The Interdisciplinary
Contexts of Reintegration
and Readaptation
in the Era of Migration
– an Intercultural Perspective

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.

The Interdisciplinary Contexts of Reintegration and Readaptation in the Era of Migration – an Intercultural Perspective

Edited by
Urszula Markowska-Manista

The cover photograph shows refugees at the Slavonski Brod Transit Camp in Croatia,
January 2016, author of the photograph: Urszula Markowska-Manista

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PREFACE

The problems addressed in this monograph refer to children and adolescents who require support due to their difficult circumstances. These circumstances include the fragile contexts in which they function, their diverse social or developmental situations and finally, their socio-psychological entanglement in ethnic, national, cultural and social conflicts of the adult world. The consequences of the aforementioned processes, as well as the questions related to children's and adolescents' psychological and pedagogical support in re-socialisation and social reintegration, seem particularly important in the contemporary world. They are crucial with regard to the fact that a large percentage of those who are excluded and marginalized are composed of children and adolescents who are migrants, refugees or members of ethnic and national minorities. These groups are present in literature as 'invisible children', children 'out-of-place', children without access to children's/human rights. Last but not least, the social discourse about refugees and immigrants, which shapes contemporary attitudes and social interactions in European and non-European societies, is certainly not without significance. In their analyses and critical approaches to social and cultural determinants, interdependencies and generational relations, the authors expose the spheres and areas of marginalization and exclusion of children who are structurally and systemically disadvantaged and discriminated against. The discrimination may be either a consequence of their cultural heritage (the Roma) or resultant from a social, economic, migrant or refugee related situation. The contributors also discuss the inhibited access of selected groups of children and youth to social resources and the system of education. They examine processes which reflect social transformations resulting from a new social structure, productive and reproductive conditions of upbringing, educating and integrating the new generations in diverse social, cultural and national contexts, referring to the issues of readaptation and reintegration.

The articles presented to the readers in this publication are an outcome of the 9th UNESCO International Summer School held in Warsaw, Poland between 14 and 24 September 2015. These summer sessions have been organized annually since 2008 by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing at the Maria Grzegorzewska 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 from a psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspective. This monograph is a collection of the lecturers' and participants' academic articles, covering both theoretical and empirical aspects of the discussed subjects. A broad, interdisciplinary insight into the problem of readaptation and integration of children and youth in European and non-European societies affords a better understanding of the complexity of the problem and the possibility to design comprehensive pro-integration solutions. This edited volume consists of two complementary parts. The first section focuses on the issues related to current problems and challenges in the area of reintegration and readaptation in diverse social and cultural contexts. The second part refers to varied issues and challenges faced in the praxis of working with and in the interest of children and adolescents in the dimensions of reintegration and readaptation. We 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, August 2016

Urszula Markowska-Manista

INTRODUCTION

"We live in interesting times, replete with transformations, abounding with local and global attractions as well as historical surprises.
[…] The world is full of endemic and expanding conflicts,
and definitions of particular interests alone are not sufficient to solve them."[1]

At the crossroads of countries, cultures and disciplines

The present book: "The Interdisciplinary Contexts of Reintegration and Readaptation in the Era of Migration – an intercultural perspective" was prepared within the activities of the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing at the Maria Grzegorzewska University[2]. It is an outcome of the 9th International Summer School "Readaptation and reintegration as problems of refugee children", held by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing[3] at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland between 14 and 24 September, 2015.

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[1] Jerzy Jastrzębski, W ciekawych czasach. Szkice o kulturze i edukacji, Wrocław 2004, p. 7.

[2] UNESCO/Janusz Korczak Chair: http://www.aps.edu.pl/unesco-chair.aspx; Maria Grzegorzewska University: www.aps.edu.pl

[3] 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 organized events include: sustainable development, cultural diversity, human rights (children's rights), interculturality and intercultural education, as well as modern psychological, pedagogical and sociological challenges.

The international school was organised in cooperation with the Polish National Commission for UNESCO and the CEEPUS Program – Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, and within the project: The Children´s Rights Erasmus Academic Network (CREAN). Partners of the event included: The Foundation for Somalia, "Ocalenie" Foundation, Polish Migration Forum and The Children´s Rights Erasmus Academic Network (CREAN). The 2015 edition of the school was held under the patronage of: UNIC Warsaw, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, International Janusz Korczak Association (IKA) and the Team for the Pedagogy of Culture and Intercultural Education of the Committee on Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN).

Among the participants of the International Summer School and its activities 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: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Ukraine and Poland. They represented the following universities, institutions and non-governmental organisations: Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Civic Integration Found and Youth Worker in World Vision International, Tbilisi, Georgia, Youth Center For Alternative Education, Tbilisi, Georgia, Cherkasy National University, Cherkasy, Ukraine, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Osijek, Croatia, Dimitrie Cantemir University, Romania, Mykhailo Drahomanov National Pedagogical University, Kiev, Ukraine, Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia, Red Sea University, Port Sudan, Sudan, University of Pisa, Italy, Taraz State Pedagogical Institute, Kazakhstan. Polish participants included university students, doctoral students and staff of the Maria Grzegorzewska University as well as one doctoral student from the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences and one student from Jagiellonian University. All participants and lecturers deal with various subdisciplines 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.

Several key dimensions of the situations of children and adolescents were addressed throughout the course of the summer school. These situations concern children and adolescents who are:

- deprived of childhood, entangled in the role of victims, witnesses and perpetrators in conflicts and longue durée wars, and their consequences;
- stigmatized, excluded, invisible, socially ignored and marginalized due to their status, origin and economic situation (children and adolescents – migrants, refugees, members of national and ethnic minorities);
- entangled in systemic discrimination and the processes of social stratification which prevent them from enjoying their rights to the fullest extent, including the right to education.

These dimensions comprised: the situation of children and youth in the so called fragile contexts; the psychological and social diagnosis of problems; practices supporting the work of institutions and non-governmental organisations as well as the conditions under which children and adolescents are able to return to the environments in which they were raised, or environments of new, host countries. Such approaches also required examining media discourse on migration crisis in the contemporary world and its impact on children and youth.

With relevance to the subjects of the Summer School, the problems addressed in the monograph focus on children and adolescents who, due to their vulnerable circumstances, require psychological and pedagogical support. The support is necessary primarily in the area of their re-socialisation and social reintegration. Academic efforts aimed at diagnosing these problems and situations seem particularly important in the modern world. Thus, the present publication has been designed as an attempt to contribute to this vital global discussion.

The academic profile of the Summer School and the research interests of its participants allowed us to look at the question of children's and adolescents' readaptation and reintegration both from a psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspective. Further, it allowed an analysis of the issues in the following contexts:

- historical (variability through time of issues connected with education, childhood, adolescence and socialization in various contexts);
- territorial (variability through time and space of questions connected with readaptation and reintegration);
- theoretical (indicating paradigms, concepts, theoretical approaches relating to the subject of children's and adolescents' reintegration and readaptation and their interpretation, as well as the aetiology of the phenomenon);

- methodological (indicating methodological assumptions, research procedures, research approaches to reintegration and readaptation in the era of migration).

A broad, interdisciplinary insight into the problem of readaptation and integration of children and youth in European and non-European societies affords a better understanding of the complexity of the problem and the possibility to design comprehensive pro-integration solutions.

The lecturers' and participants' academic articles, both theoretical and empirical, are an outcome of the 9th UNESCO International Summer School. Their contribution made this volume possible.

Introduction to the structure and chapters of the book

This edited volume consists of two complementary parts. The first section focuses on the questions related to current problems and challenges in the area of reintegration and readaptation in diverse social and cultural contexts. The second part refers to varied issues and challenges faced in the praxis of working with and in the interest of children and adolescents in the dimensions of reintegration and readaptation.

In the first chapter: *Refugee Crisis – Between EU Identity and Eurocentrism*, **Smaranda Cioban** outlines key ideas and vital aspects of discourse relating to the present Refugee Crisis in Europe. The author presents the results of research on media discourse pertaining to the presentation and perception of migrants and refugees in Europe. In her study, the author combined a variety of methods, including discourse analysis, content analysis and frame analysis to thoroughly explore the way the media influence the social perception of the aforementioned groups. The problem was investigated through the perspective of European identity crisis and a post-colonial mentality. The author's analysis points to the assessment that post-colonial attitudes are still present in Europe, while divisions among European states in addressing the problem of migration point to a crisis in the European identity.

The chapter by **Beatrice Signorini** *Reintegration as a Problem of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in European and Italian Legislation* illustrates what legislative measures have been implemented to facilitate the reintegration and protection of third-country unaccompanied minors who arrive in Italy and on

the territory of the European Union. The author provides a thorough review of existing literature on the subject as well as provisions of both European and Italian legal systems in the area of reintegration and protection of unaccompanied refugee minors, pointing to deficiencies in the legislation and the implementation of existing regulations. In her analysis, among other things, she points to the problem of insufficient monitoring of refugee minors, lack of organic Italian immigration law on unaccompanied minors, and unequal implementation of regulations in various parts of Italy.

In *Self-Image and the Image of the World in the Eyes of Young Roma in Poland* **Barbara Weigl** discusses the results of qualitative research conducted among Roma youth in three Polish towns. Following an outline of transformations which have taken place in the 21st century among Polish Roma community, the author reviews the situation of Roma students in the Polish system of education, then proceeds to the presentation of research results based on interviews with the young Roma. The text discusses their perception of self and others as well as aspects of their reality, including challenges, aspirations and hopes, pointing to a certain duality of attitudes: embedded in Roma tradition, yet open to the opportunities offered by the modern world.

In their article entitled *Exploring Resilience in Children from Families of Low Socioeconomic Status*, **Oana Rognean** and **Oana Ghimbulut** present the results of research conducted in Romania among children from socially disadvantaged environments, concentrating on the investigations of children's resilience. As a theoretical background, the authors provide an explanation of the concept of resilience as well the relationship between economic status and risk factors. Their study reveals that despite unfavourable living situations, these children display resilient competences, i.e. adapt to adverse conditions. The authors explored the manner in which children face adversities, grouping the strategies and resources used when tackling life difficulties into clear categories.

The chapter *Challenges in the Reintegration and Readaptation of Ethiopian Immigrants' Children in Israeli Society* by **Dominika Zakrzewska-Olędzka** focuses on the description of challenges and limitations faced by the Israeli state in the process of supporting the children of Ethiopian immigrants in Israel in adjusting to their new reality and the strategies aimed at overcoming them. The historical and social background provided in the introduction shows Israel as a state created by immigrants and thus having considerable, long-term

experience in developing tools for dealing with the absorption of immigrants and refugees. In the first part, the author provides an analysis of challenges faced by children migrating to a different country with a distinct cultural context. Furthermore, the text discusses ways of overcoming the difficulties in the social and educational field. It puts an emphasis on the importance of family situations and the attitude of the members of the new community to the processes of integration and acculturation. The article mentions several groups of immigrants, with a particular focus on Ethiopian migrants as the group encountering the strongest adaptation problems due to the largest cultural differences.

Ksenija Romstein's contribution on *Early Education Agendas and Practice in the Upbringing of Young Children in Post-Conflict Regions in Eastern Croatia* refers to a key question posed by the author: what values are formally supported in contemporary early education agendas in Croatia? The text offers an analysis of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education as well as an assessment of preschool environment in post-conflict regions, followed by a discussion on how the assumptions of the Curriculum are reflected in pedagogical reality. One of key aspects of preschool education discussed by the author is the question of segregation vs. inclusion of children from ethnic and national minorities. The results of the analysis point to disparities in practices, as some institutions foster inclusive and multicultural values, while others segregate children based on their ethnic or national origin, thus negating such values as inclusion, participation and citizenship.

In the text *Children and Youth with Multicultural Backgrounds in the Polish System of Education,* **Urszula Markowska-Manista** and **Edyta Januszewska** present the theoretical (legal) and practical (school environment) aspects of the Polish system of education with a focus on the situation of foreign children. The authors provide an analysis of academic literature, reports from non-governmental organizations and government institutions as well as various legal regulations to shed light on the functioning of migrant children in Poland, specifically in the Polish system of education. To provide a broader perspective on the subject, the review outlines the history of immigration in Poland, selected aspects of the Polish education system as well as selected regulations of international and domestic law referring to the education of foreign children. The analysis also draws on fragments of the Authors' own research among foreign, migrant and refugee children in Polish schools.

In her article *Communicating Beyond Words: Active Listening as a Key to Readaptation and Reintegration of Refugee Children*, **Rahaela Varga** discusses the role of active listening in the process of readaptation and reintegration of refugee children. Drawing on the theory of the pedagogy of relation, the author points to the importance of social competences in a classroom environment. Being one of key social competences, the concept of active listening is indicated as a tool which can aid teacher-student and student-student communication, with a particular focus on the role it plays in the process of the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children within the system of education of a host country.

In their contribution *The Hidden Curriculum in the Function of Promoting Equal Educational Opportunities for the Roma* **Vesnica Mlinarević** and **Maja Brust Nemet** draw attention to the importance of the education of Roma minority and the specifics of the process of Roma children's integration in the Croatian system of education. The authors explain the concept of hidden curriculum, accentuating its role in the promotion of the integration of Roma children in Croatian schools. At the same time, they address issues which are crucial in the process of social integration: the need to acquire intercultural competences by teachers and the need to support Roma parents in developing educational possibilities for school-aged children. The text also provides examples of projects realized for the integration of Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia, illustrating best practices in integration initiatives.

Olha Ovcharenko and **Tetiana Gorobets's** chapter on *Psychological Peculiarities of Internally Displaced Students' Readaptation to Study in Higher Educational Establishments in Ukraine* deals with the challenges faced by Ukrainian students following the recent domestic crisis. Specifically, the authors address the problem of internally displaced students, focusing on a program of psychological support implemented at the Psychology Department of the Bohdan Khmelnitsky National University of Cherkasy. The text provides a description of Depth Psychotherapy aimed at facilitating the displaced students' readaptation to the altered conditions of the social situation in Ukraine. As explained by the authors, this goal is achieved by applying the techniques of active social and psychological education, which consists, among other things, in the creative expression of students' feelings and emotions. Such a technique allows practitioners to strengthen their self-identity, enhance interpersonal communication and aid their self-realization in a society.

Acknowledgment

PART I

*Reintegration and Readaptation
– Current Problems and Challenges*

Smaranda Cioban*

Refugee Crisis
– Between EU Identity and Eurocentrism

Abstract: The paper attempts to illustrate essential aspects of discourse developed during the present Refugee Crisis. Thus, it explores how online newspaper articles presented the situation of refugees in the period between June 18 and September 20, 2015. The impact of the media over the way refugees are perceived by citizens is tremendous, shaping attitudes and behaviour. In this respect, I employed an innovative approach towards media discourse, which connects the events that occurred at the beginning of the refugee crisis with a specific analysis of BBC written materials. Evaluating the migration crisis from both the perspective of the European identity crisis and of a Post-colonial mentality creates an understanding of media impact over social interaction. The research applies a variety of methods, including discourse analysis, content analysis and frame analysis to media news materials. At the beginning of the research, I focused primarily on content analysis in order to establish media attitude to the presented events, employing the vocabulary used. Moreover, the presentation of the events is backed up with illustrative excerpts of European leaders' discourse. Considering the role of leaders' discourse in shaping social interaction, I further explored BBC discourse through the lens of EU identity and Euro-centrism. In this phase of research, QSR NVIVO 10 program was used for qualitative analysis both for coding and analysing the data. The last part of the paper creates a framework for discussion as to how the media's perception of refugees contributes to the acknowledgement of the universality of human rights, positive identification and humanistic values.

Key words: refugee crisis, media discourse, EU identity, Euro-centrism, integration

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Discourse theory encompasses a variety of approaches with different insight which start from the common assumption that language and language use structure human thought and action (Karlberg, 2005). Consequently, people's actions and identities are framed in accordance to language and language use, a fact that assumes an important aspect in shaping people's views on the media. Socio-constructivist theorists, such as Alexander Wendt, focus thus on the fact that states act on the basis of perceptions and created identities (Wendt, 1992). The leaders' discourse and the manner in which a particular state reacts in a specific situation may be anticipated by exploring the past actions and perceptions or specific characteristics of the leader. Under these circumstances, it is important to explore the way European societies perceive the migration of refugees that come from Asian and African countries.

The perception of otherness constitutes a major element for constructing an intercultural dialogue and portraying differences as an asset rather than an obstacle to communication. To this point, integration of foreign individuals in a society relates to accepting diversity and finding a path to value distinct characteristics and cultures. Considering this aspect, migration is a process that ties people together in a global society.

Still, the huge flow of refugees and migrants who have come to Europe in the recent period indicates that reality is quite the opposite. The countries of the European Union have not had a unitary voice with regard to the situation, but rather have avoided accepting responsibility or acting on the basis of the principles of international law with regard to human rights. The negative attitude that some European countries display towards receiving refugees or accepting their default status as a transit country may show either a fragmented identity of the members of the European Union or a split between European countries and the rest of the world.

On the one hand, the Refugee Crisis reflects the vagueness and ambiguity of defining and constructing a European identity of EU countries. European identity may be seen as an external construct accepted by countries in order to mask their nationalistic endeavour (Auer, 2010). In this respect, being a member of the European Union matters only when it brings benefits to a particular country, including economic development and political power. The European Union "is still a hybrid legal and political system", characterized by the domination of member states (Tosiek; Ingeborg). According to Ingeborg, the lack of consensus

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among countries on some topics is not an issue of concern, representing the normal path followed after a period of major achievements. However, Bauman notes that Europe is trapped between power and politics, "finding itself in a truly unenviable plight" (Bauman, 2013: 15–19). The lack of coordination between power and politics at the level of the European Union is fragmented by two incompatible roles, one to protect citizens and the other human rights, both while serving the interests of the states, paralyzed the EU with an identity crisis. According to Tzvetan Todorov, a civilization discovers itself while presenting the features of another civilization (Todorov, 1999). Seen from this perspective, the threat attributed to refugees reflects the European identity crisis, a crisis of modernity, secularization and meaning.

Still, integration remains the main point on the European Agenda together with improving representation and democracy on the supranational level. Habermas argues that the "monstrous mass crimes of the twentieth century" should be interpreted in the context that nations can no longer be regarded as "innocent" and thus, immune to international law. "Petty nationalist pasts" should be overcome, leaving space for creating a better, and more "rational" organization, which has to be based on "worldwide consensus" (See: Habermas, 2009: 114–125). The concept of "worldwide consensus" that Habermas refers to includes mutual recognition between different religions and acceptance of large Muslim communities in Europe. In a society where religious organizations coexist with secular societies and gain more and more relevance in people's lives, fostering a dialogue between civilizations implies putting an emphasis on religious values. The recognition of the common grounds of the different religions and the acceptance of religious communities brings integration a step closer. Under these circumstances, refugees and immigrants represent an important voice in constructing the identity of Post-Secular Europe (Habermas, 2008).

On the other hand, the Refugee Crisis mirrors Euro-centrism and Post-colonial attitudes. According to psychoanalysts, conflict attitudes are caused by the fear of otherness. Hence, an individual perceives others as threatening and negative and then mirrors the threat in the instinctual and irrational projections of his repressed weaknesses and instincts. Jung defines this concept as "Darkness" and holds that "Darkness" is present in each person and has stronger effects when it is not included in the conscious life of an individual (See: Jung, 1983).

However, the "shadow" refers to the "collective unconscious" as represented by Arabs and Africans, affirming a "binary opposition" between Europeans and the rest of the world, and a superiority of Europeans: "The Arab's dusky complexion marks him as a "shadow", but not a personal shadow, rather an ethnic one… The predominantly rationalistic European finds much that is human alien to him, and he prides himself on this without realizing that this rationality is won at the expense of his vitality, and that the primitive part of his personality is consequently condemned to a more or less underground existence" (Jung, 1961/1965: 244–245).

The impact of colonial attitudes on the reflection of otherness is emphasized by Frantz Fanon. European civilization sees the civilizations from other parts of the world (Africa) as an expression of negative instincts, the uncivilized savage: "the black man who sleeps in each man of colour" (Fanon, 1961, 1967, 1986). Kovel (1995) also notices the Eurocentric attitude, unfolding the tendency of psychical ghettoisation of certain types of people (See: Elliot & Frosch 1995), while Altman (2003) points out that the black man represents the "objectified" human being in "white people's" system of oppression.

Drawing on the Post-colonial theory of Euro-centrism, can we address the issue of identifying refugees as a threat to European stability?

Considering the international context and legislation from recent years, a tendency to form a negative image in relation to certain groups can be observed. From the 20th century onwards, migration control systems settled on the movement between countries, slowly evolving to an issue of international concern. Nation states had full responsibility for the rules governing their own nationality and were only required to accept their own citizens. With regard to citizens of other countries, states can decide which individuals they offer protection to and which they allow to enter their territory on the basis of the provisions of the "1951 Refugee Convention". In the absence of other regulations, states improved their immigration controls and made it even more difficult for asylum seekers and other foreigners to travel. In this way, immigration controls constituted mechanisms developed to stop "illegal migration". One of the most relevant cases related to increasing border controls to stop illegal migration deals with the illegal movement of people between the United States and Mexico. The militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico and other provisions that burdened migration had in fact a contrary effect to the

intended one, as the number of illegal immigrants in the United States grew from 3–4 million to 11 million in 2009.[1]

The data dynamics show that the harsher immigration controls become, the larger the illegal population will become. In addition, the term "illegal" creates a negative image of immigrants and constitutes an affront to human dignity. Even if immigration controls are seen as a mechanism of states to protect sovereignty and economic interests, immigration controls constitute barriers to international cooperation and intercultural dialogue, while leaving people vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation (See: Dauvergne, 2012: 75–92).

The perception of refugees as a security threat was influenced by international discourse and international law directives. The identification of terrorism as the main security threat that comes from somewhere "out there" and affects the state from inside had a tremendous impact on the perception of migrants, leading to the "criminalization" of migration (See: Atak & Crépeau, 2012: 94–101). After the terrorist attacks from September 2001, such states as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States put even more pressure on creating a negative image of migrants, as enacting new legislation for facilitating deportation and the detention of foreign nationals may show.

Furthermore, the United Nations and the European Union legitimized the anti-migration discourse through initiatives that expressly linked terrorism to refugees. For example, in Resolution 1373 (2001), the UN Security Council called on nation states to ensure that the asylum-seekers were not involved in terrorist groups and to use appropriate measures to determine the fact. Similarly, EU Council highlighted the need for creating "an integrated borders management agency" for developing an effective combat against terrorism (ibidem: 103–110). These resolutions further legitimized the idea that "the institution of asylum is a terrorist's refuge" and led to the establishment of sanctions against individuals and specific groups" (ibidem).

Consequently, Muslim people were identified by public opinion as terrorists, a fact that destabilized intercultural communication. Studies such as: "I'm a Muslim, but I'm not a Terrorist': Victimization, Risky Identities and

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[1] The data was reported by the Pew Centre over successive years. See: Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrants in the US", http://pewhispanic.org/unauthorized-immigration/ Access date: October 7, 2015.

the Performance of safety" (Mythen & Walklate & Khan, 2009), "Islamopho-
bia: Incitement to Religious Hatred-Legislating for a New Fear" (Werbner,
2005),"What do we Think about Muslims? The Validity of Westerners' Implicit
Theories About the Associations Between Muslims' Religiosity, Religious
Identity, Aggression Potential, and Attitudes Toward Terrorism" (Fischer &
Greitemeyer & Kastenmüller, 2007) show how the hatred and fear of Muslim
people escalated due to their alleged correlation with terrorism. While the first
two articles focus on the effects of the exclusion of Muslim people after the
events of 2001 as well as their need to be protected against "Islamophobia",
Fischer's research shows that the attitudes of Muslims and Christians differ
only on religious identification, as people of the Muslim religion are reported to
have a stronger religious identification than Christians. The author unfolds that
"increased religious identification of Muslims did not lead to more justification
of Muslim aggression, but to lower justification of Christian aggression" (ibi-
dem: 380). The research concludes that aggression potential is not higher for
Muslim people and they are not more supportive of terrorism than Christians.

The media also contributed to the creation of a discourse against foreigners,
molding different groups into archetypes of fear and terrorism. For example, the
article "The Muslim-American Neighbour as Terrorist: The Representation of
a Muslim Family in 24" (Halse, 2012) explores the way Muslim and Arab char-
acters are portrayed in films, illustrating that the media promote stereotypical
images of Arabs as terrorists (The "plot summary of the Araz family", 24 hours,
ibidem: 120–129).

The anti-migration discourse represents a measure of states to protect their
national sovereignty, enforce discipline and the rule of law. States have the legit-
imate right to punish citizens when security is threatened and the rule of law
is established in accordance to state interest. States decide who they receive,
having only refoulment. Still, Foucault signals that "the state must not exercise
an unconditional right of life and death, over its own people or those of another
country. To deny the state this right of life and death meant opposing the bomb-
ings of Vietnam by the United States and currently means helping refugees."[2]
Foucault interprets this moral obligation of states in the context of offering

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[2] "Michel Foucault on refugees- a previously untranslated interview from 1979", September 29,
2015, http://progressivegeographies.com/2015/09/29/michel-foucault-on-refugees-a-previously-
untranslated-interview-from-1979/, Access date: October 7, 2015.

help to refugees. But the integration of foreigners brings major challenges to a state, especially in what concerns the protection of national citizens. Describing the measures taken by the authorities to protect the citizens of a region from a plague, Foucault explores the duty of the state to protect national citizens from disruptive individuals. During the Great Plague Epidemic, people were monitored and registered, isolated one from another, received food through channels that intentionally obscured the suppliers. Furthermore, no one was allowed to move from their place without being completely responsible for the risks he assumed and had to respect the hierarchical division of power enforced. Any attempt at disrespecting order was severely punished by both the authorities and society, with authorities being "omnipresent" in every aspect of people's lives (Foucault, 1975). The "isolation" of each individual from the rest of society, like the "architectural" model of Bentham's "Panopticon", offers control and surveillance, while it "depersonalizes power and restrains communication and interaction" (ibidem: 195–227). Each individual is kept in a "small cell with large windows that make him visible to a supervisor, but do not allow him to see the supervisor". This way, his acts are controlled all the time, "the Panopticon inducing in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (ibidem: 201).

As the author mentions, the Panopticon is "polyvalent in its applications, serving to reform prisoners, treat patients, instruct schoolchildren, confine the insane, supervise workers, put beggars and idlers to work" (ibidem: 205). Bentham also underlines the largest applicability of the Panopticon principle, sustaining its general use "to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection" (Apud Bentham, ibidem: 206). Seen from this perspective, the construction of refugee camps resembles Bentham's Panopticon, with refugees being constantly monitored and punished because they belong to a different civilization. The focus on protection actually hides surveillance, while "power represents a network that includes both the advantaged and disadvantaged" (Hardy, 2003: 464). Refugees appear as individuals who need to be monitored, through which they are subjected to exclusion.

Deconstructing the concept of refugees, Soguk (1999) and Arsdale (2001) point out that this group of people is seen as: "disruptive", "victims", "transitional",

"requiring solutions and problematic". Most of them live in camps with their families for years in countries neighbouring conflict areas, facing food scarcity and extreme poverty. They are not allowed to move from the small space they are relegated to and wherever they go, even within the confines of a given camp, they go at their own risk. Consequently, they look for whatever chance possible to improve their lives by getting out of these camps and in the process they easily become victims of smugglers. Migrant workers who lived in countries later affected by conflict also look for refuge in Europe, considering that the only way to pass the harsh migration controls is to apply for asylum. Apart from refugees, other categories of migrants are deported on the border, a fact that motivates many foreigners to declare that they are refugees solely to be allowed to enter a European country. No regulations stipulate that only refugees are allowed to leave their countries, as each individual is allowed to do so. Nevertheless, it is a state decision to accept foreigners, a fact that places migrants in an absurd situation: people have the right to leave their countries, but they do not have the right to settle in another country.

Methodological assumptions of the realized research

The paper explores media discourse that emerged during the recent refugee crisis. The paper hypothesizes that the media contributed to the emergence and development of nationalistic views by suggesting that refugees are a threat to Europe. Moreover, the media presented few articles displaying positive examples of intercultural dialogue and did not report examples of a positive correlation between European citizens and refugees. In fact, they put little effort into "debriefing refugees' rights" with respect to international law and explained the main aspects related to the situation of refugees through the lens of public opinion. Still, the media also described people's initiatives to help refugees, suggesting solidarity and empathy. Addressing the question as to whether BBC discourse portrays the situation of refugees as connected to the European Union or to Euro-centrism, aims towards discussing the main hypothesizes that the media presented refugees as a threat to European societies.

During this research, I employed content analysis, discourse analysis and frame analysis to dissect media discourse. While content analysis allows us

an in-depth view of the information presented in a specific source, discourse analysis explores the text as part of social interaction where views, identities and attitudes are constructed. In this sense, the ground hypothesis reflects the socio-constructivist theory, which sees the world as a social construct (Wendt, 1992). Frame analysis starts from selecting aspects of a perceived reality, which, in this case, are the concepts of the EU and Euro-centrism, and interprets them in such a way as "to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993: 52).

Starting from the hypothesis that the media shapes the attitudes and perspectives of a society, I questioned whether the refractory attitude to refugee integration may be understood in the context of the Euro-centric attitude or as an identity crisis of the European Union. Moreover, I wanted to see how well the anti-migration discourse is presented in the media and if the main sources of information, such as the BBC, hint to agree with the integration or the anti-migration discourse.

The analysed newspaper represents a noteworthy source of information for European citizens, known for its professionalism and objectivity. The BBC is the world's leading public service broadcaster, providing news and information in 27 languages.[3] Its main values connect to impartiality and honesty, the BBC being engaged to inform, educate and entertain people.[4]

During the first phase of research, I explored how the Refugee Crisis is generally illustrated by the media and I noted the main facts that played a significant role in the emergence of the crisis situation (before 20 September, 2015). To achieve this goal, I selected the main events described in broadcast media, including the BBC, Reuters and Mediafax as the primary sources. In addition, other publications, such as The Economist and The Guardian, presented analyses and reports focused on the events and the leaders' reactions to them as expressed in their speeches. Highlighting the causes that pressured refugees to look for asylum in Europe and the hardships they face on their way to the destination country matters when analysing the events that followed the media discourse. A brief presentation of the crisis and of the main approaches to the crisis

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[3] BBC, "Inside the BBC. At a Glance", http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/ataglance Access date: October 7, 2015.

[4] BBC, "Inside the BBC. Mission and Values", http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/mission_and_values, Access date: October 7, 2015.

completes the analysis with comprehensible data meant to support the findings. However, I tried to alter the information as little as possible, preserving the vocabulary used in the articles. This was essential in order to show that media discourse depicted refugees as a threat to Europe by focusing on the dimension of the migration phenomenon, and migrants' vulnerability.

The second phase of the research implied a specific analysis of media discourse after the emergence of the crisis, centred on the news from 20 September, 2015–22 October, 2015. The method in this phase was used in order to select the relevant data for my research. Hence, I chronologically ordered the articles and subsequently created a database with them which is included in said research. Noticing that I found no articles on the refugee query for certain days (04.10.2015, 10.10.2015, 27.09.2015), I added other relevant articles for the topic from the days when higher numbers of articles were published: 22.09.2015, 05.10.2015, 18.10.2015, 19.10.2015. In the end, the research database consisted of 33 articles and the information was grouped in accordance to the concepts of Euro-centrism and European identity.

According to Wallerstein (1997), Euro-centrism represents a base of the "geo-culture of the modern world". It reflects a value of the European culture as compared to other civilizations and it emphasizes the main European achievements. Nevertheless, Frantz Fanon criticizes Euro-centrism for its superiority (Fanon, 1961). In addition, the author recommends to foreigners who settle in European countries to promote their own culture as a symbol of national consciousness, instead of assimilating to European values. The distinction between US versus THEM clearly illustrates Euro-centrism. Considering that Euro-centrism is so embedded in people's perspectives that it usually goes unnoticed (Shohat, Stam, 2014), I decided to refer to Euro-centrism from the perspective of national sovereignty. Moreover, another dimension of Euro-centrism presented in the paper relates to the perception of European civilization as superior to others, a fact suggested by the leaders' appeal to respect European values. To illustrate Euro-centrism, I established the following codes: "appeals to humanistic values of Europe", "governmental measures to receive refugees", "anti-migration discourse", "criminalization of refugees" (sub-codes: "illegal people", "linking refugees to terrorism"), "governmental measures and planning to limit or avoid migration"," supporting the anti-migration discourse", "criticism of national politics", and "returning to war zone". The code" appeals to humanistic values of

Europe" constitutes the main hint to Euro-centrism, as it reveals a degree of supe-riority of the European culture over other cultures. Although it is not necessarily a negative dimension, the "appeals to humanistic values of Europe" code portrays refugees and migrants as victims and vulnerable. "The anti-migration discourse" encompasses discussions about limiting the number of refugees, establishing bor-der controls and topics that suggest that refugees are a threat by using words such as "influx", "continuous flow", "crisis", "warn", etc. The code entitled "crim-inalization of refugees" deals with all the explicit references that link refugees to rapes, attacks, violence and terrorism. The code "governmental measures and planning to limit or avoid migration" includes the measures taken by states as a consequence of their anti-migration policies and as a way to secure the welfare of their citizens. The code of "supporting the anti-migration discourse" makes a clear reference to leaders, politicians, personalities or other people who consider refugees to be disruptive. Starting from the point that nationalistic views can be included in the concept of Euro-centrism, the "criticism of national politics" code explores the discourse of the opposition from different countries with regard to the measures taken by governments. The last code for Euro-centrism, "returning to war zone", contains articles related to asylum-seekers' return to Syria.

The European identity focuses on aspects that make the citizens of each member state consider themselves to be citizens of the European Union. Cultural aspects, mutual acceptance of religions and a focus on respect for diversity and multicultur-alism represent the main values of the European Union. In this respect, pro-integra-tion discourse on the topic of refugees mirrors values supported by the European Union. I coded the data related to the European Union, establishing "Examples of good practice and integration" (sub-codes: "Positive measures taken by govern-ments to receive refugees", "Mutual acceptance of religions", "Publicly supporting refugees") as the main elements of the European discourse. The sub-code "pub-licly supporting refugees" relates to data that suggest solutions to avoid the unfair treatment of refugees and migrants from the perspective of human rights ("Finding paths to avoid anti-migration discourse"), describes how particular people decided to help refugees ("People helping refugees') and finally describes discourse sup-porting refugees and migrants' integration ("Publicly supporting refugees and migrants' integration"). As regards the discourse on integration, this depicts ref-ugees' or migrants' stories and achievements ("Refugees' and migrants' stories") and emphasizes the rights refugees are entitled to ("Refugees' rights").

I uploaded the sources database in QSR Nvivo 10 program and then I established a node hierarchy that reflects the coding structure described above. QSR Nvivo 10 represents a software programme that structures, manages and organizes unstructured data. It is a tool used for qualitative research, a fact that makes it suitable for the present analysis. Then, I analysed the data resulting from the research queries and interpreted the results.

Analysis

During the first phase of research, I employed a general analysis of how the media presents the migration flow in order to illustrate the main events that occurred at the beginning of the crisis, and a specific analysis which questions whether Migration Crisis signals European identity crisis or suggests a Euro-Centric perspective of the European countries. The use of the specific vocabulary highlights the type of discourse employed and the attitude regarding the situation.

For example, the "tensed" situation in many countries of the world has caused a *wave* of refugees unprecedented in the last decade. The problems in Ivory Coast, Libya, Yemen, Syria and the Horn of Africa in the last 12 months have forced over 800,000 people to flee across borders and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. At the end of last year, over 42 million people held refugee status, were displaced or were classed as asylum seekers.

"Most of the refugees, more than 2.7 million, are from Afghanistan. The second largest group are refugees from Iraq, now more than 1.7 million, followed by refugees from Somalia, Sudan and Congo. The majority of refugees have chosen to remain in the neighbouring countries primarily because these countries leave their borders open in most cases. The majority of refugees are in Pakistan, which hosts 1.7 million, followed by Iran, Kenya and South Africa."[5]

Furthermore, almost half of the world's displaced people are children and many spend their entire childhood far from home. According to UNHCR, children below the age of 18 constituted 46% of the refugee population in 2012.[6]

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[5] CNN, Parish, E., "UNHCR: Refugee numbers reach highest ever recorded", http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/18/world/unhcr-refugees-most-in-history/, Access date: October 8, 2015.

[6] UNHCR, "Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase", http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html, Access date: October 8, 2015.

"Thousands of children" are parts of the "refugee caravan" moving from the warpath or migrating because of social problems. Nobody asks them if they want to, nobody tries to offer them protection. Their parents left home and consequently, they started a journey seeking a better life. While following this path, many "parents die and children wake up facing a reality without any adults to protect them". This way, they easily become "victims" of human traffickers and have no chance for protection and education.

In Europe, Germany is the country which has received most of the refugees: over 570,000. The most painful aspect considering the financial and economic crisis worldwide is that the already critical situation of these refugees "is likely only to get worse". Germany says it expects a record 800,000 asylum-seekers to arrive this year.[7]

In the context of the present situation, Europe is watching "powerless" as its boundaries are "assaulted" daily by "thousands of desperate refugees". While officials seek a solution, countries that have already received "waves of immigrants" are prepared to make "radical" decisions.

So far, almost 300,000 immigrants have come to Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and the "exodus of biblical proportions" continues in the rhythm of a few thousand daily. Nearly a quarter of a million migrants have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe this year, according to the International Organization for Migration.[8]

Where do they come from, how are they coming, how many "die on the road", where do they go and, most importantly, why?

There are regions where "the poorest, the most insecure and war-torn countries" of the globe are gathered together: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Eritrea. Individuals from these countries are desperate. For a few thousand dollars they cross land borders to Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea in unstable boats. Thousands are dying, drowned together, children and adults alike. The International Organization for Migration estimated that 2,373

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[7] The Economist, "Germany, the EU country which takes the most asylum seekers is straining", http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21661941-wanting-burden-shared-germany-eu-country-which-takes-most-asylum-seekers-straining, Access date: October 10, 2015.

[8] BBC, "Europe migrant crisis : Surge in numbers at EU borders", http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33972632, Access date: October 7, 2015.

people have died (in 2015) while trying to reach Europe by sea, and 3,573 in the past 12 months.[9]

Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary have been the only countries that failed to react in a cohesive or intelligible manner and eventually adopted an anti-migration discourse: "let the tide go" further west of the continent or stop it, temporarily. Apart from Greece, Italy is one of the countries which have been the most "exposed" to the "massive influx of immigrants". Over 104,000 immigrants from Africa, Middle East and South Asia arrived in the ports of southern Italy.[10]

For the refugees and migrants, crossing into Europe often means crossing the sea in search of a new life. In the first months of 2015, having been rescued in the Mediterranean, 4000 migrants managed to enter Italy. Macedonia has struggled to cope with the influx of transnational migrants and refugees from Greece, at one stage shutting borders and declaring a "state of emergency".

Since April, European officials have been trying to find a common response to the "wave of immigrants". So far, the discussions have ended with requests for solidarity and recommendations for Greece and Italy, countries which are gateways for immigrants. But concrete measures have not been taken. The distribution of refugees among all EU member states in accordance to an established quota system represented a suggested measure that caused tensions inside the EU.[11]

According to Nicu Sava, a Romanian sociologist and international relations expert, "Europe seems to sleep and does not realize that it faces the biggest crisis of refugees since the Second World War." He identifies the political arena as the main cause, viewing the crisis as "a product of Europe's lack of foresight and lack of policies that mitigate such crises".[12]

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[9] Strohecker, K., Truck of corpses, new shipwreck intensify Europe's migrant crisis, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-grants-eu-austria-idUSKCN0QW19H20150827, Access date: October 6, 2015.

[10] BBC, "Europe migrant crisis: Surge in numbers at EU borders".

[11] The European Union, "European schemes for relocation and resettlement", http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_annex_en.pdf, Access date: October 8, 2015.

[12] PRO TV, "Migrant Crisis", http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/international/analiza-stirileprotv-europa-in-fata-unui-exod-fara-precedent-cum-poate-deveni-romania-poarta-spre-ue-pentru-imigranti.html, Access date: October 4, 2015.

The leaders of European countries took a stand regarding the "refugee exodus", trying to find solutions to the crisis situation. Thus, German chancellor Angela Merkel declared that drafting new legislative provisions might represent a solution.[13]

Bonino, Italy's former foreign minister emphasized the need to foster cooperation on the European level in order to find common solutions to the crisis. Hence, she calls on addressing the issue on a supranational level and considers this crisis as a way to improve the European dialogue:

"There is no one, single, miraculous solution: intervention must be concerted and coordinated on all fronts. The new policy is a sound, bold proposal that must be supported, for it would require all member states to fully take responsibility for the management of the emergency. The most pressing issue is to calm the collectivised hysteria that has taken hold of Europe, for it serves the politics of some, but doesn't reflect reality. Millions of individuals are fleeing wars, dictatorships, torture, and the threat of death – and not only in the Mediterranean: it's a structural, global problem. The answer can only be political, and it must set the safeguarding of human life as its central priority."[14]

Mark Kekesi, the Hungarian Prime Minister, sends a "warning" signal on the dimension of the phenomenon and its danger: "the wave has definitely reached us now". To support his view, Mark Kekesi, who is also the head of the MigSzol Szeged, an NGO that focuses on migration issues, affirms that the number of migrants surpasses any expectation: "There have never been so many of them, and we expect this to continue for a while".[15]

The "refugee crisis" seems to "endanger" Schengen Area, according to Gentiloni, the Italian foreign Minister. He pointed out that an issue of main concern is the free movement of people:

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[13] Barkin, N., "Refugee crisis suddenly Merkel's biggest challenge", http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/31/us-europe-migrants-germany-analysis-idUSKCN0R00FZ20150831, Access date: October 4, 2015.

[14] Open Democracy, "Can Europe make it?", Interview with Emma Bonino and Paolo Mancini, https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/emma-bonino-donato-paolo-mancini/emma-bonino-interview, Access date: October 4, 2015.

[15] Dunai, M., "The wave has reached us: EU gropes for answers to migrant surge", http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/25/us-europe-migrants-idUSKCN0QU1BC20150825, Access date: October 3, 2015.

> "What is at risk is one of the pillars of the EU: the free movement of persons. From the Italian coast until Kos (Greece), from Macedonia to Hungary and Calais (France), tensions rise and, over time, might put Schengen into question."[16]

He continues the idea by emphasizing that the newcomers represent an issue of European concern and all EU member states should cooperate to solve the situation:

> "Immigrants are not arriving in Greece, in Italy or in Hungary. They arrive in Europe! That is why the rules for receiving must be 'Europeanized".[17]

As can be noticed, a general overview of media discourse shows that the approach to migration from the analysed period mirrors Euro-centric attitudes. Thus, refugees as migrants are seen as a problem from outside which European countries have to deal with. As concerning an empathetic view over the migrants' and asylum seekers' situation, this has little visibility in media discourse and the human rights topic is generally poorly addressed. Instead, in an attempt to create "emotional news", the media illustrate refugees and migrants as victims, indirectly placing them in an inferior position in comparison to Europeans. Furthermore, the anti-migration control measures taken by Hungary reveal even stronger Euro-centrism. Still, media discourse also highlights that the crisis situation emerged because of identity fragmentation at EU level. Thus, border countries feel that other European Union countries do not express their solidarity in helping them deal with such a large number of people that unexpectedly reached their territory.

In order to define whether media discourse portrays the escalation of the migration phenomenon and the tensions created from a Euro-centric perspective or as a result of European Union's fragmented identity, I narrowed the sources and explored the information provided in greater depth. In this sense,

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[16] Loewenstein, A., "A punitive approach to refugees will lead Europe to unrest and corruption", http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/04/a-punitive-approach-to-refugees-will-lead-europe-to-unrest-and-corruption, Access date: October 3, 2015.

[17] Ibidem.

I selected BBC news archive as a relevant source of information and continued with exploring BBC discourse from 20 September, 2015–22 October, 2015. After sorting the articles in a chronological order, I chose a single article for each day. As I did not find articles for each day of the period, I added some articles for the relevance of the topic. In the end, the research database consisted of 33 articles. The chosen period represented a critical one for the migration to and inside Europe, considering also how weather conditions affected migrants and asylum seekers. The colder weather worsened the living conditions that refugees and asylum seekers had to face during their flight, increasing the risk of disease and epidemics.[18]

The second phase of the research consisted of analysing whether the way the European states manage the migration crisis can be connected to Euro-centrism or to the fragmentation of European identity in media discourse. The frequency of some specific terms used in the articles represents the first clue related to the prevalence of a specific discourse. Consequently, I made use of the Frequency Query in order to show which words were most frequently used in BBC discourse (See: Annex 1). According to the analysis, the most frequent words that had high relevance for the research were: migrants (416 times, 2.06%), refugees (274, 1.36%), crisis (182, 0.9%), Europe (158, 0.78%) and Syrian (116, 0.58%). The list of the most frequently used words in the written news articles from the selected sources supports the hypothesis that the refugee crisis mirrors Euro-centrism. Thus, the word "migrant" was more frequent than "refugee" and the term "crisis" was extensively used to refer to the situation. As regards the term "help", it was employed only in 0.56% of the discourse (114). While "migrant", "crisis", "Syrian" and "Europe" represent terms specific to the perspective of Euro-centrism, "help" and "refugee" may be easily connected to an integration discourse and indirectly linked to the European identity. Values such as diversity, unity and acceptance represent core values of the European Union.

Classifying the sources in relation to a particular category posed difficulties. As a broadcast media source, the BBC complies with the norms of objectivity and neutrality and does not necessarily make reference to Euro-centrism or EU identity. However, hidden elements of Euro-centrism and European identity

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[18] BBC, "Migrant crisis: Colder weather hits refugees on the move", http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34370447, Access date: October 3, 2015.

are intertwined in the message, suggesting a certain reaction to events which took place or leaders' discourse at the level of the community. The choice of news receiving more coverage as well as the way it was detailed suggests the approach of media discourse. The prevalence of elements suggesting a particular approach also plays an essential role in this analysis. The charts below show the articles receiving most references for the main nodes, namely EU and Euro-centrism. For the EU node, the article "Migrant crisis- Hollande and Merkel urge EU unity" was the most frequently cited (covering 20.47%), while for the Euro-centrism node "Migrants 'torch tents' in Slovenia camp" represented the article with most references: 13.51%.

Figure 1: Nodes compared by number of coding references (Author's compilation)

Figure 2: Nodes compared by number of items coded (Author's compilation)

The Tree Maps of Framework Matrices, which I designed through NVivo 10 Program, show the most prevalent elements of media discourse. While the first chart compares nodes by number of coding references (Figure 1), the second one compares nodes by number of items coded (Figure 2). The hierarchical node structure codes sentences from sources in accordance to hints about specific topics, which are directly or indirectly linked to the analysed approach. Thus, the main nodes, mainly Euro-centrism and EU, contain explicit information about the approaches. The other nodes encompassed in the structure make reference to aspects of Euro-centrism or EU discourse that are necessarily coded in the main node itself.

This way, we may notice that the prevalence of explicit information to an approach does not necessarily show that the mentioned approach is more visible in the media. Rather, certain prevalence shows that the aforementioned approach is presented more directly.

At first sight, the chart on page 18 shows that the discourse focuses on EU identity rather than Euro-centrism. Hence, the EU has 92 direct coding references as compared to 44 of Euro-centrism. Concerning all the coding references from the EU main node as compared to the Euro-centrism main node, EU has 774 coding references (the sum of all nodes coding references) as compared to 482 connected to Euro-centrism. The data obtained prove that the present migration of refugees and asylum seekers to Europe reflects the identity crisis on the EU level. The tree map analyses of coding references signal that anti-migration discourse got the highest number of direct references from all the nodes (127). Although the number may show that the coding criteria are too loose and general, there is a high chance that this number indicates that even the discourse on broadcast television presents refugees as a threat. It does not, however, contain explicit data that have a negative influence on public opinion, such as criminalization of refugees (20), illegal people (8) or linking refugees to terrorism (5). In this respect, concentrating on the high number of refugees and on the panic created by such a high number of people arriving in Europe does not create a positive identification in relation to refugees.

Still, the BBC compensates for this tendency by addressing an indirect integration discourse, concentrated on examples of people who helped (44) and supported refugees (45). Although the examples of people helping refugees may indirectly put refugees in an inferior position to Europeans, this kind of discourse significantly addresses integration. The node "Tensions inside the EU" explicitly addresses the issue of European fragmentation, presenting conflicts inside the EU generated or amplified by the arrival of refugees. Blaming refugees for these situations contributes towards the creation of a negative image of refugees.

The number of items coded at each node brings more relevance in noticing the prevalence of a particular approach in the media. Hence, it quantitatively shows which topics had the greatest coverage in news articles from the BBC. The data show that most of the items coded referred to refugees' or migrants' stories by illustrating the rights refugees should benefit from through integration

schemes and the infringement of their rights after coming to Europe. However, none of the articles mention refugees' rights as they are outlined by the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, nor do they appeal to universal human rights, thus portraying refugees as victims and problematic. The problem of integration is addressed in none of these articles, particularly from the point of view of governmental measures to receive them and those of charity organizations to address the desperate situation of people outside Europe.

Addressing the similarity between the information coded for each approach is essential in understanding the relation between EU identity and Euro-centrism. In this sense we address a cluster analysis of the coding similarity between the established nodes. The Pearson Correlation coefficient shows the dependency relation between variables, values ranging between -1 (least similar) to 1 (most similar). Considering the hierarchical structure of the established nodes, a cluster analysis should show powerful correlations between nodes from the same category (main node) and a negative relation between nodes from different categories. Still, the cluster analysis summary notes a very powerful correlation (0.869) between the node "Tensions inside EU", which belongs to "EU" main node and the node "Governmental measures and planning" classified in "Euro-centrism" main node. Other powerful correlations between nodes from different categories include: "Tensions inside EU" and "Anti-migration discourse" (0.65); "Tensions inside EU" and "Supporting the anti-migration discourse" (0.6); "EU leaders discussing the problems of refugees" and "Anti-migration discourse" (0.6). The least similar information is surprisingly coded in the same main node ("EU"), between "Refugees' rights" and "People helping refugees" (-0.42). This shows a negative correlation between the terms, one addressing the condition of refugees and the access they should have to universal rights, with references to cases when their rights have been violated and the other to positive examples of people who offer help to refugees. A lack of correlation between nodes also appears between "Governmental measures to receive refugees" and "EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees" (both belonging to the same node: "EU") and between "Illegal people" ("Euro-centrism") and "EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees" ("EU").

Noticing the common references for the two approaches and the distinct information related to them matters in analysing how the concept of European identity is linked to Euro-centrism. By using the Query Node-matrix, I designed a chart

that illustrates the information which is coded for both approaches (Figure 3) and one that presents the percentage of information presented solely through the "EU" node (Figure 4). Comparing the obtained charts (see below) I observed that although the information for anti-migration discourse corresponds to a large degree with information coded for the nodes "EU" and "Tensions inside EU", most of the information coded at EU nodes is not coded at "Euro-centrism".

1: EU
2: EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees
3: tensions inside EU
4: examples of good practice.integration
5: mutual acceptance of religions
6: publicly supporting refugees
7: Finding paths to avoid anti-migration discourse
8: people helping refugees
9: publicly supporting refugees and migrants integration
10: refugees or migrants stories
11: refugees rights'

A: Euro-centrism
B: anti-migration discourse
C: criminalization of refugees
D: illegal people
E: linking refugees to terrorism
F: Governmental measures and planning
G: Supporting the anti-migration discourse
H: appeal to humanistic values of Europe
I: criticism of national politics
J: returning to war zone

Figure 3: EU and Euro-centrism (Author's compilation)

EU not Eurocentrism

1: EU
2: EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees
3: tensions inside EU
4: examples of good practice.integration
5: mutual acceptance of religions
6: publicly supporting refugees
7: Finding paths to avoid anti-migration discourse
8: people helping refugees
9: publicly supporting refugees and migrants integration
10: refugees or migrants stories
11: refugees rights'

A: Euro-centrism
B: anti-migration discourse
C: criminalization of refugees
D: illegal people
E: linking refugees to terrorism
F: Governmental measures and planning
G: Supporting the anti-migration discourse
H: appeal to humanistic values of Europe
I: criticism of national politics
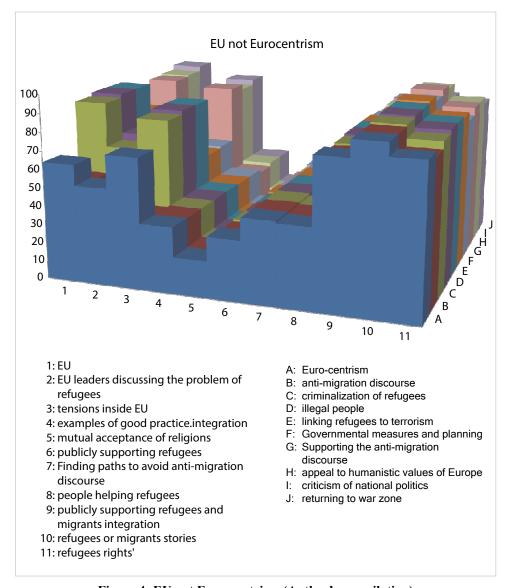J: returning to war zone

Figure 4: EU not Euro-centrism (Author's compilation)

In addition, the two charts show that the selected sources present mixed information, focusing on both views related to the topic. The sources coded at the nodes: "Refugees' or migrants' stories", "Publicly supporting refugees" and "Refugees' Rights" are better represented in the second chart. A possible

explanation is related both to the fact that they contain a small number of references to Euro-centrism and to their coverage in the articles. Hence, some nodes, such as: "Mutual Acceptance of Religion", "Examples of good practice: Integration", "Publicly supporting refugees" or "Migrants integration", do not include references to Euro-centrism. However, these nodes are poorly covered by the media.

Discussion and recommendations

The analysed media discourse reflects patterns of integration in relation to refugees' migration to Europe. In this respect, most of the integration discourse focuses on people's examples of offering help to refugees, a fact that may hide Eurocentric attitudes. However, international law clearly addresses the need to protect refugees through the Convention from 1951 and the Protocol from 1967. According to the provision of the aforementioned documents, refugees should be granted international protection:

"All persons outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and who, as a result, require international protection".[19]

While analysing media discourse, we found no reference to specific documents that basically entail the universality of the protection for refugees. However, the term *protection* is very vague, a fact that leads states to perceive protection in the context of offering the refugees a place to stay and sometimes even access to some public services. [20] The article focuses on the perspective of offering a favour to people who are refugees, instead of clearly specifying that it is their right to benefit from protection.

Another problematic issue refers to the perception of economic migrants. The criteria of defining refugee status do not make reference to malnutrition or epidemics, a fact that places people from extremely poor areas in an extremely

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[19] UNHCR, "Note on the mandate of the High Commissioner for refugees and his Office", http://www.unhcr.org/526a22cb6.html, Access date: October 18, 2015.

[20] BBC,"NI officials prepare for Syrian refugees", http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-34573302, Access date: October 19, 2015.

vulnerable position. Poor coverage of this topic in the media may again smack of Euro-centrism.

Considering these points, even if the research shows that the attitude to refugees and migrants in Europe is more connected to EU identity than to Euro-centrism, we need to expand this analysis in order to reach a particular conclusion. A fact worth mentioning is that the selected articles had a rich anti-migration discourse. Taking into account that the BBC itself is a broadcast television station committed to values of objectivity and neutrality, it may follow that other media sources which express certain political views may expand the Eurocentric data. The view of Soguk and Arsdale related to refugees as problematic and disruptive enjoys rich coverage in media discourse. Choosing to explore media discourse in other newspapers that are more subjective and politically influenced may enrich the data about Euro-centrism in the media.

But how should the integration of refugees in society be addressed? The media shapes social interaction, a fact that makes it a powerful tool in leaders' anti-migration discourse. States act in accordance to state interest and make use of humanistic approaches only when they are advantageous to them. Consequently, an efficient way to shape an integration discourse is to individualize people and present stories of people who succeed in reaching their goals. Moreover, the article about the foreign journalists from Syria, Somalia and other countries that addressed the problem of refugees from an inside view is illustrative.[21]

Another observation that we have to make in relation to media discourse relates to addressing alternatives. According to UNHCR statistics, refugees migrate to neighbouring countries because of their proximity.

Does coming to the European continent cause them to face severe difficulties? This is certainly the case. Still, they choose it.

Why? A possible answer concentrates on the lack of opportunities to continue their lives in the neighbouring countries and subsequently in the fact that they have no guarantee of any respect for their rights. Evaluating the main causes that led people towards risking their lives to reach Europe is essential. Then, we may all question for ourselves whether anti-migration is the best policy for protecting them.

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[21] BBC, "Refugees guest-edit Danish Newspaper Information", http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34490577, Access date: October 9, 2015.

Exclusion, marginalization and exploitation represent major risks that refugees are exposed to, while factors such as low education, lack of language skills of the adopted country and lack of identification documents increase their social vulnerability and decrease the chances of integration.

Conclusion

The conducted research shows that Europe is still trapped in a post-colonial mentality, a fact that significantly influenced the way the media addressed migration in the last year. Deconstructing the concept "European Union" we notice that Europe is identified with terms like "civilized", "rich", "correct", "generous", while countries from Africa and Asia, which historically were European colonies, are represented as "underdeveloped", "weak", "disruptive", "problematic". In this context, the presented refugee crisis may be seen as an echo of the Movement of Decolonisation. The media approach towards the migration phenomenon from the last year validates this premise.

Drawing on this conclusion, it may be assumed that the socio-constructivist theory represents a substantial base for the analysis of how refugee migration escalated into a conflict of European identity. The impact of terrorism in the last period needs to be further explored in the context of illustrating the way migration was perceived by European society. In this context, it is important to mention the fragmented way of drafting policies in the context of the "refugee crisis" intertwined with the "criminalization of refugees". Although masked in media discourse, identifying foreigners that come to Europe as "illegal" generated a negative identification of refugees. This way, refugees became a subject of exclusion and marginalization. Moreover, negative identification commingles with social interaction. In this process, the marginalized groups that are perceived as threats are fulfilling prophecy.

Social exclusion leads to disintegration and eventually groups that were marginalized become disruptive and problematic. Seen from this perspective, the crisis of European identity, mirrored by the absence of a unitary voice of European states in dealing with the migration situation from 2015, will deepen in the future. Preventing this situation should certainly be a priority of European countries. As finding solutions involves analysing the root causes, exploring

the way the topic of refugees was covered in the media in the first period of the crisis situation contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon. Ultimately, an understanding of the phenomenon encompasses finding solutions. Considering the results of the conducted analysis, supporting a positive identification of refugees in the media will diminish the climate of fear generated in European society. Further on, positive identification leads to integration reducing the fear of otherness, fear that is largely responsible for the unstable situation observed in Europe. The concept of the fear of otherness is ambivalent, thus stating that also refugees act on the basis of perceiving the other as a threat. Therefore, it is important to promote situations where individuals find common ground for interaction in spite of the existing differences.

The BBC media discourse shows positive examples of integration. It presents positive information about refugees, contributing this way to creating intercultural bridges. Presenting the events that happened in the last period with regard to refugees and migrants from the perspective of EU identity shows a path towards integration. In this respect, portraying examples of refugees that were integrated and of people who offered their help to refugees contributes towards creating an opposition to Euro-centrism and nationalistic views. Social interaction is therefore important in shaping a humanistic approach that "educates" people towards valuing diversity and multiculturalism. Still, social interaction needs to be promoted. The media are a powerful instrument in promoting it, as covering specific topics frames public opinion.

Addressing the concept of rights and individualizing refugees as migrants both by the BBC and other television stations will further contribute to "educating" people to surpass the fear of otherness. Besides, valuing people at the level of media discourse will contribute to directing states to act for people's welfare, whether they are national citizens, EU citizens or foreigners. Humanistic principles need to be translated into practice, but this becomes a must for governments only if citizens demand it. The realist theory emphasizes that stability and state-interest are of primary concern for every country, with states acting on the basis of state interest. It follows that concern for human rights should become state interest. This happens when citizens appeal to their state to respect the principles of human rights.

In a nutshell, the refugee crisis from 2015 signalled an identity crisis that the European Union needs to overcome. A focus on multiculturalism and diversity may represent a solution to this crisis in the context of a global society. Taking

everything into account, it is noteworthy to mention that Europe has to surpass the remains of its post-colonial mentality in order to be able to cope with the challenges brought about by globalisation.

Limitations of the research

The present study needs to be further developed in order to show if the data are statistically significant. Thus, expanding the group of sources to at least 50 is necessary in order to better represent media discourse. Still, the way the media influence society is more complex and different media sources including television stations need to be explored. Despite being the most read publication around the world, the BBC is not necessarily the preferred source of information for EU citizens. Investigating the main sources of analysis of EU member states provides a lot of benefit in analysing how the media reflect particular societies and how societies are influenced by the media.

The results of the research were mostly influenced by the coding criteria developed by the researcher. As a consequence, the researcher bias influences the results and the way the results correlate to the first assumptions. The choice of some specific queries and charts also relates to researcher bias. Moreover, choosing the sources was influenced by the employed keyword and the researcher. In the situation where more articles that corresponded to the refugee query were from the same day, I chose the most relevant ones for the analysis. Sources and nodes homogeneity are other points that need to be taken into consideration while analysing the findings of the research.

Another additional point relates to the period when I conducted the query. Hence, the news articles present on the archive may change from week to week, being in a continuous dynamic of updating and reaching the audience.

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Annex 1

Results according to word frequency query

Word	Length	Count	WeightedPercentage (%)	SimilarWords
2015	4	546	2.71	2015
bbc	3	471	2.34	@bbc, bbc
migrants	8	416	2.06	migrant, migrants, migrants'
September	9	318	1.58	september
refugees	8	274	1.36	refugee, refugees, refugees'
news	4	205	1.02	news
crisis	6	182	0.90	crisis
europe	6	158	0.78	europe, 'europe, europe'
october	7	153	0.76	octob, october
syrian	6	116	0.58	syrian, syrians
help	4	113	0.56	help, helped, helpful, helping, helps

Beatrice Signorini*

Reintegration as a Problem of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in European and Italian Legislation

Abstract: Having provided numerous provisions, European and Italian legislation have tried over time to regulate the migration flow of unaccompanied minors on their territory in terms of integration. In this text I examine the existing literature on the subject and the legislative measures provided by both European and Italian legal systems to illustrate what measures have been implemented for the reintegration and protection of third-country unaccompanied minors who arrive on the territory of the European Union. I also illustrate the difficulties in their reintegration. The results of the review show that despite the large number of dispositions provided by both European and Italian immigration law, the European Union has yet to define efficient legislation on unaccompanied minors. Italy still has not adopted a specific and organic regulation related to unaccompanied minors, and the existing integration provisions are not implemented equally in every region. Due to the lack of an Italian national body specifically competent at monitoring minors, precise data on UMs[1] are unavailable. Once they enter Europe through land or sea borders, most unaccompanied minors do not contact local authorities, and they tend to go missing. Thus, complete protection of minors in transit is almost impossible. In conclusion, the review shows the necessity of greater efforts of European countries in collecting data on UMs and strengthening their legal framework. Italy should regulate a complex, structured, organic immigration law on unaccompanied minors in order to fulfil the UMs' specific needs.

Key words: Asylum Seeker, Migrants, Refugees, SPRAR (Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati – Protection System for Refugees and Asylum-seekers), Unaccompanied Minors

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[1] UMs – Unaccompanied Minors.

Introduction

According to Di Castro (2010), "in recent years no in depth research including both a qualitative and a quantitative methodology has been carried out to investigate the situation of refugees in Italy and their reintegration process" (Di Castro, 2010: 101). This article aims to illustrate the difficulties in the integration of unaccompanied refugee minors due to the lack of a clear legislative framework and due to the lack of national bodies competent at tracing and monitoring UMs. Frequent infringements of legislative measures prevent young foreign children from integrating properly. As Kanics and Hernández's (2010) examination on EU Member States' legislation dedicated to unaccompanied children shows, most European countries usually employ a combined approach of immigration and asylum provisions. These regulations try to limit the number of arrivals with an ambiguous approach to the vulnerable situation of these children. In Italy this leads to the application of general law aimed at protecting children at risk of abandonment. In addition, Italy has established long and complex registration procedures of unaccompanied migrant children. Therefore, "a significant number of minors who go missing or leave care facilities after a short stay have never been registered in the official statistics" (Kanics & Hernández, 2010: 5). Despite the fact that Italy had created a national body called "Committee for Foreign Children", a public body charged with conducting the census of unaccompanied and separated children, it provided statistics irregularly. However, since 2012 the Committee is no longer in operation, following the decision expressed in the Decree No. 95 of 2012.

In the first half of 2015, Italy recorded 67,500 arrivals by sea. 85% of the immigrants arriving in Southern Europe come from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia ("The Sea Route to Europe", UNHCR, 2015: 3). Despite the large number of refugees and migrants coming to Southern Europe, the majority of them are in fact willing to continue their journey to the countries of Northern and Western Europe which "are perceived as offering more effective protection, better support for asylum-seekers, a more welcoming environment, and easier prospects for integration" ("The Sea Route to Europe", UNHCR, 2015: 16).

As a matter of fact, Italy registered only 28,000 claims for international protection out of 67,500 arrivals. The number of unaccompanied minors arriving in different Member States of the European Union is on the rise. According to

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report "The Sea Route to Europe", 8% of migrants and refugees who arrived in Europe were unaccompanied minors. Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the EU are mainly young males aged between 16 and 17 (Frontex, 2010: 4). They are minors not accompanied by their parents or legal guardians; these circumstances put them in a specific, vulnerable situation. Unaccompanied minors are first of all children; they cannot be treated as adults since they are entitled to specific rights. They should be sheltered from risks that could endanger their psychophysical development; they should have full access to education in order to maintain a dignified standard of living. They should also enjoy the right to be protected against violence, mistreatment and exploitation.

According to Save the Children, the number of unaccompanied minors who arrived on the Italian territory in 2015 was 12,272 (Save the Children, 2016). Italy, which has always been a country of emigration, actually became a country of significant immigration only in the late 1980s, and has struggled with its new condition for a considerable period of time (Finotelli & Sciortino, 2009: 120). As a matter of fact, Italy dealt with massive immigration phenomenon for the first time in 1990, passing the Act No. 39 known as "Martelli Act", which defined asylum procedures, "introduced visa requirements for most migrant-producing countries countries, reformed the deportation procedures for irregular immigrants and introduced sanctions for migrant smugglers and traffickers" (Finotelli & Sciortino, 2009: 123). Only in 1998 Decree No. 286, included in the so-called "Turco-Napolitano Act", regulated for the first time the immigration phenomenon in terms of integration. As Zincone and Caponio (2005) point out, the Turco-Napolitano Act had four main purposes: "1) preventing and combating illegal entry; 2) regulating new flows of foreign workers; 3) promoting the integration of immigrants holding a valid residence permit; and 4) granting basic individual rights to illegal immigrants" (Zincone & Caponio, 2005: 4). However, unlike other Europeans countries, Italy has not yet approved a complex regulation related to the reintegration of unaccompanied minors. Therefore, legislation on minors and the so-called "Unified Code on Immigration" have to be implemented. The "Unified Code on Immigration" does not only provide dispositions on unaccompanied refugee minors' reintegration, but includes integration provisions referring to asylum-seeking minors. An asylum-seeker is a person who is awaiting the evaluation of his or her request by the country of

asylum. While an economic migrant decides to move in order to pursue better prospects for life, a refugee is forced to move, facing many terrible difficulties, such as persecution, loss of economic means, social support and a dangerous journey (Catarci, 2012: 76). The proliferation of decrees and circulars on the integration of UMs has caused difficulties in interpreting the immigration provisions and praxis by local entities and courts (Salimbeni, 2011). For instance, a common procedure concerning age assessments has yet to be defined; each Italian local authority has reached a different agreement with stakeholders on age assessment, which plays a key role in the protection of minors. Many UMs arrive without identity documents, birth certificates or travel documents and lacking any satisfactory evidence of their age. This poses an additional challenge in cases of children approaching the age of 18. An incorrect assessment of a minor's age may lead to grave consequences, denying vulnerable UMs rights they are entitled to and putting them in dangerous situations (Mougne & Gray, 2010: 1). One of the current practices on age assessment in Italy is the measurement of wrist and dental mineralisation, which often results in misleading medical reports (Schiavone, 2009: 224).

According to "Mid-term report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors" released by the European Commission on 28 September, 2012, "*Member States should invest additional efforts in the quantitative and qualitative data gathering and exchange regarding UMs, including gender desegregated statistics*". In the resolution of 12 September 2013 the European Parliament calls on the Member States and the Commission to improve the collection of statistics on UMs, including age and gender statistics, to improve the comparability of statistics collection across Member States and to establish a coordinated method for gathering and sharing information in each Member State.

As enhanced by the "7th Report on the Implementation of the CRC", Italian authorities should establish a national, specific, and permanent body which would supervise and monitor the UMs' conditions while gathering data on them.

According to Di Castro's research (2010), "despite positive examples of interpersonal relationships with Italians, the majority of refugees pointed to a high level of discrimination and prejudice that jeopardise their acceptance by Italian society". In addition, Italian political elites and media have played a crucial role in the spreading and legitimation of "both overt and covert forms of xenophobia and racist discourse over time" (Di Castro, 2010: 110).

In conclusion, despite the efforts of Italian governments to define effective rules for UMs, the unclear legal framework, lack of equally implemented praxis, and the violation of legal provisions, place the UMs in a vulnerable position.

Methodological assumptions of the research

This review aims to describe the problem of reintegration of unaccompanied refugee minors. First the review focuses on international regulations, including the definition of an "asylum seeker". It proceeds to the European directives of the European Parliament and the European Council, followed by Italian regulations.

Who are unaccompanied minor refugees and why do they come to the European Union?

There is no single definition of an "unaccompanied minor"; in virtue of the UNHCR "Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care", unaccompanied minors "*are those who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible to do so*" (UNHCR, 1994: 121). The terms "unaccompanied minor" or "unaccompanied child" should be used instead of an "orphan", which defines a child whose parents are both dead. This definition always requires careful verification and the status must never be assumed. Thus, it is necessary to identify the minor in order to meet his or her developmental and physical needs, and to trace parents and other relatives.

In virtue of Article 2, Section 1, clause l) of the Directive 2011/95/EU (known as "Qualification Directive") the term unaccompanied minor denotes "*a minor who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person; it includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States*". Previously, a similar definition had been given in the European Council Resolution of 26 June 1997 on UMs who are nationals of third countries.

According to the "General Comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside Their Country of Origin", there are several reasons for a child being unaccompanied or separated from his or her parents and travelling to Europe: "persecution of the child or the parents, international conflicts and civil wars, trafficking in various contexts and forms, including sale by parents, and the search for better economic opportunities" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005: 5). They flee their country of origin in order to find a better life, to join family members, or to avoid being exploited in forced labour or by becoming victims of sexual abuse (European Migration Network, 2009: 13). A large number of UMs have concerns primarily with the definition of their legal status (being an underage child), while their second challenge is securing a job.

The European Union has adopted a wide range of measures to help unaccompanied minors, such as "ensuring representation, placing them with adult relatives, foster families or in accommodation centres with special provisions for minors or in other suitable accommodation" (European Commission, 2012).

The international status of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors

The treatment of children in situations of international armed conflict and non-international armed conflict was addressed in the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and the additional Protocols of 1977.

In 1989 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the "Convention on the Rights of the Child"; this Convention changed the way children were viewed and treated, i.e. as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity.

However, there is no Convention dealing specifically with unaccompanied children which defines the need for durable solutions. In the absence of clearly defined regulations, the rules for the treatment of unaccompanied refugee minors "can be derived from three sources: a) international conventions; b) international documents and declarations or resolutions, not having the status of conventions and protocols; and c) the family and child welfare law of the country in which the child has sought refuge" (Pask, 1989: 200).

Asylum right was defined by State parties of the UN General Assembly after World War II in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, known as the "1951 Convention" and its 1967 Optional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Article 1 of the Convention defines an asylum seeker as " [...] *a person who seeks international protection outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion*". The 145 State signatories of the Convention are under no obligation to grant the right of asylum to those who have claimed it; however, it is widely accepted that they have to ensure the "*non-refoulement* principle", which has been defined in several international instruments. In fact, Article 33, Section 1 of the 1951 Convention provides that: "*No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.*"

A new issue has gained greater importance in the international panorama: climate change has forced many people to flee their countries and come to Europe because of natural disasters, such as sea level rise (Jane McAdam, 2011: 16). However, the so-called internally displaced persons (IDPs) are not considered refugees: neither in the 1951 Convention nor the 1967 Optional Protocol.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted on 20 November, 1989 in New York, defines the "principle of non-discrimination" in Article 2. It states that "*States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind*". Article 3 of the same Convention affirms that the best interests of children must be a primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children; they should consider the effect their decisions will have on them (UNICEF Fact Sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Article 22 states as follows: "*States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance.* "Moreover, the Convention has

established a special regulation, Article 20, Section 1, to ensure that children who are temporarily or permanently deprived of their family environment are provided with assistance and protection by the State Party. According to Article 20, Section 2, all States shall ensure alternative care for aforementioned children in accordance with their national laws.

In Europe – the Common European Asylum System

Since 1999 The European Union has implemented numerous legislative measures in order to harmonise and establish an area of freedom, security and justice open to those who, forced by circumstances, legitimately seek protection in the European Union. During the meeting in Tampere on 15 and 16 October, 1999, the European Council agreed on creating the "Common European Asylum System (CEAS)" based on the application of the 1951 Geneva Convention. Combining different legislative measures, the European Union has secured common minimum standards among the member states regulations for asylum-seekers, primarily with the Directive of 27 January 2003 No. 9. This directive aims to harmonise the conditions for the reception of asylum-seekers thus ensuring them a dignified living standard and comparable living conditions in all Member States. The Directive 2003/9/EU has recently been replaced by the Directive 2013/33/EU, which has entitled new forms of assistance to unaccompanied minors. For instance, unaccompanied minors' freedom can be restrained only in exceptional circumstances, and they shall be released as soon as possible (Article 11, Section 3). Unaccompanied minors shall never be detained in prison, and Member States shall provide them with accommodation in institutions with specialised personnel and facilities which take into account the needs of children. The chapter dedicated to the vulnerable persons of the new Directive 2013/33/EU, Article 23, Section 1, states that the best interests of minors should be a primary consideration of Member States, ensuring a standard of living adequate for the minor's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. In particular, the following need to be provided: "*(a) family reunification possibilities; (b) the minor's well-being and social development, taking into particular consideration the minor's background; (c) safety and security considerations, in particular where there is a risk of the minor being a victim of*

human trafficking (d) the views of the minor in accordance with his or her age and maturity" (Article 23, Section 2). Article 24 is dedicated to unaccompanied minors, specifically it states that "[...] *all Member States have to ensure that a representative represents and assists the unaccompanied minor to enable him or her to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided*" by the Directive 2013/33/EU. The representative shall perform his or her duties in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child as described in Article 23, Section 2 of the same directive. Unaccompanied minors who have requested international protection shall be placed with adult relatives, with a foster family, "in accommodation centres with special provisions for minors or in other accommodation suitable for them". In accordance with Article 23, Section 3, it is established that Member States shall start tracing the unaccompanied minors' family members as soon as possible after the minor has applied for international protection.

Directive 2013/33/EU entitles all applicants seeking international protection to medical assistance on public health grounds, and to applicants who are minors, access to the Member States Education System, under similar conditions to their own nationals.

Moreover, Article 23, Section 4 of the same Directive ensures access to rehabilitation services and mental health care for every minor who has been victim of any kind of inhuman and degrading treatment, or who has suffered as a result of armed conflicts.

Italian definition of an Unaccompanied Minor

According to the decree of the Prime Minister No. 535/1999, an unaccompanied minor is a person who remains on the territory of Italy for any reason, who has neither Italian nor European citizenship; a person who has not applied for international protection, lacking the assistance and representation of his or her parents or any adult who is responsible for him or her under the Italian law (Biondi Dal Monte, 2015). The reception of unaccompanied minors is entrusted to the Italian Authority "Direzione Generale dell'Immigrazione e delle Politiche d'Integrazione" (General Direction of Immigration and Integration Policies).

Assistance to Unaccompanied Minors on the Italian ground

Minors arrive in Italy following many different paths; some travel with a professional trafficker with forged documents, some are accompanied by an acquaintance and face the clandestine journey by sea, some move in a highly independent way passing through various places on their own. After their arrival in Italy, UMs try to reach their adult references and this is one of the reasons why they tend to go missing (Vacchiano, 2010: 118).

In Italian legislation there are no forced returns, according to Article 19, Section 2 of the Decree No. 286, 25 July 1998: "*Expulsion is not allowed, excepting the cases provided for by Article 13, Paragraph 1, against: a) aliens not of age, withstanding the right to follow an expelled parent or custodian*". Therefore, after research on the minor's personal situation in his or her original country, authorities can enact an assisted repatriation of the minor only:

1) If it meets his or her needs and interests,

or

2) In order to grant him or her family reunification right (Elena Rozzi, 2004. Vademecum sui diritti dei minori stranieri non accompagnati).

These provisions have been widely infringed since many UMs have been returned to the frontiers, or placed in CIEs (Identification and Expulsion Centres) (Piraino, 2013: 17). For instance, Italy was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for infringing the "principle of *non-refoulement*" in the case "Sharifi and Others v. Greece and Italy", concerning UMs who disembarked on the Italian coasts and were returned to Greece. In June 2015, following a mission to Italy, the Human Rights Council reported with particular concern on the returns of individuals, including unaccompanied minors and adult asylum seekers, in the context "of bilateral readmission agreements, mainly due to inadequate or non-existing screenings that fail to determine age or to inform asylum seekers of their rights" (Human Rights Council, 2015: 14).

When an unaccompanied child is intercepted on the Italian territory, the General Direction of Immigration and Integration Policies, a department of the Ministry of the Interior, has to place him or her in a secure place. Conforming to the "Conferenza Unificata – Intesa tra il Governo, le Regioni e gli Enti locali sul piano nazionale per fronteggiare il flusso straordinario di cittadini extra-comunitari, adulti, famiglie e minori stranieri non accompagnati" (Agreement

between the Government and Regions and Local Authorities on a national plan in order to face the extraordinary migratory flow of third country nationals, adults, families, and unaccompanied minors) No. 77/CU dated 10 July, 2014, UMs should be placed in temporary accommodation, the so called "Centres for First Aid and Reception" (CPSA), in order to pursue family tracing and to undertake age assessment. All UMs shall spend there from 30 up to 120 days. In recent years, due to the intensification of the migration flow, CPSAs have usually been overcrowded. Therefore, UMs are located in other types of accommodation, i.e. hotels. For instance, in January 2011, due to the lack of space in Lampedusa centre, the authorities lodged UMs in the 4-star Hotel "Macondo" (Accorinti, 2012: 14).

All UMs have the right to demand a residence permit for underage children. Once a minor has turned 18, this permit can be transformed into a permit for subordinate work or autonomous work – a permit for study reasons and health or medical treatment reasons.

Authorities have to make an attempt to trace the UM's family members within 60 days from his or her interception. According to Article 2, Section 2 of the Decree of the Prime Minister No. 535, a minor needs to be consulted concerning the possibility of repatriation. However, it is up to the child to take the decision of returning to his original country and only if this decision meets the child's interest, as regulated in the Article 28 of the Legislative Decree No. 286/1998; "*In all the administrative and jurisdictional proceedings aimed at implementing the right to family unity and concerning minors, it is necessary to take into consideration with priority the higher interest of the minor, compliantly with what provided for by article 3, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the rights of the child dated 20 November 1989, ratified and made executive pursuant to Law No. 176 dated 27 May, 1991.*"

Article 9, Law No. 184/1983 states that any person who contacts a child in state of abandonment may refer him or her to public authorities. Civil servants and public servants must report to the "Tribunale dei Minori" (Office of the Public Prosecutor at the Juvenile Court) on the conditions of the abandoned minor. According to the Civil Code, Article 403, "*when a child is in a situation of danger to his or her physical and psychological well-being, public authorities shall place him or her in a safe location until a long term solution is found*". Within 10 days the minor is asked by a social worker about his or her

identity, family and personal conditions, with the support of a linguistic mediator. During the interview social workers should inform the minor of the possibility to request international protection. A legal expert should inform UMs about the advantages and disadvantages of formalising the request for asylum; for instance, the residence permit for asylum allows a 16-year-old UM to work, but it implies a breakup with his or her original country. The presence of a psychologist during the interview is not required (Gruppo Nazionale PAM, 2006).

If the minor does not possess any identification documents, his or her identity and age have to be established, even in collaboration with the diplomatic authorities of the minor's original country. In order to define the UM's age, the authorities must undertake a non-invasive medical test. As the Resolution 2012/2263(INI) reminds us, the European Parliament deplores "*the unsuitable and intrusive nature of medical techniques used for age assessment in some Member States, which may cause trauma, and the controversial nature and large margins of error of some of the methods based on bone maturity or dental mineralisation*". In fact, the Parliament states in Paragraph 15 "*that age assessment must be conducted with due respect for the child's rights and physical integrity and for human dignity, and that minors should always be given the benefit of the doubt*".

According to Save the Children (2010), age assessment in Italy is usually conducted without the support of a linguistic mediator, in other words, without the informed consent of the minor, breaching Article 32 of the Italian Constitution: "*No one may be obliged to undergo any health treatment except under the provisions of the law*". In case of incorrect age assessment, results may lead to grave consequences, i.e. repatriation.

According to Schmelinga & Reisingerb & Gesericka & Olzea, "[...] age estimates should consist of a physical examination which also records anthropometric data, signs of sexual maturation and potential age-relevant developmental disorders, an X-ray of the left hand and a dental examination which records dentition status and evaluates an orthopantomogram" (Schmelinga & Reisingerb & Gesericka & Olzea, 2006: 61). In Italy the most common practice is the X-ray of the left hand wrist. This practice adopts a technique called "1959 Greulich and Pyle Atlas". This method of evaluation of skeletal age uses a series of radiographs collected in the 1930s; despite the widespread use of this technique its suitability is now debatable (Tisè & Mazzarini & Fabrizzi & Ferrante & Giorgetti &

Tagliabracci, 2011: 412). In the study "Applicability of Greulich and Pyle method for age assessment in forensic practice on an Italian sample", the results highlight the problem of evaluating a safe range for age estimation. This range varies from 0.4 to 4.1 years; 50% of observations ranged from 0.2 to 1.8 years of margin of error. According to Italian legislation, this margin of error does not need to be mentioned in medical reports (Pannia, 2014).

In addition, a clear and detailed set of rules on age assessment is yet to be laid down. In fact, the new circular of the Ministry of Interior (dated 9 July 2007) has defined new criteria in order to determine the age of the minor. However, this circular does not delineate a common procedure which has to be implemented in every region. Further, in March 2014, the President of the Council of Ministers adopted the Legislative Decree No. 24, on the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. According to Article 4, Section 2 of this decree, the Prime Minister has to issue a protocol on age assessment of unaccompanied minors. This test should be conducted through a multidisciplinary approach, by specialised personnel and following appropriate procedures taking into account the specificities of the child's ethnic and cultural features. This protocol has not been adopted yet. In case of uncertainty surrounding a migrant's age, the international community agrees on granting the "favor minoris", so that it is presumed that the migrant is under-age. It is a primary necessity to determine the child's age in order to avoid discrimination or expulsion.

An Unaccompanied Minor seeking asylum

The Council Regulation 343/2003/EC of 18 February 2003 established new criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application (the "Dublin II Regulation"). This regulation provides the possibility for children to join their family in Europe and to be reunited with family members in another EU Member State. Article 6 states that "*Where the applicant for asylum is an unaccompanied minor, the Member State responsible for examining the application shall be that where a member of his or her family is legally present, provided that this is in the best interest of the minor*". Furthermore, "if an unaccompanied child has travelled through more

than one Member State, the State where the child claims asylum is responsible for processing the claim" (Feijen, 2008: 7).

Regarding the Italian regulations, since unaccompanied minors are the most vulnerable category among all migrants, Italy has developed a special procedure in order to ensure protection to every single minor who is separated from his or her parents and who seeks asylum. As this document reveals, Italy has yet to adopt a specific legislation on unaccompanied minors, therefore the legislation on minors and the "Testo Unico dell'Immigrazione" (Unified Code of Immigration) must be implemented.

According to the "Report of the General Direction of Immigration and Integration Policies", dated 30 April, 2015, since January 2015 1,112 requests for international protection have been submitted by UMs. The number of applications for international protection has increased by 45.5 % compared to 2014. A large number of these applications come from Gambia (36.1%), Senegal (13.1%) and Bangladesh (11.6%). 65.1% of the requests have been submitted by residents of sub-Saharan countries (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Direzione generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione (30 April 2015) I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia Report di Monitoraggio, 2015: 7).

The reception of asylum requests has been regulated mainly by the Directive of the Minister of Interior dated 7 December, 2006. In virtue of this directive, when public servants, civil servants, healthcare or social workers intercept an unaccompanied minor on the Italian territory, they are obligated to inform the minor about the application procedures to obtain international protection, if necessary with the support of a linguistic mediator. All of these actors have to file a report and immediately deliver it to the local "questore".[1]

Once he or she has submitted his or her request for international protection, the minor is lodged with Municipal Social Services, under the supervision of the "Protection System for Refugees and asylum-seekers" (SPRAR – Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati). Municipal Social Services provide support to the asylum seeker to fill in the "C3" form[2]; they have to be heard and their opinion has to be taken into account before making any decision.

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[1]   Questore – the chief of the municipality police office.
[2]   A verbal declaration requesting the recognition of refugee status.

Once the "questore" has been informed of the presence of a minor on his or her competence territory, or has received a request for asylum, he or she shall place the minor temporarily with Municipal Social Services and notify the minor's presence to Family Court of the district where the minor is located and to the "Giudice Tutelare" (Guardianship Judge) (ANCI, Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'immigrazione -Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, 2011). Regardless of whether the child has entered the territory legally or illegally, even when he or she has lost travel documents, the UM is to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Family Court of the district where he or she is located, in virtue of the Decree No. 251, dated 19 November, 2007. A Judge has to appoint a legal guardian within 48 hours following the communication by the Police Immigration Office (Questura). Judges tend to appoint legal guardians after several weeks since the submission of the asylum request and not to appoint a legal guardian when a child is 17. According to Pannia (2014), Judges appoint legal guardians from 3 up to 6 months after the minor's interception. Guardians should be trained to deal with asylum-seekers and to meet their specific needs, including cultural, social, and religious needs; however, Italian legislation regulates only the economic aspects (Article 357 of the Civil Code). There is no monitoring system to verify how legal guardians act and perform their mandate. Usually it is the Mayor of the Municipality where the UM is lodged who is in charge of the guardianship; he or she usually delegates this duty to other individuals who provide social assistance or other services for the Municipality. In fact, these persons have to deal with a high number of other vulnerable individuals (elderly, disabled etc.). Thus, they do not have enough time to properly fulfil their mandate with unaccompanied refugee minors (Italian Council for Refugees (CIR)).

As enhanced by Schiavone (2009), in the Municipality of Rome guardians are appointed within 2 or 3 months. In case of lack of space in the "Centres for First Aid and Reception", UMs are usually lodged in the so-called "secondary reception centres" which are situated in other municipalities close to the Municipality of Rome. Thus, UMs and guardians do not even have contact as guardians are usually appointed in municipalities kilometres away from where the minor is located.

Even when UMs are intercepted by offices of border police or in police headquarters, those actors have to guarantee minors an effective access to asylum procedures.

When the competent municipal authority receives notification of the presence of an unaccompanied minor, it contacts the SPRAR – Protection System for Refugees and asylum-seekers, in order to find a place to accommodate the UM. He or she is to be placed in the nearest local centre of the SPRAR. This body has to inform the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the UM's accommodation. The UMs' application for international protection cannot be formalised until the Judge appoints a guardian. Once the guardian has contacted the competent police headquarters and has heard the minor, he or she confirms the minor's request for asylum (ANCI, Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'immigrazione -Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, 2011). The guardian will assist the UM during this whole period, will work with the UM towards a durable solution and will thus have an important role to play in the UM's integration. However, no specific provisions concerning the rules that should be followed exist. As enhanced by the "7th Report on the Implementation of the CRC", the legislation about the UMs guardianship is not equally implemented in every region of Italy.

The presence of Unaccompanied Minors in Italy

It is extremely difficult to access up-to-date and accurate statistics that reflect the true scope of the phenomenon of the Unaccompanied Minors' migration in Europe. It is possible to shed light on different gaps:

a) Lack of homogeneity: in the European Union, "every country uses different methods of compilation and as a consequence various national statistics reflect different realities" (Kanics & Hernández, 2010: 6). For instance, Italy notes the total number of children inside the care system on a certain date, "*While other countries count the number of children admitted into care services during a certain period (Spain)*" (Kanics & Hernández, 2010: 6).

b) Lack of regularity: Italy created a national body called "Committee for Foreign Children", a public body that used to conduct a census of unaccompanied and separated children. However, this provided irregular statistics. Since 2012 this Committee no longer exists.

c) Lack of accuracy: Italy has set up long, complex procedures for the registration of unaccompanied migrant children. "As a result, a significant number of children who go missing or abandon the care facilities after

a short stay, are never registered in the official statistics" (Kanics & Hernández, 2010: 6).

According to the "5th Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum (2013)", European Union Member States reported that the number of UMs applying for international protection in 2013 was 12,425; they came mostly from Afghanistan (3,310), Somalia (1,580), Syria (1,010) and Eritrea (715). They are mainly teenagers between 14 and 18 years old (European Commission, 2014: 4). The majority of these children were received by Sweden, Germany, the UK, Austria and Italy (European Commission, 2014: 4). As illustrated by the Report of UNHCR "Protecting Children On the Move", many UMs "tend to avoid entering any national protection mechanism, or abandon their reception facilities shortly after arrival for fear of jeopardising their migratory plan to reach the envisaged destination" (Report of UNHCR "Protecting Children On the Move", 2012: 5).

A consistent number of unaccompanied minors do not apply for asylum in the Member State that registered their arrival. This happens for two reasons:

1) The minor may want to reach a contact person or a relative in another country rather than the country of arrival,

and

2) Usually he or she is afraid to be sent back to the country of origin.

The majority of UMs are believed to be using an intra-Schengen route: Italy – Germany – the Netherlands – Sweden and Norway. They usually disappear from the asylum camps a short time after they have applied for asylum and before the age-testing procedure and the asylum interview. In Italy, UMs tend to leave the centres due to "the lack of clear public reception projects or because of the impossibility to achieve regularisation when they come of age" (Vacchiano, 2010). According to the Frontex agency (2010), most of them tend to avoid authorities, do not ask for international protection and leave the reception centres within 24 or 48 hours (Frontex, 2010: 23). Thus, once they are intercepted in Norway or Sweden, authorities have to implement the Dublin Regulation, therefore, UMs are returned to Italy (Schiavone, 2009). For the aforementioned causes and due to underreporting and incoherent data management, the total number of children crossing the EU borders remains unknown. For instance, in 2013 the British Asylum Screening Unit estimated that 60% of the UMs accommodated in the United Kingdom social care centres go missing (Frontex, 2010: 22).

Table 1: The Presence Of Unaccompanied Minors in Italy (Report nazionale minori stranieri non accompagnati – Aggiornato al 31 gennaio 2015, p. 2)

GENDER	PRESENT	% PRESENT	MISSING
MALE	9,377	94,9	3,270
FEMALE	509	5,1	
TOTAL	9,886	100,0	

According to the report released on 31 January, 2015 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the number of unaccompanied minors in Italy is 9,886; however, there is a large number of UMs unaccounted for as you can see in the table above.

According to ANCI (2015), 73% of UMs who arrived on the Italian territory are aged between 17 and 18 years old and 19% are aged between 15 and 16 years old (ANCI et al., 2015: 33). In addition, the report of July 2012 by UNHCR strongly recommended Italy to define a central body specifically competent at providing international protection to unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

SPRAR

According to Article 26, Section 6 of the legislative decree No. 25/2008, UMs shall not be detained in CIE (Centre of Identification and Expulsion) nor in CARA (Reception Centres for Asylum Seeker). All UMs shall be lodged in SPRAR centres which undertake programmes dedicated to minors.

The "Protection System for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers" is a network of local authorities' centres financed by the Ministry for the Interior-Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration, through the "National Fund for Asylum Policy and Services", that aims to support and protect asylum-seekers, refugees and immigrants who fall under forms of humanitarian protection. Those centres are managed by local authorities through the National Association of Italian Municipalities in cooperation with NGOs (ANCI et al, 2015).

One of the criticisms enhanced by Schiavone (2009) is that this network of local entities does not represent an "integrated national system", enacted by a precise regulation defining the process of minors' reintegration. Indeed, it is

discretionary to local bodies to undertake the SPRAR programme. Therefore, it is impossible to acknowledge accommodation availability in reception centres, since there is no electronic database (Pannia, 2014).

Despite the availability of other types of accommodation, such as CARA or CIE, emergency reception centres that host significant numbers of persons at one time, the SPRAR centres aim at integrating asylum-seekers and refugees in the Italian society. The SPRAR provides numerous services, such as initial care, but also integration services. For instance, "Care Services" include:

- support of a linguistic mediator,
- supply of food vouchers for board,
- assistance in procedures to access social, health and educational services.

"Integration Services" comprise:

- orientation in relation to employment,
- enrolment in training courses,
- professional re-training,
- support in looking for employment and accommodation (Pratomigranti – SPRAR Project Protection System for Refugees and asylum-seekers[3]).

Since these minors will be staying in SPRAR centres for a relatively long period of time, accommodation centres have to prepare them to live autonomously.

In 2015, 430 reception projects have been adopted, 52 of which are dedicated to unaccompanied children. In case a place in SPRAR centres is not available, UMs are placed in specialised centres for children. The "Protection System for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers" has involved 379 local authorities, providing 21,449 places to refugees, 941 of which have been reserved for unaccompanied refugee minors (Anci et al., 2015: 116).

The "Integrated Reception"

SPRAR projects are "integrated reception" programmes organised and run by local authorities, who not only provide food but also information, assistance, orientation, individualised socio-economic integration and accommodation.

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[3] http://www.pratomigranti.it/index.php?pos=1&id_sezione=177&id_lingua=2, Access date: October 10, 2015.

Accommodation

The right to accommodation has been granted to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in Italy and Europe since the Council Resolution of 26 June 1997 on unaccompanied minors who are nationals of third countries. In fact, in pursuance of Article 4 Section 4 "*Member States should normally place unaccompanied Minors during the asylum procedure:*

(a) with adult relatives, (b) with a foster-family, in reception centres, with special provisions for minors, or (d) in other accommodation with suitable provisions for minors, for example such as to enable them to live independently but with appropriate support."

In the decree of 18 August 2015 No. 142, two levels of housing care have been established. The first one is the first care reception in CPSA, which provides a short-term assistance programme entitled to small groups of children. Within one month social workers are obliged to develop a long-term educational project for the UMs. In the second level of housing care, UMs are referred to SPRAR centres or to other residential care (foster families or reception communities), where they would stay until their 18th birthday (Cittalia, 2014).

All reception centres have to provide specific facilities that should be adapted to UMs' specific profiles, with personnel specifically assigned to them. However, due to the lack of space in UM camps, they are usually lodged in reception facilities for adults.

All centres have to guarantee an educational space which reproduces a familiar environment where minors can feel comfortable and protected and where they can feel free to express themselves. Social workers should evaluate the centre facilities in terms of professional abilities and with regard to the regional activities concerning minors, such as education, leisure, sports centres. The centre must ensure personal space for each minor, but it should also provide areas where they can socialise (for spare time, study or where they can play games).

Since the majority of UMs arrive in Italy during their adolescence, they are typically at a stage in their development where peer friendships and support are particularly significant. After the loss of their community they should have opportunities to connect with people. Therefore, each centre should ensure the presence of qualified personnel who would implement an individualised project on each minor. The reception workers play an important role in establishing a connection with the minor and helping him or her to define a life project. UMs

should be supervised also during nights; for every 3 UMs there is an assigned social assistant who will monitor the UMs during their stay in the centre (ANCI et Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e L'immigrazione – Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, 2011).

Personalised Education Project

According to the Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)9 of the Council of Europe, "*Member States should ensure life projects to UMs, which aim to develop the capacities of minors allowing them to acquire and strengthen the skills necessary to become independent, responsible and active in a society*". According to Section 2 of the Recommendation, every State Member should have "a holistic approach, every life project should take account of the child's specific situation".

The majority of UMs arrive by sea. The journey is mostly seen by them as a transition from one phase of life to another, a "rite of passage". UMs' life after the arrival in the destination country is generally accompanied by a feeling of freedom and personal success, although a sense of responsibility for the family and an awareness of their explicit or implicit expectations gradually emerges. Many UMs speak with pride about the investiture received from their families, sometimes expressed by formulas such as "Now you are grown up, we are satisfied with you" (Vacchiano, 2010: 120). As pointed by Vacchiano (2010), many Moroccan UMs explain their migration stating that they left "to save their parents"; they become aware of their mission.

In fact, they perceive themselves as "adults". UMs have concerns primarily with the definition of their legal status (*underage child*): the definition of a "minor" or a "child" has a different connotation in most African or Asian cultures. Secondly, they have concerns with securing a job, thus these children do not accept being repatriated because they want to fulfil their parents' expectations (Rania & Migliorini & Sclavo & Cardinali & Lotti, 2014: 293). In those cultures being a child can mean more burdens than rights; in most cases, minors play an important role in family economy and in their upkeep, since minors usually start working when they are about 6 or 7 years old. As described by the "First Psycho-social Guide for Operators Involved in the Reception of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors" by the NGO "Terres des Hommmes", many

UMs have experienced hardships, a large number of them feel guilty for having survived the journey, or they feel ashamed of themselves because they have witnessed a killing of a friend or a companion and were unable to help them. Most of them have experienced terrible events: the death of their parents, a life in the streets, or being kidnapped by rebels. In the review "Mental health issues in unaccompanied refugee minors", researchers compared UMs with refugee minors accompanied by their families; the UMs showed a significantly higher prevalence of depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder and psychosis. Extreme traumatic events were experienced by 6% of children with families, compared to 25% of unaccompanied children (Huemer et al., 2009: 4). The study has shown that 37–47% of the 166 interviewed UMs suffered from severe or very severe symptoms of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress (Huemer et al., 20: 5). Girls and those who had experienced greater numbers of traumatic events are at a higher risk of developing emotional problems.

Therefore, to reduce their sense of disorientation, social workers should first explain what being under-age means, and what their rights in terms of protection are (Terre des Hommes, 2014). The mediator has to explain the impact of the new term "minor" and in order to make it more comprehensible, social workers should provide suitable comparisons.

To cope with the aforementioned situations, centres usually offer "Personalised Education Projects". The General Direction of Immigration and Integration Policies has implemented numerous intervention measures to grant social-work integration programmes through financing the development of UMs' talents. For instance, UMs may undertake an internship in local enterprises or professional education training. In 2012 the General Direction allocated 5.498.000,00 Euros to 1.226 development projects; 910 of them were working projects, while 316 were qualification projects. In 2015 the resources allocated for these programmes were still 5.498.000,00 Euros. Social workers usually design a "life project" which should "take account of a variety of present issues, such as job opportunities and expectations, and past issues, such as migration motivations, migration path, and family expectations" (Rania & Migliorini & Sclavo & Cardinali & Lotti, 2014: 308). However, research still indicates that not all young people are receiving their full entitlements (Dixon & Wade, 2007) in support of their aspirations. Indeed, these young people arrive in Italy with a very strong and clear project: to find a job that fulfils their family's hopes. Social services

tend to consider UMs to be passive receivers of proposals designed for them, although UMs do not perceive themselves as children anymore. Most of the socio-educational services provided by social workers are standardised models of interventions, based on Italian adolescents who have not experienced as many traumatic events as UMs (Rania & Migliorini & Sclavo & Cardinali & Lotti, 2014: 309). According to Drammeh (2010)*,* social workers and the host country authorities should promote different programmes, in accordance with the child's expectations, in collaboration with operators and specialists.

In 2014 a national organization "Ibby Italia", International Board on Books for Young People, released a "Welcome kit" prepared specifically for minors to provide them with basic information on their arrival to Italy. A special "passport of children's rights" was released by the Italian Authority "Autorità Garante Infanzia e Adolescenza" (Guarantor for Childhood and Adolescence). In the kit, minors could expect to find 26 cards containing information about their stay in Italy, reassuring descriptions of what to expect during their stay, a list of rights, and a small vocabulary list translated in four languages: Italian, English, French and Arabic. This kit was to be distributed to all UMs who arrive in Italy.

A personalised programme assumes the reconstruction of the minor's biography with qualified personnel. The research should begin with collecting basic anagraphic, educational information and possible work experience data. It must take into account the minor's talents, desires and expectations. Social workers then ask questions about more delicate subjects concerning the reason why they decided to escape, the journey, and other possible events. One of the aims is to create and expand the social network around the UM which will comprise not only friends, but also people at different levels who can help the minor along the way. He or she should be able to use this network and know its potential and limits.

Education

Under Article 34 of the Italian Constitution "*Schools are open to all. Elementary education is imparted for at least eight years, [and] is obligatory and free.*" Therefore UMs should attend compulsory schools until they are 15 years old. However, the UMs will achieve their school degree once they have finished their high school course of study.

In pursuance of Article 38, Section 1, of the Legislative Decree No. 286, dated 25 July, 1998:

"*1. The foreign minors present on the territory are subject to compulsory school; they are subject to all the provisions in force as regards the right to education, access to educational services, participation in the life of the school community.*"

According to Article 38, Section 2, every local authority should ensure Italian language courses both at a regional and local level. "*2. The actuality of the right to study is guaranteed by the State, Regions and local bodies also through the implementation of specially provided courses and initiatives for learning Italian.*"

Health Care Assistance

Once a UM is intercepted on Italian ground, even when he or she does not possess any residence permit, he or she has to be obligatorily registered in the National Health Service. According to the "Accordo Stato Regioni No.255/ CSR" (State-Regions Agreement) dated 20 December, 2012, minors should have the possibility to access all health care allowances.

Unaccompanied Minors as victims of crimes

Under Article 18 of the Legislative Decree No. 286/1998 when "[...] there is the ascertainment of situations of violence against an alien or his serious exploitation and actual danger for his safety emerges due to the attempt to avoid the conditionings of an association devoted to one of the crimes listed in article 380 of the Italian Penal Procedure Code (human trafficking, pornography, children abuse, slavery, etc.) or of statements given during preliminary investigations or trial, the "questore", also upon the proposal of the State Prosecutor, or with favourable opinion of the same authority, issues a special residence permit to enable the alien to avoid the violence and conditionings of the criminal organisation and to participate in a programme devoted to assistance and social integration." There is no need for the victims to report the crime to the authorities in order to receive a residence permit.

Permit of Residence

Since unaccompanied minors are in a vulnerable situation, they are entitled to be granted residence permit for underage children. In accordance with the Law of 9 August 2011 No.129, which has modified Article 32, Section1 bis of the Decree No.286/1998, the UM who holds a residence permit for an underage child or an Asylum Seeker's permit has the possibility to request a residence permit for employment or study when he or she turns 18 upon positive opinion of the General Direction (Garantire i diritti dei minorenni; Vademecum per le forze di Polizia Gruppo tecnico previso dal Protocollo d'Intesa tra Ministero dell'Interno- Dipartimento P.S. e Autorità Garante per Infanzia e Adolescenza, 2014: 37).

Difficulties in Integration

According to Di Castro (2010), refugees and social workers define integration as: securing employment, accommodation, having friends, rights, being part of the society and speaking the language of the host country (Di Castro, 2010: 103). It is perceived as a process rather than a status or an achievement.

According to the ECRE (European Council on Refugees and Exiles), integration is a "two-way process"; it demands the struggle of both individuals- refugees and host society to live harmoniously. However, in the European Union legal framework, the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children often tries to prevent their entry into the EU in the first place. EU Member States ensure "general child protection legislation", which has been primarily created for vulnerable categories of national children (Kanics & Hernández, 2010: 5). Thus, it is not specifically tailored to UMs' needs.

In the resolution of 12 September 2013, the European Parliament recalls "*that an unaccompanied minor is above all a child who is potentially in danger and that child protection, rather than immigration policies, must be the leading principle for Member States and the European Union when dealing with them, thus respecting the core principle of the child's best interests*". However, Italian political elites and media have legitimated manifest forms of xenophobia and racist discourse over the last 25 years. Indeed, politicians and journalists have frequently defined the phenomenon of immigration as

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'massive invasion' and 'plague' (Colombo, 2013: 164). As highlighted by Colombo (2013), "arguments such as protecting jobs, eliminating abuses of welfare benefits or preserving cultural identity" have always been promoted and defended by Italian anti immigration positions (Colombo, 2013: 165). Since the early 1990s, it is the extreme-right parties, especially "Lega Nord", that have concentrated on the immigration debate, using populist slogans against multiculturalism and integration. However, public opinion ignores the fact that the Italian labour market has benefited from long-term resident migrants who have become an important structural component in flexible and low-paid employment (Colombo, 2013: 160).

In addition to this widespread racism and xenophobia, what UMs have to face in the Italian society is loneliness and separation from family that usually cause "acculturative stress". According to Rania & Migliorini & Sclavo & Cardinali & Lotti, 2014), the majority of UMs are affected by "acculturative stress" which originates in the context in which the unaccompanied minors live in. Usually, this stress is caused by the UMs' attempts to overcome the differences between their original culture and the culture of the country of arrival. Specifically, unaccompanied children may find difficulties in learning the language of the host country or in finding a job because of their status (Rania & Migliorini & Sclavo & Cardinali & Lotti, 2014: 305).

Despite the rhetorical differences enhanced by right-wing parties, Italian governments have not defined any new integration policies during the last 25 years (Colombo, 2013). The right-wing government Act No. 189 of 2 July 2002, known as "Bossi-Fini Act", did not modify the integration legislation provided by the former Immigration Act -the Decree No. 286. The "Bossi-Fini Act" mainly tried to gain better control of immigration flows and more effective prevention of irregular immigration (Colombo, 2013: 163).

It should be noted that a draft Law A.C. 1658 regarding a comprehensive regulation of the protection and reception of unaccompanied children is currently under discussion in the Constitutional Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies and Italian Council for Refugees. Other organisations are also directly involved in advocacy directed to push the quick approval of the text and by providing amendments to the draft law.

Conclusion

The aim of the present article was to illustrate a lack of efficacy of the legislation dedicated to the reintegration of unaccompanied refugee minors in European and Italian legal systems. In fact, in his latest interview to *The Observer*, Brian Donald (Europol's chief of staff) reported that despite the numerous provisions dedicated to UMs in the last 18-24 months, at least 10,000 UMs who arrived in Europe had disappeared (The Guardian, 2016).[4] As explained in this article, this phenomenon is no longer a novelty. These missing children cases are the result of ineffective implementation of the existing legislative provisions regarding the resettlement of UMs. As shown by this review, most unaccompanied minors are truly willing to find employment to fulfil the families' expectations and to help them with their upkeep. The complexity of their personal experience has to be taken into account, defining durable solutions, tailored to their identity and necessities. Every child has a story to be heard. Thus, it is important to empower the role of cultural mediators and to redefine the role of educators and social workers to better comprehend the UMs' needs. Since most of the UMs' personal projects are decided on without taking into account their expectations, children will try to pursue their goals through different ways. For instance, a significant number of unaccompanied children do not want to stay in Italy and prefer to continue their journey to other EU Member States in order to join their family or community members, or because they believe that they may find better integration possibilities. Thus, they tend to abandon the reception centres within a few hours after their identification, in order to find employment in Italy or abroad. It is a primary necessity to conduct an interview with unaccompanied minors about their intentions in order to prevent them from escaping reception centres. Establishing a "good guardianship system could be helpful to let the minor make the right choice and help him or her avoid dangerous situations, such as exploitation networks" (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2005: 50).

As shown in the article, the role of the adult guardian is of crucial importance, as he or she will represent the minor's reference point. Every guardian should be trained to deal with asylum-seeking minors. Therefore, Italy should

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[4] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees, Access date: October 10, 2015.

regulate a complex, structured, organic immigration law on unaccompanied minors, including guardianship policies and procedural regulations on missing migrant children. Defining fulfilling legislation on guardianship will guarantee its equal application in every single region of Italy, preventing the proliferation of numerous, varied practices throughout the country.

Despite the fact that UMs need to be protected from any kind of exploitation, it seems important to ensure them the right to participation, granted by Article 12 of the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Farrugia & Touzenis, 2010: 25). As enhanced by the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the "Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child", it is necessary for children "to speak, to participate, to have their views taken into account: these three phases describe the sequence of the enjoyment of the right to participate" (UNICEF, Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2007: 150). Children should be fully "recognised as rights-holders who are not only entitled to receive protection but also have the right to participate in all matters affecting them" (UNICEF, Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2007: 150). Thus, both social workers and minors should find possible solutions and define personal life projects together. Social workers should also provide UMs with information about legal procedures and inform them about their future possibilities and the potential future dangers related to their journey. Children on the move should "be informed of their basic rights, such as the right to be protected from child labour (including the notion of minimum working age), right to education and freedom from forced labour" (Van de Glind, 2010: 24).

Another implication of this study is that the most frequent procedure (the X-ray of the left hand wrist) used in Italy to assess the age of unaccompanied minors is becoming unreliable. As illustrated in this article, this type of verification is usually conducted without the support of a linguistic mediator, breaching Italian constitutional principles. Italy should define an effective protocol on age assessment, embracing a multidisciplinary approach in order to determine a minors' age (UNHCR, 2013). In addition, Italian authorities should supervise protocol implementation and grant the benefit of the doubt when assessing the precise age of a minor is impossible.

As illustrated by this article, there is little data available on unaccompanied minors. Therefore, EU Member States should intensify their cooperation on

exchanging information about why and how children migrate. Member States should establish a coordinated strategy in order to collect as much data as possible. It is necessary to gather comprehensive statistics on UMs in order to better explain this phenomenon and grant them the protection they are entitled to. This data collection will enable the formulation of appropriate responses in order to prevent UMs from going missing and to provide them with social integration.

In addition, Italy should establish a national body competent at tracing UMs and collecting data on both asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors as well as minors who are victims of trafficking. Further, more research is needed concerning what happens with those unaccompanied minors who leave reception centres shortly after they are placed there. Since no in-depth research has been carried out on UMs living in Italy, I think it would be extremely interesting and useful to understand what the minors' intentions are and why they leave the reception centres. Protecting children on the move is not an option; children must live in an environment which provides basic health, education and protection. When families and parents cannot perform their duties, it is up to society to ensure their right to survival, development and protection; in one word: the right to life.

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Barbara Weigl*

Self-Image and the Image of the World in the Eyes of Young Roma in Poland[1]

Abstract : The article addresses the subject of self-image and the image of the world held by Roma youth living in several Polish towns. The study had a qualitative character and was conducted through the use of personal interviews. The researchers spoke to a few dozen young girls/women and boys/men from local Roma communities in Wałbrzych, Płock and Bydgoszcz. These communities are both settled Carpathian Roma (Bergitka Roma) and the representatives of a more traditional group of the Polish Roma. Interview analysis reveals that despite the strong traditions and cultural standards accepted in Roma communities, the youth demonstrate increasingly open attitudes towards the "majority society". They begin to discern the importance of self-development and education, possess predominantly positive self-esteem and declare their intent to pursue a wide range of interests and personal talents. Their optimistic vision of the future is connected with emigration plans or plans related to a temporary, economically motivated migration abroad. All young Roma declare the adoption of important Roma values, such as Roma identity, respect for the elderly, and family. At the same time they accept the value of education, lucrative jobs and the chance for individual development as made possible by the contemporary world.

Key words : the Roma, youth, Roma students, traditional Roma culture, self-image, image of the world

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Tradition and cultural transformations in the 21st century among Polish Roma

The romantic image of a Gypsy, a free man travelling along with a camp, playing music, wearing a colourful outfit, has always evoked a certain nostalgia in Polish society. This nostalgia is often coupled with both curiosity and extreme emotions. At the same time, the Roma have "always" been at the lowest level of social hierarchy due to their poverty, linguistic and cultural distinctness as well as the jobs traditionally undertaken and types of subsistence strategies implemented (Różycka, 2009).

"*Romanipen*", an unwritten code obligatory for all true Gypsies, is a moral and ethical set of rules followed by the majority of Roma and is not available to non-Roma people. "*Romanipen" is an interpretation of Gypsy tradition. It imposes on the community an obligation to manifest the Gypsy identity as the highest value, to use the Romani language [...], maintain solidarity with other tribesmen, the obligation to help, to follow the accepted ceremonies and rituals*" (Bartosz, 2004: 170). Transgressing the prohibitions entails sanctions, in extreme cases: exclusion from the community. Various groups of Roma/Gypsies have a different attitude to *romanipen*. Some are more liberal in their interpretation of and adherence to the code, others exercise severe punishment for breaking Roma law.

Another important element of Roma culture is the leadership of elders. During meetings, younger family members should not speak without the acceptance and approval of the elders. All signs of disobedience, or lack of respect, are an indication of misbehaviour and a failure to uphold Roma tradition. What is naturally associated with advanced age is the concept of lifelong experience, and hence: wisdom. The belief in this organically developed wisdom is based on one's success in managing reality despite a lack of formal education, profession or employment. As a consequence of the reliance on the experience and wisdom of the elders, no pressure was put on the creation of a young layer of intelligentsia among the Roma. In contemporary times, the experience of elders and the knowledge inherited from ancestors are not broadly applied.

In Gypsy communities women play an important role – they manage the household, look after children and act as guardians of hearth and home. Despite women's significance in Roma culture (an important role is played by older

women: grandmothers, mothers, mothers-in-law) a patriarchal model dominates. It is usually the husbands who obtain the means to support the family. A traditional Roma woman (Romni) is subordinate to her husband. The emphasis on the great value of family is characteristic of Gypsy culture. It is important for the family to be large, even the most distant cousins are included in the family circle. During family gatherings, e.g. weddings or funerals, subjects of conversation include distant uncles, aunts and various loose kinship connections. Traditional Gypsies marry predominantly within their circle (group, clan), it is more rare to choose partners from other Roma groups and even rarer still to marry a non-Roma partner. Gypsy marriages are to a large extent arranged by parents. Wedding celebrations follow a traditional ritual and despite the fact that the marriages frequently lack any legal status (e.g. due to the fact that newlyweds are underage or the lack of official or church ceremony) their high value is dictated by custom. The obligation to give birth to children and look after them, which is innate to a gypsy woman's role, is among the main obstacles on the path to education. Giving birth at a young age, Gypsy women are often deprived of the chance to obtain even elementary education. A mature Roma girl attending school may be suspected by her community of immoral behaviour, particularly considering the fact that she cannot be accompanied by guardians as Roma custom dictates of unmarried women.

Children are highly valued in Roma families. They are allowed to do considerably more than children from the "majority society". Among the privileges of young age is an absolutised freedom as well as a lack of discipline or "self-limitation". The unrestrained methods of upbringing can cause problems in the Polish school environment. Gypsy children have problems with systematic work, resistance to temptation, and waiting for rewards (delayed gratification). Learning is a repetition of various activities, which are often monotonous and unattractive to the Roma students in the context of school reality.

Roma students are rare in Polish schools. The Roma minority is not populous, with approximately 20 thousand people among a Polish population of 38-million. For many years it has been said (opinions of NGOs: the Centre for Citizen Education, The Roma People Association in Poland) that Roma students are discriminated against, perceived as problematic, thought to cause "educational difficulties", misunderstood by peers and teachers and are frequently referred to special schools. On the other hand, Roma specialists and leaders stress the

low motivation of Roma parents to encourage their children's formal education in Polish schools. The uniform and prescriptive nature of school activities have become a threat to values adopted at home, and are ultimately perceived as a threat to Roma cultural identity. Compulsory school attendance is also connected with effort on the part of parents. In Roma families with many children, taking children to school, making sure they do their homework and being present at parents' meetings is a nuisance and a sacrifice. The unwillingness to send children to preschool has the same roots. Additionally, the cultural role of the Roma woman, as one who looks after the house and children, imposes a rule to keep children close to home. By sending a child to a preschool, a Romni/Gypsy woman can be perceived by her community as a lazy mother who is not attached to her child.

The belief in Roma people's superiority over non-Roma people as well as the ban on contacts with some outsiders resulting from *romanipen*, manifest themselves in social isolationism. Traditional Roma people do not go beyond the frames of their community, due to both their own unwillingness to assimilate and to their marginalization by the majority. This creates a vicious circle which limits the chance for the integration of Roma youth with a wider social environment, thus impeding the road to development.

Roma students in the Polish Education System. Roma education assistants

Social research shows that the level of education of the majority of Roma in Poland is defined as low. In the older generation illiteracy is common. Approximately 70% of Polish Roma children regularly attend schools. Children are not sent to preschools due to tradition and lack of financial means, and as a consequence they are not sufficiently prepared to begin primary education thus falling behind their Polish peers. Another problem is the low material status of many Roma people, which does not allow them to equip children with school accessories to meet – at a later stage – their educational needs. The multigenerational, overcrowded flats do not provide proper conditions for learning, while school is not perceived as a friendly place by either children or parents. It also happens that children are discouraged from attending school due to mistreatment

by their peers. Roma children used to study in segregated classes for Roma students the aim of which was to prepare them for education in regular schools with the Polish student population. Roma classes, organised by a priest of the Roma, Stanisław Opocki, aimed to equal the level among Roma students, to catch up with school backlog or acquire selected basic school skills (reading, writing, counting). However, such classes had numerous drawbacks and were criticized by educational activists and Roma leaders for creating a ghetto.

In 2004, a governmental Programme for the Integration of the Roma Community was developed in Poland as a response to such numerous problems (negligence in education and health, unemployment, living on the cost of social security, poverty). One of the elements of the Programme was the creation of the position of a **Roma education assistant** (a person from the Roma environment, usually a Rom/Romni) whose assumed task was to improve the students' school attendance and grades in those locations with the largest Roma communities. It was accepted that the first, basic responsibility of the assistant would be to oversee Roma students' attendance at school and influence Roma parents to send their children to school systematically throughout the school year. Another task consisted in observing the children's education and searching for possible subjects or parts of class material which required later revision, or called for additional explanation during compensatory classes. The assistants' duties were also to include direct work with Roma children in a school day room – accompanying children in their homework and signalling problems to teachers of particular subjects. Moreover, the Roma assistant was to fulfil the function of a caretaker (a guardian) reacting to displays of discrimination against Roma children as well as mediator between Roma families and schools. It is apparent from this cursory review of the duties of Roma education assistant's that this professional role is an immense challenge (Soszka-Różycka, Weigl, 2007).

An analysis of Roma education assistants' experiences (there are about seventy of them in Poland) at initial and further stages of their work allows us to understand what this occupational role really consists in, what challenges and gratifications are connected with it and what advantages and changes it might introduce to the Roma environment. As the interviews conducted by Robert Bladycz (Bladycz, 2009), a long-standing chairman of the Roma Education Assistants Association indicate, at the beginning of their professional career the assistants faced scepticism, even reluctance on the part of the pedagogical

staff and school management. Their negative treatment by the formal peda-gogical personnel was dictated by a fear that the teachers would be "observed during their work". A person from outside (in addition, a Rom/Gypsy!) enter-ing the school premises and observing the teachers' work in this way evoked a sense of threat and a concern that the hitherto working style would have to be changed. Roma assistants were often individuals who finished their educa-tion at the level of primary, lower secondary or secondary vocational school. Teachers perceived cooperation with such people as a blow to their status and competencies. With time, most Roma assistants have earned a better position and ultimately respect in their school environments. The process of entering the profession was a battle not only for Roma students' rights but also for their own rights and equal treatment as educational staff. Robert Bladycz mentions the asymmetry in the endeavour to reach an agreement. As far as relations with Roma children are concerned, all assistants admit to positive experiences. Students are pleased to have support from their own cultural environment at school, a trusted person who provides them with a sense of security. According to the Roma etiquette which dictates respect towards elders, children address the Roma assistants as "aunt" and "uncle". Roma students value their opinion, which, as a consequence, gives the assistants a sense of satisfaction and ful-filment. Another element which is important in the Roma assistants' work is contact with the students' families. The majority of Roma families express sat-isfaction and learn, through the assistants, to cooperate with school. Thanks to Roma assistants parents learn to value school and education, they begin to visit schools more frequently and have greater trust in teachers (Bladycz, 2009). In some environments problems arise among Roma parents where there is lack of acceptance for the effort invested into children's education. Some Roma peo-ple are still convinced that formal school education is unnecessary. A consid-erable amount of time and devotion is necessary to convince them that school guarantees a better future for their children. Similar problems are mentioned by a brilliant Roma education assistant from Elbląg, Iza Stankiewicz: "Roma children's parents pose the greatest problems. I think that it is with them that one should begin the education". The assistants' mission is to facilitate a future life in dignity for Roma children. Stankiewicz mentions her desire for the Roma image in Polish society to change, to allow Roma children the chance for a full education and a happy life. She also hopes that one day, one of her students

will continue the work that she began (Stankiewicz, 2011). The work of Roma assistants entails numerous difficulties and a high level of personal devotion. Sylwia Maroń, a Roma education leader and assistant from Wałbrzych, writes about the many challenges connected with working in this position. The main problem is the assistants' low salary which barely surpasses social security benefits or statutory, welfare based income. This reduces motivation and leads to high turnover which is definitely not advantageous to Roma children. Lack of serious treatment of Roma assistants by officials and employers can still be observed, they are not guaranteed permanent employment contracts and they are forced to demand their rights, for instance to participate in training sessions or conferences (Maroń, 2011). As the married couple Marlena and Tadeusz Bosman Krzyżanowscy, the excellent assistants from Bydgoszcz write, their working hours significantly exceed the assumed full-time job, the assistants frequently work after hours in the field, visit Roma families and intervene in many situations. Work starts at 7 in the morning and often finishes at 10 at night. They devote their free time to write grant applications and fundraise for Roma children's needs. Assistants are left unaided and do not receive adequate support (Krzyżanowscy, 2011). The message which emerges from the majority of Roma assistants' statements is that their work has a "charitable" or "selfless" character, demands sacrifice, sleepless nights, is stressful, and additionally does not bring financial satisfaction. However, the effort which the assistants invest in their work with Roma children is worthwhile. All Roma assistants see the fruits of their work. First of all, Roma children's school attendance and grades improve, which is also noticed by teachers. The Programme for the Integration of the Roma Community in Poland distributes textbooks and school accessories to Roma children. This mitigates any shame previously felt at school and allows children to attend classes with pride. Bladycz observes transformations in the attitudes of adult Roma people who are more willing to send their children to school and view education as a chance for their children's development. Roma students are less apprehensive about school, they are more eager to attend it and more willing to come into contact with their Polish peers. An increasing number of Roma children receive scholarships (Bladycz, 2009). The recognition and the sense of being needed motivates the assistants and provides them with strength for further work. A Roma assistant's work gives a profound sense of meaning (Stankiewicz, 2011).

A bilingual, bicultural student in Polish schools

Bicultural and bilingual students are a powerful source of knowledge and new experience in school environments. At the same time, encounters of students from diverse cultures provoke various problems which can obstruct the work of teachers who are unprepared and evoke mutually negative emotions among peers and their parents.

In Poland the number of foreigners is constantly increasing, as is cultural diversity; an increasing number of children belonging to cultural and ethnic minorities are beginning to attend Polish schools. Along with the growing cultural diversity in educational institutions, social expectations concerning multicultural education have begun to develop. Experts have raised the alarm that "while the various legislative activities respond to this diversity at least to a degree[2], social practice definitely falls behind" (Grzymała-Moszczyńska et al, 2011).

Among important questions concerning bicultural students' education is their linguistic competence. In case of the Roma, who have lived in Poland for dozens of years, *Romani* language is the children's first language (mother tongue) which they use in their family circles. Polish is their second language, and Roma children have contact with it mainly in the context of school, or in contact with their Polish peers. Krystyna Wiercińska, a special pedagogue and methodology advisor in the area of multicultural education (Wiercińska, 2013), stresses that students who have a limited vocabulary range do not understand orders and statements, experience friction with peers and teachers, are reluctant to attend school and have difficulties with knowledge acquisition. The lack of Roma children's linguistic competencies and additional lack of understanding of the nature of the problem among teachers, leads to numerous linguistic and cultural misunderstandings. Roma children are often treated as less intelligent than their Polish peers. A common practice among teachers is to reduce the demands and devote less attention to Roma students who – quite to the contrary – need additional motivation to learn. The failure to stimulate children's motivation and a disregard for students' progress on the part of teachers can lead to passive attitudes in Roma children, and consequently – a decrease in attendance, which is still a significant problem among Roma students. Cognitive deficiencies in

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[2] The Order of the Ministry of Education of 17 November 2010 on various forms of support for children with special educational needs and the operation of public psychological-pedagogical counselling centres.

Roma children result, to a large degree, from a lack of adequate preparation to education. Roma children are not sent to preschools, which play an important role in the acquisition of new linguistic, social and cognitive competences.

Another psycho-pedagogical problem lies in diagnosing school readiness and cognitive development of Roma children with unreliable diagnostic tools which are not adapted to study bilingual children. Children with insufficient knowledge of the Polish language who do not fully understand the orders of the diagnostician as well as those with deficiencies in cultural experience are often diagnosed as children with intellectual deficiencies and referred to special needs schools. In her publication on diagnosis in the context of multiculturalism and multilingualism, professor Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska and her team suggest that "with a low level of linguistic competences or a low level of the knowledge of the Polish language, it is necessary to select nonverbal methods in such a way as to maximally reduce the influence of language and foreign culture on final grades, which will allow the accurate and reliable assessment of the child's actual cognitive functioning and potential" (Grzymała-Moszczyńska et al., 2013). This recommendation is often not followed in psychological-pedagogical counselling centres, taking into consideration the striking overrepresentation of Roma children in special needs schools.

As we have already mentioned, wisdom in Roma culture is tantamount to cleverness, life skills are passed on from generation to generation. In Polish culture, emphasis is placed on formal education validated with certificates and diplomas. Educational achievements are valuable in themselves, but they also serve to to guarantee a prosperous future. In Roma students, who function on the border between two worlds, an internal conflict may develop. The difference between the values transmitted at school and the family and traditional values leads to a situation in which the child is faced with a difficult choice: "Who is right?", "What is my identity?" (Wiercińska, 2013).

Psychological research with the Roma – methodological problems

A number of limitations in academic research with Roma communities result from the specificity of this group. The Roma are an ethnic minority which isolates itself and is usually isolated by the "majority society". The Roma isolate

themselves from the non-Roma population to preserve the cohesion of their group, they fear the pollution of their culture by the majority culture, they are reluctant to discuss their customs, traditions and language. Revealing certain information to a non-Roma person can even be perceived as a betrayal of one's cultural environment. This generates difficulties and at times even an impossibility in selecting a willing and representative group for research. It is necessary for the researcher to be on friendly terms with the Roma community (which, in turn, is an unfavourable condition for psychological research) or to be introduced to the environment by members of this group, ideally those who enjoy a status of authority. Another problem in studying Roma children and youth can be the necessity to receive the permission for research not only from the person concerned, but also from parents and elders, whose opinion is highly respected in the community.

There are few examples of best practice in researching Roma children and youth. Usually, conclusions are drawn on the basis of data acquired in small groups, frequently diversified with regard to age. In such cases the study has a descriptive and exploratory character. The attempts to research the opinions of young Poles' and young Roma's about each other can serve as a rather unfortunate example (Weigl, Formanowicz, 2007; Bladycz, Prusakowski, 2007). One study of Polish youth involved over 100 students, while in the study of Roma youth the sample consisted of only 10 people and due to a lack of potential, interested study subjects the sample could not be extended.

The most frequent method employed in studies on Roma communities is interview or observation. Romani language is a non-standardized, colloquial, non-academic language. It has numerous dialects. Questionnaires adjusted to the needs and abilities of Roma respondents are not developed in Poland. Diagnostic interviews and conversations also have their limitations. They are also dependant on the respondents' linguistic skills. Researchers have to demonstrate patience and stay alert in order to adjust their language to the level of the respondent, to avoid using technical, difficult vocabulary in order to enable the interviewee to understand the context of the question and feel comfortable in the specific asymmetric relationship: researcher-respondent.

Results of author's own research. Interviews with young Roma from three Polish towns

The interviews analysed in the article are a fragment of a broader research program concerning Polish-Roma relations in several Polish towns[3]. The fragment analysed in the article refers to Roma youth – their self-image, self-esteem, life plans, sense of identity and quality of life. Opinions on the subjects mentioned above have been acquired during individual conversations which were based on focused, qualitative interviews. The conversations were conducted in the respondents' town of residence (Płock, Wałbrzych, Bydgoszcz) by four researchers experienced in contact with Roma communities. The interviewees were thirty young Roma individuals between the age of 11 and 21 who agreed to participate in the study. In the case of younger children, permission was also received from parents. The research sample was obtained through purposive sampling which is the most typical method of non-probability sampling. It consists in a subjective selection of researched individuals in the hope of acquiring the broadest and most complete information possible. To invite the young Roma to participate in interviews, the researchers contacted Roma education assistants or Roma leaders from particular towns, who provided assistance with outreach.

The interviews were conducted in 2013 and 2014 in the interviewees' flats or separate locations, e.g. local Roma day rooms. The students were always accompanied by a family member or a day room caretaker. The duration of the conversations varied and depended on the interviewee's readiness and abilities. The shortest interview lasted 15 minutes, the longest an hour and a half. All respondents who took part in interviews focused on several key subjects. The interviews were partly structuralised, the conversation topics were defined, however, due to the specificity of the group, their character was closer to a casual conversation between two persons. The conversations were conducted individually with each respondent. The questions could be elaborated by the researcher or certain themes could be omitted. In each case the aim of the conversation was as follows: "The conversation concerns the situation of children and youth in your town. We are interested in your personal opinion. The conversation is completely voluntary and the acquired information will be used strictly for

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[3] Research in Żywiec, Płock and Bydgoszcz.

research purposes and the development of educational programs for children and youth. Do you agree to speak and record our conversation?" If consent was received, the conversation was continued:

- What is life like here, in your town?
- What is good about this place?
- What is missing, and what would be useful?
- What is burdensome? What do you have problems with?
- Do people live in harmony here?
- What is life like for you here? Please describe your experiences.
- Who are you, how would you define yourself? Are you a Roma, a Pole, or both?
- What do you value in Roma/Gypsies? What good is there in their presence here?
- Is there anything you value in non-Roma people, in Polish people?
- Is there anything negative in contact with other Roma?
- Is there anything negative in contact with non-Roma people, with Polish people?
- Tell me about yourself. What are you like? What can you do well? What do you have problems with?
- Can you tell me something about your school, friends, family…?
- How do you see your future?
- What are you going to do? Is there anything you dream about?
- Where would you like to live? Would you like to live here? Do you link your future with this region, or perhaps a different town, a different country?
- How happy are you? How happy were you in the past? What about the future?

All conversations were recorded, transcribed, and finally listened to by two people treated as competent judges. During their discussion, the judges ascribed the content expressed in the recording to five previously determined thematic groups. The analysis consisted in matching the information from the interviews to the determined categories (areas), as well as a discussion on the psychological mechanisms observed in the conversations.

The analysed categories are:
- self-image
- the image of school and education
- the image of Polish people

- the image of the Roma
- values
- a vision of the future

A collective analysis of young Roma people's self-image and their image of the world

Self-image

The respondents vary in sex, age, place of residence and experience. The differences are also evident in their self-image.

The sense of identity is the key category for analysis. Roma youth are raised in two environments: family- Roma and school or professional– Polish environment. All young people interviewed felt Roma and identified themselves with Roma culture. Several children from mixed families also declared Roma identity. One of the boys, whose mother is Polish and the father is Roma, despite being brought up and educated in Polish environment, also believed himself to be Roma. He declared that "there is nothing to be ashamed of, it is the person who is important, regardless of his or her origin".

All interviewed young people met the requirements of the *romanipen* code which dictates pride in being a Roma/Romni.

The youth from two of the analysed towns identify with their town, they are satisfied, sometimes proud of their place of residence. These young people know their towns, they have ideas about what can be done to improve their lives. They declare that they have their families and friends there and want to live there permanently. Despite their acceptance of their towns, nearly all Roma allow the possibility and declare their desire for temporary leave abroad for work purposes. The majority of young Roma living in the third of the analysed towns would like to leave and find a permanent place of residence abroad. Such statements as "there are no opportunities here" appeared in many interviews. Two respondents, despite their present stay and education in Poland, declared that "England was their home". In the declarations of all interviewed girls and boys there appears a motif of a journey, of moving from one country to another and a distinct lack of any fear of "migration". This agrees with the traditional,

nomadic lifestyle of the Roma, albeit adjusted to contemporary times and dictates. An important factor which favours the desire to emigrate is a more distant or even close family living outside Poland. The belief in family support is also an expression of a significant Roma cultural standard.

A vast majority of the young Roma interviewed revealed healthy self-esteem. Roma youth declared satisfaction with life and a sense of happiness at high to moderate levels. Those few who are only fairly satisfied with life believe that the situation will improve in the future. Among the strengths listed by youth are musical and vocal talents, achievements in sports and good grades. The interviewees spoke of success in various competitions. They self-defined as determined, independent, willing to help others. One of the young respondents informed us that he could notice a positive change in his attitude since a wife and child appeared in his life: "only now am I responsible and an adult, I work, earn money, manage in life". One of the younger respondents compares herself to the majority of Roma and – unlike them – she believes not to be lazy. She describes herself as a calm person who does not have any problems with acclimatization, she also feels to be tolerant. Thanks to these qualities she has friends of various origins. Among the interviewees we also met a very ambitious Roma teenager who took an independent decision to continue his education. Presently, he attends a general secondary school and works part-time as a manual labourer. He works hard to develop himself, achieve something in life and change the perception of the Roma: "Let them see. An educated Gypsy", he says. He is surprised with teachers' attitudes towards gifted Roma students as a rare phenomenon. He believes that a person should not be perceived through the prism of cultural affiliation.

Among the main interest of the interviewed boys is football. One of the students "developed his talent" in a local football team, however, due to unfamiliarity with the Polish environment he was frightened and resigned. After a certain period of time, having been persuaded by the coach, he returned to training. Another interviewee, musically talented, is a lector in a church choir. There is also a passionate reader among the young Roma. Other interests of boys include do-it-yourself activities and singing.

Girls spoke most frequently about singing and dancing. Their passions are strongly rooted in Roma culture which prides itself in such domains.

Commenting on the respondents' statements it can be concluded that the interviewed Roma describe themselves in a similar manner to the majority of

their Polish peers. They are satisfied with themselves, believe in their talents and chances, their self-image sometimes has a "wishful thinking" character. What is an interesting ascertainment is the significantly greater diversification of boys' and young men's statements compared to girls. Their descriptions had a more individual and personal character. Girls' self-descriptions were more consistent with the Roma cultural norms (dance and vocal interests, the future role of a wife and mother).

The image of school and education

School is the main contact point for Roma and Polish culture. It is at school that Roma children form relationships and contacts with Polish people.

A significant part of the interviewed youth self-describe as having good grades. As Roma education assistants from the particular areas claim, these statements are frequently not reflected in reality. Interviewees signal a desire to continue education in a technical, general secondary, vocational school or to start vocational training and university education. Some young Roma adolescents observe that school provides knowledge about the world and its history, prepares students for adult life and provides a chance to achieve success. The youngest like school on account of contact with peers. They are also fond of their teachers who help and support the students and sometimes even joke. For some Roma students a teacher is a trusted person with whom problems can be shared. In the case of one of the older boys it was a female teacher who motivated him to learn and pursue education at a secondary school. His results in lower secondary school exams were good and in light of this the class teacher provided him with support and motivation. He mentioned that if he had not tried, he would have regreted it. Some interviewees comment on the important role of school day rooms where they receive help with homework and have an opportunity to participate in events and trips. Boys often speak about following their passion for sports within school walls. One of the boys is constantly motivated to work by his coach. Some students attend additional singing lessons. One of the young Roma says: "I didn't find it more difficult than *gadjo*[4],

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[4] A gadjo- a non-Roma person.

I am equally treated because I behave differently from other Roma people". In several interviews there appears, so untypical of this culture, a critical attitude towards the traditional Roma environment.

Among the young respondents there are also individuals who do not manage well with school duties and are not promoted to the next class. The problems concern foreign languages, Polish language, mathematics and history. One of the boys says: "School exhausts me, I don't want to attend it". Several students informed us that they were not very successful in school education. For some, the obstacle lies in the feeling of shame which in turn leads to a loss of motivation to continue education, while some admit that they do not have time to study. A young Roma girl had problems in lower secondary school which coincided with her father's death. She was held back from promoting to the next grade twice due to excessive absence. She also had negative experiences in lower secondary school with her schoolmates. After transferring to Voluntary Labour Corps[5] she noticed an improvement. Now she has good grades, she finds education easier and is better treated by teachers and peers.

The respondents also included individuals who had extremely negative school experiences connected with their Roma origins. One interviewee described the dishonest behaviour of a teacher, a lack of individual approach to students as well as unfair grading. One of the boys reported a fear of a particular teacher. Apparently in situations of conflict with non-Roma peers, the teacher failed to intervene on his behalf. In the situations of provocations on the part of the Roma, the teachers' reaction was reversed, they "interceded" on behalf of Polish students. One of the respondents reported that he had been poisoned by his classmates and as a result of this attack he spent time in hospital. Pedagogical staff did not punish the perpetrators in any way. In several cases, similar situations forced the students to change schools in hopes of better treatment.

One female Roma student details an experience of rejection by Polish peers who harassed her to impress their schoolmates. As she says in the interview: "the girls didn't pay attention to my feelings". The Polish female students did not react to Roma assistants' corrective remarks. Another interviewed girl reported that although she had not been discriminated against, she noticed that other

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[5] Polish: Ochotniczy Hufiec Pracy, OHP, a state-run organization aiming to prevent social exclusion of young people.

Roma students faced attacks from Polish people. One girl faced unpleasantness from her classmates, but the class teacher came to her defence.

The above-mentioned illustrations reveal the complex and unstable situation of Roma students in Polish schools. The students' experiences depend on the local social situation and behaviour as well as the individual teachers' initiative. Good experiences are connected with the teachers' individual approach to a particular student, their support and a belief in students' motivation and talents. Bad experiences are linked to anonymity, stereotypical treatment of Roma children and their being perceived through the prism of a simplified image of the entire group.

A specific, but crucial issue raised by a young Roma in one of the interviews was connected with the practice of sending children from Roma families to special schools in order to receive allowances and other social benefits. As one young Roma claims: "a desire for interim profit closes the road to a better future for a child".

The image of Polish people

The image of Polish people as a group which is foreign in the eyes of Roma youth has its positive and negative undertones. Some respondents mention acts of discrimination and racism. Part of the youth heard epithets directed at them referring to their skin colour and origin. Acts of provocation and physical aggression directed at Roma boys have also occurred.

One of the respondents observes that the word "Gypsy" pronounced by a Pole has pejorative connotations, particularly when it is used by an uneducated person. Another interviewee says: "A Pole doesn't respect another Pole, how can he respect a Gypsy?" One of the Roma respondents is not surprised that the Roma are treated as inferior. "Polish people don't like the fact that the Gypsies receive social benefits, instead of learning and working", "A Gadjo is not worse". One of the interviewees admires people working with the Roma and for the Roma, at the same time believes it to be "Sisyphean work".

The majority of Roma youth report a lack of Gypsy-Polish problems and speak freely of positive interaction with Polish peers. One of the Roma girls declares that her best friend is a Polish girl.

The subject of the description and evaluation of Polish people did not arouse great interest among the young Roma respondents. Their statements were short

and they did not elaborate on the topic. No signs of visible emotions were noticed in this fragment of the interview. It appears that the young Roma girls and boys treat the environment of non-Roma peers as a natural element of social milieu. No signs of isolationism, hostility, "dividing the world" into one's own and the foreign world were displayed during the interviews.

The image of the Roma

Reflections on the Roma people's own group form a complex image. The youth believe that among the Roma there are both good and bad people. Some of them steal, others are decent people. Only one respondent critically stated that the Gypsies did not follow any rules, "they stay close, but when an opportunity arises they will steal from each other". On the other hand, he observed that some Roma did not approve of such behaviour, even when a Polish person is the victim. One of the boys said: "When someone is good to the Gypsies, we are good to them."

An important element of the image of the Roma in the eyes of the young representatives of this community is the lack of education and the attitude to work. The "majority society" often perceives the Gypsies as lazy and uneducated. Young Roma people's opinions do not differ significantly (which is surprising!) from the perception of this group by the Polish majority. The interviews abound in statements referring to the lack of education among the Roma, which translates to their poor living conditions. One of the respondents stresses the contradiction between lack of money and having too many children in Roma families.

Critical opinions appear mainly in the interviews with older, almost mature Roma youth. They indicate a belief that the Gypsies as a group are lazy, do not pursue education and do not work. These mature youth believe the Roma lack ambition and do not see the world or their lives with any future perspective. They state that many Roma do not feel the need for self-realisation and are closed. Finally, they feel that many Roma are eager to receive social benefits, which generates dislike for them among Polish people. The Roma, as one of the respondents observed, "try to get any job to have income, most frequently they are satisfied with national average salary which is not able to cover the costs of living of a family". It is difficult to say whether the cited opinions are an expression of a passing "rebellion of the youth" and the hypercriticism directed at the

older generation which is so typical of Polish culture, or whether they indicate a real desire for change and an opposition to the traditional lifestyle which does not agree with the aspirations of youth.

Taking under consideration the highly positive perception of family in Roma culture, it was to be expected that family relations seen through young respondents' eyes would be close. The information acquired during the interviews is consistent with cultural models. The majority of the respondents declare strong bonds and good relations with their family as well as support from their parents. Two younger girls mention numerous conversations with their mothers about "women matters". Good relations with siblings are also reported. One of the boys who attends general secondary school feels that his family is proud of him and receives constant support: "no one encouraged me to learn, but at the same time no one thwarted my ambitions". In one of the families in which the mother is Polish and the father is Roma, the traditional Roma code is not followed. However, the mother learned Romani language and everyone at home speaks both languages. The parents work and manage well although they live on the border of two worlds. They do not live in a Roma neighbourhood.

A subject which is worth addressing are the young Roma's personal role models. Fathers were most frequently mentioned by boys as authority figures. One of the most pronounced examples of this kind of positive, patriarchal role model is a Rom (a Polish woman's husband) whose son expresses a very flattering opinion about his father. He views his father as a role model because "unlike the majority of Gypsies he doesn't receive social benefits, he works hard. Feeling tired is alien to him". Thus, the father serves for the son as a model to follow.

The majority of Roma girls find their role models in mothers, Roma assistants, Roma artists, as well as female teachers and pedagogues who provide them with support and help as well as a sense of security and understanding in a school environment.

The vision of the future

The majority of the interviewed Roma see their future abroad (temporarily or permanently). England was named most frequently as a future place of residence, followed by Germany. Roma youth believe that it is easier to find

employment abroad and moreover, minorities are less discriminated against. Among arguments for migration there is also family living abroad.

Poland provoked contradictory opinions. On the one hand, "bleakness, lack of opportunities, fear that nothing can be achieved here", on the other hand, a sense of belonging: "I was raised here and I got used to such a town". One of the respondents declares a desire to remain in Poland, but wishes to move to a bigger city. Lack of attachment to the place of residence is consistent with nomadic cultural models of the Roma who have frequently shifted their homesteads. The young Polish Roma also remain "citizens of the world".

As far as professional career is concerned, the respondents present varied approaches and concepts. Some of them want to finish the compulsory lower secondary school and start working directly after graduation. Their occupational preferences are not defined. They only want to work to earn a living. Others have specified plans or dreams concerning future professions. The occupation which was most frequently cited by girls was that of a hairdresser. Other professions included beautician, chef, dancer, singer, as well as lawyer (probably without reliable knowledge about the occupation: "I could be a lawyer or a hairdresser") and finally pedagogue who would help the Roma "in some association". The boys spoke about various visions. There is a plan of becoming a professional athlete. Another boy sees his future among the clergy, perceiving priesthood as his life's role. Another Roma secondary school student wishes to pursue an interest in humanities and in the future would like to do something he enjoys. He plans to study psychology and after university to work in a psychological-pedagogical counselling centre.

The young Roma, both boys and girls, do not rush to start a family. The declared age at which they would like to set up their own family ranges between 20 and 25, and the maximum number of children they desire is four. A young Roma girl reports that her mother "chases boys away and it is good this way". She "would like to experience youth before entering adulthood and setting up a family". Another interviewed girl would like to have a Polish man as a husband. One of the boys says that his priority is "to achieve something in life first, in order to support the family". For another respondent, Roma or non-Roma origin of his future wife is of no concern, he cares about the quality of the relationship. He claims (like a traditional Rom) that he would support his family himself, that the wife would not have to work. Another respondent, already

married, says that he would like his wife to find employment as well and his son to "achieve something" in life.

In the matter of happiness the young express themselves with high hopes. However, there are concerns about satisfaction with life in the future. Adulthood is perceived by the young Roma as rife with responsibility and duties. They are afraid that they will not manage financially or find employment. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents believe that the future will be favourable to them.

When asked about dreams, the youth give various answers. Some of them dream about developing their talents, becoming famous football players, starting a music band, becoming singers, dancers in a Gypsy band, or solo performers at festivals. Others dream about independence, their own home and starting a family, a good job and happiness.

Values

A predominant value mentioned by the respondents was the family of origin and one's own family in the future. For instance, the majority of young Roma declare that they would share lottery winnings with the closest ones, with parents, siblings and grandparents. One of the boys declares that he would share the winnings with his mother and this way thank her for raising him. A young Roma girl says that she would never be able to argue with her family. The closest family members are highly respected and it is they who are at the highest level in the hierarchy of important figures.

Another significant value for the young Roma is humanity and kindness regardless of one's origin. They appreciate readiness to help, support and closeness. A young Roma girl mentions that she would like to help those who cannot afford to buy bread. One boy says that love is important in life, regardless of one's material status. Another one recalls how his father instilled particular values in him, taught him that one should not steal or lie.

The traditional perception of marriage and youth has evidently undergone changes. In the past, the Roma started families at a very young age, girls became pregnant quickly and entered adult life early. Today the respondents declare that youth and freedom are of great significance to them. Before they set up their own families they want to experience youth. "Everyone has to let off steam",

as one of the young Roma girls claimed. It is important for the young Roma generation to have time to "make mistakes of youth". It is a time of freedom but also of learning from one's own mistakes, a time which allows one to become wiser and evolve in order to take mature decisions.

Self-development was a value revealed in the interviews which is untypical of traditional Roma people. The interviewed youth express a desire to develop their passions and talents. Some of them are determined to pursue a professional path. One of the respondents greatly values religion. There is a repeatedly occurring statement about the significance of independence, as well as the possibility to be self-sufficient. Such values clearly depart from traditional Gypsy standards. The older generation of the Roma used to function communally, did not stress individual career paths much less independence. A rather traditional and patriarchal model of family predominated. Today, a large number of Roma girls attend school. The motif of self-development did not reveal itself among Roma girls as evidently as in the case of boys (the girls were also younger than the interviewed boys). However, it must be mentioned that presently the majority of Roma assistants, Roma scholarship holders and students in Poland are women. The emancipatory movement among Roma women is prominent and significant for this community.

The traditional Roma culture. Capital or burden?

Ewa Nowicka-Rusek (Nowicka-Rusek, 2008), an excellent Roma culture researcher, formulated a surprising thesis that the traditional Roma culture, with its original values, constitutes capital for the contemporary generation of young Roma, not a redundant ballast or burden.

What psychosocial resources does she have in mind? We will briefly signal the author's most important theoretical analysis.

Thesis 1. The adaptability of Roma culture

The adaptability of Roma communities is revealed in the processes of selective adaptation. The Roma have reserved a certain range of social norms exclusively for their own community. Other, less important norms are adjusted to the

conditions and social context, changing depending on time and circumstances. The strength of family and clan bonds ensures the permanence of the core of Roma culture. Cultural contacts with non-Roma people, which the Roma have experienced for centuries, have not led to the breakdown of Roma identity, instead, they have resulted in numerous transformations of Roma culture.

Thesis 2. The mobility and aterritorialism of Roma culture

The Roma have never built their community on ties with a particular territory. The tradition of nomadism is an important element of Roma social consciousness. Migration is not a problem of psychological nature as a geographical place is not important either for fulfilled social roles or for an individual's identity. In contemporary Europe the ease of migration, mobility and lack of emotional limitations when leaving yet another place of residence greatly facilitates their functioning.

Thesis 3. The clan and tribal character of Roma identity

The Roma used to be bound and are still bound primarily by blood ties – a clan community. An individual derives his or her prestige and social position from affiliation with a particular family. In the face of the Roma's supranational mobility, family and clan bonds gain a new meaning. The possibility to create a supra-local network of relations which is based on the possibility of finding completely trustworthy individuals in various locations in the country and around Europe is an enormous and unique social and cultural capital of the Roma.

Thesis 4. Tribal divisions (clan, caste)

In contemporary democratic structures the problem of Roma communities' representation is revealed with an increasing clarity, and consequently, the problem of their unity and collectivity. The "caste" division into orthodox and more liberal Roma groups is a phenomenon which impedes the emergence of supratribal representation which could accept the task of expressing the needs of the entire community. Nowicka-Rusek supposes that the Roma unity faces two paths: the first one is the breakdown of *romanipen* and a liberalization of the requirements of the most orthodox groups in the name of practicality.

The second path can lead to the reinforcement of *romanipen* in groups which earlier did not follow the rules of the code rigidly.

Thesis 5. Internal integration versus isolation from outsiders

The Roma have always lived their own life, scattered or isolated from majority societies. Living among other nations they ignored the outside world, although they absorbed certain cultural elements. Today television and the Internet provide the Roma contact with the majority culture since early childhood, while school practically forces one into such contact. If educational projects and programs aiming to reinforce the sense of ethnic value among minority groups are accepted and introduced to school curriculum, it is school that can become an important medium of Roma cultural values and the sense of their community, as well as their place among other ethnic and national groups.

Thesis 6. The Roma's supranational Europeanism

The Roma have never pursued a state organism which could be the basis for a collective organisation and protection of their interests. Currently, along with a local level of activities, a regional, countrywide and international level of political agency has appeared which is very efficient at transcending the national and state level of social organisation. Nowicka-Rusek claims that the lack of their own statehood makes the Roma a prototype of a supranational ethnic collectivity – a type of supranational Europeans.

Thesis 7. The position of an ethnic minority

One of the elements of the social capital which the Roma owe to themselves is the status of an ethnic minority in European societies. The mere fact of holding this status results in possession of rights which the Roma minority use skilfully. The Roma have a right to protect and develop their own culture, also at the level of the system of education. A collectivity which is not bound to one country or one state organism becomes a prototype of modern consciousness and identity. The status of a supranational collectivity which makes similar demands and generates similar problems in all locations, endows the debate about the Roma with a unique significance. This alteration in discourse is accompanied

by elements of concrete political action – with the appearance of organisational structures which deal with the problem of minorities and the so called small nations. Among them, organisations working for the Roma minority play an exceptionally important role.

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Oana Rognean*

Exploring Resilience in Children from Families of Low Socioeconomic Status

ABSTRACT : Children who develop in unfavourable contexts, in backgrounds marked by low socioeconomic status and associated risk factors (Stansfeld & Clark & Rodgers & Caldwell & Power, 2011), would be expected to display precarious development and poor adaptation to life's demands (Rak & Patterson, 1996). However, despite the unfavourable premises, many of them demonstrate positive adaptation and adaptive functioning (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012), with resilience being the concept that can explain the adaptation mechanisms (Rutter, 2005).

The purpose of the present paper is to investigate resilience in children who come from families of low socioeconomic status, and to explore the ways in which children who face adverse life situations adjust to them with the help of resilient resources and competencies. Sixteen children were invited to interviews at a social day care centre. As a result of the in-depth interview and thematic analysis, twenty-one categories of strategies that children used emerged, which we grouped into six major themes: behavioural coping, cognitive coping, emotional coping, avoidant coping, social support and organisational support. The results indicated that children appeal to a variety of coping strategies in order to make their way through difficult situations, using them differently in accordance with the gravity or the importance of the situation.

Understanding the way resilience manifests itself in these children is of utter importance for creating and implementing programs adapted to the children's needs, programs that target the development and the improvement of resilience both at an individual and an organisational level.

KEY WORDS : resilience, children, low socioeconomic status

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Introduction

Children who develop in unfavourable contexts, in a background marked by low socio-economic status and associated risk factors (Stansfeld & Clark & Rodgers & Caldwell & Power, 2011), would be expected to display precarious development and poor adaptation to life's demands (Rak & Patterson, 1996). However, despite the unfavourable premises, many of them demonstrate positive adaptation and adaptive functioning (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). Many studies have been conducted in the past few decades with the purpose of highlighting the factors involved in these adaptation mechanisms (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Newman & Blackburn, 2002; Hamill, 2003; Boyden & Mann, 2005; Black & Lobo, 2008; Kolar, 2011; Lee & Nam & Kim & Kim & Lee & Lee, 2013). Findings have pointed to the concept of resilience, as representing "reduced vulnerability to environmental risk experiences, the overcoming of a stress or adversity, or a relatively good outcome despite risk experiences" (Rutter, 2006), a "relative resistance to environmental risk experiences, or the overcoming of stress and adversity" (Cicchetti & Rogosh & Lynch & Holt, 1993). Resilience has been regarded lately as a process in which individuals facing different levels of stress or adversity manage to overcome or navigate through them experiencing a low (or functional) level of negative effects and recovering well to baseline functioning (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

When discussing resilience, there are at least two important factors that should be considered: exposure to risk/stress, and positive adaptation. Because both the risk/stress exposure and the positive adaptation can only be evaluated subjectively (different levels of stress have different impacts on different individuals, and positive adaptation can be quantified differently according to the characteristics and potential of a person) (Ungar, 2003), in the present study we adopted a positive approach (Sheldon & King, 2001) and a cognitive conceptualization, viewing resilience as subjective well-being related to adaptation in school and peer groups, positive relations with the surrounding individuals and participation in social life.

Theoretical background

The term "resilience" comes from Latin and derives from the word "resiliere" ("re" = re, "salire" = to jump), and the first references date back to 1630. As such, we can translate the term with "jump back in its place" which is

synonymous with the terms "elastic", "flexible". In order to define "resilience" from a psychological perspective, we need to understand the way in which the term evolved and was used in different domains, mainly in science.

From an engineering perspective, a material has resilience if the following 3 assumptions are met: 1. There is a form of equilibrium and this form is the only status defined as normality; 2. The equilibrium is regained only by comparison with a force to which the material resists; 3. The kinds of forces that will act over the material are known right from the beginning (Holling, 1973). If we transfer the concept "resilience" from engineering to psychology, we need to take into account a more flexible definition of the notion. This is achieved by reconsider-ing the terms "equilibrium" and "normality" and, also, the forces under which the system is capable of regaining its equilibrium. The most plausible recon-sideration comes from the domain of economy where equilibrium is constantly redefined in the face of change which it undergoes. This perspective about the level of equilibrium can be related to the development of a person. The changes a person undergoes during his/her existence imply essential modifications and, for each moment, the level of equilibrium is defined in a different way.

The eclectic approach by which resilience entered psychology led to multiple valences of the term. The first psychological studies defined resilience as a positive adaptation of a person to a traumatic context. Presently, it seems that the positive approach to psychology is gaining the struggle for "custody". From the perspective of positive psychology, resilience is not a process which we carry out only when the system deals with intensive trauma. Instead, resilience is used each time we intend to shift from a current status (whatever that is) to a better one (Scheffer et al., 2001, Walker et al., 2004). In this way, resilience becomes the system's capacity to maintain as well as to improve itself in the course of external changes.

Theories about resilience adapted to the characteristics of adolescents and young adults focus on resources and positive adaptation used for the healthy adjustment and development of a person who deals with risky situations (Fer-gus & Zimmerman, 2005). Most of the definitions given to the resilience of adolescents and young adults mention the same two concepts: experience of adversity and use of protective factors when facing adversity (Fergus & Zim-merman, 2005; Luthar et al., 2000). Protective factors are those which medi-ate and/or moderate the impact of risk factors over mental health. Despite the fact that literature mentions several hostile (risk) factors, we still do not know

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how youth perceive the problematic situations they encounter. Thus, literature reports cases of excessive anger, of anxiety and depression, both for the individuals who have gone through natural disasters and for those who face daily stressful situations, which they perceive as catastrophic (i.e. repeated arguments with family and friends). In this context, the qualification of a situation as averse or of a factor as being risky or neutral is subjective.

The absence of a paradigm to set the limits of the definition of resilience brings about ambiguities related to the differences between resilience and adaptability, positive deviance, emotional intelligence and coping strategies. For a better understanding of the concept of "resilience", we compare it with the concepts mentioned above, focusing on the specific differences between the terms.

- *Adaptability*. No matter what type of adaptation discussed, a person needs to develop capacities to positively adapt to the changes he or she goes through during his or her life. The lifelong development of positive adaptive abilities (i.e. cognitive processes of anticipating risks) implies developing resilience (Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011).
- *Positive deviance*. The specific difference between resilience and positive deviance is the fact that positive deviance builds its conclusions on comparing an individual with others, which is a normative approach (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). In contrast, the theories about resilience compare the person with himself or herself .
- *Emotional intelligence*. In order to use best the individual and social factors in a problematic situation, first the person ought to consider the complexity of the problem and the emotions they feel. Therefore, without an acceptable level of emotional intelligence we cannot talk about resilience.
- *Coping strategies.* The constant and long-term use of an adaptive coping strategy represents a predictor for the emergence or development of resilience (Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2001).

Fergus & Zimmerman (2005) have also brought several concepts into the discussion on resilience which are related to it, but do not overlap. Therefore, "although each of these constructs is related to resilience, they are also distinct": *positive adjustment* – which is used in reference to an outcome of resilience, for example if there is a measurable healthy development of an adolescent who overcame a risky situation, it indicates he adjusted well to the context, but the adjustment is the outcome, not the process; and *competence* – which is "an

asset (i.e. an individual-level promotive factor) that can be a vital component in a resilience process", but it is only "one of many assets that help adolescents overcome adversity; because resilience models stress the importance of an ecological context, external factors in addition to competence may help youth avoid the negative effects of risks" (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

As our introduction suggests, resilience is not an easily definable concept, and research aimed at finding a common framework in approaching the phenomenon is on-going. Another aspect that increases the complexity of the discussion on resilience is the cultural dependence of the concept. Among the most prolific work related to the cultural dependence of resilience is the work of Michael Ungar, who points out that "by and large resilience researchers have focused on outcomes that are: 1) western-based with an emphasis on individual and relational factors typical of mainstream populations and their definitions of healthy functioning (staying in school, attachments to a parent or a caregiver, forming secure attachments with one partner later in life, non-delinquent forms of adaptation, etc.); and 2) lacking in sensitivity to community and cultural factors that contextualize how resilience is defined by different populations and manifested in everyday practices (Ungar, 2004, 2005; Boyden and Mann, 2005)" (Ungar, 2008). It is important to understand how research has been influenced by a western framework, and the results have been led more or less by standards that derive from such a framework. Therefore, the issue that Ungar and other researchers raise (Arrington & Wilson, 2000; McCubbin, Fleming, Thompson, Neitman, Elver & Savas, 1998, cited in Ungar, 2008) is that resilience should be conceptualised with increased attention to cultural factors, taking into account the way cultural variation and social understanding of different aspects of life influence the idea of what "health indicators" and good development entail.

In the context of a cultural approach to resilience, we consider that the study of resilience in Romania should also be led according to the adequately identified understanding of what it means to "do well" in the middle of adversity or when living under stressful conditions. While there is a lack of studies in the area of resilience in Romania, there is a total absence of exploratory studies investigating what is understood about risk and positive adaptation. This void in research becomes even more significant in a society where the percentage of families living in precarious conditions is 18.5%, according to the National Institute of Statistics (The National Strategic Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion,

2008–2010), the percentage of poor families being greater in rural areas than in urban areas (23.2% compared to 9.4%, according to the "Social Report of ICCV. 20 years later: options for Romania", Zamfir & Stanescu & Ilie & Mihailescu & Preoteasa & Scutaru & Stanciu, 2010). As the report by Zamfir et al. indicates (2010), the rate of relative poverty in Romania in 2005 was 9.4% in the urban area, and the rate of extreme poverty was 2.4%; in the rural area the rate of relative poverty was 23.2% and the rate of extreme poverty was 7.4%; on average, 15.6% of the Romanian population in 2005 was living in relative poverty and 4.7% in severe or absolute poverty. These are worrying percentages, and given these national statistics, it is clear that a large number of children in Romania grow up in families which qualify for the low socioeconomic status label (as the low socioeconomic status is defined in Stansfeld et al., 2011), in a context of high risk exposure, which tends to promote limited rather than functional development. It is important to understand how children who display positive adaptation use strategies to manage situations of adversity. Once we understand the resilience mechanisms, we can develop effective programs to improve the chances and the development of children who face such risks (Luthar, 2003).

Theoretical framework

Socioeconomic status and risk factors

It is generally understood that low socioeconomic status encompasses low family income, parental imbalances or parents with poor physical or mental health, lack of access to education and education undervaluation, reduced employment opportunities or reduced chances to access average wages; in other words, poor socioeconomic status means lack of opportunities and repeated exposure to hardships along the way (Stansfeld et al., 2010). The aggregate of factors that characterise low socio-economic status is called risk factors, and these are factors associated with a series of negative events which affect one's development: early maternity, school drop-out, substance abuse, criminality, increased family stress, abuses, as well as emotional and cognitive deficits (Mistry et al., 2002; Lee, 2003; Dyk, 2004; Orthner et al., 2004; Hutchings & Lane, 2005; Lloyd & Rosman, 2005; Skowron, 2005, cited in Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2008);

moreover, low socioeconomic status increases the probability of developing mental health problems in childhood and adolescence (Rutter & Sroufe, 2000).

Our understanding of the term "risk factor" has changed with time, and lately it has acquired a relative character, because many researchers in the area of resilience (Luthar & Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Rutter, 2006; Werner, 2012; Ungar, 2003) consider that the presence of risk factors does not necessarily determine limited development in children who are exposed to them; these factors can promote or favour the occurrence of psychopathology, unadaptive behaviours or unadaptive strategies to manage difficult situations, but they are not determinant factors, they are predisposing factors. Taking this aspect into account, in the present research we considered risk factors those factors which create the premises for limited development and negative outcomes.

Resilience

Ann Masten defines resilience as patterns of desirable behaviour in situations where positive development or functioning have been threatened to a significant level by adverse experiences or developmental conditions (Masten, 1999: 283, in Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). According to Ungar (2003), the resilience construct is a rather arbitrary one, as the operationalisation of *adversity* (or risk), of *normal level* and of *psychological and social functioning* is subjective – these dimensions are not universally quantifiable, and the "resilient/non-resilient" dichotomous approach is not adequate in this context. An important aspect in conceptualising resilience is that it is not the harsh life events that determine the individual's success or failure, but rather the way the individual responds to such a situation (Jackson & Watkin, 2004). Anchored in the positive psychology approach (Sheldon & King, 2001), supporting the view that resilience must be seen as an interaction process between the individual's capacities to respond and the adverse situations, the resilience perspective that we suggest is that, in the case of children from families with low socioeconomic status background, resilience manifests itself through adaptation to life's demands, adaptation that impacts the cognitive and affective development, as well as the school and peer adaptation, the interpersonal relationships and the participation in social life, and resilience in each child is the result of a particular combination of competences, coping strategies and engaged resources, according to each child's particularities.

Individual and social protective resources

There are numerous conceptualisations of protective factors in the process of resilience. As different conceptualisations create the framework for different interpretations of results, in this context, when discussing protection from risk factors, we will use the concept of "resources" as it implies more the aspect of personal agency (Rutter, 2007). Protection factors can be a static component, certain given assets, while resources can be accessed or not depending on the individual's competence or motivation, therefore marking the dynamic character of resilience. Protective resources are social or individual elements which influence the dynamics of resilience, and their function is to reduce the negative effects of risk factors and to act as buffers against the stress associated with adversity (Cummins, 2010, cited in Craig & Blumgart & Tran, 2011). Largely, in resilience research, two levels where resources are available can be found: the individual level, through individual characteristics (optimism, self-efficacy, self-regulation, life philosophy, rationalisation, etc.), and the social level, through factors related to family and community (a support person inside or outside the family, belonging to a religious group, a support person in a day care centre, school interactions, etc.) (Nasvytiene & Leonaviciene, 2012; Condly, 2006; Greenberg, 2006; Olsson et al., 2003, cited in Kolar, 2011). There is a third level of available resources, specifically the organisational level, which implies access to certain institutional or governmental entities which, at different points, can provide support for someone who is dealing with a difficult life situation. This would mean that, at a given point, the community is equipped with resources that one can access in order to receive support, resources such as hospitals, day care centres, police, schools, etc.

Resilient competences

As human beings we benefit from individual resources, those intrinsic emotional or cognitive features which we can use in the face of adversity, and the environment contains enough external resources that we can access when dealing with difficult situations. However, it is easy to notice how differently people respond to adversity, and while most of them are negatively affected, a smaller

proportion can do well and display a positive outcome. What makes a person resilient is the way he or she manages to use the individual or social resources, their capacity to engage a large array of coping strategies to reduce the stress (Frydenberg, 2004).

Using the definition proposed by Frydenberg (2004), we operationalise resilient competences as the capacity to use the resources to the individual's benefit, managing them in such a way that the negative impact of difficulties is attenuated. Accessing the individual and social resources increases the probability of resilience development.

Objective

The objective of the present study is to explore the individual, social and organisational resources used in difficult life situations by children who come from low socio-economic status backgrounds, and how these resources are used in the manifestation and development of resilient competences.

Method

Participants

In the present study we aimed to explore the individual and social resources that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds utilise in difficult life situations. Participants were children aged 8-13 (2nd to 4th grade), the average age being M=9.75. Sixteen children were invited to be interviewed, nine of whom attend a social day care centre, six of whom do not; we do not have the necessary information about one of the participants. We kept all the children in the study because we are interested in all kinds of resilient resources they use, regardless of their attendance to a social day care centre. All of the children came from low socioeconomic status families, with precarious financial situations (either one or none of the parents employed), with high numbers of family members in the same household, living in poor neighbourhoods.

Instruments and procedure

We used in-depth interviews as a data collection instrument due to its many advantages related to our purpose. It gave us enough freedom to adapt the questions to the children's level of understanding and to their competences; it also allowed us to investigate specific resilient strategies of each child. The head question that we used was "Think about a difficult situation in your life and tell me how you managed to get over it". During the meetings, we reformulated the questions when necessary, ending up with phrases like "How do you react when unpleasant things happen?", "Tell me about situations that you don't like very much and how you react to them", "Tell me about a moment when you had a hard time and how you got through it". In most cases, because the answers were very poor from the beginning, we followed the same pattern of questions, asking children what they thought, how they felt and how they reacted in contact with the life situations they described, so we would have a full image of their cognitive, emotional and behavioural features.

Each child was interviewed individually, the interviewers being part of a team that was trained regarding the in-depth interview. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes, varying between 15 and 30 minutes, and all of them were recorded with the participant's consent.

Results

In order to understand the resilient resources and the coping mechanisms used by children, we utilised the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which guided data interpretation. According to the researchers, the themes do not "reside" in the individuals' narratives, they do not simply "emerge" from the participants' answers, but they have to be found and analysed by the researcher as well as to be understood as a whole, in an integrated context. Therefore, we did not look at the mere evident answers, but we tried to find connections between the themes children tackled and the particular mechanisms that could be identified across their answers. Thematic analysis is characterised by a specific pattern to approach the participants' narratives, therefore we followed five steps in the themes identification process: firstly, we transcribed the data; secondly,

we familiarised ourselves with the data through repeated and thorough reading; thirdly, we selected the words, expressions, paragraphs, which presented a link to the resilience aspects; fourthly, we coded the fragments in such a way that we had an initial code list, which we further grouped according to the similarities or discrepancies, so we could issue a preliminary list of potential items; in the last phase we analysed the interviews again and, using the list of codes, we generated comprehensive and representative themes.

We identified twenty-one categories, which were then grouped into six major themes: behavioural coping, cognitive coping, emotional coping, avoidant coping, social support and organisational support, and some of the categories we extracted were the following: passive behaviour, verbal and physical aggression, locus of control, need for acceptance, forgetting, family support, etc. Some categories were found isolated, appearing in only one participant (e.g.: sports), while others were common among most of the children (e.g.: family support). In the behavioural coping theme, we found the following categories: passive behaviour (inaction when faced with a problem, waiting for it to disappear), physical and verbal aggression (used as self-defence, as a response to threat), crying (in reaction to harsh problems, like death of a relative), behavioural compromise (a behavioural form of the need for acceptance and of the need for maintaining relationships), creative behaviour and sports. In the cognitive coping theme, we found locus of control (mostly external, when the problematic situation was perceived as too difficult to bear), reformulation of reality (through negation, ignoring or rationalisation) and absolutist thinking (placing the self and others in relation to absolute values and norms which should never be crossed). Emotional coping was mostly seen in the avoidance to externalise emotions, the lack of their manifestation in peer relationships, in order to maintain a positive image of the self or to hide vulnerability. Avoidant coping was used mostly through the following categories: sleep (mostly as a reaction to events children cannot control or as a way of attenuating the negative emotional effect), attention distraction (avoiding the confrontation with problems through play, computer games etc.), and forgetting (which gives the children the impression the problem is gone). The fifth theme was social support, which children looked for when facing different life situations – for the less adverse, social support was sought in friends, and for the serious problems, social support was sought in family (the mother being the main support figure). Organisational support was

accessed through school figures (teachers and educators) and through the social day care centre (social educators).

Discussion

In the present paper we have investigated the way children from low socio-economic status families use individual and social resources to develop and manifest their resilient competences. The main purpose of the study was to explore the manner in which children face adversities, through the strategies and resources they use, and in relationship with the subjective or objective difficulty of the situation. Contrary to our prediction, that children from the targeted background would talk about the harsh or difficult life situations they face, most of them repeatedly spoke about everyday challenges and issues, describing situations that would characterise the life of a child from an average, middle-class family. A possible explanation can be found in Emily Werner's investigations (2012): while researching resilience in children who develop in the presence of risk factors she noticed that children in such situations do not perceive them as unusual; on the contrary, living in the presence of risk is the norm rather than the uncommon.

An important aspect that we noticed across the interviews was the variety of manifestations of resilience. Whether the same strategy was used in various situations or different strategies were engaged for a single event, the results pointed at the lack of uniformity of resilience. As research increasingly indicates, resilience should be understood at the individual level, and more qualitative research is especially needed to explore how resilience manifests itself through resilient competences in children from different backgrounds.

As far as the resources involved go, apart from the individual and social resources that were highly used, there was a surprisingly low occurrence of reference to organisational resources. Since most of the children attended a social day care centre, we expected that they would be more aware of the support they can receive through such an institution, or that they make more reference, by extension, to the support they can receive through school. However, our expectation was not met across the responses, which led us to believe that the organisational support is either not exploited enough by the institution itself

– meaning it is not made evident enough by the social workers that children can ask for support within the day care centre – or that children are not taught explicitly how they can benefit from such support, or that children simply do not perceive the centre as a place where they can be helped when they need it. Such a finding should be a signal for institutions that provide services for children, and it should motivate them to create more contexts in which children understand clearly how they can use the organisational resources to their benefit in situations that are more or less stressful.

Since our study was an exploratory one, although we started from the premises that resilience can be seen as a positive adaptation to life's demands, the design allowed us the flexibility to take into consideration other perspectives of the construct. We find it necessary to make such an observation, as during the interviews many children talked about coping strategies that could be easily classified as "unhealthy" or "unadaptive" ones – physical or verbal aggression, even at a low level or used only as self-defence, the external locus of control in situations where the internal locus would be considered the healthy option, etc. Michael Ungar (2008) sheds new light on such situations where the idea of successful development in adverse situations is challenged by the means children use to achieve such an outcome: "It is possible to argue that the child who makes the most out of whatever is available to him or her should be considered resilient even if his or her behaviour does not look like resilience when viewed by members of communities enjoying greater access to health-enhancing resources. In practice, this means that the young man in rural India who joins a paramilitary group to participate in the defence of his ethnic community's right to self-determination may achieve a sense of belonging, personal meaning, experience self-efficacy, gain life skills, a vocation and express his cultural and ethnic identification, all aspects of healthy functioning associated with resilience, through this unconventional, and illegal, adaptation" (Ungar, 2008). In the same way, children in our study who talked about physical violence or avoidance mechanisms in order to reduce tension and to achieve an improved state of well-being might be judged as lacking in "positive" coping strategies, but we stress the importance of treating resilience in relationship with the child's background and the features of his environment, as well as how he or she can access the most proximal available resources.

The difficulties we faced in this study were related to the data collection process. We considered this as being a limitation of the study, in that the children who were interviewed had quite poor abilities to talk about themselves, or to analyse themselves introspectively. This led to poorer first-hand insights into the children's coping strategies, more questions and more clarifications being needed for each child. Another limitation comes hand in hand with the first one, specifically the lack of standardised instruments. As important as the in-depth interview was, we believe that a quantitative instrument to back up the qualitative investigations is always essential in providing more insight into the understanding of how children cope with adversity.

Conclusions

The present study has aimed to explore the way children cope with adversity in a context of risk factors and precarious background. The results suggest a variety of mechanisms used by children, which are differently and complexly accessed according to the situational demands. We have identified six major themes which children bring about in their discourses and which help them cope with the difficult situations: behavioural coping, cognitive coping, emotional coping, social support and organisational support. There is a strong need for resilience research, starting with exploratory studies (in order to understand the factors and mechanisms that are important and relevant for children, from an individual level to the group level), and moving on with designing instruments which facilitate further research and measurement of resilience. We stress the importance of creating programs aimed at the development and optimisation of resilient competences in children, programs that are rooted in the true needs of children and fashioned according to what each child needs for a positive adaptation.

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Challenges in the Reintegration and Readaptation of Ethiopian Immigrants' Children in Israeli Society

ABSTRACT : The present article addresses the situation of children from Ethiopian minority in Israel. The Ethiopian community was brought to Israel thanks to subsequent rescue operations begun in 1884 and continuing into the present in the form of family reunion procedures. Emigration from Ethiopia to Israel initially began as the Zionist dream of Ethiopian Jews to return to the promised land. It soon became apparent that this idealistic emigration path was extremely dangerous and exhausting, many lives were lost. Those who managed to reach Israel had to face a whole new set of difficulties, the first of which was gaining recognition as Jews. This recognition entitled Ethiopian migrants to stay in Israel as citizens, where later on subsequent struggles would be faced surrounding the challenges of the readaptation and reintegration process. In the article the historical background of immigration waves to Israel is followed by a description of the difficulties perceived by Ethiopian children and adolescents in Israel in the fields of family structure, language and communication strategies, education and housing. Furthermore, possible strategies of overcoming the obstacles and solutions implemented by Israeli state are discussed.

KEY WORDS : readaptation, reintegration, acculturation, immigrants, refugees, Ethiopia, Israel

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Israel as a state of immigrants- historical and social context

Israel is a model country which was established by immigrants and refugees from all over the world. The social movement responsible for the idea that Jews should create their own state was developed in the early 19th century by Mordechai Emanuel Noah, an American journalist and diplomat. At the inception of this prospect, various ideas of potential locations were discussed.[1] In 1834 Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Kalischer raised the idea of choosing what is the Israel of today for this future Jewish state. At that time a small population of Jewish people inhabited this area, but they did not constitute a significantly large society.

The first significant, organized groups of Jewish settlers arrived in 1882 after the pogroms in Russia. The so called First Aliyah (the word "Aliyah" is used to describe the return of Jews to the soil of their ancestors, the land of Israel) included in total about 35.000 people. The situation of Jews worsened significantly in consequence of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, which in the following years found its expression in the expulsion of Jews from a number of towns and the prohibition against entering many professions (Samuels, 1977). At this time, the majority of emigrants were heading to the United States, however members of the social Zionist movement from Eastern Europe decided to go to Palestine. They were followed by a small number of Yemenite Jews. The Second Aliyah,[2] during which 40.000 Jews came to Palestine, took place in the years 1904–1913. This second Aliyah was resultant from further pogroms and the intensification of anti-Semitic attitudes in Russia (Ettinger, 1976). This wave of immigration brought optimistic young people in search of possibilities to implement socialist ideas. It was the beginning of the Kibutz movement and the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language (Samuels, 1977). The influx of Jewish settlers to Palestine was temporarily halted by the First World War. Between 1919-1923, as a result of post-war pogroms in Russia, Poland and Hungary, new waves of emigrants could be seen leaving for Israel.[3] This constituted

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[1] Początki Syjonizmu (The beginnings of Zionism), http://www.izrael.badacz.org/historia/syjonizm.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[2] Immigration to Israel: The Second Aliyah (1904–1914), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/Second_Aliyah.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[3] Yerushalayim Torah Academy, http://www.yta.org.il/wp-content/uploads/Translations/Jewish%20history/ Toldot-Yisrael-Vhaammim-Volume-Two-pages-87-134.pdf, Access date: August 4, 2016.

a Third Aliyah[4] and brought an additional 40.000 immigrants to the area of the Zionist project. The Fourth Aliyah involved 82.000[5] people and took place between 1924–1928 as an immediate result of economic crisis in Poland. An additional factor of the Fourth Aliyah were the anti-Jewish policies implemented by the Polish state which motivated people to start searching for a more comfortable and safe place to live.[6] The last pre-war, legal wave of immigrants occurred between 1929 and 1939. This Fifth Aliyah[7] brought approximately 250.000 people to Palestine. It was notable as most of the immigrants in this wave were more affluent, well-educated professors, scientists, lawyers and doctors from the German and Eastern European middle-classes, who were escaping the worsening situation which resulted from the strengthening of Nazi influence. The following years leading up to the official founding of the nation of Israel in 1947 were a period of illegal immigration.[8] Thousands of people were attempting to escape from Europe, which had plunged into the Second World War. These people included Holocaust survivors called Aliyah Bet.[9]

It is worth mentioning that not all of those who managed to reach Palestine, or later the state of Israel, decided to stay. As many as fifty per cent of immigrants from the first Aliyot ('alioyot' is a Hebrew word meaning plural to 'aliyah') left after getting to know the conditions and failing to find their place in this new situation. In each subsequent wave of immigrants the number of people deciding to leave decreased, achieving the level of approximately 20 per cent in the last Aliyah. Due to the unfamiliar cultural background, this demographic decided to continue their journey in search of a new home.

The majority of the Aliyot, especially the early ones, followed pogroms and other anti-Semitic events. They were clearly motivated by the fear of losing

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[4] Immigration to Israel: The Third Aliyah (1919–1923), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/Third_Aliyah.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[5] Immigration to Israel: The Fourth Aliyah (1924–1929), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/Fourth_Aliyah.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[6] The Jewish Agency for Israel, http://www.jewishagency.org/historical-aliyah/content/28841, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[7] Immigration to Israel: The Fifth Aliyah (1929–1939), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/Fifth_Aliyah.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[8] Zionism and Israel – Encyclopedic Dictionary, http://www.zionism-israel.com/dic/Aliya_Bet.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[9] Immigration to Israel: The Aliyah Bet (1939–1948), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Immigration/Aliyah_during_war.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

their lives, experiences of being attacked or oppressed and lastly the fear of extermination plans under Nazi Germany. According to UNHCR definitions[10]:

1) Refugee: Is a person forced to move from his/her place of living because of a direct danger of persecution or escaping from the zone of armed conflicts. For such people, return may potentially bring deadly consequences. Protection of refugees was sanctioned by international law in the 1951 Refugee Convention.[11]

2) Immigrant: Is a person making the decision to travel in search of better living conditions, improvement of his/her financial situation, ensuring a higher socio-economic status, educational opportunities, seeking family reunion or searching for a job.

In light of the above definitions, when applying this terminology to the current discourse, quite a large number of the people who came to Palestine during Aliyot (1882–1939) should be classified as refugees rather than migrants. Does this definition make a change? As Adrian Edwards[12] mentioned, naming a phenomenon and clarifying the concepts and definitions related to it allow for a better understanding of the issues described. It also allows us to more fully explore the field of migrants and refugees. However, in the available literature concerning the events addressed here the term 'immigrant' is most often used. This is true even of firsthand accounts by participants of those events. Therefore, for the purpose of the description and discussion of this phenomenon in this text, I will continue to use the term "immigrant".

After the country of Israel was officially established in 1947[13], its parliament (Knesset) passed The Law of Return[14] in 1950. This legal act remains in place today and guarantees all Jews the right to settle in Israel and entitles them to the

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[10] Edwards, A. (2015) UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant' – Which is right?, http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[11] Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees with an Introductory Note by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951, http://www.unhcr.org/3b-66c2aa10.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[12] Ibidem.

[13] Proclamation of Independence, The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, Provisional Government of Israel, Official Gazette: Number 1; Tel Aviv, 5 Iyar 5708, 14.5.1948 Page 1, https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[14] The Law of Return, http://www.jewishagency.org/first-steps/program/5131, Access date: August 4, 2016.

status of 'Oleh' (person making 'Aliyah'). The Israeli Government offers to all Olim ('Olim' is a Hebrew plural form for 'Oleh') an initial branch of supporting services[15] to assist them in settling and becoming full members of Israeli society. Jewish immigrants to Israel are treated in a special way which is very different from immigration practices in other countries around the world. This is because Olim are seen as people returning from the Diaspora (exile) to their homeland. The importance of this issue in Israeli society indicates the necessity of The Ministry of Immigrants Absorption.[16] The role of this government entity was previously carried out by The Jewish Agency for Israel. The initial package of state support for new immigrants includes: (1) free one-way ticket and additional baggage fees, (2) free transportation from the airport, (3) six monthly welfare payments from the time of arrival, (4) free health insurance for one year, (5) free cultural adaptation training for 5 months upon arrival, (6) up to 10 months of free, intensive Hebrew language courses (Ulpan), (7) 12 month tax discount, (8) support in renting a flat for 4 years starting from the 13th month after arrival, (9) discounted university fees if the studies begin within 3 years of arrival, (10) mortgage assistance within 15 years following Aliyah. The initial support package described above is available for people of all ages. However, Israel implements a branch of programs directed specifically at the children of immigrants as well as at entire families which are individualised according to exact needs.

A significant number of immigrants heading to Israel after the Second World War were willing to live there due to economic and social (immigrants from the Soviet Union and Former Soviet Union Countries) or religious (immigrants from Western Europe, United States and Canada) reasons (Amit, Litwin, 2010). Nevertheless, there are some exceptions. One of the most significant among these exceptions may be the Ethiopian immigration of the so called 'Lost Tribe'. This was motivated by famine, ethnically and religiously motivated persecution as well as armed conflicts in their region of origin. The process of bringing Beta Israel (בֵּיתָא יִשְׂרָאֵל) tribe (the Jews from Ethiopia) to Israel began

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[15] The Aliyah benefits guide, The Jewish Agency for Israel, http://www.jewishagency.org/sites/default/files/Aliyah_Aliyah%20Benefits_chart_pdf.pdf, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[16] Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, Functions and Structure, Israel Government Year Book, http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfaarchive/1998/pages/ministry%20of%20immigrant%20absorption.aspx, Access date: August 4, 2016.

in 1984 through operation Moses[17] and in 1985 through operation Sheba (Bard, 2002: 161–170). These were followed in 1991 by operation Salomon[18], and is still ongoing in so far as family reunion.[19] The extent of the trauma experienced on the path to the 'Promised Land' can be seen in literature and artistic appeals from these times. A Jewish song with lyrics by Chaim Idissis who made Aliyah to Israel in the 90's from Ethiopia serves as one example:

SONG OF THE VOYAGE[20]
The moon watching over above
On my back, the meagre bag of food
The desert beneath me, no end in front
And my mama promises my little brothers…

A bit more, a little more. To lift your legs.
A final effort, Before Jerusalem

The strong moonlight scene
Our bag of food got lost
The never-ending desert, the howls of jackals
And my mum calms my little brothers…

And in the night, bandits attacked
With knives and a sharp sword
In the desert, the blood of my mum
the moon my witness and I promise my little brothers

A moment more, a little more. Lift your legs.
A final effort, Before Jerusalem.

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[17] Operation Moses – Aliyah of Ethiopian Jewry (1984), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/ejhist.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[18] Ibidem.

[19] Israel approves 'last' round of Ethiopian immigration, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/11/16/Israel-approves-last-round-of-Ethiopian-immigration-.html, Access date: August 4, 2016.

[20] Hebrewsongs.com, Your Online Library of Hebrew Song Words, http://hebrewsongs.com/?song=shirhamasa, Access date: August 5, 2016.

In the moon the image of my mother looks at me
mother don't disappear
If only she was by my side
she would be able to convince them that I am a Jew.

The last verse clearly shows that the physically exhausting journey that cost the lives of many of the migrants who undertook it, for those who survived was only the beginning of a much longer process of redefining their identity and building a sense of belonging in the new, alien place and culture that often failed to meet their expectations.

The process of migration and acculturation

According to Berry (2006), psychological acculturation is the process of learning the values, behaviours and customs that characterise an exact social group as a result of contact with a different culture and being directly influenced by it. The process of acculturation is long-term, taking years or even centuries, leading to personal and social changes as a result of socio-cultural adaptation. There are a number of social groups that may constitute subjects of acculturation: (1) residents of multi-ethnic metropolises, (2) local employees of international business companies, (3) occupied autochthons, (4) tourists, foreign students, diplomats, expatriates, (5) representatives of powers in exotic countries, (6) economic migrants, repatriates and (7) refugees (Boski, 2010). The last two groups are especially seen as prototypes of communities getting through the acculturation process. The very important difference among them is motivation. Economic migrants are changing their place of living due to a hope for better life conditions in another country offering more promising perspectives. Conversely, refugees are forced to move on account of persecution, war or natural disasters that endanger their lives and their health and often lead to the loss of their property.

Regardless of the reasons for migration, it is never an easy decision to make or to implement, much less to deal with the consequences of. For children and youth it is very often even more challenging than for adults, since they are frequently unaware of the reasons their parents or carers take such steps nor

the predicted results of it. Very seldom consulted about their doubts or fears, children are passively taken from a well-known environment they perceive as safe and taken into unknown or sometimes (psychologically or physically) dangerous conditions.

Bar-Yosef (2001) singles out the three stages of migration which have become the fate of Jewish immigrants, especially from Ethiopia:

1) Waiting period – This stage starts when the decision for migration is made. It is the time when the family ceases their regular routine and begins preparations for departure. It is not always possible to travel immediately. Sometimes, especially when concerning less developed countries or territories under warfare, it is necessary to wait months or even years for the possibility of escape. Such a time is characterised by concentrating all efforts on preparations for the impending journey, collecting financial resources and gaining contacts. There is no time for long-term life planning, contacts with the surrounding community are often limited and efforts towards gaining education or higher social status in the community of origin are abandoned. The family is "on alert" at all times, unsure of what will happen the next day. For children it often means resignation from their education path and loss of contact with peers. It also creates an atmosphere of anxiety and tension.

2) The passage – The process of getting from the hometown or village to the origin of transit to the destination country. Very often for families and children from war zones, especially from African countries, this stage entails many days trekking through the desert, being exposed not only to hunger, thirst, wild animals and exhaustion but also to other people. Another aspect of this process is the time spent in refugee camps which can end up being a far more protracted period than expected at the beginning of their journey – possibly weeks, months or even years. This is a stage where many families are broken and separated. The elderly often prefer to stay in their homes and avoid risking the journey at all. For children, it is the first separation with grandparents and other family members. During the time spent in refugee camps, a huge number of people, especially young children and the elderly, die due to causes related to illness, starvation, exhaustion and violent theft. For children it may mean that they lose part or all members of their family ending up without any adult care or even being responsible for taking care of younger siblings. This period may lead to a number of abusive actions

towards the children enduring it. Psychologically, it is a long period of experiencing helplessness, lack of hope and exhaustion.

3) The first period after arrival – The transition period between reaching the destination country and being settled. This means having a permanent place to live which would be indicated by a sense of a family "home" and establishing relations with the local community. This stage may take from a few months to a few years and is highly dependent on the resources of the immigrants themselves as well as the efficacy of the social services provided by the adopted country. It is also very sensitive to cultural gaps between the country of origin and the destination country. The bigger the cultural difference, the longer it may take to settle into the new place.

To get settled in a new place which is culturally different from the place of origin, it is necessary to adjust to the rules and customs applicable in the new place. Sometimes the traditions and laws are entirely different or even standing in opposition to the immigrants' native culture. Both children, youth and adults implement various strategies of adaptation, however according to research findings, as well as the observations of social carers and school teachers (Ashkenazi, 1991), children and teenagers tend to be much more willing and able to adapt to their new reality, are quicker to acquire intercultural competences and learn to obey the new norms. Because of this, they sometimes become not only language but also cultural translators between their parents and older family members and the new society.

John Berry (2011)[21] developed The Model of Acculturation Strategies, in which he describes four strategies of acculturation which include:

1) Assimilation – Resignation from their own culture followed by laying roots for the acquisition of the culture of country accepting the immigrant. It is easier for children than adults to adapt this way.

2) Integration – Acquisition of a new, strange culture with simultaneous maintenance of own culture. At present it is the most preferable form of acculturation promoted within European countries for new immigrants and is realised through programs supporting newcomers to gain social competences needed in a destination country while maintaining their own cultural identity.

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[21] Berry, J.W. (2011). 'Integration and Multiculturalism: Ways towards Social Solidarity', Papers on Social Representations, Peer Reviewed Online Journal, Volume 20, pp. 2.1–2.21, http://www.psych.lse.ac.uk/psr/PSR2011/20_02.pdf, Access date: August 1, 2016.

3) Marginalization – Rejection of both the original and new culture and customs, often as a result of a failed acculturation process. May appear as a consequence of frustration perceived when the person does not find a way to adjust to the new culture and simultaneously lacks the possibility to return to the original one. Leads to exclusion from the society.

4) Separation – Insulation from the new culture and its rejection. Happens when immigrant does not accept norms and customs of their new home country, wants to be separated from it and keeps their original culture intact. Leads most often to reducing the necessary minimum contacts with representatives of the new culture (e.g. only to dealing with officials) and complete separation. In practice it supports the creation of ghettos and living strictly among its own cultural members.

The first and second of the above strategies produce good opportunities both for the immigrants and the community of the host country for fruitful coexistence and mutual benefits. The remaining two (3&4) bring challenges for immigrants as well as for their host country. It is crucial to provide good support and to direct immigrant children and youth from the very beginning to choose the right options. The range of possible reactions to being a part of a multicultural society indicates that while positive acculturation affords new possibilities, badly managed acculturation may become a reason for frustration and obstacle.

Ethiopian immigrant children – chances and challenges through the readaptation and reintegration process

The nation of Israel has been accepting successive waves of immigrants and refugees from its inception and that pattern continues up to now. Due to this fact, it has had to establish effective mechanisms of supporting the newcomers in order to give them the best possible chance to become valuable members of their new society.[22] This is true both in terms of education and economic existence, as well as the ability to earn a living and adjust to social norms and customs of the state with the

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[22] Methods of Immigrant Absorption in Israel Presented to the Committee on Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs, The Knesset The Research and Information Centre (2011), https://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/me02775.pdf, Access date: August 2, 2016.

aim of becoming a part of the community. Since the majority of immigrants establishing the country of Israel came from European countries, the following Aliyot coming from this part of the world as well as from North America had a relatively easy transition because their native culture was very similar to the culture of the country they had moved to. More visible difficulties were perceived by immigrants and their children from the so called FSU (Former Soviet Union Countries).

The biggest cultural shock was faced by children of Ethiopian immigrants for a number of reasons since their original culture was entirely different from the culture of Israel. Additionally, they had to face strong debate as to whether they had the right to be seen as Jews or the entitlement to acceptance by the Jewish state. This was due to the fact that a substantial number of these communities practice a very primitive form of Judaism which was followed before the Talmud was written or accepted as the main interpretation of Jewish doctrine. Furthermore, even being ethnically Jewish, some of them accepted parts or all aspects of other denominations while living for centuries among followers of these religions, and incorporated them into their own religious practices. As a result, they were seen as alien by both communities and their rights to be accepted as citizens of the Jewish state was questioned for many years. Additionally, representatives of Ethiopian immigration encountered a number of barriers, starting from the initial shock of meeting people with white skin. These foreigners claimed to be Jews coming to rescue them, which caused consternation and disbelief among the inhabitants of remote villages who had never met Europeans before, had no or very basic education and very limited contact with outside world. I will further explore how this relates to a major number of difficulties and programs described in reference to this group. In the following analyses I will concentrate on four spheres important for the development of children and adolescents: family structure, language and communication, schooling system and housing.

Family structure

Originally, Ethiopian families cultivated the tradition of patriarchal structure, where the man is the provider for the family and a central figure, while the woman is responsible for the home and raising children. They also gave high

status to the elderly, which meant that children were expected 'to be seen and not heard' and to show respect to adults. By comparison, the average contemporary Israeli family is very child-centred. Children are allowed loud behaviour, encouraged to be independent and outgoing and to fight for their rights. All of this leads to a situation in which children and teenagers must develop alternate ways of behaving at home versus outside in order to fulfil both family and public norms (Bar-Yosef, 2001).

Another important issue is the role of the father. In Ethiopia, the man must learn very specific skills in order to provide the earnings for his family. In the Israeli new reality, the expertise acquired within the Ethiopian socialization process is no longer valid. Suddenly, an entirely different set of qualifications is required and both children and women seem to be much more flexible in their adjustment to the new conditions as well as far more resilient to unexpected difficulties. This leads to the breakdown of traditional family structure. The instability of the family may be a significant risk factor for the development of children and adolescents, hence this issue has become one of the priorities for support programs (Mantver, 2010). Israel implemented a range of education support programs which, on the one hand, were designed to assist adults in receiving matriculation certificates and gain professional skills allowing them to start a regular job. On the other hand, emphasis was put on children's education at schools and encouraging and supporting adolescents in continuing their education within college and university programs, which led to a significant increase of Ethiopian students.[23]

Language and communication strategies

The official languages of Israel are Hebrew and Arabic. Quite a large number of people can also fluently communicate in English, Russian or Ukrainian. Ethiopian children that came to Israel did not know any of these languages and their native language was not known to the Israeli society. At first, the state of Israel provided interpreters to help children and adults overcome the administrative barriers.

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[23] The Integration of Persons of Ethiopian Origin into the Higher Education System Submitted to the Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs Committee, The Knesset The Research and Information Centre (2011), https://knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/me02892.pdf, Access date: August 4, 2016.

The next step were intensive Hebrew language courses which, in case of adults, lasted half a year and operated under the name 'Ulpan'. For children, Hebrew classes were organised as part of standard school education. While learning the grammar structures and memorising new vocabulary turned out to be achievable within 1–2 years, much more significant challenges came with communication styles. Modern Hebrew is very direct in expressing the needs and feelings of the speaker and Israelis tend to be extremely direct. By comparison, in the Ethiopian tradition there are numerous metaphors used in speaker expression and it is not polite to say 'no'. Hence, when the partner in a dialog is unaware of this rule, he or she might not understand the message at all or may misunderstand it entirely. A significant number of parents learn the new language more slowly than their children and prefer to speak their native language at home. For children, this causes a conflict between public and home language spheres. At home, with parents and other family members, they speak their native language, while in the public zone they use Hebrew. It is not uncommon that children do not want to be perceived as strangers. Adolescents in particular feel ashamed of talking with parents or grandparents publicly in a foreign language, which leads to tensions within the family. It also causes a disturbance in the traditional respect afforded to older family members. When the younger generation becomes more fluent in language skills than their elders, they cannot receive support from parents who do not have the same competences yet (Bar-Yosef, 2001). Worse still, some young children are neither fluent in their family's native language (which creates challenges in contact with family members) nor fluent in Hebrew (which causes inefficient communication with the outside world). Fortunately, such cases are rather uncommon and constitute rare exceptions (Berhanu, 2005). For older generations the process of learning new language skills and expression styles is a very challenging task. By contrast, for children and teenagers it turns out to be a natural process, especially while being in constant contact with new peers.

Education

The attitude of the Israeli Government and the Ministry of Education towards educational processes that should be applied to children from Ethiopian Aliyah have changed significantly with time from the first wave of immigrants until

nowadays. The first concepts based on both political motives as well as the genuine but misguided wish to take good care of children, involved implementing a system that led to pronounced segregation. Since Ethiopian religious practices were very different from modern Israeli customs, religious parties which are quite influential in Israel claimed that to assure their good adaptation, it would be necessary to enrol children in religious schools. This was intended to impart the knowledge of Jewish customs and practices present in the official praxis (Lazin, 2002). Another reason mentioned was that the traditional society model of Ethiopian Jews was much closer to orthodox Jews than to secular Israelis. Since parents were not able to afford payments for private religious schools, children from Ethiopian Aliyah were placed in the public, religious school system where a significant number of educational establishments were governed by the ultra-orthodox. These schools based their curriculum largely on religious matters and employed quite a low methodological and scientific level of teaching. Furthermore, since Ethiopian pupils were concentrated in one kind of school, in many of these schools their numbers quickly rose to 40% or even more than 50% of the total student population. All of this led to a specific kind of insulation that in the long run impeded efficient adaptation processes. Change was needed so the government allowed Ethiopian students to attend regular, secular schools. However, since their skills were far below their peers, Ethiopian children were placed in special needs classes meant to bridge this skills gap. These classes were created especially for them but involved a curriculum for students a few years younger. This did not greatly improve the situation of Ethiopian students. The first idea caused even stronger segregation and the second one lowered pupils' self-esteem, not to mention prevented socialization among different peer groups. Quite a large number of Ethiopian children, who did not succeed in the regular school system, were moved into the special education path.

Additional challenges were created by the fact that in Ethiopia it is the father that is responsible for children's education and teaching is mostly a male domain. Women are not subjects of authority. Since in Israeli society, much like in European countries, teaching is one of the most female-dominated professions, especially in early education through high school, this new power structure creates many tensions. The first difficulty can be seen in the relationship of teacher and father, which is doubly complicated due to language barriers and cultural differences. Men who used to be the main authority are now supposed

to consult and accept advice from a woman representing an alien cultural standard. Further challenges were seen in the attitudes between teachers and pupils. In European and Israeli models, teachers should act as role models for students. To Ethiopian children, the teacher is first and foremost female, representing the female role in society which is not respected in their own culture. Secondly, following a female teacher may be seen as a betrayal of the values of the student's family as well as its norms. All of this fosters an ambivalent attitude towards the schooling system as a whole. Conversely, particular teachers may be seen as representatives of a social group identified as having a desired standard of living, holding higher communal positions and possessing social acceptance (Lazin, 2002).

In recent years, to ensure a rise in the level of education for Ethiopian students of all ages, the authorities have imposed regulations stating that immigrant children cannot constitute a majority in classes. This rule was with the intent of ensuring the integration of immigrant children with their local peers and to prevent clicks made of own ethnic group members. Furthermore, special classes with well-qualified teachers were created and programs were put in place which encouraged Ethiopian adolescents to apply for a higher education courses at colleges and universities. This brought visible improvement in this group's educational status (Bar-Yosef, 2001).

Housing

The majority of Ethiopian immigration waves occurred without any significant resources that would allow the immigrants to not only develop but even maintain a simple way of life in Israel unassisted. Subsequently, these immigrants were dependent on Israeli social care benefits both for everyday life expenses like food or transportation, and even more so as regards housing (Berhanu, 2005). Most Ethiopian immigrants were not and are not able to fulfil bank requirements for attaining mortgage loans. Thus, the only living space they can normally afford is public housing assigned by social care officers. This kind of accommodation is usually placed on city peripheries, which are distant from city centres and cultural life midpoints. This in turn makes them concentrated in the exact areas where contacts with other parts of society are not natural but

dependent on their active involvement. That can slow down the process of natural acculturation via contact with representatives of the new culture. The location also influences employment opportunities, relegating them to lower-paid, simple positions offered in poor areas of such neighbourhoods.

For children, developmental stability and security given through the home are crucial. Children lacking these suffer from social housing which is temporary in nature (Bar-Yosef, 2001). The research shows that during the first six years of their stay in Israel, most Ethiopian families moved between four and six times. This means that children from those families change neighbourhood at least every one and half a years and some even more often. In the extremely stressful situation of facing cultural and educational gaps, lack of language skills and trauma caused by the Aliyah (long way, loss of family members, time spent in refugee camps and various kinds of oppression and exploitation), the prolonged instability may have a significant influence on children's and adolescents' psychological health and the possibility to adjust to the new cultural situation. The situation is worsened by the fact that many schools refused to accept children in the middle of the school year, which meant that many of them remained excluded from education for many long months. This is not mentioning the great stress of adapting again and again to new classmates, while knowing from experience that making friends is useless since you never know when you might be moved again (Berhanu, 2005). All of this contributed to the attempts to build more social housing closer to city centres, academic and business areas. It also contributed to putting effort to provide stable housing for these families as quickly as possible upon arrival. Such projects, however, have not been implemented due to lack of funding.

Conclusions

Analyses of the presented data show that, as indicated at the beginning of the article, migration, especially connected with moving to an area or a country of entirely different cultural background is extremely challenging both for children and adolescents. Even if objectively the standard of life is improved and the sense of physical security restored, it is insufficient. What plays a significant role both for children, adolescents and adults is the feeling of belonging

to a community, knowledge and acceptance of the norms and values of the new place. As the concept of social anchor indicates (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013a, Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013b), the psycho-social stability of individuals is ensured by anchors defined as reference and support points. It is particularly important in the situations connected with a significant number of changes and a high level of stress, like migration. Several kinds of anchors are distinguished. The main types include: objects, physical features/appearance, culture/language/customs, personality traits, values, social roles, group membership, social bonds, economic aspects, places as well as legal and institutional issues (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2013b). In case of Ethiopian immigrants to Israel, especially minors, a great majority of or even all of the anchors are breaking. It means that all the points that gave the members of this group the feeling of security and the sense of belonging are destroyed. This includes even those aspects which seem to be inalienable, like physical appearance. While in their place of origin dark skin was one of the features which identified Ethiopians as members of the community, in Israel the dark-skinned Ethiopian immigrants felt alien in the community consisting primarily of people of European origin. When upon their arrival even their religious unity, and what follows, the right to become Israeli citizens were called into question, the need for security as such was shaken in its foundations. All that did not support the acculturation process, which became ineffectual. Without full adaptation to the new situation, developing an efficient and satisfying presence in the new country of residence is not possible. In terms of gaining new skills and knowledge, the acculturation process itself seems to be easier for children and teenagers, since they learn the new language and assimilate new customs at a much faster pace. However, since they tend to demonstrate significantly lower understanding of the need of change than adults, the emotional difficulties may have serious long-term effects. In consequence, their reaction may be to oppose the internalization of new norms perceived as a threat to their identity, stabilization and the preservation of family unity.

The complexity of dealing with the difficulties caused by migration and cultural gap can prove that even the Israeli state, which has significant, long-term experience in the field of immigrant and refugee absorption, is not able to identify and implement thoroughly satisfying solutions that fulfil the expectations of both immigrants and indigenous populations. The idea of a melting pot, which

assumes that various planned and natural integration initiatives should lead to the unification of people of different origin brought to one place[24], seems not to work as efficiently as expected. Research data shows that the new generations born and raised in Israel are still more similar to their parents in terms of economic well-being than to the rest of the country's population (Schechtman, Yitzhaki, 2007), which may also regard the level of education and the choice of professions. What may bring hope for the future is that the strategies of readaptation and reintegration of migrants' children are being constantly developed on the base of previous experiences and new approaches are being tested.

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PART II

*Reintegration and Readaptation
– Practical Issues and Challenges*

Ksenija Romstein, PhD*

Early education agendas and practice in the upbringing of young children in post-conflict regions in eastern Croatia

Abstract : During the 1990s, Croatia experienced war on its own territory. There were significant numbers of casualties, among them civilians. Today Croatia is a member of the European Union and implements its recommendations in its own agendas. One of these fields of political activity is early education. To find out which values are formally supported in contemporary early education agendas in Croatia, content analysis of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education was conducted. Also, assessment of preschool environment in post-conflict regions was conducted with the main purpose of gaining insight into the pedagogical reality in these areas. As the results showed, the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education underlines several values: responsibility and inclusion, competence (i.e. key competencies and citizenship) and participation along with freedom of choice. However, the *de facto* situation in the regions previously affected by war has revealed dual practices: some institutions nurture segregation and animosity, while others are oriented towards inclusive and multicultural values. The latter ones also have a higher level of overall quality. These findings indicate the following: (1) supporting values such as participation, citizenship and inclusion can facilitate overall quality of early education, (2) institutions are immerged into local community climate and thus mirror contemporary social relations, (3) values are a complex issue driven by social and individual factors, and (4) education is seen as a tool for administrating political interests which is the opposite of child's best interest. The implications of this survey are theoretical, and can be used to incorporate a philosophical approach in education research.

Key words : early education, post-conflict context, quality, values

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Introduction

During the 1990s, Croatia experienced war on its own territory. Hostilities were conducted in several regions, and eastern Croatia (an area that shares border with Serbia) was amongst them. Vukovar, located in eastern Croatia, was the scene of one of Europe's worst genocides after WW2. The causes of the conflicts in the 1990s were connected with inter-nationality animosities (Croats and Serbs), which were supported with political actions and a change of values at the global level (the fall of the Berlin wall, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, etc.). Today, Croatia is a member of the European Union and implements its agendas in its own political activity. One of these fields of political activity is early education. In Croatia, early education is seen as a pillar of adulthood, and early education is defined as one of the most important chapters of a person's life, due to its impact on developmental outcomes (NCVVO, 2012). Croatia is oriented towards the Western world as are its educational practices and way of life in general, so naturally stakeholders tend to design agendas similar to those applied in the European Union. Following the political activities of the European Union, Croatian political actors have been trying to advance as many agendas as possible (policies and recommendations) with diverse purposes, and early education is among them. As a result, the Croatian educational community has several important documents, the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (MZOS, 2014) being the most important in the area of early education. This document represents a frame for designing early education practice and it is obligatory at all levels of the Croatian society, from the micro-level (classroom), and mezo-level (local community such as municipalities) to macro-level (i.e. county and state). However, there is no mechanism of supporting or supervising educational practices in kindergartens. More importantly, there are no coherent social actions on issues concerning the quality of children's lives, despite the fact that early education institutions are intended for children and their families, as the ultimate beneficiaries. Although the true purpose of early education is rarely discussed in Croatian literature, Baran, Dobrotić & Matković (2011) concluded that these institutions are seen as a solution for working parents while the perspective of children on the purposes of early education is less important. It is an instrumental approach to early education which has emerged from the contemporary needs of Croatian

families, and should be acknowledged as one of its inevitable functions. This is, perhaps, an unspoken purpose of early education worldwide. However, educational aspects are dominant in agendas and policies on early childhood care. Socialization, learning and preparing for future roles are among the fundamental, socially proclaimed functions of early education. These pragmatic values are considered outdated and undesirable in public discourse. Subsequently, the research concerning early childhood is often conducted on unstable ground, which results only in shallow insight into the true problems of early education, while real problems remain hidden and are left outside the scope of research.

The core problems in this paper are the proclaimed values embedded in the policies on early education and the reality of early education practice in post-conflict regions in Croatia. Thus, a brief look into values is necessary. This term is impossible to define autonomously. There are several definitions, depending on the scientific approach. In education, values are mostly explained from the psychological point of view; in this context *Schwartz* (2006: 1) defines them as "desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance that serve as guiding principles in people's lives". Although researchers are trying to link a particular behavior with a single value, it is important to stress that values are a complex phenomenon closely connected with emotions (ibid.). In other words, generalizations as to the influence of value(s) on particular behavior(s) are impossible. Rather, the discussion should be driven in the direction of the reciprocity of a value system and one's behavior, or in the direction of the influence of proclaiming social values and one's quality of life. If we acknowledge education as one of the most important fields of social activity and an individual's development, then questioning values in the context of education could reveal the society's dominant orientation: whether the society is oriented towards its members' well-being (where critical thinking and meta-level competence is a priority), or individuals are utilized for the well-being of a special interest group called politicians (which can be seen in the absence of teachers, children and parents from curricular reform across eastern Europe, despite the fact that the educational reform concerns them).

Today there are a vast number of agendas on educational values in the European Union. One of the latest agendas on values in education launched by the European Commission (2015: 2) is focused on "democratic values and fundamental rights, social-inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active

citizenship". These values are seen as crucial factors for an individual's well-being. However, they do not specify indicators for these values, i.e. benchmarks which will imply that values are fully achieved. For instance, what are the indicators of social inclusion? The presence of agendas on the universal design and rights of people with disabilities or real participation of people with disabilities in the local community and public life? It is clear that values in education, as explained by the latest *European Commission* agenda (2015), are still a vague concept, subservient to political will on a national level. Further, when it comes to the relationships of social values and education in the context of conflict, the European Commission (2011) emphasizes partnership and a coherent policy on geographic and economic issues as conflict prevention tools. It is clear that these factors of stability are not under an individual's (citizen's) control. Rather, they represent political goals, and should be questioned in relation to societal power and not one's own will. Also worth mentioning, conflict is a result of various factors and should be researched as a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

A review of the literature on values and conflict revealed the presence of three key hotspots on the peace – conflict continuum. On the one hand, there are *pre-conflict values*. Since the majority of eastern European countries have experienced political transition, it can be assumed that there was also some sort of value transition, but there is no clear evidence of that. During a discussion on this topic, Buckland (2005) states that the changing regimes construct educational reforms which will allow them to distance themselves from the previous policy, and subsequently they promote values which support new political discourse. Due to the changes in social circumstances, values changed globally during the 1990s, which resulted in the appearance of new social movements (Thomas & Tarr, 1999). The majority of these social movements focus on specific problems of a particular social group (LGTB communities, people with disabilities, women, etc.). Similarly, Corker and Shakespeare (2006) claim that globalization and advances in communication technologies are reflected at all levels of the economy, as well as social and political life, including interpersonal relations. In other words, changes in social life lead to changes in the standpoints of individuals. The premise that there exists a connection between values, policies and social circumstances is supported with the contemporary global financial crisis where values are scrutinized in the context of individual well-being and sustainability of the wider community (community well-being).

In other words, social changes result in a clash between social and individual values. Which of the two will prevail depends on many factors. Basically, it is a question of power, and this is why political actions have a crucial role during the process of transition. Changing regimes from one extreme to another in a short period of time and a fast change in proclaimed values can result in conflict, as was the case in Croatia. The second hotspot on the peace-conflict continuum is the conflict itself. Values observed during this period can be addressed as *peri-conflict values*. Since the processes in educational institutions support dominant social values, attitudes and relationships (Bruner, 2000; Ogawa et al., 2006), they play a major role in times of conflict. During conflict, values erode and are highly politicized, with strong emphasis placed on the culture of violence (World Bank, 2005). This means that conflict activities have a direct influence on values, as much as values have an impact on conflict activities. According to Kahle's typology of values (1983), there are two types of values, internal and external. While internal values are basically personal factors of life quality, such as self-respect and self-fulfillment, external values depend more on social processes and they are closely connected with feelings of security and belonging (ibid.). The latter is underlined in times of conflict because safety is a basic human need. From my personal experience of war, I can confirm that the sense of community and belonging to an ethnic group (Croats or Serbs) was a dominant value in Croatia during the 1990s, and it was a pillar of our everyday life. During these years, it was the foundation of an individual's actions. Today, I think this was a prerequisite of war: if people had been able to think of another aspect of their identities, rather than nationality and belonging to the collective, perhaps the war could have been avoided. When I look back in time, I can conclude that during a social crisis (and conflict is one of such circumstances) values can be manipulated. Their repercussion on one's life is so obscure that individuals are not able to recognize the potential dangers of a particular value they nurture under the influence of the dominant social paradigm. However, the scientific community in the field of social studies is not preoccupied with this mechanism. Some philosophers pointed at this problem several decades ago (Chomsky, 1999; Foucault, 2003), yet an average citizen burdened with everyday problems is not interested in this issue. The third hotspot on the peace – conflict continuum are the *post-conflict values,* which can be recognized in the form of biased educational contexts (World Bank, 2005), and the exclusion of

young people from public life since they are perceived as a threat to social stability (Buckland, 2005). It looks like the post-conflict state of politics maintains oppression as an efficient mechanism for the regulation of social relations, i.e. post-conflict values can be interpreted as a tool for regulating social relations and maintaining social order. Research in Croatia on youth problems supported these ideas. For instance, *Ilišin* (2011) found that youngsters in Croatia value material well-being and do not burden themselves with politics, which suggests that values are transmitted from one generation to another with a minimum risk for the society and government. The absence of understanding of conflict mechanisms, including the ontology of power and political violence, can have a globally devastating impact on our society. As *Kulić* (2002) states, knowledge, understanding and information emergent from research are left out of its purpose and left out of strategies for which they were intended in the first place. Rather, the public face policies based on a close interaction of religion and politics, whose relationships are highly pragmatic (ibid.), i.e. based on mutual, narrow interests. This approach in Croatia, 20 years after the war, results in the emergence of traditional values where the emphasis is on national identity and a normative approach to every aspect of life (marriage, work, family etc.), which also has an impact on the youngest members of the Croatian society. For this reason, Ilišin and Spajić Vrkaš (2015) claim that Croatian youngsters face the revitalization of traditional values with a parallel reinforcement of material values, which results in the slow pace of modernization of the Croatian society. In the media, these values are presented as progressive and modern, and used in political campaigns as pillars for social arrangements. In this way, traditional values are presented as contemporary and therefore progressive ones, which is a false presupposition.

Methods

The goal of this survey was to find out which values are presented in the Croatian National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (MZOS, 2014) and to confirm whether in reality they are actually addressed in kindergartens in regions previously affected by war activities. For this purpose, content analysis of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (MZOS, 2014)

was conducted. The content analysis was based on a Meta-inventory of values (Cheng & Fleischmann, 2010). The "reality check" was supported by a quantitative method of assessment. For that purpose, a Scale for the assessment of surroundings and interaction (Romstein, 2014) was applied in kindergartens in eastern Croatia, i.e. Vukovar-Syrmia County, which had been previously occupied by the Serbian army.

Instruments

The identification of dominant values in the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (MZOS, 2014) was done by a Meta-inventory of values, developed by Cheng & Fleischmann (2010). This inventory encompassed sixteen groups of value concepts, i.e.: (1) freedom, (2) helpfulness, (3) accomplishment, (4) honesty, (5) self-respect, (6) intelligence, (7) broad-mindedness, (8) creativity, (9) equality, (10) responsibility, (11) social order, (12) wealth, (13) competence, (14) justice, (15) security, and (16) spirituality. Content analysis was semantic in nature, and the quantity was validated with the help of the previously mentioned values.

Early education practice was assessed with a Scale for assessing surroundings and interaction (Romstein, 2014). This scale encompasses six fields of assessment: (1) interior and furniture, (2) exterior and equipment, (3) speech/talking and thinking, (4) activities, (5) interaction, and (6) program structure. The levels of assessment were as follows: 1 – minimum (insufficient), 2 – medium (partially sufficient), 3 – maximum (sufficient, excellent).

A total of eight kindergartens in eastern Croatia were assessed. These eight kindergartens are geographically located in areas previously affected by war in Croatia. It is important to indicate that four kindergartens still practice a separation of children by nationality, as their everyday pedagogical practice. Other four kindergartens enroll children from diverse backgrounds (Croatian, Serbs, Hungarian, Roma, etc.). Only one kindergarten is in a rural area, while the others are located in urban areas.

Neither of these instruments are standardized, but are still proven to be useful for addressing the issues of values and quality in early education (Koepfler, Shilton & Fleishmann, 2013; Romstein, 2015).

Results and interpretation

Values in the Croatian National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education

The analysis of values in the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education was conducted with the help of a Meta-inventory developed by Cheng & Fleischmann (2010). The assessment of values in the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education was based on content analysis, i.e. frequencies of particular values, as proposed by Cheng & Fleischman (2010) in their Meta-inventory of values. Primarily, this inventory was proposed by these authors for research in diverse fields, and thus considered as appropriate for this survey.

Table 1. Values in the Croatian National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education

	value	%
1	responsibility	32,70
2	competence	26,92
3	creativity	9,61
4	self-respect	9,61
5	freedom	5,76
6	justice	3,85
7	helpfulness	1,92
8	accomplishment	1,92
9	honesty	1,92
10	equity	1,92
11	social order	1,92
12	security	1,92
13	intelligence	–
14	broad-mindedness	–
15	wealth	–
16	spirituality	–
Σ		99,97

As the results show, some of the values present in the Meta-inventory (Cheng & Fleischmann, 2010) are not mentioned in the curriculum: intelligence, broad-mindedness, wealth, and spirituality. The value which is mentioned most frequently is *responsibility*. Yet, this value in the curriculum itself is always associated with social responsibility (to be responsible to others and to self). The second place belongs to *competence*. It is important to stress that the competence approach in the educational policy in Croatia has marked its presence in the recent decade due to Croatia's orientation towards the European Union. Competence approach to early education is seen in the presence of key competences (ICT, language, math, etc.) as well as in the presence of the value of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is valued *per se*, is seen as a prerequisite of the modern world and, without question, should be included in the curriculum. However, it would be developmentally more appropriate to incorporate other values, such as peer interaction advocacy approach to early childhood education, rather than lifelong learning. *Creativity*, as mentioned in the Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education, is highly utilized for learning and problem solving. It is not seen as a value of self-accomplishment or an intrinsic need, but an external demand for an efficient learning process. In the context of *self-respect*, self-confidence is mentioned, which is a very important issue in early childhood education since it has an impact on one's entire life. In the curriculum, self-confidence is utilized in the same way as creativity: it is a prerequisite for efficient learning and not an individual's need. The value of *freedom* in the curriculum is closely connected with freedom of choice. It is not a state of absence of conflict, but an opportunity to choose between several options. A paradox inherent in this value is its dual nature: what can children really choose, if adults are responsible for the choices of children (morally and ethically as well as legally)? Also, the question of resources is raised, since children can choose only what is offered to them, i.e. what adults arrange for them. As far as *justice* is concerned, it is not a value which is often mentioned in the curriculum. It refers to peacekeeping as the absence of conflict, rather than justice in relationships with others and a way of life. This is the only value that actually implies problems in early education connected with war activities 20 years ago. Other values mentioned are as follows: *helpfulness*, *accomplishment*, *honesty*, and *equity*. The last value is very surprising since Croatia has accepted inclusion as one of the standards in education. There is no inclusive education

without equity and/or equal opportunities. Yet, an absence of equity in the curriculum implies the society's normative orientation towards child development.

Early education practice in eastern Croatia

The practice of raising children in post-conflict regions in eastern Croatia was evaluated with a Scale for the assessment of surroundings and interaction (Romstein, 2014). The scale consists of six subscales: (1) interior and furniture, (2) exterior and equipment, (3) speech/talking and thinking, (4) activities, (5) interaction, and (6) program structure. The levels of assessment were as follows: 1 – minimum (insufficient), 2 – medium (partially sufficient), 3 – maximum (sufficient, excellent).

Table 2 Means by subscales

	A Interior and furniture	B Exterior and equipment	C Speech/ talking and thinking	D Activities	E Interaction	F Program structure	average
segregated settings	3	1	2	2	2	2	2
integrated settings	2	2	3	3	3	3	3

In this survey, four kindergartens were segregated, i.e. organized for a singular nationality (Croats or Serbs). Paradoxically, two of these settings share the same building: a kindergarten for Croatian children is located on one side of the building, with a kindergarten for Serbian children on the other side. The remaining four are addressed as integrated settings due to the enrollment of children from diverse national and cultural backgrounds. All eight kindergartens are situated in the same county, 7 in urban and 1 in a rural area.

The quality of pedagogical surroundings in both settings is satisfactory and in accordance with Croatian standards, yet the quality in integrated settings is higher than in segregated settings. In integrated settings the overall quality is at level 3 (excellent), while in segregated settings it is at level 2 (partially

sufficient, medium). For a deeper insight into the differences below, we will take a closer look at particular fields. *Interior and furniture (A)* are better in segregated than in integrated settings. This seems paradoxical, but apparently financial support is very important in this case. In segregated settings there is a regular flow of money, they have firmly established financial support on a monthly basis from diverse sources (sponsorships). Integrated settings suffer from more financial problems, which reflects on furniture and didactic materials. The main reason for this could be children's needs: in integrated settings there are children with disabilities and children from minorities (Roma, Hungarian, etc.) and quality work with them presupposes the presence of specific didactic materials, which were missing in these settings. On the other hand, in segregated settings there were no children with disabilities enrolled and by the very nature of segregation, no minorities were present within the environment, which contributed to a uniform arrangement of interior space. *Exterior and equipment (B)* refer to outside space adjacent to kindergartens (backyards, terraces, etc.). The most noticeable feature in segregated settings were fences: they are quite higher than in integrated settings. In segregated settings the fences are over 200 cm high, which implies other purposes than simply safeguarding children's places. Further, in segregated settings backyards are divided into two separate areas and also fenced (playgrounds for Croatian and Serbian children). This means that children's play suffers due to the practice of segregation: they can see each other, but if they want to play with peers of another nationality, they are not able to. Integrated kindergartens have fences approximately 100 cm high, which are used only as a safety barrier for young children, balls, etc. As far as *speech/talking and thinking (C)* are concerned, in segregated settings there were materials only in one language and alphabet, while in integrated settings all displayed materials have been written in both languages and alphabets (Croatian and Serbian language, Latin and Cyrillic alphabet). Interestingly, in one integrated kindergarten, beside the Latin and Cyrillic alphabet, there were pictures and photographs displayed as a means of communication for children with autism enrolled in regular classrooms. Other children have mastered the technique of non-verbal communication via pictures and successfully interact with their peers with disabilities. This certainly is a meta-level of communication and therefore integrated settings proved to be at a higher level in this field of assessment. Further, *activities*

(D) in integrated settings are mostly directed at learning and play, while in segregated settings emphasis is on routines and curriculum activities such as learning songs and rhymes. An interesting fact is that in segregated settings there is no space for solitude, while in integrated settings preschool teachers have organized a space for solitude, mostly in wardrobes and halls, in the forms of tents and houses. In these areas children can distance themselves from others, if they feel a need to do so. This kind of activity is important for preschoolers with disabilities, for instance autism, since an intensive stimulus can overwhelm a child (Bujas Petković, 1995). During activities, children in integrated settings are allowed to use all of the kindergarten space: they play in halls, visit each other in classrooms and they are allowed to move from one classroom to another. Children in segregated settings spend the majority of time in their classrooms and they do not go to other classrooms. Moreover, in segregated settings there is a culture of *closed doors* where each preschool teacher is focused on his or her own classroom without much interaction with other staff members and other children. As far as *interaction (E)* is concerned, children in segregated settings are mostly focused on preschool teachers and tend to interact with peers when they do not interact with adults (or/or situation). In integrated settings, children are supported to interact with each other, even if peers do not speak or understand their language (for instance, if children speak only Bayash, i.e. a dialectic form of Roma language, or do not speak at all, as in the case of autism). Adults in integrated settings are also involved in peer interaction, but nurture an unobtrusive approach: they are near children, they observe and follow communication. Also, in integrated settings there were mixed age groups, while in segregated settings no such organization is present, i.e. classrooms are homogeneous with regard to the children's age. Two of four integrated settings had mixed age groups, while all segregated kindergartens were homogeneous with regard to the children's age. *Program structure (F)* showed that preschool teachers in integrated settings more often plan and conduct various forms of cooperation with parents, other colleagues, and the local community. They have established forms of supervision, and continually work on their competencies. Also, they have individual education programs for children with disabilities and from minorities. In segregated settings, preschool teachers also plan and conduct cooperation with parents, but do not cooperate so much with other colleagues.

Since there are no children with disabilities or from minorities in segregated settings, there were no individual educational programs to assess.

Discussion

The values addressed in the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education are a result of "Croatian orientation towards a holistic approach to a child's development, its will to maintain and develop national, spiritual, material and natural legacy, and tendency to create a society of knowledge which will allow prosperity and sustainable living within European area" (MZOS, 2014: 19). Although the Croatian National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education is founded on values, there is no definition of "value" in this document. This approach may be one of the factors contributing to the unbalanced practice of early education in eastern Croatia. Another problem is separate practice on the national versus local level. On the national level, Croatia has guidelines and agendas. However, it is the local community that is responsible for their implementation. Also, financing early education is the responsibility of a local community, and the contemporary economic conditions in Croatia reveal that some regions are more developed and have higher incomes than others. This can have an impact on early education practice since some kindergartens receive higher funding than others.

As the survey showed, the proclaimed values and practice of raising children in eastern Croatia suffer from disparity. The proclaimed values such as inclusion, participation and citizenship were missing in segregated kindergartens. Although these kindergartens have educational conditions (i.e. structural quality) on a higher level, they miss an opportunity to improve the process dimension of quality. Wider, social implications of such educational arrangements should become a subject of scientific inquiry. Yet, it is encouraging that in eastern Croatia children have kindergartens oriented towards human values at their disposal. These kindergartens recognize children's culture as the most important value for identity. Integrated settings offer children activities related to their interests. Also, process quality is on a higher level than structural quality. If researchers become more oriented towards a critical approach to social paradigm, including questioning the proclaimed values and reality in classrooms, science can play a crucial role in raising the quality of children's lives.

Conclusion

Although Croatia has several documents concerning early education, the implementation of these agendas remains problematic. It is a rarely discussed issue and researched only at a declarative level. No longitudinal research has been conducted in Croatia on any issue concerning early education and its efficiency in later life. Furthermore, there is no research dealing with nationality and/or post-conflict state of early education. Rather, the majority of research is oriented towards the norms and standards applied in European settings, without any consideration of specific issues at a national level. Cultural, historical, geopolitical and economical particularity should be the starting points for each society and its agendas, especially when it comes to early education.

As this survey showed, preschool teachers in integrated settings are more oriented towards processes (interaction, activities and individual behavior) and subsequently these environments have a higher level of overall quality. On the other hand, segregated settings have better working conditions, yet have a lower overall quality, which suggests that preschool teachers in these kindergartens are oriented towards outside demands, i.e. social expectations. This can burden preschool teachers and contribute to inappropriate early education practice.

Finally, segregation and animosity were revealed in kindergartens intended for a particular population (e.g. Croats and Serbs). In other words, the children were enrolled in a particular classroom due to their nationality. Paradoxically, nationality is expressed by parents: it is an adults' construct and imposed on children. This kind of practice contributes to biased values in classrooms. Therefore, children's perspective on the processes in society should be researched. In this way, the true purpose of early education can be found and true values of childhood revealed.

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Children and Youth with Multicultural Backgrounds in the Polish System of Education

Introduction

The text addresses the issue of the legal situation of foreign children in the Polish education system. It aims to present the theoretical (legal) and practical (school environment) aspects of the Polish system of education in which foreign students function. The first part outlines the history of immigration to Poland as a country which, compared to Western European countries, has a low level of cultural diversity across the population. The second part presents selected aspects of the system of education in Poland as well as selected regulations of both international and domestic Polish law pertaining to the education of foreign children. The last part refers to the state of research on the presence and functioning of foreign children in Polish educational institutions with a particular focus on school. The cited statistical data illustrate the insignificant presence of foreign children in Polish schools.

The text is based on the analysis of academic literature, reports from non-governmental organizations and government institutions as well as various legal regulations referring to the functioning of migrant children in Poland. It also draws on fragments of the Authors' own research conducted within the project 'A culturally different child in Poland. A pedagogical study of "rooting"' conducted between 2011–2014 in the Mazovian voivodeship and the capital city of Warsaw'.

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The history of immigration to Poland: a brief characterisation

Throughout the centuries the Polish people have comprised an emigrant nation and Poland a country which 'has sent out' rather than 'accepted' migrants. After both World War I and II as well as periods of communism, Polish people were made refugees of both war and politics. As such, many Poles were forced to seek refuge and protection in Western European countries as well as North America.

Due to the socialist system under which the Polish state operated between 1945 and 1989, few and sporadic foreigners arrived in our country. They arrived mainly from the states of the Eastern Bloc and came within scientific scholarship programs or through use of trade opportunities between the countries under the protectorate of the Soviet Union. It was only in a specific number of cases, primarily due to political, not humanitarian reasons, that Poland (at that time: The Polish People's Republic – Polish: Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa – PRL) provided shelter to refugees in search of asylum due to the difficult situation in their countries of origin. In the 1950s, over ten thousand refugees from Europe: the Greeks and Macedonians (in total over fifteen thousand people) (Pudło, 1997: 149) as well as approximately two thousand children from North Korea (Krzyżanowska and Ukleja, 1993: 81–82) found refuge in Poland. In 1973, Poland also hosted several dozen Chileans who came in search of aid and protection (Wierzbicki, 1993: 172). In the period of the Polish People's Republic, following the Iran- Iraq conflict in 1987, The Polish Red Cross, whose activity for refugees resulted from the tasks of *the International Red Cross Movement and Red Crescent* as well as the regulation of art.3 par.2 of *the Polish Red Cross Act* (Law Journal of 1964, No. 41, pos. 276 with later amendments), provided aid to the citizens of Iran who found themselves on the territory of Poland. In the 1980s, an average of twenty individuals, mainly from African and Asian countries[1], came to Poland annually in search of an asylum. As Norbert Rafalik (2012: 5) writes: 'From the end of World War II until early 1990s Poland did

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[1] The Polish law varies from the European law in the terms: refugee (Polish: *azylant*), asylum seeker (Polish: *osoba wnioskująca o status uchodźcy*) and recognized refugee (Polish: *uznany uchodźca*). An asylum (Polish: *azyl*) is an independent decision of the Polish state and does not result from any international obligations, unlike the status of a recognized refugee.

not participate in the international refugee protection system as the country was not a party to the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees. At the same time, under the influence of the Soviet Union Polish borders were closed to immigrants […]'.

It was only after the collapse of communism in 1989 and after Poland had signed the 1951 Geneva Convention on the status of refugees and subsequently the 1967 New York Protocol in 1991, that our country began to attract more foreigners applying for refugee status. The first wave appeared as early as 1990 when the Swedish authorities deported a group of several hundred individuals from Ethiopia, Somalia, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria to Poland. These people had attempted to reach Sweden by ferry from the Polish coast of the Baltic Sea (Ząbek and Łodziński, 2008: 77–78.). Since then, the number of foreigners wishing to receive refugee status has constantly increased. However, the majority of refugees treat Poland as a transit country, which implies a short period of stay and the intention to emigrate to the West. This tendency is connected with better socioeconomic conditions of Western European countries. In the years 1990–1991 the citizens of African countries (mainly the Horn of Africa: Ethiopia and Somalia) as well as of Arab countries predominated in this group. In the years 1992–1994, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslavia and Armenia, were the most populous group of asylum seekers. In 1995 the greatest number of individuals applying for refugee status came from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Szonert, 1999: 227). In the years 1992-2000 most such applications came from citizens of Asian countries (Florczak, 2003: 110). In these years individuals from ninety two countries around the world applied for refugee status in Poland, in the years 2005–2007 – from 121 countries, while 'in 2010 the applications came from fifty nine countries' (Rafalik, 2012: 13). Since the year 2000, Russian citizens of Chechen nationality have been the most robustly numbered group of individuals to apply for refugee status[2]. In 2014, 6,621 individuals submitted applications for refugee status, the majority of whom came from the territory of the Russian Federation (Chechnya), Ukraine and Georgia.

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[2] This was connected with two Chechen wars: the first one in the years 1994–1996 and the second one in the years 1999–2002.

Among foreigners who migrate to Poland there is a large group of children- minors who submit applications for refugee status with their parents. The second group comprises children- minors who are not accompanied by a legal representative in Poland (most frequently parents/ guardians) and who can apply for such a status themselves. In such cases an official requests to appoint a curator for a foreign child to represent he or she during legal proceedings. An unaccompanied minor submitting a request for international protection in Poland is also appointed a de facto custodian, an employee of the Office for Foreigners, whose task is to exercise custody over the child. According to the act on granting protection to foreigners in the territory of the Republic of Poland, the term 'a minor without custody' refers to 'a minor foreigner who arrives on the territory of the Republic of Poland without adult guardians responsible for him or her' (*Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland*, Law Journal 2003, No 128, pos. 1176).

According to existing Polish legislation, it is forbidden to place unaccompanied, asylum-seeking minors (below the age of fifteen) in detention (in closed centres). However, upon request of Border Guards the court can refer a minor to such a centre. The applicable act on foreigners obliges the court which decides to place an unaccompanied minor in a guarded centre for foreigners to consider the best interest of the minor, in other words, to be guided by a child's well-being. Nevertheless, the theoretical assumptions and the applicable regulations do not always translate to best practice which would guarantee a child the best conditions for development and adaptation to the new socio-cultural environment of the host country.

As the authors of the report 'In search of protection. Selected problems referring to the realisation of the rights of asylum-seekers remaining under international protection in the years 2012–2014. Observations of the Legal Assistance For Refugees and Migrants Program of the Helsinki Human Rights Foundation' indicate: 'There are no analogous regulations concerning families with children applying for international protection in Poland. A large number of families with children still remain in guarded centres' (Białas et al., 2014: 72). The report stresses that foreign minors applying for refugee status should not be placed in guarded centres. This refers both to foreign minors who are unaccompanied as well as foreign children remaining in Poland accompanied by parents/ guardians.

Table 1. Refugee Minors remaining in Poland with parents/ guardians applying for refugee status in the period between 1 January 2015 and 30 May 2015

Age/ month	January	February	March	April	May
0–13	215	202	226	292	294
14–17	22	22	13	34	22
Total	237	224	239	326	316

Authors' compilation based on <http://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-miesieczne/status-uchodzcy/2015-2/>, Access date: June 24, 2015.

The system of education in Poland

The key element of everyday life which enables foreign children to adapt to the new conditions of the host country, as well as to integrate with the majority society, is formal education which takes place in the space of school. School is a place of encounters, communication situations as well as teachers' educational-nurture work with Polish and foreign students. Additionally, it is a space in which relations between students of various cultural backgrounds are formed. It is also a place of socialisation and acculturation which, in the case of foreign children, is frequently connected with the experience of alienation, culture shock as well as difficult situations and conflicts. These conflicts and situations are related to the differences in cultural experiences, unfamiliarity with the language, cultural script, and a distinct system of cultural norms and social behaviours. At times, the very system of education and the operating procedures at schools are foreign and incomprehensible to the students and their parents. Not all foreign children arrive in the new country and the new school of their own volition. Following the decision of parents, who choose to emigrate due to unexpected circumstances (war, conflict, difficult living conditions), leaving their country is often sudden, without earlier psychological and mental preparation of the child. 'The decision might, or might not have been consulted with the child, its opinion might, or might not have been considered' (Chisi et al., 2015: 6).

Their childhood biographies and school experiences are varied. After the hardships of their journey, they arrive in a new country and according to Polish law they are subject to compulsory education. They are included in a monocultural

system of education which is presently undergoing a process of adjustment in attempts to accommodate students with varied educational needs. Clearly, foreign students belong to such a group.

There are two basic models of integration policy concerning access to education which operate in Poland and are frequently cited in domestic academic publications: an integration model and a separation model (Todorovska-Sokolovska, 2009). The integration model, which functions also, among other countries, in Ireland, Scotland and Italy, assumes an integral education of children with multicultural backgrounds as well as children from the host country. Additional lessons of the language of the host country and at times also (depending on the realised projects and financial support) classes teaching the traditions and culture are organised in an individual mode. The separation model, which is also found in Germany, prescribes the early education of immigrant children in separate classes. As soon as the children learn the language of the host country at a level which allows for active participation in lessons, they are transferred to integrated classes. Certain schools apply a mixed model, which is oriented towards the integration of Polish and foreign students and the creation of educational space in which they will be able to acquire competencies within the language of the host country.
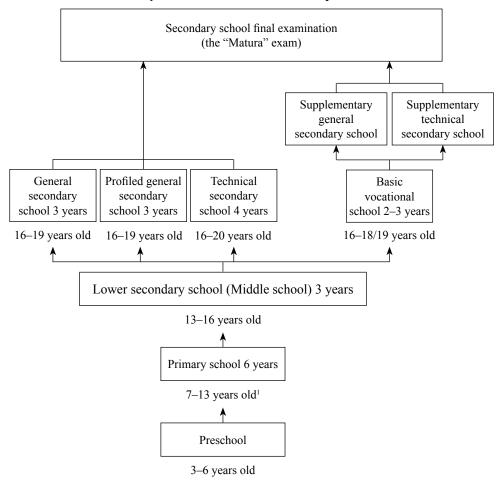
The system of education ensures the realisation of children's and adolescents' rights to learn through education, nurture and care. The basic legal act in this scope is *Education Act of 7 September 1991* (Law Journal of 2004, No. 256, pos. 2572 with later amendments).

Article 2 of this Act states that its structure includes:

1. Preschools, including: integrated classrooms; special preschools;
2. Schools:
   a) Primary schools, including: special and integrated schools; schools with integrated and sports classrooms; sports schools;
   b) Lower secondary schools, including: special, integrated and bilingual schools; schools with integrated, bilingual and sports classrooms; sports schools;
   c) Upper secondary schools, including: special, integrated and bilingual schools; schools with integrated, bilingual and sports classrooms; sports, agriculture and forestry schools;
   d) Arts schools.

Special preschools/schools are designed for students with a statement of special educational needs. In integrated schools, all classrooms are integrated in which students with a statement of special educational needs learn and develop together with other students. In bilingual schools, all classrooms are bilingual, and teaching is realized in two languages: Polish and a modern foreign language which is the second language of instruction. An agricultural school educates

Chart 1. The education system in Poland: Authors' compilation

Secondary school final examination (the "Matura" exam)

Supplementary general secondary school	Supplementary technical secondary school

General secondary school 3 years	Profiled general secondary school 3 years	Technical secondary school 4 years	Basic vocational school 2–3 years
16–19 years old	16–19 years old	16–20 years old	16–18/19 years old

Lower secondary school (Middle school) 3 years
13–16 years old

Primary school 6 years
7–13 years old[1]

Preschool
3–6 years old

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[1] The 2015 amendment to Education Act introduces compulsory education from the age of 7 and the right to commence education at the age of 6. The new regulations apply from the school year 2016/2017.

exclusively within professions of agriculture, while a forestry school educates exclusively within professions of forestry. There are also international schools and classrooms where education is realised based on the curriculum designed by a foreign educational institution. Schools in Poland are divided into public or non-public (*civic*, *church*, *private*). Education is obligatory for children from the age of 7 to 18 years old (The 2015 amendment to Education Act introduces compulsory education from the age of 7 and the right to commence education at the age of 6. The new regulations apply from the school year 2016/2017).

The right to education and compulsory education in selected acts of international and domestic law

The right to education is expressed in various legislature, both Polish and international. Article 2 of *the First Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, 20 March 1952 (Law Journal of 1995, No. 36, pos. 175) states that: 'No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions'.

Another document pertaining to the right to education is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 19 December 1966 (Law Journal of 1977, No 38, pos. 169). Article 13 states that every person has a right to education which aims at developing the individual, his or her sense of dignity as well as pursuing respect for human rights. Education should aim at an individual's participation in a free and democratic society and ought to seek peaceful relations between people of different races, nationalities and religions. In order to achieve the assumed aims, basic education should be compulsory, free and equally accessible to everyone.

The question of educating the children of migrant workers within the policy of migrants' integration in Europe was addressed in the Directive of the Council of the European Communities (*Council Directive of 25 July 1977 on the education of the children of migrant workers* (77/486/EWG), the Council of the European Communities). The directive, which is devoted to policy and

educational solutions in its general provisions, obliges particular countries to guarantee free education to the children of migrants, particularly within language education of the host country as well as within activities designed to support children's native language education and the promotion of the knowledge of the culture of their country of origin. The regulations above were preserved in the Treaty of Amsterdam and confirmed in later treaty documents which drew attention to the social integration of migrants as one of the basic spheres of activity of the European Community. They were supplemented with the Directive 2000/43/WE of 29 June 2000, which introduced the rule of equal treatment of individuals regardless of their race or ethnic origin, as well as Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003, which refers to the status of citizens of third countries.

Another document including regulations referring to, among other things, the right to education is *the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989 (Law Journal of 1991, No. 120, pos. 526). Article 28 states that education at a basic level should be compulsory and free for every child and that there should be school and vocational counselling enabling the child's comprehensive psychophysical development. Moreover, the signatories of the Convention should pursue the aim of reducing illiteracy rates around the world and take all possible steps to facilitate an exchange of scientific and technical knowledge as well as modern teaching methods between countries. Article 29 of the same Convention refers to an assumption that education should aim at the comprehensive development of a child's personality, abilities and intellectual as well as physical potential. Additionally, it should contribute to respect for a child's cultural identity, language as well as the values and religious beliefs of both the child and its parents. Another important task of education should consists in preparing a child for life in a democratic society based on respect for peace and cooperation between people of different races, cultures, religions, beliefs and worldviews. What is more, education should transmit the significance and validity of environmental care.

The right to education is also articulated in *the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, 13 December 2007 (Official Journal of the EU, 2010/C 83/02). Article 14 states as follows:

"1. Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.

2. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education.

3. The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right."

The document: *Conclusions on the education of children with a migrant background* of 26 November 2009 draws attention to the essential role of education in the integration of foreigners in Europe. It has been indicated that:
'education has a key role to play not only in providing children from migrant environments with opportunities thanks to which they can fully use their potential to become successful citizens who are integrated with the society, but also in creating a just society which favours integration and respects diversity. (…) The integration of migrants is a common task which requires effort of migrants themselves and is realised by a number of varied social sectors, not only the sector of education' (*Conclusions of the Council of 26 November 2009 on the education of children with a migrant background* (2009/C 301/07)).

On the grounds of Polish law, the right to education is articulated in *the Constitution of the Republic of Poland*, 2 April 1997 (Law Journal of 1997, No. 78, pos. 483). Article 70 (1–4) states that every individual has a right to education which is free until the age of eighteen. Universal and equal access to education are provisioned for, and in state schools learning is tuition-free. The article also states that parents have a right to choose a school for their child other than a state school.

The Polish legal system provides two basic documents regulating the right to education of foreigners who remain in the territory of the Republic of Poland. These are: *Education Act of 7 September 1991* (Law Journal of 2004, No. 256, pos. 2572 with later amendments and *Order of The Minister of National Education of 2 January 2015 on the conditions and procedures of accepting to Polish schools non-citizens and Polish citizens who attended schools functioning in schooling systems of other countries, as well as the organisation of additional Polish language lessons, additional compensatory education and lessons of the language and culture of the country of origin* (Law Journal of 2015, pos. 31). Article 94a of this Act states that foreigners have a right to free education and care in public preschools. They also have a right to free education in primary, lower secondary and public arts schools as well as in public upper secondary

schools until the age of 18 or until the completion of upper secondary school. Public schools for adults, public post-secondary non-tertiary schools, public arts schools, public centres, public teacher training centres and public social service colleges as well as lifelong learning in the form of vocational qualification courses can be accessed for free by, among others: 1. citizens of European Union countries, member countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – parties to the agreement on The European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation as well as their family members with residency rights or permanent residency rights; 2. persons of Polish origin; 3. persons who were granted permanent residency rights in the territory of the Republic of Poland; 4. persons with a valid Polish Card (Karta Polaka); 5. persons whose right of this type is guaranteed in international agreements; 6. persons who have been granted refugee status which may include their family members; 7. persons with permission for a tolerated stay; 8. persons and their family members who have been granted temporary stay on humanitarian grounds; 9. persons and their family members who have been granted complementary protection; 10. persons under temporary protection in the territory of the Republic of Poland; 11. persons who have been granted permission to remain in the territory of the Republic of Poland as long term residents of the European Union; 12. family members of persons applying for refugee status.

There are also three paths of support for foreign children who do not know the Polish language or who know it at a level which is insufficient to participate in state education. These include:

1. Additional, free Polish language education in the form of supplementary lessons.
2. Additional compensatory lessons of a particular subject for the period of twelve months. The total number of additional Polish lessons and compensatory lessons cannot exceed 5 hours a week.
3. Assistance of a person speaking the language of the student's country of origin, employed as a teacher's assistant (for instance as a cultural assistant) by the principal of the school for a period not longer than twelve months. Such a person, as school praxis reveals, can also be employed at the school thanks to financing received from a non-governmental organization within social, educational or integrational projects. In such a case, the speaker of the child's native language is called a cultural or intercultural assistant, but

in fact the tasks of such an employee are the same as a one who assists or supports the teacher, that is, provides support through translation and homework assistance, mediation in contacting the pedagogical staff and the students' parents, and helps with solving culture-based conflicts. A cultural/intercultural assistant's job is still a rather innovative form of support for culturally different students, their parents and school as well as the local environment. In Polish schools attended by students with a migrant background, assistants are seen as necessary. They are individuals who possess mastery of the Polish language and Polish cultural paradigms. They are also communicative persons who are respected among the members of a particular group of foreigners. Belonging to the students' culture (for instance, in the case of Poland: Vietnamese, Chinese, Chechen) they not only translate educational documents and announcements or explain misunderstandings in the sequence: students – school – parents as well as parents – school – students. They also serve to explain the nurture, educational, cultural and social reality which surrounds the migrant child. Thus, they become intercultural guides for students, parents and teachers. They mediate in matters concerning school, education, school achievements (or lack thereof), provide emotional support to students, and strengthen their sense of security in their new surroundings. From the students' point of view, these are exceptionally important tasks as students with a migrant background, who do not know the Polish language or Polish cultural script, are not always able to understand the educational realities, demands of particular teachers and the tasks assigned to them. From the perspectives of foreign parents, a cultural assistant is an invaluable source of knowledge connected with the Polish system of education, the rules, customs and traditions which they encounter in their children's school experience. From the teachers' perspective, an assistant helps facilitate Polish language education as well as the process of integration.

Many refugee centres in Poland as well as schools and centres run by NGOs which cooperate with migrants, offer adults and children both formal and outside-formal Polish language lessons. Their aim is possibly the earliest familiarization with the language and culture of the host country, integration with other children and adults (volunteers, teachers, psychologists) and through the above – facilitation of a better start at school. The organisation of classes, work

methods and teaching content of the classes realised within wider projects and programs differs in particular cities, towns and centres.

Moreover, in the case of foreigners subject to obligatory education, a diplomatic or consular post of the country of their origin operating in Poland or a cultural-educational association of a given nationality can organize language and cultural education of the child's country of origin. Such activities are organised following an agreement with the head of a particular school.

The presence of a foreign child in a Polish school poses new challenges for school authorities and teaching staff connected with understanding the needs and specific character of culturally diverse children's functioning in new conditions of the host country. Hence, it predisposes school employees to expand their intercultural competences, adjust the working conditions at school to foreign students' needs and finally develop competences as well as the acquisition of new skills in the sphere of communication and knowledge transmission. The Athens Declaration (A declaration of European ministers of education on the subject of intercultural education in the new European context of 10–12 November 2003) draws attention to teachers' training in the area of intercultural competences and encourages particular countries to consider the intercultural dimension in developed strategies and realised programs connected with the education of migrant children. It includes detailed recommendations concerning the involvement of particular European countries in the development of intercultural education with respect for human rights and diversity, promotion of best practices and preparation of teachers to fill this role.

In Warsaw, where the greatest number of foreign children in the country reside, "Education Department of the Municipal Office", Capital City of Warsaw implements 'The concept of systemic support for the education of foreigners'. This involves, among other things, systemic activities to raise the qualifications of Warsaw's teachers in the area of intercultural competencies as well as to expand the educational offer for children with migrant experience (also re-emigrants) at different stages of school education.

Within the support outlined for the didactic work of school, principals and teaching staff as well as the communication between students, parents and schools, information, guidebooks and publications connected with accepting and teaching foreign children in Polish schools are prepared by non-governmental organisations and educational institutions.

The publications include 'Welcome pack for foreign pupils and their parents' created and published by Education Department of the Capital City of Warsaw in cooperation with the following schools: Primary School No. 211 in Warsaw, Lower Secondary School No. 14 in Warsaw. The materials were published in paper and electronic version in Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Chechen, English as well as Vietnamese. Among other publications are, to name a few: 'A migrant child in our classroom. Recommendations from teachers for teachers'; 'Towards a multicultural school in Poland' – educational pack with a curriculum for teaching Polish as a second language for the first, second and third stage of education (in schools of the Capital City of Warsaw); an e-textbook 'Turn Poland On!'; handbooks and packs of best practices developed within the program 'Education in the face of migration challenges': 'Materials for education in the face of migration challenges, 'An autobiography of intercultural encounters' as well as handbooks: 'An Other in Polish school – guidebook for teachers working with migrant pupils' and 'Working with foreign children- a guidebook of good practices'.

Educational materials for schools and teachers are available not only in paper versions but during training sessions, seminars and workshops organised on the subject of intercultural education or global education. They can also be found in their electronic version on the Internet sites of institutions and non-governmental organisations which enact projects for the support of teachers working with students with a multicultural context. Teachers can find a range of lesson plans, texts and presentations and adapt them to the needs of didactic work in a multicultural school classroom.

Foreign children in Polish educational institutions: the state of research

In the last decade, after Poland entered the European Union, a number of articles and various reports and studies on the situation of foreign students, including refugee students in Polish schools, have appeared in the Polish literature. However, the majority of the reports are based on "local" studies conducted on limited samples, in particular cities and/or voivodeships. There are also rare international studies in which Poland is most frequently only one of the researched countries. Below is a list of the four most important reports and

documents referring to international (European) studies in which Poland is one of the participating countries:

1. 'Xenophobe. The European Dilemma: Institutional Patterns and Politics of "Racial" Discrimination', apart from Poland seven other European countries participated in the project: Sweden, Austria, France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Cyprus. The research concerned institutional mechanisms of discrimination against foreigners in the job market and the system of education. It was conducted after the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 (More on the subject: Pawlak, 2005).

2. 'Access to Quality Education by Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children. Poland Country Report, Situational Analysis', is a report commissioned by UNHCR which is a part of an analysis concerning the education of children awaiting refugee status, recognized as refugees and displaced children in forty two European countries. Apart from Poland the study was conducted, among others, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Norway, France, Germany and Hungary. It was realized in 2006/2007 and focused on the access to education of children awaiting refugee status, unaccompanied minors, children recognized as refugees and children with a tolerated stay in Poland (More on the subject: Kosowicz, 2007).

3. 'Educational Challenges Posed by Migration to Poland', a report developed within the EMILIE project: 'A European approach to multicultural citizenship: legal, political and educational challenges', (CIT5-028205), 2009. The study was conducted by the Centre for International Relations within the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission. The project lasted from July 2006 to September 2009 and encompassed nine countries: Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Greece, Poland, and Latvia. The aim of the project was to examine legal, political and educational challenges resulting from the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in European societies (More on the subject: Gmaj, 2009).

4. 'Multicultural Diversity and Special Needs Education', a report summarizing a review of literature and research encompassing the years 1994–2009 developed by The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education and covering twenty five countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Spain, Holland, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Latvia, Malta, Germany, Norway, Poland,

Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, Great Britain (England) and Italy. The research aimed at analysing the education of students with special educational needs (SEN) originating from immigrant backgrounds (Grünberger et al., 2009).

As far as local research is concerned, only two comprehensive publications regarding foreign children in Polish schools have appeared in recent years:

1. 'Foreign children in Polish educational institutions – a school perspective. Research report', the study was conducted in 2009 by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre within the project: 'Education in the face of migration challenges'. Its aim was to diagnose the situation of foreign children in the Polish school system via the perception of school principals, teachers and school pedagogues (More on the subject: Błeszyńska, 2010).

2. 'The realisation of foreign minors' right to education', a report commissioned by the Polish Ombudsman. The study was conducted in the years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 focused on the right to education of asylum-seeking minors remaining in centres for foreigners as well as minors placed in closed centres for foreigners and awaiting the decision or execution of the decision with a statement concerning deportation from the territory of Poland (More on the subject: The realisation of foreign minors' right to education, a report of the Polish Ombudsman, 2013: 12, 5–56).

Both international studies encompassing Poland and local reports provide a fragmentary view of the situation of foreign children in Polish schools. Further research is necessary which would take into consideration the changing social, legal, economic and geopolitical situation of Poland on the map of Europe and the world.

Foreign children in Polish schools: statistical data

Until 2001, accompanied, asylum-seeking children who did not have in their possession a certificate or a document confirming attendance at school abroad were not accepted to Polish schools. Children remaining in refugee centres were restricted to attending Polish language lessons. In 2001 the Ministry of National

Education began the process of collecting data on the number of foreigners learning in Polish educational institutions. In the school year 2004/2005 a significant number of children awaiting refugee status appeared in Polish schools – over 6,000 (More on the subject: Gmaj, 2009: 5). In the school year 2010/2011 there were over 5,000 foreign children in the education system (Children in Poland. Data, 2013: 58–60), while in the years 2013/2014 approximately 7,500 foreign children attended Polish preschools, primary and secondary schools (Fihel, 2014: 8). The group of foreign children attending Polish schools includes children of refugees, persons awaiting refugee status as well as persons granted permission for permanent residency in the territory of the Republic of Poland, persons granted complementary protection, permission for tolerated stay, permission for leave to remain on humanitarian grounds as well as temporary protection. Moreover, Polish schools provide education for the children of seasonal workers, migrant workers from the European Union, children from national minorities, children of repatriates and from mixed marriages. The number of foreign children in Polish schools in 2005 constituted 0.06 per cent of the total school population, which, in comparison to Western European countries, is a marginal number (data from the schools year 2006/2007).

As certain data show, approximately one thousand foreign children attend Warsaw public and private schools. There are no official data/statistics on the websites of the Ministry of National Education and the departments of education – in particular voivodeships – concerning the number of foreign students or their countries of origin. The data are mainly available in publications which were developed within various academic projects as well as social, integrational, educational projects run by non-governmental organisations and the Education Department of the Capital City of Warsaw. Thus, they can vary. Valentina Todorovska-Sokolovska reports that in the school year 2006/2007 there were 1,506 foreign children in the schools of the Mazovian voivodeship (Todorovska-Sokolovska, 2010: 3). In June 2008 there were 753 foreign children in Warsaw schools, 702 of whom were children from third countries (Chrzanowska, 2009: 2). A study conducted by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre within the project 'Education in the face of migration challenges' showed that in the school year 2009/2010 234 foreign students (including 109 girls and 125 boys) attended Warsaw primary and secondary schools. The majority, i.e. approximately ninety per cent were single students (up to five individuals from one country). They represented fifty four

countries: Western Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, Great Britain and Italy); Southern Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Moldavia, Romania and Slovenia); Central and Eastern Europe (Belarus, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia and Ukraine); the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia); Asia Minor and the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates); Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia); East and South Asia (China, India, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam); Africa (Angola, Ghana, Congo, Libya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan); North America (USA, Mexico) and three republics: Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia which are territorially parts of the Russian Federation. In Warsaw's public schools, refugees of Chechen origin constitute the largest percentage of foreign children. Among the remaining refugees the majority are students from Georgia with single students from Iraq, Sri Lanka, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan. The research was conducted between September and November 2009, its aim was to diagnose the school situation of foreign children, while the subject was the identification of the school situation of these children in the perception of educational institutions' employees. The report does not provide the list of schools in which the study was conducted (More on the subject: Błeszyńska, 2010: 23–24). Anna Bernacka-Langier reports that in the 2009/2010 school year, 134 refugee students attended Warsaw schools (in four primary and two lower secondary schools), the majority of whom were Chechen pupils. Vietnamese (341) and Ukrainian (263) students dominated among migrants (mainly economic migrants). There were 330 children of migrant workers in Warsaw schools – mainly non-public ones (Bernacka-Langier, 2010: 9–10).

Foreign children still remain a modest group in terms of percentage, however, an internally diverse group, both in terms of nationality and culture. Distinctions can be made based on: parents'/ guardians' country of origin, the child's and his or her parents'/guardians' legal and social status: refugee students, foreign students (economic migration), students from bicultural/bi-national families, as well as on the distribution in schools on the educational and geographic map of Poland. As revealed by the study of the authors of the present article as well as other research, cultural differences and other qualities of individuals and cultural groups: religion, nationality, age, language, social class, status, gender, etc. can constitute an additional value in the didactic and nurture work of the school.

Conclusions

Compared to the countries of Western Europe, Poland still has limited experience working with children with a multicultural context, which is not insignificant in the conditions of dynamization of migrant movements and their considerable structural diversity as well as multilevel cultural diversity. However, in both the dimension of legal regulations and school practice there is a continuous need for the adjustment of educational activities directed at foreign students with varied legal and social status. Additionally, there is a need for the development of tools designed to realise the accepted assumptions connected with the improvement of educational policy in the sphere of teaching foreign children with the consideration of Poland's cultural specificity. What seems equally crucial are the activities connected with teachers' education and training in the sphere of intercultural education. Poland belongs to the group of countries which apply integration policy and undertake educational activities for the newly arrived individuals. Needless to say, in the face of the transforming background of immigration to Europe: 'a number of questions connected with migrant children's education needs to be solved. Diversity ought to be reflected in the curriculum, cooperation between teachers, immigrants' communities and schools ought to be pursued and all specific problems ought to be solved, e.g.: when a large number of immigrant children learn in one school' (Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee as well as Committee of the Regions on the subject of immigration, integration and employment of 3 June 2003).

Despite the fact that Poland does not have a long tradition of accepting immigrants, it has an obligation, resulting not only from international agreements, but also from the sense of community with those who seek refuge and safety, to help those who have been deprived of their homeland and the right to respectable living conditions in peace. Thus, educational activities should concentrate on intercultural preparation of teachers, Polish students and students with a multicultural context as well as on the elimination of all forms of exclusion and discrimination in education. The following words remain valid: 'Today we know from experience that an arbitrary partition of countries, forced displacement of the population, unlimited armament, uncontrolled application of modern weapon, violation of basic rights of people and nations, violation of

international coexistence, as well as forced imposition of totalitarian ideologies – can only lead to the downfall of humanity' (John Paul II, 2008: 32).

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TABLE AND FIGURE LEGENDS

Chart 1. The system of education in Poland.

Table: 1. Minor refugees remaining in Poland with parents/ guardians applying for refugee status in the period 01 January 2015 – 31 May 2015.

Rahaela Varga, PhD*

Communicating Beyond Words:
Active Listening as a Key to Readaptation and Reintegration of Refugee Children

Abstract : The paper explores the role of active listening in the process of the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children within the educational system of a host community. Within the scope of the pedagogy of relation, active listening is identified as a useful tool that can facilitate communication between teacher and students, as well as between students themselves. The results suggest that active listening is a skill every teacher should apply, especially when teaching refugee children.

Keywords : active listening, education, communication, refugee children, teacher

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Introduction: Children's right to education

The significance of education is acknowledged in major United Nations documents of the last century. Namely, the 26th article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that everyone has a right to education, adding that it needs to be directed towards the full development of the human personality and at the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, while promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) legally obliges states parties to make primary education compulsory and available to all, as well as to direct education at the development of the child's personality, talents as well as mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential while developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Despite the fact that the Declaration has existed for almost seventy years and that it was signed twenty-six years ago by almost all member states of the United Nations (194 member states, except the United States of America), the right of children to education is still not universally achieved, with 58 million children worldwide who are not enrolled in primary school (Georgieva, 2014). The reason for such a situation can be found in unstable political circumstances, economic crises, natural catastrophes and on-going armed conflicts. Even among those children who do go to school in relatively safe and developed countries, there are many who experience violence at school on a daily basis. For instance, in Croatian schools 12% of students are considered to be victims of bullying, which is in line with other European countries (UNICEF, 2010). Although any child can become a victim of bullying, children of different nationalities, family backgrounds or religious beliefs are often the ones who tend to be singled out and picked on. Since these are usually characteristics of refugee children, efforts should be made to provide them the opportunity to access education and to ensure that they are educated in a safe and child-friendly environment, as proposed by the aforementioned documents. In Europe, refugee children have the right to education, the same as all other children in a specific community (ECRE, 1996), and therefore the educational environment must be supportive of all children equally.

Education of refugee children is a significant part of the process of their readaptation and reintegration into the host community. In this process, the teacher's

communication with children must demonstrate a special approach which facilitates their adjustment, but which also modifies existing conditions in order to make the classroom environment more culturally inclusive. All students must feel that they are being heard, and the key to achieve that is to develop the skill of active listening. This paper argues that active listening is a communication skill which can improve classroom relations. The emphasis is put on the active listening skills of teachers which can serve them to facilitate the process of readaptation and reintegration of refugee children. In the following chapters the significance of communication for education is explored, as well as the benefits that active listening can produce in the educational environment, followed by examples of best practice. Finally, implications for the further education of teachers are discussed.

The pedagogy of relation:
the link between education and communication

Education, which all children should be able to access, must be of high quality (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) and one of the components that the quality of education depends on are the relationships that exist in the classroom. Classroom relationships represent the most significant feature that must be addressed when discussing school experience, according to the pedagogy of relation. The pedagogy of relation[1] is a relatively new approach in educational theory which proposes that schools must focus on human relations in order to solve contemporary problems (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). Social issues that educators face nowadays cannot be solved by educational reforms centred on accountability and academic achievements. Such reforms are based

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[1] Although it is assumed that the term has been coined rather recently by professor Frank Margonis (The University of Utah, USA), the philosophy behind the pedagogy of relation is ancient and can be traced back to Aristotle. It is highly influenced by the works of Martin Buber (1878–1965) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). There is also significant influence stemming from critical pedagogy, especially from the works of Paulo Freire (1921–1997). It includes the contribution of contemporary authors (e.g. Nel Noddings advocating caring in education; Biesta defining the relation between teachers and students as a process of communication; etc.) and serves as a common ground for various theoretical frameworks. It is mainly directed at exploring human relations in education and their correlation to teaching and learning.

on the assumption that the primary mission of schools should be effectiveness materialised in teaching academic skills and content. Pedagogy as a science of education cannot accept such a mono-dimensional approach to the development of human personality. Instead, it calls for paying greater attention to the development of teachers' (and consequently children's) social competences.

Social competences have already been included in the European reference framework for the EU as key competences for lifelong learning (along with seven others) and a recommendation has been issued for each member state of the European Union to develop those competences through education. As stated in the Annex of the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning*, social competences "[…] include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary" (Recommendation, 2006: 16). In the same document it is explained in more detail what knowledge, skills and attitudes are related to social competences. First of all, for successful interpersonal and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments. It is equally important to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture. Understanding the multi-cultural and socio-economic dimensions of European societies and how national cultural identity interacts with the European identity overall is essential. Secondly, the core skills of social competences include the ability to communicate constructively in different environments, to show tolerance, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create confidence, and to feel empathy. Individuals should be capable of coping with stress and frustration and expressing these sentiments in a constructive way; they should also distinguish between the personal and professional spheres. Thirdly, social competences are based on an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Individuals should have an interest in socio-economic developments and intercultural communication and should value diversity, respect others, and be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise (Recommendation, 2006). Social competences defined in this way call for introspection from teachers as well as raised

awareness of their own attitudes toward different groups of children they teach. Teachers' social competences make up an important part of their professional competence, since teaching without communicating in the way that promotes understanding and acceptance cannot fully reach educational goals.

When it comes to the development of student social competences, legislative support cannot yield any results if those who are meant to implement agendas and strategies do not recognise social competences as an educational goal which is equally important to academic ones. In order to achieve those goals, teachers must work on their relations with students and students' relations with one another. The pedagogy of relations is culturally responsive and in that sense it is emphasised that educators must create learning contexts that will provide children with "those tools that are vital for future citizens in a democracy: the tools of planning, relationships, creative and critical reflection, and communication" (Bishop, 2011: 186).

Human relations and interactions are built upon communication that is socially acceptable; in this way social competences are demonstrated. Social competences and communication are mutually intertwined and it is hard to draw a line between the two. Social communication is precisely what Biesta (2004: 12–13) sees as the essence of education, claiming that "education is located not in the activities of the teacher, nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction between the two." In other words, there is no education without communication, when communication is broadly defined as an exchange of information by any means.

The same author points out that communication can be theoretically determined in several ways – as the transmission of information; as participation; or as performance. The model that describes communication as the transmission of information from one place (the sender) to the other (the receiver) through a medium or a channel is the most common one, but is an inadequate model for the description of human communication. A more appropriate model would be one that views communication as participation. Thus, communication becomes a process of the construction of shared understanding, because the participation of both the sender and the receiver results in mutual influence and equal contribution to the meaning. The participatory theory of communication suggests that the so called "gap between the teacher and the students" should not be interpreted as something negative, as it is exactly what makes education possible.

Teaching is actually the construction of a social situation, and its effects result from the activities of the students in response to that situation. In other words, meaning does not exist independently but is co-constructed. Such a constructivist approach to communication is further developed in the performative theory of communication, claiming that the act if interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the speaker and the listener, but is always a unique experience so that the same signs are each time appropriated, re-historicised and read with a new meaning. The same is the case with listening in education or, as Kök (2014) notices, the act of listening requires listeners to make meaning from the oral input by drawing upon their background knowledge and previous experiences.

Understanding and developing teachers' active listening skill

Before explaining what role active listening can play in the process of improving the quality of education (of refugee children), it is important to determine what it refers to. Active listening can be defined as a communication skill which is simultaneously a social skill (Gearhart & Bodie, 2011). As a social communication skill it can serve as a tool for teachers to reach every child and build a relationship with them, which can contribute to higher educational outcomes regarding not only social competence but also academic achievements. The first part of the chapter describes the steps of active listening and its role in education, while the second part explains why it is especially important for teachers who work with refugee children to apply it and when this skill should be introduced in their professional development.

The role of active listening in education

Active listening is actually not a single skill, but can be seen as a unified set of subskills. According to Hoppe (2007), those subskills include: paying attention; holding judgment; reflecting; clarifying; summarising and sharing. They could also be understood as steps in the process of active listening. In that sense, active listening begins with paying attention to one's own behaviour and the

speaker's behaviour, and thus creating the setting for a productive dialogue. The goal is to allow time and opportunity for the speaker to think and speak. While paying attention, one must focus not only on the meaning of the words that are being said, but also on feelings expressed as well as the underlying needs (Rosenberg, 2003). While communicating in the classroom, it is important for teachers to let the student know that they are paying attention by using the usual verbal and non-verbal signals such as eye contact, nodding, open body posture, and continuers (yeah, mm, mm hm, and uh huh) to confirm that the message is received and to display understanding that the student should continue speaking (Fitzgerald & Leudar, 2010).

The next step is to keep an open mind and to suspend judgement as the intention of the active listener should be to connect and to understand the speaker, not to judge him or her for the ideas expressed or for having a different perspective on the subject matter. Even when teachers have strong views, they should hold their criticism and avoid arguing, which does not necessarily mean they agree; it shows that they are trying to understand what the students are saying (Hoppe, 2007). This way respect is being conveyed for the student and his or her views and experience. Experience, culture, personal background and current circumstances all contribute to each person's unique perspective of a situation. In this respect, it is of vital importance that the teacher expresses empathy. Appropriate empathy is a state of human interaction in which the listener enters and understands the speaker's perspective, whilst getting in touch with their thoughts and feelings, but also remains rational in their understanding of the speaker's situation.

The ability to reflect the other person's content as well as feelings creates a strong rapport between teacher and students. Therefore, the teacher must demonstrate that he or she is tracking the information presented by restating the other person's basic ideas, while emphasising the main points as this is the way to confirm that he or she has understood them. Identifying the emotional message that accompanies the content is equally important but often more challenging as it can be contained in the words used, as well as in the tone of voice, intonation, body language etc. (Hoppe, 2007). In this way students can hear for themselves how they are being heard by others, i.e. what kind of message they are sending across. This allows them to identify possible misunderstandings and change the course of communication if the intended message is not similar enough to the one received.

In order to show that the teacher is listening actively, it is recommended to ask occasional questions and elicit answers which would provide the listener with certain clarifications. They should be open-ended questions which stimulate the speaker to provide more information, as they cannot be answered simply with 'yes" or "no". Clarifying questions help to ensure understanding and clear up confusion (Hoppe, 2007). Those questions should demonstrate cultural sensitivity (Gardiner & Walker, 2010) and not create an interrogation-like situation. They ultimately serve to deepen communication and to encourage the student to go through his or her story again in order to understand it better. Additionally, the teacher should briefly paraphrase what has been heard. Summarising serves to help students identify their key themes as well as to confirm and solidify the listener's grasp of their point of view. The summary does not necessarily imply that teachers agree or disagree but helps both parties to be clear on mutual responsibilities and follow-up.

A teacher acting as an active listener does not just passively soak up the received messages; he or she should also provide their own contribution. After the teacher gains a clearer understanding of the student's perspective, he or she should introduce his or her own ideas, feelings and suggestions. In this step, the teacher must decide what kind of contribution he or she can offer, either direct (offering practical help) or indirect (referring the student to another professional). This step is a very sensitive one as the teacher should be careful not to coerce the student to do something, additionally they should be mindful not to promote their own attitudes or even give advice. The teacher should simply present possible solutions and let the student decide what to do next. Sometimes speaking, and simply the sense of being heard, can have a therapeutic effect on the speaker (Robertson, 2005).

Those six subskills of active listening can make a great difference in the teacher's interactions with students. Classroom relationships become more solid when they are based on mutual respect, and this is why it is important for teachers to apply the active listening skill when communicating with their students. There are numerous benefits for teachers who are able to listen actively. According to Vodopija (2007), active listening correlates with: keeping an open mind when facing new ideas; innovation; improved relations among colleagues; better personal relationships; lowered stress levels; prevention of conflict and consensus in the decision-making process.

A teacher who listens actively helps the student to whom he or she listens, and at the same time servers as a model to their peers of how to communicate in a socially competent manner. In such a case, the teacher assumes the role of a model whom students can imitate and practice their own skill of active listening. By applying their active listening skill in the classroom, teachers also teach their students to listen actively to each other. For Huerta-Wong and Schoech (2010), in the case of active listening, learning by doing is a much more effective way of acquiring the skill than the direct instruction or theoretical lectures.

Apart from the benefits that a teacher can gain due to active listening, students too can profit from developing their own listening skill. For instance, educational efforts directed at learning vocabulary and the skill of active listening foster an increased level of literacy in children (OECD, 2012). At the same time, when students feel that they are being heard, they tend to feel more confident and to perform better in an academic and social environment. As a result, students who listen actively achieve higher scores in reading, have better learning outcomes and develop their abilities to a larger degree. Active listening assists students in the process of becoming self-actualised individuals who think positively of themselves and others. Therefore, it can be stated that active listening influences the overall classroom climate because it contributes to the formation of friendship culture (Crosnoe, 2000; Bagwell & Schmidt, 2013), as opposed to the existing culture of violence (Curle, 1999). Friendships among students and friendships among teachers create a sense of belonging and togetherness which results in an atmosphere that has a positive educational influence on the learning process as well as the development of students' personality.

Learning to listen to refugee children

Understood as a social communication skill, active listening plays a substantial role in the education of all children, so one can ask the question of *why refugee children should receive special attention* (1). The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ERCE) defines refugee children as persons below the age of 18 who are "seeking refugee status or international protection; who are considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or

by any other adult; or who are forced to flee across an international border (as a result, for example, of war, civil war, generalised violence)" (ECRE, 1996: 2).

The reason for emphasizing the necessity of active listening, when it comes to the education of refugee children, lies in the fact that they represent an especially vulnerable group of students at risk of being rejected by their peers. Peer rejection, along with other common problems of refugee children (such as withdrawal, being bullied, problems with their studies, anger management and dealing with traumas) can have a negative effect on the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children in a host community. Teachers should employ their active listening skill in order to help them diminish those negative effects.

Phillips (2014) argues that active listening plays an important role in the process of recognising refugee children's needs and providing help in early resettlement period. Reaching out to children (who are described as the group of refugees least likely to express the so called settlement euphoria (Phillips, 2014)) is an especially delicate task. Gardiner & Walker (2010) report that 70% of refugees are found to have experienced some form of physical or mental trauma. The effects of trauma on children and adolescents will depend on each individual and their developmental stage, but common symptoms include: learning and behavioural problems; poor appetite and sleep; psychosomatic symptoms; enuresis and encopresis; low self-esteem and guilt. These may all be manifestations of an underlying anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Cognitive reprocessing of traumatic memories is considered to be central to recovery. In other words, when speaking and being heard, children are given the opportunity to become aware of what the problem really is, which can present a first step to its solution.

The process of sociocultural adaptation can be quite gradual, and refugees integrate to different extents within the host community. Children with disrupted or minimal school education are suddenly immersed in a new educational system. In such a situation, racial discrimination and bullying are widespread (Fazel et al., 2012) due to social stereotypes and prejudices rooted in the fear of an unknown (relatively different) culture experienced by the members of the host community. In order to facilitate the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children, active listening must be applied with host population as well, to provide them with the opportunity to become aware of their own (mis) conceptions so that they might suspend certain forms of behaviour leading to discrimination.

An additional question that arises is *why teachers ought to be the ones who should listen to refugee children in an active manner* (2). In fact, active listening is already recognised as an important skill for various professionals who deal with refugee children: medical staff (Bryant, 2009), lawyers (Tyner, 2009) and police officers (McMains, 2009). Their right to be heard (ECRE, 1996) must be exercised not only when it comes to legal issues but also in an educational environment. Therefore, active listening should matter to educational staff, too, since children's right to education depends on them. It seems that active listening has been rather neglected in Croatian schools, considering that teachers spend two thirds of every lesson speaking and only one third listening (Peko, 2003). As a result, teachers' verbal domination hinders students' initiative and independent choice of topics that they would like to discuss in class (Peko et al., 2014). It can be concluded that Croatian teachers in general are not prone to listen to students, especially when it comes to issues that matter to students but do not seem to be a part of curriculum. In this way, the educational potential of topics that students are interested in remains unrecognised.

The absence of active listening from school can be partially explained by the obstacles that exist in this environment. For instance, a teacher is often perceived as the classroom leader, and students expect that the leader will dominate the communication process. Another obstacle Hoppe (2007) finds is the fact that silence is not interpreted as an attempt to understand, but as a sign of agreement, whereas in active listening silence is used solely to enable the speaker to express himself or herself. In addition, sometimes favourable conditions for active listening (comfortable place and enough time) cannot be achieved during a regular school day. Also, the teacher's personality traits can determine if they are prone to listen patiently or not. Finally, in western culture, listening and speaking are not equally appreciated, and much more attention during formative years is traditionally paid to practicing verbal presentation.

Even if the need to develop teachers' skill of active listening is recognised, the question remains: *When should teachers work on their active listening skill?* (3) The answer is provided by two examples of best practice – the first one referring to pre-service teachers and the second one to in-service teachers. The first example shows that active listening can be learnt during the initial preparation for the teaching profession while still at university. Namely, an experimental study that was conducted with a group of university students (prospective

teachers) who were trained in active listening by the use of the so called LAFF strategy (McNaugton et al., 2007). LAFF is an acronym that stands for:

L (*listen*) – pay attention and show some understanding and acceptance as well as respect

A (*ask questions*) – ask open ended questions (and take notes)

F (*focus on the issues*) – recognise the problem, feelings and needs expressed

F (*find a first step*) – contribute to the solution to the problem (in a direct or indirect way)

Those are the simplified steps in active listening which the university students were instructed to demonstrate while communicating with parents of school children. Data collected before and after the training suggest that active listening can be taught in an effective way.

The second example is set in a community and describes the Listening Project[2] conducted in Croatia in the post-war period with people of conflicted nationalities who returned to their homes and had to live next door to their "enemies". In order to ease intercultural communication, a group of volunteers was trained in active listening. The project aimed at:

- identifying problems and issues that people care about
- including unheard or unheeded voices
- fostering the emergence and development of new community leaders
- generating creative solutions for community needs and problems
- disseminating issue-related information and determining the need for additional information
- encouraging personal growth as all involved consider new viewpoints and information
- forming uncommon coalitions and alliances through which diverse viewpoints can resolve, rather than clash over difficult issues
- promoting insight, empathy, and understanding among people with conflicting views
- creating long-term capacity for grassroots community building

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[2] Listening Project is an American non – profit organisation founded by Herb Walters in 1981. Since then they have helped many community-based organisations around the world to address the issues of social and economic injustice; ethic, racial, religious and cultural conflict; community health and education; and sustainable development. More information available at: http://www.listeningproject.info/index.php, Access date: 20 August, 2015.

Kruhonja (2001) reports that the volunteers in the project conducted approximately 1800 interviews in Croatian settlements with high level of war trauma (massacres, concentration camps). The semi-structured interviews contained the types of questions that are meant to build mutual trust; encourage people to express their worries and feelings of anger and anxiety; affirm mutual beliefs and hopes; urge people to list their problems and realise that they themselves present a part of solution. For such interviews, volunteers had to work on their own prejudices, remain open-minded and refrain from judgement. Their active listening skill turned out to be crucial for intercultural understanding and cooperation even between the volunteers, for they came from both Croatian and Serbian ethnic backgrounds.

The project resulted in improved communication between volunteers and local community members. Moreover, communication within the local community was re-established, stereotypes dismissed and issues identified in order to commence building a future together. This example confirms that active listening can be taught and learnt in a community. Since the classroom is a kind of community, its members (teachers and students) are also capable of developing and improving their active listening skill, regardless of their age or work experience (Jindra et al., 2010). It can be said that active listening is a skill that cannot be mastered once and for all, but needs to be continuously improved and it is never too early nor too late to start developing it.

Conclusions and implications for teacher education

Within the theoretical framework of the pedagogy of relations, active listening is seen as a key to the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children in the educational environment of a host community. It is a special skill that enables us to communicate in a more meaningful way and to understand children's needs more profoundly. Since the teachers' main task when teaching refugee children is to avoid creating new traumatic experiences in the new social environment, the skill of active listening proves to be a useful tool. It is a skill which every teacher should demonstrate in their everyday work. In the classroom they should concentrate on children's non-verbal (e.g. body language, expressions, reactions etc.) and verbal messages and relate them to their story.

Verbal communication articulates the child's experiences, behaviours and feelings. Therefore, a skilled teacher should encourage them to continue talking while being non-judgemental and emphasising empathy rather than sympathy. This is because empathy and rapport provide children with the warmth, comfort and safety necessary to facilitate effective, positive educational outcomes.

Due to all the discussed benefits that active listening can lend the process of creating an inclusive classroom and because it can help improve the educational experience in a host community for refugee children, it is recommended that the development of this skill should become an integral part of initial teacher education. While still at university, prospective teachers should be enabled to gain the necessary intercultural knowledge, develop their active listening skill and form positive attitudes towards the marginalised social groups as a segment of their overall professional competence. Such institutional support would equip teachers to enter contemporary classrooms with an increased feeling of (social) competence and decreased level of fear and prejudice, so that they could serve as positive role models to all their students.

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The Hidden Curriculum in the Function of Promoting Equal Educational Opportunities for the Roma

Abstract : Hidden curriculum implies teaching attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions which are often expressed in the form of rules, rituals and regulations. Therefore, it has a direct impact on communication, *etho*s, overall atmosphere and school culture. The hidden curriculum, unlike the so-called didactic curriculum, is a set of students' experiences that belong to the "unwritten curriculum," and is characterized by informality and lack of conscious planning. Its effects depend on the values and attitudes of individuals, but also on the dominant value system of the society in which the school is set. The hidden influences in the school curriculum are important prerequisites for creative and critical behavior, interaction and communication, teaching methods and strategies of the teachers who, in partnership with students, are free to co-create the educational process.

   The integration of the Roma children in the educational system of the Republic of Croatia as well as the strengthening of the multicultural competence of teachers, will contribute to the promotion of their equal abilities and educational opportunities. By enabling positive conditions in the open school curriculum in daily practice, humanistic principles, pluralism and democratic values will be respected, and a positive hidden curriculum will also create a stimulating school culture. Strengthened multicultural competences of teachers can create a multicultural community through educating for social justice, preventing exclusion and marginalization, and by accepting cultural differences whose principles and values are the foundation of the National Curriculum of the Republic of Croatia.

Key words : children's rights, culture, hidden curriculum, Roma, teachers

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Environmental culture for the development of a positive identity

Hidden curriculum is reflected in school culture and school culture is reflected in the hidden curriculum. School culture is also reflected in the characteristics and behavior of teachers towards students and one another as well as towards the parents and the local community, the values, attitudes and stereotypes they promote and finally the hierarchy they develop. The existence of hidden (intentional or unintentional) goals of education reduces the transparency of the entire educational system, making it difficult to identify the real objectives of the system as well as management and control over it (Jukić, 2013).

Rilley (2003) connected the concepts of culture and hidden curriculum, explaining that the hidden curriculum subtly and non-intentionally, but strongly influenced what children would learn and do, which stemmed from their assessment of what form of behavior could achieve the approval of adults, and desirable or appropriate forms of behavior actually coincided with the concept of school ethos. Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (1996) and Ross et al. (1993, according to Walker, 1996) considered hidden curriculum to be the rules and routines of the school, which some researchers largely intertwined with its culture (Stoll, 1999; Prosser, 1999). Brown (2001) believed that hidden curriculum was reflected in the more informal forms of influence on the students' behavior and attitudes, while Pastuović (1999) believed it to be the hidden goals of education and the means to achieve them. Moreno (2007) believed that the culture of an institution was made from the norms and expectations of teachers, rights and obligations, roles and relationships of its members, which were reflected in all formal and informal interactions between adults and children, making up a sort of social framework of the curriculum. The employees of each institution defined culture as a lifestyle determined by common rituals, routines, standards, etc. (Kantor, Schulz & Fernie, 2007). Most interpretations of culture referred to specific values, beliefs and expectations of people in the institution, their usual behavior, i.e. rituals, ways of understanding and interpreting everyday events, which largely shaped the authenticity and identity of the educational institution (Stoll & Fink, 2000). Schein (ibidem) argued that culture is a deeper level of basic settings and beliefs that members of an organization share, which unconsciously determines the position of the organization in relation to itself and its environment, while Leithwood (2002) described culture as

a system of common, accepted meanings and symbols referring to the implicit and explicit content that made up the norms, beliefs, values and expectations, which were intentionally or unintentionally received and exchanged between members. Therefore, culture, according to Bruner (2000), provided a model of identity and actions for its members (Slunjski, 2006).

Educational efforts are aimed at building a man with harmoniously connected physical abilities and health, spiritual wealth, intellectual ability and truthfulness, moral strength and goodness, aesthetic sense, the culture of work, efficiency and creativity. Educational art is built on an idea of connecting teachers' experience with the students' experience. It also entails teachers accepting differences in students' experience as a necessary requirement and a requirement to establish interaction and finally of being respectful towards the students' experience (Bašić, 2009). The main purpose of education is to build a personality marked by genuine humanism and a sense of values. The complexity of the teaching profession is constantly increasing due to the rapid expansion of new scientific knowledge, global mobility, the development of techniques and technologies, new social relations and organization of life and work (Đuranović, 2005). Therefore, it is even more important to have pedagogically competent teachers who can meet the demands of contemporary society. The areas of teachers' pedagogical competences are mutually intertwined and there is no individualism. For teachers to be pedagogically competent, they need to possess knowledge, skills and abilities from pedagogical, psychological, methodological, and didactic areas.

The components of the pedagogical competence of teachers:

1. experience of competence in working with students, parents and teaching performance;
2. sense of security in the teacher's performance;
3. willingness to create conditions suitable for successfully meeting the needs of students;
4. being sure of the selection of appropriate procedures towards students, which results in a feeling of satisfaction of the teacher's calling (Ljubetić & Kostović Vranješ, 2008).

In contrast, the core components of pedagogical incompetence of teachers are: uncertainty in dealing with disciplinary problems and doubts about the choice of educational procedures, lack of quality relationships with students

resulting in a sense of burden from working with pupils (Ljubetić & Kostović Vranješ, 2008).

ISSA's definition of quality pedagogy that leads to a pedagogically competent teacher includes seven areas: interaction, family and community; inclusion, diversity and democratic values; assessment and planning; teaching strategies; environment for learning and professional development. Those areas are selected by the *International Step by Step Association (ISSA)* (2011) as they are areas in which it is necessary to provide high quality work in order to support children's development and learning. Those seven areas promote practices based on humanistic and socio-constructivist principles, developmentally-appropriate practices, individualized approach. They also promote the knowledge that learning takes place through interaction and dialogue between children and adults, as between children themselves, in a spirit of respect, encouragement and the autonomy of the one who teaches. Its starting point is the belief that the child is an able and complete being, although it requires some help and support from adults. ISSA's definition of quality pedagogy recognizes and promotes the important role of educational workers as pedagogically competent professionals who lead and guide children as they learn and explore. In particular, it highlights the importance of partnership with the family – the first educators, and also with the community – a natural environment for learning and research (ISSA, 2011). The indicators of school quality that required pedagogical competence of teachers and affected the quality of the educational process can be divided into several basic development areas: curriculum, achievement, teaching and learning, support for pupils, school culture and classroom culture as well as the cooperation of teachers with the director, professional development service and the local community (Jurić, 2007).

The importance of education of Roma minority

Today, in the European context, there is an increase in trying to train future teachers to promote the idea of mutual understanding and respect for different cultural communities. The process of social transformation is closely connected with the system of education which is directed towards the future, towards a knowledgeable society. Education holds huge potential for every nation. It has

become the primary factor of excellence, innovation, solidarity, responsibility and social cohesion in the context of long-term development of the European Community. The attitude towards the Roma and their communities in Europe has been imbued with many prejudices. The xenophobic attitude towards the Roma as well as their segregation are certainly important obstacles to their integration into mainstream society (Šlezak, Salaj, 2012). The authors see the overcoming of segregation in bringing the Roma closer to the majority population, as opposed to the marginalization of life on the edges of towns and villages. Yet the solution is not only found in the physical sense, but also in social relations, especially in improving the Roma's social, economic and educational status. The Roma population in Croatia is a recognizable part of multi-cultural environments, and today, they are certainly not integrated into all segments of society. A low level of education is one of the most important causes of the disadvantaged position of the Roma in the Republic of Croatia and the primary reason for their social exclusion. The promotion of cultural sensitivity in education in Croatian schools is evident in the cross-cultural amenities, and is certainly hidden in the values of education, in social interactions in the culture of the school and the (lack of) awareness of every individual of their competencies, cultural background and identity towards reducing ethnocentrism, prejudice, stereotypes, inequality and discrimination. With an increasing awareness of the national, religious, linguistic and cultural identity of an individual, we learn to respect differences. Solving problems in the education of Roma children is closely connected with the correct attitudes of teachers to the inclusion of these highly specific and sensitive groups in their societal upbringing – the education system.

The specific problems that have been accompanying the education of Roma children and future changes in the education system should have implications for adapting to the increased diversity of students. They should be reflected in the adaptation of teacher education curriculum to encourage the development of social, communication, multicultural and civic competences of future teachers. This will ensure their timely and adequate preparation to work in heterogeneous, inclusive classes. The context of educational achievements of Roma students points to the necessity of providing additional educational support at school to all children who experience difficulties in learning and social participation. The Roma population is the largest social and ethnic group that is insufficiently

present in the process of education. There are few Roma students enrolled in school and thus, a low rate of Roma graduation. Moreover, a large number of Roma students repeat grades, and then drop out in high school. Because of the lack of preparation for school and poorer achievements, Roma students are often separated into special classes, thus being stigmatized and demonstrating behavioral problems and diminished success. There is a significantly lower educational structure of the Roma population, even less than the average of all minorities in Croatia. Consequently, the low level of education contributes to a slower socialization and integration of the Roma, low employment, low living standards, stabilized nomadic traditions, discrimination, and generational poverty of the Roma. In general, a small percentage of educated Roma leads to their lower representation in social associations, politics, community and society. This low percentage also contributes to a more difficult financial situation and a lower quality of all aspects of life, such as home care, education and support for children or the provision of rights. Exclusion from education denies Roma children one of the basic human rights – the right to education[1], which prevents their full development and the development of all specific resources/talents. The consequences of the Roma's exclusion from education are reflected in the reproduction of poverty and lack of any prospects for a better future on the social plane.

The results of a comparative study *The Education of Roma children in Europe* showed that in France 95% of the interviewed teachers considered that their Roma pupils had insufficient achievements. In Spain, teachers assessed the academic achievements of their Roma students with an average score of 4.3 (on a scale of 10), while the average score for non-Roma pupils was 6.9. The relationship between academic achievement and student's age was inversely proportional: the older the student, the more exaggerated the failure (OPRE ROMA, 2002: 73). The argument also lay in the results of Roma and non-Roma students in the National

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[1] The project *The Education of Gypsy childhood in Europe* (OPRE ROMA) is a sociological and ethnographic study of the education of Roma children in Italy, France and Spain. Equal Access to a Quality Education for Roma is the EUMAP report (Monitoring and Advocacy Program of the European Union, the Open Society Institute), which, among other things, contains data on key education indicators of the Roma population. The report aims to support the objectives of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015" in the framework of education and establish a framework for regular monitoring in all aspects of the Decade.

testing, in comparison with their school grades. If teachers had the same expectations for Roma and non-Roma students and evaluated them on the basis of the same criteria, Roma and non-Roma pupils with the same grade should have the same average scores on a standardized test. However, Roma children scored lower on tests than non-Roma students with the same grade, thus, it can be concluded that Roma students were expected to show less knowledge to get the same grade. The hidden curriculum was transparent so far as the different attitudes of teachers towards Roma students compared to non-Roma students. This is also true of different levels of expectation and assessment of student achievement, and consequently, lower expectations from students which contribute to their achieving lower or worse results. Thus, Roma students received less support, motivation and encouragement from their teachers, and therefore achieved less themselves.

Studies on the education of the Roma in Croatia showed that this group's problems in the area of education lay in poor economic conditions, poor adaptation to a different language, poor parental support, discrimination by society and the short duration of their education (Hrvatić, 2009; Bedeković, 2007; Piršl, 2007; Sablić, 2014; Mlinarević & Brust Nemet, 2015). The Croatian Government adopted the National Program for the Roma in 2003, and the Action Plan for the Decade of the Roma from 2005 until 2015, in 2005. The National Program and Action Plan related to education and to the integration of Roma children in the educational and wider social system, and it included educators and the means of monitoring the process, targets and measures for achieving them, indicators to monitor the implementation of measures, as well as the necessary resources. The current system of education in the Republic of Croatia provides equal opportunities to all children, but it is not flexible to the specific needs of Roma pupils. The initial results bound both institutions and the Roma community so that the Croatian Roma could preserve their ethnic identity and achieve minority rights, but also cease to live in ghettos, marginal settlements, as unemployed and on social welfare. Hrvatić (2009) emphasized that the problems occurred in inadequately adapted classes for Roma children, exam adjustments and their intelligibility, but were also caused by a lack of competent teachers trained to work with Roma children. A multicultural community implies a coexistence of different cultures based on the principles of multicultural respect, solidarity, responsibility, cooperation, participation, etc. (Sablić, 2014). The success of Roma pupils requires the cooperation of teachers, school counselors, principals, students, parents, prominent

representatives of minority communities, non-governmental organizations, local communities and others. All of these actors are required in the creation and development of open multicultural curriculum that contributes to the affirmation of school as a social community within a multi-cultural environment. By integrating different cultures, beliefs, habits and orientations, we can diminish the fear of the unknown and different, and replace it with understanding and acceptance. In this event Roma pupils would, via receiving the message of acceptance by teachers and peers, develop understanding, respect and acceptance of others in a positive hidden curriculum, school/class. Mesić (2008) assumed that students should not move away from their own culture and origin, but that teachers should prepare them and raise awareness of sharing their lives with people from other cultures, people who have different characteristics and whose ways of life are often different from theirs. Multicultural community offers numerous opportunities for the expansion of one's point of view, with the emphasis on strengthening coexistence, tolerance and equality of all educational stakeholders (Mlinarević & Brust Nemet, 2015). The scientific monograph *The challenges of education in multicultural environments* introduced "structured recommendations for teachers and students of teacher education faculties, suggesting that teachers and students, in order to gain successful implementation of multicultural competences in the educational system should be: open to the needs of the people around them; strive to a deeper understanding of themselves and others; lead by example and encourage others to promote the formation of attitude of openness, active listening and solidarity with others; endeavor to respect and promote the harmony of diversity; take responsibility for their relationship with other people; continuously learn and work on themselves to persevere in raising awareness and eliminating their own prejudices and all states to accept as a right, not a duty" (Baking & Mlinarević, 2009: 236).

Providing equal educational and training opportunities for the Roma through projects in Croatia

The development of multicultural competencies is a sensitive and life-long process. Schools and faculties that educate future teachers and educators – the main promoters, drivers and mediators in the acquisition of multicultural contents and values – play an important role in this process. Hrvatić (2009) mentions

the need for appropriate curriculum and projects to establish a quality system of education for the Roma in the educational system of the Republic of Croatia. To educate children means to educate society, react to any form of disregard, so that every child can have equal opportunities for development, learning and believing that they are just as valid as any other child. Given the fact that Roma children and children of low-income status rarely attend regular kindergarten or preschool program, they often lack mathematical and reading skills, as well as knowledge of Croatian language, all of them being key prerequisites to succeed at school from the earliest days. With the lack of success, those children often fall behind others, lose interest and develop a negative attitude towards school. There are three protective factors that affect educational achievement of children needing to be improved and nurtured: cooperation between parents and schools, a supportive environment and support from the community.

Within the various implemented projects, such as *Improvement of the situation of Roma children in the educational system in Baranja* (2013–2015), *Nonviolence begins with me* (2014), and *Support Network for Roma children – REYN* (Step by Step, 2014–2016), the goal was to raise the quality and efficiency of the education of Roma minority children and to ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable the personal development of students. In addition to professional training, exchange of experience, and information for the staff of kindergartens and primary schools, the aim of the network REYN, was to advocate for the improvement of Roma children's situation in the society. In addition, one of the important tasks of children was to finish elementary education, in order to continue their education and to reduce the differences between their educational achievements in relation to the average level of educational attainment of all students in elementary education.

After the projects *Education, empowerment and networking of youth through training in mediation and conflict resolution* (2006–2007), *Education, empowerment and networking of young Roma and non-Roma* (2007), *Empowering young people from marginalized groups for self-representation and active participation in the community* (2008–2009), *Ensuring the sustainability of the activities that are carried out in the community by young people from marginalized groups* (2009–2010), *Together against discrimination against Roma* (2010–2011), and *Employment through measures of public work* (2008 – present), the number of young and adult members (especially women) of Roma national minority was

increased through programs in primary and secondary education as well as vocational training aimed to strengthen their knowledge, competencies and skills for participation and competitiveness in the labor market as well as active participation in society and social processes. There has been an increase in the number of Roma adults who, under the influence of the above-mentioned projects, finished their primary, secondary and vocational education through adult education in accordance with the requirements of the labor market, and are employed in public affairs cleaning and arranging Roma settlements. Through the projects, measures aimed at encouraging individuals older than fifteen who have not finished primary and/or secondary education, were implemented to encourage them to continue their education and to support those affected by the programs and their families during the process of education and socioeconomic inclusion. Through the above-mentioned projects, the role of the Council of the Roma national minority and non-governmental sector is actively involved in informing and raising the awareness of the Roma community as to the importance of continuing education (Brust Nemet & Kostić, 2015).

All of the above helps the Roma community with integration and improved performance in education, housing, and health care, but it is necessary to ensure continuity, enthusiasm, resources, and desire for change even after the completion of the project. The Republic of Croatia and the institutions responsible for the implementation of these projects should find quality and long-term solutions for other inter-related and pressing problems of the largest and most vulnerable minority in Europe: issues of their employment, education, health and housing (Brust Nemet & Kostić, 2015).

A pilot project for Roma education realized within the framework of the plan The Decade for Roma Education from 2005 to 2015 was implemented in the elementary school "Dr. Franjo Tuđman". The aim of the project was to equalize educational opportunities for Roma children, and to obtain better socialization and integration of Roma children in the school system. The project included 50 pupils aged 7 to 11 and 45 pupils aged 11 to 14. The project was implemented in the form of an extended stay for Roma children and children from socially disadvantaged families for lower grades, as well as instructive classes in Croatian, English, German, chemistry and mathematics. The students were provided with hot meals, trips, and gifts for the holidays. The project enabled education for teachers, and also education for the parents of Roma children through parent

meetings. Following the completion of the project, there were visible results in improved student success, communication, integration, and better attendance in regular classes. Roma children can successfully finish their education if they are motivated to actively participate in educational activities, provided with conditions for good socialization and integration, provided with assistance in learning, and encouraged to complete their education up to the highest degree their capabilities will allow (Lesić, 2015).

The Faculty of Education in Osijek designed and realized the project with the help of the European Union, alongside the NGO "Luna" from Beli Manastir as a partner. The project was named "Improving the situation of Roma children in education in Baranja (RO-ufos-luna-MI[2]) and it was implemented to contribute to raising awareness of the importance of creating a climate of multicultural education and social justice in the community. Project members included: the Agency for Education – Osijek, Elementary School "Dr. Franjo Tuđman", Beli Manastir and kindergarten "Cvrčak", Beli Manastir. The overall aim of the project was to promote equal opportunities and integration of Roma children into the education system of the Republic of Croatia. The project contributed to the realization of that aim through the integration of Roma children into shorter educational programs and activities and through building the competencies of educators, teachers, headmasters, expert associates and students of the Faculty of Education for work in a multicultural community. In the long term, the project should improve the primary education of Roma children, in particular by emphasizing the importance of their socialization and integration in early childhood. Project activities aimed at the inclusion of Roma children in non-formal educational activities that helped in their socialization and in the acquisition of language competences.

The following main project activities have been realized:

- Establishing and realizing cooperation with the parents of Roma and socially deprived children and building of their capacities;
- Implementation of workshops for Roma children and children of other nationalities aged 3–6;

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[2] Hereinafter, the project *Improving the situation of Roma children in education in Baranja* will be specified with the abbreviation RO-ufos-luna-MI.

- Implementation of out-of-school activities for Roma children and children of other nationalities;
- Assisting children in writing homework and mastering curriculum;
- Implementation of workshops about dialogue, non-violent communication and creative conflict resolution at primary school;
- Organization of a round table and an international conferences regarding the education of the Roma;
- Setting up and running of info-corners at the school and kindergarten;
- Training teachers, expert associates and students of the Faculty of Education about Roma culture and the challenges of working in a multicultural community;
- Conducting research about attitudes and competences of educators, teachers and parents.

The project involved all stakeholders in the education process: children, parents, teachers, expert associates, expert agencies and institutions. This was especially important for the education of disadvantaged groups in multicultural communities, and the establishment and effectiveness of this partnership was the token of the project success. Therefore, all project activities were designed in a way that established and nurtured cooperative relations. After the project implementation, an international and scientific conference "The Position of Roma in Education" was held, where the results of the project were presented. The conference offered an opportunity to acquire new competences, exchange experiences and establish partnerships in order to ensure sustainability and multicultural atmosphere (Mlinarević, Brust Nemet & Bushati, 2015).

In Croatia, according to the census of 2011, 16,975 Roma were registered. However, a realistic assessment, according to the number of inhabitants in Roma settlements, statistics of Roma associations and social welfare centers estimated between 35,000 to 40,000 Roma in Croatia. This figure has been used by the Government, non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the international community. This information suggests that the Roma accounted for less than 1% of the Croatian population and, therefore, the number of Roma children aged 7 was about 450. In Baranja (eastern Croatia) there were about 2,600 members of Roma community (the number could be smaller due to migration, especially in Baranja). In the early pre-school education before the implementation of the project RO-ufos-luna-MI, not a single Roma child from Beli

Manastir was involved. During the project, 26 Roma children became involved in early and pre-school education. Elementary school Franjo Tuđman from Beli Manastir currently educates 64 Roma students. Frequent non-attendance, problems with socialization, a high dropout rate, and consequently poorer educational achievement were common among Roma students. The professional development of teachers and Roma assistants to overcome those issues is still at an early stage. In order to improve the basic education of Roma children within the project RO-ufos-luna-MI, the emphasis was on the socialization and integration of Roma children and their parents in the community. This was with the intention of creating a culture environment that promoted the development of positive identity, especially in kindergarten and elementary schools. Project activities encouraged the inclusion of Roma children in non-formal educational and training activities that aid their socialization and the acquisition of language skills. Project activities were designed to establish and nurture collaborative relationships, and to help Roma children with socialization and preparation for school. This was with the aim of ensuring they had a better start in primary education, as an integrated pre-school education of Roma children ensured better performance in school in addition to providing better linguistic preparation for school. Project realization improved the basic education of Roma, promoted their cultural identity, enabled lifelong education of teachers, and strengthened the competencies of students for future professional work through experiential learning.

Teachers' multicultural competencies

The development of multicultural competence is a sensitive and life-long process. Preparing people for coexistence in a multicultural environment is a pedagogical task. This guidance should start as early as kindergarten and elementary school with the process of socialization and education, and should be continued throughout life-long education. Schools and teacher education universities have an important role in this process as they educate future teachers – the main mediators in the acquisition of multicultural content and value (Mlinarević & Brust Nemet, 2010).

RO-ufos-luna-Mi project activities confirmed the level of teachers' multicultural competencies and strengthened them. Based on the evaluation of six educational

workshops, two seminars, and on a self-assessment scale of multicultural competence completed by teachers after participating in workshops and seminars, one can conclude that professional training contributed to the development of teachers' competence and more successful educational work with Roma students. The topics of the educational workshops were as follows: working with students with behavioral problems, working with students with learning difficulties, creative problem solving, conflict resolution strategies, nonviolent communication, active listening, positive discipline, stress in teaching, communication with parents, and building self-esteem in children. The seminar topics were: Romani studies and multiculturalism in education. The leaders of educational workshops and the speakers at the seminars were education experts with years of experience in the field of Romani studies, multiculturalism in education, Croatian studies, rehabilitation, pedagogy and psychology. All workshops and seminars were successfully realized, as evidenced by the evaluations. Educational workshops were assessed with mean values above 4.00 (4.35), which included benefits from the workshop, satisfaction with the content, manner and methods of work, the conduct of the workshops, one's own involvement in the activities, the contribution of the workshop to increasing competence for working with Roma children and the contribution of the workshop in fulfilling the specific objectives of each educational workshop. The fulfillment of the specific objectives of each workshop was reflected in the responses of participants who pointed out that the workshops contributed to the teacher's understanding of basic factors, causes, needs and motives underlying the behavior of Roma children and in developing the ability to use the newly acquired competences in the classroom. Following active participation in all educational workshops, the teachers were given all necessary materials, so that they themselves conducted workshops during school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. These teacher–conducted workshops were completed with their own students in the "Dr. Franjo Tuđman" elementary school in Beli Manastir, a total of 168 educational workshops in all departments from 1st to 4th grade were held. Given the importance of dissemination, it is important to point out that the implementation of educational workshops in classrooms is ongoing and in this paper we cannot present exhaustive results of the evaluations (Mlinarević & Brust Nemet, 2015).

The teachers also expressed high satisfaction with various aspects of the seminar, as all mean values were above 4.00 (4.40). The participants were most satisfied with the conduct of the seminar and believe that the seminar was

informative and useful. They were also satisfied with the manner and methods of work. When asked: "What new information did you learn and/or find out at the seminar?" the participants provided the following answers: information and knowledge regarding the importance and opportunities for active involvement of citizens in solving numerous problems in the community through civic initiatives and associations; useful information that encouraged them to engage in some form of volunteering; specific ways of solving problems and raising awareness about the problem and the position of the Roma in education; information about the history of the Roma and their suffering throughout history, about Romani culture, tradition and customs; the importance of multicultural education; and benefits of this kind of awareness seminar for all individuals, especially educators. When asked "Do you have any suggestions regarding the content and conduct of the seminar?", the participants commented that more seminars of this kind were needed as well as more activities on the part of participants themselves, concrete examples and experiences of teachers working with Roma children and the experiences of members of Roma minority themselves.

The teachers assessed their multicultural competence as very high after participating in six educational workshops and two expert seminars, since the mean values of all items were at least 4.00. Likewise, the mean value of the total score was very close to the maximum theoretical value of 125. The teachers considered themselves to be multiculturally competent. The results of a similar survey (Jevtić & Mikanović, 2013) conducted in Serbia among 305 teachers in primary and secondary schools as well as students of teacher education studies in Serbia through the analysis of variance, showed a statistically significant difference in teachers' desire to be trained in the field of multicultural education. Teachers with higher self-efficiency beliefs proved to be more committed to the development of a multicultural dialogue. This link was mild but statistically significant, as demonstrated by regression analysis. Factor analysis revealed teachers' priorities when it came to multicultural education. The factorization of measuring variables suggested that teachers' awareness of noble assumptions about multiculturalism should be strengthened (Mlinarević & Brust Nemet, 2015).

The teachers believed that Roma children had sufficient capacity to finish school via the regular curriculum (variability probably reflected the view that all children had the ability to complete the regular curriculum). They expressed

a conviction that Roma children needed help to master a subject, that they were not motivated and did not have good conditions to learn at home. The results were in accordance with the perception of obstacles to the integration of Roma children that were present with the Roma (Mlinarević, Kurtovic & Svalina, 2015).

84 students of the Faculty of Teacher Education, preschool teachers, and elementary school teachers in Baranja have acquired competences and skills for work with Roma children. The action increased competencies of 84 students (64 in the first and 84 in second seminar) of the Faculty of Teacher Education, preschool teachers and primary school teachers in several different ways. They have received expert training at the Faculty of Teacher Education, which prepared them for work with Roma children and parents, and also for work with Roma children with learning difficulties. Secondly, through participation in two seminars, they acquired knowledge in Romology and multiculturalism in education and upbringing, active listening, identities, prejudices and stereotypes as well as in basic values and principles of volunteer work. Thirdly, the international conference on the education of the Roma and its conclusion and findings (conference proceedings in Croatian and in English published in 300 copies) presented innovative teaching methods for teachers and experts working in multicultural communities. These will prove beneficial not only for the 50 conference participants, but also for all those who read the published conference proceedings.

Supporting Roma parents in developing educational possibilities for school-age children

For many Roma associations, the education of the Roma is a priority topic for improving the status of the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe.

An example of good practice in Croatia was the inclusion of 332 parents of Roma students in Međimurje County from 2012 to 2014, in the project *Empowering Roma parents to support the development and education of their children*. Project activities significantly improved the quality and frequency of cooperation between parents and schools. School employees and parents become partners in creating change. In addition, there has been an improvement in educational

achievements of children and a reduction of inappropriate behavior. Joint participation in the project contributed to a greater understanding and respect between Roma and Croatian parents (Borko, Perhoč, & Brajkovic, 2015).

Throughout the RO-ufos-luna-MI project activities, a partnership of school and Roma parents was developed, in Baranja, Croatia. Roma parents were empowered and became partners in the process of their children's socialization, integration and achievement. Collaboration with Roma parents was one of the most important pillars of the action. They received training designed to fit their needs as parents and as members of the community. Also, they supported their children in attending pre-school, primary school, out-of-school activities and workshops. Research results (Brust Nemet & Kostić, 2015) on the attitudes of parents to the education of Roma children (N=40) indicated that 37 out of 40 parents thought that school was very beneficial and important for children, however, 19,4% held that not all subjects were equally important (e.g. math vs. Sunday school). Furthermore, 94.4% of parents felt that school contributed to education, while 5.6% were not sure or thought that the school contributed more to education than upbringing. Most of the parents stated that their biggest concern was for their child to get a good education in order to find a job. Health was also very important, and many parents worried about properly educating their children and providing them with education and everything necessary to that end (Brust Nemet & Kostić, 2015).

The association of Roma Friendship Luna organized monthly visits with the parents during the RO-ufos-luna-MI project. This was so that parents and children could talk about the project and its activities, the enrolment of children in kindergarten and how to support their children in schooling. Also, they discussed current issues of the Roma community in Beli Manastir. Volunteers of the Association of Roma Friendship Luna have conducted 218 home visits. Prior to this, the protocol for active listening had been designed. However, since the majority of project activities relating to parents and their children have not yet started, the main topic of conversation was the problems that the Roma community encounters relating to living conditions, employment and education. After the education cycle for parents has been implemented, and their children have started taking part in educational activities, the volunteers conducted visits to parents' homes as planned. The majority of parents support their children in attending project activities and try to enhance their interest in schooling. They

are especially interested in the assistance sessions offered by the students of FTEO: the parents encourage their children to attend these sessions and receive assistance. The parents have been participating in all project activities designed for them and especially in coordination meetings, where they discuss their problems and enrolment in kindergarten. We are pleased that in this school year 2014/2015, 25 Roma children have been enrolled in "Cvrčak" kindergarten in Beli Manastir and its branch kindergartens in Šećerana and in Branjin Vrh. They are the first Roma children to regularly attend kindergarten in Beli Manastir. 53 Roma parents took part in these workshops.

Capacity building is a process which will continue, due to the poor education of parents. The results of active listening, which is to be conducted in the fifth quarter of project realization, will give us a thorough insight to what extent the parents feel their capacities have been raised. However, we observed a positive shift in some parents and we are trying to motivate them to finish primary school and to build their capacities in this way as well. Furthermore, after the workshops, the parents started to be more proactive about their children's schooling. The majority of parents encouraged their children to regularly attend school, which will enable them to master school curriculum more easily and have better success in school. Also, in 2014, parents of 25 Roma children enrolled their children in kindergarten. The cooperation with Roma parents was good. One of the tasks was to inform parents of preschool and primary school children from the Roma population in association "Luna" about the forthcoming project and project activities (workshops, consulting, and activity inclusion, raising children). Promotional materials and invitations to cooperation and inclusion in project activities were distributed. There were a number of visits to Roma homes where help in problem solving and the education of children was given. A possibility of free education in primary school in Beli Manastir and vocational retraining was presented to parents. Moreover, the project team tried to make parents aware of the conditions and environment for successful learning and writing homework (didactic materials, desk, chair, notebooks).

The parents went on a study trip to Tuzla where they actively participated in the roundtable discussions. Also, they took part in organizing festivities (Roma holidays, birthdays, School day, etc.) and visited theatres and a Zoo with their children. The parents were motivated throughout the project to actively participate in different school activities and boards (school plays, school board).

Improved cooperation between Roma parents and schools was achieved. The parents regularly participated in individual conversations with teachers as well as teacher-parent meetings. They also expressed their satisfaction with the workshops, which the parents found to be both interesting and informative. Luna showed a responsible attitude towards the parents throughout the duration of the project and the parents were very understanding. The association has helped parents with providing space, technical assistance and a revival in promoting their own goals as well as the goals of the project in the community. The parents still lack information, knowledge and skills to investigate their own projects, but we are working with and preparing several parents from the group to write and implement smaller scale projects in their community.

Project activities of RO-ufos-luna-MI
directly aimed at students' development

Within the project RO-ufos-luna-MI, all project activities had an indirect impact on students' development. Some of these activities stood out: workshops for children in kindergarten, help with studying and writing homework at school as well as extracurricular activities for all students who were keen to participate, Roma and non-Roma.

Workshops in a kindergarten

In order to socialize Roma children and give them the opportunity to build friendships and encourage them to learn the language, six workshops were held for 50 Roma children and children of other nationalities. This had an impact on children's positive self-image and on the complete development of every individual child. Participants also developed a positive image of preschool as a place for playing, learning, for being creative and for building friendships. Their parents were also enlightened as to the advantages of their children's socialization and integration into broader community at the first level of the educational system in the Republic of Croatia. We are satisfied with the children's feedback and we are happy that our work with the Roma population

throughout this project resulted in 25 Roma parents enrolling their children in kindergarten.

Help with studying and writing homework

University students helped Roma children with studying and writing homework. They went to "Dr. Franjo Tuđman" primary school every day for 2 hours and worked not only with Roma children, but with all children in need. The students who participated in project activities improved the grades and socialization of Roma children but there is no evidence whether these children would actually be able to attend regular classes. A longer period of time is needed for the professionals from the State office for administration to determine the abilities of each student.

Extracurricular activities

With the aim of facilitating the social integration of Roma pupils, 38 Roma children from Beli Manastir, aged 7-11, participated in four different out-of-school activities (Theatre group, Dance group, Sports group, and Little school of mathematics). This afforded these children the opportunity to socialize with children of other nationalities, to practice and strengthen their communication skills, to meet their needs and interests and to create a positive self-image.

70% of Roma children were educated according to special education programs. Many Roma children in Baranja have an insufficient command of the Croatian language. In addition, many of them are growing up in inadequate socio-economic conditions and their parents often lack motivation to invest in their children's education (due to low educational levels and past experience with discrimination on the part of the parents). On the other hand, teachers and other school staff working with Roma children lack training, support and resources to deal with ethnically mixed classes. Teachers usually hold low expectations of their capabilities and motivation, which, in turn, influences teacher behavior and confirms the low expectation results. All of this results in poor attendance at school by Roma children, many of them attend special programs and drop out

at an early age, some of them are even violent. Ultimately there was a failure of cooperation among stakeholders of the educational process due to insufficient competences, skills and lack of sensitivity to the issues in question.

In order to improve this situation, teachers were trained on: how to help Roma students acquire language skills and master the curriculum; how to foster inclusion of Roma children; how to boost their self-respect, how to overcome difficult situations in classes and how to establish good relations with Roma parents and 24 teachers of primary school (1st to 4th grade) in Beli Manastir. Teachers also received materials for six workshops to be conducted in their classes throughout the school year (totaling 168 workshops held for app. 500 children).

In order to efficiently work on the socialization and the early education of Roma children, it was important to build strong relationships among all stake-holders of the educational process in a multicultural community. These include: parents, teachers, children, experts and the local community. Their cooperation was strengthened through three separate activities: 64 stakeholders took part in a roundtable discussion on Roma education; a Protocol for cooperation of all stakeholders of the educational process has been designed and established; and two creative info corners were set up and are still running in the school and kindergarten in Beli Manastir.

The project RO-ufos-luna-MI was successfully implemented, most of the activities were fully realized as planned, and the results for the majority of default parameters have been achieved.

Conclusion

The hidden curriculum of a school, i.e. school culture, could contribute to the development of Roma students' integration. We can derive positive develop-ments by promoting the cultural identity of the Roma, becoming aware of the needs of vulnerable groups and by minimizing the marginalization and dis-criminatory practices against the Roma. Additionally, these positive devel-opments can be achieved by facilitating frequent contact and cooperative relations between Roma and non-Roma parents and children and teachers in various activities in the school and community. It is important that the academic

community and civil society, as well as experts directly involved in the education of children, make and enact recommendations related to the education of children and their teachers with respect to the processes of integration and multiculturalism of the region in which we live. It is necessary to encourage a dialog among scientists about multicultural education, exchange experiences and present programs of multicultural school programs in Croatia, the region and the world. It is also essential to emphasize the importance of multicultural competence of future teachers, provide guidance for teachers with regard to the integration processes and multicultural community in which they work and find appropriate approaches to promote multicultural dialog.

Various efforts through projects of state institutions, educational institutions and civil society organizations in Croatia allowed equal opportunities for Roma children/students. Positive examples of project results showed that it was possible to strengthen the multicultural competence of teachers, to enlighten the importance of education among parents and create an enabling environment for the successful education of Roma students.

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Psychological Peculiarities of Internally Displaced Students' Readaptation to Study in Higher Educational Establishments in Ukraine

Abstract: One method of student readaptation to study is the annual practice of Depth Psychotherapy. Depth Psychotherapy takes place in a learning environment at the Psychology Department of the Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy. The purpose of this practice is to help students overcome their internal stress, to form internal stability and to develop confidence regarding their future lives. Additionally, depth psychotherapy aims to help students develop mental health and self-help skills: introspection, the skill of autogenic training, the sublimation of mental energy into creative activities or sport and the ability to predict the risks of conflict behavior and aggressive tendencies. Students gain knowledge about self-identification and their sense of life, they also acquire the ability to react to their negative emotions, as they are able to understand the future consequences of their actions. The essence of the psychocorrection method, which is realized through the techniques of active social and psychological education, is based on the creative expression of students' own feelings and emotions. It reinforces their self-identity and improves inter-personal communication. As a result, psychocorrection practice gives rise to a constructive self-realization of individuals in a society by activating their motivation to learn and thus discover their social roles. The psychocorrection practice implemented in the course of active social and psychological education, based on the principles of trust and unprejudiced judgment, reveals individuals' capabilities of adaptation and facilitates their adaptation to the changed conditions of the social situation in Ukraine.

Key words: readaptation, method of active social and psychological education, internally displaced persons, forced migrants, military conflict, art therapy

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Introduction

In present-day Ukraine, psychologists deal with people affected by psychological traumas resulting from exposure to military operations, which have a destructive influence on human life. This problem is becoming increasingly complex and demands the activation of research. The contemporary military activities in the East and in the South of Ukraine between 2014 and 2015 are important factors contributing to psychological changes, such as anxiety, depression, bewilderment, problems with social adaptation and the decline of effective communication. Psychological trauma is stimulated in the unconscious through traumatic memories which can impede the person's ability to function in daily life, and create fear and mistrust which hinder a migrant's adaptation to life in a new reality. This concerns soldiers and their close relatives, refugees and displaced persons, adults and children – all these categories of people who endure emotional and mental hardships. Therefore, the process of readaptation of internally displaced persons in Ukraine is a primary focus of psychologists.

According to desk research conducted for the purpose of this study, in 2014 there were 1.4 thousand students who fled the occupied territories in the Crimea, and an additional 30 thousand students who fled Donbas. In 2015 there were a further 100 thousand scientists, associate university professors, school teachers and students displaced in Ukraine. It is estimated that in the years 2014–2015 there were roughly 1.3–1.4 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

The Law of Ukraine "On ensuring the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons" № 1706-VII from the 20th October 2014, provides that the citizens of Ukraine who left their permanent places of residence have a right to social protection in the independent territories of Ukraine. Internally displaced persons belong to vulnerable groups and can have specific needs, such as: the need for housing, social guarantees, legal protection, political security, protection from violence and persecution, the need for equality of social positions, etc. (Bochkor & Dubrovs'ka & Zales'ka, 2014). Moreover, internally displaced individuals need psychological support to overcome individual stress and anxiety, and level aggression. Thus, psychologists have to take into consideration all new narratives of those who are compelled to leave their places of origin due to antiterrorism operations (ATO). Their status is interpreted as: "temporarily moved individuals, internally displaced persons, settlers in a new place, forced

migrants" (Kisarchuk & Omelchenko & Lazos & Ly'tvy'nenko & Czarenko, 2015: 27).

Between 2014 and 2015, Ukrainian students were forced to leave their homes because of military operations in the South as well as the East part of our country. The majority of the internally displaced persons from Donbas moved to Kharkiv city, Dnipropetrovsk city, Zaporizhzhya city and adjacent regions. The remaining displaced persons moved to Kiev, Cherkassy and other areas. People from the Crimea migrated to Odessa city, Lviv city and Mykolayiv city. The students among the displaced were given the opportunity to continue their studies in peaceful regions of Ukraine. At the same time, certain difficulties emerged regarding university transfer: restrictions in the number of places for tuition-free education; problems with preparing documents concerning student transfer at universities in occupied territories; limited benefits for displaced students; etc. Additionally, Tyshchenko (2014) described the problem of missing documents, which prevented students from continuing their education.

Methodological assumptions of the realized research

Regardless of various economic challenges, migrants face a number of everyday problems, such as difficulties with social security benefits, search for lodging and employment, and social adaptation. The social-psychological characteristics of migrants do not sufficiently reflect all processes which they experience, however, they outline the main risk factors and the orientation of psychologists' work with migrants' readaptation (Axmedova, 2003). Readaptation is interpreted as "the process of resetting the individual into the social context and the formation of his or her compensatory social skills" (Golovin, 2007: 677). The process of readaptation of Ukrainian internally displaced persons is complicated, reflecting the unexpected tragedy in the country which led to a change in their permanent places of residence as well as lifestyle. The students who lived in eastern or southern regions of Ukraine lost their property, friends and their close ones. Others lost hope and perspectives for the future.

Psychological rehabilitation combines a set of measures aimed at restoring and correcting the disturbed functions of the psyche. Golovin (2007) separates the following principles of psychological rehabilitation: partnership, diversity

of efforts, the unity of psychosocial and biological methods of influence, and sequence. The indicated principles are based on the focused cooperation of the client and the therapist to achieve the effects of rehabilitation. Axmedova (2003) identifies the following principles of psychological rehabilitation:

The principle of orientation on personal growth and development. The critical condition of refugee students should not be seen as pathological, but as a normal reaction of individuals to abnormal circumstances of life. The crisis, upon the condition of successful resolution, is the process of personal establishment on a new level of development. Thus, readaptation work can be seen as a process of personal development.

The principle of consideration of age peculiarities. The specificity of the psychologist's work should be differentiated according to the age characteristics of children and teenagers. Therefore, psycho-physiological growth, the leading form of activity and individual's interests must be taken into consideration.

The principle of orientation towards the community. While working on the problems of children and teenagers, their social environment must be taken into account. In other words, they should be considered as parts of the situation surrounding them. Psychological therapy must be offered not only to children, but also to their parents, and even teachers. In addition, rehabilitation work should be aimed at approaching different generations, at reducing the existing distance between them, and ultimately at the integration of different generations in a united community.

The principle of multifaceted work. Any rehabilitation activity should be aimed at all levels of children's or teenagers' functioning (behavior, skills, emotions, cognitive processes, values, belief system, personal identity and self-integrity). This multifaceted and complex method of support encourages the deployment of the process of a person's full constructive changes.

The principle of prolongation and sequence of the rehabilitation process. The overcoming of a traumatic experience, the assistance in mental and physical development and personal development of children and teenagers demand long-term work (not less than a year), not one-time interventions. Taking part in rehabilitation activities during the prescribed period of one year, children and teenagers will cycle through specially selected therapeutic applications. Each successive program will deepen and enrich the learned skills, abilities and experiences adopted in the previous one.

The principle of integration with society. The rehabilitation intervention should be directed at the formation of productive members of the society. For this purpose, all measures must be aimed at the development of children's and teenager's self-esteem, dignity, and tolerance towards their environment.

The principle of unconditional positive attention. Communication with children should be based on mutual trust and respect. It is important that rehabilitation sessions create a safe situation, which encourages self-expression and the disclosure of the child. This can be achieved if the child is accepted as he or she is, without any evaluation or precondition. If the therapy is trending to the correction of destructive behavior displayed by the child, the behavior or act alone must be evaluated, not the personality or character of the child (Axmedova, 2003).

In therapy with internally displaced persons, both individual and group forms of work can be applied. Psychocorrection groups are the most important methods of psychological rehabilitation at early stages of the crisis while the psychological trauma sustained is still acute and people are still under the influence of stress factors. Usually, the most vulnerable persons with various psychological and psychosomatic problems participate in these group sessions. Group methods of psychosocial rehabilitation are aimed at:

- reacting to injuries and the inclusion of mechanisms for stress management;
- reduction of stress disorders (such as anxiety, intrusive memories, insomnia, nightmares, irritability, depression);
- correction of psychosomatic disorders;
- development of skills to overcome mental crises.

In group sessions, depending on the tasks, psychotherapists use a whole range of psychotherapeutic methods such as group storytelling with further study of trauma, relaxation techniques, Gestalt-therapy, behavior therapy, psychodrama, cognitive therapy, and psychodynamic approach. Group storytelling with further study of trauma is applied to diagnose anxiety, traumatic experience and expectations. Relaxation techniques are effective in reducing tension. Gestalt-therapy involves work with a person's current anxieties and fears. Behavior therapy is a technique for the formation of constructive behavior. Psychodrama is a method of re-playing traumatic events and negative life situations, which a psychologist helps to perceive and revalue in a group context. Cognitive therapy is very important in the recognition of a person's negative thoughts about

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traumatic experiences, and their transformation into positive perceptions. The psychodynamic approach is a basic method of diagnosing emotions, thoughts, mental problems and working towards a healthy psychological state. The need for carrying out such rehabilitation work disappears when the displaced students acquire the skills of overcoming the crisis and form self-help and mutual aid groups. The internally displaced persons gradually become self-reliant and take responsibility for their own destiny, which motivates migrants to continue their studies.

The practice of art therapy is widely applied in working with internally displaced persons, which is also the case in Ukraine. As Voznesens'ka (2015) writes: "Art therapy helps immigrants to cope with depression, get rid of negative emotions, to move from destructive, devastating behavior to constructive and creative attitudes" (Voznesens'ka, 2015: 4). The author presented the following benefits of art therapy in working with internal migrants: there are no limitations to its application, it provides an opportunity for nonverbal communication, and opens the desire for self-expression and creativity.

We apply the method of active social and psychological study for the purpose of rehabilitation of displaced students, which helps develop their self-awareness. The application of the method of Active Social and Psychological Education (ASPE) is part of the educational process employed by the psychological faculty at the Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy. Internally displaced students of other courses of study can also receive psychological help thanks to the work of the psychological services of this University. The provision of psychological assistance to displaced students helps to restore balance to their internal state and harmonize their psyche. The process of adaptation to studying at a higher education institution is becoming more effective thanks to the restoration of students' psychological health. This enables the students to focus to a greater extent on the learning process and to avoid re-experiencing traumatic events.

The method of Active Social and Psychological Education (ASPE), developed in 1978 by professor Tamara S. Yatsenko, a Member of the Academy of psychological sciences of Ukraine, is one of the methods used to gain insight into the unconscious mechanisms of the psyche. The process of psychocorrection in ASPE groups is built on the activation of such innate psychological mechanisms. Education is carried out through a mediate method of self-cognition,

without imposing theoretical knowledge on the individual, which could be incomprehensible without its practical presentation. Activities in the group of active social and psychological education are based on the principles of inter-personal interaction, among others: unprejudiced judgment, voluntary partici-pation, acceptance of others, confidentiality, empathy (Yatsenko, 2006).

The process of restoring psychological balance allows a person to achieve full recovery through psychocorrection work in the group of active social and psy-chological education. Yatsenko's psychodynamic approach is oriented towards providing insight into the subconscious mind through its indirect, symbolic representation in pictures. Painting, nonverbal exercises, role-playing, psycho-drama, work with subject models, dialogue – these are the methods of practical psychology which allow for the recognition of the unconscious motives of the individual's behavior based on his/her conscious goals and expectations.

The basis of our empirical research is group psychocorrection work. The group should include 10–12 people of a range of ages and both genders. Group sessions take place in a specially equipped room, in which all participants, along with the psychologist, sit in a circle. Treatment duration is 12 days, 8 hours daily. At the beginning of the group session the participants are allowed to become familiar with each other by taking part in exercises which build mutual trust and group cohesion. This is followed by deep psychic work which ends with the participants providing mutual feedback.

Statement of the problem

Internally displaced students and scientists suffer from insecurity, diffidence, anxiety and nightmares. War impacts civilians' mental health. Children who are eyewitness to military operations become irritable, restless, depressed, they lose interest in play and social intercourse (Yule, Dyregrov, Raundalen& Smith, 2013), display negative behavior (Cohen, 2015), and often relive trau-matic experiences through repetitive play (Tarabrina, 2001). Adults exhibit dis-trust, irritability, social stigma, the fear of being kidnapped, nonobservance of law and order, and increased vigilance. They suffer infringements of personal security (military attacks, intimidation), nightmares, incertitude of future life, psychological pressure, and lack of information. Additionally, they experience

negative thoughts and dispositions; slow down or speed up their reactions to external stimulus (Pidlisetska, 2014). They are forced to adapt to a new culture in other regions of their country, endure disappointment, loss, and face cultural shock (Voznesenska, 2015). As Shaferyuk writes: "The settlers who move to new territories (especially in Ukraine, where the East and the West have very different cultural traditions and customs), note "micro-cultural shock" when they enter the new microenvironment and a rejection reaction to "strangers" among the local population comes to light" (Shaferyuk, 2014: 147).

Internally displaced persons have specific, socio-psychological features. Women who had to flee with their children and elderly relatives have experienced a significant burden of personal responsibility for families. Zagarnicz'ka investigated the phenomenon of childhood as exposed to military conflict. She describes the problems of children's social development during military conflict. The author distinguishes the following effects of hostilities on children's growth: danger to a child's life and health; increased child poverty; destruction of familiar lifestyle; problems with access to education; being raised in broken families; the pressure of propaganda; value crisis; and psychological traumas. Displaced people are afraid to renounce their self-identity, which complicates their adaptation to the new conditions of life and assimilation into their new community. Pilhanchuk (2015) describes the spheres of life which influence the formation of identity: choosing a profession, accepting and revaluing one's religious and moral beliefs, political position, social roles, integral perception of one's life and behavior, self-perception and self-determination. As a result of the ongoing social crisis, Ukrainian students have lost the prospect for professional development, which affects their self-identity and self-acceptance.

Internal migrants experience solitude and isolation in this situation; they feel passive, trapped in victimhood, experience depression and subordination. In Kisarchuk's words: "the temporarily moved individuals feel states of despondence, irritation, "emotional stupor", and frequent depressive episodes. As to changes in the psyche, there is a worsening of memory and concentration of attention, inadvertence, forgetfulness, a change of life principles and plans for the future" (Kisarchuk, et al., 2015: 44).

The occupation of certain regions of Ukraine led to a situation in which Ukrainians had to solve such dilemmas as whether to accept the burdensome standards of activity and laws imposed by occupiers, or abandon the old traditions in

favor of new rules and regulations in peaceful areas of the state. This caused conflicts among the displaced persons, members of their families, and friends. Therefore, most displaced persons have experienced the loss of family support as a result of conflicting values, aspirations and political convictions.

The majority of Ukrainian teens and young men witness violence, which causes psychological trauma. The consequence of psychological trauma is inhibited adaptation. Passivity, apathy and increased aggression are considered to be the manifestations of disadaptation. The students who were forcedly displaced from the occupied territories of Ukraine have developed new character traits and attitudes, such as low self-esteem, unwillingness to accept new social roles, avoidance of current events, and increased anxiety. Forced migrants in Ukraine are losing a sense of stability and security, which leads to violations of interpersonal relationships.

One of the causes of social disadaptation of displaced students is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Among the traumatic events that may trigger PTSD are those which threaten human life or may cause serious bodily injury; they are related to witnessing appalling images of death and injury of others, to violent or sudden death of a loved one, and other stress factors. Scientists describe two effective adaptation strategies to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder: a purposeful return to traumatic memories for their psychological analysis, and a study of personality and awareness by the subject to discover the true causes of traumatic events from the point of view of an ordinary person (Pischelko & Sochy'vko, 2003). The displaced students witnessed sudden deaths of civilians, which caused acute stress. They were unable to receive initial psychological assistance to level the shock. Therefore, in most cities of Ukraine, psychologists organized self-help groups. In these groups, the internally displaced persons discussed similar psychological difficulties. As indicated above, exposure to non-internally displaced persons is of great importance for the displaced in the process of their reintegration; the ability of both groups to express their attitudes towards each other allows mutual understanding.

The process of integrating the displaced students into social groups creates certain difficulties in their communicative interactions. There is often a language barrier in the learning process – students from the central regions of Ukraine study in Ukrainian language, while students from the East of Ukraine speak mainly Russian. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that all students

are the citizens of one state, but they defend opposing political and personal beliefs. If a person's views differ from the accepted positions in a group, the phenomenon of "bullying" – physical, psychological or economic abuse of another child will take a place (Bochkor & Dubrovs'ka & Zales'ka, 2014). We are convinced that the above-mentioned difficulties may be overcome during rehabilitation work with both the internally displaced students and the remaining students at the university.
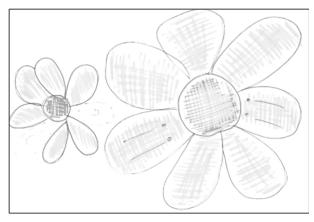
Research results

The displaced students from Lugansk region were transferred to the Faculty of Psychology at the Bohdan Kkmelnytsky Cherkasy National University. They commenced their study immediately with all our students in educational groups. Since in the process of professional training, future psychologists are taught the skill of self-perception and self-conception, we use the practice of group psychocorrection as an obligatory part of their professional education.
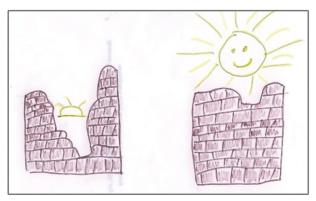
During the psychocorrection studies, displaced students join a group of other students who are studying at the university on a regular basis. This contributes to the leveling of interpersonal conflicts, since every participant develops a tolerant attitude, and learns to recognize each person's individuality. In psychocorrection groups, the recognition of the participant's own values is enabled through the self-actualization of self-knowledge values. This is achieved through the method of active social and psychological education. The processes of positive disintegration and secondary integration are characteristic for groups which follow the program of active social and psychological education. Positive integration is a testament to the overcoming of students' psychological trauma and the harmonization of their psyche. As a result of the psychocorrection practice, the index of displaced students' anxiety was reduced and memories about the military operations faded.

The effectiveness of the process of psychocorrection through active social and psychological education in the context of leveling the destructive effects of trauma are confirmed in the results of contemporary scientists' research projects and self-reports of participants, conducted and written after the completion of psychocorrection studies. These participant self-reports are in the form

of questionnaires which reveal their experiences and introspection. As part of the self-report, the participants were asked to answer the following question: "How did studying in the group of active social and psychological education affect your personal development?" The students described their feelings and expressed them by drawing pictures. Below are sample drawings prepared by students during their activities in the psychocorrection group on the subject: "I'm before classes. I'm after group session" (pictures 1–4).
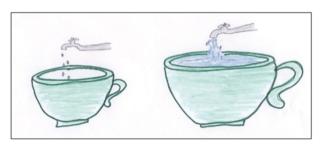

Pic. 1. "I'm before classes. I'm after group session"
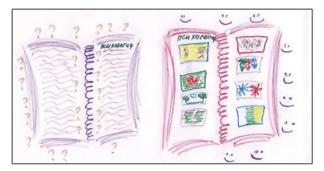

Pic. 2. "I'm before classes. I'm after group session"

A psychologist has to interpret the drawings of each person in the group. This is usually done by analyzing the participant's picture and asking her or him about its symbols. Sample symbols are presented in pictures 1–4, showing the

Pic. 3. "I'm before classes. I'm after group session"

Pic. 4. "I'm before classes. I'm after group session"

dynamics of an individual's transformation during the psychocorrective process. The participants described their own positive dynamics symbolized by representations such as more beautiful flowers in the pictures (pic. 1), brighter sunshine (pic. 2), a full cup of water (pic. 3), a richer book (pic. 4). They felt progress in their self-perception and the perception of other members of the group of active social and psychological education. As opposed to the positive development upon the completion of the session, at admission they reported a sense of inconsistency, inner emptiness, and the need for a search for answers to vitally important issues.

The participants' self-reports were analyzed in the active social and psychological educational group. They showed a positive effect on individuals, as there were improvements in self-perception, a broader awareness of their own feelings and desires, acceptance and understanding of other people's behavior, strengthened social positions, while their prospects for the future and the ability to rethink one's life experience expanded. Additionally, students experienced an increased level of self-perception, a desire for self-improvement, and

knowledge of their own problems based on the examples of other group members. As a result, the psychocorrection sessions formed tolerance towards other people ("I became more respectful and kinder to people"), aided the leveling of aggression ("I became less aggressive"), understanding of one's contribution to conflict situations and one's abilities to level and admit responsibility for conflicts ("I can see where I was wrong, I'm trying to correct my mistakes. Now as for me, it is much easier to admonish the conflict than to deal with it, when it has gained ground"). Further, balance ("I became wiser and well-balanced") as well as the ability to restrain one's emotions improved ("I learned to hold back and not to be cruel"), while indicators of inner peace ("I gained inner peace") and the attitude to parents and the people around them became optimized ("Relationships with family and friends have changed").

The use of images in psychocorrection practice is associated with the development of the method of art therapy in psychology. The participants of the group of active social and psychological education do not need to be skilled painters, as the main purpose of drawing is to express their own feelings and emotions. The process of using colours and free drawing helps to defuse mental stress, which is an important step towards the rehabilitation of individuals in their new conditions of life. In active social and psychological training groups, we propose group members to select the desired theme of their pictures or alternatively to invent it at the end of their painting. This method makes it possible to direct the dialogue between a psychologist and a participant towards developing a person's sense of introspection.

We distinguished several indexes of the students' changes. These are: openness to new experiences; unbiased comments; high level of self-control; remaining faithful to one's beliefs; ability to form relationships; liberation from stereotypical perceptions; skills of self-therapy; improvement in communication; understanding of cognitive prerequisites of various emotional states; taking into account one's contribution to misunderstandings with other people; awareness of stereotypically destructive tendencies in behavior which are not productive for communication; the ability to communicate adequately; the ability to assess the situation; the ability to predict tendencies in their development and to accept psychological responsibility for one's behavior; a sense of psychological security; and a retrospective analysis of the history of one's life and past experiences.

Conclusions

The process of reintegration of internally displaced persons consists in ensuring their social and psychological security. Psychological assistance is given to create conditions for the understanding of the negative impact of their own traumatic experiences connected with military operations. Trauma is the driving force in the formation of somatic disorders, internal conflicts and suffering, which impair relationships with other people. Students who have experienced trauma, have a limited awareness of their potential resulting from fears and barriers to personal growth. Displaced persons, who suffer emotional distress, have a distorted perception of the actual situation, revalued or undervalued opportunities, experience increased anxiety and destructive emotional states. Psychological support includes working with these students on recognizing their psychological trauma. The next step is to develop an adequate perception of social and psychological conditions in which the displaced persons currently live, and to facilitate their self-realization. Forced migrants are burdened by the reluctance to accept the rules of another region. This complicates the process of students' adaptation, and leads to their subsequent need for rehabilitation. The purpose of psychological support is to form the students' self-assuredness and future prospects.

We believe that the process of readaptation of refugee students can be improved on the condition that psychocorrective practice within educational programs is implemented in higher education institutions. Group psychological sessions are aimed at introducing the displaced students to the present learning environment, leveling their personal difficulties and complexes. We see prospects for further research on the improvement of methodological tools in psychocorrection groups for the rehabilitation of Ukrainian citizens who are internally displaced persons.

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