete to abstract thought
- Emotional – moodiness, shifting from self-centeredness to empathy in relationships
- Social – peer group influences, formation of intimate relationships, deciding on future vocation.

The development of a healthy individual identity is a major task of adolescence. This involves the search for a stable sense of self that provides adolescents with a direction guided by knowledge of who and what they are and where they are going, giving both meaning and purpose to their lives as they enter adulthood (Roscoe & Callahan, 2005). It is very important to understand young people, their behaviours and needs from a developmental perspective.

The unique features distinguishing adolescence from other stages in the life span are accompanied by challenges that are also unique. During adolescence, rapid and extensive physical, cognitive and social changes necessitate interpersonal adjustments in order to maintain the functional dependence of both familial and extra familial relationships. This includes the area of conflicts with peers and how to manage these conflicts effectively in a manner viewed as positive by society (Collins & Larsen, 1992).

As professionals concerned with human development, we find it important to examine more closely the uniqueness of conflict during adolescence as well as the factors which may influence the types of conflict resolution strategies used by adolescents in conflict with their peers and friends.

Adolescents and interpersonal violence

The World Health Organization defines violence as the use of physical force or real threat against oneself, another person or a group in the community, which either results in or has any chance of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, development disability or deprivation (Leon, Carmona & Garcia, 2010). Violent behaviour, especially the use of physical violence, is a significant public health problem worldwide because it poses serious personal and social consequences.

Today many adolescents and children continue to be involved in aggressive and violent behaviours such as physical fighting, bullying, verbal threats or harm to others and chronic, impulsive aggression. Violent behaviour rarely appears spontaneously; it typically has a long developmental pathway. In certain instances, aggression may be a response to stress that occurs during a particularly vulnerable period and the individual may not respond the same way at other times in their life.

Conflict in the period of adolescence involves mutual disagreement or hostility between peers or peer group (Nooks & Ronald, 2006). It is characterised as conflict between people of equal or similar power (friends); it occurs occasionally; it is unplanned and can escalate into violence. Those involved in violence and aggression usually have comparable emotional reactions, demonstrate some remorse and actively try to resolve the problem (Shanty & Hardtop, 1992; Rafaela, 2007).

Youth violence often originates from multiple risk factors. Individual factors such as problem –solving skills, self–regulation skills and language are associated with youth who engage in aggressive behaviours. They are more likely to exhibit deficits such as poor impulse control, low frustration tolerance, limited ability to generate alternative responses to stress and limited insight into their own feelings or the feelings of others. Youth lose control more quickly and tend to engage in aggressive behaviours during times of stress. Family factors such as interaction, discipline and communication patterns are associated with youth who engage in aggressive behaviours. School factors such as support and approach to discipline also play a role (Jackson, 2009). The presence of aggressive behaviour serves as a risk factor for later psychological maladjustment in children and youth. Research indicates that experiences with violence as a child can alter the structure and functioning of the brain, which can later raise the risk of stress-inducing problems, including depression or suicidal thoughts (Housman & Guerra, 2007). It is very important to prepare students to successfully respond to conflict, to identify their aggressive behaviours and to promote positive peer conflict resolution techniques for children and adolescents.

Conflict resolution strategies

Conflict resolution has been defined as “the style of behaviour used to resolve conflict between individuals interacting in a variety of settings” (Wilson & Gross, 1994). The implication here seems to be that an individual behaves with some consistency in resolving conflicts in different types of relationships. Research addressing this issue has been based on the assumption that conflict resolution styles reflect relatively stable personal preferences. Conflict management skills are linked with several attitudes including enhanced perspective taking and social understanding (Bandy & Moore, 2014), successful peer group entry and the formation and maintenance of friendships (Hair & Brahe, 2009).

Adults can play a critical role in teaching and modelling the skills of effective coping, anger management, active listening and compromise. They can try to help young people successfully take control of their feelings, work through issues and plan their next steps both during and after a conflict. The strategies employed to overcome conflict commonly encompass the categories of overt anger, compromise, avoidance, adaption, social support and collaboration (Sternberg & Dobson, 1997).

Among the various conflict resolution styles identified in existing literature, three that are especially relevant to adolescents are compromise, collaboration and overt anger (Owens, Daly & Sleep, 2005).

Compromise is used increasingly throughout the adolescent years and is regarded as a constructive and adaptive way of resolving conflicts and therefore as a strategy to be promoted among young people. Adolescents who use collaboration as a conflict resolution style are assertive and cooperative. They work with their opponents to devise a win-win solution that meets the needs of both parties. Consequently, these particular styles are more constructive and their use is heightened when harmonious relationships are important to the adolescents involved.

Overt anger, by contrast, is regarded as a destructive response, which includes aggressive behaviour and arguments as well as verbal attacks. Such behaviours are consistent with male stereotypes and have been shown within the course of aggression research to be displayed more by boys than girls (Hill & Lynch, 2013). Consequently, developmental trends suggest that the use of compromise, collaboration and overt anger is likely to be higher for older than younger

adolescents. Effective conflict resolution involves managing emotion in conflict situations and using a negotiation or problem solving process to determine a mutually acceptable situation.

Relationships and interethnic tension among adolescents in the Republic of Macedonia

The Republic of Macedonia is a multiethnic country that has battled against the consequences of the transitional process which in turn negatively affects the social, economic and political stability of the country. Even though 16 years have passed since the interethnic conflict, interethnic tension still exists and it is a major problem affecting and complicating the developmental process and political stability of the country.

The ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia rarely succeed in fostering space for interethnic interactions between youth, spaces for open communication, cooperation, recognition and mutual respect for culture value and the way of living.

Building mutual alternative spaces for interethnic interaction would contribute to overcoming the existing prejudice and stereotypes and will increase respect for others. It would also encourage the development of mutual tolerance between the youth of different ethnicities. The poor mutual communication between these groups is one of the factors perpetuating prejudice and ethnic stereotypes between youth of different ethnic communities, religions and cultures (Bergmuller, 2013).

In the past decade in the Republic of Macedonia, the media, the Ministry of Education and many non-governmental organisations reported on dramatic and shocking violent incidents that have left all of us disturbed and surprised by the scope of potential and actual school violence. We have a situation in schools where students of different ethnicities are learning in separate shifts and buildings, fieldtrips are segregated and occur in different locations, very often there are incidences of conflict in the classroom, canteen, library, public bus and school yards. When considering relationships between groups, interethnic tensions in schools and respectively this kind of integration in education affects many issues (Maleska, 2010). Maleska thought that minority status played

a role in different rates of aggression and violence observed among adolescents from different ethnic groups in our country. The ethnic composition of classes appeared to moderate the relationship between ethnicity and violence in ethnically diverse classes.

In our case, Macedonians are the dominant group while Albanians are the minority group. Together they represent a solid basis for research of intergroup violence between adolescents and the types of conflict resolution styles they use.

Methods

Study problem

The problem being studied is represented in the question: Is there a relationship between violence among Macedonian and Albanian adolescents and the type of conflict resolution strategies they use?

The main question can be subdivided into the following sub-questions:

1. What is the level of violence between Macedonian and Albanian adolescents and how do they manage aggression?
2. Are there substantial differences at the given significance level ($p < .05$ or $p < .01$) in the amount of violence among adolescents who studied in mono-ethnic and multiethnic schools? Which form of conflict resolution strategies do they prefer to use?
3. Are there substantial differences at the given level of significance ($p < .05$ or $p < .01$) regarding the amount of violence among boys versus girls? Which form of conflict resolution strategies do they usually use?

Importance of study

The importance of this study lays in attracting the attention of teachers, educational supervisors and school counselors to modify school children's behaviour and to decrease the level of violence between adolescents overall.

Participants

The sample of students was randomly selected and all participation was voluntary. Participants were comprised of 200 2nd and 3rd grade students aged between 15 and 17 years old. The mean age of the students was calculated as 16.50 (SD=7.42). Among the participants, 100 were female (50%) and 100 were male (50%). According to the students' self-reported ethnic affiliation, the sample was 50% (N=100) Macedonian and 50% (N=100) Albanian adolescents (Figure 1).

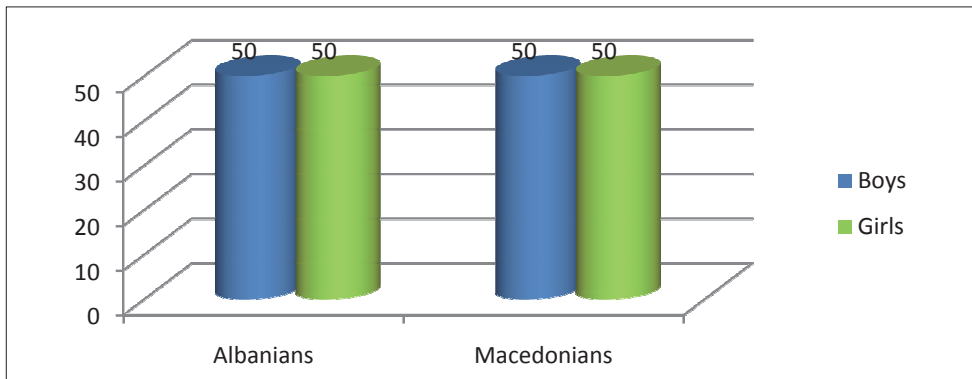


Figure1. The distribution of the sample by gender

They were all from 2nd and 3rd grade classes of four secondary schools (two mono-ethnic and two multiethnic) in the urban city of Skopje (Figure 2).

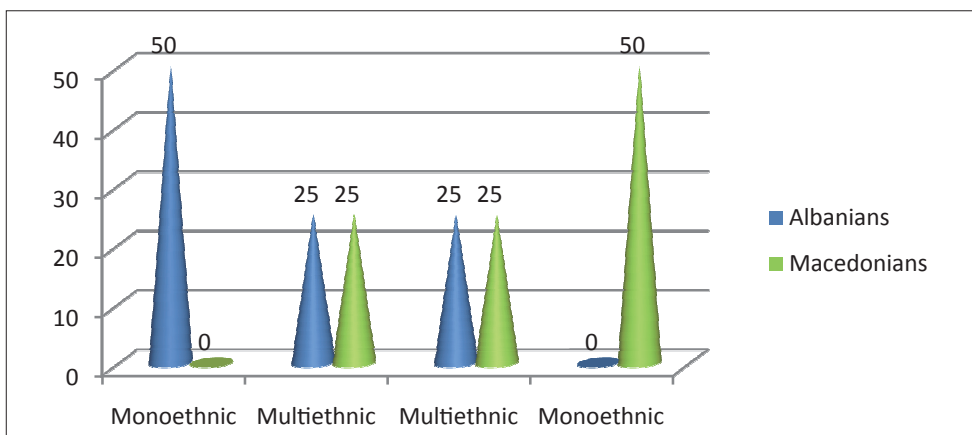


Figure 2. The distribution of the sample by the type of schools

Data collection tools

Within the scope of study the following data collection tools were used among adolescents: Personal Information Form constructed by the authors of the present study, Aggression Questionnaire for the determination of the level of violence among students and lastly, a scale for Conflict Resolution used to detect conflict resolution strategies.

Personal information form

This includes gender, age and ethnicity.

Aggression

The Buss-Perry Questionnaire was used. This scale, developed by Buss, Perry and Warren (2000), is used to measure general aggression levels. The scale was composed of 34 items (8 items for physical aggression, 5 items for verbal aggression, 8 items for anger, 7 items for hostility and 6 items for indirect aggression). It is a five-point linker type scale. The total score ranged from 34 to 136, with higher scores indicating a greater level of aggression. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency was .85.

The Conflict Resolution Instrument

We used Thomas and Kidman's (2005) Adolescent Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (Womack, 1988). The scale aimed to determine conflict management styles in students and is composed of 30 items. The items represented five different subscales: avoidance, irritation, adaptation, compromise and collaboration. It is a five-point linker type scale. According to the sum of the scores, the range of total scores for every subscale is from 6 to 30, in which the higher score indicates the conflict resolution strategies the students prefer to use. Validity was $> .07$ for all types of strategies.

Data procedure and data analysis

Data collection tools were employed by researchers during the summer semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. The instruments were introduced to the students in their classroom setting after being granted permission from their instructors. The period for answering the scales was 45 minutes.

The data was analysed using SPSS 17.0 for Windows package program. In this study the significance levels were accepted as .01 or .05.

Results

In our study, we observed that the mean rate of aggression for the Macedonian sample was 70.25 (SD = 8.50), while for the Albanian sample it was 68.22 (SD = 10.05). The difference between the two study groups was significant at the level of $p > .01$.

In regard to conflict resolution styles, a significant difference was identified between Macedonian and Albanian adolescents. Students from the Albanian ethnic group prefer to use: avoidance, irritation and compromise, while the students from the Macedonian ethnic group used irritation and collaboration.

Figure 3 illustrates the overall scores for the level of aggression and use of conflict resolution strategies amongst the two ethnic categories.

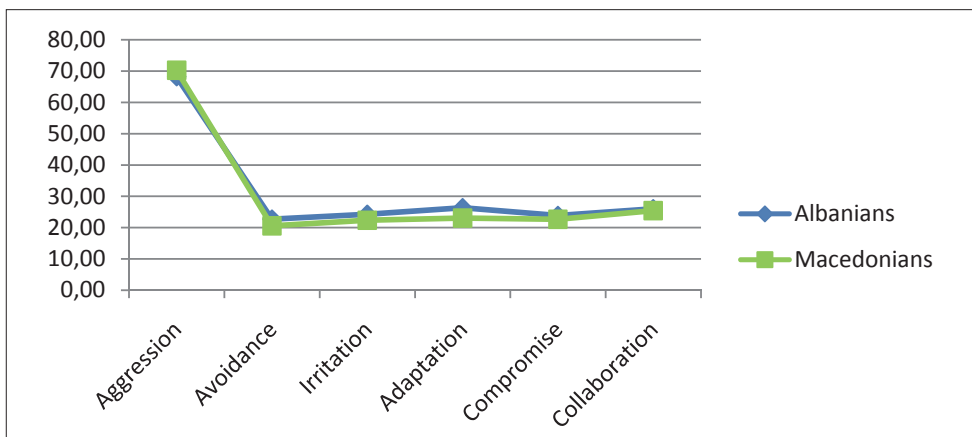


Figure 3. The level of aggression and conflict resolution strategies among adolescents

At the same time, there was a positive and significant relationship between aggression and avoidance ($r = .352, p < .01$), aggression and irritation ($r = .423, p < .01$), aggression and adaptation ($r = .206, p < .01$) and aggression and compromise ($r = .412, p < .01$) among Albanian students. On the other hand, there was a positive and significant relationship between aggression and irritation ($r = .325, p < .01$) and aggression and collaboration ($r = .158, p < .01$) among Macedonian students (Table 1).

Table 1. The correlation between the level of violence and conflict resolution strategies among Albanian and Macedonian adolescents

Pearson Correlation	Aggression – Albanians	Aggression – Macedonians
Aggression – Albanians	1.000	-0.049
Aggression -Macedonians	-0.049	1.000
Avoidance – Albanians	0.352**	0.024
Avoidance – Macedonians	0.046	0.031
Irritation – Albanians	0.423**	-0.056
Irritation – Macedonians	0.026	0.324**
Adaptation – Albanians	0.206**	-0.006
Adaptation – Macedonians	-0.075	0.028
Compromise – Albanians	0.412**	0.102
Compromise – Macedonians	-0.031	0.136
Collaboration – Albanians	0.104	-0.038
Collaboration- Macedonians	0.025	0.058**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (1-tailed).		

The results confirmed that adolescents who studied in multiethnic schools had higher levels of aggression than adolescents who studied in mono-ethnic schools. There was a positive correlation between aggression and school type ($p = 0.045$).

Figure 4 illustrates the overall scores for the level of aggression and the type of conflict resolution strategies among adolescents from multiethnic and mono-ethnic schools.

A Pearson analysis performed on the conflict resolution strategies showed that the adolescents who studied in multiethnic schools used all types of conflict

resolution strategies. In this group we found that aggression positively correlated with avoidance ($r = .214, p < .05$), irritation ($r = .451, p < .01$), adaption ($r = .195, p < .05$), compromise ($r = .360, p < .01$) and collaboration ($r = .234, p < .05$).

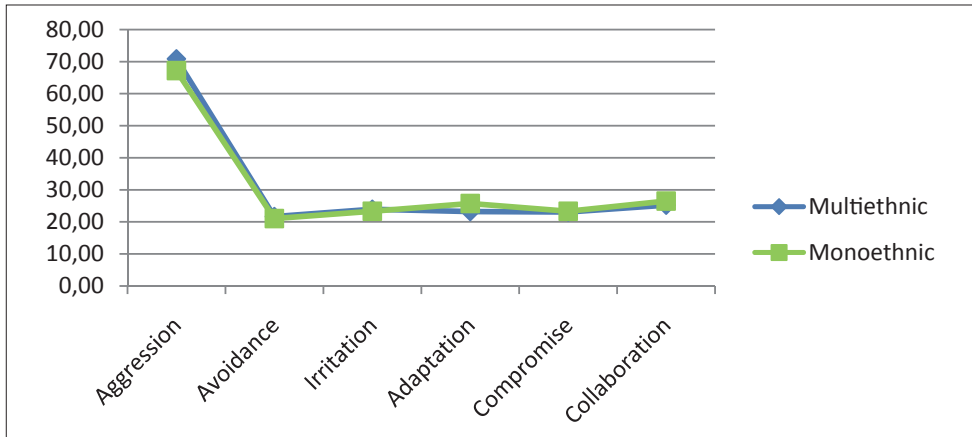


Figure 4. The level of aggression and conflict resolution strategies among adolescents from multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic schools

Table 2. The correlation between the level of violence and conflict resolution strategies among adolescents from multiethnic schools

Pearson Correlation	Aggression_Multiethnic	Avoidance_Multiethnic	Irritation_Multiethnic	Adaptation_Multiethnic	Compromise_Multiethnic	Collaboration_Multiethnic
Aggression_Multiethnic	1					
Avoidance_Multiethnic	.214*	1				
Irritation_Multiethnic	.451**	.583*	1			
Adaptation_Multiethnic	.195*	.594**	.633**	1		
Compromise_Multiethnic	.360**	.574**	.647**	.706**	1	
Collaboration_Multiethnic	.234*	.522**	.681**	.712**	.682**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

However, as we can see from table 3, those adolescents who studied in mono-ethnic schools used irritation ($r = .179$, $p < .01$) and adaptation ($r = .223$, $p < .05$) more frequently.

Table 3. The correlation between the level of violence and conflict resolution strategies among adolescents from mono-ethnic schools

Pearson Correlation	Aggression_Mono-ethnic	Avoidance_Mono-ethnic	Irritation_Mono-ethnic	Adaptation_Mono-ethnic	Compromise_Mono-ethnic	Collaboration_Mono-ethnic
Aggression_Mono-ethnic	1					
Avoidance_Mono-ethnic	.090	1				
Irritation_Mono-ethnic	.179**	.571*	1			
Adaptation_Mono-ethnic	-.223*	.481**	.479*	1		
Compromise_Mono-ethnic	.078	.483	.536**	.455**	1	
Collaboration_Mono-ethnic	-.025	.417	.539	.659**	.610	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

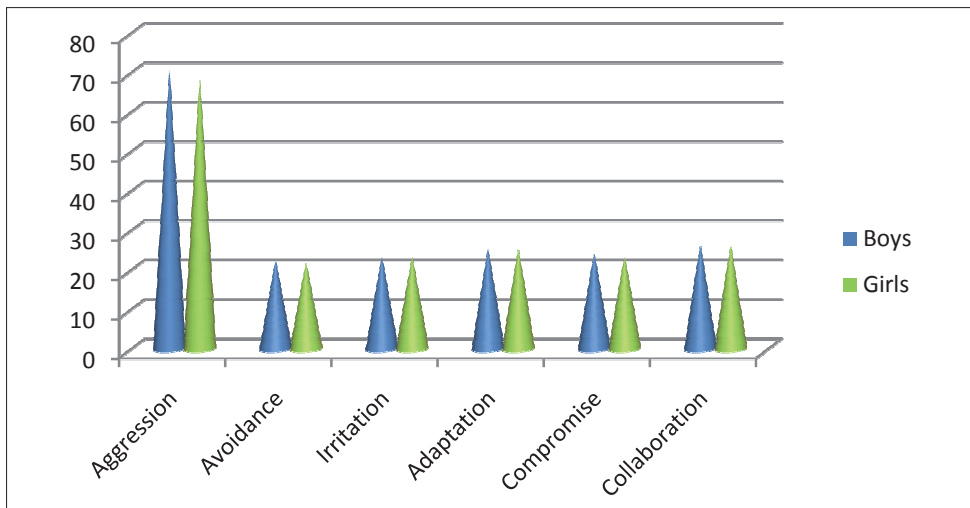


Figure 5. The level of aggression and conflict resolution strategies among boys and girls

We observed that mean score for violence among female participants was $M = 66.78$ ($SD = 9.01$), while for the male participants it was $M = 70.56$ ($SD = 9.61$). Figure 5 illustrates the overall scores for the level of aggression and the type of conflict resolution strategies for boys and girls. A significant difference between females and males on total rates of violence was found by Pearson correlation ($r = .038$, $p < .01$).

In regard to conflict resolution strategies, there were positive and significant relationships between aggression and irritation ($r = .423$, $p < .01$) and aggression and compromise ($r = .205$, $p < .05$) among boys. Also, in this group we found that among girls, aggression positively correlated only with compromise ($r = .302$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

A growing body of international literature demonstrates that the experience of violence is a common problem, with incidences varying as regards a number of factors including gender, age, ethnicity and type of violence (Verkuyten, 2002).

The present study adds to this body of literature through its focus on the correlates of violence and conflict resolution styles among Macedonian and Albanian adolescents. Violent behaviour in adolescents is a fundamental problem in today's world. Attitudes among peers during middle childhood and adolescence are an important part of children's social and emotional development. Children and adolescents pick up essential social and communication skills from their peers as they move into late adolescence and early adulthood (Collins & Lewinski, 1994; Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 2008). Peer conflict is not necessarily a bad thing; disagreement and conflict are part of life and children and adolescents need to develop the skills to resolve disagreements (Tezel & Demur, 2001). Peer conflict can cause significant emotional and physical harm and can lead to aggressive behaviors when youth fail to use the social skills necessary to cope with their frustrations (Jaconet & Graham, 2001).

In our study we investigated the level of aggression in an ethnically diverse sample of middle school adolescents, mainly Macedonian and Albanian students who studied in mono-ethnic and multiethnic secondary schools.

The present study supports the premise that there was no difference in the level of aggression between Macedonian and Albanian adolescents, but there was a significant and positive relationship between the occurrence of violence and the type of secondary school. The young people who studied in two schools under one roof (multiethnic), where education has been segregated between Macedonian and Albanian students, were more violent than students who studied separately in mono-ethnic schools. At the same time, differences between ethnic groups were noted when the subtypes of conflict resolution styles were considered. The adolescents from the Macedonian ethnic group preferred to use irritation and collaboration to manage the conflict, while the Albanian adolescents used avoidance, irritation and compromise. Also, adolescents from multi-ethnic schools employed all subtypes of conflict resolution strategy to manage conflict adequately. They practiced respectful and positive interactions with their friends that have been very important in their lives. In contrast, Macedonian and Albanian adolescents who studied in mono-ethnic schools only used irritation and adaptation as conflict resolution strategies. They were more likely to use violence as a self-defense mechanism and to have a significantly greater risk of engaging in threatening behaviour or physical abuse among their peers.

It is difficult to compare these ethnic group findings with international studies, so it is unclear whether higher or lower rates may be observed within certain groups due to their majority or minority status, or some other specific factor related to their ethnicity, such as degree of acculturation, socioeconomic status or religious affiliation (Kawabata, Crick & Hamaguchi, 2010). The observed interethnic group differences must exist for some other reason, such as school composition (Furlong & Morrison, 2000; Schwartz, 2000). Both of the main ethnic groups in Macedonia, Albanians and Macedonians, live in “totally separate worlds” and no amount of communication succeeds in building a bridge between them. Young people do not know how to manage jealousy or verbal and physical aggression. Juvenile delinquency and violence are symptoms of youth’s inability to manage conflicts in their lives (French, Jansen & Posada, 2012; Ruggiero & Taylor, 2007).

The results also showed that boys demonstrated a higher level of aggression than girls. At the same time, both genders use similar styles of handling conflict with friends, classmates and peers in their schools. Boys and girls prefer to use irritation and compromise as conflict resolution styles.

Differences in socialisation and environmental influences may play a role in these gender differences. From an early age, boys typically manifest more aggressive behaviours than girls (Johnson, 2003). Aggression in girls is much less tolerated and more discouraged by parents (Page & Smith, 2012). Boys appear to be more concerned with overt issues of power than girls. The studies indicated that boys engage in more disputes of power and abusive behaviours than girls, while girls engage in more disagreements about interpersonal relationships (Miller, Danaher & Forbes, 2006). The same authors also concluded that girls tended not to resolve their conflicts with their friends while boys were more likely to compromise with their peers.

In this research, the findings show that there is interethnic tension between Macedonian and Albanian adolescents. We believe some of the factors which have correlated with an increased risk of engaging in violence are: drug abuse, association with delinquent peers, poor family functioning and poor grades at school. However, it is our opinion that in this case the main risk factors would be the existence of prejudice, stereotypes, ignorance and ethnic differences between young people. Conflict Resolution Education is a beneficial component of a comprehensive violence prevention and intervention program in schools and communities.

In 2012/13 in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia, a project was started for the realisation of interethnic integration in education. This program was an initiative and vision of USAID in cooperation with the Ministry of Education with the aim of building a functional, multiethnic society where through integrated education children learn to accept and respect cultural differences and solve conflicts peacefully. The aim of the program would culminate in the tolerance and mutual cooperation of youth directed towards building peaceful communities (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012).

The project regarding ethnic integration in education enables the active involvement of youth, teachers and parents in the building process of peace and development in a multiethnic society. Through integrated peace education, adolescents would resolve conflicts in nonviolent ways; manage their behaviour with increased self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect (Troop-Gordon, 2015). Peace education promotes peace-making values such as equality, inclusion and collaboration.

Conclusion

International literature shows that violence is a universal experience, although the rates may differ according to factors such as country, gender, domain of violence and ethnicity. It is important to understand these factors more fully in the Republic of Macedonia and to increase understanding of the risk and protective factors specific to violence in this country.

This study adds to existing literature pertaining to violence and conflict resolution styles internationally and provides a much-needed overview of the state of violence and conflict resolution strategies within a Macedonian and Albanian sample. The results indicate that rates of violence may be higher than expected. Ethnicities showed differing average rates of violence. Gender trends in violence are comparable to international research. These results indicate that violence is a significant issue for adolescents who live in a multiethnic country such as the Republic of Macedonia. Even so, the results of this study indicated that young people in our country promote and encourage peaceful resolution of conflicts.

School based prevention programs intend to influence attitudes and increase the students' knowledge of dating violence as well as some of its consequences. The effective conflict resolution education programs have helped to improve the climate in school, the community and juvenile justice settings by reducing the number of disruptive violent acts and increasing spontaneous use of conflict resolution skills through the school day in a variety of academic and nonacademic settings. A peaceful school promotes a climate that challenges youth and adults to believe and act on the understanding that a diverse, nonviolent society is a realistic and attainable goal.

Recommendation

A peaceful school creates an environment where everyone works together toward conflict resolution, including students, teachers and parents. Only in this way can students develop the attitude and knowledge necessary for interethnic and intercultural collaboration.

Through successfully building peaceful classrooms, teachers can integrate conflict resolution strategies into daily classroom activities and overall management.

National policy makers should make use of the right to act in schools according to activities that will improve interethnic integration and the realisation of interethnic integration and related educational projects.

Media should promote the shared activities of students in order to improve interethnic tolerance at mixed schools.

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TATIANA V. LISOVSKAYA*

*The creation of educational conditions
for socialisation and social integration
of disabled adults living in neuropsychiatric
nursing homes in Belarus*

ABSTRACT : The article discusses possible methods of education for people over 18 years old with severe mental and physical impairments. These methods imply the creation of educational environment for their socialisation involving the scientific rationale and development of a curriculum for neuropsychiatric boarding houses. Additionally, the method would involve forming extracurricular, generalised ways of life, the introduction of vital communications and applied training content.

KEY WORDS : severe mental and physical impairments, educational field, the living prospects of nursing home residents, feasible home employment, secure working conditions

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Introduction

More than 40 years have passed since the adoption of the UN Declaration “On the Rights of Mentally Retarded People” (1971) and “On the Rights of People with Disabilities” (1975). During this period, the international community has revised the treatment of children with impaired physical and mental development, their legal status, as well as the philosophy, goals, objectives and content of special education.

Under current conditions in the Republic of Belarus as well as throughout the world, society attaches paramount importance to people with special needs to such an extent that they could be employed and busy, improve their financial situation and social status.

Children, adolescents and adults with severe mental and physical impairments living in nursing homes make a complicated group, characterised by diverse clinical symptoms (due to organic lesions of the central nervous system) as well as complex disorders in physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional areas (Bgazhnokova (2005), Lubovsky (1982), Maller (2015), Pevzner (1982), Tsikotoet (1978)). To begin with, let us define “people with severe mental and physical impairments”. The main criterion for combining these individuals into one category was a significant (severe) degree of intellectual underdevelopment. The psychophysical features present during their development have a definite impact on shaping their social relations and cognitive abilities.

In the 20th century, the issue of the learning abilities of people with severe mental and physical impairments was considered to be controversial. Until recently (early 2000^s), children’s homes, under the supervision of the department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, did not carry out education of children with severe mental and physical disabilities. The work of the employees of these institutions focused on oversight and care for those children. In nursing homes for adults, education has not been implemented either. Neuropsychiatric nursery homes for the elderly and disabled still remain the leading type of institutions offering support (under the provisions of this institution, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus of 01.10.2013 №5). It is a residential institution whose main task (according to №5 standing order, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus of 01.10.2013) is the organisation of care, social

services and medical assistance for citizens who are recognised as incompetent¹. However, concentrating on the problem of inclusion, we should not only lodge adults with mental and physical disabilities in nursing institutions, but also set new, namely educational tasks aimed at developing the possibility of implementing professional training and providing adults with maximum independence with professional support (Kravtsova, Lisovskaya, 2015).

One of the steps towards improving special education in the Republic of Belarus is to create conditions for lifelong education of people over the age of 18 with intellectual disabilities living either with their families or in nursing homes, to prepare and encourage them to implement their right to work.

Today, medical condition permitting, people with intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to choose and train for a profession in vocational education institutions after they graduate from auxiliary schools (boarding schools). This applies only to people with mild intellectual disabilities.

Some graduates who have mastered the requisite of special education programs (especially the moderate to severely intellectually disabled, with multiple, mostly musculoskeletal disabilities) are unable to follow a “profession” due to medical contraindications. The word “profession” is not placed in quotation marks accidentally, as in relation to this category of people its substantial sense can be transformed. Thus, they are deprived of the chance to find a job or additional financial security much less to integrate into society and as a result they become social outcasts (Lisovskaya, 2013).

According to the results of a survey conducted among parents of graduates from the Correction and Development Training and Rehabilitation Centres (hereinafter –CDTRC)², most of their adult children (over 18 years old) stay in their apartments and do not pursue any activities after graduation (Zabelich, Lisovskaya, 2014).

Today, this problem is accompanied by the anxiety experienced by many of the special education institutions in our country as well as by parents. The experts are well aware that the loss of the developmental learning environment will lead to the cessation of developmental achievements generated by years of previous hard work. As for the parents, for whom the future of their

¹ Regulation on the Psycho-Neurological Boarding House for the Elderly and Disabled, Approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus, 2013.

² Educational institutions for children with severe multiple psycho-physical impairments.

adult children is the most painful issue, the prospect of restrictive neuropsychiatric boarding is not attractive. Due to the peculiarities of their memory, attention span and other cognitive processes, a year without education of these people would be equivalent to the loss of all ten-years of previous training in the CDTRC. Since 2007, the territorial social service centres (TSSC) administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security have been developed in our country (Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus “On Approval of the Program Development and Optimization of a Network of Social Service Institutions”, 2007). However, many graduates from the second branch of special schools (moderate and severe intellectual disabilities) and CDTRC graduates cannot take advantage of attending these centres due to subjective and objective reasons. For example, parents express fear of not being able to provide transportation to these centres every day. Moreover, there are age restrictions (from 18 to 31 years) and limitations on the degree of independence in self-care, as social workers in the TSSC are not ready to work with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the conditions in the existing institutions are not adapted to this age group.

Thus, after the age of 18, adolescents and adults not living with their family are transferred to neuropsychiatric nursing homes. According to statistics, as of 1 January, 2015, 12,619 people with disabilities reside in the country’s existing 47 residential homes.

Still worse is the situation with older people who do not live with their family but in neuropsychiatric boarding schools, i.e. in a closed society. These people have extremely weak motivation for self-development, there is a deformation of personality and the sense of responsibility for their actions and deeds is poorly developed or slowing down. As a result of imperfect diagnostic tools and other factors, a range of people with either normal mental development or mental retardation can be found in neuropsychiatric nursing homes. Behavioural problems occurring due to the social situation of development in closed institutions are also seen. The famous Russian psychologist Igor Alexandrovich Korobeinikov notes that “the frequency of such errors happens not only due to the insufficient training of P MEC (psychological, medical and educational commission) specialists, but is also forced by the need for preserving and even worsening the mental retardation diagnosis [...] otherwise the legitimate reasons for their residence in a specialised boarding school disappear” (Korobeinikov, 2012, p. 20). Many residents of

such institutions never received any education for various reasons and as a result lose their right to mental capacity as well as employment opportunities because a diagnostic approach to the definition of disability still exists in this country. Many of these people living in nursing homes for adults cannot read, write or count because they either have never been taught or have been taught only occasionally. Among the 35 residents of Lida and Cherven neuropsychiatric nursing homes who were surveyed, ranging from 22 to 47 years old, all were diagnosed as suffering from “moderate or severe degree of mental retardation” and deprived of legal capacity. 50% of respondents were transferred to these institutions from orphanages and boarding schools, which carried out only care and supervision but did not address the issue of their education. The remaining 50% were lodged in mental nursing homes for various reasons but almost all of them tell the following story: they went to school, studied there for three or four years (with one exception³), their mothers died, their fathers left (abandoned the children, were alcoholics, are in prison etc.). The majority (85%) of the respondents assess their own capabilities as adequate and discuss realistic life plans, which indicates that they have no pronounced degree of intelligence disability. The responses were as follows: “I want to deliver mail in the village, like my father”; “I want to wash the dishes in the dining room of our boarding school;” “I can work on a farm, because I love to plant potatoes and trees”; “I want to help the priest in the church”, etc. One woman wanted to be a hairdresser and the director of the orphanage confirmed that she “does great hairstyles, weaves unique beauty braids”. I saw a great desire among these people to learn to read, write, count and master the elements of computer literacy because they all want to regain legal capacity so that they are able to work and earn a living.

Lifelong education of people with mental and physical disorders – opportunities and conditions

To restore the legal capacity of people living in nursing homes, it is absolutely necessary to create a motivational environment allowing them to be included in supporting activities, maintain active and ongoing training of their level of

³ A woman aged 43 said she had graduated after nine grades of a village school

independence that will ultimately contribute to their socialisation and social integration. This in turn would reduce government spending on their maintenance.

I objectively assess the opportunities of the residents living in neuropsychiatric nursing homes and I do not believe that legal capacity can be returned to all people with mental and physical disorders. However, it is necessary to provide educational conditions for this demographic regardless, as a chance to restore legal capacity. In this regard, I believe it is necessary and possible to create an educational environment for the socialisation and social integration of people with mental and physical disorders who live in neuropsychiatric nursing homes.

On September 28, 2015 Belarus acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (Presidential Decree № 401 from 09.24.2015). Article 24, item 5 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities commits to develop a system of lifelong education, thus pushing the search for new forms and new content of education and a socio-psycho-pedagogical support. It is anticipated that the legal, regulatory and technical base for this will be improved and an inter-agency cooperation mechanism will be developed.

The basic postulates of a lifelong education of a person with severe multiple disabilities (SMD) are the creation of educational space throughout a person's life; the security of freedom of choice to be trained throughout life; provision of equality in the continuing education of representatives of different cultures, nationalities, having different degrees of severity of mental and physical disorders; the ability to learn, regardless of the severity of mental and physical disorders, the content of the training and the overall objectives of education; the engagement to achieve specific educational objectives in continuing education; the absence of a requirement to obtain the document on education; the focus of education on sustainable access to culture in its various manifestations giving a chance to form an understanding of the world and a person's place in it.

I define continuing education as a system of human activity implementing the person's right to education, ensuring the creation of adaptive correction and developmental environment, personalised in content, time, pace, taking into account the needs and capabilities of people with SMD. The relevance of this education is determined by its legal, political, economic and social necessity (Lisovskaya, 2015).

The goal of the continuing education throughout life of a person with SMD is their constant development, with the help of educational resources, in terms

of cooperation and support from other people who provide the environment for proximity to positive role models. All of this will contribute to the mastering of social experience, overcoming social disability and the improvement of the quality of the person's life in general.

The Objectives of Continuing Education: a change in public opinion, the development of societal tolerance towards people with SMD; the realisation of the human right to education which requires the creation of an adaptive, corrective and developmental environment, taking into account educational needs and capabilities of people with SMD; reducing the economic costs due to the inclusion of people with SMD into the social world while making available types of home and work accessible to them; the assistance of people with SMD in social adaptation, the prevention of their illegal behaviour as a vital condition of social security for society overall.

I have identified *principles* (the continuity of education, the integrative approach, the teaching-craft, the humanisation of education, taking into account the potential of people with SMD) and *the conditions of the implementation* of continuing education: the establishment of institutions (educational, social, etc.) for lifelong learning (formal or informal) of people with SMD at different ages and in different periods of life; providing a mobile environment favourable for the life and development of people with SMD and ensuring the satisfaction of their vital needs; the creation of conditions for people's self-conscience as a value; participation in communication processes with a focus on emotional communication; the implementation of accessible activities; participation in the process of creating something new in different spheres of activity.

A survey conducted among adults living in psycho-neurological boarding homes for the elderly and disabled of the Republic revealed high motivation for learning. When determining the content of potential educational fields, I recognised the heterogeneity of the residents and took this into consideration when questioning the results. For example, the study found that 19% of mentally impaired adults between the age of 18 and 45 were completely illiterate (Lisovskaya, 2015). This is not merely a problem of illiteracy or semi-literacy; it is a problem of training a person to live in a society. I have taken into consideration that the adult residents of boarding homes are used to being objects of routine; basic social skills such as autonomy, responsibility etc. are not in demand as a rule. The emphasis in selection of the content of adult education

is designed to help boarding home residents master the standards of socially demanded and acceptable behaviour as well as the cultural traditions of Belarusian people.

Towards a new educational curriculum

The curriculum is intended for use as the main regulatory state document, which defines the list of subjects and the number of hours per week allowed for the study of a particular subject.

In the development and scientific substantiation of the curriculum for neuropsychiatric boarding schools, it is essential to take into account the current state of socio-economic development of our country, the life prospects of the residents of nursing homes and their capacities.

In general pedagogy, the content of education is defined as “a system of scientific knowledge, activities and social relationships, which must be mastered by the learners” (Chepikov, 2013, p. 40). With regard to people with mental and physical impairments, we refer to their correctional and developmental education, which primarily provides the formation and development of personality, the accumulation of social experience and the mastering of different methods of activity. The larger their social experience is, the more successful their socialisation and social integration into society will be.

Based on the comparative approach, I tried to identify ideal components of the content of education for adults with severe mental and physical disorders. In comprehensive school, the main components of education are *cognitive, practical, creative* and the *component of values* (Chepikov, 2013, p. 153). I distinguished the components and hierarchy of essential educational aspects as differentiated from those of comprehensive school by considering the available experience of education for children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities under the age of 18, the analysis of the curriculum and training programs of the second branch of special schools, the potential of such students and the pathological biological mechanisms of existing disorder (Leschinskaya, Lisovskaya, 2015).

Preference in curriculum design is given first of all to the *emotionally valuable* component: the emotionally positive learning environment, the formation

of an emotionally friendly attitude to others and emotionally valuable orientation. This component has caused the inclusion into the curriculum of such subjects as: “Fundamentals of Artistic and Creative Activities”, “The Development of Emotional and Volitional Spheres and the Formation of Required Social Behaviour”.

The *practical* component reflects acquiring skills and mastering different activities while forming and enriching social experience. The practical component is considered fundamental in the curriculum for neuropsychiatric boarding-homes.

It is present within all subjects of the curriculum, but some subjects give it particular emphasis: “Elements of Applied Mathematics”, “Applied Labour”, and “The Formation of a Generalised Way of Life”.

The *cognitive* component is non-principal but supplementary. Vitaly important knowledge based on personal experience and arising from the practical needs of the learners is formed.

Until recently, the *creative* component has never been implemented in the education of adults with mental and physical disabilities. In the case of my curriculum, it is provided with such subjects as: “Fundamentals of Artistic and Creative Activities”, “The Development of Emotional and Volitional Sphere”. Over the years, many researchers (Barkov (2012), Bariaeva (2001), Bgazhnokova (2005), Gracheva (1932), Zabramnaya (2009), Leshchinskaya (2015), Loginova (2006), Maller (2015), Radionova (2011), Tsarev (2015), Tsikoto (1978), Shinkarenko (1997), Shipitsina (1996)) have found that children with severe mental and physical disorders manage to preserve their motor and emotional spheres. Being connected to synchronous activity along with talented children and adults, in certain conditions and with the help of special technologies, such children are able to create and achieve considerable success. We transferred these results to adult education. The condition of a severe mentally and physically impaired person changes considerably through the use of the compensatory mechanisms of the central nervous system. Thus, complementary evaluation and demonstration of achievements begets a positive response and the range of activities expands in the process of creative activity, new neural structures are involved in the positive activity. Good mood and positive emotional background enhance success and as a result higher mental functions are restored and developed.

In determining the content of education it is paramount to improve the quality of life of a person with severe mental and physical impairments, to increase his or her viability, to form the functional adaptive skills, to use alternative means of education and to correlate it with the future life of this category of people.

I have distinguished the following essential characteristics of the content of continuing education of people with severe mental and physical disabilities:

- *The priority of social over cognitive development* (by emphasis on content it is possible to enrich social experience);
- *life orientation training* (this aspect of the content takes into account the personal experience of the students, socially significant and important life situations are modelled for the person);
- *inclusion into the activities and the formation of different types of activities and methods of action* (formed life competencies are projected in this aspect of the program);
- *the formation of socially demanded behaviour* (this aspect is aimed to provide a variety of tasks and simulated situations to fulfil various social roles);
- *actualisation of leading sensor systems* (offers a diverse set of teaching tools that enhance the activity of analysers).

Let us consider a brief characterisation of selected subjects of the curriculum for neuropsychiatric boarding schools.

Forming the ability and willingness to operate in everyday situations requires not only concrete, specific kinds of activity, but also generalised, universal kinds. This educational aim was the reason for the introduction of the subject “Domestic Self-Sufficiency”. The generalised system of actual methods of activity is focused on the spheres of normal activity and necessary life competencies.

The introduction of the subject “The Development of Communication, Reading and Writing” was dictated by the need to expand communication between learners with severe mental and physical impairments and to include them into social interaction in a form accessible to them. Communication can be carried out not only by means of speech (vocalised words), but also through images, gestures, tactile symbols, telecommunications, graphics, icons (images or groups of figures reflecting specific content), gestures which can be used either as non-verbal speech support or as an independent means of communication (gestural language). Supplemental communication and augmentative communication, which increase knowledge, can also be carried out (Tetzchner, 2014:

20). I believe that the augmentative communication is broader, deeper and goes further since it extends the view of the learner. With regard to the specific needs of people with severe mental and physical impairments, a specific form of communication can be used – vital communication. The content and pattern of vital communication is determined by the content of the necessities of a person and his or her individual capabilities.

Vital communication is dependent on a symbolic pattern: an open door, window or book may mark the beginning of some event, but closing them marks the ending. A ritual pattern can be given to musical tunes or scenes of a television show or movie. Electronic educational resources are given a primary role and hold a particularly symbolic purpose. They allow the use of colour and sound to create a specific emotional background and sensory stimulation through the use of polar stimuli.

The curriculum introduces the subject of “Applied Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy.” The word “applied” in the Modern Dictionary of Russian language is interpreted as “having practical value, applicable in practice” (Modern Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2007, p. 507). The subject of “Applied Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy” includes educational material about calculations, sizes, shapes, and spatial relations of objects, which have practical significance as they are used in everyday life. “Applied Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy” expands the educational training of learners by supplementing arithmetic with geometric material, which holds a far more practical application. The pragmatic orientation of education is enhanced as in the process of studying applied mathematics the learners will solve purely practical problems of direct relevance to everyday life. Computer literacy training will increase the functional capacity of learners and will improve the quality of their life as residents in boarding homes. We assume that the use of modern computer technologies will increase the level of motivation of learners and set the individual rate and scope of the task. Their use will help personalise the learning process and quickly allow visible results and evaluation of technology-based tasks, which will make the educational process interactive.

The subject “Man and His Health” forms knowledge and skills that enable secure, healthy lifestyle, monitor key health indicators, maintain health and strengthen it. Health is considered here as a broad concept, i.e. somatic, physical and mental.

The final practical component of the curriculum characterises the state of mental well-being, meaning the absence of manifestation of mental disease and ensuring the regulation of behaviour adequate to the conditions of a given activity. The subject “Man and His Health” aims at the conservation and preservation of health in the broadest sense of this word.

The subject “Fundamentals of Artistic and Creative Activities” may include music and rhythmic exercises, visual activities (painting, drawing, sculpture) and drama activities. This direction will implement the interaction between pedagogy and art and use both the aim of correction while taking into account the interests and abilities of each person.

The new educational content was the subject of discussion among the teaching staff of auxiliary schools in the Republic of Belarus. This is due to the fact that in boarding homes for adults there are no teachers but only health and social service workers. I have analysed 29 questionnaires expressing collective and personal opinions. The presented version of the curriculum which reflects the new content of education, received broad support and understanding. Here is an evaluative judgment: “The curriculum is designed to meet the current level of pedagogical science, the needs and opportunities of people with severe mental and physical disabilities, ensures the development of inclusive processes and helps to improve innovation in the field of special education” (SEI Auxiliary boarding school №11 of Minsk).

Conclusions

The novelty of the educational content developed consists in:

- a) the recognition of opportunities for creative activity of people with severe mental and physical impairments and the creation of appropriate conditions for activities determined by the new subject areas, allowing the use of the unity of art and pedagogy for correctional purposes, as well as considering the emotional and motor capacities of students;
- b) the addition of the new subject domain “Domestic Self-Sufficiency” contributing to the development of universal, generalised ways of life, contributing to the enhancement of personal vitality and guided acts of self-sufficiency;

- c) the introduction of vital communication, enhancement of opportunities for communication and exchanging views through the use of symbols and an increase in the range of positive effects on the nervous system;
- d) the addition of a wide variety of applied educational content (applied mathematics, practical work) which enhances capacity (partial or complete), encourages boosted feelings of personal significance, usefulness and self-esteem.

In the future, I plan to develop a rating scale to evaluate autonomy levels (self-service level, the level of adequate behaviour, the level of speech perception, reading and writing, an elementary level of practical mathematics etc.), as well as create a la carte training programs and workshops for selected subjects of the curriculum.

Scientific research and practical activities of Belarusian pathologists have proved the limitations of the current monistic view on people with mental and physical disorders and clearly illustrate the dead-end that is the marginalisation of special education. It is only through the joint efforts of different specialists that the societal and self-image of individuals with severe mental and physical disabilities can be changed. It has been proved that the disabled can become more self-sufficient, sustainable, and most importantly, to develop distinct personalities.

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Factors for reducing violence in multicultural education in the Republic of Macedonia

ABSTRACT : Identity development among children who live in multi-ethnic societies involves understanding the meaning of membership in their ethnic group. At times, children do not perceive their identity adequately. They may lack a strong concept of self and depth of understanding of their friends from different cultural groups, and have limited ability to understand multiple or even conflicting, cultural and national interpretations of events. They may also lack understanding of some values and behaviours. They may become aggressive or even violent, experience negative thoughts and emotions about their peers from the other ethnic and cultural group.

Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline the major aim of which is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural groups. One of its most important goals is to help all children to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic, democratic society, to reduce their aggressive behaviour and to teach children how to interact and communicate with people from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.

Education can be a valuable tool in reducing conflicts and violence between children. Depending on the methods and content employed, it can encourage a range of outcomes including confrontation, neutral coexistence and cooperation, promotion of reciprocal tolerance and equal dignity.

KEY WORDS : children, violence, multicultural society, multicultural education

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Introduction

Understanding the relationship between multi-ethnic culture and youth violence requires an analysis of specific developmental contexts that can vary by characteristic of culture. One of the most important developmental contexts for children is the community where they grow up. Children from different cultural groups have disproportionately grown up in neighbourhoods characterized by high levels of segregation and disadvantage, as indicated by poverty and inequality (Evans, 2004; Demander, 2004; Massey, 1996; Wilson, 2006). Several aspects of these disadvantaged contexts can interfere with successful behavioural adaptations and can lead to inadequate behavioural expectations. This in turn can facilitate the learning, use and escalation of aggressive, violent and delinquent behaviour during childhood which is carried through adulthood.

Culture refers to the “traditions, rituals, beliefs and values that are shared amongst a group of people” (Leung et al., 2005). Culture is determined as a sum of unique spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional models of a society or a group of people (Sleeter, 2006). Examined from the perspective of social cohesion, it is safe to say that culture is the centre of individual and social identity. It is the main component in developing an understanding of group identity. Culture, as a way of living, includes the extent of using material goods, ways of having fun and informal socialising, religion, morality, social customs, art and language.

Culture as a universal category introduces us to the fact that there is no society in which there are no significant elements of both culture and cultural products. The existence of culture is universal to all humans living in society. In a single-social state, there are many cultures and cultural elements entwined and as such, cultural differences appear (Gobs, 1978). These differences are what make a society multicultural while the differences found in multicultural societies can be surpassed only by greater communication between different cultures as well as greater respect and tolerance for different cultural values. Every person is part of a culture, but certain families are part of multiple cultures.

Multiculturalism refers to the “sharing of many cultures” and many groups of people and is based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other factors. Sometimes children who live in multicultural societies do not recognise the differences between people or do not realise or accept that there ever were people with different cultures and traditions (Corwin, Martine, Reagan, 2007). It

is also worth noting that children are not immune to prejudice against their peers from other cultures and backgrounds and they do not always help or tolerate one another, while some of them may even become victims of aggression or violence.

Today, multicultural programs and multicultural education help to prepare young people for life and active participation in a global multicultural society. They do so by developing more knowledge and understanding among them regarding the world and their place in it (Pianos, 2008).

The aim of this paper is to describe the relationship between multi-ethnic society, the cause of violence between adolescents from different ethnic groups and finally the specific role of multicultural education in the Republic of Macedonia.

Multiculturalism and multicultural education

With the globalisation that is present everywhere in the world today, people of different cultures experience greater interdependence and through this interdependence, multicultural societies become increasingly common in the world. The term multiculturalism is complex and ambiguous and is defined differently by various authors. In a wider context, the term multiculturalism covers different types of cultural pluralism, with several different cultures and traditions thriving together in a society. There are different forms of multicultural structure in the historical development of human societies, beginning with the nomads through voluntary migrations, invasions during times of war, forced immigration etc. These factors show us that every multicultural society has its own history of creation (Petrevski, Mirascieva, 2013, p. 24).

Within a multicultural state there is more than one culture, members of different cultures live together and these differences denote multiculturalism.

The term interculturalism refers to the establishment of relations between groups belonging to different cultures. Interculturalism determines multiculturalism, while multiculturalism refers to the description of the society in which the cultures live (Zikargae, 2013, p. 127). Proponents of interculturalism believe that people from different cultures enrich and develop themselves through contact and experience. Aside from elements of either ethnic or national culture, multiculturalism involves linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic differences.

Multiculturalism should allow people to be free to accept the traditions and customs of other cultures (Baumann, 2003, p. 144).

In every democratic society, one of the main aims of education is the progress of democracy within the community. The educational system should consider the multicultural character of the society and aim towards active contribution for peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between different cultural groups. In the traditional approach, there are two concepts of multicultural and inter-cultural society: through learning the cultures of others, multicultural education attempts to provide acceptance or at least tolerance of other cultures. On the other hand, intercultural education aims to surmount passive coexistence and to reach developed and sustainable ways of living together within a multicultural society (Mostafazadeh, Keshtiaray, Ghulizadeh, 2015). This could be achieved through developing understanding, mutual respect and dialogue between different ethnic groups, providing equal possibilities and fighting against discrimination.

What is multicultural education?

Multicultural education is an idea developed over time and at its core carries the legacy of the 1960s and 1970s in America. This was a period of profound social change when the people of the United States of America were forced to re-examine their cultural heritage. As a result, multicultural education emerged in the 1990s to address the educational needs of a society that to this day continues to struggle with the realisation that it is not monoculture, but an amalgamation of many cultures. Much of the overt and covert national conflict about race, ethnicity, social class and gender in the United States has been based on the mythology of a superior culture into which all others must be assimilated. The imbalance of power between the dominant culture and subjugated cultures has created centuries of aggression, antagonism and resistance. It is the suppression of cultures that weakens society. The on-going discourse and practice of multicultural education is an attempt to maximise the possibilities of plurality through education (Gobs, 1978).

Cultural education is also a response to the changing demographics of the United States. By 2020, 46% of the students in public schools will be children

of colour and 21% of all children will live in poverty (Rued & Priest, 1999, p. 4–11). The need to address the various learning needs of such a diverse student population and the subsequent pluralistic society for which those children will be responsible is an urgent task faced by public schools in America. However, the monoculture approaches education with emphasis on the middle class. Eurocentric content, instruction and values add the additional learning task of acculturation to the work of normal schooling. This complicates the process of learning academic knowledge required to be successful in school. Culture is what we learn and what we create to make sense of the world. The discontinuity between the cultures of poor and ethnic minority students and the culture of schooling lends itself to academic underachievement and failure.

According to Banks and Banks (1995, p. 11), multicultural education has a specific purpose:

“Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class and cultural groups. One of the important goals is to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.”

Teaching with a multicultural perspective encourages appreciation and understanding of other cultures as well as one’s own. Teaching with this perspective also promotes children’s sense of uniqueness of their own culture as a positive characteristic while enabling them to accept the uniqueness of the cultures of others as well.

Multiculturalism and multicultural education in the Republic of Macedonia

Macedonia is a country that has long been characterised by a very complex and particular ethnic structure. Aside from Macedonians, the Republic of Macedonia is home to Albanians, Turks, Romanizes, Serbs and Vlachs. There are orthodox Christians and Muslims. Ethnic structure in the Republic of Macedonia reveals a very careful and sensitive relationship between all existing ethnic

communities. Additionally, there is a presence of inter-ethnic relations and inter-ethnic communication aimed at avoiding all possible conflict situations in all segments of social life. Historical statistical data referring to ethnic structure in the Republic of Macedonia under Ottoman rule show us that multiculturalism existed in that period. According to the correspondence of Danco Zografski, at the beginning of the 19th century the Republic of Macedonia, excluding its northern regions, had a population of 968,000, three fourths of which (724,500) were Christians and one fourth (204,000) were Muslims (Petrevski, Mirascieva, 2013, p. 34).

The end of the 20th century was a period of mass migration with great numbers of people crossing borders and borders themselves being redrawn. Due to this, every country today including Macedonia has come to adopt a multi-ethnic structure. Every national group in the state is mobilised and attempts to confirm its own identity. The multi-ethnic conflict that is present in the Republic of Macedonia today is built on a historical foundation due to the clash of traditions, culture and customs. Multi-ethnic conflicts are present in every segment of the social structure of the country.

The Republic of Macedonia is a home to many cultures and religions and although there is only one official language spoken by everyone, many other languages are also in use. From an early age, children attend multi-ethnic schools. Through this educational system they encounter different cultures, traditions and customs. It is also within the educational system that the initiation to multicultural conflict occurs.

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned characteristics of Macedonian society, in the educational system there is a need for the reconstruction of institutions and curriculum. This is so that participants of the educational process, regardless of their affiliation to majority or minority group (ethnic communities), are able to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary to function well within multicultural societies. Multicultural education is not aimed at one ethnic community. It is for all participants of the educational system regardless of their nationality in order that students may become well informed about their own country and become active citizens in a multicultural society.

The need for multicultural education in Macedonia

Macedonia continues to exhibit great diversity; the need for understanding and accepting the differences among all people has never been more important. Thus, the challenge for educators is to present an effective foundation for multicultural education by means of which all children and adolescents can learn to accept others.

Children from all ethnic groups who live in the Republic of Macedonia are involved in a multicultural educational system where all children are part of the multicultural curriculum. Through this system, children become acquainted with the ways of life of other ethnic groups and learn to respect the traditions and customs of other cultures. This curriculum provides children with the opportunity to obtain the skills, attitudes and knowledge that are necessary for participating in a multicultural society such as Macedonia. The need for updating the curriculum and introducing an increased focus on multicultural education is a result of increasingly frequent conflicts and violent behaviour among young people from different ethnic groups.

The goal of multicultural education is not only to teach students about other groups or countries. It is also to help them become accustomed to the idea that there are many lifestyles, languages and cultures. The purpose of this type of education is to attach positive feelings to multicultural experiences so that each child will feel included and valued. This is in hope that children will feel friendly and respectful towards people from other ethnic and cultural groups (Corwin, Martine and Reagan, 2007).

One way of helping young children to develop a sense of world citizenship lies with the early childhood teacher. The disposition exhibited by teachers in promoting everyone's culture will be a successful factor in the development of a multicultural perspective within children. This is sometimes easier said than done in multi-ethnic societies. Youth sometimes respond to diversity with discomfort and may perceive identity diversity as abnormal. Such responses might include mocking, shunning or aggression towards different cultures (Gorman-Smith and Hagan, 2008).

Multicultural education in our country is essential for young people to develop a truly multicultural perspective in order to enhance:

- A good self-concept and self-understanding

- Sensitivity and understanding of other cultural and ethnic groups in Macedonia
- The ability to perceive and understand conflict and violence based on cultural and national interpretations
- The ability to make decisions and take effective action based on a multicultural analysis and synthesis
- Understanding of the process of stereotyping, a low degree of stereotypical thinking, pride in self and respect for all people.

Also, we need to use multicultural education to end aggression and violence among youth, to help them accept differences, to eliminate prejudice and to encourage universal respect for people from all cultures and nations.

Factors for violence in a multicultural society

Researchers have made it clear that violence among young people has become a trend (Wilson, 2006, p. 3–18). But what do we know about why young people engage in violence? Why do some youth get caught up in violence while others do not? What happens between adolescents of differing ethnic groups? How does this developmental process interact with contextual influences including families, peers and neighbourhoods? In fact, there is no simple answer to these questions; however, scientists have identified a number of determinants that place children and adolescents at risk of violent behaviour and factors that seem to protect them from the effects of this risk (Dodge, 2010, pp. 389–416).

Firstly, we must take into account that adolescence is a time of rapid biological, psychological and social changes. Biological changes during puberty are marked and often dramatic, including a rapid acceleration in growth, development of primary and secondary sex characteristics, changes in body shape and composition as well as an increase in physical strength and fitness. These biological changes are part of a complex process that physically transforms children into adults.

Adolescence has also been described as a developmental stage during which individuals focus on autonomy and the search for identity (Erikson, 1998; Ladson & Richards, 1994). This involves the search for a stable sense of self that provides adolescents with a direction guided by knowledge of who and what they are and where they are going, giving both meaning and purpose to their

lives as they enter adulthood. On the other hand, identity development for adolescents who live in multi-ethnic societies involves understanding the meaning of affiliation to their ethnic group, so sometimes they do not perceive their identity correctly. They lack a good sense of self-concept or a real sense of understanding peers from different cultural groups. They also display a low ability to understand multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural and national interpretations and perspectives on events, values and behaviour. They become aggressive and violent, exhibiting negative thoughts and emotions about their peers from other ethnic and cultural groups. Youth perceive violence as an instrument for self-protection and so with time they become aggressive and violent towards their peers (Wilson, 2006).

Many of the more interesting intercultural moments are those that are unplanned – moments arising from incidents within school or issues raised by children themselves. These incidents offer a great chance for dialogue and often provide some of the best opportunities for multicultural education.

Prejudice and stereotypes are often at fault when conflicts in multicultural education do emerge. Prejudice is an attitude with a relatively consistent, negative stance aimed towards certain groups, people and individuals. It is defined as a particular kind of attitude that in itself includes strong emotional and destructive ideas directed towards certain groups of people. These attitudes can be recognised through maintained social distance, discrimination, systematic limitations of certain human rights and even physical assault. Prejudice appears as a stereotyped way of thinking, which in essence means having a certain attitude or opinion, often unfounded in fact, that is very difficult to change. This way of thinking begets enmity and wrath towards certain groups of people. Of special importance for the relations between people are ethnic and racial prejudices because they have a great influence on people's interactions, especially between certain groups. Ethnic prejudice is most frequently defined as attitudes that an individual has towards a certain ethnic group which influence their behaviour towards said group (Hrnjica, 2005, p. 337). When these attitudes are prevalent within a group, they represent a central problem in ethnic relations overall. The presence of hostile feelings among young people of different cultures is most frequently manifested through overtly hostile acts. Children who are raised in a multicultural society such as that of the Republic of Macedonia are immediately influenced by their cultural surroundings. The knowledge they gain is a direct result of these surroundings.

The prevalence of prejudice among young people in the Republic of Macedonia is resultant from exposure to negative attitudes towards certain ethnicities from early childhood. In this way, prejudice is preserved and transferred from one generation to the next. Stereotypes represent a pattern which appears consistently and in the same form towards a specific ethnic group. Attaching certain characteristics to a particular ethnic group ensures the transfer of certain affective reactions. Following the present patterns of thinking among young people, the presence of ethnic favouritism can be seen. The presence of prejudice and stereotypes among young people in the Republic of Macedonia are the most basic factors determining the appearance of violent behaviour within multicultural education scenarios. Ethnic prejudice and stereotyping lead to social distance between young people which negatively influences the overall curriculum in Macedonia. As a result of these conflicts and the presence of ethnic discrimination, two differing attitudes appear: the first is that ethnically homogenous schools would prevent conflict or violence and the second is that ethnic coexistence is required and children should study in mixed schools. If children studied in ethnically homogenous schools, the Macedonian state would disintegrate and mutual trust among students of different ethnicities would be reduced. To decrease the social distance among students of different ethnic origins in Macedonia, priority should be given to mixed schools while creating a global social strategy as this represents the foundation of elementary interethnic communication. Ethnically mixed schools represent the basis for positive change of curriculum through which stereotypes and prejudice would be eliminated among young people.

Finding a solution to violence in multicultural education in the Republic of Macedonia

For some time now there has been a need in the educational system in Macedonia to introduce changes in the methods of implementing the curriculum through which ethnic violence and hostility would be reduced. After World War II, the method of education in Macedonia was leaning in the direction of merging all the ethnic groups present. As such, classes were mixed, so that Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish children studied together in the same classroom. Initially, the organisation of the curriculum was useful for creating coexistence

among different ethnic groups and all of the students learnt one universal language, the Macedonian language. This system functioned pretty well until the 1970s when minority students began to demand their rights to study in their native languages. At this point, violent behaviour appeared between students of different ethnic groups.

It is evident that in countries in transition, especially Macedonia, there is a need for improvement of the educational system. One through which students of different cultures will be able to become familiar with the cultures of their fellow citizens. Educational institutions have a problem dealing with existing difficulties, but also with the number and diversity of ethnic groups. One of the reasons for this situation is the lack of flexibility and adaptation of the structures of these institutions and their approach towards changes. Their rigidity prevents them from adapting and reformulating the curriculum. The negative effects of the process of transition are more frequently stressed than the values and standards of behaviour among the students. Children themselves as well as parents and teachers are facing different forms of violence among ethnic groups in schools; in these conditions children in multicultural education could be considered as children under risk. In order to surmount this problem, Macedonia requires an educational system dedicated to developing and improving intercultural knowledge while strengthening intercultural relations. The current curriculum in Macedonia helps to develop an effective educational system through which the ability to peacefully coexist would improve among students of different ethnic and cultural groups. Through the development of the educational system, the current curriculum would be able to help achieve equality among students of different ethnic groups. In doing so, equality in education would be achieved which would increase overall social participation and improvement of interethnic collaboration. Through activities and educational contents, schools offer an environment where the acquisition of knowledge and skills for governing one's own life are possible. Additionally, schools should offer the opportunity for first-hand familiarisation with the cultures and traditions of all ethnic groups in Macedonia. This is so that pupils, from an early age, possess information about traditions, lifestyles and cultures of their fellow citizens. This would teach children and youth to respect and appreciate other cultures, and at the same time the level of violent behaviour would be decreased in multicultural education.

One of the factors essential to eliminating violence in multicultural backgrounds is the creation of education focused on the individual's personal development and maintenance of cultural identity defined in the ambience of multicultural surroundings. A special aim and responsibility of the education system in Macedonia is to ensure the nurture and development of individual characteristics of a person through the process of introduction, understanding and respect for other cultures, their traditions, attitudes and interests. This educational structure is achieved with particularly formed and defined curriculum and contents which in their structure involve the characteristics of all the ethnic groups represented in Macedonian society. The educational process would be raised to the level of education about one's self and one's individual identity. This would create the condition where it would be possible to feel secure in one's own place within the context of wider surroundings.

In order to create constant coexistence in multicultural education it is necessary to take some psychological steps through which prejudice and stereotypes can be removed. Significant factors for the appearance of violence in a multicultural society are prejudice and stereotypes that the individual has towards ethnic groups to which they do not belong. Prejudice and stereotypes appear where there is not enough information, so efficient education regarding the culture and tradition of all ethnic groups within multicultural education is of great importance for correcting preconceptions of other ethnic groups. Students who hold these prejudices towards certain ethnic groups face difficulty in changing their opinion; these students select and reinterpret information in a way that supports their prejudice. This problem in multicultural education in Macedonia would be eliminated by creating educational programs in with activities that would alert students to existing prejudice, advising them how to process new information with open minds and resist hidden prejudice. This method is very effective in improving coexistence in multicultural education. The next step which is necessary in the reduction of violence in multicultural education in Macedonia involves guiding students to learn empathy towards their fellow students, regardless of ethnicity, in a way that would encourage them to learn to look at the world from other perspectives. Empathy in itself does not include sympathy or the acceptance of differing values, feelings and interpretations of life. The aim of empathy is to allow us to better understand the lifestyles, traditions and cultures of other groups. When we do this, we set aside our own perspective and

understand others better. Empathy presents us with the ability to understand the experience of others.

In recent years, multicultural education in Macedonia has seen a noticeable separation of students along ethnic lines. In this way, ethnic groups remain closed and hatred and violence between members of the different ethnic groups is engendered. To alleviate this cause of violence it is necessary for students to learn to establish direct relations between different groups. This can be done through multicultural education programs. By doing so, minimal friendship would open communication between different ethnic groups and intercultural learning would occur. To achieve this, communication must be emotionally positive, filled with warmth and amiable feelings. As a final factor for decreasing violence in multicultural education in Macedonia, I would mention the need for collaboration and team work among students. Through collaboration, students would learn that every ethnic group has its values and traditions, but also that all students involved in the educational system have the same basic interests. Collaboration merges people in a positive sense, helping the formation of personal relations that encourage the creation of pleasant coexistence between students.

Concluding remarks

Today children live in a world which is very complex and is a home to people who hold different views on life. Our children need to recognise and understand the cultures and perspectives of people quite unlike themselves. They have difficulties understanding the interconnectedness of today's problems and creative entrepreneurial skills to adequately address them (Parmar, 2012).

Living in a multicultural society has its advantages, such as the opportunity to get informed, gain insights about new lifestyles and awareness of different cultures. However, living side by side with other groups which differ in terms of culture can provoke fear, a sense of threat as well as difficulties in communication. Hence, nowadays multicultural education is gaining an important position, in the framework of institutional context as well as within the context of non-institutional forms of education.

Today, every young person can be educated and informed through different cultural events and understand these events in a multicultural reality, which

is only a basis for raising a young person. In that context, the school and the family should enable young people to understand, realise and use all common civilizational benefits which open wide horizons for multicultural and inter-cultural personality building.

As a multicultural society, the Republic of Macedonia faces a range of problems in multicultural education, primarily violence among students of different ethnic backgrounds. In order to reduce the violence in multicultural education in Macedonia, certain methods must be applied. Through a change in the current curriculum promoting education centred on the elimination of prejudice towards other ethnic groups and better communication and collaboration among students of different ethnic groups, coexistence in multicultural education can be achieved.

For successful communication in multicultural education to be achieved it is necessary to put aside all prejudice and stereotyping and to respect other cultures and traditions. It is as necessary to understand the consequences of discrimination against ethnic groups as it is to develop the capacity for non-stereotyped thinking. Multicultural education is a powerful tool in creating intergroup relations, reducing prejudice and building a child's personality in the contemporary life in a multi-ethnic society.

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SERENA SALIGARI*

*Integration and Art: Bruno Munari's ideas as
a new possibility for Intercultural Pedagogy*

ABSTRACT : In this article, after a brief analysis of social and cultural aspects connected with intercultural dialogue, I will refer to the cognitive mechanism of creativity, underlining its importance for the structuring of everyday information: lateral thinking, divergent views of reality, research of variation and unusual aspects of routine. Examining these points could be the first step in approaching cultural differences in a more open and flexible way. Artistic laboratories for children are actually shown as powerful “fields of experience” in multicultural terms. In these laboratories, starting with the creation of a universal visual language, it is possible to increase knowledge and improve perception of the world in order to enhance cultural and symbolic heritage the world over. The work and influence of Bruno Munari, an Italian artist and pedagogue, will influence our education planning through books and didactic tools in order to promote art and creativity as effective tools for intercultural contact and dialogue. The project *IncontrArti*, conceived as an experiment regarding this idea, will be the model for empirical evidence and research analysis, in particular through the augmented reality of video-research. Tapes, especially in the perspective of video-collaborations, will allow for the sharing of experience, points of view and assessments of the results of this process of integration.

KEY WORDS : creativity, laboratories, Bruno Munari, art, integration, Intercultural Pedagogy

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Introduction

Since the success of Charles Darwin's theory, pedagogues and developmental psychologists have been emphasising the importance of providing children with a vast and thorough knowledge of the world they live in to facilitate their adaptation to it. Children learn from operant (Skinner, 1938) and classical (Pavlov, 1927) conditioning, from habituation and imprinting (Lorenz, 1970), from cognitive mechanisms (Köhler, 1929) and social learning (Bandura, 1963) – in particular through imitation and cooperation. Their learning is often latent, hidden and unconscious (Tolman, 1951); other times, they acquire new knowledge through sudden insight (Köhler, 1929) or while they are doing or searching for something else by means of the so-called *serendipity* phenomenon.

In light of this, we cannot assert that our learning is strictly cognitive. Phylogenetic studies show that human beings distinguish themselves from animals through their ability to acquire and elaborate mental contents, thereafter expressed by language, rather than act only in response to stimuli. Obviously the nature and contents of these universal cognitive mechanisms vary from person to person and especially from culture to culture.

This cultural variability in developing mental contents appears obvious if we admit that people learn from what surrounds them and that language strongly influences our knowledge and interpretation of the world: “human consciousness is shaken by the ideas, beliefs and values that we derive from our experience and through the meaning which we derive from them” (Robinson, 2011, p. 151).

Situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1990) is reinforced by our perceptual dispositions because “the human brain perceives what it is already prepared to accept” (Dallari, 2008, p. 77. Personal translation) and, as Edward De Bono (2004) underlines, it accepts and elaborates information in a cumulative and confirmative way, proceeding linearly and conforming. The “new” or the “different” is not even appraised because our brain does not see it; so the assumption summarised both by Jerome Bruner and Bruno Munari (1971, p. 111) is true: “everyone sees what he knows” (Personal translation).

However, Edgar Morin, with his *complex thought* (1990), teaches us that the world is becoming more and more complex: phenomena are influenced circularly so that it is difficult to identify the causes and to predict the consequences.

We are surrounded by chaos and disorder and events happen on the basis of the so-called *uncertainty principle* (Heisenberg, 1949).

In this intrinsic situation of shakiness and complexity, humans are searching for some kind of assurance by radicalising their ideals, beliefs and values, becoming more and more unbending in their convictions and increasingly close-minded.

It is becoming harder to approach new situations and to find a good solution to problems and critical circumstances. This happens in every field of everyday life, from politics to finance and economics, from households to big communities, from schools to business affairs.

In this way we can probably explain why foreigners – in particular migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers – represent such a divisive question for our societies. The key point in this debate is not the initial stage of reception – in which Italy is on the front line at European level, with a peak of 170,100 arrivals in 2014 – but rather the integration of these people in our western model of society. Obviously, the differences in terms of habits, religion, education, employment mentality, family organisation and social relations represent a big challenge for the establishment of a multicultural community. Problems often arise from insufficient frequency of contact with the so-called “others”, where everyone wants to prevail throwing both sides into disarray, both the autochthonous citizens and the newly-arrived.

The aim of this research is to propose an unusual way of intervening in multicultural contexts and, especially, in the integration processes. The premise is the will to allow people with different cultural backgrounds to meet without compromising their values and ideas thus enhancing everyone’s heritage. It is a way to safeguard our antidote to complex situations and to mitigate demands from both sides. We will call it a *creative way*.

This proposal originates from the innate mechanism of humans that, going back to Darwin, acquiesces us to acknowledge the world and to organise it. In particular, it refers to creative processes, too often considered as secondary and optional in the management of our everyday life.

Lev Semënovič Vygotsky, who could probably be considered as the first psychologist who investigated creativity as a cognitive process, affirmed that “creativity is not an exception of mental activity, but a rule” (1972, p. 21. Personal translation). This means that everyone is naturally provided with creativity because it is indispensable to our existence, being the mechanism responsible

for the complex process of restructuring received information. *Invention* especially, which is a more impulsive skill, comes from the desires and needs an environment imposes on us. "Invention is applied creativity" (Robinson, 2011, p. 142), and is the method through which we put ideas into beneficial practice. This ensures that people are as inventive as possible regardless of how difficult or arduous their habitat is. Going back to the Evolutionary Theory, "a person lacking creativity will always have problems adapting to changing conditions of life" (Munari, 1977, p. 121. Personal translation).

This is a countertrend point of view if we consider that since 1967, year of the first publication of Vygotsky's *Imagination and creativity in childhood*, the creative process including inventive attitude and imaginative discretion were considered to be the domain solely of strange and special people. These people were considered somehow demented as in the well-known expression "genius and folly" (Jaspers, 2001).

Théodule Ribot tried to turn the tide on this topic that has been, in his own words, "one of the most persistent, apparently real, though very indefinite psychological spooks" (1900, p. V. Personal translation). Ribot continued to treat *imagination* as something magical describing it as something between mystic, magic, utopian, commercial, scientific and plastic imagination. He also described it as something that "is displayed in as highly developed form in both commercial leaders and practical inventors as in the most bizarre of romantic idealist" (1900. VI. Personal translation).

Therefore what does creativity have to do with integration, multicultural societies, intercultural contact and dialogue?

When we activate creativity, we suspend our certainties for a while and relegate the background of preconceived knowledge collected thus far to a corner. More or less conscious, we destroy the monolithic assumptions that have always led and organised our world and we start to develop a different, unusual and unexpected point of view in which we search through new, original elements for creative production. In this way, we prearrange a different approach to reality, more elastic and flexible, more open and inclusive. Basically, this is the disposition we must have when approaching the unpredicted and at this point, the "different". Bruno Munari, an Italian artist and designer, was the source of inspiration for this project because on many different occasions he illustrated the positive effects of the conscious use of creativity and applied

creative processes in various educational contexts – from childhood to old age. He implemented many tools such as books, games and visual instruments to foster and develop creative thought and raise the awareness in our society that “a creative child is a happy child” (Personal translation).

Hence, we think that these beneficial effects could be achieved in a research scenario seeking an efficient program of integration, especially for children.

But, first of all, what does *creativity* mean?

It is important to distinguish this concept from others, describing different and generally mistaken phenomena. Vygotsky (1972, p. 17) recognises a creative action in every human activity that “produces something new” (Personal translation). According to Munari (1977, p. 21), *creativity* is not *fantasy* – lacking discretion, free to pursue whatever thought, even absurd, incredible and unfeasible ones. Nor is creativity *invention* – the act of producing something new which has practical use and works even if it lacks aesthetic value. *Creativity is* the union of fantasy and invention to produce something new, feasible and aesthetically good. In saying that creativity is “the process of having original ideas that have value”, Robinson (2011, p. 151) perfects Munari’s assertion that it is not necessary “to come up with something that has never been thought of before” (Robinson, 2011, p. 158). This is because we can be creative at different levels and being creative could entail something as simple as looking at existing things in different ways.

But there is even the *imagination*, the big box holding all of these concepts: “the act of thinking and visualising what creativity, fantasy and invention produce” (Munari, 1977, p. 22. Personal translation) could be considered as the “primary gift of human consciousness” (Robinson, 2011, p. 141), being able “to mind things that are not present to our senses” (ibidem).

Basically, as we said before, every child is provided with the baggage of creativity competences but these skills are positively related to life experiences. That is why creativity would not exist without reality, i.e. providing elements through which creativity can work. “If creativity could produce something from nothing, it would be magic” (Vygotsky, 1972, p. 25, 26. Personal translation).

Children need an incubation period during which they can learn and acquire: “what we must do is broaden the experiences we provide him with. All else being equal, the more a child sees, hears, and experiences, the more he knows and

assimilates, the more elements of reality he will have in his experience, and the more productive will be the operation of his imagination” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 15).

It is a common belief that creativity flourishes more in children because “adults find in their drawings [...] things out of reality” and they “believe in children fantasy because they are too much influenced by the reality to think such strange things” (Munari, 1977, p. 30. Personal translation).

But if “fantasy is [intended as] the result of the relationship between what is thought and what is known (ibidem, p. 29. Personal translation), this assumption cannot be confirmed. Children have less mental and cognitive material to work with and they establish fewer links with reality because of their scarce needs: even their combinational skills are less developed. They are advantaged by play, which is the tool that “widens knowledge and allows the memorization of data” (ibidem, p. 35. Personal translation). Play is a prelude for imagination meaning that “imagination is a game without action” and “play is imagination in action” (Vygotsky, 1972, p. 10. Personal translation). Adults are overpowered by the rationality and practicality of everyday life and for this reason cannot foster the creative potential of their innate mental resources.

As previously underlined, creativity can be considered a necessary tool for structuring information. It is important to distinguish between *reproductive activity* and *creative activity*: the former is strictly connected with our memory and allows us to adapt to the world. It is omnipresent and it consists of repeating previous experiences. The second uses fantasy to creatively elaborate previous elements and build new situations, enabling human beings to look to the future. It is what Max Wertheimer, working on the problem-solving process, called *productive thinking*, in opposition to *reproductive thinking*. *Productive thinking* is the result of new ideas and breakthroughs, based on the combinatory faculties of our mind.

However, these combinational faculties can only work after the deconstruction of the links between the elements themselves and also between the elements and reality where we experiment with them. Our socio-cultural frames and well-known knowledge have to be subverted and overturned in order to look at them from a different perspective.

This mechanism, called *dissociation*, is the first preparatory and “negative” operation. After this, there is the positive and constitutive one, called *association* (Ribot, 1900, p. 15).

Between them, there is a series of acts that our mind can perform: transformation of elements, altering the paradigms of recognition through change of dimensions, colours, shapes; mixing elements from different fields of experience, repetition of the same element, associating elements “making unusual connections: seeing analogies between ideas that have not previously been related” (Robinson, 2011, p. 158).

Basically, “we are pushing the boundaries of what we know now to explore new possibilities” (ibidem, p. 152) and “creative insights occur when they are combined in unexpected ways or applied to questions or issues to which they are not normally related” (ibidem, p. 158).

It could seem useless if not counter-productive to destroy, confuse and overturn the pre-set knowledge and skills that have been founded after an extended period of training in life. But there are lots of advantages to get in the game of this *productive* way of thinking: we can learn to look at things from a different perspective – in a critically and not prearranged way, we can exploit hidden functions and potentialities of objects, we can develop different kinds of perception of reality, we can find and fine-tune unexpected and alternative solutions to problems that seemed unsolvable, we can look with a more flexible point of view at current problems and complexities.

Everything could be summarised in the creation of a new, elastic *formae mentis*, prearranged to facilitate divergent and lateral thinking on the confrontation, structuration and elaboration of reality.

It is important to focus on these two concepts of *divergent* and *lateral thinking*. These are cognitive techniques that “help to unblock the conventional way of thinking” (Robinson, 2011, p. 161). It goes beyond the linearity of logic-deductive thought which works sequentially and leads to one single answer.

Divergent and *lateral thinking* originates from a more free association of ideas, which allows us to the ability of “reframing the question” (ibidem, p. 162). However, there is a small difference between them: in 1950, Joy Paul Guilford coined the term *divergent thinking* in opposition to *convergent* thinking. It consists of a form of thought capable of producing and proposing different solutions to the same problem, moving away from conformity.

Some years later the expression *lateral thinking*, invented by De Bono (1967), cropped up indicating a way of solving problems, elaborating projects or behaving when considering a series of hypothesis that could seem illogical

and incorrect at first glance but that are “curious, paradoxical, aesthetically interesting or at least different” (Dallari, 2008, p. 80. Personal translation). It does not consist of the purpose of finding a different solution, but rather to subvert the problem. As De Bono said, “You cannot dig a hole in a different place by digging the same hole deeper” (1970, p. 8), which means that trying harder in the same direction may not be as useful as changing direction. By making intersections, digressions, branching, encouraging discontinuity, difference and deconstruction we can generate lots of original and revolutionary ideas which can proceed alongside conventional vertical thinking as a form of “stock of divergence” (Dallari, 2008, p. 80. Personal translation). This process starts from abstraction, which allows our mind to slip away from a unidirectional thought and contributes to find original and efficient solutions to problems.

By referring to the complex reality which Morin brought to our attention, we can deduce the benefits of prearranging an alternative way of facing problems. From this perspective, we can really open our minds, work together with and also on our differences. These differences should be considered a source of enrichment full of stimuli and creative cues, ameliorating the confrontation and sharing experience with other people, all of whom are searching for a different way of looking at the problem of integration.

Laboratory: the sacral space to exploit creativity

Once the benefits and potential of creativity are emphasised, it is necessary to find the correct and most appropriate occasion to express and work with them. From a pedagogical point of view, we can say that it is necessary to outline the most suitable *field of experience*. According to Munari's experience and work, laboratories seem to offer the best space for a pedagogical and educational intervention, effective even in multicultural contexts. Laboratories have to be conceived as a place of knowledge and experimentation, where attendees can not only discover and learn through games, but also understand and mould their skills with their eyes and hands. Munari used to say that the ideal laboratory should be a “mental gym” designed to stimulate thought patterns while sensitising participants to a complete and organic vision of reality from early childhood. Laboratories also represent an optimal situation to foster cooperation, peer education and experience sharing

between participants. This is especially true if it can be considered as a space of possibility, where children can act and be involved in the environment, as supported by John Dewey's pragmatism (1938).

With particular connection to the intercultural perspective, laboratories can bring lots of advantages, both from a social and individual point of view.

- Find a universal language: the language barrier is one of the most discouraging factors to intercultural contact and dialogue. After almost 30 years living in a multimedia reality, we are still not accustomed to thinking of ways of communicating outside of language, as it is exactly this that characterises human beings. Every day we are surrounded by images and we easily decode emoticons, symbols, stick figures but we hardly think of them as tools of communication. Although Munari cannot be directly related to the intercultural problem (at that time it was not a pressing topic of discussion), he started his pedagogical work in order to promote the educational and communicative value of art, especially with regard to visual arts. Munari stated that "there is no need to explain in words what can be explained with examples: the child will understand immediately" (1981, p. 6. Personal translation). Given that children produce something visual during their workshops, "the visual explanation of a visual action seems to be the most obvious thing to do" (*ibidem*). Munari had the chance to experiment in person with the universal efficacy of visual communication. In the 1960s he was invited to take part in some workshops at the Children's Castle in Tokyo, even though he did not know a word of Japanese. "The information was transmitted by a simple action [...]. We did not need an interpreter and at the end there were no questions" (Munari, 1995, p. 35. Personal translation).

If we admit that "the word is a surrogate of the image" (Munari, 2007, p. 13. Personal translation) we also have to underline that "in the visual form we can express thoughts that do not fit the structures of words" (Robinson, 2011, p. 149). The specificity of images and pictures is to be used as schematic symbols whose meaning is "uniquely expressed in the forms they take" (*ibidem*). If you want to understand the meaning of an image, you cannot look it up in a dictionary, but you must trust the interpretation. In ateliers and workshops, images and visual languages are crucial to better understand their efficacy and to exploit their value for a cross-cultural contact.

- Share cultural heritage: we are usually unconscious of the fact that reality is codified by symbols, because our mind easily and naturally elaborates them. This depends on the fact that since early childhood we have developed a skill called *joint attention* (Robinson, 2011, p. 142), which consists of the ability “to share words and focus points” and “to understand the idea that one thing can represent another” (Dallari, 2008, p. 7. Personal Translation). Vygotsky said that the human being is a symbolic animal, who developed symbols easy to interpret to reduce complicated realities. “The power of representation has given rise to intricate forms of language, mathematics, and the arts which permeate human consciousness and frame our ideas and feelings about the world” (Robinson, 2011, p. 143). It therefore seems obvious that, depending on the symbolic system that different human societies have developed, people look at reality from different perspectives. Everyone was astonished when Vygotsky said for the first time that language could influence thought and that by learning to speak we give shapes and frames to our mental contents. People were sure that thoughts were already pre-constituted in our minds; regardless of the way we expressed them. Even Robinson (2011, p. 143) said that “there is a common-sense assumption that [...] first we have our thoughts and then we find the words to convey them” but studies in linguistics and developmental and cognitive psychology showed that the role of language on “what and how we think is more complex”. As Panlogism and Logocentrism support, “language is the only thing responsible for the construction of our reality” (Dallari, 2008, p. 8. Personal translation) and “there is no knowledge that can disregard words” (ibidem).

Moreover, language consists of more than the names of things: it has syntax, mood, structures, tense which give shapes to our thoughts and to argumentation and which structure the reality. Robinson (2011, p. 145) said that “children absorb ways of thinking that are embedded in the particular languages they learn”. We surrender words in favour of images and visual communication: based on these last few points we understand that barriers not only refer to the language, but also to the structure and the shape of our thoughts.

For this reason, in a laboratory everyone can express themselves by using their preferential manner or technique, looking for the best one to mould and symbolise mental contents. In multicultural contexts it is possible to see how

everyone gives shape to reality and as a result, it is possible to achieve the awareness that what we consider as strange or illogical is the result of a different way of learning. Furthermore, we learn that our point of view is not the only one possible but it is specific of a particular community or society. Moreover, we can confront ourselves with various ways to express and codify reality: different alphabets, numbers, sketch lines, signs, symbols – just think about the meaning and the function of Indian *bindi* or tribal tattoos.

- Active and personal involvement: to engage ourselves is the best way to learn and, for foreign people, to gain experience, competence and awareness of the new world they live in. We all know that children's minds are much more elastic, flexible and adaptable than adults'. But Confucius said "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand". Experimenting first-hand and being actively involved in the environment is not only an assumption of Dewey pragmatism, but a belief alive in all the most famous pedagogical theories. It is in the action and in the concrete activity that we build our personality and we perfect the cognitive tools that lead our actions. It is the concept of "learning by doing" and even "learn to learn" that is particularly dominant in creative processes. "Doing something", Robinson (2011, p. 142) said, "is typical of creativity, because if imagination can be an entirely private process, creativity presumes actively producing something in a deliberate way".
- Organic creation of personality: according to Munari it is important to "recover the act" (Nocchi Croccolo, 2005, p. 67. Personal translation): only by acting can we activate "the process of triple distinction between the knower, the known object and the instruments of this knowledge" (Nocchi Croccolo, 2005, p. 67. Personal translation).

In laboratories, children can confront their abilities and skills, they can identify their strengths and their weaknesses. They can find their own way to express and conduct themselves in reality. They can learn that fantasy is a tool for everyday life.

In laboratories, children can find various activities aimed at encouraging different capabilities and even different areas of the brain. They can experiment with different materials and techniques, challenge themselves with unusual actions and experience different sensations through multi-sensory stimulation. In this way, we can really foster a complete and organic personality, aware both of the limits and potentials available.

This approach also allows the addition of value to everyone's unique potential and resources: "when people find their medium, they discover their real creative strength and come into their own. Helping people to connect with their personal creative capacities is the surest way to release the best they have to offer" (Robinson, 2011, p. 139).

- Express ourselves: "all forms of creative imagination imply affective elements" (Ribot, 1900, p. 31. Personal translation) but these affective elements find a way to be expressed through the creative path: this is the *law of double expression of feelings* (Vygotsky, 1972, p. 31. Personal translation). Through Vygotsky's law, images of fantasy permit an intimate expression of feelings, but at the same time imagination encloses a re-elaborated symbolic heritage of personal emotions. Creativity could become a *sacred space* as theorized by Van der Leeuw, i.e. "being separated from ordinary space", where children can express their feelings regardless of cultural or social rules and where roles are suspended in order to be free from every kind of duty.
- Demolish prejudices and stereotypes: Munari's aim in life was to completely free children from the limits and boundaries produced by society. Among them, prejudices and stereotypes are pre-conceived assumptions that children often learn from primary education institutions and that are difficult to eliminate. This approach prevents children from experiencing some realities or contexts that are considered bad, therefore limiting and reducing the knowledge of the world – even the good parts of it.

By working in laboratories and confronting themselves with other possibilities, children could experiment first-hand with differences and have direct contact with the "other". But all these processes are based on the fact that "imagination liberates us from our immediate circumstances", "holds the constant possibility of transforming the present" and "anticipates or imagines the possible future" (Robinson, 2011, p. 142) where humans will be free from pre-conceived knowledge. Here, in addition to the preferential and meditative meeting that children could have, they can enrich their experience and meet different points of view never before considered. They can learn from others, they can share, they can see with their eyes that different does not mean less than or inferior. All cultures are put at the same level and all stimuli are fostered for the support of an organic experience.

- Give value to every culture: the rhetoric of interculturalism teaches us that all cultures have the same values and that we should share, confront and valorise all of them. Open-mindedness is what we have been supporting until now; however, we also need to be able to safeguard the specificity of everyone's heritage in order not to weaken or compromise the founding principles of all identities and cultures.
- Experiment with various and peculiar materials, enhance everyday life objects and turn them into creative processes, become familiar with goods typical of a particular geographical area: Munari was strongly convinced that every child must have the correct instruments to express himself. For this reason, a laboratory minutely arranged, organised and equipped with various materials permits children to "experiment and choose the most appropriate one" (Munari, 1981: 9. Personal translation), to distinguish between possibilities and favour a mindful differentiation in the application of various tools. "An instrument is often used in one way only, following the established tradition" (Munari, 2015, p. 54. Personal Translation), but experimentation allows for the discovery of new and divergent applications. "Creative thinking goes hand in hand with increasing technical facility with instruments or materials that are being used" (Robinson, 2011, p. 161).

We also have to consider that a multi-material context makes people aware of *multi-sensoriality*, enriching the sensorial heritage and *synaesthetic* connections. Finally, reusing everyday life objects in a creative way means, besides recycling, being able to look at reality in a different way and give a different meaning and function to the ordinary. This process is called *resemantisation*, a concept which will be explained later and which allows us to focus on and give importance to the familiar and wealthy patrimony we take for granted.

- Work on a common thing: laboratories may ask attendees to work all together on a common project. This allows the joining of powers and talents, sharing knowledge and competencies, ideas and hints. Cooperation and reciprocal help are the aims to be pursued, especially through the differentiation of assignments based on everyone's preferences and skills.
- Starting from the same possibilities: in laboratories all participants have plenty of instruments at their disposal. If it is true that there is an aptitude for creativity, it is extremely important to provide participants with the conditions to foster and support such creativity. Participants move all from the

same possibilities of expression and this equal setting is the starting point for the creation of a healthy net of relationships, free from competitiveness.

- Free and unjudged activities: this was one of Munari's main warnings. It is important to respect everyone's productions and artefacts because, if we admit that creativity transmutes from knowledge to reality, "how we interpret reality varies from person to person" so that "people often see the same events differently" (Robinson, 2011, p. 146). This fact is obviously connected with culture, as underlined many times in this paper, but also with a more physiological reason detectable on the level of "sensory perception" (ibidem). The nature of our senses determines what we can perceive, so that something that could seem ugly to us could be very powerful and important to others or, something stupid could assume lots of meaning for others. Moreover, *vertical thinking* (De Bono, 1967) acts in a confirmative way, perceiving only those things that our brain already knows: "we see the world not as it is, but through a veil of conception" because, as Susanne Langer affirmed "the brain is a great transformer" (Robinson, 2011, p. 146, 147).

Furthermore, even when we bump into an error while executing activities, we must learn to convert it to a cue for new perspectives. Gianni Rodari, Italian teacher, writer, poet and pedagogue became famous for his interest in the "fantasy's grammar" (1973), listed lots of ways to build stories even exploiting casual and involuntary errors. Hence the mistake becomes a precious resource to stimulate creation and fantasy. We have to admit transgression and destruction in order to let neologism spread and incredible unexpected stories take shape. Consider that "it is in these errors and transgressions that children use metaphoric and symbolic thought. Stimulation and development of symbolic ways of thinking are fundamental for the construction of identity and intelligence" (Dallari, 2008, p. 12. Personal translation).

We must be open-minded and respectful towards everyone and sensitise ourselves to the variety and subjectivity of interpretation, especially in an artistic space such as the laboratories where artefacts are the expression of intimate processes.

- Express and elaborate trauma: the benefits of art-therapy are well known. A drawing, a way to represent reality, is an expression used to tell a story that can give us many clues to understand an emotional condition and the status of personality.

Fears, apprehension and anguish could lie deep in refugee children, forced to leave their homeland and to start a trip without certainty about their future, to face the well-known difficulties of integration in a foreign country. Drawings can reveal things children are not able to tell us due to some psychological block or fear of consequence. By choosing a specific colour, shape, drawing or painting technique, children could elaborate on the contents and find a more delicate and sensitive way to release bad experiences and be accepted. A child who is able to share and express their needs is more predisposed to be helped and to find support in adults for a healthy and safe childhood.

As Maria Rilke said, children “became painters for the reason that there is something that is not possible to say”.

Methodological assumptions of the research and experimentation

As Vygotsky said, it is the practice that decides the success of a theory (1972, p. 7).

All the above listed speculations and premises found their first empirical application in April 2016, when a set of laboratories called *IncontrArti* – from an Italian pun (literally “meeting you”), meaning “meet art” – was organised at the public library of Tirano, a small town in the North of Italy. The course, split in four meetings of two hours each, was attended by 15 children between 8 and 10 years old, all Italian citizens the majority of whom had foreign ancestry – Moroccan, Rumanian, Polish, Russian and Swiss.

Each laboratory was focused on a specific topic, not necessarily directly connected with culture or diversity: the first laboratory was about identities, the second about places, the third about handicrafts and the last one about emotions and colours.

Below are the purposes of this course:

- to make children aware of different cultures and show them as equal and of equal value;
- to research similarities and differences between cultures;
- to encourage and enhance the “different” as additional value for personal and cultural enrichment;

- to break and discourage prejudices, stereotypes and all preconceptions assumed as true without critical perspective.

Four steps of the so-called “formative action” (Massa, 1991, p. 466. Personal translation.) were followed to carry out the laboratories. In particular:

- Designing and planning: after thorough research on Munari's works, which represented the guideline of each topic, the designing phase enabled us to give shape and organic structure to each laboratory, also through the integration of other materials – books, picture books, games.

As Munari suggested, “planning is easy when you know how to do it” (2015, p. 8. Personal translation): following “a series of very experienced and necessary operations” (ibidem, p. 16. Personal translation) it has raised completeness and an enrichment of the topic, providing various stimuli for children.

Every workshop was tested beforehand in order to guarantee both its efficacy and forcefulness, to exclude any setback and to adapt it to the setting.

- Organisation: thanks to the valuable support of the person in charge of the public library “Paolo e Paola Maria Arcari” of Tirano, who took care of the locations, materials and communication, as well as the cooperation of the association “Bambini del Mondo” – Children of the world – that helped me to select the children, we arranged all practical procedures required to start the project.
- Realisation and direction: during the two-hour laboratory, I was personally responsible for conducting the activities as project creator. Volunteers at the library supported me with practical issues.
- Evaluation: the project assessment is widely described in the “Results of the research or conclusions from considerations” section of this article, where the results and considerations concerning the real efficacy of this method of integration through art and creativity are discussed.

Every laboratory was composed of two parts: the first part was an introduction to the topic, mainly disclosed with books and artworks by Bruno Munari, but also by images, videos, pictures, comic books, games, artworks, art books, leporello books, maps etc. Children could contribute to the discussion with their knowledge and personal experience.

The second part was the actual laboratorial part where, through specific workshops, children could express themselves, their identities and their personalities

in a creative way by following and carrying out prearranged activities, experimenting materials and finding the best way to act.

At the end of each laboratory, there was always an “exposition” moment where children could show their handiwork, encouraging engagement and discussion and giving value to new stimuli, unusual perspectives, evolution, innovation and the unexplored product of their creativity.

This division was also carried out in terms of location: a big carpet where children could sit on the floor was used for the discussion; tables with materials were situated in a more suitable area.

According to Munari’s method and will to valorise creative potential, everything – materials, spaces, activities and moments – was minutely organised.

This is because we strongly believe that creativity can better emerge if there is an order and a rational disposition of the action. Leaving children free means abandoning them to imitation of previous experience and to delusion, sensing their inability to equal the masters and learn anything new. For all these reasons, rules are important: it is like a marked line, which allows everything to work and that after having been acquired, may evolve with various modifications.

Someone could complain that a rigid organisation may compromise freedom and expression but, as Munari said “Rule alone is monotonous. [...] The combination of rule and chance is life, art, fantasy, equilibrium” (Munari, 2008, p. 33. Personal translation).

Moreover, “creativity does not always require freedom from constraint or a blank page. A lot of creative work has to function to specific briefs or convention and great work often comes from working within formal constraints” (Robinson, 2011, p. 152). In this way, we followed Munari’s project method made up of phases, rules and principles to delineate the activities.

In particular, Munari had this tendency of simplifying everything, sure that “what you can’t say in few words, cannot even be said in a lot of words”: “complicating is easy, simplifying is more difficult and it requires lots of creativity” (Munari, 2015, p. 132. Personal translation).

Creativity is not improvisation but an incentive to natural resources and attitude that must be fostered in the correct way. Stimulation should start from what children already know and our intervention has to start from certainties, because “everyone sees what he knows” (Munari, 1971, p. 111. Personal translation).

As we said before, a great attention was dedicated to materials, considering the possibility of “using standard forms to achieve unique effects and original insights” (Robinson, 2011, p. 152).

To do that, before every workshop, all tools and instruments were shown and explained to the children, underlining all possible functions and uses. This “experiment for technical knowledge” (Munari, 1981, p. 7. Personal translation) leads every child to develop knowledge, which “gives a complete mastery of the instrument” (Nocchi Croccolo, 2005, p. 19. Personal translation). Adults must help “not saying what to do but how to do it” (Munari, 1981, p. 8. Personal translation), as in the idea of developing autonomy and responsibility promoted by Maria Montessori and summarised with the sentence: “help me to do it by myself”.

This attention was also fostered by the will to provide a great and complete stimulation of *multi-sensoriality* and *multimedia communication*.

With the word *multi-sensoriality* we mean an organic stimulation of every child's senses: not only their eyes, which are primary in our perception of reality, but even smell, touch and emotional perception. This multidimensional stimulation can lead to a many-sided notion of the world and to the awareness of the different ways of perceiving and communicating what we perceive. “Creativity is a dialogue between the ideas and the media in which they are being formed” (Robinson, 2011, p. 153).

Consequently, we can stimulate multimedia communication, searching alternative channels to communicate our experience of the world often expressed strictly by words: images, sounds, gestures, actions and even pantomime can more organically express our perspectives and perceptions.

We said that creativity implies affective elements, but only in the event that art is able to touch the hidden feelings of human beings will it be very powerful. In this way, *synaesthesia* was one of our key principles: to lead children to recover their emotions and feelings, especially the ones raised during laboratories and connected with some specific stimuli. Black could be associated with fear, a sweet symphony with maternity, an unrefined support to some arduous activity.

Emotions are, like play, a fixative for the learning process and a brilliant and deep part of our individuality.

This project was oriented to children's integration and the best way to get them involved was through games: the history of pedagogy teaches us that our

societies have taken many years to consider games as a valued and important activity for cognitive and senso-motorial development. Then, Jean Piaget with his theory about symbolic games and Vygotsky with the connection between imagination and play, rose the awareness of games as a way for structuring reality and a fully-fledged way to learn with curiosity. “Knowledge of reality occurs instinctively through this activity that adults call *game*” (Restelli & Sperati, 2009, p. 23. Personal translation) and game is “a fixative in the memory of what we do gladly” (Munari, 1981, p. 6. Personal translation).

The aim of these laboratories and, in particular the workshops, was not to produce something to take away like a memory or a result of the work done, but rather the process which had led to this production. The process allows to internalise the behaviour and encode it to memory; it is the acquisition of a new competence that attendees can replay on other occasions and that becomes part of their personal heritage for the future.

We have to fight against the Western assumption that everything we do must have a concrete utility or function, as if every action is aimed at a finished product. Sometimes it is necessary to do something just for the fun it brings: history teaches us that wonderful inventions spread from useless and illogical actions of “crazy” people.

Considerable importance was conferred to the entity of the group especially because of the project’s intercultural nature, relationships, connections and bonds established between attendees represented a direction to be followed for the stimulation of intercultural contact, a field to be investigated through research and to be assessed in terms of efficacy. The aim of my work was to encourage the creation of an organic entity or group where everyone could be respected for their identity and at the same time could share their experience and attitude to the benefits of all participants. Into this *field pattern* (Mortari, 2015. Personal translation) I had to be able to extrapolate and identify the “circular logic of the retroactive causality” (Morin, 1989. Personal translation) that according to Morin leads to the “causative reciprocity” between the single person and the working environment.

As we already said in the previous pages, Bruno Munari was the leading influence of this project. His polyhedral personality, such to be defined as “the Leonardo of our times” by well-famous Picasso and his boundless production, as he himself said, “everyone knows a different Bruno Munari” (Munari, 2008,

p. 84. Personal translation) have been showing us the variety of his application in different contexts for some years.

In a presentation of his work he said, “the method is what distinguishes these laboratories from others” (Munari, 1981, p. 3. Personal translation).

The idea to apply Bruno Munari's ideas to an intercultural project of integration came from a specific attitude he had in his way of working, the “sincere research of variation” which he considered as one of the numerous aspects of creativity. It consists of “systematically changing the features that normally define an object, a figure or a reality” (Nocchi Croccolo, 2005: 70. Personal translation) without compromising their identity or recognisability.

The premise for this activity is a disposition to experimentation and research: in this way it is possible to reach innovations, both in the action and in the way we use specific materials. The search for variation allows us to act in lots of different ways and explore the possibilities and alternative potential of everyday objects and actions. Munari spurred his attendees' creativity with basic activities such as searching for different ways to mark a line or to represent a human face (Munari, 2015). The rules of the workshop give you a way “to build a model” while “variations generate several different models abiding by the same rule” (Nocchi Croccolo, 2005, p. 21. Personal translation). “Lots of different solutions, all fairly plausible, offering many occasions to confront and to choose between alternative paths” (ibidem, p. 70. Personal translation).

It was not only an activity, but also a way to conduct the laboratories where “every child is free to move in the space looking at what is most interesting, because there are not preconceived truths [...] but only the possibility to look for a lot of truths” (Munari, 1981, p. 7. Personal translation).

This variation of attitude can be modified in various ways such as measuring limits, varying an object or a reality so much so as to ask ourselves if it is still the same thing; changing dimension or quantity, in order to raise unusual and strange sensations; changing the organisation, in order to enrich the knowledge of the world; overturning a situation, sensitise ourselves to opposites, contraries, complementary elements; raise unusual relations between elements not usually connected.

Changing colours, which is one of the main and more influential features in the perception of an object may astonish people and trigger new ideas; changing

materials, as in surrealist artworks, or changing functions of objects are some of the alternative ways to search through variations listed in the compendium *Fantasia*.

The activity of research of *analogies* also permits the discovery of what is similar or what originates from similar principles. Nowadays, lots of campaigns against racism underline children's innate attitude to be naturally open to everyone and everything without prejudice or stereotypes – these appear later under the pressure of society. This theory, which is also supported by Rousseau in his *Emilio*, has scientific evidence: children are more prone to perceive similarities than differences (Vygotsky, 1972).

By acting in a varied and analogical way, there is the need to have something specific to work on, not only from a practical perspective – materials, stationery, supports – but also in terms of theme and topic. The four laboratories were focused on identity, places, objects and emotions; these topics were introduced by books, leporello books, maps and in particular, through a visual alphabet, images, pictures and contemporary and modern artwork, primarily Munari's.

Once again, art is a visual, universal language and an endless resource of stimulation and mental provocation. Art is so varied that it can provide children with something new every time they come into contact with it. Sometimes art is so strange that it can create the cognitive displacement necessary to start a completely new path of thought.

In order to promote variation, children need to acquire different techniques and skills, such as collage, frottage, division, signing – because “it is the sign that makes the drawing” (Munari, 1971, p. 35. Personal translation) – texture, the pressure of colouring, formats and shapes, colours, hues and constructions.

Our aim was to integrate this approach to variation with an activity inspired by an Italian surrealist artist Luigi Serafini who wrote “the strangest book in the world” – copy and paste the sentence in Google if you do not believe me. In his *Codex Seraphinianus*, he elaborated an entire encyclopaedia of a hypothetical alternative world where elements from different fields of existence acquire new functions and potential are mixed up through a strange and astounding hybridisation.

Even Munari fostered this activity of changing techniques to research variation: in *Fantasia* he proposed the fusion of different elements in the same body, inspired by Hieronymus Bosch and later René Magritte's artworks because “creative thought involves breaching the boundaries between different frames and reference” (Robinson, 2011, p. 158, 159).

Moreover, this encyclopaedia is written in an un-coded handwriting which does not correspond to any other alphabet codified by humans in the History of the World.

This wonderful and magical book gives us a lot of pedagogical food for thought: it is a way to stimulate interpretation and story making, first of all, because we are all ignorant and illiterate in the face of this code that none of us can interpret. It is a way to look past ordinariness but it is an especially brilliant way to focus on everyday life objects and situations that are obvious to us. The author did great work of *resemantisation*, giving new, unexplored meanings and functions to them, starting exactly from this process of dissociation that we identify as the first step to creative production. Flowers were no longer flowers but they became a pen or a hammer. Fingers were no longer fingers but they became guns or knives. Even though this is a completely useless exercise that does not produce anything in particular, it can be a precious tool to stimulate our children to look at reality from a different point of view and build unexpected relations, make new associations and find new solutions. When Robinson asked people “how many uses can you think of for a paper clip?” unprompted people could find a maximum of 10-15 uses while divergent thinkers could think of more than 200 uses. Our reality is an infinite container of materials that must be considered “not only for what they are, but also for what they could become” (De Bono, 1967).

Results of the research

This research project found the model to define the choices of researchers and to establish criteria to achieve “trustworthy knowledge” in the *ecological paradigm* (Mortari, 2015. Personal translation).

For this reason, the “environment” acquires such great importance both for the attendees, as I underlined several times in this paper, and researchers eager to activate participant observation and idiographic and ethnographic analysis.

The whole experience of laboratories was video recorded, in order to exploit the advantages of this “multi-methodological and inter-disciplinary option” (Goldman, 2009, p. 4. Personal translation).

Among the benefits of stimulating and provoking the function of recorded images, we can list first of all the possibility to review the laboratories at any

time. In this way, I could modify my intervention on the basis of the children's needs and stimuli raised during previous meetings. The tapes allowed me distance from the immediacy of the laboratories and to later look at them in a more objective and rational way because "objectification [...] is a trampoline for planning and changing" (Bove & Sità, 2016. Personal translation). This is true even from the perspective of new or future applications of the videotaping method.

The second reason was to have materials available to review any time I needed. This convenience allowed me to explore the hidden meanings and perspectives of the project *IncontrArti*, to restructure the past in an organic way, to have a complete vision of the path overall. This is the potential of the *video feedback* technique, as conceptualised by Bove and Sità. Tapes empower reflection and explicit concealed aspects, especially on the elements that we considered as obvious. It stops the flow of experience to allow adjustments and changes on the basis of necessity and it permits the verbalisation of the experience which I made use of by drafting field notes after the experience. Tapes allowed me through this *stimulate recall*, to focus on some aspects that I initially considered marginal or that I did not notice. They isolate moments, enabling the researcher to "to take distance from the complexity of the background, focusing the attention on details, encouraging detachment" (ibidem, p. 63. Personal translation), thus reducing the space between meanings and action, between theory and praxis.

Finally, the video record allowed me to share this experience with a public interested in the topic, in order to make adjustments based on the different points of view expressed. Through the concept of *video-collaboratories* – the fusion of collaboration and laboratories – professionals can share points of view, visual data, materials, resources, and interpretations for the evolution of the research.

In order to express my point of view about the efficacy of this method of integration through art and creativity, it is important to highlight that in such an educational context it is impossible to settle the computational methods that, for a long time, have been considered as the only ones able to provide an "impartial vision of the real" (Massa, 1991, p. 22. Personal translation). In this project, comparative and narrative methods acquired great importance, in particular through the possibility to recall the experience via taped records. A qualitative point of view, based especially on "secondary features" (Mortari, 2015, p. 45. Personal translation), such as colours, touch, emotions, sounds,

intentions, meanings and the promotion of a reflection about “ideographic character” (Mortari, 2015, p. 20. Personal translation), was settled: the aim was to enhance the subjectivity of expression and to “understand and interpret the concrete instance” treated singularly as “something unique and not repeatable” (ibidem, p. 194. Personal translation).

Conclusions

The purpose of *IncontrArti* project was to find an alternative way to foster intercultural contact and dialogue. The artistic language and specifically the visual code have the potential to put all the people interacting at the same level of expression and understanding.

The laboratories showed that art was an unconventional way to achieve intercultural integration, promoting interaction among children especially by virtue of its interpretative nature: given that everyone can perceive, understand and comment a reality by his own point of view which cannot be judged, art interpretation was a guarantee of free expression of individualities and personal emotions, sensations, feeling, impressions.

In the light of all benefits listed, we can understand the validity of Munari's assumption that “if art remains outside everyday problems, few people will be interested in it”: for this reason art is not necessarily something aimed to satisfy our aesthetic taste, but it is a stimulus, a provocation, an occasion of experimentation, of moulding feelings and ideas, of striving for new points of view and perspectives.

The aesthetic experience was founded on the deeper meaning of the Ancient Greek word *aesthesis*, intended as the action to perceive with all the senses and feelings.

We worked using the process of *dissociation*, opening fissures and using disorientation as a positive and productive way of unconventional problem solving.

The approach of *IncontrArti* was “ideographic”, in other words a method which considers everyone as unique and original and aimed to respect and hone one's skills, curiosities, talent and aptitudes. For this reason, I can affirm that during the journey – the word journey is important because it underlines the sequential and longitudinal development of the project, set up to be increased

and replicated and not as a sporadic intervention – children appeared very involved and proactive in both the discussion and practical activities. In particular, I noticed a constant and valiant contribution of individual experience and knowledge in the discussion of the meeting topic. The interaction always proceeded in a very dynamic way, but even in the enriching dimension of democracy: everyone was interested in the heritage and culture of the others and found in this circumstance of personal contribution a free and suitable occasion to express themselves.

In the workshops, children wanted to become protagonists of their knowledge and they actively worked in the direction of discovery and experimentation, searching for new stimuli. I never noticed competition and this was a perfect occasion to raise awareness about the multiplicity and richness of reality and of every culture.

In the light of this, I feel to conclude with a quote from Paul Klee that helps us understand the profound and introspective value of art expression and its moulding property: “Art does not reproduce the visible but makes visible” what often is not.

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*Modelling as an (in)effective
rehabilitation strategy*

ABSTRACT : The article elaborates on the relations between the two participants of the educational process – the educator and the learner. It also explores the co-dependencies that shape the effectiveness of educational processes. The article presents a theoretical analysis in which at the beginning, education is defined as a range of educational activities and later the specific methodology of modelling is discussed. Finally, a reference model of an educator (whose required characteristics are shaped by the personality of the learner) is provided. The article also describes the interactions, methods and techniques used by an educator; it tackles the axiological aspect of educational models, and also refers to the results of studies carried out in similar research fields. This publication forms theoretical implications for further studies aimed at searching for ways to increase the efficiency in the process of rehabilitation.

KEY WORDS : effectiveness of rehabilitation, methodology, modelling, axiology of education, educator

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Introduction

Education, as well as rehabilitation, takes place in a specific educational reality. Its main elements are: the educator, the learner and the relations between the two, which occur in particular educational situations. These relations are of reciprocal nature and are mutually affected. The same is true for the whole educational process. The parties involved in the process of education constantly influence one another. As a result, specific responses or stimuli generated by one party result in specific behavioural response by the other. This creates a mechanism of mutual dependence between the two constituent elements of education. Pragmatically speaking, it can be understood as follows: particular actions of the educator result in particular changes in the learner. At the same time, certain behaviours of the learner trigger certain responses from the educator. This relation between the two parties involved in the educational process is particularly important for one of the basic educational techniques known as modelling.

Modelling derives from the theory of social learning. One of its initiators, Albert Bandura (Ostrowska, 2008), based his theory on the following two modelling assumptions:

- 1) modelling means learning how to behave in small steps in order to obtain the desired effect,
- 2) learning occurs through observation.

Based on these two points, we may assume that a person learns not only through performing, but also through observation of the behaviour of others. Thus, depending on the message that modelling carries, it must be assumed that it may result in the improvement as well as deterioration of the social functioning of an individual.

So what in fact is modelling? Following the maxim ‘words teach, examples attract’, which perfectly illustrates the idea, we can say that modelling is primarily an alternative to expository methods of teaching and learning. According to Bandura, modelling is understood as both mapping, which means absorption of the observed behaviours, and acquisition of new behaviours or modification of the behaviours formerly revealed by the observer. It has to be emphasized that modelling excludes any conscious imitation of the model by the observer (Bandura, 1977).

Today, the social reality in which modelling is done, i.e. the closed world of Juvenile Detention Centres (in Poland designed for children and youth), is specific, perhaps simply stating that this reality... is changing. Multiculturalism gradually enters this sphere of life. In addition to possessing “traditional” skills that are essential when using the technique of modelling, the educator must now have the skill to deal with civilisational, religious, cultural and social differences which may constitute an additional barrier in dealing with learners coming from remote parts of the world.

Antropotechnology in education versus modelling

In applied rehabilitation, modelling usually takes the form of antropotechnological interactions. To be more precise, it is implemented through the *method of personal influence* and *personal example* as well as *the impact of authority*.

Rehabilitation through *personal influence* occurs when a specific educational relation is built. This relationship can be defined as contacts between the learner and other people which are organised, inspired or approved by the educator while fully controlled. These contacts stimulate the learner to engage in meaningful activities (Górski, 1985).

Górski distinguishes two types of educational relation: external and internal. External relation occurs when the learner interprets the contact with his educator only as a way of avoiding penalties or receiving immediate rewards. This creates unnecessary opportunism and conformism because the learner acts in a calculated way. This sort of attitude prevails when a learner defines mutual dependence. What the educator does, what he thinks or believes in, does not really matter as the learner does not appreciate it, nor does he approve of it. Such relations can be defined as formal and official.

Internal relationships cause a reversal of the above behaviour. The relation between a learner and his educator, for example, has a different dimension – the learner appreciates the efforts of the educator, seeks his approval and praise and wants to be helped. In this relationship the learner pursues spontaneous contact and enjoys the presence of the educator.

Rehabilitation technique involving personal influence is implemented in two stages. Initially, the educator must ensure that the learner understands that imitating

his educator brings measurable benefits such as positive evaluation and praise. Not only will he avoid penalties but he will also benefit from the fact that the educator accompanies him through his rehabilitation process and helps to complete the defined tasks. In the subsequent stage, the learner should accept the qualities of his educator. These are qualities that the learner currently lacks, but which are possible to acquire or achieve if he imitates the educator's behaviour. What is highly characteristic to this technique is the fact that the more attractive the educator is and the more often the educator inspires the learners at significant moments, the more situations are created in which learners want to imitate the educator. This increases the chance of a learner seeking to identify with his educator.

Another rehabilitation technique which involves modelling is realised by the method of *personal example*. Here the influence of an educator on a learner is based on the principle of conscious imitation (Górski, 1985). Its objective is to change the unwanted behaviour of a learner, which, due to identification with the educator, is subject to elimination. It is crucial to ensure that the behaviours the learner is intended to imitate are socially approved by the community he identifies with most.

It is equally important to reward the learner for each occurrence of the imitated behaviour in a tangible way. The more valuable the reward is, the higher the chance of identifying with the educator. It is also obvious that the importance of the instructor is a significant factor which can directly affect the effectiveness of this method. The more important the model is for a learner and the more respect they have for the educator, the more eager the learner will be to imitate the educator. Ultimately, the stronger the bonds, the stronger the influence.

There is one more factor that affects the degree of identification in this method – the significance of the educational situations in which it occurs. If the situation was of vital importance or happened around some critical event which had a significant impact on the learner, it would generate a more sustainable change of attitude. Thus, the inmate would be left with a stronger motivation to copy the behaviour of the person he perceives as important.

Modelling through personal example is not limited to the imitation of the external image of the educator, but above all it involves the acquisition of their principles, hierarchy of values and aspirations. It is crucial that the educator is authentic in modelling their message. There must be total compliance between what they advocate and what they do.

The image of the educator presenting their values and beliefs must be consistent with the content of their message. Otherwise, there is no conformity and the educator loses credibility. This is an obvious result of the perceived discrepancies between what the educator says and what the learners see. Obviously in such a scenario the process of imitation and identification of a mentee with his mentor will be ineffective.

The last modelling technique involves the power of *authority*. This is an extremely important element of the personality of an educator, and it is essential when we talk about effective influence on a learner. Not only does the educator carry the formally assigned authority, but he also presents an unsurpassed model for his follower, and sets the aim which a learner identifies with and aspires to.

The term authority is widely known and applied. Literature very amply demonstrates its importance. Sośnicki claims that authority should be understood as a relationship between two people in which one acknowledges the will of the other, adjusts to this will and bends to it (Badura, 1981). Thus, we can distinguish two opposite sides in authority: the side of values and the side of subordination, which condition its social nature. The values lie in the person who is perceived as an authority, while the side of subordination is characteristic for people who are under the influence of educational instruction. Authority in pedagogical context is understood as educational influence of a widely recognised person on an individual or a group of people and the specific sphere of social life. Authority derives from personality traits which contribute to the universal recognition of educators, gain them the respect of the given community and bring success in teaching and educational practice.

When exploring the concept of authority in literature, we find a number of different categories. We read about intellectual, moral, emancipating, subjugating, and finally the inner and outer authority.

The intellectual aspect of authority refers to knowledge and professional expertise, while moral authority is all about educational standards and rules of conduct in contact with learners. Emancipating authority helps to release creative energy, fosters mobilisation, persistence in achieving goals and pursuing interests, builds the desire to achieve success in one's actions and activities and the enthusiasm to do something meaningful. Subjugating authority, on the other hand, creates a sense of compulsion and leads to rebellion. Learners easily give up on their goals, are unwilling to act and fear their teacher.

Teachers who have inner authority do not need to subjugate their learners who willingly adopt a subordinate position and highly appreciate the personal qualities of the teacher. Learners express appreciation, admiration, kindness and the eagerness to work together. In the case of outer authority we have a different scenario. Students take a subordinate position not out of internal beliefs, but out of fear, obligation or command. It is classified as forced subordination, which does not work in the process of education.

Thomas Gordon presents his interpretation of authority in four aspects (Gordon, 1991):

- authority based on knowledge, experience and competence,
- professional authority,
- authority based on informal agreements,
- authority deriving from power (the right to control, the right to appoint, the right to penalise when rules of conduct are violated).

In his analysis of the notion of authority, Mysłakowski distinguishes eight basic features of a model teacher: ability to make contact with young people; active kindness (as a teacher, as a friend and advisor); respect for the dignity and personal feelings of a student; the benefit of the doubt which young people should be given; justice; consistency between actions and words; reliability; being demanding and authoritarian (Mysłakowski, 1971).

Machel interprets authority in another way – authority is understood as a set of attributes of an educator, which are identified by a learner and thanks to which the educator becomes a point of reference for the learner. The learner is eager to accept the educator's suggestions, opinions and advice and to allow the educator to control his behaviour. He also makes a distinction between formal and informal authority. The first type enforces subordination because of the high position in the hierarchy. The other one, informal, guarantees a good rapport with learners and builds their trust towards prison personnel (Machel, 2003).

Due to the fact that they derive from social learning theory, these modelling methods are dependent not only on the observed activities described above, but also on the properties of the observer and the model himself (Ostrowska, 2008).

Educator in modelling process – model versus facts

So what is actually the current model of an educator? To answer this question, Gaś launched a project which covered three types of institutions for minors: voluntary labour corps, juvenile detention centres and reformatory correctional facilities (Gaś, 2008). In order to determine the effectiveness of the actions undertaken to help minors with special educational needs, Gaś studied the behaviour of the learners but also extended his research on the personnel of these institutions.

The study sample in juvenile detention centres consisted of 117 staff members who varied in terms of age, length of service and position (instructors – 48,7%, counselors and psychologists – 7.7%, supervisors – 3.4%, teachers – 24,8%, others – 0.9%, position not revealed – 14.5%).

The general profile of the examined group indicates that they tend to deal with stress in a calm and peaceful way, control their instincts with required adequacy, and show emotional stability in stressful situations.

They are scrupulous and reliable in performing their duties and are highly motivated to achieve their goals. The respondents present average level of life optimism, are cheerful and can distance themselves from situations requiring a rapid intensification of openness in interpersonal contacts.

Their social competences are on average level, their competence structure is balanced. The personnel are capable of developing closer interpersonal relations and creating commitment which requires openness. Moreover, they can express their point of view, exert influence and effectively withstand pressures. The researcher also diagnosed how the respondents cope with stress and the results show that they are focused on task-oriented activities and report a reduction in experiencing emotions. When they are overloaded and stressed they tend to formulate solutions, deal with their problems in a cognitive way and take measures to change the situation. They are also oriented towards avoiding intense emotional responses and prefer a balanced expression of negative emotions. They strongly believe that undertaken plans should be put into action and they are able to sustain their energy to act despite emerging difficulties.

The analyses show that professional staff in charge of juvenile detention centres perceive a typical learner in a very critical way. Such a dismal picture derives from a strong defence tendency. In their assessment, a typical learner is

deprived of interpersonal sensitivity and fully focused on himself. His mode of action is characterized by aggression and a negative attitude towards others. He is concentrated mainly on making himself the centre of attention.

When it comes to their own competences, however, staff members assess themselves very highly, both at a personal and professional level. But the focus on self-development does not stand above average and has no relation to the high self-assessment of their competences.

Independently, Gaś carried out his research project in selected correctional facilities. The study sample consisted of 108 staff members who varied in terms of age and length of service. Here, the survey embraced the guards as well and the research showed the following profile of positions:

- instructors – 64,6%,
- counselors and psychologists – 6,5%,
- teachers – 2,8%,
- guards – 1,9%,
- position not revealed – 24,1%.

Research results indicate that the personnel of correctional facilities generally have an integrated structure of personality, characterised by emotional stability. Operational staff members are well organised and targeted to achieve specific goals. They generally withstand difficulties and are moderately efficient in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

It was also revealed that they demonstrate average social competences, a task-oriented approach in stressful situations and moderate optimism. The respondents rated their personal and professional competences very highly but were accompanied by only standard interest in further self-development.

The examined group unanimously present an extremely negative picture of a typical learner. When it comes to their opinion of defining factors which would raise the effectiveness of correctional actions, they point out mainly formal changes which should be introduced in their facilities, and changes in the functioning of other participants of the rehabilitation process (e.g. parents of the minors).

What is characteristic about the quoted results is that in fact only half of the respondents possess features which predispose them to work as counselors in correctional institutions. The determinant of this thesis is an assumption that a person predisposed to work in this type of facility must not only possess the

necessary qualities but also present a certain level of these qualities. Research results revealed that only about half of operational staff in detention centers and correctional facilities demonstrate social competences above average level or present a highly integrated structure of personality.

In both groups examined, a large proportion of respondents (approximately 30%) do not have any idea how to increase the effectiveness of correctional activities. They do not associate the efficiency level with their own competences, which, in their opinion oscillate at a high level. Therefore, they do not feel the need for professional development – at their very best they showed only standard interest in self-development, which was usually low.

An important conclusion derives also from the analysis of the perception of a learner by the staff. The personnel of both diagnosed institutions – detention centres and correctional facilities – project a negative image of the learners they work with, which probably reduces their motivation to engage in modelling as a rehabilitation technique.

The results of the survey are quite controversial – they seriously question the quality of modelling which is used as a rehabilitation technique in the diagnosed institutions.

So what are the desired qualities of an educator who could effectively act as a model in the process of correcting the personality of minors? The top representatives of the Warsaw school – Jedlewski and Czapów – claim that an educator should demonstrate an attitude adequate to the advocated effective educational methods (Czapów & Jedlewski, 1967).

Machel, in turn, lists the following characteristics of a model employee of a corrective institution: good communication skills, empathy, fairness, good physical and mental condition, kindness, resistance to provocation and intimidation, the ability to express feelings and authenticity (Urban & Stanik, 2008).

Węgliński provides a description of the personality of a teacher, who according to Grzegorzewska, should be: equipped with love, kindness and moral standards (Węgliński, 2004).

In relevant literature many other interpretations of the educational model can be found- the work of Tomaszewski (1986), Łukaszewski (1974), and Kozieliński (1988), to mention but a few. However, if we want to follow the most up-to-date reference we should analyse the interpretation of the recognised pedeutology expert and researcher Zdzisław Kosyrz (2005). In his opinion, the

personality of a teacher should be analysed from a psychological as well as pedagogical perspective. The first aspect refers to the theory of educationally effective personality, and the second aspect deals with the pedagogical interpretation of what should form the desired personality structure of an educator.

Effective personality is characteristic to people who act beyond their standard educational obligations, focus on self-development and are able to make unpopular decisions which do not undermine their authority and beliefs. Additionally, they are critical towards themselves and can engage in honest self-reflection. Besides, an effective educator combines personal goals with professional objectives, cooperates with others, can interpret legal acts and make appropriate decisions.

Kosyrz extends the collection of mental properties of a good educator even further: beliefs, motivation, interests, abilities, intelligence, temperament, character, conscience and self-improvement. In the course of his digression on effective personality he formulates the following definition: effective personality shall be understood as a compilation of personal properties of an educator which determine his actions and pedagogical thinking. This system consists of socially and biologically shaped components which are closely integrated with each other. They include beliefs, motivations, interests, abilities, intelligence, temperamental, characterological and self-regulatory mechanisms.

Learners as the recipients in the process of modelling

Having analysed the model of a perfect educator, we should try to characterise the learner – the person who is being educated. To do that we have to adopt a specific classification of socially maladjusted minors. For our purpose, the best determinant is the scale of behaviour issues demonstrated and the level of demoralisation. Such classification is advocated by Sullivan, Grant and Pytka (2005), who describe the theory of interpersonal maturity development and diagnostic system called ‘I-level classification’.

According to this standardisation, people who are socially misfit are located on one of the three levels of interpersonal maturity (the levels are defined from the second to the fourth, as levels one and five are infrequent for a delinquent population). Within these levels there are nine subtypes of social disorders:

1. Level 2:
 - asocial aggressive,
 - asocial passive;
2. Level 3:
 - immature conformist,
 - cultural conformist,
 - manipulator (pragmatic);
3. Level 4:
 - neurotic acting-out,
 - neurotic anxious,
 - cultural identifier,
 - situational-emotional reaction.

The authors of this typology formulated an accompanying list of desired qualities of educators who would work with the particular category of socially misfit minors.

In the case of the first two subtypes – asocial aggressive and asocial passive – an educator should be calm and in control, resourceful, tolerant, selfless, have quite a low level of sanctions and short distance to intimacy (find it easy to develop intimacy), and the ability to control the behaviour of a learner.

An immature conformist, on the other hand, should work with a calm and cool-headed educator, as these qualities can lead to mutual identification. Besides, his educator should be characterised by verbal moderation, eagerness to offer help, selflessness and resistance to emotional breakdown resulting from the possible lack of educational success.

A cultural conformist requires a teacher who knows how to work with a group, is witty and can tell a lie from the truth after skillful analysis. A person who works with cultural conformists must have a strong controlling personality or at least demonstrate a tendency to be in control.

To deal with a manipulator the teacher must be even more assertive. They must know how to impose restrictions, show confidence and react in a firm or aggressive way. They must be able to analyse the intentions of a learner so as not to be fooled by them, and must maintain emotional distance.

On the fourth level of classification we have individuals prone to neurosis and acting out. Their guardian should ideally be open and communicative, honest, able to react quickly, self-critical, confident, resilient, firm, able to identify the

problems typical for this group and familiar with the jargon they use. Another subtype on this level of interpersonal maturity is an anxious neurotic, whose rehabilitation should be supervised by a person truly engaged in therapeutic work with minors, prone to introspection, tolerant and compassionate.

Minors classified as cultural identifiers call for a guardian who will not identify himself with them and will be able to maintain his autonomy. The authors failed to define more precise qualities for this type.

There is also limited information on how to work with a minor who is characterised by situational-emotional reaction in traumatic situations.

There is no empirical data available, so the qualities of an ideal educator for a minor with this particular dysfunction are not formally defined. The following compilation of general features is listed, although they have not been empirically proven so far: good knowledge of psychology of adolescent youth, ability to show emotional compassion and sympathy, eagerness to offer help, empathy and understanding of the behaviour of other people.

The above proves that modelling depends on factors such as the personality of the model-educator and the features of a socially maladjusted minor in their charge. Effective results are conditioned by the correct combination of these two factors in the process of interaction. At the same time particular methods, adequate for the situations in which modelling occurs, were indicated.

Finally, searching for further connections and dependencies between various aspects of modelling, we should definitely mention different characterisations that modelling can take.

Relevant factors in the process of modelling

To start with, the attempt to form a person's system of values or attitudes through modelling can be made in an *intended/planned* way, *or unintended/accidental* one.

In the first instance, the moderator acts in a *planned, deliberate, intended* manner. They are fully aware of their actions and what effect they are supposed to have on the learner. Additionally, they attempt to select a proper modelling technique (personal influence, personal example or the impact of authority) in

order to maximise the benefit for the particular learner, thanks to which modelling is more efficient.

Unplanned modelling is a different story. Here the range of activities carried out by the model is spontaneous, if not accidental. The educator acts in an intuitive way, in accordance with their beliefs, habits and customs. Despite the fact that they are educators, they do not plan a specific technique for use in correctional activities. What they do is rehabilitation seen as a spontaneous action aimed at the correction of certain behaviours and attitudes of the learner in their charge. They do not necessarily understand rehabilitation as intentional and planned correctional activities (Czapów & Jedlewski, 1971). The spontaneity and lack of strictly scheduled actions obviously does not mean the desired effectiveness cannot be achieved. If the message sent by the model is sufficiently authentic and strong, it can yield even higher effectiveness than the intended actions, although it will lack the axiological background.

The final classification of modelling to be discussed in this article is based on **axiological teleology of the message**, and subsequently it is linked to polarisation of the achieved educational effects. So if the content and the form of the message are not compatible with the educational paradigm, instead of achieving the pro-social effects of modelling, we obtain the opposite result – the strengthening and consolidation of the qualities of a socially unfit person which lead to devastating antagonism. Similarly, the opposite result is generated when we model the desired characteristics and what is achieved when they are imitated is valuable and pro-social.

The first scenario is linked to the thesis formulated by Ostrowska, who claims that one of the ways criminal behaviour is learnt is through social modelling (Ostrowska, 2008). This thesis can be easily extended by making an assumption that antisocial and asocial behaviours are also acquired through modelling or imitation. So if an educator models undesired behaviour or attitudes, they must assume that the effect of such modelling will be similar behaviour of the learner. Therefore, all legal regulations aimed at the protection of the rights of minors placed in closed detention institutions are fully justified. Their aim is to eliminate all activities which violate human dignity of learners and to foster subjective treatment of minors. An employee of a detention facility who manifests (and thus models) aggression towards a minor in their charge, whether through physical abuse (beating, maltreatment, violation of bodily integrity)

or psychological abuse (at the level of communication), receives in return the same product in the chain of social coexistence. Even if the abuse is not directed towards the educator (as here usually conformism takes over), it shows in relations with other learners, especially if there is relation of superiority.

Opora dedicated one chapter of his book to modelling from the perspective of social expectations, in which the author describes the complexity of pro-social modelling (Opora, 2010). In his view, pro-social modelling refers to a process in which the educator, in order to encourage other people to behave in a similar way, adopts a constructive role. To do this, he must adopt a *pro-social attitude*, which relies on ethical and respectful conduct towards learners. This confirms the stereotype that modelling is solely based on a behavioural aspect, while in fact it also refers to cognitive theories. This means the activity of an educator, apart from playing a positive role model, requires the following elements:

- building an empathetic relationship with the learner,
- modelling and reinforcing pro-social behaviour,
- discouraging presentation of undesirable values and behaviors,
- transparent and appropriate use of authority,
- open and univocal performance of the assigned roles and clear formulation of the objectives of the undertaken interventions,
- active cooperation with the learner, based on partnership relation, aimed at changing motivation and building new skills of planning, negotiating, problem solving and monitoring the progress,
- individual approach to each learner (acceptance, development of potential while taking into account personal limitations and deficits).

Conclusions

To sum up, modelling seems to be a very broad issue and it is too difficult, if not impossible, to take monodisciplinary approach in discussing this phenomenon. Its inexorable effect should be the improvement of the social functioning of the socially unfit through adopting the proposed system of values. This effect can be obtained by means of two superior mechanisms responsible for implementing the modeled axiomatic factors, which are first interiorised and then internalised. Only then will modelling shape the most effective mechanism of autoregulation – their

conscience. And all the educators and models should be reminded that 'he who stays with children quite a lot will soon discover that none of our actions remain without impact on them' (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe).

As Urszula Markowska-Manista writes (2016), for many years the Polish education system (Juvenile Detention Centre being a part of it) functioned without having to confront multiculturalism and problems with the construction of intercultural relations, conflict resolution, motivated and cultural interaction at the interface of cultures outside the Central European cultural circle. From the perspective of intercultural education, the educator should come in a variety of roles: a partner, advisor and mediator. Educationally difficult situations are caused by ignorance, additional responsibilities, helplessness, resentment and surprise. They also result from lack of training centres and a failure to prepare the staff to the adoption of foreign children, in particular refugees. These children do not speak Polish, thus require a lot of extra work for which the educator does not always have time. On the other hand, young people lack motivation to learn and rebel against the situation in which they do not have influence on experiences which provoke emotional instability. This only exasperates educational problems. Thus, to use the method of modelling effectively today, the educator must also possess intercultural competences.

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PAOLA D'URSI*

*Democratic Education in Lo Spazio
Popolare Neruda. Can the housing occupation
movement provide a forum to develop the
values of Democratic Education?*

ABSTRACT : Since the economic crisis of 2008, some social and political movements in Italy have organised themselves to confront the so-called “housing emergency” – the existing disparity between unoccupied housing and people without homes – offering support and solidarity to people in need, be they Italians or migrants. This text analyses Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda, a building which has been unoccupied and abandoned for about 10 years, that came to house 40 families. It speculates that within this community, a system has been developed based on the values of Democratic Education, as defined by AERO's Directory of Democratic Education and dr. Peter Moss. In particular, this paper explores the topics of integration, participation (both in the decision-making process and in activities organised), engagement and commitment to the community. Finally, it will address the importance of increasing our sense of responsibility and self-awareness as they are powerful antidotes to the reduction in self-esteem suffered after facing challenges in life. Jessor's theory of risk and protective behaviours and the theory of Inclusive Education will be taken into account with regards to their implementation in this case study among participating youth. Additionally, Zimbardo's Heroic Imagination Project will be addressed. The conclusion will illustrate that the formal educational system should cooperate with informal ones to spread the principles of Democratic Education in order to help young people to fully develop their potential, engage with the world around them and become positive, contributing members of society.

KEY WORDS : Democratic Education, housing emergency, occupations, community, inclusive education

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Introduction: Democratic Education

In every institution of formal education, instructors teach their students about democracy as a practice typical of ancient Greece, consisting in the possibility of expressing one's own opinion. Students are taught that in a democracy it is possible for citizens to state their own opinions without fear of punishment and that is essential to accept that there are different opinions and that everyone has the right to voice their own, as long as it does not hurt others. However, most of the time, the lesson stays at a theoretical level rather than encouraging the practice of the values of democracy in everyday life, including the classroom. Education, in its various forms, is basically authoritarian since one person or small groups of people make decisions about what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, how to assess learning, and the nature of the learning environment.

The main aim of Democratic Education is to develop real democracy through active participation by all those involved in classrooms and educational institutions. Under Democratic Education, students have the power to make decisions about their learning experience, because power is shared rather than appropriated in advance by a minority of people. There is no monolithic definition of Democratic Education or democratic schools, but what we mean here is “education in which young people have the freedom to organise their daily activities, and in which there is equality and democratic decision-making among young people and adults”.¹ Democratic Education views young people not as passive recipients of knowledge, but rather as active co-creators of their own learning: they are not the products of an education system, but rather valued participants in a learning community.

Democratic Education begins with the premise that everyone is unique, so everyone learns in a different way. By supporting the individual development of each young person within a caring community, Democratic Education helps young people learn about themselves, engage with the world around them, and become positive and contributing members of society. Basically, Democratic Education can be defined as the subject of *what* a teacher teaches and, at the same time, *how* they teach it, giving students the possibility to *learn by doing*.

¹ As quoted from AERO's *Directory of Democratic Education*. Alternative Education Resources Organization – conference: “Definitions of Selected Alternative Methods & Approaches”, 2014.

According to Peter Moss (2015), learning has to be a co-construction of meanings, not just an adult who assesses knowledge. It is necessary to provide space for the acquisition of new knowledge originating from different children and people, all of whom are able to think and act for themselves. This is so that democracy is actuated in all forms of deliberation and becomes a way to link people in every aspect of their lives. In Moss's opinion, the conditions necessary to practice this kind of education in society include providing students with well-educated teachers who have and teach respect for differences, evaluation and practice of democracy, and trust in human beings and their capacities. Democracy should become a fundamental value taught consistently in public education from kindergarten through university rather than being introduced after the right to vote is reached. According to Doctor Moss, people need democracy in order to survive as a species and also to reject the dictatorship of the lack of alternatives by being included and participating in a world of diversity where education is a tool to achieve more and more knowledge.

Democratic Education is based on many values, which will be outlined in this paragraph. Among others, these include the freedom of decision: everyone affected by a decision should be involved in the decision-making process, regardless of age, gender, nationality etc. In the case of school – opinions of students/pupils, teachers and parents because the whole community should decide collaboratively what is the best for each of its members. The value of participation or taking part in the decision-making process is not enough on its own. It is necessary to participate in all stages of the decision making process to ensure a community's welfare, and commitment to implementing and upholding its own decisions. Additionally, the values of cooperation and sharing responsibilities are fundamental. Everyone should take responsibility for the well-being of the whole group and in turn, the whole group is strengthened by the collaboration of each of its members, who are still important as individuals but become indispensable as parts of a team. Other important values of democracy and Democratic Education are innovation, equality among all of the members who join the community, acceptance of diversity as a source of enrichment, freedom of thought and expression, integration and so on. All of these principles should ensure that every person involved in a community's activities is enticed and driven to be civically and socially engaged. In this way, community members will be less tempted to delegate the implementation of

changes they would like to see in others and will work themselves to make these improvements first-hand.

Another key feature of Democratic Education is the implementation of so-called Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education is defined by the National Centre on Inclusive Education and Restructuring (NCERI) (National Study of Inclusive Education, 1994) as “providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the necessary supplemental aids and support services, in age-appropriate classes in their neighbourhood schools, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society”. It has to be clarified that this definition refers to all kinds of disabilities ranging from physical and developmental ones to handicaps created by the consequences of psychological stress. The latter can be caused by traumas such as migration, poverty, personal or familial loss, bullying and homelessness. Disabilities resultant from psychological stressors can render a student incapable of focusing during class, speaking properly or even going to school and following the courses taught. This is why the whole community, from teachers to students and parents, must make everyone feel accepted and integrated with the group without stigmatising or blaming those who have difficulties but rather helping them to overcome these.

Presentation of a case study: Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda

Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda was created as a project by the social centre *Askatasuna*.

Askatasuna is a social centre established in an unused building in Turin, in a multi-ethnic district called Vanchiglia; it was occupied in 1996 by a group of societal antagonists who wanted a meeting place in order to organise their political and social actions with the aim of creating a network of solidarity and support between students and workers of every age and nationality. Over time, *Askatasuna* welcomed hundreds of people who organised themselves in different collectives. The main ones among high school and university students are *CUA (Collettivo Universitario Autonomo)* and *KSA (Kollettivo Studenti Autorganizzati)*. Another collective is *Sportello PrendoCasa*, whose aim is to help people to face the consequences of evictions with legal and material support.

Comitato di Quartiere maintains contact with people who live in the district in order to understand the issues that increasingly hit the “weak” parts of the population and to find ways of tackling these issues. These two last groups often work together to manage the so-called “housing emergency”.

Since the economic crisis of 2008, the housing market has been one of the sectors most affected and trade still remains low (-1% on an annual basis in the second quarter of 2014). On average there are 15.8 unsold homes per every thousand housing units on the national territory.² According to the report “The homeless – Year 2014”, about 50,724 homeless people have turned to social services in the months of November and December 2014. This represents 2.43 per thousand of the population recorded at registry offices, an estimate that is likely to be much lower because it is based on the number of people who have turned at least once to the soup kitchen or night shelters in 158 municipalities. There may be many more people not reflected in these statistics because it is difficult to quantify how many people, for fear or shame, prefer to remain in the shadows. The population reflected here is mostly male (85,7%), foreign (58.2%) and under 54 years old (75.8%). In addition, l’Unione Inquilini³ estimates that 700 thousand families are currently waiting to get into the popular houses and will remain waiting for many years before eventually getting one. This is because the number of housing units allocated by the government at the time of the last housing reform (1980s) does not cover the large number of requests made every day by the newly poor, and also because the properties intended for that use are not considered up to standard, and deemed uninhabitable. The last government underestimated the insufficient housing problem and failed to invest in the renovation of existing housing. Instead, the government left what little housing there was empty and unused, continuing to cut public spending instead of investing in support of families in difficulty. The “housing emergency” consists in the irony of an excess of empty houses and the homeless people who are not allowed to live in them.

On the 25th of May 2016, an official document of the Ministry of the Interior⁴ announced that thousands of families are evicted every day by public

² Official data by Scenari Immobiliari, Milan, 2015.

³ Official data by L’Unione Inquilini, Rome, 2015.

⁴ Data realised by the Italian Minister of the Interior, 2015.

forces. This report immediately reveals that the “housing crisis” is a central social problem in all Italian cities, and it is now a mass, physical emergency. Evictions are a major component of the social drama of the housing crisis and in the last decade there has been a worrying rise. Slightly more than 36 thousand households materially suffered an eviction in 2014 which equals almost 100 evictions per day. This is compared to 150 thousand official requests for eviction made by landlords and over 77 thousand eviction orders issued by legal officers. On average, one in every 334 households experiences issues surrounding eviction according to data released by the Ministry of the Interior, first being subject to the bureaucratic process, and eventually being evicted.

Turin has become the city in Italy with the largest number of evictions per year: in 2014 there were 4,632 evictions resulting in hundreds of families being made street homeless. The shortcomings of public policies and welfare are confirmed by the report of the Ministry of the Interior which says that 90% of evictions occurring in 2015 concern “arrearage innocent”, or families whose members have lost their jobs and cannot find new ones. These are essentially victims of the mass unemployment problem that plagues this country. The institutions have proven incapable of proposing real solutions for families experiencing housing problems and instead choose to delegate and empower the police to deal with it. What is a political and social problem of housing as a matter of public policy is now a police issue and has led to the development of a treacherous new tool: Article 610, which is another confirmation of the unwillingness of city hall to confront the issue affecting the city. Article 610 allows bailiffs to show up unannounced with policemen to carry out evictions. This provision aims to heap insecurity onto those who are already burdened by the weight of an impending eviction. The bailiff could show up on any date, any time, destroying all opportunity for dialogue with vulnerable families. It delegates the management of evictions to the police, making it clear that the theoretically responsible institutions will not take political responsibility for what happens. This is the consequence of the policies of a local government that wants to show its strength through egregious acts instead of solving the housing problem in a sustainable, holistic way. This could be done by allocating funds to support people in need or, by providing high-demand housing to those who have been languishing on

the waiting list for over 10 years. The local government has failed to do this because it would mean investing money in projects that would take years to show positive results. Government has shown itself to prefer immediate results, albeit bad ones. The main problem is that the government is supposed to be responsible for these people many of whom are not even illegal immigrants. Considerable portions of the people suffering under the housing crisis are poor people from this country. Leaving them without homes reduces the level of social security of the whole nation.

The consequences of this situation include most prominently that these people are essentially homeless right after their eviction. There are also grave psychological consequences: how they feel, their anger, their frustration, their sense of powerlessness, their lack of ability to focus on anything else but the basic need for housing and other symptoms typical of post-traumatic stress disorder as described in the DSM-V. These people can fall into the category of depression or PTSD (more: Friedman, Matthew et al., 2011, pp. 737–749) because of the loss of their belongings and most of all, their dignity and the perception of being able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. They can often develop addiction to illegal substances or, more often, behavioural addictions, for example to gambling, hoping to win money to buy a new house. Furthermore, it often happens that people with this kind of background are more at risk of criminal activity: prostitution, theft and human trafficking may seem like the only options for those who have been abandoned by social institutions and the community.

To face this critical situation, *Askatasuna* created a project that offers support and solidarity to people based on the condition of their needs, either psychological or legal and material. This is in order to make them feel surrounded by a network of other people who care about their wellbeing, but even more to empower those who feel powerless and insecure. Once empowered by this supportive network, they feel like the architects of their own destiny driven by the desire for self-organisation within the community, becoming more aware of the influence that each of them has on their own life and taking responsibility for their own actions. This network has the goal of delaying the evictions of people in need. This means being ready at any time to present at a household that is being evicted to face the bailiff and the police and try to convince them not to carry out the eviction. When it does

not work, the network provides the people being evicted with a place to live, most of the time in a building that was left empty and derelict and that has been found and used to house them.

Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda houses 40 families, both Italians and migrants, in an abandoned, former primary school. The group first repurposed the building in March 2015, and in just a few short months the occupants were able to create a strong community which includes people of all ages and ethnicities. Currently Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda houses four Italian people in their twenties (from *Sportello PrendoCasa*), several Italians in their late forties and around 40 migrants, mostly from Africa and Eastern Europe. Some occupants are alone; others are with their children. All of these people faced difficult situations in their lives: some of them lost their jobs and homes because of the unemployment crisis, others came to Italy hoping to find better opportunities for life and work. All of them had to manage the same problems, and all of them have proven to be incredibly resilient in order not to succumb to the hardships of life. They are willing to fight for what they think they deserve and for them, Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda is a safe place where they can start over and build a decent life. It is also a safe place to secure a bright future for their families and children.

In late July 2015 the building's occupants were evicted by the police in spite of extensive efforts to prevent this. Some of the occupants locked themselves on the roof and stayed there for hours under the burning sun. The police did not allow anyone to bring them water, and even a new-born baby was not allowed to be brought to his mother who wanted to breast-feed him. At the end of the day, the police were able to reach the roof and brought them all to the police station to report them (they all have criminal records for this reason). Even though the building had been surrounded by people who supported this occupation, the bailiff closed it. No alternative accommodation was offered to the families in need, who were not even allowed to talk with lawyers or social services. For a certain period of time the group went to live in *Askatasuna*, but soon, through common effort, they organised to occupy a new empty place in another district, giving it the same name as the previous one, in its honour. They have lived there since the end of October 2015, but were forced to spend the winter without any heating. There was a period of time without water or electricity because local institutions prevented them

from signing contracts with private or public industries providing the public with these essential utility services.

It is a remarkable fact that everyday more and more people believe that to tackle this critical situation it is necessary to gain self-consciousness and engage first hand in their own lives without relinquishing their future to any social institution. The conflict in question is what is expressed in the relationship between the State, which is unable to meet the basic needs of a large part of the population, and the population itself. The person who is negatively affected by the problem is the one who owns the conflict and has to find a solution to it, and this thought often begets reactions that are considered illegal by the same institutions who have allowed the problems to be created and that do not take care of their own citizens. People are willing to take what they think they deserve to live a dignified life, conscious of the risk of trials and legal penalties, rebelling against laws that are considered unfair and even oppressive. It is notable that there are two different kinds of illegality that can easily result in the face of the housing crisis: homelessness, theft, prostitution and human trafficking on one hand and illegal occupation and resistance on the other. How to choose which side to take is up to the person himself/herself, and depends on their personal level of self-esteem and resilience. The first “category” is usually stigmatised by society, and the second one is often blamed because they “found a way not to pay the rent when everybody else has to”. Moreover, they are considered dangerous because they represent an alternative and a threat to the way of life that is well established in our society. It is interesting that the second category, as a part of a political and social movement, has its own lawyers who offer their work for low prices to support the whole movement. This means that sometimes even people of the law recognise that it is necessary to act in a way that is considered illegal in order not just to survive but to live a life worth living.

Applications of Democratic Education in the Project

Only some of the people who support the project decided to actually live there, while many others often go to the building to attend the social activities that the occupants organise periodically. In fact, every week there is a meeting between

the occupants, some people from *Askatasuna*, mostly militant from *Sportello PrendoCasa*, people from the district and whoever is interested. During these meetings, they talk about every issue that matters to the group and from time to time they organise events for the community such as dinners open to everyone at low prices, concerts or film nights. Sometimes there are activities for children such as artistic workshops, after-school programs and lessons. Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda is not just a place to stay, it offers an alternative way of living based on the values of solidarity, integration, equality, participation and civic engagement, all of which are basics of the democratic system. Although it is not a formal institution for the education of children and youngsters, it is an informal and even complementary space where they can have the possibility to learn the skills related to manual capabilities, organisational abilities and all values and principles that will help them in the formation of a strong and structured character which can juggle the adult world. Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda is using the norms of the Democratic Education and it is developing positive results.

Living in this place means to live in a community, in which all the people involved take part in the decision-making process through weekly assemblies where everyone has equal rights to talk and to express their opinion about anything affecting themselves or the whole community. The community's welfare and wellbeing are discussed in a peaceful but critical way in order to achieve what is, over time, the best that everyone can do without giving orders to anyone. This creates the desire to participate and to be engaged in activities that are often addressed not only to individuals themselves but to the entire city. Conceptually, these collaborative discussions extend to the national or international level when it comes to the rights of migrants, women, children and so on. Living in a community implements the processes of cooperation and sharing, unknown to those who live in their own homes and often isolated from others. Day by day these people start to share their lives with strangers and they have to deal with differences in languages, cultures, values, age and gender. They manage to work together for the best of the community which becomes more important than the single individual as it strengthens each of those who live within it. This is a value almost lost in western societies while it is still strong in non-individualistic Eastern societies.

As regards children in particular, taking into account Jessor's theory of protective and risk factors, it is possible to analyse how these factors (family,

environment, peers, and school) and intra-psychological conditions of children are implemented in this project (more: Jessor, 1957).

For what concerns *family*, by showing their children how to face problems without surrendering, parents can teach resilience to children. In fact, the newest study proves that resilience is not innate, it is actually a capability and a tool that can be developed in order to deal with difficulties. Latest analyses (see: Steinhart, Dolbier, 2010) indicated that those who received a psychoeducational intervention had significantly higher resilience scores, more effective coping strategies (i.e. higher problem solving, lower avoidant coping), higher scores on protective factors (i.e. positive affect, self-esteem, self-leadership), and lower scores on symptomatology (i.e. depressive symptoms, negative affect, perceived stress) than those who did not have the psychoeducational intervention. These findings indicate that a resilience program may be useful as a stress-management and stress-prevention strategy.

Fostering resilience prepares young people to work on weaker areas of their development, while supporting a positive sense of self; taking a resilience approach requires acknowledging and balancing the ongoing tension between short- and long- term goals. On the other hand, research on resilience tells us something about the adults who facilitate resilience: “educators gain the trust of young people, hold high expectations for achievement, and offer caring support coupled with accountability” (Brown, D’Emidio-Caston, Benard, 2001).

Moreover, other studies introduced the concept of “Community Resilience” as substantially different from the sum of each person’s capacity of adaptation under extenuating circumstances, but as it emerges from four primary adaptive capacities: economic development, information and communication, community competence and social capital; lastly, it emphasises the capability of a group to “change and develop following the challenge” (see: Hamiel, Wolmer, Spirman, & Laor, 2013, pp. 261–274). After developing a “culture of safety”, the community is prepared, and it can react more rapidly and effectively to disaster by implementing a coordinated response.

For what concerns the *environment*, Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda offers a great example of participation and civic engagement and, even if the role of parents remains strong, the whole community has important influence on the life of the children who live or frequent this place. Children are offered an authoritative model, rather than an authoritarian one. Furthermore, these people

share responsibilities not only in what to do, but also in the education and the wellbeing of the children.

Everyone contributes to childcare when the parents are absent, including older children who take care of the youngest ones. As a consequence, among the group of *peers* it is easy for children to find someone who can be seen as a mentor and who can guide them and help them to improve, hopefully most of the time with positive behaviour. A study (Beier et al. 2000, pp. 327–331) indicates that there is a relationship between adolescents who have mentors and less participation in certain risk behaviours; it finds that adolescents having mentors were less likely to participate in 4 of the 5 measured risk behaviours—ever having carried a weapon, having used illicit drugs in the past 30 days, having more than 1 sexual partner in the last 6 months, or smoking more than 5 cigarettes on a daily basis. It did not find adult mentorship to have a significant effect on the use of alcohol. When it assessed the impact of non-parental mentors and parental mentors vs. no mentors, it found that adolescents with either type of mentor were less likely to be at higher risk, i.e. participating in 2 or more risk behaviours compared with adolescents who did not have a mentor.

Children do not only play together, they also do their homework together and most of the time they organise themselves in groups to help each other. Often, the older children assist the younger ones when they can. Doing this, the children feel and actually become more responsible, acting in a much more mature way than their peers who are not used to cooperating with younger ones. The children feel instrumental in others' scholastic success and general wellbeing. This increases their self-awareness and their willingness to study themselves as they see that this can be positive for the whole community, and only later on realise how important studying is for their own future.

From this willingness to study and help each other, the assembly has decided to offer free tuition to students with difficulties passing the school year or to those who are preparing for their maturity test. The classes are open to everyone who is interested, and are held by students attending university who volunteer to give their contribution to the project feeling helpful and included in it. In this way, opening up to people coming from other backgrounds increases the diversification within the network of solidarity. It also represents an opportunity for acknowledgement, not only of what the lesson itself concerns, but also the backgrounds and stories of others. Essentially, it affords the possibility of

effective integration among different people. The classes are based on the values of Inclusive Education so that every student is supported to learn, contribute and participate. Inclusive Education provides opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying, developing friendships among a wide variety of children. Each child has their own individual needs and abilities, and this positively affects both children and parents in their appreciation of diversity and inclusion on a broader level. A culture of respect and belonging is fostered and individual strengths and gifts are developed with high and appropriate expectations for each child.

This project also gives a chance to people who live this experience from another perspective. They have the opportunity to feel part of it and as a consequence of this openness to everyone, the issue becomes better known by the citizens. In turn, the level of support and solidarity is raised higher and higher as well as the participation during the activities and the engagement in the experience. Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda becomes a point of reference even for those who do not live there or who have different socioeconomic backgrounds, but who know that it is a place to spend time in a nice environment where everyone is welcomed and accepted for who they are. This recognised acceptance is regardless of nationality, religion or culture, but because of them, as those characteristics are considered something that enrich the whole community bringing different points of view and new approaches to life.

The free tuition is not the only activity that the community offers to the public, it also organises arts workshops and celebrations of the main national festivities. There is a parade for carnival in which the children build floats and paint each other's faces. At Halloween, children trick or treat in the district and, on both of these occasions, the children (and some adults) dress up in costumes. At Christmas they create hand-made presents for their families and friends and even receive their own directly from Santa Claus. At the beginning of spring 2016, children from the housing project and their friends painted one of the main walls of the building with a design that they created together, with the assistance of two students of the faculty of Art. Every once in a while they participate in a weekly market held by the housing project. They organise their own children's market where they sell toys and things that they no longer need. They earn a little pocket money that they can use for whatever they like, and through this they learn the value of money and the importance of work in acquiring it. They achieve skills of interaction with

those who want to buy from them, and they also learn how not to be too attached to material things, being able to give away their belongings.

All of these activities, and many other, help to increase children's self-awareness and a sense of ability and entitlement. They learn to express themselves and to work to reach their goals, so much that some of them want to follow the assembly and partake in the decision-making process. They participate by reporting what it is like to live in this kind of situation, what they need and what they think they can do to strengthen Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda. They have opinions on how to make it more recognised in society as a safe place where children can play and grow while their parents can either spend time together or fight for their rights. This demonstrates that even in the assembly there is equality between those who participate, there is no discrimination, not even based on age barriers. Instead, there is acceptance and integration of whoever wants to contribute so that the children are not over-protected or excluded from the decision-making processes as a form of age discrimination. From time to time, they are, as much as possible, included and made aware of the situation of the community.

All this means that children feel like a part of the community and start to think about the role that each of them can play within it. They also consider the role that this community itself can, in return, play in society and obviously they are helped and guided by adults with a more complex and accurate global view of things. They are placed on a level of discussion that helps them to develop critical thinking skills as well as subjectivity that aids them in learning to interpret the world around them with awareness and caution. They learn to evaluate what is being spread by the media and to embark on a path of personal growth as well as citizens. They are aware and critical and are able to understand what can be modified to decrease the level of inequity and social injustice, and how to do it.

This is why most of the time, when Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda organises demonstrations around the city, children are willing to organise and make speeches. They share their personal experience as occupiers, the trauma they faced during and after evictions and what it means for each of them to have the knowledge that they are never alone in facing these difficulties. They are supported not only by their parents and the other occupants. They also receive a lot of aid and encouragement from their classmates and their teachers who are involved in common initiatives to raise awareness in school both towards the other students and their families regarding the emergency housing crisis and the integration of

migrants. Through their participation in meetings and the planning of interventions and initiatives, children learn by doing: they begin to understand how to organise themselves trying to reach agreement and taking into account all the different proposals, mediating between each other and avoiding conflicts. They learn to collaborate and to share, to be engaged and committed to what they believe, to increase their empathy for the weak and to be the spokesperson for those who do not have the chance to fight for their rights without help.

Through the enhancement of empathy and compassion, this experience provides each of the individuals involved with knowledge, tools, strategies as well as exercises to help them overcome the social and psychological forces that can prevent people from taking effective action at crucial moments in their lives. Thus, they are more prone to react during challenging situations, to transform negative situations and create positive change. This is basically the main aim of the “Heroic Imagination Project”⁵ that was founded by prof. Philip Zimbardo, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Stanford University, which is unconsciously put into practice within the occupation, with more than positive results. In fact, it is notable that children and adults who are used to reacting first-hand to critical moments in their lives will be more likely to do the same for others, in order to help them to overcome their problems, showing understanding and courage.

Thanks to the commitment that the community takes in educating children to the positive values of coexistence, integration and social and civic engagement, and thanks to the passion that the children themselves are acknowledged to have in being part of the community, these reinforce each other. They become more and more self-confident and empowered in what they do so as to get good results for themselves. In the short term: having a home and organising very successful activities, thus having a confirmation of the fact that their efforts have paid off in raising public awareness and support. In the long term: being able to create and maintain a strong support network and solidarity as well as openness to discussion and the ability to take action in the event of necessity. This further strengthens the occupants and remains impregnated in people who have lived such experiences even in the case of an eventual eviction. The values acquired and shared during the existence of the occupation housing project remain strong in the city, and not

⁵ *Understanding Heroism*. Philip Zimbardo, 2015.

just tied to a specific physical place as this project will survive in the individuals who continue to pursue and spread the initiatives begun together.

What more can be done?

Certain things must be done to achieve success and spread the ethical principles that are shared within the community, so that they will be extended beyond the network itself. This would clearly be helped by a drastic change in government policies dealing with areas of intervention such as: integration of migrants, the housing crisis, assistance to the unemployed and protection of human and children's rights. However, even if these changes in government policies on the local and national level were effective, they are not enough, as they would only treat the symptom rather than the causes of this problem: there is the urgency to deal with the housing crisis, the unemployment, the decrease in average income, the rise of public services costs, the fund cuts in school and health...

As long as this radical change in social institutions does not happen, the only thing that can be done is to spread more and more positive values like integration, compassion, participation, civic engagement and action itself. This can be achieved through sensitisation programs and the creation of mindfulness and commitment in individuals. This way, there will be more people willing to challenge what is wrong in society and to work to change it. Although Lo Spazio Popolare Neruda has developed and carries out its democratic system in opposition to governmental institutions, the goal of both the political movement and the government should be to work together to spread the implementation of this positive behaviour among children and adults. This is in order to make the consequences of Democratic Education that have been certified by the scientific community and that are evident in this project (participation, civic engagement and integration) profitable for everyone. For this to happen, it is essential that teachers of primary and secondary schools are trained to change the traditional teaching method in favour of the innovative and hopefully better one, which is based precisely on the studies done in the field of Democratic Education and Inclusive Education. It is necessary for students with vulnerabilities to be supported by competent staff and included in the group. Otherwise, they may be marginalised and subject to bullying and

discrimination. The same support and training should be applied to people from migrant families; it is important that families and pupils are taken into account from time to time in the decision making process so that they develop a sense of responsibility and engagement with the community. Having confidence in the ability of children and allowing them to express themselves freely gives them the opportunity to fully develop their potential. By changing the mindset of the adults of the future we can hope to achieve positive changes in the whole society.

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REBECCA BUDDE*

*Advanced academic study programs
and their contribution to awareness raising
on children and their rights*

*The example of the M.A. Childhood Studies
and Children's Rights*

ABSTRACT : Advanced, specialised academic programs of study have been mushrooming over the past years. This is particularly so in the field of humanities and more specifically regarding the study of democracy, conflict management, human and children's rights. Advancing from this fact, outcomes of such programs are mostly intangible and only few have been evaluated concerning their impact on participants and the contribution they can make towards an awareness amelioration of social circumstances in the field concerned (Hirseland et al., 2004).

In this chapter, I will discuss the *M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights* at the Freie Universität Berlin and University of Applied Sciences, Potsdam, Germany. I will do so respectively as one example of how scholars, researchers and well-studied practitioners can position themselves, engage in research and take action in view of the difficulties children face in today's societies. Evaluative data collected during the first decade of the program's implementation (2007–2016) will be drawn upon. A brief overview will be given of the program's content introducing the concept of 'Children Out of Place' (Conolly & Ennew, 1996; Invernizzi et al., 2017) as a theoretical basis for understanding marginalised children's living circumstances. By listening to graduates voices and their estimation of the program's impact on their professional and personal lives as well as their attitudes when interacting with members of society, in particular children, this article will argue towards the necessity of continuing and establishing more such specialised and advanced programs in children's rights.

KEY WORDS : advanced M.A. program, evaluation, children's rights, childhood studies, children out of place

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Introduction

Is it possible to reach a conclusive answer to the question whether and how advanced academic study programs, such as the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights (MACR) contribute to raising awareness of children's rights; referring to migrant and refugee children and other children who are in some way 'Children Out of Place'? Could potential contributions made by an academic program to the improvement of children's lives and the lives of Children Out of Place in particular be defined and described or even measured? As in other trainings, workshops, modules and programs of study in areas such as democracy, human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination, anti-bias, children's rights (understood as a special form of human rights), direct impact and outcomes can hardly be depicted due to the intangible and long-term results of the qualification. What can be done is to evaluate the impact the training has on its participants and their subsequent actions in which skills and tools as well as theories obtained during the qualification are contextually applied. One prevalent outcome of the qualification is a change in understanding what childhood is, the attitude towards children and approaches to research concerning children, and a shift from research *on* children and their need for protection to researching *with* children: *I became much more aware of the concept of children as participants rather than just beings that we need to protect* (answer of a MACR graduate to an online survey conducted in autumn 2014¹).

What effects this change of attitude and understanding has on society and how it impacts social living conditions and specifically children and their rights is difficult to assess (objectively) to say the least. Henceforth, the question may rather be asked: In what way does the program contribute to understanding and taking according action regarding how children in societies can be assisted in coping with difficulties and challenges.

¹ In autumn 2014, I developed and conducted an online survey, which was sent to graduates of children's rights study programs at several European Universities. Several of the few comments (about 40) on what the studies' main impact has been is that a shift away from children's rights as protection rights towards agency and participation rights has been evoked. The question answered here is: How has studying children's rights impacted on you personally? Has your mind set changed, and if so, how would you describe this change?

When graduates and alumni of the MACR are asked what the main and dominant knowledge acquired through the program is, they often answer similarly. It seems graduates and alumni of this particular program feel that the notion of children's rights as participatory rights has been conveyed to them through the MACR and has changed their view on children. Prior to the program, alumni viewed children merely as vulnerable, largely incompetent beings in need of protection, development and of acquiring (cognitive) knowledge and skills, or, said in other words, as nearly empty buckets which need to be filled with resources and capacities to make them true members of society. In contrast, upon completion of the program, the students' understanding of children has been extended to give more weight to both the agency and subjective rights of children as beings in the present. ...*it strengthened my respect for children as agents and their participation rights* (MACR graduate, online survey 2014).

The M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights (MACR)

The M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights (MACR) is an advanced 1,5 year study program, with seven modules and a final Master's Thesis. In this section, I will outline the individual modules, their content and the impact they have had on graduates.

First Semester

Module 1: Childhood Studies

Within this advanced study program on children's rights and childhood studies in higher education, the struggles that children and young people face today are approached from various disciplines. The basis for discussion is lent in large parts from sociological perspectives and more concretely from the "New Sociology of Childhood" which is based on the assumption that childhood is a social construction that changes and has changed over time, and requires contextualisation (see e.g. Hungerland, 2008; Gaitán 2009, Liebel, 2007, 2009 and other years). In their millennial work *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*,

James & Prout (1990, p. 7) argue: “The immaturity of children is a biological fact but the ways in which immaturity is understood is a fact of culture... childhood is both constructed and reconstructed both for and by children”. These thoughts as well as the understanding that children, already at a very young age, are an inherent part of society and accepted as such, which, in many societies outside of the Global North is factual living, just as much as children’s contribution to a functioning communal living, children’s agency is acknowledged, discussed and critically reflected in the MACR. The core belief is that children are social actors, equal members of society and not only their parents’ or guardians’ dependents. A child does not become (a member of society), he/she is a member already today.² Children are often seen as being the future, which makes us blind to the fact that they are part of our societies in the present, during their childhood. Western, European normative assumptions of what a ‘proper’ childhood is, namely the phase in life in which children are still immature, unable to participate in society and in need of preparation for their future role as adults in society, is questioned. According to this understanding of childhood, it is a period in which persons are freed of responsibilities and in need of protection (Ariés, 1965; Hungerland, 2008). This approach to childhood still dominates discourses on childhood, which per se view childhood outside the North/West in the Global South³ as unfortunate, lacking, needy and, as James, Jenks & Prout argue “even outrageous, violat(ing) some universal, natural childhood” (James et al. 1998, p. 141; see also Burman, 1994). This categorisation bears problems, as the ‘developing’ world, the entirety of the Global South, cannot be generalised; Chile or Brazil are much different than Sudan or Myanmar- by arguing in simple North/West-South distinction, justice to these varying societies cannot be done. The discourse on whether there is one childhood (a proper one) or many (see Prout, 2005; Alderson, 2013), whether children who do not grow up having a proper or ‘real’ childhood are children without or ‘outside’ childhood,

² Already in the early 20th Century, Janusz Korczak understood children as actors of today. ‘Children don’t become human beings, they already are’ (see Korczak, 1919/1920 in Eichsteller, 2009, p. 384).

³ There have been changes of terms due to political correctness and the premise of non-discrimination:

From ‘Third World’/‘Developing Countries’ to ‘Majority World’ (where the majority of the world population lives) and the ‘Global South’ (all the countries are in the South of the equator). This term is mostly used at the moment. All terms carry a message: the first implies superiority of the North/West, the second has the most neutral and factual connotation and the third can easily be equated only geographically which carries the message of a homogenous Southern half of the world.

is discussed in the MACR to grasp diversity in contrast to claimed universal concepts.*I really, really had to reflect on my own thinking about childhood and especially the idea of “Kinder ohne Kindheit” (children without childhood) which actually negates the other types of childhood that many children have around the world*⁴ (Moritz, p. 72–75, Graduate of 2008, interviewed in early 2016, UK Citizen living in Germany, child rights ombudsman for a small NGO in Berlin and tutor in the MACR).

Module 2: Children’s Rights (as Participatory Agency Rights)

Accordingly, children’s rights in the MACR are understood as subjective rights children can claim for themselves rather than rights solely conveyed to them on their behalf by adults. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its four guiding principles: children’s right to non-discrimination (Art. 2), the best interest of the child (Art. 3), the child’s right to life, survival and development (Art. 6) and respect for the child’s views (Art. 12–17) are the starting point to grasp the concept of children’s rights as part of international human rights laws and instruments. The CRC is neither the first nor the only international agreement on children’s rights. It is the outcome of a lengthy development process in which ideas and declared rights of children from former international declarations⁵ were taken up and further developed (see e.g. Cantwell, 1992; Holzscheiter, 2010, Liebel, 2007). The perspective of a child’s right to participation as a new angle shifted the approach from a mere protective and provisional view on children and their rights to include children’s participation.⁶

⁴ This and the following quotes are taken from structured interviews with graduates and alumni that have been conducted over the past eight years. All names have been anonymised. A full analysis of the interviews and other evaluative data on the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children’s Rights is being done in the frame of my PhD. For full interview transcripts, please contact rbudde@fu-berlin.de or budde@fh-potsdam.de

⁵ Eglantyne Jebb’s *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* from 1923 formed the basis for the *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child* of 1924, followed by the *UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1959, culminating in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* which entered into force in 1990.

⁶ The rights enshrined in the CRC are often referred to as the three P’s. Protection, Provision and Participation, of which participation rights are the ‘newest’

The right to participation is emphasised and lived in the MACR – in order to grasp the meaning of true participation, of natural participation that is effortless and normal, it is important that students experience and reflect their own participation in the MACR, by engaging in discussions and learning from each other rather than getting input mainly from the teacher. During and upon completion of the program, some students criticise this as unprofessional or not scientifically worthy of M.A. level studies as they may be based on reflections yet perhaps not researched opinions of other students. This concept is new for some students who come from other disciplines, such as law or economics, from other countries and cultures, where university education often emphasises listening to knowledgeable professors' input without much space for students' participation. In retrospect, students value the exposure to other opinions and perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds as one of the greatest assets of the MACR. (...) *...there wasn't only one way but you could tackle children's rights from different perspectives* (Lulu, p. 204–205, Graduate of 2014, Macedonian Roma, works as a children's rights school mediator) Lulu is referring to the significance of various opinions and perspectives to take interdisciplinary and truly holistic approaches to children's rights in all working stages. [...] The major players, in the CRC's implementation e.g. NGOs, public institutions, governments, politicians and individuals are also a focus of discussion in Module 2.⁷

Module 3: Techniques and Research Methods

The methods of research on childhood and children's rights, the third of the core modules in the first semester, are mostly based in social qualitative research approaches. This is based on the belief that there is no all-inclusive recipe for a social group as diverse as children which, as often practiced in quantitative approaches, cannot be depicted in numbers and statistics only. Social research, especially qualitative methods, can, when taught in theory, be overwhelming for students who do not yet have experience in this field. As the MACR student groups are very heterogeneous, with students from up to fifteen different countries per group and just as many disciplinary backgrounds, not many have been exposed to qualitative research methods before: *....methods and techniques, ummm, well*

⁷ Due to limitations I cannot go deeper into this complex topic.

this subject or module was, I found, really interesting and extremely useful, but I needed more... (Branka, pp. 108–109, Graduate of 2008 – Serbian citizen, living in Germany, she studied pedagogy, teacher education and English Literature). The reason for qualitative research methods being even more difficult to grasp than quantitative methods is the assumption that the data collected from case studies and interviews, focus group discussions and field observations can often not be representatively analysed and thus carry a potential risk of arbitrary interpretation of the data by the researcher. Therefore, childhood and children’s rights research, as argued by Ennew & Bessel & Beazly (2009), must take an approach of including and involving children in the research process and engaging in a mutual process of observing and learning; analysing and drawing of conclusions to use for better understanding of phenomena of concern to children and subsequent action to meet the identified needs. Art. 12 (and following Articles 13–17) of the CRC gives the legal foundation for children’s participation, stating that:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (CRC, Art.12 (1)).

Although Art. 12 mainly aims at including children in judicial proceedings, it can and must be applied to *all matters* affecting them (principle “best interest of the child”, CRC, Art. 3), including research *on* them, towards a focus on researching *with* them. As Mason & Hood (2010) argue, if the increasingly acknowledged children’s agency is taken seriously, the power dynamics in child-adult relations must be re-negotiated so as not to continue researching children according to ideas, patterns and assumed children’s needs defined and categorised by adults. Still today, most research concerning children is designed by adults. And yet, often the criteria are not even defined by adults who are in the children’s surrounding, or who at least are grown-ups from communities sharing similar values as the children concerned, nor by involving people in direct contact with the children (parents, teachers, coaches, doctors etc.) in the process. On the contrary, studies conducted by researchers from the North/West in the Global South rarely take into account, let alone are based on the issues children themselves experience as challenging. Moving away from such an

adult-centered paternalistic approach to research opens the eyes for participative research methods in which children are creators of their own living space. Involving them in research can empower children to co-design the research frame and research questions to best approach the most pressing themes they are dealing with (Ennew et.al, 2009; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010; Tisdall et al., 2006). What makes participation meaningful to children? Finding an answer to this question in cooperation with children is one step towards ensuring real participation. One alumna from Germany, Lisa, debated whether to start her PhD research after having graduated from the MACR. She had the idea of engaging in empirical research and having children conduct the research themselves. She had in mind to have children truly and meaningfully participate, not only by consulting with children on the research topic and questions or involving them by asking pre-defined questions, letting them draw or participate in their own focus group discussions. Rather, Lisa wanted to encourage children to conduct interviews themselves or animate children to collect own data, which she may have analysed cooperatively with them. *well, like I like actually wanted and still want to [...] work with children and elaborate with children and conduct interviews with children and in fact not only with children as interview partners but children interviewing children [...] ehm, and I am still passionate about this idea – and she (the professor) said, that is nonsense, if you'd like to work with children, then organise and hold nice workshops but this isn't worthy for science [...] she of course didn't articulate herself exactly like this – but that was then a bit...* (Lisa, pp. 222–228, Graduate of 2012, own translation). So the professor she wanted to work with argued that this would not be scientific. This demonstrates that even those scholars, researchers and professors who are active in the field of childhood and children's rights (the professor had been the spokeswoman of the National Coalition for the Implementation of the CRC in Germany before) do not, in reality, trust children to have the competence to do research (under the guidance of adults) which is scientifically valid- the image and understanding about children not yet being in a position to do so prevails. More children's rights study programs can contribute to further thinking *.....with children instead of about them* (Ruth, Graduate of 2013, studied pediatrics, is a neonatologist, and did bedside teaching for a long time, German) in participative research to produce more adequate, grass-roots data and understanding of how children can live and enjoy their rights and live them.

Second Semester

Module 4: Children's Work and Education

The second semester in the MACR is dedicated to four major themes of which three, seminar 2 in module 4 on working children's rights and both seminars in module 5, refer directly to the concept 'Children Out of Place', which I will highlight here. Before introducing the concept, for reasons of completeness, I will depict the content of the first seminar of module 4: children's right to education. This seminar has a focus on reform pedagogical approaches, global and informal learning as well as inclusive education. As most people agree, education (and learning) is key for succeeding and progressing in one's life. The right to education is written and manifested in the CRC, Art. 28 (1) articulating the general right to education, and the quality and aims of education are discussed in General Comment No.1 on 'The Aims of Education'. They are introduced and critically discussed in the seminar by looking at different case studies. The heterogeneous approaches to education and what complimentary or additional forms of education and learning concepts are needed are presented and challenged in a number of ways. Namely by weighing the pros and cons of specific educational settings, raising questions such as to what end children shall be educated and what type (and quality) of school, educational system or institution should be accessible for them in which world region or social strata. Challenging questions in the module are whether children ought to be educated with the objective of their becoming a part of the functioning, skilled and able workforce, i.e. for "useful (tangible) things in life". Alternatively, should they be educated to become socially responsible members of society or to become supporters of specialised knowledge and progression? (Ross, Dooly & Hartsmar, 2012, p. 1). Issues discussed in the MACR are the different connotations of education and learning, learning understood as a lifelong, informal process, that occurs in any life situation compared to education which is mainly attributed to formal education in institutions pertinent to the Western schooling system (Singh, 2004, p. 93). As a result of the high numbers of refugee children, MACR students are introduced to the (difficulties faced in the) recently established so-called "Willkommensklassen" that aim at introducing children to the German school system and teaching them the German language and by this bringing them "Into Place".

The second seminar in module 4: ‘Children’s work in an international and intercultural comparison’ introduces and invites students to re-think the familiar and widely agreed understanding of child labour and shed light on child workers’ heterogeneous living circumstances. The topic of children’s economic contributions to family or community income and the rights of working children is one of the most controversial subjects dealt with in the MACR. The common, generalised and frequently misjudged view of working children is one of child labourers in less developed countries who are exploited and have to be freed from their plight of being ‘Out of Place’. A differentiation of meanings of children’s work for the children (and their families) and its impact on their lives is rarely stressed outside academia, where a wealth of critically researched and reflected publications on street and working children can be found (see e.g. Liebel (various years) Bourdillon, 2012, 2017; Saadi, 2012; Reddy, 2017; Invernizzi et al., 2017). Not all working children are exploited and ‘Out of Place’; many work as street sellers of homemade food or as shoe cleaners, to earn some money for schooling or to contribute to their families’ income in order to have a stronger basis for survival, i.e. children’s work does not necessarily take place in mines, sweatshops or similar exploitative economic areas as is often demonstrated in both the media and fundraising campaigns of international child help organisations. Exploitative child labour is mostly found in family circumstances in which parents and other family members are also working under such conditions, i.e. the exploitation does not only concern children but persons of all ages and requires measures for effective counteraction. ILO Convention 182 on the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour has tried to set a frame to abolish child labour, unfortunately it has overshot the objective, by turning all working children into criminals pushing them ‘Out of Place’, as child labour has become illegal. Movements of working children, in particular in Central and South America (NATS- Niños y Adolescentes Trabajadores), but also in Africa and India are introduced in the seminar and their activities discussed, analysed and evaluated considering children’s testimonies and case studies of working children (Abebe & Bessel, 2011; Bourdillon et al., 2010; Ennew, Myers & Platteau, 2005; Liebel, 2013).

...The age of children who work in street situations and how this creates conceptualisations of other descriptions with repression as their starting point (Pedro, p. 75–77 – graduate of 2015, studied law before, from Paraguay- own

translation). Pedro is referring to the criminalisation of these working children and their stigmatisation through generalisation, categorisation; legal directives and their implementation by which they become ‘Children Out of Place’.

Module 5: ‘Children Out of Place’⁸

The fifth module is specifically dedicated to the concept of ‘Children Out of Place’ that has already been mentioned several times in this article. The term ‘Children Out of Place’ is lent from an editorial of Judith Ennew and Marc Connolly to *Childhood* (Ennew & Connolly, 1996). In speaking about ‘Children out Of Place’, the authors referred mainly to street children, however the term has been taken further to include children who are not in the place they supposedly should be; not only measured by the dominant, normative, Northern understanding of children and their childhood but also by the local community in which they grow up; i.e. the term is also used to refer to children’s groups such as internally displaced, refugee and migrant children (see e.g. Penn, 2005), working children, (as mentioned above) children affected by HIV/AIDS, child orphans (Bourdillon, 2017), children heading households, child domestic workers, children in forced marriage as well as sexually exploited and sex selling children (Invernizzi, 2017). In addition, the term does not only refer to groups of children but also to research on children and how it is done – in order to grasp the circumstances disadvantaged children face, more disaggregated data is needed (Liebel & Budde, 2017) and the children who are out(side) of place may have to ‘move to the centre’, they must be given a space to participate and their life experiences require contextualisation (Kjørholt, 2017, pp. 157–170). ‘Children Out of Place’ can be described as the most vulnerable, excluded and marginalised group of children. By having studied the MACR it is possible to find new concepts to deal with the difficulties of these marginalised children. Asked about the knowledge and most important skills gained during the MACR and whether they live up to what was expected before studying, how they can be applied in professional, practical work and which ones are the most beneficial, Pedro from Paraguay says: *ehm, yes, generally speaking, yes. I really believe that in the MACR, various tools were presented and that they have*

⁸ The module was originally called “Disadvantaged and Marginalised Children and Their Rights”.

helped me – in particular all classes on ‘Children Out of Place’ that helped me – the dynamics [...] of how to work in, with such a vulnerable population, so yes, it gave me very important tools and skills, the importance also of this multidisciplinary approach – working with certain tools with people from other disciplines, e.g. doctors (Pedro, p. 133–139 – own translation). He works as a national consultant for juvenile justice and delinquent youth and coordinates centres for child convicts, conceptualising them in a child rights oriented way. Marginalised children are his major concern, the approach taken in the master’s program has been an eye opener to him. The ideology and the understanding of ‘helping’ the poorest people in the world, the most marginalised children, of which street children are a prominent example (Ennew, 2002, p. 399; Williams, 2007), is a one dimensional, arrogant perspective, of pretentious knowledge. This ideology is constrained by its focus on what, according to its prescriptions, these children are in need of and how they can overcome their problems to become children ‘with a childhood’, ‘children *in place*’ according to our Northern concept which has been engrained in us over hundreds of years (for a post-colonial viewpoint, see e.g. Nieuwenhuys, 2008; Liebel, 2017).

One example of this arrogance of the Global North, is the Millennium/Sustainable Development Goal (MDG/SDG) to increase children’s enrolment in ‘proper’ schools, as their right to be educated is enshrined in the CRC which has been signed and ratified in nearly all UN member states.⁹ Education sells well, people agree that an education helps escaping (from misery), but for many children there is simply no access to ‘proper’ schools. Williams’ (2007) suggestion to make education more accessible to all children, in particular to ‘Children Out of Place’ and re-thinking what education shall entail could be met e.g. by offering outdoor school classes at a specific time at a specific spot for street children (or other children who are interested). In this way, they would be able to drop by without the confines of school expenses which they often cannot afford.

⁹ In 2015, as the 195th and 196th states, South Sudan and Somalia ratified the CRC leaving only the USA as non-signatory state, despite the USA’s active role in drafting the Convention (see e.g. Holzscheiter, 2010).

Although child and youth migrants in multicultural societies face problems and these are increasingly researched especially today with the high numbers of refugees coming into multicultural societies and societies that are in the process of transforming to be multicultural, the difficulties these children face may be judged differently than realities of marginalised and excluded children in some less developed and poorer regions, states and communities. The situation of refugee children has been a most prevalent topic as the massive movement of people we are experiencing today will not end in the next weeks, months or possibly years. Although borders have been closed and ways of entering the EU have become scarce, many refugees continue to take the risk of reaching the EU by crossing the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁰ In view of the contemporary global political situation, it is of utmost importance to look at issues that have arisen due to high numbers of foreigners coming into (West) European countries and to take all possible measures for their integration and inclusion in society so as not to see them remain and be condemned to remain 'Out of Place' as one of the most vulnerable social groups. Several graduates of the MACR are working in child rights, child help and child protection organisations and institutions, all of which have dedicated project and program work to migrant and refugee children and their situation in Germany. One graduate for example is working at a large NGO in Germany coordinating a project for refugee children: 'Zukunft von Ankunft an',¹¹ in which several refugee housing facilities are visited to collect information on the situation of children and develop a quality framework for standards in the facilities while strengthening networks of help organisations.

She describes the approach taken within this project and difficulties encountered: ... *not like: We will now tell you what you need- you need accommodation etc. rather we want to look at the situation together and see what realistic standards can be, I mean what can we do. For this we aim at implementing a children's rights situation analysis, together with a research partner [...]*

¹⁰ In 2014, 218.000 refugees entered the European Union from the Mediterranean Sea; according to UNO 3.500 died on the way. In 2015, 35.000 refugees came to the EU from North Africa, about 1600 drowned, almost every 50th refugee. In this one year, the possibility of drowning is 30 times higher than in 2014 (The number of refugees dying on the way to Europe on foot crossing the Sahara desert is estimated to be even higher than the number of people who drown in the Mediterranean).

¹¹ 'Future Beginning at Arrival'.

and they will go through issues with the children using participative methods: where are the places you like being and where not – interviews with interpreter with parents, social workers, directors of the facilities are part of the project as well- a needs analysis shall be the result and from this another smaller project shall be developed for and with the children, such as, e.g. the design and equipment of the play area [...], in all this, it is important that it is done from inside the housing facility, i.e. with the refugees themselves. [...] [A major difficulty encountered in implementing this ambitious project is that] ...it's very difficult in the present situation with rising refugee numbers¹², to find housing facilities that are actually open to participate in the project as they first off need resources due to a lack of capacity- often when I called they said: 'yes, nice idea, but at the moment we don't have time for such a thing' (Miriam, Graduate of 2015, German, studied Islamic Studies before, pp. 115–119, 122–130 and 138–142).

The statements of graduates show that the knowledge and attitude gained during the MACR play a significant role in their work. The example of Miriam and her project shows that the clear positioning of an analysis as described here cannot be done without including those who are affected in a sensitive way.

Module 6: Children and Media and Module 7: Internship, Practical Project or Research Proposal and MA thesis

Before engaging in an internship or developing a (hypothetic) research proposal and writing the final master's thesis, module 6: Children and Media, discusses advantages and potentials as well as risks and dangers of new media and representation of children in the media including children's potential participation in the form this takes place. Questions of ethics in media about, for and with children form a basis for getting an insight into media production about, for and with children by having an introduction and first step workshop to acquire some practical skills. These skills are tested by students in a media production; e.g. short videos with children, on children's rights; pocket exhibitions made with children, apps for children and young people, photo galleries and more.

¹² The interview was conducted in early 2016, when the EU borders were still open.

Some thoughts on the terminology of ‘problem’ and ‘multicultural’

The theme of the 10th UNESCO summer school: “The contemporary problems of children in multicultural societies” of which this volume is one outcome is phrased very broadly and cannot be taken up and discussed from all the perspectives it may concern: Firstly, normative legal frameworks should play a role- children and their rights as stated in international human rights law and the CRC; secondly, specific aspects of children ‘Out of Place’ are confronted with that require attention such as issues of unaccompanied minors, family reunification, criminalisation of young people, access and inclusion in school, school performance, access to labour market, personal relationships with host country members and other migrant or refugee children, often dire situation at refugee camps, language barriers, discrimination by the majority population, outright racist behaviour and processes of ghettoization can and should be considered.

The definition of ‘problems’, which per se carries a negative connotation can pose difficulties due to a lack of criteria and variables ascribed to the term, perhaps using a more constructive solution oriented term such as ‘challenges’, may better reflect the efforts and resilience children “Out of Place” also have.¹³

The definition of a ‘multicultural society’ is also not clear, i.e. by what criteria is a society defined as multicultural? In 2015, 17,1 million foreigners lived in Germany, this makes up 21%, one fifth, of the total population. On average, the population with a migrant background is significantly younger than the bio-Germans¹⁴. Every third person under the age of 18 has a migrant background; the highest percentage (36%) is found in young children under the

¹³ There has been an ongoing debate on children and resilience, in which reference to resilience is important and necessary for children (see e.g. Ungar, 2008); on the other hand, the focus on resilience can blacken out or at least fade the actual difficulties children face as their seemingly resilient manner of coping with adverse situations can fall prey to romanticism.

¹⁴ The term bio (as in biological) Germans has become a term used for German citizens who biologically do not have any other background than a German one.

age of five. Only 10% of people over 65 living in Germany¹⁵ have a migrant background¹⁶. I will presume this to be enough cultural mix to back the claim that Germany is a multicultural society.

What about children without migrant backgrounds in multicultural societies? Do they have problems? It is implied that we are talking about migrant children, however the title suggests that we could also be talking about the native population. As far as I know there are only very few studies if any at all on the effect or impact the changing structure of population has on them. They are the group who have the most contact points with children from other backgrounds first, because a significant part of the migrant population is under the age of 18 and second, because due to the school obligation in Germany, young people are ‘confined’ to a mutual space. The indefinite terminology places obstacles on one hand, as it can be arbitrarily interpreted. However, it can also be seen as an asset in that a large variety of approaches are presented, according to the involved researchers’ interests and beliefs.

Conclusion

This master has given me much vigour, courage and knowledge to work for children’s rights on different levels (e-mail from Claudia, Graduate of 2011, previously studied pedagogy, German. At age 26, she is the youngest director of a private high school which takes a clear child rights approach to education and learning to turn children’s rights into living rights for the children).

M.A. programs in children’s rights are ‘en vogue’ across Europe- many of the new academic programs are offered at member universities of the European Network of Masters in Children’ Rights (ENMCR).¹⁷ It seems there is

¹⁵ All data retrieved from D Statis, Statistisches Bundesamt: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/MigrationIntegration.html;jsession-id=1D162FC8AF1FF546BF983B0791745508.cae4> (accessed on 11.11.2016).

¹⁶ A person has a migrant background, when she herself or at least on parent has been born with a non-German citizenship. This definition applies to immigrated and not immigrated foreigners (non-German Nationals), immigrated and non-immigrated naturalized citizens, (late) emigrants as well as their descendants who were born as Germans.

¹⁷ The ENMCR is a network of universities offering children’s rights studies. The MACR is a member of the network. www.enmcr.net.

a rise in acceptance and support at universities that the rights of children are 'worthy' of being part of higher education. At the same time, some members of the ENMCR are also encountering serious difficulties. There is a prevailing notion of social qualitative research lacking scientific validity due to the supposedly liberal interpretation of data, as I have discussed above in methods and techniques of childhood and children's rights research and the qualitative, participative approach taken by the M.A. Childhood Studies and Children's Rights. The lack of support stems partly from the general idea of research having direct tangible outcomes e.g. in pedagogy this would refer to cognitive, subject related knowledge which can be queried. In such a broad, disciplinary and global field as human rights and democracy education, direct or tangible outcomes may not be detected easily. However, in evaluating the program using qualitative research (in this case here by semi-structured interviews with graduates and alumni, an online survey and evaluation of classes and a final evaluation at the end of the course) the impact of the master on the participants as members of a transforming society can be uncovered. This is evidence enough to claim that cross-referencing practical with scientific knowledge to develop better theoretical foundations for children's rights is one of the great assets of a master's in children's rights.¹⁸

A recurring theme in almost every evaluation session at the end of the program, and in the interviews, is the change in attitude which the students undergo during the 1.5 years of the master's. Many also say that they used to have a feeling of injustice when they are confronted with others and their own behaviour towards children when interacting with them. However, they did not have the courage to voice this gut feeling as they did not have a theoretical understanding of what was happening. Now they can speak up more easily and argue much more profoundly than before. This, in my eyes, is reason enough to engage in more research in children's rights and how they can be channelled to become the most useful tool for positive change. Miriam and Tobias are good examples to shed light on the effect the master has had on their work and attitude. Both are graduates of 2015 and now work at a large children's NGO that has national and international programmes. Tobias emphasises that

¹⁸ A very real and practical issue limiting the offer of specialised advanced master's programs are the necessary tuition fees, which due to economic constraints make it difficult for potential students to pay and by this ensure the continuance of such programs.

a real asset of the MACR is that he looks at everything very critically and does not take anything for granted any longer (see Tobias, graduate of 2015, German, studied pedagogy before, 401).

At times it is difficult to apply this critical view in such organisational structures where many blind spots in need of visualisation are not of interest due to time constraints or donors' expectations, with whom the delivery of certain scheduled outcomes have been agreed. This becomes especially clear, when working in a large children's help organisation, where tactics for marketing its humanitarian nature often rely on pitiful media images of 'Children Out of Place' whom only we, from the 'knowing' and 'advanced' North can help, or who pay high salaries for workers who go to regions where children are suffering and need protection with a plan designed in the safeness of Germany or Europe mirroring nearly nothing of the local lived reality. Both Miriam and Tobias feel proud that they can take a critical children's rights approach in their work which is based on researched scientific knowledge.

I would like to conclude with a, to me, very moving quote from one graduate, which shows what meaning the program (can) have on the participants and successively on their doings:

This is a master that I can recommend without any reservation and with all my heart. The child and her needs and interests are in focus (not her future use for society). The master is visionary in many respects and has been formed by people who very passionately, ideologically dedicated and above all inspiringly stand for the interests of the child (Own translation) (e-mail by Daniela a graduate of 2014, studied economics before and is now working at "Teach First")

The quote reflects what impression graduates have of the program, and what impact it has on their future activities, the impact they can have on their surroundings. The e-mail went out to colleagues of Teach First, an educational organisation which takes a child-centred approach to school classrooms and kindergartens as promotion for the MACR. Notwithstanding that some graduates also had different and more mixed feelings about the master. In some groups e.g. the dynamics were not as harmonious as in others, general feedback is positive and contents as well as results of discussions within the MACR are personally enduring and applied in work settings. It is likely that the children's rights agenda will lead to an improvement of children's situations, not only in

‘multicultural societies’ but everywhere although admittedly more rapidly in some world regions than in others. Compared to 2005–2007, when the MACR started at Freie Universität Berlin and stakeholders, politicians, researchers and practitioners did not think in terms of children’s rights or have the idea to apply a child rights approach in their activities, today, ten years later, the children’s rights community has grown and with it the visualisation of children’s rights in society. To ensure that children’s best interests (Art. 3, CRC) are at the heart of any child related action, many more motivated and reflected passionate personalities have to be qualified who take on critical responsibility and ‘think children’s rights’ and who raise awareness of children’s rights by their learned and lived human rights attitude.

Primary Material:

The United Nations Convention On the Rights of the Child

Extracts of answers to online survey with European child rights alumni

Extracts of interviews and e-mail exchange with graduates and alumni:

Moritz (2008), Lulu (2014), Branka (2008), Lisa (2012), Miriam (2014), Pedro (2014), Daniela (2013), Claudia (2012), Ruth (2013), Tobias (2014).¹⁹

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¹⁹ For full interview transcripts and complete survey questions and analysis please contact Rebecca Budde: budde@fh-potsdam.de or r.budde@fu-berlin.de.

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UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Well-being (UNESCO Chair no 666)

The UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair was established in October 2004, under the agreement concluded between UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris and The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education (Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw). Initially, the Chair bore the name “UNESCO / Janusz Korczak Chair in Social Pedagogy” and carried out activities within the field of social education. The name of the Chair was changed to: UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Well-being. The new name better shows the nature of the research and activities conducted by the Chair. The patron of the chair is Janusz Korczak, one of the central characters in emancipatory education directed at the rights and well-being of children, not only in Poland and Europe but also globally.

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“[The book] is well embedded in the literature of the subject and its authors demonstrated not only great competence but also sensitivity to the problems of children and young people from culturally diverse backgrounds. It is unique in the way of taking up many important issues for the research – the problems that are being solved. I think the book will be welcomed with great interest [...] by teachers, future teachers as well as intercultural education researchers. It should also be provided for educational politicians who design educational changes, who – also in Poland – should take into account changes related to the increasing cultural diversity (...).”

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„[The] book edited by Urszula Markowska-Manista, supports a free and open discourse. Activism, research, social creativity and responsibility for the world we share with children, are combined in a unique way. (...) The problems the authors are facing and are describing and explaining as challenges are particular moments in their areas of expertise. This helps professionals in the fields as readers of the book, to grow in their ambitions, their knowledge and their perspectives. This helps scientist too, to understand methodologically different approaches and the link between these approaches, the vulnerability of respective children and childhoods and the questions that arise in society and finally in research that involve projects and the longing for change.”

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