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EDITORIAL

This issue of Sociological Review commemorates the 25th anniversary of the adoption by the UN General Assembly of The Convention on the Rights of the Child on November 20, 1989. It should be recalled that the beginnings of children's studies and the sociology of childhood coincided in time with the introduction of this treaty, which established international standards for children's protection and development. The Convention aims at safeguarding the youngest society members from different forms of abuse, exploitation and violence, as well as at promoting their rights to a decent standard of living and to broad social participation. The authors of the articles presented herein, representing the current sociological attitude towards children and youth, follow these assumptions.

The articles thus mirror some important attributes of contemporary children's studies – its cognitive multidimensionality, differentiated quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the shift from "research *on* children" to "research *with* children", scholars' interest in the results of comparative studies (especially the results of natural sciences), and the concern about the practical implementation of research outcomes. The main topics tackled in this collection of texts are children's poverty and social inequalities rooted in the first phase of their life cycle, suffering and various risks experienced by children and teenagers, framed in both the national and international contexts, as well as children's quality of life, youngsters' well-being, youth participation, civic engagement and the new concept of investing in children. Children, considered as equal social actors and citizens – although still most vulnerable to abuse, discrimination and social exclusion – are presented in the framework of their complicated networks of relationships with peers, adults, collectivities and societies, the welfare state, social policy institutions and other organizations, with the notion to important factors decisive for their present life and their future.

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"INVESTING IN CHILDREN": A DOMINANT DISCOURSE ON CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN IN 21ST CENTURY

Abstract

Looking at the last 30 years, one can observes the radical change in the academic and political discourse concerning childhood and children. The concept of "investing in children" has become dominant in the academic discourse and political programme of at least the European Union. Investing in children is located at the core of the social investment strategy. In this article, the social investment paradigm is characterised, and two types of arguments for investing in disadvantaged children are presented. J. Heckman's explanations concerning the stage of a child's life cycle in which to invest, and how, are presented. Practical implementation of the Early Child Education and Care in the European countries is outlined.

Key words: investing in children, the social investment state, Early Child Education and Care

INTRODUCTION

Approaches to childhood and children change over time and cultures, according to the production mode and cultural constitution dominating in society. Society's functioning provides incentives to exclude childhood and children, or include them in society as full-fledged citizens and influence the discourse on their present and future significance and impact on society.

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In looking back over the last thirty years, one can observe a radical change in the academic and political discourse about childhood and children. The concept of "investing in children" came to replace that which was in force in industrialised countries, offered by the developmental psychology. Childhood was then considered a universal phase in a human being's development, immune to the environment in which children live. Developmental psychology, as created by Piaget and his followers, perceived children as objects of adult's activities, whose primary characteristics were nonage, immaturity and the need for protection. Based on the critique of this perspective, childhood studies arose in the 1990s as a modern sociological approach. Jens Qvertrup, one of the founders of childhood studies, claimed that childhood is socially constructed and relational in nature. He explained that: *The notion of childhood does not have the individual child in mind but rather the legal, spatial, temporal and institutional arrangements available for children in a given society* (Qvertrup 2007: 13). According to Leena Alanen (2001), another prominent representative of childhood studies, generational relations, i.e. between childhood and adulthood, are like those between social classes and gender.

Currently childhood studies encompass three streams in sociological studies on children and childhood [van Krieken, Buehler-Niederberger, 2009:188]:

1. The structural approach, also referred to as the generational approach, concerns childhood and adulthood as segments of macro-structure, constituted by the inequality between them;
2. The historical and social constructivist approaches analyse discourses about and actions toward children;
3. The ethnographic approach focuses on interactions and communication in different groups of children.

The sociological approach to childhood and children paved the way for perceiving children as competent and capable agents impacting on their environment. It also contributed to conceiving children not only as adults-in-the-making but as persons living "here and now", with specific needs and rights. The notion of "children well-being" as a multidimensional concept became widespread, attracting not only sociologists but also scholars in economics. Approaching childhood as a underprivileged macrostructural segment also called for political engagement. For decades, priorities in social welfare programmes did not explicitly cover children. The central figure was that of a man serving as a breadwinner, whereas women and kids were "privatised" as belonging to the realm of the family. Welfare programmes protected male-workers against

income losses, in case of unemployment, illness, injury, or old age, to enable him to satisfy the primary needs also of his family members. Children were neither considered a subject nor a target of social policy. While this does not mean that the policy did not impact on children's well-being, nonetheless in no way were children the primary focus of social policy. Recent years seem to have brought about a process of change, at least in the academic discourse embedded primarily in welfare state studies as well as in international political declarations.

'INVESTING IN CHILDREN' IN THE CENTRE OF THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT PARADIGM

The reason for this change lies in the structural and cultural changes in developed countries, which produce "new social risks". Combating them requires a redefinition of the maintainers of society's development and, accordingly, a new approach to welfare programmes. Children and childhood have been placed in the centre of the new welfare paradigm. New social risks are defined as a gap in access to work that pays and hence to high-quality services (Jenson, Saint-Martin 2006: 430). The underlying causes are the transition to a "knowledge-based economy", demographical factors, and shifts in culture.

The knowledge-based economy's mode of production requires highly educated skilled workers. Former male industrial workers did not meet such a criterion and many of them were transformed into long-term unemployed, supported by different benefits. They thus lost their attractiveness as husbands and fathers for women, who in growing numbers were entering the labour market. Prolonged education and the employment of females, combined with efficient control over reproduction, contributed to delayed and lower fertility. At the same time, the increasing number of divorces increased the number of single-parent households, with many of them being provided with benefits. Overall, this made that marriage occured less necessary for women and children to survive and less protective against income losses. Though the public at large has accepted single-parent families and single women as mothers, there is no doubt that changes in the family structure impose a burden on the state budget. Moreover, in developed economies there is a tendency for children to decline in number. This makes policy-makers worry about the functioning of pension schemes in the future, as at the same time the share of the elderly population steadily increases.

These structural changes undermined each of three pillars of the socio-economic welfare system: the market, the family, and the state, making the protection of individuals and families from being left behind ever more

problematic. Therefore, the model of the existing welfare regime required re-definition and needed to be re-structured, not least because of the growing costs it generated. The neoliberal approach to the state intervention, regarding it as "spoiling" the regulative forces of the market, also played a part in the attempts to reconstruct the welfare state.

New ideas developed in the course of the 1990s. Some of them aimed at making anti-poverty measures more cost-effective, and some at increasing social integration *via* employment. The concept of social investment, invented in academia, was transferred into flagship political programmes adopted by international bodies, like the European Union.

One of the precursors of the idea that public spending aimed at empowering the poor should be treated as a social investment is Micheal Sherraden (1991). He challenged the anti-poverty strategy based on income-support as ineffective and proposed a new strategy called Asset-Building. This strategy is based on a conviction that assets have a positive impact on both the poor and the society as a whole. According to the author assets: improve household stability; create an orientation toward the future; promote the development of human capital and other assets; enable focus and specialisation; provide a foundation for risk-taking; increase personal efficacy; increase social influence and political participation; and increase the welfare of offspring (p. 166). To enable poor families to accumulate assets he proposed Individual Development Accounts based on matched savings of the family and public institution (central government).

In Europe, Anthony Giddens (1998) propagated the concept of "the social investment state", which laid the foundation for the Labour Party programme with its well-known slogan "Children first"[1]. He proposed a so-called "Third way" for developed countries to maintain economic growth and competitiveness under conditions of globalisation. According to him, the role of the state should be converted from 'protective" and 'corrective" to promoting and supporting 'prevention", "activation" and "productivity". The state should act as an entrepreneur, aiming at receiving the highest gains from public spending. Hence

[1] The Labour Party entirely reconstructed the social policy model in the United Kingdom towards a preventive one. The policy was targeted primarily at children, families, and communities. It constituted a comprehensive social welfare system based on the following priorities: 1) more financial support for (deserving) low-income families; 2) welfare to work, childcare and family-friendly employment policies; 3) investment in Sure Start programmes; 4) more support for first-time mothers; 4) investment in parent education; 5) policies aimed at strengthening marriage and promoting child welfare in divorce proceedings; and 6) initiatives to address domestic violence, school truancy, teenage pregnancy and youth offences (Home Office, 1998).

it should invest in those social groups and activities that promised the highest pay-off. Therefore human capital development should be a focus of government interest, and children should be considered the first group in which to invest. The responsibility for welfare has to be shared between individuals and the state, and therefore there are "no rights without responsibilities". Social benefits should be conditioned on the activities undertaken to obtain work by individuals. The provision of high-quality services should improve the skills needed in the labour market and also the academic achievements of children growing up in low-income families. In order to deliver social services, private-public partnerships need to be constructed. According to the author, making economic, employment and social policies fit together would contribute to achieving the goal of building a competitive and the cohesive knowledge economy.

The further elaboration of the concept and practice of the social investment state took place during the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in 2000 and the Belgian Presidency in 2002. The governments of both the above-mentioned countries commissioned reputable academics to elaborate reports on both the model and the architecture of a new welfare state. The former, written by Ferrera, Hemerijk, Rhodes (2000), concerned the future of welfare state. The second report, authored by Gosta Esping-Andersen with Gallie, Hemerijck and Myles, proposed an answer to the question what the architecture of the new welfare state should look like. The report by Gosta Esping-Andersen and colleagues, published in 2002, became the most influential publication on the social investment paradigm. Anton Hemerijck defines that paradigm as: *a new welfare repertoire based on consistent normative principles, coherent causal understanding, (re-)distributive concerns and institutional practices – a repertoire that is comparable in its generalities to that of the male-breadwinner Keynesian welfare state of the post-war decades* (2006: 1).

Gosta Esping-Andersen (2002) formulated an explicit reference to childhood as a central figure in the social investment state. He claimed that in order to increase their productivity, European societies would have to make better use of the employment potential of women. This requires the "de-familization" of women and children as the primary factor for society to develop. The traditional form of child care provided by mothers hampers their activity on the labour market. Therefore the institution of child care services, financed jointly by the family and the state, would enable women to obtain gainful employment. Simultaneously, children born in low-income families would have a better start, and inter-generationally transmitted inequalities would be prevented. Early child education and care (ECEC) institutions would help disadvantaged children to obtain the

skills enabling them to break the vicious circle of poverty and avoid becoming poor adults. The focus on child care and education would reward society in two ways: by increased productivity and by combatting inequality and preventing it from continuing in the next generation.

Esping-Andersen's approach is based on the conviction that childhood impacts on achievements in later stages of the life-cycle.

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AS A CAUSE FOR POOR ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT

Studies documenting the critical role played by poverty during childhood were conducted primarily in the USA. These studies demonstrated that children living in poverty have a poorer vocabulary upon their arrival at the kindergarten steps. They attain less academically and – as adults – they remain at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder (Shonkoff, Philips (ed.), 2000; Yaqub 2002; Chase-Lansdale, Kiernan, Friedman (ed.), 2004; Lareau 2011). Nonetheless, at the start of this century the question of why poor children have inferior academic achievements remained without a definitive answer.

The progress in neuroscience, molecular biology, research into the genotype as well as studies of behaviour have brought us closer to answering the question. The differences in the process of development of a child's brain resulting from growing up in poverty might be the reason for the low academic achievements of poor children.

Comparative studies of the brain structure and functioning of children from poor and non-poor families provided evidence that growing up in poverty damages neuronal connections in the prefrontal cortex, the operation of which plays a decisive role in the cognitive potential of an individual. The research also pointed to the significant lack of nerve connections that affect communication (linguistic) and social abilities. Farah, Noble and Hurt (2009) stated that childhood in poverty leads to limitations in the functioning of the brain which are similar to the damage caused by a cerebral haemorrhage. It impacts on language skills and memory, which subsequently affects academic achievements. Therefore, it is a matter of crucial importance to provide timely incentives that stimulate the development of the brain. In this context, attention is paid to the environment in which a child is raised. Adverse social and physical conditions can generate toxic stress in children, which destroys parts of the brain responsible for cognitive processes,

such as attention span, memory and language competencies. This contributes to lower educational attainments (Evans, Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov 2011).

As Jack P. Shonkoff (2011: 10) states: *Today, there are no doubts that a child's development is a result of mutual interaction between 'nature' and 'environment' and that:*

- *genes provide an initial plan for brain architecture,*
- *the environment affects the neuronal connections that will be created,*
- *mutual interactions between genetic predispositions and early experiences resulting from the environment affect whether the basis for learning, behaviours and physical health are weak or strong.*

Researchers have underlined that growing up in poverty need not be a life sentence (Conti, Heckman 2014). Early intervention may stimulate brain development. Whether to invest in disadvantaged children is no longer subject to question. However, there are different arguments over why and how to do it.

APPROACHES TO INVESTING IN CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

Two types of arguments are applied in favour of the thesis about the need to invest in children:

- the pro-natal one, which points to the 'utility' of children as prospective future employees;
- the financial one, which points to the losses generated by society as a result of growing up in poverty and the economic advantages of minimization of losses *via* appropriately addressed support.

In developed countries, children have lost their utility as providers to their elderly parents. However, as future employees they are indispensable to ensuring the solvency of the pay as you go (PAY) pension systems. In this respect, they constitute a quasi-public good since those who are no longer working will benefit from the productive activity of children when they become adults. Nancy Folbre N. (2008), the representative of feministic economics, represents this stance. She indicates that increasing the inclination of the state to spend money on children requires a shift in the approach towards households. In her opinion, it is imperative to move away from treating a household as a unit of consumption and towards the perception of it as a producer of human capital. When a household is perceived as a unit of consumption, a child is valued as a durable consumer good, in the sense that adults may choose to either have a baby or to obtain other durable consumer goods. Under this approach, parents are ascribed the

overall financial responsibility for children. However, should a household be conceptualised as a unit of manufacturing and retaining human capital, the benefits coming from children become indisputable for the entire economy. Therefore, the state should contribute to the cost of rearing them. According to this argument, investing in children, by providing them with the best possible conditions for their development, means promoting prosperity in the future both for the children themselves and for the whole society.

In the second type of argumentation, it is stressed that child poverty generates losses for society. Attempts to calculate the total costs resulting from child poverty have been undertaken only recently. So far, such estimates are available for just two countries and one Canadian province. Although the calculations make a huge impression, one should realise that their findings are dependent, as pointed out by Griggs and Walker (2008), on the theoretical assumptions, accessible data, and applied variables. For this reason they should be treated with caution as a rough illustration rather than an established and indisputable fact.

These estimates usually take into account the following types of costs:

1. Costs of corrective actions, including health care, the fight against criminality, and the provision of social security benefits.
2. Costs related to intergenerational transmission of poverty, since children raised in poverty 'inherit' difficulties and deficits that ensure their parents remain destitute.
3. Lost opportunity costs borne by society because of the failure to use the productive potential of those who are poor.

For the US, losses resulting from the fact that a part of the population is growing up in poverty are deemed to equal at least 500 billion dollars annually, which is the equivalent of 4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. In Great Britain, the costs are estimated as at least 25 billion pounds sterling annually, which translates to 2% of the country's GDP (Holzer, Schanzenbach, Duncan, Ludwig 2007). Annual losses related to the existence of poverty in the province of Ontario in Canada are estimated to be 5.5% – 6.5% of the GDP of this province (Lauri 2008: 4).

In Great Britain, Allen and Smith (2008: 34) estimated individual annual costs resulting from poverty and dysfunction in the following way:

- *Violence costs the country at least £20 billion*
  – Violence towards NHS staff is estimated at £69m
- *Children in care cost £2 billion;*

– *Child abuse: at least £1 billion (mostly dealing with the consequences, not prevention)*

• *A child with a severe conduct disorder costs £70,000 (1995 estimate)*
– *with indirect costs seven times that*
– *parents' training amounts to approximately £600 per child*

• *Social Security benefits (including tax credits) increased from £35.5 billion to £142.7 billion in the 12 years up to 2005/06".*

Hence the authors conclude that eliminating child poverty would greatly contribute to decreasing public spending in the future.

WHEN TO INVEST IN CHILDREN, AND WHY THEN?

Analyses (by, *inter alia*, Cuna, Heckman, Schennach 2010; Conti, Heckman 2012), supervised by James Heckman, the 2000 Noble laureate in economics, generated strong arguments in favour of investing in children from socially and economically disadvantaged milieus. At the same time, they documented when such intervention is the most cost-effective. These studies support the common belief as regards the overwhelming importance of early childhood. Heckman and his co-workers based their analysis on the latest achievements of developmental science, considering the development of skills as the principal mechanism for success in society.

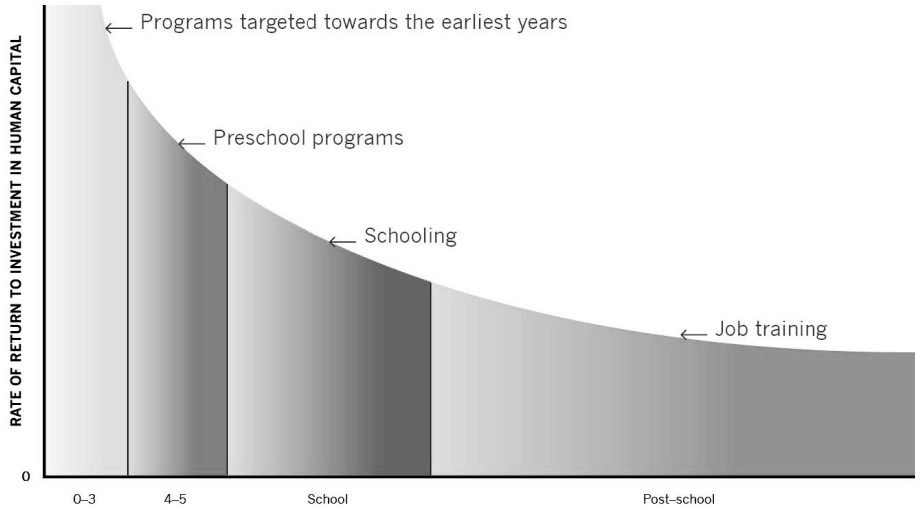
Heckman and Mosso (2014: 4) assumed that:

• there are critical[2] and sensitive[3] periods in childhood from the point of view of the formation of skills,
• success in life depends on different skills and not only on cognitive abilities,
• investments can assume various forms, including time,
• adult-child relationships are interactive systems,
• attachment is one of the major determinants of childhood learning,
• parents are not always competent in terms of fostering a child's potential and efficient parenthood.

The research team headed by Heckman indicated that investment in children throughout different phases of childhood brought about diverse effects. The highest rate of return was achieved by investing in small children (up to 3 years).

[2] A critical period is the period when, and only when, investments are efficient.
[3] A sensitive period is the period when effects of investments are especially significant.

FIGURE 1. Returns per Dollar Invested, by Stage of Life Cycle



Source: Conti G., Heckman J. (2012: 43)

The most rapid development of the brain takes place during early Childhood. The skills acquired at this stage beget other skills, and learning begets learning. Thus, if an inability to acquire capabilities arises in early childhood, it is probable that such an individual will have similar problems in adulthood too. A poor environment, i.e. one which does not offer cognitive and non-cognitive stimuli to a child, constitutes a significant factor in future failures in various dimensions of adult life. A key to success in life is social competencies, which influence success both directly and indirectly *via* increasing cognitive competencies.

Heckman (2006: 3–4) argues for investing in children in the following way:

- Life-cycle skill formation is a dynamic process where early inputs greatly affect the productivity of later inputs in the life cycle of children. Skills beget skills. Early failure begets later failure.
- Apart from cognitive abilities, an individual also possesses non-cognitive skills (character skills).
- Character skills are also important for success in life.
- Motivation, perseverance and the ability to maintain attention are important *per* se, and affect scores on achievement tests.
- The early family environment is the primary predictor of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills.

- Early intervention can influence both cognitive and non-cognitive skills.
- Early interventions promote schooling, reduce crime, improve workforce productivity, and reduce teenage pregnancy.
- These interventions in early childhood have high benefit-cost ratios and rates of return.
- Early interventions targeted toward disadvantaged children have much higher returns than later interventions, such as e.g. reduced pupil-teacher ratios, public job training, ex-convict rehabilitation programmes, tuition subsidies for students from disadvantaged environments, or expenditures on police.

Heckman and Kautz (2013) argue that success in life is influenced by various skills and that cognitive and character competencies result from investment in subsequent stages of the life cycle:

> *Skills at birth depend on prenatal investments and inherited traits. Skill formation at later ages depends on the stock of skills acquired earlier as well as prior investments. This concept is called self-productivity (...)* (p. 31) *Investments (parenting, environment, and schools) also affect skills. The efficacy of investment is moderated by the stock of skills at any age* (pp. 31–32).

According to the authors, in the process of skills formation static and dynamic complementarity occurs. The former means that the benefits from investments depend on the current level of skills of an individual; and the latter –that current investments increase future competencies which, in turn, increase the return on future investment. This chain of interdependencies enhances the benefits from early investments since it contributes to making future investments more productive. Therefore, as demonstrated by Cuhna, Heckman and Schennach (2010), investment in the most neglected small children is economically effective since it increases returns on investment. Although interventions at later stages of childhood can also generate beneficial results, it is more expensive to reach the same effects than by way of investing in small children. However, if a society intervenes too late and individuals have too low skill levels, investments at a later age may not be cost-effective. This is why it is in the interest of both society and individuals to support the development of small children by setting up programmes targeted at early childhood. Therefore, according to the authors, social policy should be re-oriented –from programmes addressed to adults to those targeted at children. What's more, instead of programmes aimed at increasing the cognitive skills of pupils they should support the parents of small children and kids themselves *via* programmes that develop "soft" skills. These programmes

should be offered on a universal basis to avoid stigmatisation, while participation fees paid by parents should depend on their income. These programmes should be evaluated based on scientific methods (Heckman, 2009).

ECEC IN PRACTICE

The conviction that early childhood impacts on success or failure at later stages of life is not new. However, the work of economists has produced "hard" evidence that investing in children in general, and in particular on those living in adverse conditions, is cost-effective and profitable for the society as a whole in the future. They documented that: 1) childhood and children are key to any investment strategy because today's children are tomorrow's future taxpayers; 2) inequalities in childhood contribute to the disproportionate accumulation of human capital; and 3) this results in unequal opportunities in the labour market (Van Lankcer, 2013: 6).

Policymakers, at both the national and international levels, have applauded the concept of social investment and claim to focus on the prevention of social risks *via* children-centred and activation policies (increased employability). They have converted the concept into political programmes. In 1998, the Government of the United Kingdom launched area-based Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) for children under five, realised in localities with high child poverty rates[4]. The objective of the SSLP was to improve the life chances for the most disadvantaged children to enable them escape poverty and obtain social inclusion when they reach adulthood. Improving the developmental trajectories of children was seen as a measure to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty. After a series of evaluations of SSLPs, in 2006 Children's Centres (CCs) replaced them to cover the whole of England and become mainstream services. In the 30 per cent of areas constituting the most disadvantaged areas, CCs were obliged to provide ECEC services, which was not usual for SSLPs. Local authorities instead of the central government took over the supervision of CCs.

[4] In selected areas, Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) were implemented covering all children living there to avoid stigma. They were financed directly by the government and until 2006 were independent of local authorities. Each programme was run by a board composed of health, education and social services agencies, private and non-governmental organisations, and parents (Glass,1999). Each SSLP has to provide: "(1) outreach and home visiting; (2) support for families and parents; (3) support for good quality play, learning and childcare experiences for children; (4) primary and community health care and advice about child health and development and family health; and (5) support for people with special needs, but without specific guidance as to how." (Melhuish, Belsky, Barnes, 2010: 1).

Despite generous financing of the programme, the Government run by the Labour Party failed to achieve its primary objective – to reduce child poverty by half by 2010. Poverty rates declined sinking up 2007, then went up during the financial crisis. The evaluation of results (when the Sure Start children were seven) concluded that SSLPs had a beneficial impact on family functioning and maternal well-being, but that there was no impact on child outcomes. (Melhuish, Belsky, Leyland 2010). The authors assumed that this might result from the fact that universal free early education for all children was introduced in England in the meantime. It might also result from the fact that Sure Start children made developmental progress at the age of three, which was documented in earlier reports. In another place the authors concluded: *The results are modest but suggest that the value of Sure Start programmes is improving.* (Melhuish, Belsky, Barnes, 2009:160) The disappointing results of SSLPs raised the question whether, in an unequal society, services are a sufficient measure for equalising opportunities for children. Therefore, levelling social inequality is said to be a prerequisite for improving children's well-being and developmental opportunities.(Rowlands 2010)

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government established in May 2010 pulled back on social investment in children and families, and cut public spending. Nonetheless it maintains early intervention on the agenda. To win the 2015 election, the Conservative Party promised to introduce free full-time (30 hours per week) access to ECEC for the children of working parents, as compared with 25 hours per week as required by Labour Party. However, the ruling Coalition decided that children's services have to be commissioned, provided, and delivered by voluntary organisations and the private sector.

Investing in children, with ECEC as one of its most important measures, is on the agenda of the European Union. During the EU Sumit in 2002, the so-called 'Barcelona objectives' and achievement indicators were agreed upon[5]. By 2010 Member States were to establish ECEC places for 33 percent of three-year-olds and younger, and for 90 per cent of pre-school children. However, the Barcelona targets did not go beyond considering children as "dependents", and applied the "childcare" concept rather than child development and child well-being approaches. Enabling a mother's employment and the reconciliation of family and work were the leitmotifs for the interest in children.

[5] http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-08-592_en.htm

In 2011, the Commission published the Communication "Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow"[6]. The document reminds us that ECEC lays the essential foundations for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability. It asserts that ECEC is beneficial because it:

- *has the potential to give all young people a good start in the world of tomorrow and to break the cycle that transmits disadvantage from one generation to another (...)*
- *has a crucial role to play in laying the foundations for improved competencies of future EU citizens, enabling us to meet the medium- and long-term challenge, and to create a more skilled workforce capable of contributing and adjusting to technological change (...)*
- *enables parents better to reconcile family and work responsibilities, so boosting employability (...)*
- *is particularly beneficial for the disadvantaged (...) can help to lift children out of poverty and family dysfunction, and so contribute to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty (...)*
- *can make a strong contribution – through enabling and empowering all children to realise their potential – to achieving two of the Europe 2020 headline targets in particular: reducing early school leaving to below 10%, and lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.*

The Commission urged member states to widen access to ECEC and ensure high-quality services by employing professional staff and balancing public and private investment. It suggested that Member States include a report on progress in ECEC into the National Reform Plans which are obligatory to submit every semester to the EC.

European networks of non-governmental organisations, like EUROCHILD, dealing with overall children's well-being critically reacted to the Communication. In its Policy Statement from February 2011[7], EUROCHILD underlined the:

- importance of underpinning early childhood policies with a recognition that children are rights-holders,
- necessity to perceive childhood in its own right, not solely as a transition to adulthood,

[6] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52011DC0066.

[7] http://www.eurochild.org/policy/library-details/article/eurochilds-policy-position-on-early-childhood-education-and-care/?tx_news_pi1[controller]=News&tx_news_pi1[action]=detail&cHash=99cc2d79cfb5008887f0d2a2e43e8776.

• need to avoid promoting ECEC services as a mechanism merely enabling women's participation in the labour market and appreciation of their importance for child development,

• need to conceive of ECEC services as an part of broader policy system combining labour market policies, maternal and parental leave, family support policies and formal education systems,

• entitlement of all children to access high-quality inclusive ECEC services, coupled with targeted support for disadvantaged children,

• need to apply an integrated approach to ECEC for children aged 0–6, instead of splitting services for 0–3 year-olds and 4–6 year-olds,

• requirement to establish common EU criteria for quality ECEC services,

• need to raise professional standards, training and the remuneration of ECEC employees.

The data monitoring progress in ECEC is collected by EUROSTAT and the OECD, which provides the *Family Database* and publishes the reports *Starting Strong* (2001, 2006, 2012). The results of the analyses are not optimistic. The vast majority of EU Member States are far from achieving the objective of covering children under three with good quality services. This means that the lowering of social inequality among children and improving the school readiness of disadvantaged children remains a distant achievement. The organisation and management of ECEC services differ among the Member States. This also concerns formal competencies of the staff employed in nurseries (OECD 2006).

Recently Wim Van Lankcer (2013), relying on EUROSTAT data, published a very competent comparative analysis of ECEC services in the EU 27. He stated that: *It is crystal clear (...) that the majority of EU Member States still have a long way to go in universalising and equalising formal care use for children below the age of three (...)* (p. 17). He provided evidence that:

1. There are huge differences between member states in the use of formal ECEC services for children under three: in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland coverage is lower than 10 percent of population, whereas in Denmark and Sweeden it is higher than 80 percent.
2. In all except six countries (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Lithuania, Malta and Estonia) there are sgnificant differences in the use of formal ECEC between high-income and low-income families. However, the magnitude of inequality in this respect is particularly striking in countries with low levels of formal ECEC use, like Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. For example, in Poland high-income families use ECEC 5.5 times more often

than low-income households. Denmark and Sweeden are countries with the lowest inequality (<2). No European country reports a higher usage of ECEC services by low-income children than by higher income counterparts.

3. In the majority of Member States, there is no significant inequality in the availability of nurseries for employed mothers. Inequality ratio between high-income and low-income groups are low (<2). However, in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and the United Kingdom the ratio is high and exceeds five. This means that in these countries even employed mothers with low-income have less possibilities to obtain care for their children in formal care institutions than better-off employed families.
4. To obtain a similar ECEC usage as Denmark, all countries but Sweden would have to increase budgetary spending on childcare.This would require doubling it in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, tripling it in Germany, Spain, Slovenia and Estonia, or even quadrupling it in Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

Van Lankcer concluded that: *The main lesson to draw from this analysis is that the children who would benefit most from being integrated into high quality childcare are the ones currently most likely to be excluded. This is likely to exacerbate rather than mitigate social inequalities in early life. Hence, the unavoidable conclusion is that existing childcentred investment strategies are bound to fail* (p. 21).

CONCLUSIONS

The academic concept of investing in children as a core of social investment strategy seems to be well-documented. However, putting it into practice depends on political decisions and is constrained by budgetary needs and the values attached to children. Considering childhood as a macrostructure segment, composed of citizens holding social rights, is not very widespread. Children are rather considered as a private good and family dependents. Therefore it does not seem to be easy to put "children first", since this requires recognition that children are entitled to access state resources on a par with adults.

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Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska

„INWESTOWANIE W DZIECI" – DYSKURS O DZIECIACH I DZIECIŃSTWIE DOMINUJĄCY W XXI WIEKU

Streszczenie

W ciągu ostatnich 30 lat dokonała się radykalna zmiana dyskursu akademickiego i politycznego na temat dzieci i dzieciństwa. Koncepcja 'inwestowania w dzieci" zdominowała dyskurs akademicki i program polityczny, co najmniej w Unii Europejskiej. Inwestowanie w dzieci stanowi jądro strategii inwestowania społecznego. W artykule scharakteryzowano paradygmat inwestowania społecznego i przedstawiono dwa typy argumentacji na rzecz inwestowania w dzieci z defaworyzowanych środowisk. Omówiona została koncepcja J. Heckmana dotycząca inwestowania w dzieci małe oraz efektywne sposoby interwencji. Wskazano na praktyczną implementację inwestowania w małe dzieci w krajach Unii Europejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: inwestowanie w dzieci, państwo społecznych inwestycji, wczesna edukacja i opieka nad dziećmi.

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FROM POVERTY TO WELLBEING: CHILDREN AS SUBJECTS OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND EMERGING AGENTS ON THE POLICY ARENA IN ESTONIA

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present a retrospective of child poverty research in Estonia: how it has developed from the social and political acknowledgement of poverty as a social issue in the early 1990s onwards, and how child poverty research has contributed to the development of political thought. The paper follows the use of a new paradigm of childhood research, and revisits the methodological approaches and main research findings that have enhanced the understanding of children as a new policy interest group in politics.

Key words: child poverty research, relative deprivation, exclusion, children in policies, children's perspective, Estonia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The perspective on children – as active agents, social actors, and units of observation – crystallised as a new field of sociological research – the sociology of childhood – in Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see: Qvortrup, 1991; James and Prout, 1990). This new approach to researching children and childhood emerged when researchers focused on one hand on minority, and on the other developed social constructivism and interpretative theoretical approaches. The perspective did not problematize traditional views on children but was seen as

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complementary to it, thus enriching academic understanding of social practices related to children.

Today the ideas underlying the new paradigm of childhood studies have spread worldwide and have developed in several directions. Most importantly, besides child welfare issues, the conceptualization of a child's wellbeing and the development of child social indicators have attained an acknowledged position in R&D projects and in the academic literature on children. Moreover, the research output received from studies with children and children's perspectives in their own right are gaining trust in both national and international studies by informing policies. To name just a few one may mention the Health Behaviour of Schoolchildren (HBSC-Study), Children's Worlds (ISCWeB), and the PISA-Study.

This paper makes an historical excursion back to the 1990s and then forward to demonstrate how the new theoretical perspective on children reached Estonia, first undertaken in research and then commencing to serve policymaking. Like elsewhere, the research *with* children grew out of the research *about* children, and in the case of Estonia was very much related to poverty studies in the early 1990s, which was also the start of a new field of research that time. Poverty studies served as engines for making children visible in the policy arena, thus paving the way to trust children's perspectives and helping to follow the principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, according to which every child has a right to be heard and to be taken seriously.

The aim of this paper is to present a retrospective of child poverty research and show how it has developed from the social and political acknowledgement of poverty as a social issue in Estonia, a country which re-established its independence and started reconstructions from scratch in the early 1990s. The paper also considers how learning about child poverty has contributed to bringing children into the policy arena as a separate policy interest group, by following the emergence of a new paradigm of childhood research and examining its impact on the development of political thought with respect to children's wellbeing. The paper also revisits the methodological approaches applied to measure child poverty, relative deprivation, and social exclusion and presents the main research findings arising from these approaches. By means of a historical excursion the article makes an attempt to link the research output with the development of political thought.

2. FROM "NO-POVERTY" TO POVERTY IN CHILDREN'S LIVES

The definitions of poverty vary and cognitive research models can be constructed using several related terms – subjectively perceived relative deprivation (economic, social and psychological); social exclusion from different social arena (peers, family, school, activities, shelter, services, etc), or by using related but more distant constructs like abuse, violence, school bullying, children in court hearings, etc. In order to measure a social phenomenon several preconditions must be met: (1) the existence of an observable phenomenon; (2) official recognition of this phenomenon; (3) the availability of a measuring tool; and (4) society's readiness to address the issue.

Between 1940 and 1991, Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union as one of the Soviet Socialist Republics. During the Soviet occupation, social sciences were subject to strong ideological pressure – academic social research was strictly censored by government agencies. The statistical data collected by the Estonian Statistical Office were carefully controlled by the Central Statistical Office in Moscow, to ensure that the totalitarian system was portrayed in a favourable light. Poverty as a term was applied only to the Western World and not discussed in the Soviet framework. Because poverty did not officially exist, poverty research could not be developed or related topics considered.

2.1. First steps of poverty research

The first scientific article dealing with poverty of households (and introducing poverty as a scientific and political term in Estonia) was published by Kutsar and Trumm in the *Scandinavian Journal of Social Welfare* (currently known as *International Journal of Social Welfare*) in 1993 (see: Kutsar and Trumm, 1993). This publication opened the way towards official recognition of poverty as a political term as well as the development of its measurement tools. During the Copenhagen Social Summit in 1995 the Estonian Government took responsibility for developing a strategy of poverty eradication in the country. The first analysis of poverty patterns and trends, as well as the method for setting the poverty line, was published in 1999 (Kutsar and Trumm, 1999). The team of researchers working on poverty structures and using empirical data from the *Estonian Household Income and Expenditure Survey* came to the conclusion that (1) poverty in Estonia is structural; (2) poor children tend to come from households with unfavourable shares of breadwinners and dependants (households with unemployed adults, especially long-term unemployed, single-parent families, large families with three or more children), and (3) a child is the most vulnerable subject exposed

to poverty in Estonia. These conclusions are no longer new because they go in parallel with many other international studies on poverty and, more specifically, child poverty (see for instance the publications by Jonathan Bradshaw) but at the time they were released they were a novelty in research and politics.

It was also argued that the child him/herself can be a crucial risk factor in determining the health of a household economy. With every additional child, the economic situation of the family is more likely to worsen. Compared to other social groups, children are at a higher risk of living in a household with a small income, which means that due to a shortage of money their needs are more likely to remain unmet. It was understood that a child in a household setting is dependent on the social and economic coping capacities and the available resources of the child's parent(s); children can do very little themselves to improve their situation. The latter conclusion resonated strongly with the general public, which caused policy makers recognise child poverty as a social problem in Estonia.

2.2. Children – emerging agents in the policy arena

Estonia has been a member of the United Nations since 1991. By joining the UN and the European Council, Estonia also joined the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the 21st November 1991. Following this move, both state and private social welfare institutions, courts, and executive and legislative powers have to take into account the provisions of the Convention, which states that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all cases involving children, and that every child has a right to be heard and taken seriously. The Republic of Estonia Child Protection Law Act was passed by the Estonian Supreme Council on 8 June 1992, and contained similar principles as the UN CRC. The purpose of the law was to protect the rights of all children by considering the special nature and needs of a child.

According to the Child Protection Law Act (1992), all children in Estonia are equal, having the same social status. Children should not be treated differently because of the status of their parents. Every child has the right to protection and wellbeing, as well as the right to develop and the right to privacy. Indeed, the fundamental rights of a child to eat nutritious food, to acquire an education according to his/her abilities, or to receive needed medical treatment no longer depend on his/her legal status, but on several other factors.

Awareness of a child as a subject with his or her own specific needs and interests has grown considerably since the early 1990s. The Child Protection Law Act was revised accordingly and the new version will come to power on

the 1st of January 2016. The new Law makes attempts to more fully apply the new understanding of children and childhood. However, it has been subject to criticism from the political opposition, researchers, and the public. The Family Law Act was also completely revised and introduced in 2009. It now pays special attention to protection of the rights of a child in the family framework. It establishes a new legal bond between the child and his/her parent/s by regulating the care responsibilities and fiscal matters.

Following Estonia's restoration of independent statehood in 1991, state subsidies for children's goods were ended, which had a detrimental impact on households with children and put them at risk of falling into economic hardship (without reference to *poverty* as the term was non-existent during that time). Following the recommendations of researchers, a universal child benefit was introduced as policy response in 1992 to compensate for increasing prices of children's goods and to provide support to households with children. This was the first time when policy makers had, following consultations with researchers, considered children as a minority group and adopted a principle to value all children despite of the socio-economic status of their parents.

Later on, and impacted by poverty research, the position of children on the policy agenda strengthened step by step. However, the situation did not improve in real terms, but rather tended to be part of political rhetoric during political rallies. The universal child benefit provides the best example of this trend. In 1992 when the universal child benefit was introduced it consisted of 18 per cent of the average salary in Estonia, while it was only 2.8 per cent in 2001, while at the same time old age pensions increased in accordance with inflation. Following recent hot debates, today it is 45 euros per month paid to the 1st and 2nd child and 100 euros from the 3rd child on (4% and 10% respectively of the average salary, both before individual income tax).

To conclude this section, it may be said that consideration of a child agency was influenced by three developments. First, changing social practices (e.g. the reconstruction of the national economy, which led to a big part of the population, including households with children, who had to cope with serious economic hardship) required policy interventions; second, Estonia's joining the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which paid attention to a child as a subject with his/her own needs and social competence; and third – the emerging new academic understanding of children as a minority group in a society, together with the potential to trust children's own perspectives in understanding the effects of poverty in children's lives.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Structural approach

As explained by Qvortrup (1991), understanding children as active social actors starts from counting children. According to this theoretical framework, the family, school and other settings can be dealt as the background variables. In Estonia, the main data source for calculating the number of children exposed to poverty was the *Estonian Household Income and Expenditure Survey*, first undertaken by the Estonian Statistical Office (until 2006) and subsequently continued by the EU SILC. The structural approach includes research on risk factors of households with different household structures, the numbers of children exposed to high risks of poverty, and the poverty trends (Kutsar, 2010; Kutsar and Trumm, 1999; Tiit, 2006a; 2006b, and others).

The main methodological problem revealed in the analysis was related to equivalence scales applied to the income and expenditure data. The OECD equivalence scale (1:0.5:0.7) was not optimal, and calculations were made using the officially accepted scale (1:0.8:0.8) as a more accurate measure of child poverty (for more on the method of elaboration, see Kutsar and Trumm, 1999). In recent years, the EU modified equivalence scale (1:0.5:0.3) is applied with the aim of following the harmonised approach in international social reporting. However, the modified scale tends to underestimate the share of individual consumption of the household members. In case of Estonia (and the rest of the new EU members of East and Central Europe) it under-represents child poverty (Malier et al., 2007; Tiit, 2006b) and needs to be treated with caution when political decisions are being made concerning the poor, especially when children are concerned.

3.2. From welfare to wellbeing approach

In order to study poverty experienced by children, the researchers began to follow the concepts of subjectively perceived relative deprivation and social exclusion. Besides the former welfare approach, the child wellbeing approach began to develop in the late 1990s as a new field of knowledge, also inspired by the new paradigm of sociology of childhood (e.g., Corsaro, 1997) and the principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. A similar trend emerged in other countries as well and is currently acknowledged worldwide – mostly spreading among academics, and step-by-step gaining influence in policymaking. The best example of the child wellbeing study is an outstanding international study "Children's Worlds" (ISCWeB) that was deeply piloted in 2010–2011 in 14 countries,

with the main study carried out in 2013–2014 among 15 countries worldwide. The study aims to collect solid and representative data on children's lives and daily activities, including economic matters and in particular on their own perceptions and evaluations of their wellbeing. The purpose is to improve children's wellbeing by creating awareness among children, their parents and their communities, but also among opinion leaders, decision-makers, professionals and the general public (see: http://www.isciweb.org/).

Beginning in the late 1990s, in Estonia the children's perspectives were applied in relative deprivation and social exclusion studies with children. The perception of relative deprivation was understood by researchers as a process of social comparison with peers. The researchers were inspired by Augoustinos and Walker (1996), according to whom an individual who feels deprived believes that he/she deserves more than he/she has. This recognition may lead to an increasing group cohesion and protest, or conversely – to distress and psychosomatic symptoms. In both cases the feeling of deprivation has a negative impact on children's participation in peer culture routines – the processes of mutual communication, interpersonal comparisons, and influence.

A three-dimensional welfare approach developed by Erik Allardt (1975) was adapted by Kutsar (1997) in order to understand poverty in people's lives through its related constructs of subjectively perceived relative deprivation and social exclusion. She constructed an integrated measure for adult respondents and further applied it by analysing data collected from children (Kutsar, 2000; Kutsar et al., 2004).

According to Kutsar, the three welfare dimensions developed by Allardt – "Having" (*what I have*), "Loving" (*where I belong*) and "Being" (*what I am*) are considered as dimensions of relative deprivation cases of scarce resources – economic, social and psychological respectively. Through deficits in the economic dimension (economic deprivation), a child is exposed to negative social comparisons – namely what the child has and what he/she feels they deserve when compared to important others – his or her peers. Deficits of resources in the social dimension (social deprivation) leaves a child devoid of his/her participatory rights of belonging to peer groups and taking joint actions with them. Deficits in the psychological dimension (psychological deprivation) lowers the self-esteem of the child and puts him/her at the risk of negative self identity. Deficits of welfare resources cumulate into risks of social exclusion from peers.

The *Living Conditions Survey among Children*, carried out in 1997 (1568 respondents from the 8th forms of ordinary schools – 14–15 years of age; representative sample of students of this age group) became a first source of data to understand child poverty from the child's own perspective. The questionnaire

was constructed around the rights of a child following the principles of the UN Convention. Among many other items, the survey contained questions about children's perceptions and estimations of their household economic performance and it also tested the child's perceived relative deprivation and social exclusion. The data analysis applied the welfare deficits' approach by Kutsar (1997) and the new paradigm of childhood.

The same analytical framework was used in two additional small-scale quantitative surveys among children, which focused on social exclusion from peers: the study carried out by Vetemäe in 2004 (330 respondents 12–13 years of age) and the study of children's self-exclusion from peer activities carried out by Viira in 2005 (291 respondents of the same age). Later on, issues of children's wellbeing and the children's perspectives' methodological framework was applied to new topics, including those where children were asked to comment on policies involving political issues that directly or indirectly impacted their everyday lives. Examples include a study on how children perceive family borders in a situation of diversification of family structures in the society, carried out by Roots (2010); assessing the wellbeing of children of separated parents (Peterson, 2010); exploring children's opinions and experiences of being left behind by parents engaged in labour migration (Kutsar et al, 2014); and studying children's opinions about adoption rights if given to same-sex couples (Heinma, 2014).

4. A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT THE FINDINGS

Let's return at this point to the initial stage of new childhood research in Estonia that firstly focused on poverty and the related constructs – deprivation and exclusion, then revisit the findings that are still meaningful in child wellbeing research. First, household expenditures as a source of perceived relative deprivation of children are highlighted from the structural perspective, followed by a presentation of children's own perspectives of perceived relative deprivation and exclusion, and self-exclusion from peer activities.

4.1. The "cost" of a child – a source of relative deprivation?

The research on household incomes and expenditures revealed the structural character of poverty in Estonia, as was highlighted earlier in this paper. Proceeding from this finding, Tiit (2004) set a research question: how much does a child "cost", or – how much do parent/s spend from the household budget to meet the child's needs in households with different consumption levels. The household budget

method is itself somewhat problematic because of relatively large role of joint consumption in households (e.g., expenditures on the use of a family car, joint meals, shared accommodation, etc). However, the comparisons of expenditures on children among different income groups helps both understand the roots of social and economic inequalities between children in the household framework and experiences of relative deprivation compared to peers, from the children's perspectives.

Tiit's (2004) analysis utilised data from the *Household Income and Expenditure Survey* (10,460 households, data from 2002). She compared expenditures on a child among households with children in five lower income deciles (*the "poorer half"*) with those in the upper five deciles (*the "wealthier half"*). The study showed that the difference in expenditures on children between these two groups of households is nearly double. The wealthier households spend as average 1.55 times more on food, 1.86 times more on eating out, 2.13 times more on transportation, 3.12 times more on clothing and footwear and 3.25 times more on leisure activities of the child. It is important to note that expenditures on clothes and footwear in case of a preschool child form up to 80% of that of the average adult, and reach 1.5 times by 18 years of age.

The needs of a child vary and tend to change as the child grows older. The study demonstrated that during the teenage years the consumption needs are driven by specific different items (wardrobe items, educational and leisure activities) than those of an average adult. In addition to their basic needs of food, shelter, self development, etc, they have a need to belong to peer groups as equals. Children's participation in peer culture routines is a mutually impacting process. It is obvious that children regard what items their friends have as important. Sometimes it appears to be of enormous importance to own specific things, e.g., computer games, toys, the 'right' clothes, a computer or a 'right' mobile phone. A lack of these things may result in exclusion from the peer group society, like missing a ticket to attend a social event. Through external prerequisites a child can express his or her acceptance of norms and values of the peer group.

We can presume that children from less wealthy households experience relative deprivation and are exposed to higher risks of social exclusion and a higher probability than their peers living with wealthier parent/s. This assumption was tested based on data collected by several studies among children, discussed in the following section.

4.2. Perception of relative deprivation and social exclusion

A survey of 1568 schoolchildren in Estonia (1997) confirmed a statistically significant impact of poor economic conditions of the family as estimated by children on their perceived relative deprivation – economic, social as well as psychological. Those respondents who estimated the economic performance of the family as poor were more likely to experience subjective economic deprivation when compared to the economic situation of their friends. As they perceived it, they had less pocket money, could not afford necessary things, and were not able to attend school events and hobby and recreational groups compared to those from wealthier families. Being aware of the resource level of the household and taking the views of their parents into consideration, children from poorer families learned to cope with fewer material resources. They learned to be silent and not speak about their needs to their parents (Kutsar et al., 2004).

The low economic performance of a household puts a child at a risk of perceived social deprivation and isolation, e.g. by having fewer friends than their classmates they also felt or believed they were less favoured by the teachers and that they received less support from them. Children who estimated the economic performance of their family as poor were more likely to experience relative psychological deprivation. They could not accept themselves as they are – they tended to be less satisfied with their own body and capacities. In addition, compared to children who estimated the economic performance of their family as good or very good, they regarded themselves as being less successful and less happy.

A study by Vetemäe (2004) focused on teenage friendships – who is liked as a friend, who is excluded from friendships, and how this is related to the perceived economic performance of the family the child comes from. The study showed that 52% of the 12–13 year old respondents had experienced withdrawal by peers, including 12% who estimated this occurred often, and 5% who felt it occurred very often, while 17% also had felt excluded.

This study confirmed the results of the 1997 study, i.e. that the lack of resources in one welfare dimension is related to the lack of resources in another welfare dimension and cumulates in experiences of social exclusion from peers. The multinominal logistic regression model processed by Vetemäe (2004) revealed that feeling excluded from peers was not determined by gender, family structure (nuclear, single-parent, or a large family) and the location of residence (town or village), but by economic (less pocket money and the related perception of low popularity among classmates), social (less acceptance among classmates, fewer friends or even no friends) and psychological (less satisfied with one's

appearance, not appreciated for personal features, feeling of being unsuccessful) deprivations of a child.

However, the model showed that having less pocket money does not determine one's belonging to the group of excluded children, because other material values also lose importance. This is confirmed by the fact that feeling excluded from peers is determined by the lack of resources in the "belonging" and "being" dimensions of welfare. The poor economic situation of the household as the launching factor takes secondary place in the child's perceptions, which leads us to the idea of children's agency where participation in peer groups and self-value are really important factors in children's everyday life. Indeed, the material values (including having a decent amount of pocket money) determine the belonging to the group of non-excluded as does self-acceptance, having more friends and the perceived acceptance by the classmates.

The study by Vetemäe (2004) also showed that the feeling of exclusion has the risk of escalation and being perceived also in other social interactions of the child beyond peer group relationships. The children who perceived exclusion from peers also felt excluded from their family members. More often than the 'not-excluded' they stated that they were not heard and accepted by family members; no interest towards their activities nor successes was expressed at home; they claimed they had more arguments with their parents and they had less wish to spend time with them, especially with their father.

To conclude, feelings or exclusion are not determined by gender, family structure, or location of residence, but are determined by fewer perceived opportunities and lack of choices (different types of deprivation).

4.3. Self-exclusion as a coping strategy of a child with poor welfare resources

The experience of negative social comparisons with peers (relative deprivation) creates a situation of cognitive dissonance between personal standards and low available resources to meet one's needs. This psychological situation cannot last long and can end either with attempts to increase one's resources or, conversely – by lowering one's personal standards when making more favourable social comparisons. The latter, characterised by Zapf as a satisfaction paradox (Zapf, 1984) paves the way towards resigned adaptation: one's personal standards are adapted to the undesired situation, which helps to cope with it and produces a state of mental satisfaction. This also explains a child's strategy of not speaking

out about his or her consumption needs to their parents after receiving several negative responses from them (see Kutsar et al., 2004).

For the purpose of better understanding how a child copes with feelings of deprivation or being excluded from peers, a small additional survey among 6th form students was carried out by Viira in 2004. The study showed that more than organised leisure time, the time organised by the child him/herself is meaningful. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents feel deprived from self-organised activities due to a lack of opportunities – more so for children from families with unemployed parent/s and from families with poor economic resources, as estimated by the child. The study also confirmed that children from poorer households set lower standards for their needs: they expressed less interest in leisure activities and exposed less activation in looking for strategies to cope with the unfavourable situation – 30% of children from poor families compared to 10% of children from 'average' families and only 3% of children from well-off families were not active owing to a lack of interest. It was thus concluded that the perceived lack of financial resources (economic deprivation) not only leads to a decrease of personal standards for social comparisons with peers, which helps to avoid feelings of deprivation, but also to a loss of interest towards opportunities of organised leisure time as a coping strategy of a child.

This conclusion is supported by a study carried out among 910 parents from big families (with more than three children) in 1996. Three quarters of the parents agreed that their children should not feel poorer in comparing themselves with the other children. At the same time, less than a half of the respondent parents stated that their children should have equal opportunities with the other children. In situations of economic stress, being a good parent is put under strain. Many parents found a way out from the situation by changing their own views of parenting. More and more often they found themselves saying 'no' to their children's needs, justifying the decision with a new view of parenting – 'nowadays children get too much', or 'the child is not aware what his/her real needs are and sometimes wants too much' (Kutsar et al., 2004). Putting these two research findings together we can conclude that self-exclusion and resigned adaptation of a child are defence mechanisms that help a child to deal with parents who say 'no' – instead the child him/herself says 'no' to the emerging needs or wishes.

5. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION

Poverty research using a structural approach gained much political resonance in the late 1990s. The benchmark of child poverty reduction is found in the guidelines of poverty eradication in Estonia presented to the government in 1999 (see: Kutsar

and Trumm 1999). The measures aimed at reducing poverty among children were grouped into four targets.

1. Supporting families with children through financial assistance and services (measures aimed at the development of a universal and supplementary system of assistance and services, with an emphasis on ensuring a level of coping for families with children who are living below the poverty line);
2. Minimising the risk of underdevelopment of children in poverty (activities which aim to satisfy their basic needs and protect the development potential and health of children from poor families);
3. Developing professional networks to protect the physical and mental wellbeing of children living below the poverty line (activities connected with monitoring and improving the living and developmental environment of children from poor families and children who are lacking parental care);
4. Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, the needs of children should be considered equally with the needs of adults. Measures aimed at children must directly reach them (Kutsar and Trumm, 1999).

A direct impact of the guidelines was the introduction of a number of child-friendly family support measures, and the relative child poverty rate fell from 25% in 1997 to 22% in 2002. Võrk and Paulus (2007) examined the cost-effectiveness of different family support measures (family benefits, parental allowances and individual tax relief) in reducing child poverty in the years 2000–2007. By applying micro-simulation models, their main conclusion was that the family support measures in total have lifted about one third of the children from poor families (about 20,000 children) above the poverty line. The greatest effect was noted in cases of large families (with three or more children), and a less visible effect was noted in the case of single parent families.

The methodological approach of children's relative deprivation and social exclusion/inclusion, supported by the principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Estonian Child Protection Law Act, has gained much attention among the NGOs (political pressure groups like the Estonian Union For Child Welfare; Child Support Centres, etc) who deal with child wellbeing issues. It has also had an indirect impact on the revision of laws. Understanding children as a structural part of society and as active social agents has helped to understand that they are poor, deprived, and excluded 'here and now'. Children at risk of poverty are at risk of losing choices. They are exposed to the risk of social exclusion from peers and the risk of losing interest in taking joint actions with peers, i.e. socially withdrawing or excluding themselves. Socially excluded

children 'here and now' lead to risks of social exclusion for the next generation of children. Children stand as mediators between two generations of adults by transferring intergenerational inequalities from one generation to another. Keeping children as subjects, with their own perspectives on policy agendas, may have an unexpectedly powerful impact on the reduction of child poverty and the process of children's social inclusion in the whole society in a long run.

Today, policy actors in Estonia are facing dilemmas in formulating welfare policies for families and children, since adults and children belong to different parts of the social structure, with the result that the interest groups representing them may often be in opposition to one another. However, individually and collectively, the studies demonstrate that policy makers have much to learn from poverty research which approaches issues of child wellbeing from a child's own perspective.

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Dagmar Kutsar

OD UBÓSTWA DO JAKOŚCI ŻYCIA: DZIECI JAKO PODMIOT W BADANIACH SOCJOLOGICZNYCH I NA ARENIE POLITYCZNEJ ESTONII

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest prezentacja badań nad biedą dzieci prowadzonych w Estonii od wczesnych lat 1990, gdy biedę uznano za kwestię społeczną, aż do dzisiaj, oraz wskazanie wkładu badań nad biedą dzieci w rozwój myślenia politycznego. Autorka ukazuje zastosowanie nowego paradygmatu w badaniach nad dzieciństwem, dokonuje także przeglądu strategii metodologicznych i rezultatów badawczych, które przyczyniły się do konceptualizacji dzieci jako nowej grupy interesów w polityce społecznej.

Słowa kluczowe: badania biedy dzieci, relatywna deprywacja, wykluczenie, dzieci w politykach, perspektywa dzieci, Estonia

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY. THE CASE OF LODZ, POLAND

Abstract

The article is focused on the analysis of the relationship between socio-economic status of the family and the quality of life of the child. The sixth-graders living in Lodz from the schools selected on the basis of the share of pupils getting fee-meals were respondents of the auditorium questionnaire. Conducted statistical analysis show the disadvantaged position of children brought up in the low status families. In all crucial spheres of life of a child taken into account in the research: living conditions, family relationships, peer relationships, school, health, and subjective well-being, we can argue that children from above mentioned category experience lower level of the quality of life than their better off peers. Furthermore, the level of global quality of life differs substantially between groups selected with regard to SES of the family of the respondent.

Key words: quality of life, sociology of childhood, social inequalities

INTRODUCTION

The existing research shows that Lodz, the 3rd largest city in Poland, is experiencing a number of social and economic problems[1]. Sociological studies that have been conducted since the 1990s by a team of sociologists (with research

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[1] Before 1990, Lodz's economy focused on the textile industry, which in the nineteenth century had been extensively developed in the city. The textile industry declined dramatically in 1990 and 1991 (as a result of the socio-economic transformation). The sharp decline of the industry caused dramatic growth in the unemployment rate and the emergence of other social problems, many of which have not yet been overcome.

focused on poverty and social work) indicate that social exclusion, ghettoisation, and inter-generational transmission of inequality are among the city's major social problems (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska ed., 1998, 2001, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Jankowski, 2010). These processes affect the youngest inhabitants of Lodz. Social diagnoses of the situation of children points to the inheritance of socio-economic status, spatial segregation of the city, and the juvenilisation of poverty (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, 1999, Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Petelewicz, 2010[2]). Impoverished neighbourhoods are characterised by decrepit and run-down apartment houses, where the living conditions are tough. The impressions of negligence and impairment are sharpened through the processes like gentrification and revitalisation of particular areas, which stand out in marked contrast to adjacent buildings. As W. Warzywoda-Kruszynska writes: *children growing up in dysfunctional families, located in physically degraded parts of the city, are the victims and 'transmitters' of poverty to another stage of their life and to another generation* (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, 2009, p. 15). This article analyzes the life situation of the youngest inhabitants of Lodz from a structural perspective. The quality of life concept is applied as a framework to show the multidimensionality of childhood and its significant diversity (Ben-Arieh, 2010). The strong, practical orientation of this approach enables the transmission of knowledge between researchers and other stakeholders, for example practitioners, and attempts to influence social policy makers.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Analyses of the quality of life of children and teenagers are an example of those situations wherein the empirical research is much more advanced than the theoretical examinations. Until today the main charge towards the sub-discipline considered in this article is a lack of a consistent, consolidated theory (cf. Oleś 2010, Casas 1997, 2007). Theoretical influences, or inspirations, can be found rather than solidly anchored points of theoretical references. The modern shape of the approach is undoubtedly connected with the theoretical and methodological advances within the framework of sociology and other disciplines interested in the study of the life situations of children. The works of O. Brim in

[2] Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Petelewicz (2010) is a text summarizing the empirical research done within the framework of the project "WZLOT". The within article is based partially on the same data, i.e. the part concerning schools located in enclaves of poverty. However the presented analyses was prepared by the author for the purpose of her doctoral dissertation and have not been published before.

the 1970s laid the foundation, and the dichotomy of "becoming" versus "being" remains especially influential. In past years the level of interest and usage of the concept fluctuated, nevertheless since the 1990s the researchers in childhood studies widely consider it in their scientific reflections. Moreover the idea of perceiving children as social subjects here and now, rather than concentrating on shaping them into future members of society, constitutes the basis of theoretical deliberations within the child indicators approach. O. Brim also formulated the idea, nowadays cherished, of drawing up a set of universal indicators describing the situation of the child in the wide ecological context (Ben-Arieh, Bowers, 1999).

According to A. Ben-Arieh (2010), there are three influential normative and theoretical approaches that have had particular impact on the contemporary child indicators' movement and the research into the quality of life of children.

1. The ecology of child development. *Children interact with their environment and thus play an active role in creating their well-being by balancing the different factors, developing and making use of resources, and responding to stress. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of human development conceptualizes child development on the basis of four concentric circles of environmental influence, with time as an underlying factor, recognizing both individual changes over time and time itself. (...)In interacting with the different systems and subsystems, children and their families encounter both barriers and facilitators. These barriers and facilitators can be considered, in many respects, to be indicators of children's well-being.* (Ben-Arieh, 2010, pp. 10–11). On the one hand U. Bronfenbrenner refers to Piaget's theory, treating the child as an agent adapting to the external situation, and on the other pointing out the activity of various environments of children's development.
2. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Convention offers a normative framework for understanding children's well-being, and the idealistic vision of fulfillment of their rights can be synonymous with the model of a high quality of life.
3. New Sociology of Childhood. Children are treated as integral components of the social structure; their status is defined by culture and normative structure. As James and Prout write: *The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture* (Prout and James, 1997, p. 7). The key concept is that childhood is important in its own right, and that children should be studied not only as the future adult members of the society, but also as entities that have needs and rights in the here and now. Childhood is as stage in and of itself.

The ideas put forward by the representatives of the normative and theoretical approaches are reflected in the recommendations concerning methodology and empirical research. It should also be noted that the development of methodology in the research of the quality of life of children is linked with the advances in social statistics, especially in the area of social indicators, as well as the analysis of the quality of life of adults. Since Campbell's famous statement *quality of life must be in the eye of the beholder*, the subjective perspective in the research on the quality of life of adults became a golden standard; however as far as children are concerned, it still remains controversial. The role of the child in the research on well-being is still under vivid discussion, however according to scientists like F. Casas, A. Ben-Arieh, or R.A. Cummins, only the combination of subjective and objective data and incorporating the point of view of children themselves enables researchers to make a complex and in-depth diagnosis of the situation of children. F. Casas (2010) writes that *we must not confuse child well-being with adult opinions of a child's well-being. Both are important, but they are not the same, and both are a part of the complex social reality we call child well-being* (p. 564). Such an attitude poses a challenge: how to include children as reliable respondents in sociological research.

An analysis conducted within the framework of research on the quality of life lets us describe children's life situation from their point of view, to get to know its characteristics as well as conduct an analysis of the determinants of the level of quality of life. The presented research is one of the first studies of the quality of life of children in Poland where children are informants about their own situation. It allows for confronting, and confirming, the common-sense knowledge about the life situation of children living in families with different SES in many spheres, and also to make an overall analysis of the diagnosis of the situation of the youngest, fragments of which can be found in the results of research carried out under the sub-disciplines of sociology and social work. The main aim of this article is to present an analysis of the relationship between particular dimensions of the quality of life, as well as global quality of life, and the socio-economic status of a family in which a child is raised. Emphasis will be put on their subjective well-being, as this sphere is not often present in the sociological examination, whereas it is inherent in the studies of quality of life.

DIMENSIONS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Analogously to the definitional problems with the term 'quality of life' of adults, there is a similar chaos concerning the quality of life of children. Pollard and Lee, authors of an in-depth analysis of more than 1,500 scientific articles concerning children and containing the terms in their title – quality of life, well-being, satisfaction with life or related phrases – state that: *Well-being*[3] *(...) is commonly used but inconsistently defined. A systemic review of child well-being literature reveals that the definition of well-being is highly variable (...) the great variability among definitions and indicators of well-being hampers efforts to compare findings across studies* (2003, p. 63). The authors postulate developing a commonly accepted definition and, referring to the most frequent strategy used by researchers, they suggest defining this concept via an enumeration of its dimensions. They lean towards acceptance of the definition of the well-being of children and youth created by Columbo, i.e. *a multideimensional construct incorporating mental/psychological, physical, and social dimensions* (Pollard, Lee, 2003, p. 64). OECD experts, in the publication "Doing better for children" (2009), refer to this suggestion and indicate that the main shortcoming of this definition is the lack of a material dimension. According to Ben-Arieh and Frones (2007a, p. 1) *the concept of well-being is rooted in traditions of analyses of the quality of life and happiness, as well as in traditions of studies on standard of living and health.* For this reason it should comprise all of the dimensions/ indicators relevant to the mentioned areas.

Referring to the lack of developed definitions and models, I assume that the quality of life of children is a multidimensional construct. The operationalisation of this concept needs to indicate areas that are important from the viewpoint of children. Based on the study models of children's quality of life used in international research[4], review of the literature, as well as taking into account the character of the research territory, six fundamental areas which comprise children's quality of life have been singled out.

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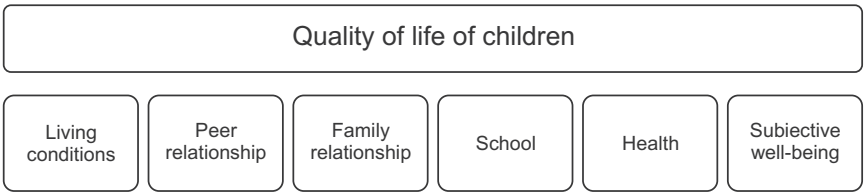
[3] The terms 'quality of life' and 'well-being' are often treated as synonymous. Even though I do not agree with such an approach, it is not the aim of this article to concentrate on the definitional disputes.

[4] Model Innocenti Research Center (UNICEF), Child well-being index (CWI) USA – (Land et al., 2007), EU-25 Child Well-being Index – (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, Richardson, 2007), The State of London's Children (SOLC) reports (Hood, 2007), Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale – school version (Cummins, 1997), The Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale (Cummins, 1997).

DIAGRAM 1. Model of children's quality of life



Indicators of particular spheres, synthetic indexes of each dimension of the quality of life of children, were constructed on the basis of empirical data using factor analysis or an analysis of reliability[5].

THE EMPIRICAL BASIS OF ANALYSIS

An analysis of quality of life of sixth-graders in Lodz was carried out using the empirical material gathered within the framework of the project "WZLOT" – to enhance changes and lessen poverty transmission among the inhabitants of cities in the Lodz Voivodeship[6]. As part of the diagnostic component, research on specific groups, i.e. those *particularly at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the life cycle and in intergenerational transmission* (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Golczyńska-Grondas 2010, p. 16) were conducted. Some of these studies were focused on the students in the last grade of primary school and living in the areas known as "enclaves of children's poverty"[7]. Firstly, an attempt to characterise the school with regard to students' economic status was made. As an indicator, the share of children from families with a low economic status in school was calculated. Support in the form of free meals at school was taken as an indicator of bad material conditions in the household. Free meal in school/kindergarten is the only benefit (in kind) addressed directly to children. Pupils eligible for

[5] Detailed description of the construction of particular dimensions of the quality of life of the repondents are presented in the unpublished dissertation "Quality of life of children from the low SES families. The case of Lodz", by the author of the article.

[6] The project was realized in 2007–2010 by the Dep. of Applied Sociology and Social Work at the University of Lodz, in collaboration with the Institute of Social Initiatives. Professor Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszynska was coordinator of the project. It was co-financed by European Union from the European Social Fund. The project was composed of three components: diagnostic, didactic, and promotional-informational.

[7] This methodology was created in a master thesis seminar conducted by professor W. Warzywoda-Kruszynska in 2005, and three unpublished master theses were written on the basis of contemporaneously gathered data.

getting it have to be members of low-income families as defined in the Act of Social Assistance. It was 526.5 PLN per month per person at the moment of the fieldwork study. It is worth mentioning that the subsistence minimum for a family of four, as calculated by The Institute of Labour and Social Affairs was at that time higher (656.1 PLN per person) (Kurowski, 2008).

On the basis of the data obtained from the Social Welfare Centre (the number of children fed in each particular school) and The Education Office in Lodz (the number of children in each particular school), the share of pupils getting free meals was calculated for every primary school. The first part of the research was conducted at schools with the highest share of children getting free meals, and the second at schools with the lowest share of children getting free meals (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Petelewicz, 2010). The main research technique was an auditorium questionnaire; the survey was conducted in 19 primary schools (N=951).

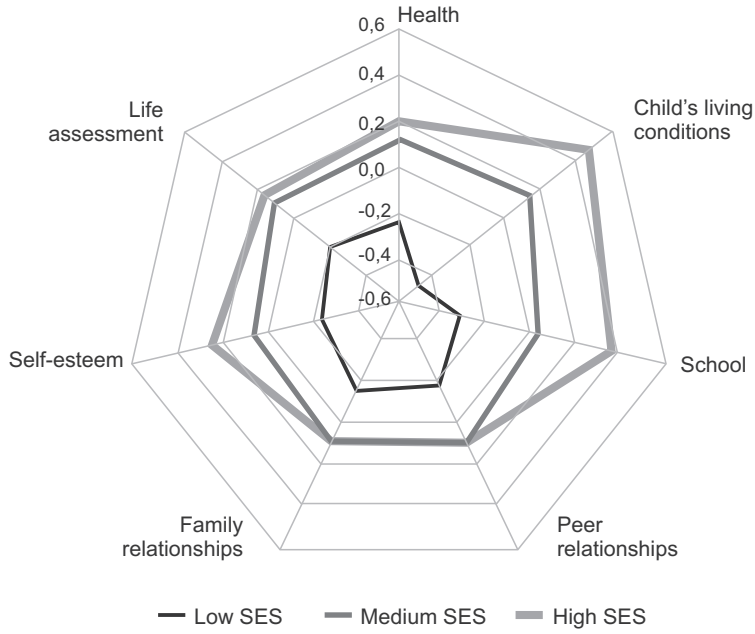
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY AND DIMENSIONS OF CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE

While analysing particular dimensions of children's quality of life, each time I used the one-way ANOVA to check if there is any relationship between the groups selected with regard to family SES[8] and quality of life in each sphere. It turned out that being classified into a category of low family status matched with a significantly lower result of the mean for every dimension. However, not in every case the differences between the groups were statistically significant. It concerns both – family and peer relationships indexes. In those cases children from families with a medium and high status was qualified to one subset.

The chart below (No. 1) is a graphic summary of the relationships between particular dimensions of children's quality of life and the socio-economic status of a child's family.

[8] Such variables were the part of the socio-economic status' index: material conditions of a family, mother's professional status, father's professional status. Factor analysis indicates that these variables create one dimension, so they can be used as a synthetic indicator. Factor loads of the variables are very similar (from 0.726 to 0.741). Owing to the fact that many values were missing, it was impossible to append a variable of parents' education level to the analysis.

CHART 1. Relationships between dimensions of children's quality of life (mean) and SES of a respondent's family



Source: Own study

Analysis of the data contained in the chart highlights the disadvantaged position of children living in families with a low SES. There is no dimension in which the mean achieved by this category would be similar to that achieved by children growing up in families with a medium or a high SES. Moreover, in each dimension the mean is significantly lower than the average for the entire sample, and children from families with a medium and a high SES are located at above average for each of the dimensions. Furthermore, there is a much greater disparity between children from families with a low and a medium SES than children from families with a medium and a high SES. Between children from families with a medium and a high SES relatively significant inequalities relate to dimensions of living conditions and school, and to a smaller extent, self-esteem. The greatest disparities between the categories, singled out with respect to a family's SES, are associated with the dimension of the child's living conditions, his or her functioning at school, and self-esteem. The difference is the smallest in the areas of peer and family relationships; it should be noted that mean values for children with medium and high status are almost equal in these dimensions.

The conducted analysis of variance and the graphic illustration of the results in Chart 1 clearly show significant inequalities in particular aspects of the quality of life in childhood between the categories of children growing up in low and high SES families. It seems that in all the crucial spheres of life, children from families with low SES are located below the other categories, selected with regard to status, and below the average for the whole sample. To sum up, based on the results of the analysis of the gathered empirical material, a proportional relationship between a respondent's quality of life and his family's socio-economic status can be identified. This can be seen in each dimension of the quality of life: living conditions, family relationships, peer relationships, school, health, and subjective well-being.

It should be noted that particular dimensions are characterised by different disparities, so different impacts may be assumed in particular cases. The low quality of life experienced by children from families with low SES exerts the strongest influence on the dimension of living conditions. However, differentiation with regard to family status also substantially affects the dimensions of functioning at school and self-esteem, which is an element of subjective well-being. In contrast, family and peer relationship, as well as health, are differentiated less by a family's SES. It should be emphasized that the situation of children from underprivileged families is worse not only objectively, but it also considerably affects their subjective well-being as measured by two components: self-esteem and evaluation of life. The conducted analyses indicate the existence of a group of children who experience an accumulation of difficult situations, they overlap with the challenges posed by the life cycle stage. This group requires intensified and appropriately targeted interest and support from those institutions broadly defined as a social support system.

As W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska and A. Golczyńska-Grondas point out (2010, p. 47) according to the analyzed research projects *the mechanism of resistance to unfavorable conditions of development caused by the poverty experienced during childhood is not fully recognized. It is connected with the ability to cope with stress and a high level of the self-esteem, nevertheless the origin of the relationship is not examined.*The analyses which were carried out clearly show that in the category of children from families of low SES, in which the risk of poverty is greater, self-esteem is at a much lower level than in better-off families. Referring to the above quote, it can be assumed that the possibility of these children's capacity to resist the impact of negative external factors – unfavourable conditions for development – remains limited.

Taking the above mentioned results into consideration, the question about relationship between particular dimensions seems crucial. Table 1 below presents the correlation of particular dimensions.

TABLE 1. Relationships between dimensions of children's quality of life – values of Pearson's correlation coefficient

	Health	**Child's living conditions**	**Self--esteem**	**School**	**Peer relationships**	**Family relationships**	**Life satisfaction**
Health	1	0,139**	0,216**	0,192**	0,164**	0,314**	0,256**
Child's living conditions	0,139**	1	0,315**	0,230**	0,191**	0,174**	0,140**
Self-esteem	0,216**	0,315**	1	0,458**	0,417**	0,391**	0,398**
School	0,192**	0,230**	0,458**	1	0,315**	0,341**	0,223**
Peer relationships	0,164**	0,191**	0,417**	0,315**	1	0,307**	0,280**
Family relationships	0,314**	0,174**	0,391**	0,341**	0,307**	1	0,518**
Life satisfaction	0,256**	0,140**	0,398**	0,223**	0,280**	0,518**	1

** Correlation is critical at level 0.01 (bilaterally)

Source: Own study

The correlations between all the above-mentioned dimensions are statistically significant, moreover in many cases the calculated values of Pearson's coefficients r are high. The chain of relationships between particular quality of life areas is dense and complicated. The strongest correlation exists between the index of family relationships and life satisfaction and a cause-effect relationship can be assumed, i.e. family relationships greatly determine life satisfaction. Similar conclusions can be drawn regarding the relatively strong correlation between self-esteem, health and life satisfaction. It can be assumed that the higher quality

of life in the dimensions of self-esteem and health, the greater is the satisfaction with life. It should be noted that life satisfaction correlates poorly with a child's living conditions. Self-esteem is the only dimension of children's quality of life included in the model, which correlates at least at the level of 0.2 with all the other dimensions, therein with the index of functioning at school and the index of peer relations the strongest. Self-esteem correlates the least with a synthetic index of health. It seems very interesting that the index of the living conditions for a child correlates most strongly with the self-esteem index. This suggests that material resources are very important for self-esteem among teenagers. There is insufficient data to determine in what ways these dimensions influence each other, but it can be supposed that it has both a direct and indirect nature. According to the data, children who reach the higher level of the index of living conditions perform better at school. The correlation of the child's living conditions with other dimensions is low. Except for the strong correlation with self-esteem, the interdependence – of a moderate strength – between functioning at school and family and peer relationships draws attention. It is difficult to conclude the direction of a cause and effect relationship. It appears that the impact of the variables on each other can be of two types, which, taking into account the characteristics of variables is not excluded. Children receiving more support at home, feeling satisfaction with contact with their loved ones, which undoubtedly affects their sense of security, confidence and competence, find it easier to obey the rules of school life and be successful in this field. It can be also presumed that children who do not have problems at school, which is for many parents one of the key elements of the "assessment" of a child, to a lesser extent, experience interaction of a negative nature with their parents, are not so often punished, nor do they have a feeling that their parents are not satisfied with them or treat them too harshly.

Teenagers who are satisfied with their relationship with friends, and who are able to obey the prevailing rules in the peer groups, probably cope better with adjusting to school norms. In this period of life, being accepted by one's peers has a very significant impact on self-esteem and competence. Furthermore, it can be assumed that personality traits such as openness and spiritedness are both beneficial for the relationship with peers as well as for educational achievements. On the other hand, children with learning and behavioral difficulties at school are marginalized in school life, and thus are also excluded from the peer groups. Problems at school can convert into auto-exclusive practices or aggressive behavior, which in turn influence one's position in a peer group. As mentioned before, the health index correlates with life satisfaction and self-esteem, and above all with the index of family relationships. Analyses have shown that this

is mainly due to pro-health behaviors and avoiding unhealthy behaviors, which are significantly influenced by a child's parents' behaviors and attitudes. Parents who are concerned about their child's health reassure the child of their care and engagement.

The quality of children's life is a complex, multidimensional construct. Among the selected areas of the quality of life, there is no area that does not correlate with another dimension. All of them are linked together in a chain of mutual, manifold relationships. Deterioration or improvement in one of the aspects has an impact on others. On the other hand, the obtained conclusions support the belief that efforts made to improve the quality of a child's life should be comprehensive, and that isolated activities in one of the areas are associated with a low probability of real and sustainable improvement in the quality of a child's life. Among the analyzed areas, relationships with parents seem to be the most pivotal, which, apart from the living conditions created for the child, have the strongest correlation with the other dimensions. According to the conclusions of developmental psychologists (Bee, 2004), and contrary to popular beliefs about the declining importance of parents in adolescence, relationships with parents are the key influence on the child's ability to cope in many aspects of his or her life. Another important conclusion is that the self-esteem which is an important element of subjective well-being, is linked with all of the selected areas of the quality of life under investigation.

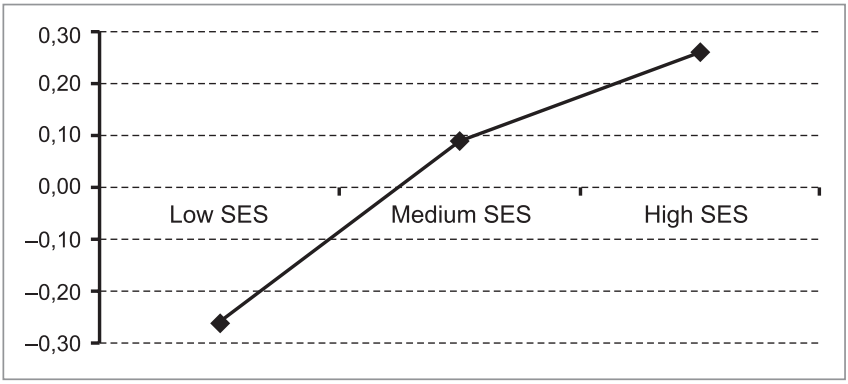
GLOBAL QUALITY OF LIFE

A synthetic index of a global quality of life was created taking into account the indexes measuring quality of life in different spheres. Particular indices have been transformed into Z – scores, and the average score was calculated for each respondent. The reliability analysis using αCronbach coefficient indicates that selected dimensions can be considered as one construct, and that the level of the coefficient – 0.738 indicates the adequate reliability of the scale formed by the following dimensions: health and living conditions of the child, self-esteem, education, peer relationships, family relationships, and satisfaction with life.

On the basis of the above findings, it can be assumed that the global quality of life will significantly vary according to the socio-economic status of the family of the respondent. In order to confirm this assumption, I conducted the one-way analysis of variance. The analysis has confirmed that the level of the global quality of life differs substantially with regard to the socio-economic status of the family. As the *post hoc* analysis done using a Scheffe test shows, all the groups differ

from each other in a statistically significant way, the category of children from families with a low SES from both categories with a higher SES ($p < 0.001$), and the category of children coming from families with an average SES and from families with a high SES ($p = 0.005$)

CHART 2. Analysis of variance: global quality of life and family SES



Source: Own study

Confirmation of the relationship – the higher the status of a family, the higher the global quality of life – can be clearly seen on the Graph no. 2. Summing up, on the basic on the conducted analysis it can be stated unequivocally that children from families of a low socioeconomic status experience a lower quality of life, understood as a whole, than their peers growing up in families with a higher social status.

An attempt to create a linear regression model, in which the global quality of life is the dependent variable, failed, taking into account the extensive set of independent variables, most of which turned out to be statistically insignificant. In the final version only two variables were included in the model: material conditions of the family and the child's sex, but together they account for 23% of the variability of children's global quality of life level.

TABLE 2. Linear regression model, the dependent variable: the global quality of life

Variable	B	S. E.	B	p
(Constant)	–0,215	0,057	–	0,000
Family material conditions	0,301	0,018	0,472	0,000
Sex (ref.=boy)	0,146	0,037	0,115	0,000

S o u r c e: Own study

Based on regression analysis shown in Table 2 above, it can be concluded that the global quality of life largely depends on the material conditions, and less on sex. While girls often experience a higher quality of life than boys, the question is whether other variables such as family structure, or occupational status of parents actually do not affect the quality of children's life, and so if the material conditions are such a strong determinant, whether a variable characterizing the situation of the family is influenced by the other variables that are linked to it.

SUMMARY

Childhood is usually defined as a period of immaturity and understood as a universal category, which cannot be questioned from the biological point of view. However the question arises if the same is true from the social point of view? Since there are a magnitude of the diverse situations involved in growing up, should the singular or plural form be used? Is there a universal situation of childhood or are there many childhoods, with respect to the social class, place of living, gender, ethnicity, and so on? These theoretical questions are often discussed within the framework of the sociology of childhood and the vivid dispute seems never-ending. However, on the basis of the conducted analysis it can be stated that the life situation of the category under study is undoubtedly highly differentiated, and that it is difficult to describe using one category. The results of available research and observations of everyday life allows us to assume that children growing up in families with a low status are in a worse situation compared to their peers growing in well-off families, but the analyses clearly shows the specific and complex nature and scale of these relationships. Children raised in families with low SES experience a lower quality of life in all investigated areas: living conditions, family relations, peer relations, school, health, as well as subjective well-being. The evidence is clear – the myth of a romantic, carefree childhood cannot be applied equally. Childhood as well as adulthood is highly socially unequal.

The revealed inequalities do not relate equally to all areas. The largest variation refers to the dimensions such as: the child's living conditions, functioning at school, and self-esteem. The results are also consistent with the current knowledge about the inequalities in education, poorer performance, and alienation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Dolata, 2008, Szkudlarek, 2007), as well as the analyses of the lives of children brought up in families living in poverty. Living in poverty affects the whole life of a child, which is consistent with the results of

research on poverty in childhood (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, 1999, 2001, 2009; Tarkowska, EAPN).

The issue of subjective psychological well-being is usually omitted in sociological investigations. The conducted analyses reveals that it is a sphere of severe socio-economic inequalities. Even though inconstancy and a decrease in self-esteem is typical for the early phase of adolescence, children from the low SES families evaluate their life significantly lower and have less self-confidence. Moreover, their accessibility to psychological support is limited, especially for children growing up in disadvantaged families. Such problems can lead to mental and social disorders in the here and now, as well as in adulthood. According to the theories of resistance to poor living conditions, the psychical factor is the most important mechanism in breaking down the objective barriers (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Golczyńska-Grondas, 2010). It is evident that children from low SES families have lower self-esteem, which limits their opportunities to overcome external difficulties.

There is no doubt that quality of life research, even though already in the mainstream of the social policy research, will gain more adherents. Hopefully, more pressure will be put on theoretical advances and a more systemic approach. In many countries the systematic monitoring of the quality of life of both the entire population as well as particular groups, including children, has become a golden standard. Numerous organizations dealing with the diagnosis of the situation of children use the achievements of the child indicators movement. Nevertheless in Poland there is a lack of a systemic approach to the quality of life of children, and the subjective, well-being perspective is almost absent. What's more, children still seem to be invisible in the official statistics, where the main unit of observation is the household, which blurs the true picture of a child's situation. One of the main postulates of the child indicators movement is to make a change within the methodology of the social indicators which will reveal children's plight. This concept is accompanied by a contentious discussion. The skeptics are against it, as it can also lead to a demand for changes in social policy, from family-centered to the child-centered. However, the presented findings expose the real need for wide-range, child-centered, representative quality of life research, especially repeatable, which would enable the dynamic perspective.

To sum up, the conducted analysis reveals inequalities in the level of the quality of life of the youngest members of society in particular spheres, as well as the quality of life understood as a whole, which indicates the existence of social inequalities in childhood. Already in the 1990s the authors of "Childhood matters" (Qvortrup et al. 1994), one of the most important contributions to the

sociology of childhood, emphasised that children did not experience the positive effects of the economic growth of previous decades. Applying these words to the specificity of the situation in Poland, or locally in Lodz, it can be stated that the youngest members of society are experiencing, to a very large extent, the effects of macro-social transformation – systemic transformation. The consolidation of poverty and social exclusion, deepening the social inequalities, and inefficiency and the lack of the mechanisms to equalize opportunities, exert a significant influence on the lives of children.

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Marta Petelewicz

ZALEŻNOŚCI POMIĘDZY JAKOŚCIĄ ŻYCIA DZIECI A STATUSEM SPOŁECZNO-EKONOMICZNYM RODZINY. NA PRZYKŁADZIE ŁODZI

Streszczenie

Artykuł koncentruje się na analizie zależności pomiędzy statusem społeczno-ekonomicznym rodziny a jakością życia dziecka. Na podstawie danych uzyskanych techniką ankiety audytoryjnej, zrealizowanej wśród łódzkich szóstoklasistów w celowo dobranych szkołach, przeprowadzone zostały analizy korelacyjne oraz analizy metodą regresji liniowej. Wyniki pokazują upośledzoną pozycję dzieci wychowujących się w rodzinach o niskim statusie społeczno-ekonomicznym, doświadczają one niższej jakości życia w wyróżnionych sferach: warunków materialnych, funkcjonowania w szkole, relacji rodzinnych, relacji rówieśniczych, zdrowia i subiektywnej oceny życia, a także jakości życia ujmowanej globalnie.

Słowa kluczowe: jakość życia, socjologia dzieciństwa, nierówności społeczne

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PERCEIVED SUPPORT FROM PARENTS, TEACHERS AND PEERS AS A FACTOR OF EARLY LEAVING FROM UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN POLAND[1]

Abstract

The aim of the article was to investigate the early school leaving phenomenon on the basis of the survey sample of 3157 students of basic vocational and upper secondary schools in Poland (located in urban areas in Warsaw, Lublin and Chełm), surveyed in 2014. The main focus has been on the correlation between students' social support – as an indicator of social capital – and their plans for the future, in particular the respondents' desire to continue formal, full-time education.

The multivariate regression analyses conducted confirm the existence of a correlation between the respondents' desire to leave formal education before completing upper secondary school and the perceived level of social support. However, in the case of perceived parental and teachers' support, the correlation appears to be weak. The most important category of significant others is constituted by friends/peers.

Key words: early school leaving, social support, peers, parents, teachers

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1. INTRODUCTION

It seems to be no longer a matter of sociological debate that social capital visibly influences pupils' educational outcomes and that the way an individual navigates through the educational system is strongly influenced by the social networks he or she can rely on (Clycq et al. 2014). The selective function of school not only serves to allocate the most skilful people to the most important social roles, as assumed by the functionalist approach (Parsons 1959), but also leads to a reproduction of the social structure (Bourdieu, Passeron 1990) and contributes to the hegemony of the middle class in modern societies (Ball 2002).

However, there is still a discussion over what social capital actually is, and whether the individual (also called endogenous) – described by James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu – or collective (also called exogenous) – represented by Robert Putnam and Francis Fukuyama – approach is more instrumental in defining this complex phenomenon (Dudzikowa 2008).

The majority of the research on social capital in education follows either Pierre Bourdieu's (1986, 1990) or James Coleman's (1988) heritage (Clycq et al. 2014, Behtoui & Neergaard 2015, Portes 1998, 2000). According to those authors, although social capital derives from social networks, it is nevertheless a property of individual actors, contrary to the collective view of Robert Putnam, who describes social capital as an attribute of groups and societies (1993, 1996, 2001). The popularity of the Bourdieusian/Coleman approach is in line with the dominating, individualistic understanding of the educational process, where an object of analysis is typically the performance of an individual student (Carbonaro 2004, Behtoui & Neergaard 2015).We will discuss this issue in further paragraphs, adding another layer of social capital's conceptualization (described by Rose [2013] as "a portfolio of resources"), but in our study the unit of analysis is the individual rather than the community.

In consequence, this article focuses on the endogenous dimension of social capital, such as perceived social support from parents, peers and teachers – understood as a component of an individual's resources – and how it affects the educational plans and aspirations of upper secondary school students. The article investigates the interplay between this dimension of social capital and the potential risk of leaving education early.

2. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING (ESL), RESILIENCE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

2.1. ESL as a soci(ologic)al problem

According to a widely recognised definition (Clycq et al. 2014), early school leaving refers to *all persons aged 18 to 24 who have finished no more than a lower secondary education and who received no education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey* (Eurostat 2012). The ESL rate in Poland, as so defined, has remained stable and oscillates around 5.6%, compared the EU average of 12%, and is one of the lowest in the EU countries (Eurostat 2014). Some characteristics of the Polish educational system (the long cycle of general education, late tracking, lack of a selective education system, prevalence of upper secondary and tertiary education) together with the wider socio-economic context (e.g. the situation on the labour market, the educational boom) seem to explain to some extent the low rate of ESL in Poland (Marchlik & Tomaszewska-Pękała 2013).

Since the Lisbon Strategy (2001) and "Europe 2020" strategy (2010) were published, reduction of the early school leaving (ESL) rates became one of the main goals of the European educational policy (Ross & Leathwood 2013: 405), making the notion of ESL one of the most vital problems in European studies on education. Similarly to many other education-related categories, ESL persists mostly as a concept from the domain of policy. However, as policy has the power to influence social reality, early school leavers have to become the object of scholarly interest (Swadener & Lubeck 1995, Clycq et al. 2014: 5).

The European Commission's policy toward ESL and life-long learning is criticised by scholars for making simplistic generalisations, hiding the inability of the labour market to create a sufficient number of good jobs (Ross & Leathwood 2013), transferring the responsibility for the youth unemployment to 'under-qualified' individuals (Downes 2013), and for not being sufficiently aware of the diversity of the ESL phenomenon (Witte et al. 2013). However, the connection between ESL and other factors of social exclusion or disadvantage – unemployment or low paid jobs (Vallejo & Dooly 2013), probability of committing a crime (Smale & Gounko 2012), or the reproduction of poverty and marginalisation in the case of pupils from disadvantaged families (Alphen 2012) – seems undeniable. In searching for the most important predictors and solutions for ESL, the concept of resilience – the ability to adapt, recovery from the sources of stress – has become one of the more promising concepts (Luthar et al. 2000), and is at the same time associated with individuals' level of social capital (Clyq et al. 2014).

2.2. Social capital and the portfolio of networks

Following Pierre Bourdieu's concept we define social capital as: *The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition* (Bourdieu 1986: 284). It is important to emphasize that although social capital derives from the various social networks an individual is embedded in, it is not identical to those networks (Dika & Singh 2002). Possessing numerous social ties does not necessarily imply benefiting from them (Rose et al. 2013), and in certain cases those networks can even play a destructive role in the social, economic or educational progress of the individual (Portes 1998).

Furthermore, various networks contribute differently to one's resources of social capital, and particular individuals benefit differently from various sources of social capital. This leads to the interesting conceptualisation of social capital *as a "portfolio" of perceived instrumental and expressive resources spanning multiple microsystems* (Rose et al. 2013: 546). In the case of youth, i.e. secondary school students, three major 'microsystems' of social ties can be distinguished: family (particularly parents), school (especially teachers) and peer groups, while the measures of their success are centred on educational outcomes. Hence, in order to support development of the social capital of youth it is crucial to focus on promoting those environments which are the most vital in enabling the use of those resources (Rose et al. 2013).

2.3. From social capital to perceived social support

Among the various factors of social capital, the support a student receive from his or her significant others (further: social support) seems to be essential. This social support helps young people to deal with difficult life situations and it prevents feelings of alienation and loneliness (Ystgaard 1997). The results of research show that people with close family ties, friends, and who belong to various organisations and have establishing close relationships with other people, are able to face difficult situations better, have a better resistance to stress, and deal with problematic situations more easily (Schwarzer & Taubert 1999). It has been proven that young people who have the feeling of support are more satisfied with life (Yarcheski et al. 1994) and that they exhibit risky behaviours more rarely (Samdal & Dür 2000).

The perception of social support is also linked with life skills, e.g. looking for support (Helgeson 2003). Persons who assess their perceived social support as high have a positive attitude towards events which may occur, view life more

positively, and have better mental health (Knoll & Schwarzer 2004). Their conviction about the existence and availability of support reduces their feelings of fear and stress connected with crisis situations and maximizes their convictions about their resourcefulness and effectiveness, which enables them to treat a difficult situation as a challenge (Sęk 2004). It has been proven that persons who experience a high level of social support are perceived by others as more resourceful, better in solving problems, better reflecting their parents' concern and interests compared to people with a low level of support (Cieślak & Eliasz 2004).

The existing studies (Dołęga 2003) suggest that although younger pupils rely mostly on the support of parents, with the arrival of adolescence the role of peers becomes increasingly important for young people. Furthermore, the influence of their relations with peers is one of the main explanatory factors in the Problem Behavior Theory – which describes the risky behaviour incentives for youth (Jessor & Jessor 1977, cited in Ostaszewski 2008). It has already been proven that feelings of loneliness and being rejected by peers is one of the most important factors behind ESL (Frostad 2014; Archambault at al 2009), while a perception of the school environment – constituted to the large extent by relations among peers – as friendly increases one's educational aspirations (Madarasova Geckova et al. 2010).

2.4. Research questions and hypotheses

With reference to the aforementioned research results, two hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: The perceived social support is significantly correlated with the declared will to leave education early.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived parental support correlates stronger with the students' educational plans than perceived support received from teachers and friends.

The hypotheses were tested on the basis of quantitative survey data, using the multivariate regression model, with the desired education level as a dependent variable, and three scales of parental, teachers' and peers' support as the explaining variables.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The above hypotheses were tested using the quantitative data from the survey of 3157 students from 57 upper secondary schools located in Warsaw, Lublin and Chełm. The group surveyed consisted of students from three types of schools:

general upper secondary schools (*liceum ogólnokształcące*, LO), vocational upper secondary schools (*technikum*), and basic vocational schools (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa,* ZSZ). The quotas' criteria were: age cohort and research area.

The questionnaires were collected within two age cohorts:

§ cohort 2 – the older, consisting of the students in the final grades of upper secondary school (3rd grade of LO and ZSZ, and 4th grade of *technikum*);
§ cohort 1 – the younger, consisting of their peers who were two years younger (1st grade of LO and ZSZ, and 2nd grade of *technikum*)[2].

In overall, 1586 students from the 1st cohort and 1571 students from the 2nd cohort took part in the survey. The distribution of the sample according to research area, type of school, and cohort is displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The sample by: type of school, cohort and city.

Type of school	Cohort	City			Total
		Chełm	Lublin	Warsaw	
General Upper Secondary (LO, ISCED 3A)	1	215	113	533	861
	2	232	137	534	903
Vocational Upper Secondary (Technikum, ISCED 3A)	1	210	213	123	546
	2	234	180	102	516
Basic Vocational (ZSZ, ISCED 3C)	1	103	20	56	179
	2	62	33	57	152
Total		1056	696	1405	3157

S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014.

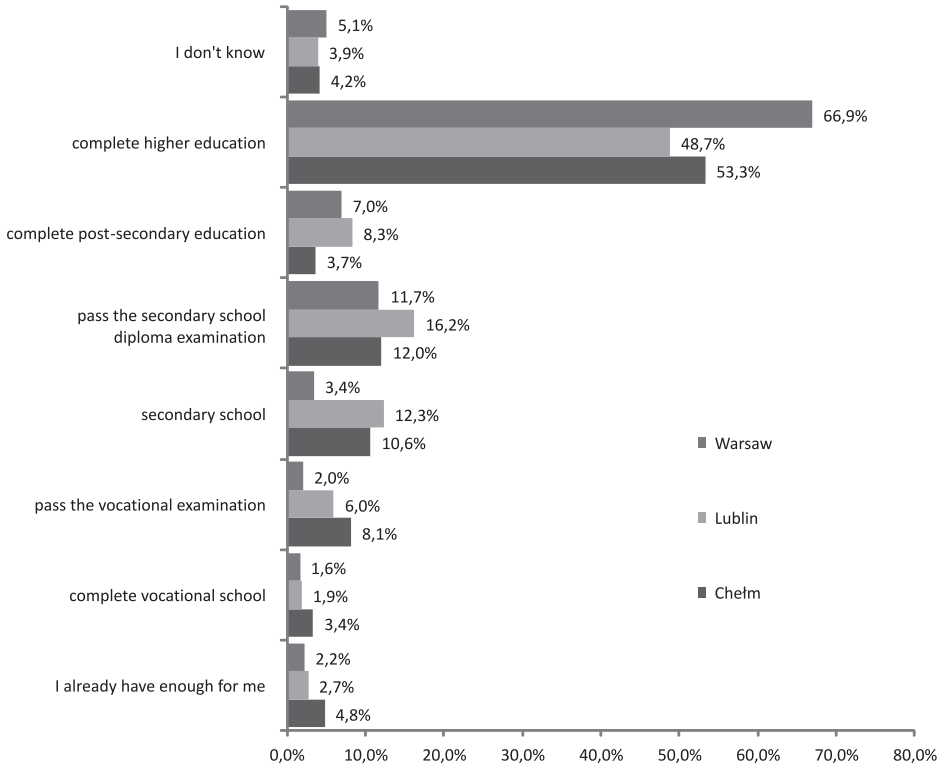
4. RESPONDENTS' EDUCATIONAL PLANS AND THE PREDICTION OF ESL

As an indicator of risk of ESL we adopted the respondents' declarations concerning their educational plans. At the final stage of completing the questionnaire the respondents were asked to answer the question: 'What is the highest level of education you are aiming to achieve?'. As displayed in the Figure 1, from nearly

[2] The in-class response rate was 67.1%, but it differed significantly within particular research areas – in Chełm 86.4% of students of the selected classes actually took part in the survey, while in Lublin and Warsaw the respective percentages were 69.6% and 54.7%.

half (in Lublin) to two-thirds (in Warsaw) of the interviewed students aimed to achieve a higher education, and only a relatively small fraction – from 2.2 % in Warsaw to 4.8 % in Chełm – were satisfied with their current level of education.

FIGURE 1: The highest level of education a respondent was aiming to achieve, by the cities in the survey.

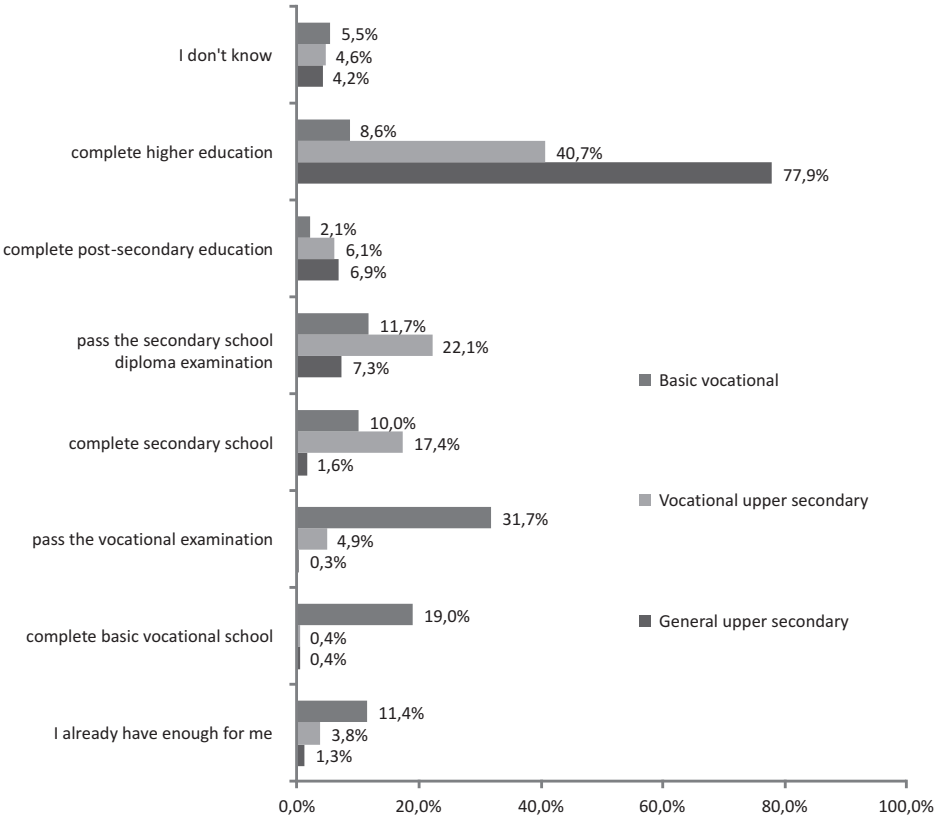


S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014, n = 2838.

Figure 2 reveals the significant – and obviously not surprising – relation between the type of school a respondent is attending and his or her further educational plans. Among the students of the ZSZ, 11.4% of individuals were satisfied with the level of education they had already attained, while among the LO students the equivalent percentage is only 1.3 %. The outcomes concerning the respondents from *technikums* show their lesser willingness to continue on to post-secondary education, although also in this category nearly 50% (exactly 46.8%) of respondents would like to either finish either post-secondary vocational

school, or attend university. The percentage of those who are undecided as to their further educational trajectory is quite similar throughout all types, but highest among the LO students[3].

FIGURE 2: The highest level of education a respondent is aiming to achieve, by type of school.



S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014, n = 2838.

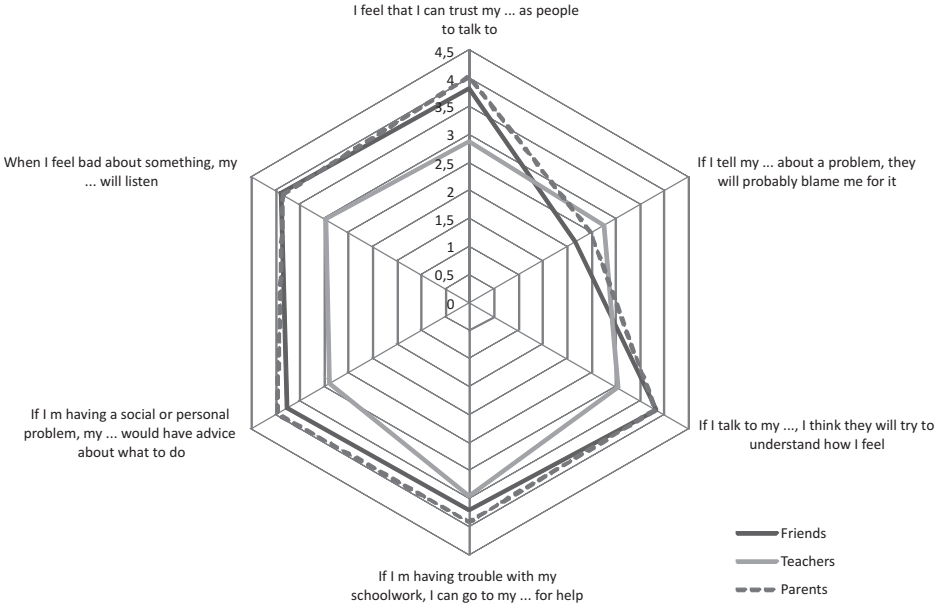
[3] A minor percentage of the respondents from the upper secondary schools (*liceum* and *technikum*) remarked that they would like to complete basic vocational school or pass the vocational examination, despite the information that those answers were available only for the basic vocational school students.

5. PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AS AN INDICATOR OF STUDENTS' SOCIAL CAPITAL

The survey also collected data on how the respondents perceived the support they received from three categories of significant others: parents, teachers and peers/friends. The Parental Support Scale designed by T.A. Wills, D. Vaccaro & G. McNamara (1992) was used to measure the attitudes of students toward parents (the respondents were asked to give information concerning the parent with whom they talk the most). The same scale was adopted to measure perceived teachers' and peers' support. The 5-point scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). It consists of six items meant to assess the students' trust toward the parents/teachers/peers, the quality of communication between the student and the significant others, and the latter's helpfulness. The scales demonstrate a good internal consistency when applied to the RESL.eu survey database, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.75 for perceived teachers' support to 0.79 for perceived peers' support, which proves their reliability as indicators of the phenomena they are designed to measure.

The declared level of support the interviewee received is much lower with respect to teachers than for the remaining two groups (see Figure 3). However, this does not necessarily mean that respondents are critical of the emotional assistance received from the school staff – the mean score for most of the items comprising the scale of perceived teachers' support is about 3, which is labelled 'neither agree, nor disagree" (this was also the modal answer for each item, with the frequency oscillating around 40%), and thus the respondents seemed to be rather hesitant. Only when asked how they assess the possibility to be helped in the event of troubles with the schoolwork did their answers tend to be positive. The indecisive answers may be caused by the diversity of the teachers' personalities and attitudes, as perceived by the students. However, it may also suggest that the respondents are not accustomed to thinking about their relations with teachers in the same categories which are applicable to their affinity groups. Teachers provide students with formal support, while parents and peers provide them with informal support (Cauce & Srebnik 1990).

FIGURE 3: The perceived support by parents, teachers and peers – comparison of the means.



S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014.

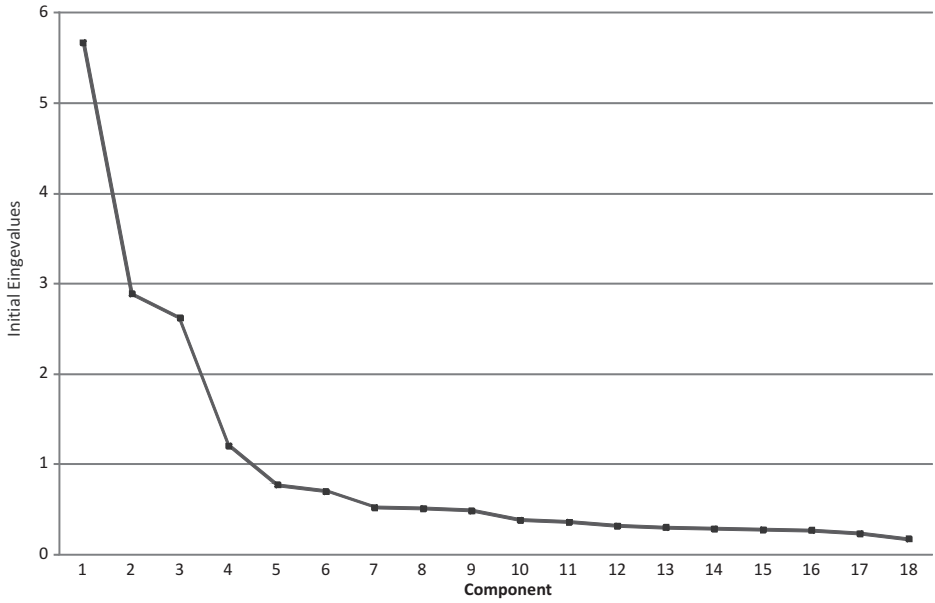
Although on average the interviewed students assessed similarly the level of support received from parents and their perceived support from friends/peers, the average correlation coefficient for the items of parental and teachers' support is not impressive (R=0.12). Apparently, the roles of parents and friends are, at least to some extent, supplementary – less intimate relations with parents are compensated by peer relationships, and *vice versa*.

Such a supposition was tested using K-Means Cluster analysis – the variables constituting the parental and peers' support scales (the items concerning the possibility of being blamed by parents or friends were not applied) were used to calculate four clusters. The 1st cluster collects the students with consistently positive attributions of parental and peers' support, the 4th encompasses individuals who perceived support from both groups as low, while the 2nd and 3rd clusters consist of respondents with a low perceived support from one group and high from the other. The 1st cluster is by far the largest, while the 4th is the smallest, and the 2nd and 3rd total 658, which is almost a quarter (23%) of the valid cases, and which partially explains the low correlation between the parental and peers'

support. The clusters also give an idea about the frequency of the social capital portfolios as defined by Rose et al. (2013).

However, in order to prepare the ind ependent variables well-suited to be applied to the multivariate regression model, the scales were scored by using factor analysis, which led to the extraction of four major orthogonal (uncorrelated) factors (see Figure 4), explaining 68.8% of the variance of eighteen initial variables. The factor created a subspace within the database, which could be rotated to find the most convenient interpretation of the data.

FIGURE 4: Factor analysis scree plot



S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014; n=2801.

The rotation of the subspace led to the extraction of three new factors closely related to the items of perceived social support. Thus, factor 1 is strongly correlated with the respondents' attitude to parents, factor 2 is similarly correlated with the perceived support from teachers, and factor 3 is linked to the perceived relations with peers, as displayed by Table 2. Apart from the three factors closely correlating with the respondents' perception of support from particular categories of significant others, the additional – 4th factor – was extracted, which is strongly correlated with the students' fear of being blamed in case of sharing a problem, by parents, friends or teachers alike.

TABLE 2: Values of the R coefficient measuring the correlation between the four factors and eighteen initial variables (rotated component matrix).

Initial items		Component (factor)			
		1	2	3	4
Perceived Parental Support	1	**.84**	.09	.07	–.06
	2	–.22	.01	.12	**.71**
	3	**.88**	.11	.09	–.08
	4	**.73**	.14	.16	.00
	5	**.87**	.08	.09	–.03
	6	**.90**	.12	.07	–.04
Perceived Teachers' Support	1	.07	**.84**	.10	–.07
	2	.01	–.38	–.04	**.61**
	3	.09	**.86**	.11	–.08
	4	.15	**.74**	.10	–.03
	5	.13	**.85**	.14	–.05
	6	.12	**.87**	.12	–.07
Perceived Peers' Support	1	.04	.12	**.81**	–.02
	2	.05	–.01	–.34	**.64**
	3	.11	.10	**.85**	–.05
	4	.17	.13	**.72**	–.11
	5	.08	.10	**.83**	–.01
	6	.09	.12	**.85**	–.01

S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014; n = 2801.

Therefore, in the following analyses the 1st factor is used as the indicator of the perceived parental support, the 2nd factor as the indicator of perceived teachers' support, the 3rd indicates perceived peers' support, and the 4th is a new dimension of social support – the fear of being blamed.

6. PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS

To assess the correlation between the desire to leave school early and the perception of support from different types of significant others, the analytical method of multivariate regression was applied. The dependent variable was the respondents' declaration concerning the highest education level they would like to achieve (described in Section 4), recoded into the binary variable taking the value 1 when the respondent declared a desire to leave school without completing it, and 0 in

other cases[4]. The explanatory variables were the four factors indicating the scales of social support.

The analysis confirmed Hypothesis 1 – all the scales of social support are significantly correlated with the respondents' declared desire to leave school without attaining a secondary education. However, the percentage of the variance of the dependent variable explained by the multivariate regression model is not impressive – the Pearson's correlation coefficient for the model equals to R= 0.21. The direction of the unstandardized regression coefficient is negative in cases of the scales of parental, teachers' and peers' support, and negative in case of the fear of social blame scale (see Table 3), indicating the role of good social relations in limiting the risk of ESL.

TABLE 3: Coefficients of the multivariate regression model – desire to leave school early and the scales of parental, teachers' and peers' support, as well as fear of being blamed.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Constant	,030	,003		0
Perceived Friends' Support	-,029	,003	-,174	0
Perceived Parental Support	-,012	,003	-,071	0
Perceived Teachers' Support	-,016	,003	-,098	0
Fear of Being Blamed	,000	,003	-,003	0,894

S o u r c e: RESL.eu survey 2014; n = 2801.

Out of the four scales applied to the model, the one measuring perceived friends' support takes the highest value of standardised regression coefficient ($\beta = -0{,}17$), thus confirming Hypothesis 2: the most important factor of social support correlating with a desire to leave school early is the quality of students' relations with peers. The fear of being blamed seems to be irrelevant.

As mentioned in the Section 4, the educational plans of the respondents are strongly related to the type of school they were attending at the time of the survey, with the ZSZ students being the least desirous to continue their education. The perceived peers' support is correlated with this variable as well ($\beta = 0.12$), giving a much better approximation than the other three scales of support.

[4] The 'I don't know' answer was classified as missing.

7. MAIN RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Peers, parents, teachers and the interplay of various networks

The results of our research are in accordance with the other studies proving that students with a high level of social support from various resources achieve better grades at schools, devote more time to learning, and feel more satisfaction with their school life (Lawrence 2000). With respect to the results of our research, it should be emphasized that for youth the social support from peers is of special importance. Friendly relations with peers impact on self-esteem, ensure emotional safety, help to develop interests or hobbies, teach cooperation in group, provide support in difficult situations, and as well they constitute a model of future social relations. A friendly relationship as the only one creates the opportunity for so-called 'intimate disclosure' (Buskirk-Cohen 2012), which for many young people seems to be impossible in contacts with other people, including relatives.

Although the results of our study indicate the dominant role of peer groups in relation to the upper secondary school and educational plans of the youth, it seems that in creating their portfolio of resources the students at this age rely on social capital and social networking competences developed earlier in their immediate social vicinity – family, school, local environment (Howe 2010). Therefore, in the discussion it is worthwhile to look at the other two sources of support (parents and teachers) and their importance for school performance and the educational aspirations of young people.

Carbonaro (2004) indicates that learning outcomes and, more precisely, the effort that students exert at school is strongly related to the character of social ties with their parents. The author describes four main mechanisms that explain the way in which those two elements – youth's relations with parents and school performance – can be related. These are: communicating standards and norms regarding school performance; devising rules and setting limits on activities that might undermine students' motivation; enforcing norms by monitoring children's behaviour; and finally, defining clear educational expectations.

A similar approach can be used to explain the importance of social ties with teachers (Carbonaro 2004). Students' greater commitment to learning is associated with a perceived supportive character of teacher-student relations, clear teachers' expectations, a high level of confidence in students' possibilities to achieve set educational goals, and last but not least, in perceiving the teacher to be legitimate authority figure.

Rosenfeld (2000: 219) underlines that: *although perceived high teacher support appears to be a necessary condition for positive school behavior, affect, and outcomes, it is not a sufficient condition. Perceived teacher support alone is not effective; teacher support must be perceived in combination with perceived support from parents or friends, albeit the best combination is perceived support from all three providers.*

7.2. Social capital at school and the broader Polish context

However, it should be noted that students' relations with teachers are not suspended in a vacuum. Today's school is characterized by an erosion of social capital, and a culture of mutual distrust or even hostility (Dudzikowa 2008), and is seen as a place where processes of segregation and reproduction of inequalities takes place (Boudieu & Passeron 1990, Anyon 1980, Ogbu 1990, Dolata 2008). However, it seems pertinent to repeat the question raised by Czapiński, whether and how the school is a place to build students' social capital (Dudzikowa 2008).

The results of our research do not signify explicitly that the student-teacher relationships are particularly bad or that youth's educational aspirations are surprisingly low, but the results of other research, for example the international project *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children. A WHO Collaborative Cross-National Study (HBSC)* – carried out in Poland cyclically every four years since 1982 – indicate a decrease in the level of satisfaction with the school environment among students. Particularly worrying seems to be the low assessment of social support from peers in the classroom in Poland (compared to the other countries involved in the study and compared to previous editions of the study). Since the early 2000s the percentage of teens who see their peers in the classroom as supportive and willing to help has been gradually decreasing (Woynarowska etal. 2015). Similarly the results of the PISA research prove that the percentage of students declaring happiness at school is significantly smaller in Poland, compared to the majority of the OECD countries. Polish students are also relatively critical in their opinions concerning the benefits of school education (Kaye et al. 2014: 43–44).

This could indicate two phenomena: 1) a negative attitude of students towards school in general – regardless of whether or the relationships with teachers are satisfactory or not, which may indicate the oppressive character of this institution (Bell 1997, Kelly & Brandes 2010) or 2) a low level of trust and community involvement in Polish society, which translates into low levels of social capital. Confirmation of both of these hypotheses can be found in many international and

Polish researches (OECD 2013, Woynarowska et al. 2015, Czapiński & Panek 2013, Sztabiński & Sztabiński 2014, Jaskulska 2012).

7.3. Final remarks

The preceding sections verified that the scales of the perceived support the students receive from parents, teachers and peers (indicators of trust and social capital) correlate with the expressed desire to leave school early, however the Pearson's R coefficient values indicate that this correlation is of limited importance and the perceived support from friends is visibly more important than the perception of support from parents and teachers.

This article has pointed out the importance of perceived social support in relation to the development of young people's educational plans. Given the results obtained and the social changes taking place in Poland, there is a need to take actions that will strengthen the development of a positive school climate. Strengthening friendly peer relations can be a major factor improving the social capital of teenagers, and thus their resilience to various educational and professional challenges.

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ODCZUWANE WSPARCIE ZE STRONY RODZICÓW, NAUCZYCIELI I RÓWIEŚNIKÓW A RYZYKO PRZEDWCZESNEGO PORZUCENIA SZKOŁY ŚREDNIEJ W POLSCE

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza zjawiska przedwczesnego kończenia edukacji w oparciu o bazę wyników badania ankietowego na próbie 3157 uczniów polskich szkół ponadgimnazjalnych (z terenu Warszawy i regionu Lublina), przeprowadzonego w 2014 roku. Przedmiotem analizy jest związek pomiędzy deklarowanym przez uczniów poziomem wsparcia społecznego jakie otrzymują – jako

wskaźnikiem kapitału społecznego – a ich planami na przyszłość, szczególnie gotowością do kontynuowania formalnej, pełnowymiarowej edukacji.

Metoda wielozmiennowej analizy wariancji zastosowana w celu przetestowania związku pomiędzy poziomem edukacji, jaki respondenci chcieliby osiągnąć, a deklarowanym przez nich poziomem wsparcia społecznego potwierdziła istnienie takiej relacji. Niemniej jednak, w odniesieniu do wsparcia ze strony rodziców i nauczycieli, związek ten okazał się niezbyt silny. Najważniejszą grupą znaczących innych są dla respondentów rówieśnicy/przyjaciele.

Słowa kluczowe: przedwczesne kończenie edukacji, wsparcie społeczne, grupa rówieśnicza, rodzice, nauczyciele

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SCHOOL INTEGRATION IN THE EYES OF MIGRANT CHILDREN. BASED ON THE POLISH MIGRATION TO NORWAY[1]

Abstract

In the context of the contemporary wave of migration from Poland to Norway and the growing interest in research on child migrants, this article focuses on children's experiences, their opinions, and the practices by which Polish migrant children growing up in Norway engage in school life in their receiving country. School integration is examined through 32 semi-structured interviews with the children aged 6 to 13, born in Poland and living permanently in Norway. In this article, migrant children are treated as experts on their school integration. Such an approach will help us to better understand their needs, and thus to develop an appropriate educational policy in Norway based on migrant children's experiences and their opinions about their school life. The aim of this article's is to fill the knowledge gap pertaining to the integration of Polish children in Norway, seen from the missing perspective of the children themselves. The argumentation is based on the assumption that Polish children in Norway are "temporarily visible". When a migrant child does not manage to adapt to the school environment, regardless of the support he or she receives

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[1] Empirically, the article is based on the Work Package 5 study: *Children's experience of growing up transnationally*, conducted under the auspices of *Transfam* project titled *Doing family in transnational context. Demographic choices, welfare adaptations, school integration and every-day life of Polish families living in Polish-Norwegian transnationality.* The research leading to these results received funding from the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme operated by the National Centre for Research and Development under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014, within the framework of Project Contract No Pol-Nor/197905/4/2013.

from school, family and peers, then the costs of inclusion and integration increase and the difficulties multiply.

Key words: children, migration, school integration, research with children, Poles in Norway

INTRODUCING RESEARCH ON POLISH MIGRANT CHILDREN[2]

The sociological framework of migration entails a change of social environment (Biernath 2008:192), which has both a dark and a bright side (Nowicka 2011). For a child, migration is a turning point from his or her life-course perspective (Wingens et al. 2001) and constitutes an event that allows for gaining unique knowledge and experiences which would otherwise be unavailable (Gober 1993). Regardless of the weighing of costs and gains incurred by a child in a migration process (Burchinal & Bauder 1965), it must be underscored that it was only at the end of the 20th century that we witnessed an increased interest in migrating children. The shift has taken place as a consequence of the paradigmatic change in sociology of childhood (e.g. James et al. 1998)[3].

As a result, the number of studies treating child migrants as significant social actors has increased. Contemporary literature has started to adapt a more 'child-centred approach', giving voice to Polish children's own notions of mobility, family and school, as well as emphasizing children's agency (e.g. Ni Laoire et al. 2011, Moskal 2014, Sime & Fox 2014, Pustulka, Ślusarczyk & Strzemecka 2015, Slany & Strzemecka 2015).

Norway has for many recent years occupied top places in most ranking listing the best, richest, happiest, or most prosperous country in the world (e.g. LI 2014). One of the reasons for its high ranking is its model of socio-economic policy (Anioł 2009). The main features of the Norwegian model – classified by Gøsta Esping-Andersen (e.g. 1990) as a social democratic model – is a developed social policy, in particular its social security system. This is important in the migrant family context, as settled foreigners may make use of the extensive support system, for

[2] I am grateful to the young experts (children) and their families who shared their experiences for this study and acknowledge their contribution. I am also grateful to Prof. Krystyna Slany and Prof. Hieronim Kubiak from Jagiellonian University in Kraków for their useful comments and ongoing support.

[3] Under "the new sociology of childhood", children are treated as active subjects, capable of having and expressing their own opinions and views on their private realm (e.g. family) and public lives (e.g. school) (e.g. Ni Laoire et al. 2011).

instance the *child benefit.* According to estimates, Poles form the largest group of immigrants living in the Kingdom of Norway (91,000), followed by Swedes (37,000) and Lithuanians (35,000) (SSB 2015). Since 2007, work and family immigration have become the most common reasons for immigration (see also Iglicka & Gmaj 2014)[4]. It is worth noting that only 793 children of Polish origin lived in Norway in 2004, a number that grew significantly, to 5,939 in 2013 (Slany & Strzemecka 2015, forthcoming, cf. Dzamarija 2014: 35).

In general, school is recognized as a crucially important socialization environment for children, and this is particularly true for children with a migration experience (Reynolds 2008: Nowicka 2011). A review of the sociological literature shows that the issue of school integration seen from the perspective of Polish migrant children is a topic rarely covered in the research. Especially in the Norwegian context, there is a dearth of research dedicated to Polish children growing up there as migration research subjects (e.g. Pustulka, Ślusarczyk & Strzemecka 2015, Slany & Strzemecka 2015). The migrant family studies usually focus on children, but frequently through the lens of their parents (e.g. Ślusarczyk & Pustulka forthcoming), educational experts, as well as educational policy (e.g. Ślusarczyk & Nikielska-Sekuła 2014, Nikielska-Sekuła forthcoming). There are a number of reasons for this gap in the literature, i.e. (1) difficulty in accessing migrant children of an early age; (2) the need to keep strict ethical guidelines and obtaining parental as well as the child's consent; (3) the need to find a suitable place for conducting a study; (4) skills and knowledge about research methods appropriate for children are also important, not to mention the risks and psychological costs of a study; as well as, crucially, (5) in the Polish-Norwegian context it has become very popular nowadays to conduct a public discourse about Norwegian institutions, especially *the Child Welfare Service* of *Norway* (*Barnevernet*) (Bivand Erdal 2014). Many Polish migrants have trouble understanding and trusting the Norwegian state, which plays a strong and an important role for social integration in general, and more precisely, enters into the homes of residents through its institutions of

[4] Polish immigrants have become the largest group of foreigners in this country over a relatively short period of time. The contemporary mobility of Polish citizens to Norway can be described as three waves of movement: (1) the political refugee in 1980s; (2) the seasonal worker in the 1990s, to the Polish family after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, (3) Poland's accession to the EU and the European free movement of labour (Friberg et al. 2012).

support and control. In the eyes of parents, the Norwegian state may sometimes appear to play the role of a "family-policeman"[5].

Research conducted by Norwegian researchers, for instance Randi Waerdahl (forthcoming), suggests that Polish children are relatively invisible in Norwegian schools (the term "invisible immigrant child" is sometimes employed). This is explained in part by the visible similarities, i.e. similar racial features and similar clothing – which make Polish children indistinguishable from their Norwegian peers. Waerdahl (*ibidem*) also notes the connection between the relative invisibility and a lack of statistical data on Polish children, which seem to be included and attempted to be integrated in a non-problematic way – "in the true spirit of Norwegian egalitarianism". Waerdahl further argues that this obscuring of the differences and incorrect attribution of individual problems and challenges may impede Polish children's opportunity structures and their ability to do well at school, as well as hinder trust between family and school realms[6]. Consequently, even if a child of Polish migrants is viewed as "invisible" by academics or teachers in their school or division, the child remains "visible" for himself or herself, needing to tackle migratory experiences that affect school performance and peer relationships.

The argumentation is based on the claim that Polish children in Norway are "temporarily visible". When a migrant child does not manage to adapt to the school environment, regardless of the support he or she receives from school, family and peers, then the costs of inclusion and integration increase and difficulties multiply.

INTERSECTING MIGRATION AND EDUCATION IN NORWAY

Every child staying in Norway for a period longer than three months is allowed to partake in education. Children aged 1 to 5 can attend kindergartens (*barnehage*). Pre-school in Norway is organised on a voluntary and fee-paying basis. If parents

[5] Some behaviors which are legally and culturally acceptable in the parent-child relation in Poland (e.g. public displays of emotions, a child's crying or screaming) may be treated as an abuse of children's rights in Norway. Any potentially inappropriate parental acts are referred to Barnevernet in Norway by public/social service employees, school personnel, neighbors, nurses, doctors or other persons. Child's statements can also serve as grounds for initiating a formal procedure (MSZ 2015).

[6] Randi Waerdahl's article (forthcoming) focuses on one of the findings from Work Package 7 – *Integration and re-integration of Polish children in school*, conducted under the auspices of the *Transfam* project. The examples are from the set of data that comprises the Norwegian case, and deals predominantly with the understandings of Polish parents and from the Norwegian teachers' point of view.

cannot afford the additional costs, they may benefit (for a small fee) from the services of "open pre-school" (*åpen barnehage)*. Unlike pre-schoolers, children are required to attend obligatory schooling for 10 years (*grunkskole*). *Grunnskole* comprises seven primary school grades (*barneskole*) and three years of middle-school education (*ungdomskole*). Compulsory school education for children aged 6 to 15 is free. In addition, children learning in the first to fourth grades can benefit from an afterschool program, actually offered both prior to the commencement of classes and when the lessons are done in the afternoon. Enrolment in the afterschool program – SFO (*Skole Fritids Ordning*) requires paying a fee. Following middle-school, children can begin an elective, but free of charge, high school (*videregående skole*), which is supposedly tasked with preparing students for higher education (*studie kompetanse*) (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2007, IOM 2014). Importantly, Waerdahl argues that the dominant perception of the Polish inflow as an intra-European labour migration obscures the need for introducing family-centred laws or regulations. Unsurprisingly, this means that neither nation-wide standards nor municipal solutions for handling Polish children's issues are featured in public, institutional or national debates (Waerdahl forthcoming). Pupils with an insufficient skill level in the Norwegian language are entitled to special assistance, which in practice means more Norwegian classes, aimed at quicker learning and more rapid integration. An educational entity has an obligation to examine the level of Norwegian language competence and to evaluate which learning strand a student should be assigned to (regular or with assistance). The school headmaster has the final say on the matter. Students can attend separate school divisions in the so-called welcoming classes (*innføringsklassen*) (Tomczyk-Maryon 2014). The primary goal behind the educational offer for the newly arrived pupils originating from ethnic minorities is to attain a level of fluency in Norwegian, which is supposed to allow children to benefit from educational activities and contact with peers. Participating in such activities is free and voluntary (IMO 2014)[7].

[7] The limited scope of his article does not allow for an extensive coverage of the Norwegian education system and programs aimed at integrating children of immigrants into the Norwegian school environment. More details can be found in Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2007, Mańkowska 2014, Ślusarczyk & Nikielska-Sekuła 2014, Ślusarczyk & Pustulka forthcoming, Nikielska-Sekuła forthcoming.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this article I analyse the opinions of the children of Polish immigrants on the subject of how they function and feel in Norwegian primary schools. Since the study concerns an interpretation of integration process of Polish immigrants' children with a direct migratory experience (meaning children born in Poland who migrated to Norway with their parents), a conceptualization of culture shock was selected to be applied in the analysis (Obeg 1960). In the context of changing one's social setting, which clearly applies to the migration experience, it is assumed that culture shock is a phenomenon occurring in the space where two cultures collide. It entails a clash of previously internalized norms and values with the surroundings of the receiving country. Culture shock encompasses the physical, psychological and social situation of a person and is linked with negative emotions, impeding well-being and lessening general life satisfaction (*ibidem*). It is argued herein that the level of culture shock is not influenced only by the starting level of social, economic and cultural capital of migrant families and by their awareness and desire to acquire/make up for deficiencies in the cultural competences and cultural codes (Rapaille 2007) of the host society, but also by the nature of social borders in the destination society (Alba 2005). In the examined case of school integration of Polish children, the culture shock level and the degree to which values conflict are also dependent on the requirements that Norwegian schools impose on children of immigrants.

The conceptualization of culture shock is here paired with the processual/dynamic approach to integration, which is a notion marked by ambiguity and ambivalence. In spite of certain problems with the integration concept, I follow Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazowska's approach (2008: 49), which defines it as a dynamic process rather than a desired state of stability. The article draws on an understanding of integration which presumes a transnational character/dimension of migration (Kindler 2008: 51). Transnationalism accentuates individual agency, while developing a theoretical framework indispensable for explaining the situation of migrants who live "dual lives" in two countries – "here and there" (Vertovec 2010: 7). Honing in on an array of relations that transgress nation-state boundaries and their impact on migrating individuals and groups, transnationalism underlines a multitude of adaptation options and is seen as a strategy that allows for the "inclusion" of a migrant, rather than delaying/hindering the processes (Vertovec 2007). It is assumed here that the integration process of migrants, including at schools, not only differs across immigrant groups but is also marked by diversity within a given ethnic minority (e.g. a group from a single country)

(Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008). Researchers (Chiswick 1978, Ni Laoire et al. 2011) believe that the costs of integration incurred by an individual during the early phase of their stay abroad are high. However, if a migrant invests in the oftentimes difficult process of "inclusion" into the new society quickly, then the costs of integration will begin to fall. Analogously, when an immigrant fails to engage in efforts connected to adaptation in the receiving society, then the costs and possibilities of "inclusion" become both higher and scarcer, respectively (Gordon 1964).

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research with children, I used the paradigm of the sociology of childhood (e.g. James et al. 1998, Ni Laoire et al. 2011)[8]. I look at the process of integration from children migrants' point of view and treat them as experts on their experiences. Within this theoretical and methodological framework, I conducted participatory research with children of Polish immigrants in Oslo and bordering communities within a radius of 200 km, from January to May 2014. During this period of two weeks, I was supported by two field researcher assistants[9].

In this article, a sociological analysis of the school integration of Polish children in Norway from the perspective of migrant children is explored through: (1) semi-structured interviews with children aged 6 to 13 (a total number of 30),

[8] This paradigm comprises several main components, such as: respect for children's competences, according them subjectivity, considering diverse contexts over the course of the entire research process (e.g. social, cultural, economic and historical), the assumption that a child is an expert in terms of his/her life and, last but not least, is an actively involved participant in research. The researcher is therefore obliged to negotiate his/her role with young participants (Dockett et al. 2011).

[9] The participants were children aged 6 to 13, born in Poland, Norway, as well as the UK and living permanently in Norway. The children come from Polish-Polish and Polish-Norwegian couples, currently attend primary schools and speak Polish (at least at a level that allows for a good communication flow). During the research encounters with children we used the following methods and research tools: (1) semi-structured interviews with children (a total number of 50), (2) drawings (a total number of 60), (3) observations accompanying the interview (children's rooms), and (4) Sentence Completion Method issued to older children (24 tests total, SCM was available in three language versions – Polish, Norwegian and English). The main issues, in the questionnaire of a semi-structured interview combined with drawing/s and SCM, were as follows: (1) family and leisure, (2) school/learning and friends/peers, (3) national identifications, belongings, choices and future plans. The situation of children from mixed (inter-ethnic) families is not analyzed in this article. Due to the specificity and distinction of this group, separate and more in-depth analyses are planned, and in the future comparisons will be made between children from nationally homogeneous and non-homogeneous families.

(2) and 19 Sentence Completion Tests filled in by children aged 9–13, born in Poland to intra-ethnic couples[10]. It is important to note that the analyzed 30 interviews actually encompassed 32 participants (20 boys, 12 girls), as two group interviews with sibling pairs (four children in total) were conducted in addition to the 28 individual interviews. More than half of the children in the respondents' group arrived in Norway at the kindergarten age of between 3 and 6 (18), while seven children moved when they were older than 7 years. Seven children moved in early life (from birth to 2 years of age). The children come from a variety of socio-economic levels of their families.

According to an earlier-conceived research scheme, each meeting with a child started with obtaining the written consent of a parent and the verbal consent of the child who was to participate in the study. The researcher presented the goal of the study, asked for a permission to audio-record the meeting, and answered any questions the parents and/or child/children had. After the consent was obtained, a child would usually invite a researcher into her/his room. At that point the research meeting began with either drawing and/or interview probing. The initial warm-up task was aimed at building a rapport and often entailed a request for drawing of child's family and/or school and conversation about these topics. At the meetings the children also suggested various activities, for example looking at family photographs, playing board/console games, or eating a meal together. During these activities, we talked about life in Norway and links with Poland (see also Slany & Strzemecka 2015).

DISSCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Between the sending and receiving country: children in a "social stride"

The research yielded the conclusion that migrations to Norway have a rather definite character, i.e. are not circular or fluid – the members of the respondents' families are reunited/reunified and have made a decision to settle down and live together in the new country. The findings conclude that most barriers connected with the process of entering the school community in a different cultural sphere are faced by children born in Poland to Polish-Polish couples, who emigrated aged 6 and over. Though all children from this group were strongly affected by beginning their schooling in Norway, the experience was particularly difficult for children who attended Polish school prior to migration. This result confirms

[10] The following sentences were analyzed for the purpose of examining school integration: (1) My school is…, (2) My friends are…

earlier suppositions about the problems of the "1.5 generation" – the migrants born in the parents' country of origin and at least partially raised in the sending country (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008: 50). The key importance of the demographic indicator of age results from the fact that a relatively large portion of social capital is gained in the early years, meaning that the younger the migrant, the higher the probability of successful integration in the new society (Elder 1990).

School integration in the context of family background and support

Research suggests that the family situation (economic standing, language skills of family members, awareness of the importance of school-home communication, which is an absolute essential base for participation in Norwegian school life) highly impacts on school satisfaction. Two cases, of Honorata and Nina, are presented below to illustrate how two children of the same age and gender coming from different families represent totally different patterns of entering and functioning in the school environment[11].

The case of Honorata (10)

Honorata's father, who is a language teacher by training, engaged in seasonal work in Norway between 2004 and 2012, taking care of a wealthy man and his estate. In 2013, the entire family – father, mother (also a language teacher), and three children settled in Norway for good, following a carefully scheduled migration. The planning took into account that the children should arrive in time for the beginning of a new school year in order to start education in the foreigners' division, and then move to regular Norwegian system schooling after completing this step. The parents also secured a contract with an employer, consulted teachers, and signed their children up for school after careful research. As a result of meetings with a headmistress, each of the three children was placed in a different division to minimize their contact and foster learning the Norwegian language. Both the parents and children revealed that they were content with schooling in their community during the interview, mainly reflecting on the excellent system of "inclusion" and the prime system of school-home communication. According to Honorata's parents, the preparatory class constituted "a bridge" that a child can smoothly cross and enter the Norwegian school system, without suffering any dangers to emotional stability after migration. The parents admitted that Honorata "blossomed like a flower" and was growing up quickly. They supported the process by having only Norwegian and English television, buying Norwegian

[11] The names of all children have been coded.

books and subscribing to the *Aftenposten Junior* daily, all in order for the children to blend in with the Norwegian society. Honorata's family treated migration as a project, which they prepared and consequently executed in accordance with their "submersion" strategy.

The interview with Honorata shows that she likes her new school very much and likes being there. She admits that there is nothing she doesn't like in Norway, respects her teachers and says they "are nice (…) always accompanying us outside (…) I asked when I could not understand during the first days (…) but I do not need that much help". According to the children who attended a Polish school before emigrating, Norwegian schools have "different rules and principles". Honorata lists what she considers to be the three most important rules, and explains what they entail:

(1) "there's a great rule that you go outside whatever the weather. And in Poland you could only go out in spring and summer";

(2) "we have a rule that if someone is teasing you or doing something to you, you say "stop";

(3) "in Poland when I had maths for example, they (the teachers) taught me differently, with different rules. But here (in Norway) they teach you calmly. If you don't manage to do something, then (the teachers) don't tell you what the answer was, but you have to think yourself".

The case of Nina (10)

A completely different account of her school experience is given by Nina, who has lived in Norway with her mother and brother since 2010. Nina's mother finished a vocational training in Poland and works as a cleaner in Norway. She's a single parent, whose ex-husband remained in Poland and seasonally works in the UK. Interestingly, it is Nina's grandmother who was a pioneer migrant to Norway in the 1980s, followed by mother's brothers in 2004. Nina's mother claims that the fact that the girl did not go to Norwegian kindergarten left her without certain knowledge and affects her generally weaker academic performance in the primary school. She underlines that Nina initially did not want to go to school at all, and even threw herself at the car to stall departure when leaving for school. Early on, the family enlisted help from a tutor (English lessons, for example, were given by the mother's friend from the neighbourhood and an uncle). Today the girl no longer takes private lessons but still has problems at school, which resurfaced when she was diagnosed with dyslexia at the end of third grade. In order to attract attention, Nina often told teachers that she had headaches, nightmares, and trouble sleeping. As a consequence, teachers called her mother to school several times,

although they did not take further measures. It is noteworthy that the mother and daughter do not attend integrative meetings for families – the so called *familie gruppe*, neither does Nina frequent social events – like birthday parties of her friends from school. In response to problems, the mother wants to use the school's psychological assistance (PPT – *Pedagogisk-Psykologisk Tjeneste*), but she is afraid of the institutional consequences, especially fearing the intervention from *the Child Welfare Service* of *Norway* (*Barnevernet*), which could even recommend taking her child away and placing her in forster care. It is clear that Nina's family is generally settled in Norway with work and schooling, but that they do not trustingly partake in the social life in the country. This behaviour influences Nina's educational attainment and her level of satisfaction with life and school.

Nina admits that she has encountered "problems" in her contacts with her teacher, but her mother does not speak sufficient Norwegian and is therefore not involved in solving her daughter's "problems". As a result, her grandmother has to go to the school. Nina's assessment of the situation is as follows:

> (…) I have fairly serious problems with her (the teacher) and it is very hard to make myself understood to her and sometimes we've had some big problems, that people, that just grandma at least, is always on my side. She always comes to school and speaks to the teacher. Mum can't quite protect me from that, because firstly she doesn't speak too much Norwegian, and secondly she most of all doesn't feel that she can kind of protect me strongly, but Grandma is more like that, that she'll always protect and always look out for me most of all. I have a feeling that the teacher always gives me more homework. I have this thing where it is harder for me to read, different letters get mixed up. The teacher knows it because they gave me a test, she knows but she still gives me more homework. And it is difficult and I tried talking to her and she says that it's "so I learn more" (...) I am scared to talk with her, generally to talk about anything. Often I do not manage to get homework done and then she calls my mum, because, well, I haven't done homework, or they are compli... I, I can't explain to my mum, because I already talked to the teacher (…) I know I do many things wrong (…) I would even change my group, maybe repeat a year, calmly. The teacher does not understand that I need more help and more time.

Going beyond the two cases of Honorata and Nina, it is noteworthy that children who are more satisfied with school (grades, contact with teacher, peer group memberships) are more engaged in practices linked with school/peer life. Conversely, children who do not do so well at school and feel (even a partial) sense of non-belonging to peer groups, have a tendency to focus more on their family life. More specifically, they tend to intensively practice the transnational family and what Olena Nesteruk and Loren Marks call "emotional transnationalism" (2009: 77).

Children's relations with teachers and assessment of support from school

The interviews highlight that Norwegian classrooms usually comprise 21 to 26 pupils, with a generally even distribution of boys and girls. School administration appears to be assigning children to divisions in a way that does not allow for too many children from one nationality to learn together, though this rule is not a standard for all schools in the country.

The children interviewees often pointed to a teacher as a very important person in their school experience, impacting on how they do and how they feel (especially in the early stages of living in Norway). The teachers' assessments were predominantly positive and underscored their appropriate preparation for working with children and their capacity to give different types of support, even if they sometimes "yell". Overall, 47% of children gave a positive opinion of their teachers, 9% shared some ambivalence, and only 6% expressed a negative evaluation. Many children – 38% – did not articulate their views on this matter[12].

An example of a positive view

> We came here when I was six years old. And I did not know Norwegian at all, but the very next day after we arrived I had to go to school, (…) but I had a teacher who was also Polish. She taught me (…) She is very nice (…) she helps to understand (…) She goes to a different room and explains it. And then an assistant watches the other children who are in the class (Aneta, 9, in Norway since 2010).

An example of a negative view

> I don't like them (teachers) and especially (name of a teacher). No, I do not like her, she's mean (Adrian, 10, in Norway since 2008).

An example of an ambivalent view

> (…) It's not that I don't like it, it's my duty to go to school and learn, but the teachers here, they sometimes have different characters, like my sibling, (brother) is nice, has patience, but I have a different temper, no patience, hot-head (Wojciech, 12, in Norway since 2007).

Language skills

In the context of language skills and preferences, it is notable that among the 19 respondents who completed Sentence Completion Tests (11 filled in by girls and 8 by boys), the children chose the Norwegian version 11 times, the Polish version 6 times (though one was filled in in a combination of Polish and

[12] In these interviews the conversations moved towards other topics, like hobbies and paid extra-curricular activities.

Norwegian), and the English version twice. The most common explanation of the choice was a desire to showcase one's knowledge of the local language, and a second component was a difficulty with (mostly written) Polish[13].

Ten-year-old Adam, who has lived in Norway since 2008, recalled his early school days by saying that first two years were the hardest due to language skills and peer contacts. This emerges from other children's narratives, including those who began Norwegian school at the standard time, entering the first grade at the age of 6:

> First grade went fine, second grade went better, always better, and by the third, fourth, I spoke Norwegian fluently then. In first and second grade I had some small problems.

Oliwier (11, in Norway since 2011) draws attention to the crucial importance of having a Norwegian accent and touches upon the still viable stereotype of a migrant, which accompanies him even in the virtual world:

> If I had started school now, no one would have ever guessed that I was from Poland. They would take me for a Norwegian because I have a Norwegian accent, very similar to a (Norwegian) friend of mine. (…) This is very important for me because then… and sometimes my (Norwegian) friend asks (online) 'Ok, where are you, you Pole?' Just for fun, not in a serious manner but just jokingly when she is trying to find me in the (online) game. Because we have this one very popular computer game (Minecraft).

During the interviews, children often shared their tricks for learning Norwegian. For instance, 13-year old Katarzyna, who came to Norway in 2011, advises intensive learning of Norwegian words by watching Norwegian television channels (NRK), reading "interesting" and "engrossing" books from the school library (e.g. children's crime stories), and maintaining "moderation" in contacts with Polish friends at Norwegian school. As a result, children can complete the transition class for foreign children before the end of the school year and "find it easier" at primary school or lower secondary school. Katarzyna has the following to say about her initial strategy in contacts with her Polish friends in *innføringsklassen* and about her linguistic progress:

> All the girls who were Poles spoke to me in Polish, and I for example didn't want to. I just kind of isolated myself from them, so I could be with those and talk in Norwegian. As a result I completed the integration class a lot earlier.

[13] An analysis of grammar and orthographic knowledge would be outside the scope of this article.

Assessing peer groups and networks

Being accepted by peers, which often signifies relatively close participation marked by mutual approval, remains a key issue for migrant children. In the post-transnational phase (family reunification) (Muszel 2013), children usually feel a detachment from certain models of daily life and lifestyle, a loss of status, and the specific position which they held in their country of origin. This leads to a temporary sense of loss of security and a sense of otherness or non-belonging to the peer group (Ni Laoire et al. 2011: 161), as demonstrated by the following extract from for my interview with 11-year-old Kacper. Kacper has lived in Norway since 2013 and began schooling directly in the regular Norwegian school, without prior stay in the preparatory division for foreigners. This was simply due to the fact that the community where his family lives does not implement this introductory educational measure. For this reason, the family plans to move within Norway, specifically seeking a residential area and a community where a special division for foreigners is available. At present, Kacper feels sad and isolated from his school environment and peer groups. The language barrier prevents him from initiating friendships at school and maintaining them outside of the institution. Moreover, the boy does not stay in touch with his friends from Poland. He tried to contact an ex-class member through social media, but this friend did not want to maintain a relationship, explaining that he has forgotten his profile password and cannot log-in to chat. Kacper was so engrossed in migration preparations that he did not manage to say goodbye to his friend. Besides, he underlines that he has many friends online (for instance at the nasza klasa.pl, social media platform) and they play network games together. The world of games available online across social media platforms constitutes an important social setting for Kacper. He uses virtual reality to navigate through his current initial difficulties at school and mitigate his temporary feelings of loneliness and non-belonging among peers.

S: (author): So this is an online game with… Where you can play with someone you do not know? Or you play alone?

K: (You can play) with friends, for example… you can visit a friend's garden (…) you can play with everyone all over the world.

S: Oh, and what do you do during the breaks? I heard you go outside a lot?

K: Sometimes when one hides, one can stay inside.

S: Oh.

K: Under a table of something.

S: Oh. So you play football or what do you guys do?

K: Honestly you can do whatever you like during the breaks.

S: Oh, so what do you do?

K: Nothing special, I just walk alone.

Once again linking integration with its processual character (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008), interactions with peers begin to secure emotional safety, self-confidence and group belonging. Several things have to be noted here. First, the group dynamics, or more specifically the changes within the functioning style of a child migrant in a group generally move away from an isolating style toward a participating one, and result in the fact that local peers are ready and interested to make room for newly arrived foreign children in their ranks. Secondly, the process can have various degrees of intensity – lesser (Wojciech's case) or greater (Katarzyna's case):

I mean I like it (at school) but sometimes, it's just, when I started first grade I did not have so many friends in first grade. (…) One could still hear that I am not from Norway. Then in second grade it sounded like I was in Norway, so all was good, and, well, I still did not have friends and I got into fights a lot. I mean they fought with me, they made fun of me, that happened maybe up until fifth grade. Actually these were difficult times for me, when they like excluded me from their group, I was alone (…). And then now with people from school we made nice, we are friends more, we are closer than before. (…) here in Norway children are interested in different things from me. They have their own different behaviours, different food. Different (sometimes) means same, but still they have their own. They have their national holiday on May 17th, it is therefore different. (…) (Norwegians) have different rules. They believe that everyone should be friends. (…) In Poland it is different: you have one best friend, one favourite friend. There's no requirement for everyone to play with everyone else, like here in Norwegian school (where teachers) say that this is how it must be. They (Norwegian peers) talk about things differently. They ask how much your dad makes, and how much your mum does (…) Norway is a very rich country. I understand that this is a very rich country, and that it is good that there are not only poor countries but also rich countries. Even though – come on! – talking about money in school is too much (…) This is what I think, but well, my mum now says that children in Poland are also changing (…) But luckily my parents raised me well enough to not ask you how much money your father makes." (Wojciech, 12, in Norway since 2007).

Earlier, during the first year, I was really mad that we moved because I already had friends in Poland (…) and here when we came (to Norway), then all that I have somewhat built there (in Poland) was lost and I had to start everything all over from the beginning (…). In Norway there is no such thing that they call you names at school. It does not happen that they criticize you. They do not say that you study too much. I mean it was maybe at the beginning because it happened a few times that I was better than Norwegians attending first grade. And that could have annoyed them. I know I was better sometimes and that is the truth. But after some time, when I was here for one year already, after completing sixth grade, it became normal at the end. They had finally (…) gotten used to it, so there were no more problems like at the beginning, for instance. (…) You could call me an expert. I'd advise them (migrant children) definitely not to be ashamed when it comes to borrowing something at the start (…). Because

here everyone is just (open), it's different (from Poland). Not to be scared to invite someone and ask, "do you want to go out somewhere with me?" (Katarzyna, 13, in Norway since 2011).

Despite the limited national and ethnic diversity in Polish schools[14] the findings show that Polish children after migration do relatively well in the generally high level of national and ethnic diversity in Norwegian schools. However, taking into account the child's length of stay abroad, it must be underlined that children who have been in Norway for a shorter period of time (less than 12 months), tend to initiate and maintain contact mainly with other Polish children (as long as other Polish children attend the same grade). The research suggests that engaging in interactions with other Polish children is the result of having a common language (Polish), not of ethnic or racial prejudice against other children at school. Creating bonds of friendship with people that one can communicate with at a given time is a kind of temporary adaptation strategy, as language is one of the main "identity matchers" (Reynolds 2008: 12). Over time, as the process of attaining competence in the Norwegian language progresses, the child's circle of friends begins to grow and diversify through a strategy of entering relations with nationally heterogeneous groups. When the child's self-esteem improves, he or she starts to feel proud of being able to establish a relatively strong position in the group. What's more, the research results indicate that at the same time such a child concurrently weakens his or her interactions with children from Poland, who might be less popular in the peer group for a variety of reasons (e.g. due to uncertainty, worse knowledge of the Norwegian language, differing interests, or being less focused on physical appearances)[15].

CONCLUSIONS

Every migration has its "brighter" side (e.g. improved economic standing of a family, gaining unique competences) and "darker" consequences (e.g. temporary or permanent feeling of non-belonging). Success in integrating the children of immigrants is of enormous consequence for the receiving society, and the education system plays a crucial role in this process. The findings suggest that the majority of barriers in the process of entering school community in a different cultural sphere are faced by children born in Poland to Polish-Polish couples, who

[14] Bożena Muchacka (2015: 23) states that: "The population of foreign children in Polish educational facilities is not significant. In 2011 there were 1,258 children in nursery schools, 2,876 in primary schools, and 1,104 in lower-secondary schools".

[15] This issue will be analyzed in an upcoming article.

emigrated aged 6 and over. In the post-migration phase, the children usually feel a detachment from certain models of daily life and lifestyle, and a loss of status and of the specific position which they held in their country of origin. This leads to a temporary sense of loss of security and the sense of "otherness" in school.

The findings show that Polish children in Norwegian schools are temporarily "visible" – treated as different/visible by their peers and feel themselves as such. The egalitarian and increasingly multicultural Norwegian society is generally open to diversity. At the same time, the integration process in Norwegian schools poses specific (obligatory, or at least desirable) requirements to the newly arrived children and their families (e.g. competence in the Norwegian language, regular home-school communication, sex education linked to other subjects like Norwegian, Biology, etc., and the integration of children and parents within family groups).

As a consequence, both sides – the school and Polish families – can be caught in a state of value-related conflicts and distrust for an extended time period. When a migrant child does not manage to adapt to the school environment, regardless of the support he or she receives from the school, family and peers, then the costs of inclusion and integration rise and difficulties multiply. Research points to the fact that the first two years in Norway are crucial for a potential relatively-quick adaptation, especially for children who had previous school experiences (kindergarten/primary school) in Poland. During this two-year period, every effort should be made for including a child in the Norwegian school life, concurrently neutralizing the effects of culture shock (Obeg 1960). Linking school integration with its dynamic character, Polish children will feel better in the Norwegian environment and subsequent education levels (middle-school, high school, university), therefore benefiting from social life.

I posit that conclusions and recommendations pertinent to Norwegian integration policies (including education) that delineate the frame of migrant children's school integration should include not only the opinions of experts or parents, but also take the experiences and views of children into account, ensuring polytonality. Based on my interviews with the children, I can state that the children are submerged in the world full of co-dependencies and relations between them, their families, school, peer groups and social settings (Poland and Norway). The image of their world resembles a transnational spider web, in which all items are connected to one another. Based on their experiences, they can give advice as to how to function in the new school environment. In this way, they can play the role of experts on their school integration. I suggest that migrant children's

views can be useful for: (1) children of immigrants and their families (to help with understanding what it means to be a child of immigrants and improve communication between the family, peers and teachers); (2) Norwegian school staff (to help them in understanding what it means to be a child of immigrants and improve communication between teachers, peers, the child and his/her family); (3) the Norwegian government (e.g. Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion), welfare institutions (e.g. Child Welfare Service of Norway) and/or academic/research centres (e.g. Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) – NTNU (to help build policy-focused measures for migrant children, responding to their current and future needs).

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INTEGRACJA SZKOLNA OCZAMI DZIECI MIGRANTÓW. NA PRZYKŁADZIE POLSKIEJ MIGRACJI DO NORWEGII

Streszczenie

W kontekście współczesnej fali emigracji z Polski do Norwegii oaz rosnącego zainteresowania badaniami z dziećmi migrantami, artykuł skupia się na doświadczeniach, opiniach i praktykach, przez które polskie dzieci dorastające w Norwegii włączają się w życie szkolne w tym kraju przyjmującym. Analiza integracji szkolnej opiera się na 30 pół-ustrukturyzowanych wywiadach z dziećmi w wieku 6 do 13 lat, urodzonymi w Polsce i mieszkającymi na stałe w Norwegii. Dzieci migrantów będę traktować jako ekspertów w dziedzinie swojej integracji szkolnej. Taka perspektywa przyczyni się do lepszego zrozumienia ich potrzeb, a tym samym do tworzenia adekwatnej polityki edukacyjnej w Norwegii, bazującej na doświadczeniach i opiniach dzieci migrantów na temat ich życia szkolnego. Celem artykułu jest uzupełnienie niedostatku wiedzy na temat integracji szkolnej polskich dzieci w Norwegii z punktu widzenia dzieci. Wiodącą tezą artykułu jest twierdzenie, że dzieci polskich imigrantów są „tymczasowo widoczne" w norweskiej szkole. Jeśli dziecko migrant nie podejmie wysiłków, aby przystosować się do środowiska szkolnego, bez względu na wsparcie które otrzymuje od szkoły, rodziny oraz rówieśników, to wraz z upływem czasu koszty integracji wzrosną i stanie się ona trudniejsza.

Słowa kluczowe: dzieci, migracja, integracja szkolna, badania z dziećmi, Polacy w Norwegii

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UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF IMPUNITY: THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE SYSTEM IN THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Abstract

This paper treats the social conditionings of institutional violence. First the very notion of the impunity, which creates the theoretical foundation of the consideration, is briefly discussed, followed by treatment of the scheme of the institutional(-ised) space of impunity with its constituent elements: common beliefs regarding the "nature" of the marginalised collectivity, the low social value ascribed to the collectivity, an ideological embargo on scientifically-based knowledge, and the expulsion of the marginalised from normals' field of vision. In the main part of the article the author presents a historic example of a social space of impunity: the children's residential care system in the Polish People's Republic (PPR). Examples of institutional and private violence in this space of impunity are depicted in the final part of the text. The narrative and biographical interviews with institutional care-givers, narrators' files analysis and FGIs constitute the empirical basis of the article.

Key words: institutionalised violence**,** impunity, social space of institutionalised impunity, children's residential care institutions

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INTRODUCTION

This paper treats the social conditionings of institutional violence in the "helping" sectors" with reference to the notion of *impunity*. The "dark sides" of formal organizations operating in the area of social work and rehabilitation have been analysed in sociology from its very inception, in particular within the framework of symbolic interactionism. The early analyses of correctional institutions for children and youth described by Chicago school authors were developed by Goffman (1961) in his legendary "Asylums". Sociological concepts and theories gain support from social psychology and its well-known experiments, especially with Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) (Zimbardo 2008). Sociologists and social psychologists share in this regard an interest in the situational (or cultural) conditionings of violence. In this article I consider the concept of *the space of impunity* as a set of important cultural and situational factors of institutional(-ised) ill-treatment of underprivileged children.

The concept of *institutional(-ised) impunity* is recognized more in law and criminology than in sociology. As a term "impunity" refers both to the lack of legal consequences of serious and minor crimes and to the cases of harmful anormative behaviours in which the social control mechanisms fail (i.e. moral, legal, and traditional sanctions are not applied or do not work, consequently the perpetrators of anormative behaviours remain "untouchable", even though their specific behaviours are culturally considered "immoral", "bad", "wicked", etc.). During the last two decades "impunity" and cognate terms ("official politics of impunity", "impunity regimes", "impunity law", "legal impunity", "levels of impunity", etc.) are applied almost exclusively by English and Spanish-language authors in analyses of genocide, war crimes, the crimes of military regimes, and the inequalities of (international) justice systems. Studies on democracy and civil society development, human rights protection and transitional justice create the general framework for such considerations (e.g. Burt et al 2013; Druliolle 2013; St. Germain and Dewey 2013). It seems that Burt, Amilivia and Lessa, researching the prosecution of human rights violation in Uruguay, were the first who used the concept of *institutionalised impunity* (Burt at al. 2013: 307). The concept of impunity also appears in the literature and refers to different kinds of corrupt practices, violence, maltreatment and neglect performed towards marginalised individuals and groups; those who – due to their unequal status – are deprived of access to material and symbolic resources or whose rights are violated (e.g. women and children, particularly in South America or Asia, ethnic minorities, etc.) (e.g. Boesten 2012; Brito and Pereira 2012). We can also find

some references to the field of social- economical- or gender-based inequalities (the impunity of "the wealth owners" [Cattani 2009] or the impunity of revenge pornography perpetrators [Salter and Croft 2015]). This article falls within the "stream" of studies on "lived experiences of those who traditionally have been left out of the analysis and marginalised" (Burt et. al. 2013: 309), focusing on the space of impunity established in the institutions called upon to protect or rehabilitate society's members[1]. Generally speaking, the concept of a space of impunity presents the mechanisms contributing to the maltreatment of individuals perceived as "marginalized", "less worthy", "pathological", etc. in institutional settings. Institutional employees acting in the space of impunity (re-)victimize their clients, service-users, wards, etc., neglecting their basic needs and depriving them of their rights. Weakness of mechanisms of social control both sustain and provoke further ill-treatment.

The still hypothetical concept of an (institutional or institutionalized) space of impunity[2] has been generated from the empirical data gathered since mid-1990s in studies on poverty and social exclusion in the city of Lodz and the Lodz region[3], however it seems that the very phenomenon of a space of impunity has been deeply rooted in every hierarchical social order, regardless of cultural and historical frameworks. Children and teenagers are treated – due to the cultural conceptualisations of childhood and the resulting lower social status of "minors" – as a collectivity especially vulnerable to the impunity phenomena. Although the historic progress of the welfare institutions is obvious (see, e.g., Kolankiewicz 2006), and children's rights and proper child care are nowadays mainstreamed in many international and national documents, we can still observe examples of serious neglect and violence affecting the youngest in many countries.

[1] The term "impunity" in this context has appeared, for example, in the studies of maltreatment of imprisoned women (Buchanan 2007), and in children's court testimony in cases of child sexual abuse in Brazil (de Brito and Pereira 2012). Buchanan, in describing the mechanisms of re-victimization in women's prisons, states that: "Prisons owe an affirmative legal duty to protect their inmates against abuse" (Buchnan 2007: 46, 53). She also demonstrates the significance of legal regulations in constructing institutional impunity (*ibidem*: 71–75).

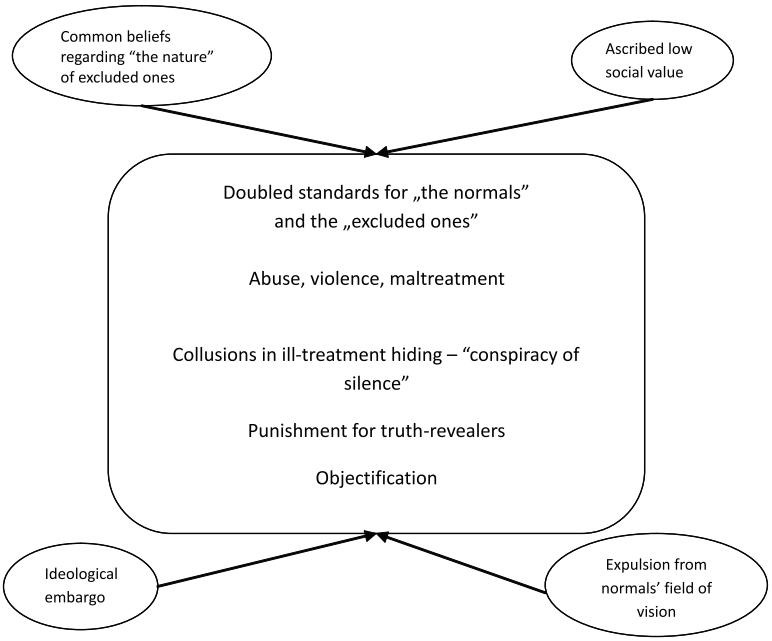
[2] Which, generally speaking, seems to be an interesting analytical tool in studies on all hierarchically-structured social settings.

[3] Before Poland's systemic transformation, Lodz used to be the 2nd largest city in Poland and the centre of its textile industry. During the last 25 years it has become a shrinking city with a wide scope of social problems. Since early 1990 the sociological team I work in, led by Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, has conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses on poverty and social marginalisation in the city of Lodz and the Lodz voivodship (region).

THE SCHEME OF THE SPACE OF IMPUNITY

The main thesis of this paper is that the acts of classifying and valuing the socially-excluded *others* by members of mainstream society have their impact on the institutional management of marginalisation and create the phenomenon designated as *the social space of impunity*. In every society we can identify some typical ways of "marginalisation management", i.e. the strategies that institutions and social actors adopt to cope with socially excluded persons. Some of them are in the permanent repertoire of societies, and some are particular, strongly related to the historic time and cultural system in place, built into scientific paradigms, social policy discourses, etc.

Generally speaking *the institutional(-ised) space of impunity* as a social phenomenon has four constituent elements: 1) common beliefs regarding the "nature" of the marginalised collectivity; combined with 2) a low social value ascribed to the collectivity itself and to its members; 3) an ideological embargo (Kraczla 1992) on solid, reliable scientifically-based knowledge; and 4) expulsion of marginalised persons from the normals' field of vision (Picture 1).



Individuals, mainly professionals employed in social welfare and juridical institutions but also everyday participants in social life acting in the space of

impunity, "allow themselves" to treat socially-marginalized people in a way they would never treat persons perceived as members of the mainstream society. In a way, a double standard for the "normal persons" and "excluded ones" is a central attribute of this space. This "conspiracy of silence"[4] enables different kinds of maltreatment, much more easily conducted in a situation when there are no organisations or groups which stand up against the violence. In the space of impunity the victims are powerless, while their persecutors remain unpunished, or – according to Salter – "immune" from social and legal sanctions (Salter & Croft: 2015: 1). As the victims are invisible to the mainstream society, they cannot expect any help. An average mainstreamer who would happen by accident to enter this space usually experiences a kind of shock resulting from the differences between his imagination of assistance and/or correctional institutions and their reality.

UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN IN THE INSTITUTIONAL SPACE OF IMPUNITY – THE HISTORIC EXAMPLE OF THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (PPR)

As the very concept of the space of impunity has been generated from biographical data of social welfare clients, I will here present the historic example of institutionalised violence in socialistic Poland, as recounted in the biographies of adult leavers of group homes, interviewed in 2010–2012[5]. Due to dysfunctionality in their families, the narrators were placed in residential child care institutions in their childhood and/or adolescence during the last three decades of the PPR (from the early 1970s until late 1990)[6]. Even though the PPR represented the

[4] See Buchanan's remarks about the meaning of the "code of silence" in women's prisons (Buchanan: 2007: 67).

[5] Forty narrative and biographical interviews were collected within the research project funded by National Science Centre: "Institutionalised identity? The processes of identity development on the basis of biographies rendered by adults raised in residential care, Lodz, Poland 2011–2014", grant no 6716/B/H03/2011/40. The narrators' institutional files, made available to the researcher by the group homes and 3 FGIs conducted with the care-takers, teachers, probation officers and judges, professionally active in the children's residential care system in those years, represent here two other types of data sources.

[6] The system of residential care for children which functioned until late 1990 was created in Poland after World War Two in response to the needs of war orphans. Due to the weak tradition of professional social work in pre-war Poland it was organized within the framework of Ministry of Education (therefore it is characterized as "school-centred", i.e. oriented at providing children with basic education and vocational skills). The main tendency was to conduct large-size residential institutions; in contrast in to the de-institutionalization tendencies in western Europe and the USA in 1950 and 1960, where the children's institutional care institutions were labelled an "expensive

socialist welfare state model, with many social transfers available for those who were active on the labour market, it is rather difficult to say that the state with its institutions followed any clear principles of social policy, besides the so-called regulation of the wages of labour and prices of basic goods. People living at the margins of mainstream society[7] were isolated (not only due to mental but also due to architectual barriers[8]), concentrated in large-sized total institutions, and at the same time deprived of any other institutional help, stigmatised and/or penalised. While there were social welfare agencies situated at district health centres, they offered some services mainly to old and disabled people. Third sector organizations hardly existed. The NGOs established before the World War Two were eliminated in the late 1940s and early 1950s under the banner of class conflict. They were recognized as organisations run by "class enemies", and all their property was taken over by the communist government. The institutions run by those NGOs were turned into public property or liquidated (Leś 2000: 131–132). The only "survivors" – huge organizations like Polish Red Cross or The Children's Friends Society, were controlled by the state.

We should note that the criteria for being excluded from the socialist society was of a dual nature. Firstly they stemmed from the cultural norms, values and beliefs of Polish society, deeply rooted in tradition and religion, and the outcome of this phenomenon was the social exclusion of people who not only violated basic social norms, but also of those whose failure to 'fit in' was the result of perceptions within the framework of strict Catholicism. Thus to some extent traditional and religious values were interfering with the puritanism of the system[9]. Secondly, there was an ideological embargo[10] imposed on social problems and

failure" (Wolf et al 1976: 52 as cited in: Sutton&Mannes undated). Although the structure of the wards changed (the percentage of so-called "natural orphans" was diminishing, they were "replaced" by "social orphans" – children from multi-problem, underprivileged families), in the late 1980s the system operated in a rather stabilized way under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, an arrangement which lasted until the end of 1998. Since 1999 the children's residential care institutions have been transferred to the structures of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and this action began the process of systemic reorganization (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014).

[7] This group includes individuals and groups affected by social problems: criminal offenders, prostitutes, drug addicts, persons with all categories of serious mental (but also physical) impairment, homosexuals, deeply poor, "goldbricks", "deadbeats", persons permanently out of labour market, sub-cultural groups (e.g. hippies), and some ethnic minorities, especially the Romani people.

[8] For example, one could hardly meet a person in a wheel chair outside his/her home.

[9] E.g., the impairment of a child was perceived as "punishment" for parents' sins (deviant behaviour, alcohol abuse, or sexually transmitted diseases).

[10] The ideological embargo had its roots in the myth of social equality, mirrored in the propaganda of success, although some studies were conducted semi-officially, under the cover of

social inequalities in public and scientific discourse, not only in the PPR but also in the other socialistic countries. The embargo contributed to the removal of those socially low valued, excluded people from visual sight of the "normal persons". Moreover, some social problems were either politicised[11] or presented by the socialistic mass-media through a distorting mirror. Hence different groups living at the margins of society faced a tribal stigma, stigmatization, and isolation. Marginalised individuals, "invisible" to the mainstream citizens, were deprived of social support and could be easily placed in the space of impunity.

In general, the members of families with multiple problems are a "typical" example of a social group endangered by social exclusion. Poverty and unemployment, combined with drug/alcohol addiction, child neglect, violence, etc., were and still are one of the main premises for undertaking institutional intervention in Poland and other European countries. While adults in such families are assessed by professionals (school teachers, social workers, psychologists, etc.) as persons who are not able to fulfil parental tasks, their children – on the basis of an order of a family proceedings court – are placed in residential care.

The legal acts of the PPR created the framework for the intervention undertaken in the cases of children deprived of parental care[12]. One such act pointed out that staying with the natural family was in the best interests of a child, and that children could be placed in institutions only when all other efforts aimed at improvement of a situation of a family were ineffective (Dziennik Ustaw 1964, par. 9, as cited in Kamińska 2000: 18–19). However, multi-problem families in the socialist reality were deprived of proper help and marginalised in their environment, thus their problems deepened over time (Hrynkiewicz 2006). Polish children's group homes had all the typical traits of Goffman's total institution – a forced residence, a schedule of daily activities carried out in a group, restricted contacts with the outside world, a clear staff-inmate split; some institutions fulfilled just the biological needs of residents at the very basic level, neglecting or ignoring children's emotional needs (Goffman 2006; Golczyńska-Grondas 2014). The staff, with differentiated professional skills and personal capacities represented the whole spectrum of attitudes towards the wards, from deep engagement and

"non-indicative" titles (e.g., it was possible to research "deprivation of needs" instead of "poverty") (Kraczla 1992, as cited in Tarkowska 2000: 9; Tarkowska 2000: pp. 9 and following).

[11] E.g. drug addiction was recognized in the late 1970s and 1980s as a plague imported to Poland from imperialistic countries.

[12] The Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed in 1989. It was ratified by Poland in 1991.

passion, to neglect, cruelty and violence. The members of personnel representing the latter attitude were able to manifest it in the institutional space of impunity[13].

Presumably, the space of impunity in the system of child residential care in socialist Poland was founded on beliefs about the nature of institutionalised children resulting from the beliefs regarding their parents and relatives[14]. The analysis of narrators' institutional files (dating from early 1970) reveal that the professional assessments (performed by school teachers, educators, probation officers, psychologists, etc.) leading to children's placement in residential care were constructed on two main attributes – poverty and dysfunctionality in family life. It is noticeable that the opinions of the specialists were founded not only on professional expertise and knowledge, but also on their individual perception rooted in values, norms, stereotypes, personal beliefs and prejudices. At least some of the analysed documents seem to depict arbitrary opinions, intuitively formulated, with regard to subjective standards and norms mostly referring to the desirability of the place of living, based on cultural norms required of the children's and adults' behaviour. One of the most important criteria in the assessment of parental incapacity were the moral competences of the adults and their (ir)responsibility (*very bad moral situation; children faced with immoral behaviours of the drunk parents; mother leads an immoral life, she often disappears from home, coming back after a few days (...) she is an incorrigible mother*). Generally speaking the responsibility for family dysfunction was ascribed according to sex – men were portrayed as offenders and women as weak, passive victims – while the descriptions given by narrators of their mothers' and fathers' functioning are far from being cast in "black and white" terms. The conditions and factors influencing parents' malfunctioning, as well as potential resources of the child's social environment, were not described in the assessments. Hence it appears that documents gathered at the beginning of the institutionalization procedure were constructed in order to justify the necessity of separating a child from the family (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014: 181–190). It also seems that the professionals in the children's residential care system, in locating the causes of parental incapacity in individual traits, capacities, values and behaviours and blaming the parents

[13] According to Philip Zimbardo: "a total situation" has the potential of transforming the behaviours of both the personnel and the wards (Zimbardo, Polish edition 2008: 268).

[14] Other authors, analyzing the issues of gender-based inequalities, also underline the importance of cultural beliefs as a cognitive component/factor in sustaining institutionalised impunity (Buchanan 2007; Slater and Croft 2015). See also Albert Bandura's considerations about the phenomenon of moral disengagement (e.g. Bandura 2002).

for the difficult situation, leaned toward cultural (behavioural) interpretations of poverty and social exclusion (Tarkowska 2013: 56–57)[15].

The negative evaluation of the parents – the next attribute of the space of impunity – is noticeable in both the documents and in some opinions formulated by the participants of the focus group interview:

> There were families with a very low cultural level where, in point of fact, for them the education for children in the school was just a needless duty; in this place between [2 streets], in the past there was (…) a club "Young Africa" created for such people. And there mummy met that… that student. So, that student, of course, behaved typically for a man. And shortly afterwards he left. And she [the institutionalised girl] stayed with the mother, who, however, in spite of all, did not return to normal, but she kept on looking for adventures; the parents simply didn't have time for her [the institutionalized girl] because there were eleven [children] and the mother had children with anyone who came across (all quotations from the FGI with retired workers of the children's residential care system).

Nowadays it is impossible to reconstruct thoroughly details of the attitudes of individualised personnel towards the children themselves, nor their professional practices in everyday work. Nevertheless, the typical trait of the socialist residential care institution was collective child-rearing; the staff applied this common standard to all the residents. Until the late 1980s children's homes followed a secular upbringing ideology, and some pedagogic methods were based on rituals typical of collective totalitarian institutions (e.g. collective responsibility or written self-criticisms displayed on notice-boards) (Czyż 2000: 41). This lack of an individualised approach was an important factor in the wards' objectification. Moreover, it seems that at least some of the care-takers followed the concepts of social or genetic inheritance, potentially enhancing the tendency to anormative behaviours in the space of impunity: [*the care-taker] always repeated: "You are just parasites and you will be worth nothing"; in the group home one also heard that you, that "you are nobody here! You're going to be rubbish*"; *"Your children will be sentenced to be placed in the institution just like you"*.

These beliefs and the negative valuations of wards were supported by traditional attitudes towards childhood, the children themselves, and their social status. A child in Polish society in those times was conceptualized as "an undefined and

[15] As Elżbieta Tarkowska states: "According to the cultural interpretation, also called behavioural, the causes of poverty are contained in individuals' traits, their abilities, capacities, values, attitudes and behaviours, e.g in laziness, recklessness, irresponsible procreation, incapacity of thinking in terms of foreseeable results of present activities, etc. The issue of an individual's personal responsibility for her/his economic situation is interlinked with this approach, as well as the practice of blaming the poor for provoking the situation in which they found themselves (Tarkowska 2013: 56, transl. AGG).

unfinished being, filled with deficiencies and imperfection" (Ornacka 2013: 16) rather than a subject entitled to autonomy, dignity, respect, or as a partner of an adult (Ornacka 2013: 36[16], Taraszkiewicz 1996: 22–23). These attitudes not only formed the basis for the power and dominance of adults in mainstream society, but they also possibly enhanced the objectification of children in residential care institutions.

The next factor constituting the space of impunity – the ideological embargo on scientific studies – did not cover research on children placed in group homes *per se*[17], yet it encompassed areas of crucial social problems which could be identified as important factors of children's institutionalisation, first of all poverty and other factors interlinked with this phenomenon. The exact number of impoverished individuals in socialist times remained unknown, although there were some estimations of the percentage of the Polish population living below the social minimum level (see Tarkowska 2000: 53–54). Again, the lack of scientifically-grounded knowledge enabled the maintenance of stigmatising beliefs and prejudices.

The expulsion from normals' field of vision regards mainly the inner reality of children's group homes. Most of institutionalised children attended public schools, they spent vacations on organized holidays with peers from different kinds of social environments. Students in their trainings and volunteers supporting children visited institutions. Yet, the group homes were isolated from their environment by fences and gates, they rarely maintained contacts with local environment and local community. Some institutions, like emergency shelters or social rehabilitation centres, had their own kindergartens and schools. Moreover, the wards in the territory of institution remained under the group power of the personnel (Goffman 2006). Due to the system of work organisation, each of the care-takers could independently form his/her own relationships with children, especially when the place was poorly supervised by a headmaster.

[16] "The evolution of conceptualizations of children and childhood also concerned children coming from the lowest strata of the social structure – children deprived of their own identity, hard-working, abused by adults for criminal activity" (Ornacka 2013: 36, transl. AGG).

[17] Many studies on institutionalised children were conducted along with the development of psychology, psychiatry and pedagogy, including in socialist Poland. Some early experiments provide other illustrations of the institutional space of impunity, e.g. the research conducted by H.B. Dye and H.M. Skeels in 1930, who proved the correlation between individualised care and an increase in the developmental index on the basis of observation of a group of infants from an orphanage placed in temporary care for mentally retarded women staying in the asylum (Ainsworth 1962, as quoted in Lis 1992: 64).

INSTITUTIONAL (-ISED) AND PRIVATE VIOLENCE IN THE SPACE OF IMPUNITY

In analysing the children's residential care system in the PPR we can point out two general categories of typical behaviour manifested in the institutions: a) institutionalised violence (open practices of violent, aggressive behaviour); and b) private violence (Buchanan 2007: 60), defined as hidden acts of ill-treatment.

With respect to a): a ward of the children's residential care system was objectified and victimised at the very beginning of the institutionalization procedure, at the very moment of placement in an emergency shelter or in a group home. Mostly children, even older adolescents, were taken to the institutions without any preparation, suddenly eradicated from their environment (*We didn't even know that... we would go [there]. The police simply came and they took us from home to the emergency shelter*). Sometimes, during the placement procedure[18], acts of direct physical violence took place:

> (...) it is my worst memory of my 40 years work in the court – placements. For me it was a trauma, for children, it was a trauma for parents, some release of aggression, after all it came down to some struggle. We had to place them with the support of militia, because sometimes there were really tragic situations, literally. The mother was convulsed, and while seeing it, the children too. I was taking four children, I had four well-built militiamen to help [their task was to protect the probation officer, they were forbidden to touch the children] (...). [The mother] was shouting. They did not touch her, they did not touch those children, and I – the four of them, the driver helped me, caught two, I took two others in my arms, because these were small children (FGI, probation officer).

Children who were located in emergency shelters were routinely placed for some time in a kind of isolation room, officially intended for captured escapees (*You sit in one room, you are closed, yes? Barred windows (...) nothing more. If you need to go the toilet you have to knock or ring the bell*). Due to the legal regulations siblings of differentiated ages *(the regulations did not take into account the differentiated age of siblings*) were separated. A child could stay in an emergency shelter no longer than three months, but this regulation was routinely ignored, and placement in this institution could be even prolonged until even a year or more. Such prolonged detainment meant that the wards were in a state of limbo, which enhanced their sense of instability (a significant attribute of the institutionalisation process *in toto* – Andrzejewski 2007; Golczyńska-Grondas 2015). Limits placed on family contacts (cancelling passes for home visits) and (the

[18] It happened quite often that children were taken from schools during classes. A parent or legal guardian could also bring a child to the institution him/herself.

threat of) re-placement to other more rigorous institutions (reformatory centres, psychiatric hospitals, or sanatoriums)[19] as either a punishment or a disciplinary tool are other examples of violent institutional, semi-official practices in residential care[20]. The wards' objectification creates yet another dimension of institutional violence in the space of impunity. The residents of children's homes were not able to decide their fate for themselves, neither in everyday life nor in important choices regarding their future[21].

As concerns private violence (b): the space of impunity sustained the phenomena of a "second life", as it generated the framework for hidden acts of private violence performed by some staff members. Probably the direct physical violence (from forced-feeding to punishments via torturous exercises[22]) performed by a number of care-takers, combined with the overwhelming sense of powerlessness, formed one of the most traumatic experiences for institutionalised children, both as victims and eye-witnesses (*and the first time I saw at [children's home name] how the boy was booted by a teacher. Booted! (…) At that moment I saw a young boy curling up with pain*). No narrator declared that she/he was a victim of sexual maltreatment themselves, but some of the narrators confessed to witnessing such acts[23]. A care-taker who wanted to avoid direct confrontation with a child could provoke peer violence:

> She hit my sister's head with her rings (...). I rushed toward her [the teacher] and told her not to hit her, (...) so she sent girls to us in the evening, who were older wards there, while we were fresh (...). These older inmates (...), they had a permission (...), when they [teachers] couldn't

[19] The practice of placement in a psychiatric hospital is still performed in Polish children's homes: "there were cases where the need for psychiatric hospitalization reported by the personnel was a kind of punishment for aggressive behaviour" (Sowińska 2007: 11–12, transl. AGG).

[20] "They sent me [to the reformatory institution] just so, without any court proceedings, without what now would be impossible (...). I wanted ev/even to commit suicide. For me, generally it was a terrifying world, the reformatory centre" (WDD10 Grażyna).

[21] For example nearly all of the wards of child care institutions in the 1980s were sent to vocational schools (Raczkowska 1983), quite often not corresponding with their individual capacities and interests. Sometimes such practices were performed against the best interest of a ward.

[22] "(…) for example 'the chair' by the wall, you leaned your back against the wall, kneeled to the level of the chair and stretched out your arms and you had to hold it for some time (…) And sometimes she [the care-taker] ordered another child to sit down on the other child's knees to make it easier ((ironically))" (WDD07 Bartosz).

[23] It happened that teachers did not react even in situations of sexual violence: "Quite often [the teacher or another staff member] caught somebody on the spot, but it was just that he hit a person or something, 'Go away, dismiss', [A: and this was all? the end?] . . . and that was all" (WDD 17 Grzegorz).

cope with something, to knock us down a peg or two (...). In reality they [the inmates] were sorting things out, that one should be polite to the teacher (WDD32 Sabina).

The acts of psychological violence experienced by narrators during their institutionalisation resulted in deep emotional trauma:

I remember, what I was wearing when I came to the group home, red dress, white cuffs, white collar. I remember how my mum was putting a little cross on my neck an she told me ((pause)), not to take it off ((cries))... and I remember too how the headmistress of the group home ordered me to take this cross off... ((cries)), that it was forbidden[24] to have something like that. (...) after so many years this headmistress is still alive (...) and I do not have a heart for this woman ((specific intonation)). (...) I do have very unpleasant memories of her, just because of this, that she ordered me to take this little cross off. And my mum, I remember, told me, my child say your prayers, have God in your heart and remember that I have given you this cross (WDD01 Agata, recalling the very moment of the placement in the children's home).

Almost certainly minor acts of psychological violence, stigmatising and humiliation were elements of everyday reality in children's homes in the PPR. It also seems that such behaviours were performed "just so", not only by serious perpetrators, but also by other staff members[25]. It happened that children were reviled in the most opprobrious terms, e.g. woken up by shouting or spanking. A care-taker who had funds for clothes and shoes at his/her disposal could refuse to supply a ward with new things, even though the old ones were worn-out or too small, and a hygienist at the emergency centre could cut off a protesting teenage girl's long hair, explaining her conduct by hypothetical pediculosis. Moreover, defraudation of the wards was an observable phenomenon at group homes. The inmates were aware that kitchen personnel took food home. During the times of martial law, staff members felt entitled to supply themselves in the first place, depriving children of different goods (food, clothes) delivered to the residential care institutions by international aid organisations from Western Europe (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014). A few institutional leavers are, retrospectively, conscious that the mistreatment they experienced as young children resulted from their lower social status (*it seems to me (...) that – as the inmates – we were on better terms with the administration and such social service [workers], (...)*

[24] The residential care institutions in the PPR had to have a lay character.

[25] "The worst thing there were teachers, because they allowed this / (…) and I remember it was such, trauma and that it was that they mentally/, because they were not allowed to beat or something, but they brought us down mentally, for example one came back from home after a pass 'So why mother didn't give you the grub?' And it was more such that one had to bite the bullet, say nothing, because one couldn't" (WDD32 Sabina).

an accountant or a cleaning lady, (...) these people talked with us as if we were normal people, in a sense they even wanted to be our friend).

The "conspiracy of silence" at different levels of the administrative hierarchy within the system was conducive to hiding ill-treatment, even though it seems likely that staff members were aware of the acts of power abuse performed by their colleagues[26]. Mostly the inmates – convinced that the perpetrators represented a kind of "total power" – were too frightened to snatch on the teachers. They doubted if anybody would believe their stories and they were aware that they would remain unaided, as they did not have support even from relatives (*we were really... powerless, we couldn't do anything (...) such a child, from (...) home... where there are parents could say a word to a granny or someone else (...) and we didn't have anybody to tell, because (...) one was afraid of what could happen next*). Inmates' beliefs were supported by their experiences – sometimes other teachers used a perpetrator as a "threat" to discipline the children, and/or the victims who informed the authorities were punished instead of the violator:

> This care-taker was the next terrible man (...) he had one rule – beating, beating and once again beating… Once he trashed our younger colleague so much that I have not seen anybody so black and blue. He was simply all black and blue from his back to the knees (...). We were then 15 years old, so we had our own wit, we told him "go to the police" [militia]. This was a tragedy, as they pummelled him too for the reason that he came to blame the care-taker (WDD 07 Bartosz)[27].

Only by the collective activity of a large group of inmates was there any chance of opposing the violence at group homes, but in most cases the children were too young or too weak to organize themselves. Moreover, the phenomenon of symbolic violence is observable in institutional leavers' stories. Some of the narrators still accept the grounds of institutionalised brutality and justify the teachers behaviours:

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[26] At least the employees of the residential care system were and are aware of the phenomenon of multi-dimensional neglect and violence in the children's homes: "The fact that they [children] went through bad institutions, in which there was violence, mobbing, aggression and other kinds of mistreatment – this can be a real life-long nightmare" (FGI-active employees of the present system).

[27] The care-taker described in the quotation also kept on stealing both different children's as well as institutional property. The wards decided to report him to the headmaster. At first she did not react, but after having come back from holidays the narrator got to know that this man resigned from his post in the group home, got a promotion and became a supervisor of all children's homes in the city. Another narrator recalls a suicide of a 10-year old inmate; she recalls that the personnel and the headmaster of the group home kept their positions in the institution.

(...) it was I who maybe provoked, surely I provoked all this situation myself [the narrator has slight hearing impairment – as a teenager he was hit on his head by a teacher], I was saucy and I only saw this hand as it was reaching me and recklessly I did this way [he bends] and the whole open palm dropped on my [ear], the pressure simply torn this ear-drum (...). But as I say, I myself, was guilty on my own for this situation, for sure (...). I reported this to the headmaster, she was supposed to take care of this issue, later (...) I went to the pedagogue (...): "You didn't have an abduction? Oh, now you cannot do anything" (...). And what? I was guilty myself.

AGG: Did they have any idea about the medical treatment?

N: No, not at all (...) There was some blood from the ear, it stopped later (...). Later I got to know that I have a perforation of the ear-drum ((longer pause)). (...) Although, as I say, this person, who, who... ee hit me, he was needed in that place at that time. It had to happen so that I gained, such... another, another perspective, started to think a little bit differently (WDD34 Marcin).

FINAL REMARKS

It is difficult to assess whether the space of impunity was a general phenomenon in all residential care institutions in the PPR. Unquestionably it depended on the functioning staff, their attitudes and values, and some headmasters were able to lead the institution according to the principle of the best interest of the child. This leads one to ask: What about the space of impunity nowadays? On one hand, it is possible to formulate the thesis that the space of institutional impunity in democratic countries has been shrinking and becoming the space of symbolic violence. The systemic transformation brought about changes both in the area of social awareness and legal regulations. The post-communist countries have reformed their social welfare systems. Within the field of residential institutional care – the focus is declared to be on individualised psycho-social work, family-assistance, and the development of professional foster care. There are better opportunities for staff training, as obligatory life-long skills' training, and aftercare programmes have been introduced. In the last two decades in Poland the activities of human rights and watch-dog organizations have significantly increased, and mass-media has begun to play a very important role in the mechanisms of social control. On the other hand, a child (especially in the "family-oriented" Polish society) is still treated as "a minor" and placed in a subordinated position in the relationship with an adult[28]. We can also observe that children from the lowest social strata are still treated as "low(er)-value" children and that cultural beliefs regarding the individual sources of marginality and poverty are still present in both educational

[28] In 2012, 34% of researched Poles agreed with the opinion that corporal punishment (spanking) cannot do any harm to a child (O dopuszczalności kar cielesnych…, 2012: 3–5).

and social welfare institutions (Kalbarczyk 2013; Górniak and Kalbarczyk 2013). The Supreme Audit Office reports on acts of neglect and human rights' violations in residential care institutions for children and youth. The risk of maltreatment is higher in the population of institutional wards then in the population of their peers living in family homes (Informacja o wynikach kontroli… 2011:14; Sajkowska 2007, 2010). At the same time, the mass-media constantly informs the public about acts of maltreatment in group-homes, emergency shelters, correctional institutions, and youth psychiatric wards. Children living the pockets of poverty are not sufficiently protected from poverty and harm (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska and Golczyńska-Grondas 2010). Therefore it seems that the phenomenon of institutionalised impunity needs further and continuous monitoring, and that constant exploration and research should be carried out in strict cooperation with the endangered individuals, with the authorities and practitioners responsible for child protection, and with the employees of other social welfare institutions.

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Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas

DZIECI ZE ŚRODOWISK DEFAWORYZOWANYCH W SPOŁECZNEJ PRZESTRZENI BEZKARNOŚCI: NA PRZYKŁADZIE SYSTEMU OPIEKI CAŁKOWITEJ W POLSKIEJ RZECZPOSPOLITEJ LUDOWEJ

Streszczenie

Artykuł traktuje o społecznych uwarunkowaniach zinstytucjonalizowanej przemocy. W pierwszej części tekstu skrótowo scharakteryzowano pojęcie bezkarności stanowiące podstawę teoretyczną rozważań, następnie omówiono schemat (zinstytucjonalizowanej) przestrzeni bezkarności wraz z jej konstytutywnymi elementami: potocznymi przekonaniami dotyczącymi "natury" (z)marginalizowanej zbiorowości, niską społeczną wartością przypisywaną jednostkom i grupom, ideologicznym embargiem dotyczącym naukowo ugruntowanej wiedzy, usunięciem wykluczonych jednostek i grup z pola widzenia zwykłych uczestników życia społecznego. W głównej części artykułu autorka opisuje przestrzeń bezkarności funkcjonującą w tzw. systemie opieki całkowitej dla dzieci i młodzieży w okresie PRL. Ostatnie fragmenty tekstu zawierają zestawienie przykładów instytucjonalnej i prywatnej przemocy wobec wychowanków placówek opiekuńczo-wychowawczych realizowanej w przestrzeni bezkarności. Empiryczną podstawę tekstu stanowią wywiady narracyjne i biograficzne przeprowadzone w latach 2011–2013 z dorosłymi „absolwentami" PRL-owskich domów dziecka oraz wywiady grupowe z pracownikami systemu edukacji i sądownictwa aktywnymi zawodowo w okresie instytucjonalizacji narratorów.

Słowa kluczowe: zinstytucjonalizowana przemoc, bezkarność, społeczna przestrzeń zinstytucjonalizowanej bezkarności, placówki opiekuńczo-wychowawcze dla dzieci i młodzieży

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SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN POLISH SCHOOLS

Abstract

The aim of this publication is to discuss the current state of sexuality education in Poland, officially referred to as "preparation for family life". Its core curriculum is based on maintaining sexual abstinence, preferably until marriage. Hence, it tries to impose a fixed model of sexuality by providing cultural scenarios that, with reference to moral reasoning, focus mostly on the negative effects of becoming sexually active before marriage. These scenarios also tend to support traditional gender roles and point to the family as the most important part of social life. However, according to studies both experts and young people stress that "preparation for family life" is being taught in a poor manner, failing to introduce reliable, age-adjusted sexuality education. Therefore this paper points out that by trying to impose a fixed and unified model of what sex and sexuality should be, "preparation for family life" fails to take into account the conditions of late modernity, which provide both a diversity of accessible sources of knowledge about sexuality and a plurality of cultural scenarios available to young people through these sources. Consequently, this paper stresses the importance of designing a tailor-made sexuality education program which would be based on reliable information and supported by up-to-date, scientific research. Hence, it would not only meet young people's expectations but also provide apparatuses corresponding both with young peoples' actions and other, available sources of knowledge on sexuality. This would deliver a plurality of cultural patterns as a valuable resource to construct one's sexual scripts.

Key words: sexuality education, preparation for family life, young people, cultural scenarios.

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SEXUALITY

Regardless of the historical period, human sexual behavior has always been subject to normative control. One could argue that modernization has brought about changes (e.g. industrialization, increasing rationalization of society and expert systems) which have had a great influence on the way intimacy, as well as sexuality, are perceived today (Giddens 2008).These changes have also been associated with new forms of control. An important aspect of these forms of control has been their gathering of data about citizens. Not just economic data, but also sociological, demographic and biological data. The data was meant to be used for rational policing of societies (Foucault 1979). Hence, the institutional need to control human bodies[1] has facilitated the emergence of new ideas of sexuality, and the sexual revolution, as well as technological and medical development, has brought about social changes which put greater emphasis on human sexuality[2].The way people negotiate and live out their sexuality has become more permissive and sexual behaviors, which were formerly treated in Western culture more as private matters, have gradually become a subject of public discourse[3] and the subject of social sciences and political debates (Coleman, 2008).

It is quite common to use binary juxtapositions in the discourse about sexual life. The terms used include: "good" and "bad", "normal" and "deviant", "psychological and social", "natural and biological", "nature" and "culture", "individual" and "society", "freedom" and "control" (Giddens 1992; Archard 1998; Waites 2005; Weeks 1986). However, one could argue that nothing is sexual in its essence. It can become sexual by attributing a sexual meaning to it (Plummer 1975). Hence sexuality is a construct, it is plastic (Giddens 1992) and can be understood not only as "sexual practices but also sexual identities and varied historical and cultural forms which sexual identities and practices can take" (Holland et al. 1998; 23). It is biology that sets the capabilities of the physical body and determines the boundaries of these capabilities. Biology ,however, does

[1] This included acquiring information about health, fertility, demography etc.

[2] This refers mainly to sociological interest, as the beginning of the 20th century witnessed the works of "the founding father" of psychiatry – Sigmund Freud, sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Richard von Krafft – Ebing, Magnus Hirschfeld, as well as Alfred Kinsey, Virginia Johnson and William Masters.

[3] Discourse is understood as 'a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event (or person or class of persons), a particular way of representing it or them in a certain light' (Burr 2005: 48).

not create scripts or patterns according to which people live out their sexuality. Rather, social relationships create these scripts or scenarios.

The diversity of settings in modern social life is one of the key features of late modernity, or as Bauman calls it – liquid modernity (Bauman 1992). Nowadays, social conditions offer multiple possibilities for behavior, rather than universal models or fixed guidelines (Giddens 1991). The shift, from the primary legitimization of one's basic values by tradition and religion, towards individual freedom and autonomy has also influenced the enhancement of confidence in individualism as the point of reference guiding people's actions and opinions.

Sexuality, being subject to norms and regulations, both influences and is influenced by society as a whole as well as particular human interactions and personal relationships. At a time of simultaneous pluralisation of possibilities and individualization, which is the result of people being given more 'informed choices', people are able to independently choose elements which constitute their own biographies. Consequently, sexual identities are also subject to individualization. The availability of different sources of knowledge on sexuality and the plurality of ways people can negotiate their sexuality, are used by individuals in creating and sustaining their coherent, yet revised, biographical narratives (Giddens 2001).

Gagnon and Simon (1984) provide a theoretical framework which helps specify the course of action in constructing these narratives. They argue that people, through negotiations and interpretations, follow different scripts according to which social interactions are organized. This process takes place on three different levels: cultural scenarios, interpersonal scripts, and intra-psychic scripts. Cultural scenarios, which consist of general, vague, unpredictable "instructional guidelines which exist on the level of collective life", are the object of interest of those who analyze resources that young people can draw from (Gagnon, Simon, 1984: 53). Hence, a closer look at cultural scenarios could provide a deeper understanding of two main issues: what kind of information/knowledge about sexuality is provided through available sources, and who do young people consider as their 'significant others' – the normative reference groups influencing their actions. Of course these two can, but do not necessarily have to, overlap[4].

[4] This also is associated with the division between sexuality education, focused on providing information and knowledge, and sexual upbringing or "preparation for family life", understood verbatim and providing norms according stipulating how one should, or should not, behave (Długołęcka in: Feminoteka, 2013).

YOUTH SEXUALITY

In today's Western culture, one of the dominating cultural narratives presents childhood as a period of 'innocence and incompetence' (Archard 1998: 119). Hence some argue, that there is 'no place for sexuality in children's lives if their well being is to be sustained' (Scott et al, 1998: 702). As a result of this cultural assumption, according to which children are "non-sexual, (…) subjects without any rights or degree of competence" (Waites 2005: 14), young people[5] are 'protected' by adults who tend to juxtapose sexuality with the cultural idea of childhood innocence (Thomson, et al. 2004). However, as previously mentioned, today people (including youth) are offered a variety of possibilities which result in a vast number of potential choices. Hence being taught to perceive sexuality merely in "black and white" terms may result in a lack of preparation to lead a healthy and responsible sexual life (Izdebski, et al., 2011). This traditionally common neglect of youth sexuality has led to a relatively recent increase of interest by social scientists in conducting research in this area[6], and the improvement of youth's sexual wellbeing is gradually becoming a public issue.

Another reason that the debate concerning youth sexuality is of vital importance is that recent studies show that the average number of adolescents who engage in sexual encounters at a younger age is rising, and that younger generations tend to present increasingly permissive attitudes towards sex, which is evident in their growing consent towards premarital sex (Wróblewska 1998, 2007, Woynarowska et al. 1999, Woynarowska 2007, Izdebski 2012). However, research also shows that young people use contraception irregularly. Moreover, legal regulations in Poland restrict access to abortion[7], and the vast majority of

[5] As adolescence is a socially constructed transition phase between childhood and adulthood, defining it becomes problematic due to the lack of a single, fixed definition. Therefore the terms "young people" and 'youth' are used in relation to both the period of early adolescence (11–16 years of age) and late adolescence (16–19 years of age) (Kurzępa 2009: 21).

[6] Research on child and youth sexuality has included such topics as: maturation, sexual awareness, masturbation, sexual initiation, and sexual partners. See: Jaczewski, Radomski (1980); Kozakiewicz (1980); Izdebski (2012); Kultys (1992, 1994); CBOS (1998, 2008); Wróblewska (1998), Woynarowska et al. (1999).Recently the number of studies conducted using qualitative methods has increased, focusing on: the experience and awareness of youth sexuality and sources of knowledge concerning sexuality – Kurzępa (2009); socialization to gender roles in school – Kopciewicz, Zierkiewicz (2009); the state of school sex education – Chomczyńska-Miliszkiewicz (2002); Józefowska, (2009, 2014); sexualization of girlhood and aggression amongst girls – Stadnik, Wójtewicz (2009); sexual activity and premature parenthood: Izdebski, Niemiec, Wąż (2011).

[7] Since the introduction of the Act in 1993 there have been constant debates and disagreements over worldviews between the 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice' supporters (see: Matuchniak-Krasuska

contraceptive methods are not subsidized by the state and are only available to young people with a prescription.

An additional problem lies in the fact that doctors are reported to interpret the Polish law very restrictively, and often prescribe contraceptives only to adolescents of age. Younger people usually need their parents' consent[8]. All of the above suggests that there is a great need for educating young people about the risks and consequences of engaging in sexual activities.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING SEXUALITY

As late modernity provides both a diversity of available sources of knowledge about sexuality, and a plurality of cultural scenarios that are available through these sources, young people have a wide scope of scripts they can draw from. Also, being able to reflect upon their actions, which results from the acceptance of different cultural scenarios, young people expect knowledge to be acquired primarily at home (72.9%) or in schools[9] (61.6%) (Izdebski et al. 2011). Nevertheless, their expectations are often not met. Studies show[10] that at the beginning of this century young peoples' primary sources of information regarding sexuality were peers (69.5%), books (42.5%) and newspapers (33.3%) (Izdebski 2005). Recently, the Internet has also become one of the most popular sources of such information[11] (Izdebski 2011).

During the first period of an individual's life, his or her family is the normative reference group. Yet even though parents are mostly considered responsible for their children's primary sexual socialization[12] (Izdebski et al. 2011), actual

1995). The latter, including feminist organizations and leftist circles, point out the hazards of the current legislation, such as the growth of the backstreet abortion industry. According to The Federation for Women and Family Planning, the estimated number of illegal abortions performed annually oscillates between 80.000 and 200 000 (Desperak 2010).

[8] The legal age at which a person can engage in sexual activities is 15, yet paradoxically a girl who is not yet 16 years of age needs her parents informed consent to go on birth control.

[9] Teachers should also be open and not ashamed to discuss intimate topics and should have a high level of empathy, assertiveness, and be knowledgeable and able to talk about difficult, controversial and even perverse topics (Kurzępa 2009: 184).

[10] Quantitative studies are available which provide information about the sources young people most often draw upon to obtain their knowledge on sexuality, there is however a lack of studies which would relate to the ways of negotiating cultural scripts provided by these sources of knowledge.

[11] In a representative study, 79.5% out of 10,016 persons, aged 18–59, used it in this sense (Izdebski 2011).

[12] Studies show that 59% of the society considered sexuality education a responsibility of both the parents and schools, and 34% considered it only a parental responsibility (CBOS 2007).

conversations about intimacy and sexuality within families are rather rare (Kurzępa 2009; Izdebski 2012[13]). As a result, parents often provide cultural scenarios which present a rather restrictive approach towards sexual behavior (Ponton 2011). As individuals get older, secondary socialization agents, such as peers, educational institutions, the media and legislators have a greater impact on shaping their sexuality (Moore, Rosenthal, 1996). When group norms become more important for the individual than family norms, an individual's identification with their sex and gender roles is enhanced (Lew-Starowicz, Długołecka 2006: 236). Thus the peer group has a strong influence on individual decisions regarding sexuality, by providing knowledge and patterns which show what is and what is not acceptable in one's social circle (Wąż 2011; Kurzępa 2009: 148). Some young people however, perceive their peers as "not reliable" (Kurzępa 2009: 199), and turn to other sources of knowledge, like the media, which are said to have an enormous influence on sexuality (Moore, Rosenthal 1996; Królikowska 2009). Apart from the omnipresent sexualized images visible on television, the internet is responsible for an onslaught of sexual content (Wąż 2011: 64). This latter source, however, has its good and bad sides, both being a result of how easily accessible it is. On one hand, the Internet provides answers to various questions related to sexuality that people otherwise might not get. On the other hand, free access to pornography offers cultural scenarios which show skewed images of sex, and are often based on objectifying people and glorifying sexual experiences, while omitting their emotional component (Zabielska 2009).

While parents who fail to engage in conversations about sexuality with their children offer scenarios that present sexuality as a social taboo[14], the media provides viewers with sexualized content, where sexuality is anything but taboo. Home-based sexuality education is still uncommon and trying to verify the information young people get from their peers and the Internet is a very difficult, if not impossible, task. Hence it is important to focus on sexuality education at

[13] Amongst 3,200 respondents, almost one half (48.1%) declared that their parents did not talk with them about topics regarding sexuality, even though the vast majority stated that they had a very good or good relationship with their parents (85.6% with the mother and 72.7% with the father) when they were adolescents.

[14] Discussing possible sources from which young people derive their knowledge on sexuality, as well as cultural scenarios that these sources could present, would take more space than an article. Therefore, the chosen cultural scenarios can be considered as generalized and somewhat simplified examples, based on the results of the above-mentioned quantitative studies. There is a need to bear in mind, however, that different sources of knowledge provide a variety of possible cultural scripts.

school[15], which could potentially provide knowledge in the fastest and most effective way by simultaneously granting a vast number of young people scientific, reliable and institutionally unified knowledge. Scenarios presented by means of school-based sexuality education could put emphasis on responsible ways of living one's sexual life and provide apparatuses that correspond with young people's actual behaviors, as well as with the other sources from which they draw their knowledge on sexuality.

PREPARATION FOR FAMILY LIFE IN POLAND

Sexuality education in Poland was established by law in 1969. Its aim was to educate young people about the anatomical and biological concepts of sexual life, as well as issues related to parenthood and family. In 1973 it became obligatory under the title of "preparation for life in a socialist family" (pol. *przysposobienie do życia w rodzinie socjalistycznej*) (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2009). After numerous changes[16] in the following years, 1999 brought about a shift in the title and curricular content, applying *preparation for family life* to Polish schools. In accordance with international acts[17] and amended national legislation[18], the Polish government is obliged to implement sexuality education, which has to be unbiased, religiously neutral and based on scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, since 2009 it is a non-obligatory subject[19], which starts in fifth grade of elementary school, takes 14 hours per year[20] (including 5 hours separately for boys and girls) and is taught by a pedagogue

[15] According to the WHO's and UN's' guidelines, sexuality education is supposed to provide young people with, *inter alia*, information on the current knowledge on human sexuality and the ways to prevent becoming infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2009). In addition they aim to build attitudes and value systems that are socially recognized as appropriate, and hence are a source of cultural scenarios.

[16] See: Wejbert-Wąsiewicz (2009).

[17] Such as: The Universal Declaration of Sexual Rights, The Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Universal Declaration of Sexual Rights, and the final documents adopted during the World conference on Population and Development in Cairo and during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

[18] Regulation of the Minister of National Education from February 17th 2012, Journal of Laws No. 2012 Item 300

[19] This means that if students who are of age (or their parents, if they are younger) decide not to take part in classes they need to give the headmaster a written statement.

[20] However, given the official program's broad scope and the number of teaching hours devoted to its implementation, going through the entire curriculum becomes almost an impossible task and requires the teachers to take a selective approach towards the topics discussed. Hence, very often the actual information provided is being delivered in a poor manner, failing to take into account the

who completed a supplementary course[21] (a university-based postgraduate course or one of the courses organized by the Ministry of Education). The official core curriculum of "preparation for family life"[22] can be classified according to the WHO[23] as type "A" (WHO BZgA 2012: 5), otherwise known as "chastity education" or "abstinence education". It provides information based on cultural scenarios which represent a restrictive model towards sexual ethics (Kozakiewicz 1985). In terms of moral reasoning, the core curriculum – and so the available scripts – focus on the negative effects of having sex before marriage. It also supports traditional gender roles and portrays starting a family as the most important role one can have in society. This also applies to the content of the official textbooks.

All of the textbooks which currently are recommended by the Ministry of Education (including the vast majority of those which have been previously), not only fail to present up-to-date, scientific knowledge regarding human sexuality, but often are based on heteronormative and patriarchal standards (see: Chomczyńska-Miliszkiewicz 2002; Wąż 2011; Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2009; Zabielska 2009; Feminoteka 2013). The "Wandering towards adulthood" (pol. *Wędrując ku dorosłości*) series[24] has been subjected to a lot of criticism since it was published. Among other things, the authors openly promote using natural methods of contraception (Zabielska 2009), and marginalize preventive healthcare (Pawłowska, Synakiewicz 2015). Rather than addressing the problems youth might encounter, social reality is presented in an idealistic and wishful way, and the language used is "often moralistic and full of pathos" (Chomczynska-Miliszkiewicz 2002: 28). What's more, the authors create "a family-centered model and thus the only "right" kind

achievements of modern science and the results of up-to-date studies on human sexuality, including gender studies (Chomczyńska-Miliszkiewicz 2002).

[21] By the end of 2011 there were 14,578 teachers, 25% of which were not qualified to teach the subject (Feminoteka 2013).

[22] It is worth noting that even the name "preparation for family life" indicates the emphasis on social structure and on the family as the proper/only place for sexuality (Parker et al., 2009).

[23] The WHO recognizes three types of sexuality education programs. The second – type "2" or "B" – referred to as "general sex education" and emphasizes different possibilities in deciding about one's sex life. It considers abstinence before marriage as one of the options, but also highlights the importance of using contraception in those cases where people do not want to wait until marriage. The third program (type "3" or "C"), called "holistic sex education", or "comprehensive sexuality education" shows different possibilities of sexual activity in the wider perspective of an individual's general and sexual development (WHO BZgA 2012: 5).

[24] This series provides textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education at every educational level.

of love – heterosexual love – appears in almost every context and fragment of the course books" (Suszyńska 2012: 77). The scenarios provided give the idea that "sexual intercourse takes place, or should only take place, within a heterosexual marriage" (Pawłowska, Synakiewicz 2015). These scenarios are deeply rooted in a traditional, conservative, patriarchal and heteronormative discourse, which places the heterosexual family in the centre of social life. It is important to stress that the Ministry of Education did not recommend any textbook which would provide young people with alternative scripts. This sheds light on the possible shape of knowledge presented by teachers, who use these textbooks in class.

The reported reasons why students decide to drop out of the course include situations when the class takes place very early in the morning or late in the afternoon, situations whereby students (usually dissatisfied with their previous experience) assume they will not learn anything new or useful in class (Józefowska 2009, Skonieczna 2014), and cases when teachers lack knowledge or are unable to openly discuss issues regarding sexuality (Kurzępa 2009).

Young people also stress the necessity of providing knowledge which would be based on the awareness of possible risks of engaging in sexual activity, for example the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, the development of psychosocial skills, and information about sex per se. (Izdebski 2012). Yet the sparsely available reports[25] that discuss the content of "preparation for family life" classes in detail (Józefowska 2009; Skonieczna 2014) reveal that actual topics discussed in class often vary from young peoples' declarative expectations. It is not uncommon for teachers to simply screen educational videos (which present patriarchal, nuclear families) and fail to later discuss them with their students

[25] "Ponton" published two reports which presented young people's voices on "preparation for family life" (Józefowska 2009, Skonieczna 2014). The first one (2009) was based on a number of emails sent voluntarily by young people. Out of 637 emails received, 252 persons stated that they never took part in a "preparation for family life" class, while 376 attended these classes in middle and/or primary schools. The second report (2014), was based on an online survey available on www.jakaedukacja.pl website. It included 3363 respondents aged 11–30 who took part in the study.

It is necessary to be aware of a number of shortcomings in both reports. First of all the results of both studies demonstrate a primarily negative evaluation of the classes attended, but perhaps those who find sexuality education to be on a satisfactory or good level do not feel the need to share this information with others. The second report, published in 2014, seems to be even more problematic. The distribution of sex and age of the respondents (74% of the respondents were women, and 70% of the sample was aged 21–30) does not reflect that of those students who could potentially attend family life education. Furthermore, taking into consideration the age of the respondents, the report may reflect the state of sexuality education from 10–15 years ago rather than the current one. Nevertheless both reports, due to the lack of any comparable sociological research, provide important information.

(Skonieczna 2014). On the other hand, sometimes the information provided, such as advising girls to bathe in water mixed with vinegar as a way of post-coital contraception, is based on nonscientific knowledge which not only could mislead young people, but also be hazardous to their health (Józefowska 2009: 8). Teachers are also said to disseminate myths and stereotypes concerning human sexuality. One of the biggest hazards takes place when the information provided regarding sexuality, contraception, pregnancy or even rape, are grounded in the Catholic dogma, which not only results in presenting theological concepts as scientific, sexological knowledge, but may also lead to homophobic discourses (Józefowska 2009, Skonieczna 2014).

The state of "preparation for family life" is therefore assessed as unsatisfactory not only by young people, but also by, e.g. independent sex-education organisations, sexologists, pedagogues, and pro-choice and feminist organizations. These groups suggest changing the current core curriculum[26] and basing it on a holistic[27] approach[28] towards sexuality. The central issue lies in the fact that the binding model of sexuality education discourse treats sex solely from a moral-religious perspective, and fails to incorporate also a psychological-sexological view[29]

[26] See: The agreement concerning the dissemination of sexuality education to children and adolescents in Polish schools, signed on January 20th 2009 by NGOs, teacher unions and known scholars.

[27] One of the biggest concerns raised by opponents of implementing general or holistic sexuality education is that it might be a reason for a further decline in the age of sexual initiation and lead to a growth of the number of sexual encounters between young people. Although some studies show that attending sexuality education has no measurable effects on the age of initiation (Lew-Starowicz Szczerba 1995), others show that it conversely delays it (UNAIDS 1997; Zabielska 2009). Also, comprehensive sexuality education has been proven to be more effective in lowering the risk of teenage pregnancy (Kohler, et al. 2008), as abstinence-only programs pose a risk of leaving young people uninformed about issues regarding sexuality (Collins et. al 2002).

[28] This approach is integral to UNESCO's strategy on HIV and AIDS prevention. Presented scripts are based on a relativistic approach towards sex and sex education, and focus not only on providing information on sexual behavior and ways of preventing venereal diseases. This kind of education emphasizes the fact that from the youngest age educating children about their sexuality can contribute towards their general development in a positive manner. For example: providing them with knowledge about the body can result in advancement of a positive body image and contribute towards building their self-confidence and help them development a feeling of responsibility (BZgA WHO 2012: 35). The available scenarios guide teens through subjects such as self esteem, mental and physical health, as well as family life and sexual decision-making.

[29] These axiological bases are the foundations of the contradictory sexual ethics that underlie the discussed approaches as to what sexuality education should look like. The binding model still prevails, not only disregarding other models but labelling them as bad and, using moral reasoning, depicting their possible effects as immoral. This is because the Catholic Church has in Poland a lot

(i.e. Kochanowski 2013). Hence it fails to correspond not only with today's reality and the plurality of scenarios available to young people, but also with their actual preferences. It also ignores young people's ability to act independently, as well as the available knowledge about the way they live and negotiate their sexuality.

The "preparation for family life" curriculum fails to keep up with social and cultural changes regarding sexuality, and in consequence, with young people's needs and actual behaviors, which present increasingly permissive attitudes towards (premarital) sex. Hence the scripts presented in class seem incongruent with young people's declarative needs, and their far less conservative attitudes towards sexuality.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the pluralisation of discourses concerning various aspects of sexuality, individuals nowadays have access to a variety of cultural scenarios in constructing their biographical narratives. Those scripts that are offered via the "preparation for family life" course (in its curriculum, textbooks, and in class) provide a normative, immutable and unchangeable idea of how young people should live their sexual life. By referring to moral reasoning, they focus on maintaining sexual abstinence and stress the negative effects of starting one's sex life before marriage, a position which is incongruent with many young people's declarative needs and their less conservative attitudes towards sexuality.

Therefore, the model of sexuality education type "A", which is binding in Poland, fails to adapt to today's reality, where multiple possibilities preempt fixed behavioral models, and the cultural scenarios which it provides poorly correspond with those offered from other sources. As a result it is often rejected and operates marginally. Hence the remaining sources of knowledge, such as peers or the Internet, play the biggest role in providing young people with cultural scenarios regarding sexuality, as they seem more compatible with young people's needs.

By getting to know which cultural scenarios people draw upon in order to negotiate their sexuality and how they influence their everyday interactions, it may be possible to provide scripts which would show ways of making responsible choices and meet young people's expectations. This could provide the basis for constant improvement at the educational, institutional and even medical levels. This in turn could bring about tangible effects, such as potential protection from

of influence on the way sexuality is perceived and talked about. This however is a vast subject which would need to be discussed in a separate paper.

the threats and hazards to peoples' physical and mental health. This is especially important in the case of young people. Yet, the quality of information regarding sexuality presented to young people is usually assessed as poor. This inconsistency between the levels of knowledge and practice can have serious consequences for their wellbeing. Sociological research therefore ought to aim at attaining a deeper understanding of the basis of individual sexual behavior in a social context. Due to the fact that the discourse concerning youth sexuality is dominated by the voices of adults, there is a need to conduct social research which would focus on listening to young people's needs and opinions. This is especially important because, by not taking into consideration the voices of subjects that the sexuality education is aimed it, results of the programs will bring about partly ostensible actions.

Quantitative studies, though without doubt crucial in terms of getting a fuller picture of social phenomena, often fail to recognize deep meanings and subtle experiences, which are extremely relevant in the case of sexuality. Therefore it is crucial to conduct more qualitative research, which would not only provide information about who young people consider as their 'significant others' in the choice of alternative sexual scripts, but what scripts they provide and what is the impact of these authorities on the actual sexual practices and on the meanings attributed to the sexual sphere of individuals. All these points are designed to facilitate the construction of a tailor-made sexuality education program which would meet young people's expectations, simultaneously providing them with reliable knowledge based on up-to-date scientific research.

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EDUKACJA SEKSUALNA W PRAKTYCE POLSKICH SZKÓŁ

Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia aktualny stan edukacji seksualnej w Polsce, realizowanej w czasie lekcji „wychowania do życia w rodzinie". Podstawa programowa przedmiotu oparta jest na zachowaniu abstynencji, najlepiej do momentu zawarcia ślubu. W efekcie jest on próbą narzucenia stałego modelu seksualności poprzez dostarczanie scenariuszy kulturowych, które w odniesieniu do moralnego rozumowania, głównie skupiają się na negatywnych skutkach rozpoczęcia życia seksualnego przed ślubem. Scenariusze te opierają się także na tradycyjnym podziale ról płciowych, który jednocześnie wspierają, oraz przedstawiają rodzinę, jako najważniejszą cześć życia społecznego, do której każdy człowiek powinien dążyć. Badania jednak pokazują, że zarówno eksperci, jak i sami młodzi ludzie podkreślają, że „Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie" nie spełnia swojej funkcji, ponieważ często nie przekazuje dostosowanej do wieku, rzetelnej edukacji seksualnej. W artykule podkreśla się zatem, że próbując narzucić stały i jednolity model tego, czym powinny być seks i seksualność, program „wychowania do życia w rodzinie" nie bierze pod uwagę realiów późnej nowoczesności obejmujących zarówno różnorodność dostępnych źródeł pozyskiwania wiedzy o seksualności, jak i pluralizmu scenariuszy kulturowych dostępnych za pośrednictwem tych źródeł. Analiza skupia się również na wykazaniu znaczenia, jakie ma „szyta na miarę" edukacja seksualna, która przekazywałaby rzetelne informacje poparte najnowszymi badaniami naukowymi. Taka edukacja nie tylko wyszłaby naprzeciw oczekiwaniom młodych ludzi, ale dostarczyłaby narzędzi, które korespondowałyby zarówno z działaniami młodych ludzi jak i innymi źródłami, z których czerpią oni wiedzę o seksualności.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja seksualna, wychowanie do życia w rodzinie, młodzież, scenariusze kulturowe.

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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND PARTICIPATION OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH: A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS

Abstract

This study draws on a transnational research project called MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement) which received funding from the European Commission. Survey data from almost 17000 young people from fourteen European countries were used to identify socio-demographic factors which are linked to young people's participation. Male, upper social class, higher self-perceived discrimination, greater diversity in social network, higher political socialization in family, and higher political knowledge are significantly related to greater level of political, and civic participation. In addition, higher civic participation is significantly associated with greater satisfaction with life, higher level of trust for politicians and parliament. Moreover, those in education, rated high in household income, reported greater trust for political parties and those from conservative state appeared to have significantly greater political participation. These findings are discussed in the context of previous empirical studies and theories on participation and well-being. Suggestions for future research are also put forward.

Key words: Participation, Youth, Young people, Well-being, Civic engagement, Europe

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1. INTRODUCTION

Youth participation is a process by which the young people get involved with the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. In defining the concept, Checkoway (2011) emphasises on the active engagement and real influence of young people, not just their passive presence or token roles in adult agencies. Head (2011) identified a number of benefits that participation brings for the young people as well as the wider society. At the individual level, benefits include various forms of skills, self-esteem, and self-development. At the societal level, higher youth participation broadens civic activity and contributes to citizenship (Zeldin et al., 2003).

These developmental benefits and increasing influence of rights-based perspective of youth participation have resulted in a growing interest among academics and policy makers in countries within the EU and beyond. However, research on youth participation, like any other areas of research (e.g., youth subjective well-being) appears to be influenced by research on participation among adults (O'Toole et al., 2003). It is reflected firstly on the way participation is narrowly measured (e.g., by voting behaviour) and secondly on the limited number of domains and/or items used for measuring those domains which do not necessarily address the changing nature of youth participation (Smith, 2000). O'Toole et al. (2003) criticised this 'top-down' approach and asked researchers to place young people at the centre of research and define participation, and associated measure by collecting youth centric views.

Over the past decade, there appears to be a paradigm shift on youth participation research as researchers are now aware of the uniqueness of youth participation especially the diverse modes or avenues through which this specific group of population participates in the decision making processes. This theoretical shift has also influenced recent surveys (e.g., Eurobarometer, European Social Survey) that aim to identify factors linked to youth participation. Previous studies on participation identified a number of demographic correlates of participation including age (Fieldhouse et al., 2007) gender (Norris et al., 2004), education, economic condition, class (Marti et al., 2014). Although these demographic factors play significant roles in participation, they do not explain much variation when used alone in the participation model. Influenced by a number of psychosocial theories including social capital and civic voluntarism, some researchers (e.g., Norris, 2003) identified statistically significant association of socialisation function in family, perceived trustworthiness of institutions, interest in politics,

sense of political efficacy, satisfaction with national government, satisfaction with democracy, and trust in politicians with participation.

Parallel to this development, the recent growth of cross-cultural comparative surveys influenced researchers to include a number of contextual factors as antecedents to participation. Morales (2009) emphasised on the political context especially the existence and networks of politically active organisations that enable mobilisation of citizens.

Each of these three strands has its own strength since they greatly contribute to our understanding of factors linked to participation. However, there is a growing tendency among researchers to combine factors from multiple strands to fit a better model. When Mannarini et al., (2008) added psychosocial factors to their original model containing only demographic factors, the model provided a better fit for the participation of Italian youth as the adjusted R^2 changed from 20% to 55%. In this regard, Norris (2003) developed this approach further when she modelled citizen-oriented and cause oriented participation in 15 European countries by combining demographic and psychosocial factors. Although Norris identified a number of important factors including age, education, income, interest in politics, closer affiliation to a political party, satisfaction with national government, internal and external efficacy, her participation models (with adjusted R^2 of 22%) did not explain as much variation as Mannarini et al. model did.

One of the reasons for Norris's (2003) model to explain lower level of variation might be linked to the fact that Norris used OLS regression to analyse cross-European data on participation that had some structures/layers. There is a growing consensus among researchers that for robust modelling of structured data, especially in modelling a phenomenon using cross-cultural data, multilevel analysis is required (Field, 2013). In this regard, Fieldhouse et al., (2007) were probably the first who used the sophisticated multilevel analysis to take into account the structured/layered data to model participation using data from 22 European countries. They examined national variations in election turnout for young people across Europe, and used multilevel logistic regression models to understand these variations, and to test the extent to which they were attributable to the characteristics of young people and the electoral context in each country. Variations in turnout among young people were partially accounted for by the level of turnout of older voters in the country and partly by the characteristics of young voters, including the level of political interest and civic duty.

Although Fieldhouse et al., provided additional insights on youth participation in Europe by bringing demographic, psychosocial, and contextual factors within a single framework, their analysis focused only on voting behaviour of young

people. Their study needs to be extended further not only to examine other areas of youth participation but also to test some other potential factors which previous studies did not explore. For example, research on youth well-being identifies participation as an important aspect of youth life (Goldin et al., 2014). However, there is still no systematic evidence on how youth's well-being is linked to their participation when examined with demographic, psychosocial, and contextual factors in cross European context. This article aims to identify (a) the demographic, psychosocial and contextual factors that are linked to the participation of European youth, and (b) how youth well-being is associated with participation when examined in the context of those demographic, psychosocial and contextual factors.

2. DATA AND ANALYSIS

Data for this article were obtained from the survey component of the research project called MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement) which received funding from the European Commission (http://www.fp7-myplace.eu). Using a semi-structure interview, data were collected from around 17000 young people living in two contrasting locations in fourteen European countries: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Slovakia, Hungary, Georgia, Greece, Croatia, Germany (four locations in total – two from the East Germany and two from the West Germany), Denmark, United Kingdom, Portugal, and Spain.

Ethical issues relating to this survey such as data protection, confidentiality and informed consent were subject to specific procedures agreed by the MYPLACE Ethics Committee. IBM SPSS is used for cleaning and analysing data. For descriptive analysis at the aggregate level, bar diagram is used. Since the data collected in the survey have structured nature or layers (individual respondent nested in a location), multilevel modelling is used.

3. MEASURES

3.1. Dependent variable(s): Participation

Conventionally, participation is measured by voting behaviour. However, it is now widely recognised that this approach fails to capture a range of areas in which young people participate (White et al., 2000). In this article, two broad dimensions of youth participation are considered: political activism, and civic participation (Norris et al., 2004).

In order to measure political activism, respondents were given a list containing 20 activities (such as signing a petition, collecting signatures). They were asked to say how often ('never', 'once', 'twice', 'three times or more') they did each of these activities during the last 12 months. Number of activity done at least once were counted which resulted in an index ranging from 0–20 (higher score indicating greater political activism).

For measuring civic participation, young people were asked the types of involvement ('member', 'participated in activity', 'done voluntary work', 'none') they had with 15 organisations such as a political party, religious organisation during the last 12 months. Respondents who said they were members or participated in activity or did some voluntary work for these organisations were counted to develop an index ranging from 0–15 (higher score indicating greater level of civic engagement). In the subsequent analysis, these two indices on participation will be explored separately.

3.2. Independent variables

3.2.1. Demographic characteristics

Respondents were asked about their date of birth from which their age was calculated. Age of the respondents ranged from 16 to 25. Gender is dummy coded. Female is the reference category with code 0, whereas 1 is used for male. The four categories for occupation used in the analysis were employed, in education, unemployed, and other. Employed was used as a reference category. In order to measure the household solvency, respondents were asked to describe current household income situation on a four-point rating scale ranging from 0 (finding it very difficult on present income) to 3 (living comfortably on present income).

The measure of parental class was derived from scores on four input variables: father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation. For the education variable, young people who had a parent with education at the level of Degree and above received score 1 and a parent with education below Degree level received score 0. Respondents who had a parent working in the professional or higher administrative sector received score 1 and those with a parent working in the other job sectors received score 0. The way the index was constructed is weighted by the number of parents as well as parents without an occupation or where the educational level was not known. The four point scale is therefore the product of a re-processed seven point scale ranging from weighted values as follows: 0, ¼, 1/3, ½, 2/3, ¾, 1.

3.2.2. Psychosocial factors

3.2.2.1. Self-perceived discrimination

Respondents were asked whether they felt ever threatened because of the followings: (i) supporting a particular political movement, (ii) being a member of an ethnic or religious minority, (iii) a sexual orientation, (iv) belonging to a subculture (punk/skinhead/Goth etc.), and (v) gender. Respondents who reported either 'occasionally' or 'regularly' for each aspect was counted to construct an index ranging from 0–5. Higher score indicates greater level of discrimination.

3.2.2.2. Diversity in social network

For measuring the diversity in social network, respondents were asked how many (none, one, two, three or more) of their close friends were (have come) from the following groups: (a) members of a different race/ethnic/minority group, (b) a different social status/class to them, (c) different political views, (d) different religious beliefs, (e) a different sexual orientation, and (f) a different sex/gender. Original responses to each of these questions were coded in the following way to create a rating scale: none = 0, one = 1, two = 2, three or more = 3. The summated scale ($\alpha = 0.77$) ranges from 0 to 18, a higher score indicates a greater level of diversity in social network.

3.2.2.3. Political knowledge

Respondents were asked to name the head of Government, foreign Minister, and main ruling party in their country. The number of correct answers for each respondent was counted to construct a political knowledge index ranging from 0 (all incorrect answers) to 3 (all correct answers). Higher score indicates a greater level of political knowledge.

3.2.2.4. Political socialisation in family

Respondents were asked how often they discussed political issues when they got together with (a) mother, and (b) father. Responses to each item were coded in the following way: never = 0, rarely = 1, sometimes = 2, often = 3, and always = 4. The summated scale ($\alpha = 0.78$) ranges from 0 to 8, a higher score indicates a greater level of political socialisation in family.

3.2.2.5. Human rights situation

Respondents were asked how much respect they thought their country had for the human rights situation. Responses were collected on a four-point scale and were scored as follows: 'No respect at all' (score = 0), 'Not much respect' (score = 1), 'A fair degree of respect' (score = 2), and 'A great deal of respect' (score = 3).

3.2.2.6. Subjective well-being

Over the past few decades, a wide variety of measures has been developed for measuring subjective well-being (Cummins and Lau, 2005; Huebner, 1991). For this study, an eleven-point rating sale (0 = extremely dissatisfied; 10 = extremely satisfied) is used to measure young people's satisfaction with life as a whole.

3.2.2.7. Satisfaction with democracy

For measuring satisfaction with democracy in the country, respondents were asked to score on an eleven point rating scale ranging from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied).

3.2.2.8. Trust for politicians

Respondents were asked to say how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'politicians are corrupt'. Responses were collected on a five-point scale and were scored as follows: 'Strongly agree' (score = 0), 'Agree' (score = 1), 'Neither agree nor disagree' (score = 2), 'Disagree' (score = 3), and 'Strongly disagree' (score = 4). Higher score indicates greater level of trust for politicians.

3.2.2.9. Trust for political parties

Respondents were asked to score on an eleven-point single item scale to express their level of trust for political parties in the country. The scale ranged from 0 (No trust at all) to 10 (complete trust).

3.2.2.10. Trust for parliament

A single item scale with eleven points ranging from 0 (do not trust at all) to 10 (complete trust) was used to measure respondents' trust for parliament.

3.2.3. Contextual factors

3.2.3.1. Youth unemployment rate in the country

Youth unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed youth (15–24 years) divided by the youth labour force (employment – unemployment).

Data on youth unemployment for each country were collected from the World Bank for year 2012 when the survey was conducted.

3.2.3.2. Welfare state type

Following the typology proposed by Kaariainen and Lehtonen (2006), participating counties were grouped under five categories: Post-socialist, Nordic, Conservative, Mediterranean, and Liberal. These were dummy coded and liberal country was used as a comparison group.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Univariate Analysis

Almost equal number of females (50.3%) and males took part in the survey. On average, they were almost 21 years old (standard deviation = 2.85). Slightly more than half (57%) and one-quarter of them were in education and employment respectively. One in ten reported to be unemployed. When asked to describe their household income, almost one-quarter of the respondents reported it difficult to live with that income.

4.2. Bivariate Analysis

4.2.1. Political activism of European youth by locations

Results of the analysis on aggregate level data in Figure 1 suggest a wide difference on political activism of the young people living in different European locations. Young people in Jena and Rostock (East Germany) reported to have the highest level of political activities, whereas the young people from Sopron and Ozd (Hungary) reported the lowest participation among all locations.

4.2.2. Civic activism of European youth by locations

In terms of civic activities, the participation of the young people appeared to vary by locations. Young people from Jena (East Germany), Odense East and Centre (Denmark) reported higher civic involvement, whereas their counterpart from Telavi and Kutaisi (Georgia) reported lower civic activities

FIGURE 1: Mean score on political activism index by locations

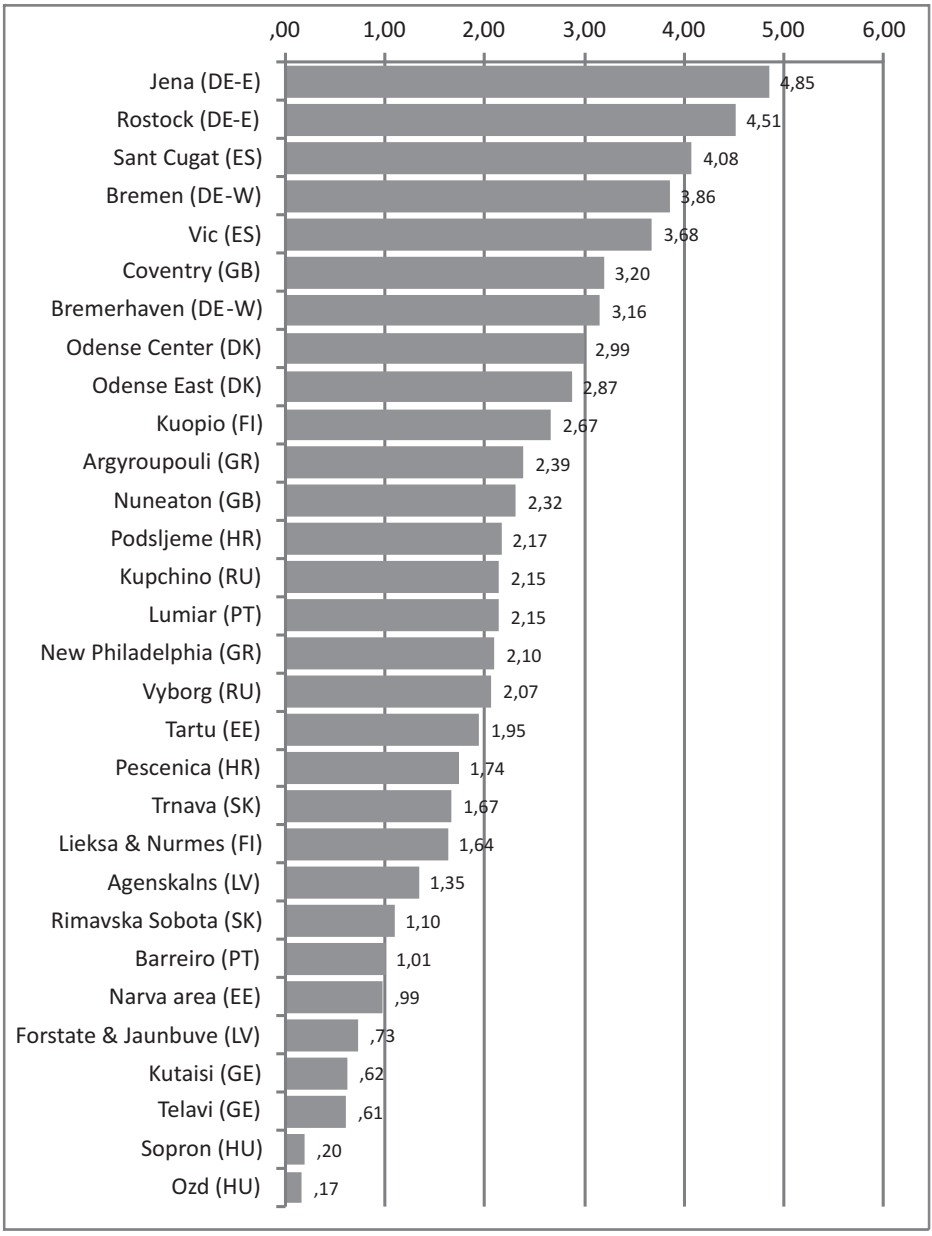
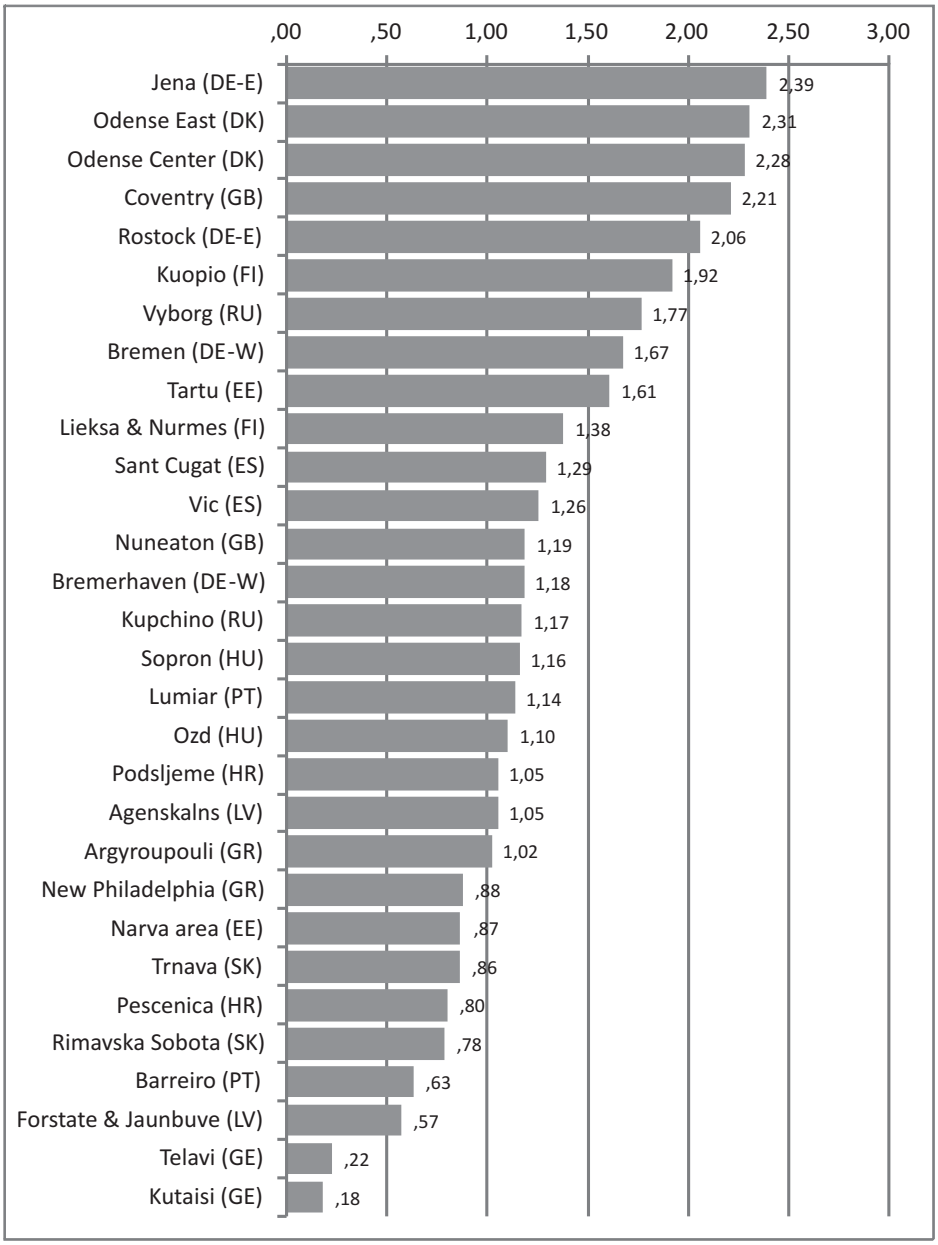


FIGURE 2: Mean score on civic activism index by locations



4.3. Multivariate analysis

In order to examine how the demographic, psychosocial and contextual factors are related to youth participation in Europe, two multi-level models were tested. This section presents results of these analyses.

TABLE 1: Variance components of regression models explaining political activism, and civic activism

a. Political activism			
	Empty model (random intercept only)	With individual level explanatory variables	With country level explanatory variables
σ (Individual level)	7.63	6.37	6.37
σ (Location level)	1.64	0.88	0.30
Intra-class correlation	0.18	0.12	0.04
Loglikelihood	49802.00	48019.99	47993.50
b. Civic activism			
	Empty model (random intercept only)	With individual level explanatory variables	With country level explanatory variables
σ (Individual level)	2.61	2.39	2.39
σ (Location level)	0.35	0.22	0.12
Intra-class correlation	0.12	0.08	0.05
Loglikelihood	38841.11	38025.26	38016.64

4.3.1. Overall model of political activism

The initial analysis of variance components reveals that 82% of variance in political activism can be explained by differences between individual young people, whereas 18% of the variance lies at the level of localities [intra-class correlation (ICC) = 0.18] (Table 1a). The substantial variation at the level of localities means that it is necessary to search for contextual variables that would help to explain it.

Inclusion of the individual level variables (demographic and psychosocial) resulted in a 16.6% decrease of residual, individual level variance, and led to an even larger 46% in intercept variance. It means that much of the observed differences between localities are due to the composition effect. In the next step, two contextual variables (welfare state types and youth unemployment rate of the country), were added which helped to achieve a massive 66% reduction of intercept variance compared to the model containing only the individual level predictors – again, an improvement that is highly significant. This means that the contextual variables are capable of explaining a huge portion of the unexplained

variation in political activism between localities. Only 4% of unexplained variance (ICC= 0.04) remains at the level of localities, although it is still significant at 0.01 level.

4.3.2. Overall model of civic activism

The Intra-class Correlation (ICC) of 0.12 in the empty model for civic activism in Table 1b suggests that local areas explain 12% of the variance, whereas the remaining 88% of the variance in civic activism is due to the differences between individual young people. Individual level variables e.g., demographic and psychosocial variables reduced 8% of the residual or individual variance. In this regard, these variables contributed to reducing 35% of the intercept variance. However, further 45% reduction in intercept variance indicates a great contribution of contextual variables in explaining variance in civic participation from the model development point of view.

TABLE 2: Parameter estimates of regression models explaining political activism, and civic activism

Predictors	**Political activism index** (n1 = 10, 212; n2 = 30)		**Civic activism index** (n1 = 10,199; n2 = 30)	
	B	**SE**	**B**	**SE**
Constant	–0.68	0.58	0.61	0.36
Demographic variables				
Age	0.02	0.01	–0.01	0.01
Male (Ref. Female)	0.14 *	0.05	0.10 *	0.03
Occupation (Ref. Employed)				
Unemployed	0.06	0.10	–0.02	0.06
In Education	0.19 **	0.07	0.04	0.04
Other	–0.03	0.12	–0.08	0.07
Household income	0.09 **	0.03	0.03	0.02
Parental class	0.21 ***	0.03	0.08 ***	0.01
Psychosocial variables				
Self-perceived discrimination	0.83 ***	0.03	0.38 ***	0.02
Diversity of social network	0.08 ***	0.01	0.04 ***	0.01
Political knowledge	0.26 ***	0.03	0.11 ***	0.02
Political socialisation	0.26 ***	0.01	0.08 ***	0.01
Assessment of human rights situation	–0.06	0.04	–0.01	0.02
Satisfaction with life	0.02	0.01	0.02 *	0.01
Satisfaction with democracy	–0.10 ***	0.01	–0.01	0.01
Trust for politicians	0.04	0.03	0.04 *	0.02
Trust for political parties	0.08 ***	0.01	0.01	0.01
Trust for parliament	–0.02	0.01	0.02 *	0.01

Predictors	Political activism index (n1 = 10, 212; n2 = 30)		Civic activism index (n1 = 10,199; n2 = 30)	
Contextual variables				
Youth unemployment rate	0.01	0.01	–0.02	.01
Welfare state type (Ref. Liberal)				
Post-socialist	–1.20 *	0.45	–0.32	0.28
Nordic	0.21	0.50	0.24	0.31
Conservative	1.33 *	0.53	–0.24	0.33
Mediterranean	–0.43	0.62	0.03	0.39

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

4.3.3. Factors associated with the participation of European youth

Table 2 presents results of multilevel analysis on demographic, psychosocial and contextual factors that are associated with young people's participation on both political and civic activities. This section identifies those factors focusing first on political activism.

When all potential factors are entered into multilevel analysis together, eleven out of seventeen variables appear to have statistically significant association with political activities of the youth in Europe. Young people from post-socialist countries reported to have significantly lower political engagement compared to those from liberal countries. However, compared with the liberal countries, young people from conservative countries reported significantly higher participation. Males and those in education (as opposed to those employed) were significantly more engaged with political activities. Young people who positioned themselves high on household income and class had significantly greater political engagement. In addition, higher political knowledge, political socialisation in family, diversity in social network, trust for political parties, and self-perceived discrimination were significantly associated with greater level of political activism. However, young people with higher level of satisfaction with democracy in the country appeared to have significantly lower political activism. Controlling the effects of other independent variables in Table 2, young people's level of engagement with political activities was not significantly related to their age, assessment of human rights situation for the country, life satisfaction, trust for politicians and parliament, and youth unemployment rate of the country.

Results from Table 2 on civic activism identified nine factors that are significantly related to civic engagement of the European youth. Taking into account the effects of all sixteen variables in the analysis, higher level of satisfaction in life appeared to be significantly related to the greater level of civic engagement

of young people. Males and those had parents from higher class appeared to have significantly greater level of civic engagement. Moreover, higher score on self-perceived discrimination, political knowledge, diversity in social network, political socialisation in family, trust for politicians, and trust for parliament, appeared to be significantly associated with greater civic engagement. However, results of multivariate analysis in Table 2 also identified that age, occupation, household income, assessment of human rights situation, satisfaction with democracy, and trust for political parties, welfare state type, and unemployment rate of the country were not significantly related to the civic activities.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article aimed to identify demographic, psychosocial and contextual factors that are associated with participation among European youth. It also explored whether young people's satisfaction with life was significantly related to their participation. This section highlights the main findings and discusses them in the context of previous studies and theories on participation.

Except age, the four demographic factors (gender, occupation, household income, and parental class) were significantly related to youth participation. Males reported to have significantly higher participation than females. This finding supports the claim made by Inglehart and Norris (2003) that women in several Western countries participate less in the political process. However, some studies (Lowndes, 2004; Lorenz, 2003) argue that gender gap is attributable to different participatory styles and meanings people attach to participation. In this regard, Lorenz (2003) argued that females participate more to those types of participation which are informal and aim to address practical and daily issues. These claims need to be tested for their wider generalizability on European female population in future studies.

Similar to Marti et al. (2014), this study identified significant association between occupation and participation. Young people who were in education reported higher level of participation than those who were employed. This aspect may be linked to the wider macro level situation of European countries especially in the rise of youth unemployment and tuition fees in many educational institutions. Statistically significant association of household income and class reinstated the implication of poverty on youth participation. In this regard, Flanagan and Levine (2010) opined that young people who have parents of high socio-economic status get better access to community and education resources which increases the likelihood of greater level of participation.

Political socialisation within family especially through parents appeared to play a key role in both civic and political activities among youths in this study. However, Mannarini et al., (2008) in their study found the association significant only for conventional type of political participation. It is argued that the prospect of sharing opinions and gathering information on politics within family circle increases the likelihood of being more involved with participation (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers (2001). Thus, family – an important primary agent of socialisation – stimulates youth participation.

Guided by the legitimacy approach, this article examined the association of trust for three pillars of political institutions (political parties, parliament, and politicians) with youth participation. Higher level of trust of young people for each of them appeared to be significantly associated with greater participation. Reciprocal trust between young people and those political institutions foster level of participation. However, this finding contradicts with Mannarini et al. (2008) study where they reported a statistically significant negative association of institutional trust with both conventional and unconventional political participation. Dalton (2002) argues that distrust does not need to be considered as a negative factor for participation because it can encourage people to participate non-traditional (e.g., protest) form of participation.

Higher level of discrimination appeared to be significantly related with greater level of both political and civic participation among youth in this study. This link might be explained by conflict theory that argues that inequality should fuel debates about the direction of political priorities which results in higher rates of mobilisation (Solt 2008). Furthermore, research on group mobilisation has documented that perceptions of discrimination increases the likelihood of various forms of participation, including voting and signing petitions (DeSipio, 2002).

Young people reported higher level of diversity in their social network had greater participation. Ikeda and Boase (2011) argue that diverse networks supplies access to diverse sources of information and alternative perspectives, which in turn stimulates political interest and increases political efficacy. Since political interest and efficacy are positively associated with participation (Best and Krueger 2005), diverse youth networks foster participation. Leighley and Matsubayashi (2009) proposed that the race/ethnicity and social class of the network membership could have implications for how individual members engage politically and perceive political information. They concluded that the political behaviours of racial and ethnic groups tend to be disadvantaged by their distinctive social networks. Social networks that were made up primarily of minority members

tended to have smaller less informed networks and access to fewer resources that in turn resulted in lower participation.

Political knowledge is regarded as a crucial element of democratic citizenship. Young people with higher political knowledge were reported to have significantly greater participation. This result supports a number of previous studies which also observed a positive association between political knowledge and participation (Andersen et al., 2001). Delli Carpini & Keeter (1996) argue that political knowledge fosters citizens' enlightened self-interest – the ability to connect personal or group interests with specific public issues and to connect those issues with people who are more likely to share their views and promote their interests. Thus, political knowledge is a key determinant of instrumental rationality (Zaller 1992).

Satisfaction with democracy appeared to be associated negatively with youth participation. This contradicts with the traditional literature which identified a positive relation between democracy and participation. For full review, see Clarke et al., 2004. The reason for the negative association might be linked to the fact that when people are satisfied with the democracy in the country they do not feel the need for change and therefore less inclined to participate especially in political activism.

Civic activity is one of the important domains of youth well-being (Goldin et al., 2014). Young people scored high on life satisfaction appeared to have higher level of civic engagement. Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2008) used the concept 'procedural utility' to explain the link between participation and well-being. The approach argues that people have preferences not only over the end result of decisions but also over the way in which those decisions are made (Frey et al., 2004). Studies from psychology indicate that people want to feel autonomous, related to other people and competent in their lives, and some processes are more capable of bringing about these states of mind than others. To the extent that certain behaviours can create these feelings, they create procedural utility. Political participation is one of the behaviours that increase individual procedural utility by creating an individual's senses of autonomy, relatedness and competence which in turn increases psychological well-being.

This article identifies a wide variation on the level of participation among the youth living in 30 European localities. This differential rate of participation was also observed in some previous studies. For full reviews, see Almond and Verba, 1989). In this regard, Schofer and Gourinchas (2001) argued that the variation can be explained by two institutional distinctions: (a) statist vs. non-statist (liberal), and (b) corporate vs. non-corporate. These dimensions reflect

the differences in state structure and political institutions that foster or hinder the growth of participation.

To sum up, the multilevel analysis in this article identifies gender, occupation, household income, and parental class as significant demographic factors of youth participation in Europe. Among the psychosocial factors, the study finds self-perceived discrimination, diversity of social network, political knowledge, political socialisation in family, satisfaction with democracy, trust for politicians, political parties, and parliament, and satisfaction with life (well-being) as significant factors of youth participation. Analysis of contextual factors further identifies country of living as an important factor of youth participation in Europe. These findings should be useful in formulating policies for fostering youth participation in Europe.

This study has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. ***Firstly***, it uses correlational design. Therefore, causal connections cannot be established between demographic, psychosocial, and contextual factors and youth participation. For identifying cause-effect relationship, longitudinal study can be considered in future.

Secondly, analysis of data for this article examined only 17 factors and tested their association with participation. There is a range of other demographic and contextual or situational factors such as ethnic background, disabilities, citizenship status. Future studies need to include them in the analysis.

Thirdly, this article tested two-level models (individual nested within locations). It might be worthy to check whether a better model can be developed using a three-level analysis (individual nested within locations that are further nested in countries) in future.

Fourthly, for measuring participation this article focuses on civic and political activities. Future study can explore the association of the same sets of independent variables for modelling voting behaviour of the European youth.

Finally, a number of variables used in this analysis had a large number of missing cases. For fitting better models with greater precision power and generalizability, imputation method can be considered before modelling the data.

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Haridhan Goswami

SPOŁECZNO-EKONOMICZNE CZYNNIKI PARTYCYPACJI MŁODZIEŻY EUROPEJSKIEJ: ANALIZA WIELOPOZIOMOWA

Streszczenie

Niniejsze opracowanie opiera się na wynikach międzynarodowego projektu badawczego zatytułowanego MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement; MOJE MIEJSCE – Pamięć, Młodzież, Dziedzictwo Polityczne, Zaangażowanie Obywatelskie) – project ten sfinansowano ze środków Komisji Europejskiej. Dane surveyowe uzyskane od prawie 17 tysięcy młodych ludzi z 14 europejskich krajów posłużyły do zidentyfikowania socjodemograficznych czynników powiązanych ze zjawiskiem partycypacji młodych ludzi. Męska płeć, pochodzenie z wyższej klasy społecznej, większa świadomość dyskryminacji (*higher self-perceived discrimination*), większe zróżnicowanie sieci społecznych, wyższy poziom politycznej socjalizacji w rodzinie, większy zakres wiedzy politycznej istotnie korelują z wyższym poziomem politycznego i obywatelskiego uczestnictwa. Ponadto wyższy poziom partycypacji jest znacząco powiązany z większą satysfakcją życiową, wyższym poziomem zaufania do polityków i władz parlamentarnych. Jednocześnie osoby uczące się, o wyższym poziomie dochodów w gospodarstwie domowym deklarują większe zaufanie do partii politycznych, a osoby z państw określanych mianem konserwatywnych wydaje się cechować znacząco wyższy poziom uczestnictwa politycznego. Ustalenia te poddane zostały dyskusji w kontekście wcześniejszych analiz empirycznych oraz teorii dotyczących partycypacji i jakości życia (*well-being*). Sformułowano również wskazania dotyczące przyszłych badań z zakresu tej problematyki.

Słowa kluczowe: uczestnictwo, młodzież, młodzi ludzie, jakość życia, zaangażowanie obywatelskie, Europa

BOOK REVIEW

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Warner J., The *Emotional Politics* of *Social Work* and *Child Protection*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2015

Emotions comprise an important context for many concepts developed within social sciences[1], and recently interest in the role of emotions in shaping political processes also seems to have grown. Although the notion of emotional politics is used in works on racism, slavery or citizenship as social constructs[2], it is difficult to tie it to a single coherent theory or concept. The way it is used by different authors implies a constructionist paradigm, broadly speaking, but so far it lacks precise operationalization and its analytical usage seems rather intuitive.

The reviewed book fits into the above-indicated tendency, as it does not bring satisfactory theoretical conclusions. However, it should be acknowledged as an input into the scientific debate upon cultural and political aspects of the modern welfare state, which has been emerging over several years within a few different paradigms. Contrary to the empirical analyses focused on various elements of the "welfare culture" and the "social consciousness of elites", Jo Warner tries to capture and describe the dynamics of discourses which both mirror and shape an arrangement of rules and institutional practice which is constantly reformed on all levels (from macro to micro). The book, written by the researcher and lecturer

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[1] A review of the classical sociological concepts from this point of view can be found in "The Sociology of emotions" (J. Turner, J Stetseds, Cambrigde University Press 2005).

[2] See, e.g., P. Joanide (2015), The Emotional Politics of Racism: How Feelings Trump Facts in an Era of Colorblindness, Stanford University Press; M. Franz (2015) Will to love, will to fear: the emotional politics of illegality and citizenship in the campaign against birthright citizenship in the US, "Social Identities" Vol. 21, Iss. 2;

from the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research at the University of Kent, can be viewed as a summary of studies on the public debate surrounding the British welfare system, mostly with respect to the sector of child welfare. To some extent both the selection of the subject matter (the media and politics) and the approach to the analysis (searching for "irrational" sources of changes in the perception and functioning of the welfare system) seem to correspond with the moral panics conceptual framework applied in the author's earlier works, which she invokes several times in the present work under review.

The notion of "emotional politics" is seen by the book's author as a complex set of practices: "By introducing the concept of emotional politics, I explore the way emotions as anger, disgust and shame over the abuse of children are not only personally and subjectively felt, but also generated and experienced collectively" (Warner 2015[3]).

The assumption that emotions are political has been borrowed from sociological works, mostly from Simon Williams and Gillian Bangelow, who in their work "The lived body" (1998) encapsulated the concept of emotions as a keystone between the biological, individual, social and public. Although judgments based on "rational" argumentation are traditionally valued in public debates, emotions still comprise a stable element of narrations constructed by both the political left and right. Nevertheless, the author does not systematically reconstruct the "emotional codes" used by various representatives of different ideologies. She recalls the analyses by Norman Fairclough (2000) on the rhetoric of Tony Blair's public speeches, as well as more recent studies on statements and pronouncements by the leaders of the Tories and Labour, where such categories as empathy or compassion play an important role. In turn, group identity and conformism is frequently constructed by pride and shame. To capture the complexity of the societal rules concerning emotions, Warner uses the term '*emotional regime'*, borrowed from Arlie Hochschild's works (2002), defined as "taken-for-granted feeling rules (rules about how we imagine we should feel) and framing rules (rules about what we should see and think). Together these rules shape how we see and feel about everyday reality"(Hohschild 2002: 118, quoted after: Warner 2015).

Underlining the complexity of mechanisms shaping the interrelations between the media and the audience, the author recalls the assumption that

[3] The reviewer's copy of the book (licensed by Kindle Library) does not contain page numbers, which is why the quotations in this article are not accompanied by precise bibliographic references.

in the age of tabloidization, texts play the key role in shaping the language of debates surrounding social policy. She also convincingly defends the decision to narrow the analyses and focus on discussions concerning child welfare. Warner claims that the whole of images of human suffering can bring about a decline in audiences' sensitivity (she recalls the notion of *compassion fatigue* borrowed from the research on post-traumatic stress, see: Wilkinson 2005). However, children's suffering still has the power to trigger fierce reactions, rooted among other things in empathy and another psychological mechanism – a tendency to identify oneself with a parent or guardian.

These mechanisms are seriously challenged by media releases on child abuse by the closest family members. Warner gives examples of studies by British scholars pointing out that in such cases the media does not usually explicit images of suffering (such as photographs from autopsies), but rather publishes photos from before the acts of violence (showing smiling, healthy children), which in turn increases the tension between the information about the abuse and the utopian image of a happy childhood. The narrative structures of such releases are mostly subordinate to attempts to make them meaningful in the context of social norms attached to social class, gender or race.

Subsequently, the above-described processes are quickly transferred to the political level, as children are easy to present as a common good. If we perceive them as "the future of the nation", publications about child abuse can be interpreted as a message about our collective negligence as "caring parents". This leads to attempts to assign moral responsibility and to pose questions about gaps in the system of formal and informal care, grounded in unrealistic assumptions about their total infallibility. Warner gives much attention to claims for reform frequently invoked in such moments of crisis and inspired by the expectation that social services could and should exercise a total control. This situates the reviewed book in the heated scientific debate on the dominant perceptions of risk and risk management in social work and surrounding it.

Finally, the argumentation presented in the book contains a postulate which could be described as strictly political and emancipatory. Namely, by getting back to the first welfare scandals involving children described by the British media, where social workers were cast as scapegoats, the author points out the resulting changes, both in legislation and helping practice.

A just and in-depth depiction of mechanisms used to construct a negative image of social work and social workers can be, in turn, a starting point for constructing the opposite images. Stemming from digressions about interrelations

between the scientific debates and social practice, the above postulate can be invalidated as the exemplification of a utopian faith in the whistle-blowing role of social sciences. On the other hand it should be kept in mind that the reviewed book was released at the moment when the language and argumentation of several works written by authors (such as Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, Daniel Dorling, Guy Standing or Thomas Piketty) entered into the mainstream political debates and seemed to modify dominant conceptual frames, within which important phenomena and socio-economic processes had been previously perceived. Although Jo Warner's proposal is much more modest, both in terms of theoretical reflection and the range of analysis, its accessible language and content predispose it to become the subject of heated discussion in the circles of social work practitioners and managers.

The book seems to be more a well-written essay (which corresponds with a great Anglo-Saxon tradition of argumentation) than a thorough but hermetic academic work. The argumentation extends here to the forefront, which – together with the catching "journalistic" chapter titles – corresponds with the author's intention to make the analysis interesting for the representatives of the child care sector. The main argumentation is enriched by different bibliographical references, which can be seen both as a limitation (eclectism) and a merit (eruditeness), as they seem to be brought together under one goal, which is the interpretation and contextualization of empirical data.

The structure of the book seems rather clear (with the exception of the last chapter, later discussed in this review) and subordinate to above-reconstructed goals. A detailed description of the methodological procedure was placed at the end of the book, in the Appendix. This solution can be seen as a gesture to non-academic readers. The empirical basis for the reflections comprise qualitative data: press articles, documents, and political speeches. Although the author does not resolve these issues explicitly, she has focused mainly on elite discourses. Her methodological strategy is summed up as follows: "In this study, I used methodological techniques that would enable me to discern and make explicit the main themes in the press coverage by locating patterns in the way different aspects of the story were presented" (Warner 2015). In turn, the juxtaposition of press articles and political documents was aimed at pointing out commonalities. The short description of the research procedure refers both to the criteria for data selection as well as technical aspects of her analysis, inspired by Sara Ahmed's (2004) and Beverly Skeggs's (2004) works devoted to emotional politics and

the articulation of social class in political rhetoric, as well as by the studies on moral panics.

The examples of debates discussed in the book from the years 2008–2014 were selected purposely, and a reader who is not familiar with the British welfare debate should trust that the author points out events of special meaning, both because of their range and because of the consequences for legitimization and the daily functioning of child care system. The political documents included in the analysis were retrieved from the official register of parliamentary debates, on the basis of keywords (mostly children's and politicians' names). Only textual data were subjected to coding (which, in the case of media releases, may limit the results of the analysis), which was planned in accordance with the procedure designed and implemented by Lee and Ungar (1989) and comprised of such categories as topics, emotional distance, and moral norms. From the technical point of view, rigorous rules of the three-step route followed from open through to focused and selective coding.

The empirical part of the book begins with the chapter titled "Heads must roll? National politics of anger and the press". Warner turns back to a media and political scandal from 2007, triggered by the death of 18-month old Peter Connelly (named "Baby P."). The analysis is mostly aimed at revealing the role of anger both as a background for social services actions and as a factor mobilizing and bonding the national community. The central element of case study is aimed at showing the processes of quick crystallization and the directing of emotions, including a thorough analysis of David Cameron's speech.

The following part of the study is devoted to the role of disgust in reproducing a negative image of the lower classes. Similarly to the previous chapter, this one can be seen as continuation of reflections published elsewhere (Warner 2013a, 2013b). In this case the analysis covers press releases from two trials of mothers accused of killing their children (2008 and 2013). The category of class-based and directed disgust as a tool for moral regulation of social relations seems to be an interesting input into the long discussion on the social construction of the *underclass* as "the Other"[4], as it reveals the tension between the fantasy of innocence and vulnerability of a child figure and the public image of the "undeserving" and their immoral life, which are key elements of media stories of mother-murderers. Warner (2015) argues that this tension influences every

[4] Apart from disgust, fear and shame – which are more broadly discussed in the literature – also play an important role.

day helping practices, as "social work operates in the wider context of moral condemnation of people living in poverty rather than compassion" (Warner 2015).

Chapter 4, based on an analysis of political documents, can be seen as a passage to reflections on the role of *commemoration, and collective remembering* in the process of formulating claims for reforms. Both the recollection of children's names and public case reviews are seen as the starting points for a specific vision of the system's improvement, grounded in the myth of total control (eliminating any risk of mistakes or negligence). Warner pays special attention to articulation of the idea of introducing an alternative training system, aimed at replacing "toxic bureaucrats" with "new" heroic social workers.

The problem of risk tolerance in the area of child care is discussed exhaustively in Chapter 5, mostly in the context of conflicts of interest among certain collective actors and the role of these fights in constructing their group identity and distinction. A return to the arguments presented in the Chapter 3 brings about new reflections on the role of moral condemnation of the underclass as an element of the status game, played by the middle classes more intensively, as the role of solid, socio-economic foundations of the social structure, as well as the role of rules governing the distribution of deference within British society, decline.

The analysis leads to conclusions which would not be contrary to common sense, although Warner underlines that the negative image of the underclass and their crippled parenthood is a significant reference point for the construction of an internally contradictory model for the middle classes. Also the interrelations between social workers and clients, and especially the justification for intervention in their privacy, is considered as a consequence of class position.

In Chapter 6 the author passes on to analysis of three official documents representing a specific category of *serious case reviews*, which in accordance with British law are obligatorily published in cases of a child's death caused by abuse or negligence[5]. The idea to include them in the book is justifiable, as they "reflect and generate feeling rules that include profound regret at past actions and intense anger at the ease with which, in hindsight, the child's suffering might have been prevented. Documents also implant feelings and framing rules into the rationalities of practice, particularly in the processes of risk and blame" (Warner 2015).

Moreover, they comprise not only the result of documenting helping practices, but are also texts which are extensively used in the media and in political debates, and they make up part of the process of constructing social relations. The

[5] Such reports are kept in the national repository and accessible to the public.

specificity of this institutional context can be especially interesting for a non-British reader. Warner convincingly shows how the above-mentioned procedure is instrumentalized to persuade audiences that some mistakes could have been easily prevented, which both boosts the eruption of anger and reinforces the belief that the childcare system can be totally effective, and that its weakest link is the social workers.

In the Chapter 7, the author tries to reconstruct the elements of emotional politics within childcare systems outside the UK. However, the criteria for her selection of Australia, Holland and New York does not seem clear, nor does the criteria for data selection and the scope of analysis (national level juxtaposed with the local etc.). The conclusions, especially in relation to different strategies for reworking the tensions between two key orientations – at *child protection* and *child welfare* – are very thought-provoking in certain parts, but in light of the fact that the previous chapters constitute a comprehensive whole, they seem out-of-place and fragmentary.

The summary of main topics and conclusions contained in Chapter 8 is also a starting point for a broader discussion on the institutional and public role of social work in the process of power transmission. The author raises some important claims: "The public institutional role of the social work is to articulate different feeling rules about social work and the communities social work is largely engaged in. To do this it is necessary to extend certain elements of our own politics to a much wider audience, and to do so with renewed energy. The most important element of our politics that I argue we need to communicate to others is the politics of social suffering. Social suffering serves to focus attention firmly on *power* (…)" (Warner 2015). This, in turn, paves the way for compassion, which – so long as it not is confused with pity – can become a starting point for collective action based on mutual trust.

To sum up, the book by Jo Warner may be criticized for its insufficiently deep theoretical reflections, as it lacks the construction of a conceivably precise concept of emotional politics. Nevertheless, in my opinion such publications deserve appreciation for different reasons. They offer analyses which are both methodologically grounded and rooted in broad (even if eclectic) scientific reflections. In addition, such books refer to current problems which are widely discussed in public debates surrounding public policies. Being both critical and attractive for practitioners, they play an important, and sometimes underestimated, role as they raise the sociological imagination and the ability to recognize the macro-social, political and cultural contexts surrounding legal solutions,

administrative decisions, and everyday practice. It is worth underscoring that in Poland the market niche for such works – which go beyond the technocratic language of ministerial instructions as well as the hermetic language of sociological theory – remains underdeveloped.

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