



Some still more equal than others? Or equal opportunities for all?

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Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth

Some still more equal than others? Or equal opportunities for all?

Edited by Serdar M. Değirmencioğlu

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To receive further information about the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, please visit our website at <http://youth-partnership.net> or contact us by e-mail at youth-partnership@partnership-eu.coe.int.

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Preface

Hanjo Schild and Marta Mędzińska

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth is committed to furthering youth research and constructing links with policy and practice; to achieve a better knowledge and understanding of youth has been one of the key priorities of its work programme since 2003. This includes a programme of youth research seminars, promoting dialogue among youth researchers and between them and young people, youth organisations, policy makers and practitioners. The seminars are focused on themes of relevance to young people in Europe that have been identified as key by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and various stakeholders in the youth field.

The programme of each seminar consists of thematic panels, within which the selected research papers are presented and debated by all stakeholders. Those discussions lead to the formulation of recommendations for future reflection and action in the areas of youth research, policy and practice. The presented papers and seminar reports recalling the main debated issues are then published in the Youth Knowledge Books series.

The seminar on Equal Opportunities for All was organised in Budapest from 7 to 9 November 2007 in the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe. The seminar theme was very broad and encompassed conceptual as well as empirical work on equality and inequality, social exclusion, anti-discrimination policies and youth participation. Particular emphasis was placed on policy development and good practice in the youth field as well as papers that integrated orientations of theory, practice and policy.

The need to promote the principles of equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination through policies and programmes has become a priority both in the Council of Europe and in the European Union. The Council of Europe's involvement in the development of the principle of equality dates back to 1950, to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This framework was later complemented by the European Social Charter (from 1961 and revised in 1996), which guarantees social and economic human rights.

Adapted at the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, held in September 2005 in Budapest, the Resolution on the Priorities of the Council of Europe's Youth Sector puts an emphasis on a number of priorities, including the "promotion of intercultural dialogue, inter-religious co-operation and respect for cultural difference" and "facilitating the access of young people to working life and to social rights". In this context, the European Youth Campaign on Diversity, Human Rights and Participation was run in 2006-07, conceived in the spirit of the 1995 campaign All Different – All Equal.

The political priority of Equal Opportunities for All was re-confirmed in Resolution CM/Res(2008)23, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which stated that human rights and democracy, living together in diverse societies and social inclusion of young people should be regarded as priorities of the future Council of Europe youth policy, with special emphasis on "ensuring young people's full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity", "promoting young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures", "promoting

equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives”, “effectively implementing gender equality and preventing all forms of gender-based violence”, and “ensuring young people’s access to education, training, working life” and “decent living conditions” as well as to “cultural, sporting and creative activities”.

The European Union has been committed to the fight against discrimination since its creation. For many years, the main focus was the prevention of discrimination on the basis of nationality and gender. More recently, the focus has been enlarged, in response to the demand from civil society and the changing needs of European society, to include other forms of discrimination. New powers for combating discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation were conferred under substantive amendments to the Treaty Establishing the European Community introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, together with a strengthening of those already agreed in relation to discrimination in general. The promotion of “equal opportunities for all” was also set as a priority by establishing the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) – towards a just society.

With specific regard to the youth field, the Youth in Action Programme of the EU (2007-13) complements the general European equality policies, stressing, among its priorities, the access of young people with fewer opportunities to its activities and the promotion of cultural diversity.

In the “Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field” of November 2009, the Council of the European Union agreed that, in the period until 2018, the objectives should be to create more, and more equal, opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market and to promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people. To this end a number of guiding principles should be observed in all policies and activities concerning young people, such as promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination.

Despite the significant efforts of the member states, institutions, organisations and citizens in the implementation of anti-discrimination legal instruments, policies and programmes, many young people are still far from having equal opportunities in practice. They continue to suffer from social marginalisation and inequalities at work, in access to education and vocational training, health and social assistance, housing, access to goods and services, etc. Those various types of discrimination raise important questions for law makers, governments and civil society.

In recent years, a number of important studies have contributed to the debate on equality/inequality and discrimination. However, a lack of specific studies on discrimination suffered by young people is still noticeable. The research seminar aimed at helping to bridge this gap by further exploring the various realities of equality and discrimination as well as policies, strategies and mechanisms aimed at enhancing equal opportunities for all young people. We invite all those interested in its results to study this publication, which hopefully enriches the knowledge of this crucial topic.

Introduction

Serdar M. Değirmencioglu

The youth research seminar focused on equality and non-discrimination in line with the focus of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All designated by the European Commission and of All Different – All Equal, the youth campaign of the Council of Europe.

In the Council of Europe, the main basis for work focused on equality and non-discrimination is the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms¹ and the European Social Charter (1961; revised in 1996), which guarantees social and economic human rights.² The Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Framework Directive³ define principles that offer everyone in the EU a common minimum level of legal protection against discrimination. In 2004, the European Commission adopted the strategy to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all in the EU, set out in the Green Paper on “Equality and Non-discrimination in an Enlarged EU”.⁴ Following the consultation process linked to the Green Paper, a framework strategy aiming at the achievement of non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all was laid out by the Commission in 2005.

In the eyes of a significant majority of Europeans, violations of the above mentioned rights and principles are widespread, despite the efforts of institutions and organisations.⁵ The research seminar was intended as a means to explore existing realities of inequality and discrimination, as well as policies, strategies and mechanisms that enhance equal opportunities for all.

→ All Different – All Equal campaign

The youth campaign of the Council of Europe, All Different – All Equal, involved a large number of activities across all member states. The slogan “referred to the fact that people all over the world differ in so many ways, for example what people believe in and how people look, but regardless of these differences they should be given equal rights.” The campaign challenged those who took their rights for granted with factual questions and invited youth to respect diversity, to know about human rights and to take action in defending their own rights, as well as standing up against the discrimination of others.

The campaign, therefore, focused upon racism, discrimination (on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, disability or other factors) and placed a strong emphasis on standing up against all forms of discrimination, both for one’s own direct benefit and for other’s rights.

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1. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=005&CM=7&DF=7/9/2007&CL=ENG>.
 2. www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/.
 3. Directive 2000/43/EC of 29.06.2000 and Directive 2000/78/EC of 27.11.2000.
 4. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/combating_discrimination/114157_en.htm.
 5. See special Eurobarometer 263 “Discrimination in the European Union”, <http://ec.europa.eu/public-opinion/archives/ebs/ebs-263-en.pdf>.
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*We live in a confusing world. In some ways we seem to be coming closer together. For the few with access to information highways or satellite television it is possible to be in contact with the other side of the planet in seconds. But nearer to home the distances between us are increasing. We do not enjoy our multicultural societies as we could: as a phenomenon which enriches us with diversity and which we should not allow ourselves to waste.*⁶

The campaign invited youth to consider the fundamental question about diversity and ensuring equal rights to all from a positive perspective. Diversity or differences between people are an asset to a community and to a society. In fact, democracy emerges only when there is diversity: people need democracy when they are different from each other in terms of opinions, interests, lifestyles or other significant ways.

→ Co-ordination of the seminar

The research seminar was co-ordinated by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth and was convened by Barbara Giovanna Bello and administered by the Partnership Research Officer, Marta Mędlińska. Karin Lopatta-Loibl represented the European Commission – Directorate General for Education and Culture, Youth Policy Unit.

→ Youth research and youth policy: the institutional commitment

Antje Rothmund, the Director of the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe in Budapest (EYCB), noted that European citizenship is about diversity which is protected by the provisions of human rights legislation. The references and values provided by the legal framework are needed by young people, as well as by society as a whole. However, research is needed to understand the ways in which young people are not able to benefit from equal opportunities and diversity. Research not only highlights the gaps and the needs of young people for researchers, but also brings these gaps to the attention of policy makers and of young people themselves. If young people are actors of social change, then it is necessary to consider and examine how their participation may make a difference.

Karin Lopatta-Loibl briefly outlined the activities of the European Commission, particularly in the youth field, against discrimination and specifically against racism and xenophobia. The Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission made the promotion of diversity and, in particular, the reduction of all forms of racism and xenophobia one of its key priorities in 2005. The European Commission's White Paper on "Youth" emphasises the importance of participation among all young people in Europe in fighting discrimination. Ms Lopatta-Loibl underscored two of the main aims for the seminar, namely, to gain greater knowledge about fields of importance for young people and thus facilitate knowledge-based policy making and to bring young researchers from all over Europe (and beyond) together for networking and to share their research.

Marta Mędlińska noted that the partnership in the youth field between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth emphasises a tripartite relationship between research, public authority and civil society. The aim of this relationship is to ensure that youth policy is evidence-based, building on both the findings of youth researchers and the practice of youth workers and youth activists.

6. <http://eycb.coe.int/edupack/01.html>.

In terms of the theme of the seminar, Ms Mędlirńska stressed the three pillars of the youth campaign – diversity, human rights and participation – and the need for research on these pillars from all angles or disciplines. The EU-COE youth partnership offers tools that can serve as viable platforms for dialogue among researchers, policy makers and youth activists. Among these are the Pool of European Researchers Network and the partnership website, comprising the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP).

→ The legal framework

Barbara Giovanna Bello offered a brief introduction to the Council of Europe and EU legal framework pertaining to discrimination and to equal opportunities. In the Council of Europe's framework, the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 14, is particularly relevant: "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status."

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) was set up following a decision of the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in October 1993. The task of the commission is to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. The legislative corpus is complemented by other documents, such as the European Social Charter, adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996 and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed in 1995.

In the EU framework, the anti-discrimination legislation is employing a new generation of legal instruments, thanks to the changes introduced into Article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. With this article, the European Council has the power to, "take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation".

→ Inequalities and the need for a critical research framework

Keynote speaker Dr David M. Fryer presented an overview of the outcomes of structural and emergent inequalities in the developed world from a community critical perspective. The critical emphasis highlighted the key issues and positioned the researcher in a complicated set of power relationships. Dr Fryer first focused on the unequal distribution of health within developed societies: people at the bottom of the social hierarchy have death rates between two and four times higher than those at the top (that is, a 5 to 10 year difference). Next, he focused on the unequal distribution of health between developed societies: richer countries do not necessarily have healthier populations than poorer countries. Given minimal standards of nutrition, shelter, hygiene, etc., a country can be twice as rich as an other without being any healthier. Life expectancy is greater in some countries that are less wealthy in terms of GDP than richer countries. As Wilkinson puts it, "Among the developed countries it is the most egalitarian that have the highest life expectancy, not the richest."

In fact, a wide range of social and psychological problems – including obesity, teenage births, violence, school performance, imprisonment, psychological disorders, social stress, poor social networks, low self-esteem, high rates of depression, anxiety, insecurity, the loss of sense of control, lower levels of trust – are more

common in more unequal societies. Greater inequality seems to harm the vast majority of the population at all levels in the status hierarchy. That is, it is not only the most disadvantaged that suffer.

Unemployment is another major factor that undermines psychological well-being. Unemployment is linked to a variety of facets of psychological health and the results hold across levels of investigation, geographical contexts, a range of historical periods and a variety of methods and designs. Other documented societal causes of distress, illness and injustice have to do with various forms of discrimination and inequality: employment “stressors”, disabling practices, institutionalised oppression, forced migration, homelessness and housing problems, racism, misogyny, relative poverty, and other forms of oppression.

Dr Fryer also emphasised two issues that are often not mentioned in debates about discrimination and inequality. The first is the staggering public cost. About a tenth of adults, an estimated 450 million people worldwide, are affected by psychological disorders at any one time. The other issue is the discrimination that lack of well-being brings about: people with these disorders often experience social isolation, poor quality of life and increased mortality.

Dr Fryer suggested that critical methodology is needed in any field to reverse the misuse of research and social scientists should intervene to reduce and prevent material, subjective and ideological oppression in everyday societal contexts. It is entirely possible to conduct research that serves the community and the public interest. Examples of community praxis (research and action) are available in the community critical psychology literature and elsewhere.

→ Research on equal opportunities for all

Education institutions are critical to understanding how inequality is reproduced. Bálint-Ábel Bereményi focused on unequal schooling opportunities for Spanish Gitano (Roma) students. The issue has largely remained hidden in academic, political and professional debates on intercultural education. Unlike immigrants, the Gitano are invisible in the mass media. Dr Bereményi examined how legal discourses on cultural diversity, equal opportunities and non-discrimination were received and reinterpreted by teachers. The perceptions of teachers were influenced by negative social representations of the Gitano and by the limited ability of teachers to analyse the sociocultural context of their work. This led to school practices that built further barriers towards equal opportunities. In contrast, a positive school climate appears to play a key role in creating conditions for the integration of Gitano students.

Research on youth often neglects the earlier part of life and treats youth issues as though they are completely unrelated to processes in childhood. In contrast, Dr Anna Kende focused on the critical issue of lack of equal opportunities in early childhood. She looked at the increasingly common practice of holding children back from kindergarten for a year, where the intention is to let children have more time to be ready for school. This practice of flexible admission age policy often leads to upward spiralling performance standards for the first years of school. As the average age of children entering school rises, schools tend to shift the curriculum from play to academic work, which then encourages more parents and educational advisers to decide to keep children longer in pre-primary education or at home, further raising the average age of school entry. Raising the entrance age in school districts may establish an academic environment that divides advantaged children from disadvantaged peers. It may also mean denial of public education for one

year to previously age-eligible children. The impact on upper and middle class children may be small, as they are likely to spend their time in preschools or in more stimulating home environments.

→ Cycles of social exclusion

Ana Azavedo studied the pathways and aspirations of young people outside the regular educational system in Portugal. Students in alternative schools do not seem to appreciate the advantages of the schooling system they are enrolled in, compared to normal schooling. Alternative programmes are designed to provide young people with a quick way to enter professional life, rather than to guide them to further education. Schools appear to exclude the “challenging” students rather than include them. Ana Azavedo suggests that attempts to integrate and work with those at risk of failing academically, should be standard in schools.

Umut Aksungur studied youth facing social exclusion in Ankara. He examined three processes associated with disadvantage: education, the labour market and social capital. Young people facing the worst disadvantage were experiencing long-term unemployment, economic hardship and social isolation. They had been at a disadvantage since childhood. The risk of social exclusion was linked with low educational attainment and low level of qualifications and especially lack of family support. Mr Aksungur argued that social exclusion of young people is multidimensional and the dimensions are inter-related. Experiences of social exclusion are cumulative and compounding. Social exclusion of young people appears to be a “vicious circle” or a “spiral of disadvantage”.

Taken together, these papers indicate that education continues to play a pivotal role and the barriers in the educational system are often structural and therefore more difficult to overcome. The challenges are much less structural and somewhat less difficult to deal with, depending on the context and available support. In the case of marginal groups, such as the Gitano, the challenges are invariably difficult. Falling out of the educational system guarantees social exclusion and young people are often aware of their narrowing horizons. Equal opportunities in schooling are still more rhetoric than reality and how school policies discriminate against disadvantaged young people needs to be studied from early on, preferably before children start school.

→ Needs of minority youth

The second keynote speaker Dr Judit Takács presented an overview of the discrimination that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experience in Hungary. Following the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Dr Takács distinguished between direct discrimination (a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and indirect discrimination (when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice disadvantages people on the grounds of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim).

Dr Takács did not concentrate solely on an individualistic notion of discrimination, which is the approach usually favoured by anti-discrimination legislation, but also highlighted forms of discrimination ingrained in public life which affect LGBT people as a group. A structural concept of oppression is needed to better understand the

disadvantages and injustice suffered by LGBT people as individuals and members of an oppressed social group. These are the consequences of everyday practices which, in turn, result from unquestioned norms and assumptions underlying institutional rules. Structural oppression is far too common in the lives of LGBT people in Hungary and elsewhere.

Next, Veronika Honkasalo highlighted the importance of understanding what might be proper for girls from a migrant background in a society very different from the one where they have roots. There appears to be a double standard in the way authorities assess the effectiveness of youth programmes and youth work in Finland. When a cultural problem emerges, the girls' background, culture and its enforcer – the family – get blamed and this is often used to mask the responsibility of the authorities to face the issue of how open youth programmes and youth work affect young people with a different backgrounds. Ms Honkasalo argued that multicultural youth work should emphasise changing the generally masculine character of communal youth work, rather than trying to integrate immigrant girls according to the old practices. The critical issue, then, is understanding what might be proper for girls from a migrant background and accommodating youth work to the needs of immigrant girls.

Karina Chupina focused on hard of hearing young people. From a social science perspective, deafness is more than a disability or a medical condition. "Hard of hearing" (HoH) is not a widely accepted term for identifying people with a hearing loss in Europe and there is a need to examine the experiences of HoH youth from within. Only some deaf and HoH people identify themselves as disabled; others reject equating hearing loss with a disability. Evidence indicates that HoH people, like others with a moderate disability, have lower chances of finding employment. Establishing education and employment programmes for HoH young people appears to be an important policy issue. Ms Chupina noted that without self-acceptance and self-awareness, HoH young people may not be able to organise themselves and articulate their needs adequately. National organisations of HoH adults can help younger generations come out of the self-imposed isolation and provide visibility for the HoH condition. Active and well-integrated HoH young people, by acting as role models and advocates, can also help other young people to accept themselves.

→ Mobility across borders

Two papers focused primarily on the challenges facing young people in Ukraine in the post-Soviet era. Dr Alissa Tolstokorova presented her work on economic inequality, social exclusion and labour migration. Over the last decade, large numbers of people have left Ukraine to seek employment in other countries. This economic migration inevitably involved youth, the most flexible and mobile, as well as the most socially and economically deprived demographic group. Dr Tolstokorova argued that external labour migration of Ukrainian youth serves as a mechanism of social exclusion, caused by structural inequality in the labour market, educational disadvantages for young people from low-income families and economic inequalities, among other factors.

Ivanna Temirova, focused on wilful or forced trafficking of youth in Ukraine. The trafficking of young people is most prevalent in the Donetsk region, Lugansk region and Crimea. Despite the extent of the problems, trafficking is not even mentioned in the programmes of the main political parties. The actual number of trafficked youth is still not known. Ms Temirova noted the urgent need for measures to protect the rights of children.

The papers on cross-border mobility and disability indicate that migration presents a major challenge to multiple actors in the receiving country. Particularly important is the need for youth workers to be informed of and sensitive to cultural differences, in order to better support immigrant youth. Secondly, migration is not a unitary experience and may reduce poverty and increase opportunities for parents and their children, provided that there are mechanisms in place in the “sending” and “receiving” settings. Thirdly, alarm bells are ringing in countries peripheral to the EU because domestic and cross-border trafficking is on the rise, putting the vast majority of trafficked youth at great risk of maltreatment and criminal activity. Finally, there is a clear gap in the literature regarding disabilities, reflecting an important bias among researchers. The numbers of disabled young people are not sufficiently reflected in the numbers of scientific studies. Policy and programmes directed specifically at youth (for example, the EU Youth in Action Programme) are often not inclusive of disabled youth.

→ Religion and social exclusion

A number of events, including the 11 September attacks in New York, the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands and the 7 July bombings in London, have changed the lives of a large number of Muslim youth in Europe. The “insecurity discourse”, the war in Iraq and the ongoing violence in the Middle East further polarised many, including Muslim youth. Some Muslim youth have become hard-liners, whereas some have chosen to become more active politically to oppose growing discrimination against Muslims. The riots in France in 2005 added to the tension around the issue of “integration” of immigrant and Muslim youth.

Dr Momodou Sallah reviewed evidence regarding the failure on the part of mainstream services in the UK to meet the needs of young Muslims and the strong historical link between this failure and the Eurocentric bias that allows for very little sensitivity to different cultural and religious values and needs. There has been a shift in UK policy from multiculturalism to integration, signalled by the setting up of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion in August 2006. The government’s integrationist approach does not incorporate the needs of Muslims in general and young Muslims in particular. This approach is reflected in the mainstream services. The evidence suggests that there are many barriers to accessing mainstream services for young Muslims and these barriers need dismantling.

Ali Akbar Tajmazinani noted that Muslims are the second largest religious group in the UK and have the youngest age profile. Given the large number of young people among British Muslims and findings that suggest growing extremism among British Muslim youth, the social inclusion of young people is an urgent matter. Evidence suggests that young Muslims are among the most excluded and marginalised in the UK. However, there is little consensus about the main causes and factors of their exclusion.

To help this debate, Mr Tajmazinani first examined the relevance of existent explanatory viewpoints or frameworks, and proposed a new theoretical framework: The Multi-Level Analysis Model of Social Exclusion. To complement this model, a flexible definition of social inclusion is needed. The literature indicates that a) social exclusion is not a simple matter of economic deprivation, but also includes social, political and cultural aspects; b) it results from a process of interplay between various factors; c) it is context-based and can have different meanings and manifestations in various contexts. In the light of these findings, Mr Tajmazinani suggested a composite definition of social inclusion: the desired

situation whereby all members of the society have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live.

It appears that there is a need for a more rigorous “calibrated” approach to inclusion and exclusion. First, there is still a need for versatile models that can guide research as well as practice in terms of identifying and utilising indicators of social inclusion. Secondly, there is a need for continuous monitoring of these indicators – as suggested in many policy documents. The circumstances of a certain segment of young people in a given country may change drastically following seemingly minor changes in public policy.

→ Resistance and participation

An important and integral component of the debate on equal opportunities is the participation of young people themselves. Reda Šatūnienė described a particular form of youth participation in her study on the punk subculture in Lithuania. Young people interested in punk subculture share an interest in various social problems, national politics, the idea of equal human rights, animal rights, vegetarianism, feminism and ecology. The main values punk subculture members assert are equality, liberty and critical thinking. They emphasise equal human rights for all, anti-fascism, anti-racism, feminism, anti-hierarchy, anti-globalism, anti-consumerism, and the struggle for animal rights and vegetarianism. They try to change what they consider to be a stagnant society, with info-shops, free universities, “do-it-yourself” events, protests, demonstrations, produced “zines”. Members of the punk subculture represent a consciously oppositional and active part of contemporary Lithuanian youth who are eager to change the society.

Eduardo Valenzuela described a new approach to youth offenders. In 2007, laws in France against repeat offenders were stiffened. The Ministry of Justice, however, had suggested “citizenship training” in 2004 as an alternative to imprisonment. Mr Valenzuela described “Citizen Dialogues”, as a way to restore the dialogue between those persons placed under the authority of the judicial system and the various players in the local community: members of the judicial system, local councillors, those in charge of associations. The notion of citizenship is revisited in relation to different daily contexts: by tackling different aspects of “living together” through personal testimonies, this approach opens the door to identifying those factors involved in negative identities and victimisation often experienced by individuals in trouble with the judicial system. The dialogue helps participants reflect on the notion of citizenship, the conditions of “living together” and develop a respect for others and for institutions. The way institutions function and forms of collective engagement and participation are revisited through the concrete examples of the personal experiences of those involved.

→ Immigrant and indigenous youth

Marianna Kasic presented her work on immigrants in Italy, who constitute about 5% of the entire population. Immigration policies in Italy have traditionally linked immigration to the job market, as in other western countries. The institutional approach has, until recently, regarded immigration as a problem and as a matter of security and public order, rather than as a social and inclusive matter. Ms Kasic first compared social-psychological theories about ethnic identity and in- and out-group formation to highlight how “otherness” is constructed. Findings suggest

that the majority of Italians are perceived not to be open to diversity. Participants often believed that most Italians are scared of immigrants due to the way they are presented on the television news. Many believed that Italians tend to associate foreigners and immigrants with a sense of threat.

Elena Knyazeva first presented an anthropological analysis of the indigenous culture and the realities as well as the beliefs that shape indigenous lives in northern Russia. Next, she surveyed the various forms of discrimination (cultural and linguistic, racial, religious, economic, educational, etc.) that indigenous people are faced with across multiple domains. Only half of the indigenous population of the north over the age of 15 have elementary or incomplete secondary education. About 17% of the population do not have any form of elementary education and half of these can be classified as illiterate. Among those who enter school, only 55% are able to finish school. About one third of first grade pupils have to repeat first grade. The low educational attainment of the indigenous habitants of the north makes it very difficult for them to prepare for contemporary life. They end up unable to do anything but unskilled physical labour.

At the same time, indigenous youth cannot resort to traditional life, because the traditional activities that sustained the indigenous population (that is, the economic base or livelihood) have disappeared for the most part. The presentation highlighted the many challenges facing an indigenous way of life and the key notion of power. Unlike immigrant minorities, the indigenous people were in their homeland at the beginning and they have been there ever since. However, they do not have the power to protect their way of life anymore.

Ms Knyazeva argued that the small indigenous minorities of northern Russia are at a crossroads. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the indigenous minorities now have an historic opportunity to begin asserting their identities as indigenous peoples. This political recognition has already gained considerable recognition from governments and aboriginal organisations in other countries, particularly within the Arctic region. The protection and articulation of the rights and freedoms of the indigenous minorities of northern Russia represent one of the weakest components of the legal system of the Russian Federation. It is important for researchers as well as activists to help indigenous peoples articulate and protect their rights and freedoms. As the president of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East noted: "The indigenous peoples of the North, having preserved their individual identity, are not only Russia's assets but those of the entire mankind."

Taken together, the papers highlighted a number of very important issues. First, there is a need to continuously describe the reactions of young people when they experience or perceive systematic inequalities. The reactions could be violent (as in the case of riots) or more systematic (as in the case of oppositional subcultures) and organised (as in loosely-organised oppositional groups or paramilitary organisations). Secondly, there is a serious gap in research regarding the forms and impact of youth participation in the struggle against discrimination and inequalities. Finally, there is a need for research on indigenous youth, who are not immigrants and yet share many experiences with immigrant populations. There is also a need to focus on the concept of power in the practice of youth work.

→ Looking ahead

The last session began with Ms Lopatta-Loibl outlining the Lisbon Strategy and how the intended process impacts on social exclusion and the requirements for the

member states to report on employment, education and youth as the transversal approach that helps put young people on board. Research has highlighted the discrimination that young Muslims are facing and the Fundamental Rights Agency is examining the situation of young Muslims in Europe.

The general discussion identified some of the challenges ahead. One is how equality and equal opportunities can be accomplished and the way young people perceive and construe equality and inequality. Another has to do with the so-called “culture challenge”: where does a culture begin, or end? Culture is hard to define and hard to demarcate. If culture is so elusive, then intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism can prove to be elusive too.

Another challenge has to do with gaps in the literature, partly reflected in the seminar. There is little research on the role youth can play against discrimination and inequalities. There is also a big knowledge gap on disabilities, despite the fact that millions of young people are disabled. European youth programmes are rarely inclusive of the disabled. Existing research often ignores rural youth. Focused research is also needed on the role the media play in generating or reproducing discrimination.

More research is needed to understand processes generating inequality and discrimination. The dynamics of power, in particular, require explicit attention. The seminar highlighted the fact that indigenous people face discrimination just as immigrants do. The issue is not who came first; rather it is about who is left powerless. A related issue is the critical stance toward research. Critical methodology requires the researcher to be aware of his/her and other researchers’ privileges and power dynamics. The question, “How do we conduct ourselves as ethical/politically-conscious researchers?” is a fundamental challenge for future as well as current researchers.



Inequality and research from a community critical psychology standpoint

David Fryer

→ Community critical psychology

This chapter has been written from the standpoint of a community critical psychologist. By this I mean that I try to problematise not only exploitative, oppressive, unjust and pathogenic societal arrangements but also reactionary psychologies which construct, maintain or collude with such societal arrangements.

As a community critical psychologist I strive to: problematise ideologically reactionary aspects of mainstream “knowledge and practice” (rather than collude with them); develop sophisticated ways to construct knowledge (rather than default to being a “scientific practitioner”); engage with consequences of societal arrangements (rather than offer psychologistic interpretations of them); develop innovative socio-structural interventions and preventions (rather than default to traditional intra-psychic treatment); collaborate with collectives (rather than working unilaterally on or for individuals); promote social change (rather than promote psychological adaptation); engage in emancipatory process and outcome through progressive redistribution of power (rather than collude with or contribute to reactionary oppressive (re)distribution of power);

make processes of psychological oppression visible and contest them (rather than camouflage, mystify and collude with them).

I believe that “rather than seeking to engage with power as such ... we should be engaging with the way societal hierarchies are set up and maintained through wealth, class, labour market position, ethnic dominance (majority/minority status), gender and so on, and the way societal structures impact on people both objectively and through their subjective understanding of them” (Fryer, 2008, p. 242).

→ **Inequality as a focus of research**

An international research programme of epidemiological and related research has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that so-called developed countries (such as European and other OECD countries) are characterised by hierarchies of social power and privilege and that people located at the lower ends of these hierarchies have death rates – from nearly all the main causes of death – which are far higher than those at the top of the hierarchies. This results in those lower down hierarchies living, on average, lives which are many years shorter than those higher up.

This can bring about very stark and disturbing differences in life expectancy. For example, as the authors of the World Health Organization Commission on Social Determinants of Health Final Report – Closing the Gap in a Generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health (WHO, 2008b), point out in table 2.1, life expectancy for men in one of the poorer parts of Glasgow (Calton) at 54 years is nearly 3 decades shorter than life expectancy for men in Lenzie, one of the richer areas of Glasgow, only a short distance away.

However it is not just that the most hierarchically subordinate live much shorter lives than the most hierarchically dominant, though that is the case, but rather that throughout these social power hierarchies those anywhere in such hierarchies tend to live less long than those modestly above them.

More radically, this programme of research has also demonstrated that countries, states and cities which have flatter hierarchies of social power and privilege – that is, those which are more egalitarian – are characterised by greater life expectancy, better health and well-being. Societies with less unequal distributions of social power and privilege characteristically have less ill-health and ill-being than those with more unequal distributions of social power and privilege.

Richard Wilkinson, who has written accessible summaries of this work (for example, Wilkinson, 1996) as well as making important contributions to it, has tended to focus on the relationship between distribution of income and distribution of health. However, I prefer to focus on the relationship between hierarchical position and ill-being because: a) the hierarchy can be operationalised in terms not only of income but also in terms of occupational status, extent of formal education and quality of living conditions, all of which I consider proxies for social power; b) research like Marmot’s Whitehall Study of 17 000 white collar middle class workers employed by the British civil service in London showed that a lower hierarchical position rather than poverty is central to ill-being, in that it demonstrated that the death rate from heart disease was four times greater for staff lower down the hierarchy of employment grades than for staff higher up the hierarchy – indicative of social power and privilege – even when only comparing those with similar risk factors for heart disease, such as whether or not they smoked, their tolerance for glucose, cholesterol level and blood pressure,

(Marmot et al., 1991); c) experimental research with cynomolgus monkeys, whose position in their social hierarchies has been experimentally manipulated downwards (where the notion of income is irrelevant) has shown demotion increases coronary artery atherosclerosis and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal and ovarian dysfunction (Shively and Clarkson, 1994; Shively, Laber-Laird and Anton, 1997); d) it allows one to make sense of the apparent riddle that, when making comparisons within any society, poorer people live shorter lives than richer people but, when making comparisons between societies, poorer societies do not have populations which live less long lives than populations of richer societies, while those with more unequal distribution of social power do. In the former studies, wealth is a relatively easily measured proxy for societal power and in the latter studies the extent to which that societal power is relatively heterarchical, rather than hierarchical, appears to be the key issue.

These investigations, which demonstrate that societal hierarchies characterised by inequalities in social power and privilege are individually and socially pathogenic, are of outstanding contemporary significance, but do not throw light on the detail of the social mechanisms through which people are (re)located in social hierarchies, characterised by inequalities in social power and privilege. One area which has done so is psychological research on the impact of unemployment.

Whilst commentators and scholars have expressed concern about the social, physical and mental health consequences of unemployment for over 100 years, it has been beyond reasonable social-scientific doubt since at least the 1930s that unemployment is involved in the social construction of mental ill-health. The early community-based studies remain exemplars of empirical research excellence, with their painstaking attention to detail in context, ingenious triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods, integrity of fieldwork practice and boldly innovative conceptualisation (Fryer, 1987). Some recent community-based studies withstand comparison with these classic studies, but, in general, more recent research has been dominated by large-scale, longitudinal, survey research, using standardised measures of mental health of proven reliability and validity, following groups through employment status transitions, periodically measuring the mental health of those who got jobs and those who did not and comparing group mean scores cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Again and again, the evidence suggested poor mental health was the consequence rather than the cause of the labour market transition (Fryer and Ullah, 1987; Fryer, 1992; Fryer, 1998).

Evidence consistent with the claim that unemployment “causes” mental health problems has been reported from studies carried out across Europe, North America and Australia. There has been a steady stream of publications to this effect since the 1930s, with surges of publications in the 1980s and 1990s. It has therefore come to be regarded as a phenomenon common to many countries/cultures (though, perhaps tellingly, comparable unemployment studies from Africa, China, the Far East, India, Russia and South America are rather hard to find).

Evidence consistent with the claim that unemployment causes mental health problems has been reported by researchers using a wide range of research methods (from epidemiology and longitudinal quantitative surveys, to qualitative techniques and discourse analysis) and has also been reported by studies using a wide range of techniques for measuring mental health (so has been widely taken to be not just an artefact of a particular research method). Statistically sophisticated meta-reviews have reiterated that social causation is involved. The negative psychological consequences of unemployment have thus come to be taken as an empirical discovery,

transcending relatively superficial historical differences in the nature of employment and unemployment (Fryer, 2006).

If we accept that unemployment leads to poor mental health, the question arises as to how many people are affected. The figures available can be difficult to interpret and the figures one wants can be hard to find. Whilst national governments are usually concerned with the number of people claiming benefits – that is the direct costs of unemployment to government – the International Labour Organization (ILO) is concerned with the number of people who want to be employed, can start within two weeks and are actively looking for employment, whether or not they are in receipt of state benefits. The latter figure can be twice as large as the former because benefit eligibility restrictions mean that some people ready, willing and able to become employed but ineligible for benefits do not count as unemployed. Note, however, that the figure does not include people who have stopped actively seeking work because of depression, demoralisation, social withdrawal, etc. (all suggested by research to be common consequences of unemployment). The number of economically inactive people who want employment but have given up their job search is much larger than the ILO figure. In addition, there are many people who do not count as unemployed because they are at least nominally “employed” (in the UK, the “in employment figures” count people as employed if they work for one hour per week).

Many people are involuntarily employed in part-time jobs whilst looking for fuller employment. Many others are on government active labour market/training schemes and whilst considering themselves to be unemployed, do not officially count as unemployed. The numbers of such people are hard to determine, but it does mean that the number of people unemployed in a sense relevant to this chapter is vast and far greater than official estimates.

Eurostat estimated in April 2008 that there were 16 047 million people in the EU27, but this is based on the ILO survey definition and the “real” figure, psychologically speaking, that is, including people who want employment and would take it but have ceased actively looking for work is, for the reasons given above, much larger (Eurostat, 2008).

Furthermore, the research literature suggests that many people, in addition to those who are actually unemployed, are negatively affected psychologically by unemployment; that the impact of unemployment can persist after re-employment; and that employment in an insecure, poor quality job has consequences for ill-being similar to unemployment.

Unemployment is a powerful mechanism in modern industrial societies through which inequality is socio-economically constructed and maintained, but it is only one of many mechanisms: classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, misogyny (from domestic violence, to rape as an instrument of warfare), forced migration, homelessness, housing problems, organisational stressors, disabling practices and so on, are all means through which inequality is socially constructed and maintained in our societies.

The scale of socially constructed and maintained mental health problems is astronomical. The World Health Organization (WHO), for example, states: “Hundreds of millions of people worldwide are affected by mental, behavioural, neurological and substance use disorders. For example, estimates made by WHO in 2002 showed that 154 million people globally suffer from depression and 25 million

people from schizophrenia; 91 million people are affected by alcohol use disorders and 15 million by drug use disorders. A recently published WHO report shows that 50 million people suffer from epilepsy and 24 million from Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. In addition to the above figures, many other disorders affect the nervous system or produce neurological sequelae. Projections based on a WHO study show that worldwide in 2005, 326 million people suffer from migraine; 61 million from cerebrovascular diseases; 18 million from neuro-infections or neurological sequelae of infections. Numbers of people with neurological sequelae of nutritional disorders and neuropathies (352 million) and neurological sequelae secondary to injuries (170 million) also add substantially to the above burden" (WHO, 2008a).

In the face of this tsunami of individually and socially toxic consequences of inequality, the orthodox response is a call for more capacity for individual treatment. The WHO, for example, suggests "Shortages of psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, psychologists and social workers are among the main barriers to providing treatment and care in low- and middle-income countries" (WHO, 2008a).

However, the sheer scale of the problems means that there could never be enough practitioners to "treat" all the people who are suffering individually. Even if we could provide enough individual "treatments", there are serious doubts about the effectiveness and safety of some treatments. Even if all casualties of noxious societal inequality were to receive individual treatment and it were successful, the problems would recur once those "treated" were re-exposed to the pathogenic conditions of inequality responsible for their plight in the first place. Even if casualties who had been effectively "treated" were not re-exposed to pathogenic inequality, there would still be a steady stream of new casualties resulting from the effects of the continuing psychologically damaging inequality on others. Finally, individualistic intervention, which assumes intra-psychic causation of psychological problems caused by societal inequality, colludes with victim blaming and promotes the interests of the status quo which benefits from that inequality.

In brief, the scale, social aetiology, impossibility of one-to-one treatment and ideological onslaught on the victims of pathogenically unequal societal conditions are such that orthodox mainstream suggestions are practically, methodologically, ethically and ideologically problematic.

→ Inequality as a consequence of research?

Research is positioned in dominant discourses as a "good thing": of course it is not claimed that all research is good in the sense of being carried out well, or good in the sense of producing knowledge which is well used subsequently, but research itself is seen as a good thing. In this section of the chapter, I would like to ask: good for whom and in which ways?

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999) is one of the most significant publications for critical social science of recent years. The searing indictment of the opening paragraph of the introduction still has the power to shock me after many readings: "From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is

so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples." (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 1).

Yet transposing the issue of extra-societal colonisation resulting in inequality to the issue of intra-societal exploitation resulting in inequality, raises the question to anyone engaged in social research as to whether research is also implicated in the subjugation and exploitation of the people involved in the research and of the wider population from which they are selected.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes: "it is surely difficult to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together, in the same breath, without having analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 2) and prompts us to remember that it is equally difficult to discuss research methodology and people in our own oppressive societal power hierarchies together without an analysis of economic exploitation and exploitative socio-structurally oppressive practices.

Tuhiwai Smith continues, equally relevantly: "research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument. It told us things already known, suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already had jobs" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 3). Those of us who have made, or intend to make, careers doing inequality-related research take heed. Is our research also worthless to the people involved, but wielded as a weapon against them by others?

With clear parallels to people in Europe living in oppressive societal hierarchies of inequality, Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes of people who "continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities ... they may live in destructive relationships which are formed and shaped by their impoverished material conditions and structured by politically oppressive regimes. While they live like this they are constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of higher order human qualities" and "the creeping policies that intruded into every aspects of our lives, legitimated by research, informed more often by ideology" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 3). The parallels with the experience of those at the bottom of European societal hierarchies is striking.

Returning to unemployment, the remarkable consistency of claims across time, culture, method and technique, is generally taken as constituting replication and convergent validity, that is as particularly strong grounds for confidence in the empirical claim that unemployment causes mental ill health. But, bearing Linda Tuhiwai Smith's thesis in mind, could the extraordinary consistency be better interpreted as providing grounds for confidence that "knowledge" about unemployment and mental health had been consistently constructed and used ideologically to promote the power of powerful interest groups, that the consistency of "knowledge claims" across time, culture, method and technique merely reflects the consistent interests of the status quo and in particular employers, company owners and shareholders in neo-liberal political economies, in whose interests it is to have a large reserve army of unemployed labour, desperate to be unemployed for as short a time as possible?

Whilst it is pretty obvious whose interests would be served by a belief that poor psychological health causes unemployment, that is one which blamed unemployed people for their own unemployment (and thus for their own distress) and simultaneously absolved governments and businesses of responsibility for the health consequences of unemployment, it is by no means necessarily the case that belief in social causation, belief that unemployment causes poor psychological health, is in the interests of unemployed people and detrimental to the interests of the status quo.

Mass unemployment serves the interests of the status quo in a range of ways, but most of these require unemployment to be a condition so undesirable that no one wishes to become unemployed and everyone wishes to leave it behind as soon as possible. Mass involuntary unemployment guarantees there are potential workers willing to do the most boring, dead end, underpaid, temporary, insecure, unpleasant jobs (the ones currently being created in the so-called flexible labour market) and mass involuntary unemployment functions effectively as an incomes policy because it guarantees that there are unemployed people competing for the jobs of the employed, thus facilitating employers in reducing wages and working conditions.

What are the conditions under which involuntary mass unemployment would function most effectively as an instrument of social and economic control? The existence of far fewer jobs than potential workers seeking them would create mass unemployment but that would not, in itself, ensure that unemployment was involuntary: after all large numbers of rich people manage quite happily without paid employment and avoid the disastrous psychological consequences of not being in paid employment. Ensuring that unemployed people are poverty-stricken and that they have to go through intrusive and degrading rituals to get the pittance they receive to keep them healthy enough to compete for work, but not comfortable enough to have a viable alternative lifestyle, helps.

Ensuring that unemployment is a stigmatised condition with orchestrated campaigns by the media and politicians reinforcing the view that unemployed people are feckless, anti-social idlers living a life of luxury at taxpayers' expense and fraudulently claiming income support also helps. Making a point in press reports of mentioning whenever criminals were unemployed would help taint unemployment with criminality. Psychological literature demonstrating that unemployment causes mental ill health, whilst mental illness is simultaneously socially constructed as frightening, dangerous and deviant, also helps.

Unemployment has to be, and be seen to be, negative, in order to function effectively as an instrument of social control. Psychological researchers may have intended to demonstrate that unemployment causes psychological ill-being (rather than psychological problems causing unemployment) but may have ended up contributing to the discursive social construction of the ill-being associated with unemployment, which functions against the interests of unemployed and employed people who are low in the societal inequality hierarchy.

Apart from assertions about the causal relationship between unemployment and ill-being, published research by clinical psychologists has evaluated attempts to reduce the negative mental health consequences of unemployment by giving cognitive behaviour therapy to unemployed people. The underlying logic is that by increasing the effectiveness of unemployed people in their job search, one can increase the likelihood of them becoming re-employed and so remove the risk of the noxious psychological effects of unemployment upon them (Fryer, 1999).

Orthodox questions can be asked about whether such interventions “work”, i.e. whether they do indeed increase the effectiveness of the job search of the unemployed people involved in the studies, whether the theoretical basis of cognitive behaviour therapy is coherent, how faithfully such interventions implement this theory in its practice, how representative the participants are of the wider population of unemployed people, how suitable the research methods used are, how appropriate the techniques are which are used to analyse the data and so on. Whether or not the above are appropriate questions to ask depends on one’s epistemological and ontological frame of reference, but they are not the critical questions I am interested in asking here.

I am critically interested in whose interests it would serve for it to be widely believed that the mental health problems of unemployed people are caused not by external socio-economic events like recession and employer profit maximisation strategies, but by dysfunctional internal psychological cognitions.

I am critically interested in what the implications of this work are for the attribution of blame for the psychological damage wrought by unemployment and thus the responsibility for reparation?

I am critically interested in how the interests of the various parties would be served if it were believed that mental ill health caused by unemployment was reversible through a few sessions of talking therapy.

I am critically interested in whose interests would be served if it were believed that mass unemployment could be tackled by individual cognitive treatment of people after they become unemployed (by cognitive behaviour therapy) rather than through collective socio-economic prevention before people become unemployed (through employment creation or redistribution).

I am critically interested in whose interests would be served by interventions that create and maintain an excess of potential employees over vacancies and coach such people to compete with each other for success in getting one of the inadequate number of vacancies compared with interventions that create and maintain an excess of vacancies over potential employees and coach employers to compete with each other for success in getting one of the inadequate number of potential employees.

I am critically interested in whose interests would be served by the creation of an illusion of effective intervention through increasing unemployed people’s chances of re-employment which, fundamentally, merely redistributes the misery of unemployment from one subgroup to another, whilst maintaining an unchanged total of unemployed people, and thus an unchanged number of people at risk of psychological damage by unemployment.

I am critically interested in to what extent the construction and use of certain “knowledges” about unemployment, employment and mental health are used to promote the power of the status quo rather than that of unemployed people.

The suggestion that there are a variety of “knowledges”, each of which promotes the interests of some, as opposed to other, interest groups, may seem an odd one to those who operate on the modernist assumption that knowledge is fundamentally a cognitive representation of “what is the case” in the “real world” arrived at through a combination of rationality and empiricism. However, according to

a critical perspective, there are many “reality versions”, in each case “reality” is constituted, in an emergent process, through subjective sense-making of a unique intersection of societal structures and then socially manufactured into “knowledges”. The dominant version of “knowledge” is just the “reality version” that serves the interests of the most powerful group. Psychologists have been industrious in legitimating this dominant version.

The societal structures of which subjective sense is made include systems of ideas within which one is immersed and through which one is, at least in part, constituted. There are, however, not just one set of systems of ideas but many alternative systems of ideas, which serve different interests in different ways. Much of psychology as a discipline, and as a means to maintain the status quo, is made up from, and permeated by, systems of ideas which imply that psychological ill-being and illness are caused and maintained at the individual level by intra-psychic forces and processes that could not be otherwise. Such systems of ideas suit the status quo for not only do they not require a practical change in the status quo in order to prevent or reduce distress and illness, but they also imply that psychological distress and illness could not be prevented in principle.

It is important to engage critically with research as a set of social practices, to grapple with power issues in process and outcome, to contest the disempowerment of people implicated and the collusion of psychologists and other social scientists in its construction and maintenance and to go beyond documenting distress associated with, or caused by, societal inequality in order to prevent or reduce it. Of course, the status quo resists challenges to its power, exerts control reactively when challenged and proactively as an everyday function of its existence. Some of this control is obvious, but much is far less obvious, because it is built into our multi-level social context and taken for granted. The “surfacing” and contesting of such control – and the collusion of psychologists and other social scientists in its construction and maintenance – is, in my view, a central task.

On some occasions the state intervenes brutally to stop such surfacing and contesting of personally and socially pathogenic social structures, characterised by gross inequalities in power. Ignacio Martin-Baro – who was born in Spain in 1942, trained in psychology at the University of Chicago, taught in Frankfurt and Bogotá, and worked in San Salvador – was, after several unsuccessful attempts to assassinate him at work, taken into a quadrangle of the University of Central America and shot dead by government troops on 16 November 1989 for doing just that. Martin-Baro had argued that “psychological knowledge” should be “placed in the service of constructing a society where the welfare of the few is not built on the wretchedness of the many, where the fulfilment of some does not require that others be deprived, where the interests of the minority do not demand the dehumanization of all” (Martin-Baro in Aron and Corne, 1994, p. 46). Martin-Baro argued that: “What is needed is the revision, from the bottom up, of our most basic assumptions in psychological thought. But this revision cannot be made from our offices; it has to come from a praxis that is committed to the people. Only through such a praxis of commitment will we be able to get a new perspective on the people of our communities” (Martin-Baro in Aron and Corne, 1994, p. 23).

→ Conclusions

In this chapter I have briefly explicated the community critical standpoint from which this chapter is written. I then outlined recent social investigations of outstanding contemporary significance into societal inequality. This work strongly suggested

that social structures characterised by gross inequalities in power are personally and socially pathogenic.

I then outlined key features of social scientific research into a specific means through which inequality is socio-economically constructed and maintained in contemporary neo-liberal societies: that is, unemployment. I also suggested that unemployment is only one of many societal apparatuses through which inequality and immiseration are constructed and maintained in neo-liberal societies and suggested that the nature and scale of the “construction industry” related to inequality, distress and ill-being is so vast, effective and all-pervasive that the orthodox, mainstream project of conceptualising and treating the personal and social manifestations of inequality is hopelessly inadequate and ideologically problematic.

I then switched attention from inequality as a focus of research to inequality as a consequence of research, problematising inequalities reproduced through research and asking some questions about whose interests are served by research and what part research plays in constructing and maintaining inequality. I argued that rather than doing “research” social scientists should engage in praxis: an irreducible collective social practice which is simultaneously knowledge construction, critical reflexivity and emancipatory social action, to promote public mental health and collective social justice through contesting, intervening to reduce and prevent material, subjective and ideological oppression. What are we waiting for?

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Barbara Giovanna Bello

“Equal opportunities for all”? Social challenges and legal boundaries in the European puzzle

→ Introduction

The principle of equality is a fundamental assumption of democratic countries and institutions. It is not surprising, therefore, that both the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) have been committed to the enhancement of social inclusion of discriminated groups when drawing up their legal guidelines in relation to the situation of vulnerable youth. With the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 and its relaunch in 2005, it has been increasingly clear that governments need to ensure that the economy develops, while paying particular attention to equal access to social rights for young people, in particular access to employment, social protection and housing.

Over the years, the principle of equality has been conceptualised in different ways, which reflect the adoption of very diverse measures and legal instruments.

After providing a short overview of the different theorisations of the principle of equality, this contribution aims to describe the Council of Europe’s and the European Union’s engagement in the promotion of substantive equality for young people. The Lisbon Treaty (in effect

as of 1 December 2009) has at least two important consequences for the enforcement of the principle of equality and the principle of non-discrimination, both within the aforementioned institutions.

In fact, thanks to the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was signed and proclaimed on 7 December 2000 in Nice (and therefore known also as the Nice Charter) and which enshrines fundamental political, social, and economic rights, has the same legal value as the European Union treaties (except for those member states with an opt-out for this provision). This has the main aim to ensure that European Union regulations and directives are in conformity with the European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe (see below), which was ratified by all EU members. Secondly, the legal basis (the new Article 6(2) of the Treaty on European Union) for the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights has been established. In March 2010 the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs held a hearing on the institutional aspects of the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

→ Principle of equality: formal equality vs. substantive equality

In the traditional approach of national legal systems, equality is conceived as a system of rules, whose fundamental principle "all human beings are equal" has to be present in the national constitutions or in international agreements.

The idea of formal equality dates back to the Aristotelian concept of equality, according to which "things that are alike should be treated alike". From this perspective, a person should not be discriminated against on grounds such as physical or personal characteristics. Furthermore, differences among people should be considered irrelevant for the access to (and exercise of) basic rights. Notwithstanding its noble statement, a principle of equality constructed in this way has shown to have two main limitations: first of all, it may reinforce inequalities because it does not take into account concrete obstacles which can lead to emerging forms of discrimination and disadvantage; secondly, it is inadequate to tackle subtle forms of discrimination, generated by laws and practices based on apparently neutral criteria, which subsequently create a disparate impact for certain people.

In the search for a more complex and substantive conception of equality, two further developments of this principle have come into being: equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes.

The former, inspired by a (partial or full) redistributive justice system, tries to cope with inequalities due to individuals' different starting points, by providing them with equality of opportunity. In this theorisation of equality, equal opportunities are implemented through the use of positive action plans to ensure that individuals from traditionally disadvantaged groups receive proper support to compensate for their exclusion, as well as to prevent further discrimination.⁷

The latter is an extreme version of substantive equality (equality of outcomes) and goes much further than equality of opportunity by explicitly treating people more favourably on the grounds of race, sex, religion, belief and so on by, for

7. See below the paragraph titled "The European directives".

example, appointing someone to a job just because they are male or just because they are female, irrespective of merit.⁸ These measures are better known as “positive discrimination”.

Looking at the legal interventions and policy carried out by the Council of Europe and the EU, it is clear that they embrace the first and second conceptualisations of the principle of equality, while they do not yet grasp the third version of the principle (equality of outcomes).⁹

→ The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe’s involvement in the development of the principle of equality dates back to 1950, when the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention) was signed in Rome. The Convention is enforced by the European Court of Human Rights (the Court), based in Strasbourg, which is therefore called “the guardian” of the Convention.

Article 14 of the Convention states: “The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.” The content of the Convention has been enriched by 13 Protocols, among which Protocol No. 12 strengthens the significance of the aforementioned Article 14 while prescribing that “the enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. 2. No one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground such as those mentioned in paragraph 1” (Article 1).

The list of grounds is not intended to be exhaustive. In fact, claims based on the above mentioned Article 14 have been lodged in order, for example, to ask protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation, a ground for discrimination which is not explicitly named in the Convention.

As with many other documents, the Convention does not provide a legal definition of discrimination. This gap has been filled by the case law of the Court, according to which “a difference of treatment is discriminatory within the meaning of Article 14 of the Convention if it has no objective and reasonable justification, that is if it does not pursue a legitimate aim or if there is not a reasonable relationship of proportionality between the means employed and the aim sought to be realised”.¹⁰

8. Barnard C., Hepple B., “Substantive Equality”, *The Cambridge Law Journal*, No. 3, Vol. 59, (2000), Cambridge University Press, pp. 562-585.

9. Brown C. (2002), *The Race Directive: towards Equality for all People in Europe?*, *Yearbook of European Law*, Vol. 21, pp. 195-227; McCrudden C. (2003), *The New Concept of Equality*, available at: www.era.int/www/en/c_10540_doc.htm, Academy of European Law, Trier; Schiek D. (2002), *A new framework on equal treatment of persons in EC law? Directives 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC and 2002/73/EC changing Directive 76/202/EEC in context*, *European Law Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 2 pp. 290-314; Waddington L. (2003), *The expanding role of the equality principle in European Union law*, Robert Schuman Centre Policy Paper available at: www.iue.it/RSCAS/e-texts/CR2003-04.pdf, European University Institute, Florence.

10. *Karlheinz Schmidt v. Germany* judgment of 18 July 1994, series A No. 291-B, pp. 32-33, § 24.

The Court's case law covers: a) direct discrimination, which occurs when a person is treated differently without an objective and reasonable justification, either because the discriminatory practice/behaviour/law does not pursue a legitimate aim, or because there is no reasonable relationship of proportionality between the means employed and the aim pursued; b) indirect discrimination, which comes in three different forms: (a) when an apparently neutral regulation or practice appears to be particularly disadvantageous to the members of a certain category, if the provision creating the disadvantage is not objectively and reasonably justified; (b) when a general measure affects a disproportionately high number of members of a particular category, unless the measure resulting in such a disparate impact is objectively and reasonably justified (disparate impact discrimination); (c) when the author of a general measure has failed to treat differently a specific individual or category by providing for an exception to the application (so-called effective accommodation) of the general rule, without objective and reasonable justification.

The European legal literature mostly agrees on the existence of a hierarchy of grounds in the case law of the Court.¹¹ An explanation of this statement can be found in the fact that the Court distinguishes between differential treatments based on so-called "suspect grounds" (for example, gender, sexual orientation), which are considered not to be discriminatory only when "they are justified by very weighty reasons and seem necessary and suited for realising the legitimate aim pursued" and differential treatments based on "non-suspect grounds" (for example, religion), which are judged not to be discriminatory "if they pursue a legitimate aim by means presenting a reasonable relationship of proportionality with that aim".

Incidentally, the boundary between suspect and non-suspect grounds is not unmodifiable and can undergo transitions from one category to another.

After 2000, the principles elaborated within the Court needed to be connected with the so-called "EU Equality Directives" and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, whose coming into force reinforced the link between EU and the Council of Europe's legal framework and could forge a closer relationship between the Court of Justice of the European Union, based in Luxembourg, and the European Court of Human Rights, based in Strasbourg.¹²

11. Borrillo D. (2002), "Les instruments juridiques français et européens dans la mise en place du principe d'égalité et de non-discrimination" ("French and European legal instruments for the implementation of the principle of equality and non-discrimination"), *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales*, No. 1, 56^e année, p. 113-129; Toggenburg G. (2002), "The Race Directive: a new dimension in the fight against ethnic discrimination in Europe", *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, Vol.1, pp. 231-244; Waddington L. (2003), "The new equality Directives – mixed blessings", in Costello C. and Barry E., *Equality in diversity – the new equality directives*, Irish Centre for European Law; Strazzari D. (2002), "Nuove strategie di lotta alla discriminazione razziale nell'UE e in Gran Bretagna: il cosiddetto principio di mainstreaming e il partenariato sociale. Verso un diverso approccio della legislazione antidiscriminatoria?" ("New strategies in the fight against racial discrimination in the EU and UK: the so-called mainstreaming principle and social partnership. Towards a different anti-discrimination legislation approach?"), *Diritto pubblico comparato ed europeo*, No.1, pp. 161-175.

12. Dollat P. (2002), "Vers la reconnaissance généralisée du principe de l'égalité de traitement entre les personnes dans l'Union européenne", *Journal des tribunaux*, No. 87, pp. 57-65. Compared to the Council of Europe's legal instruments, the Equality Directives may offer a stronger protection against discrimination in the member states because every person, who assumes to be the victim of discrimination by public or private institutions/people,

The legislative corpus of the Council of Europe legislation in the discrimination field is completed by many other documents such as the European Social Charter, adopted in Turin in 1961 (revised in 1996) and by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed in 1995.

The former guarantees social and economic human rights¹³ and its implementation in the states is monitored by the European Committee of Social Rights. The European Committee of Social Rights examines national reports and publishes decisions (called “conclusions”) every year on the conformity of national law with the European Social Charter. It also makes decisions on collective complaints lodged according to the Committee’s rules adopted on 29 March 2004 (Rules 22-35).¹⁴

With regard to the latter, Article 3 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (the “Framework Convention”) states that everyone who belongs to a national minority “shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice”. Article 4 explicitly addresses the principle of non-discrimination and fosters the concept of the substantive principle of equality by recommending member states “to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited ... to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political

can lodge a claim before a national court. On the contrary, there are some limits which affect the effectiveness of the Court such as, for example, the fact that claims can be lodged at the Court only after having exhausted all the proceedings and remedies in the state concerned. Moreover the Court cannot deal with complaints against individuals or private institutions, but only towards public authorities belonging to states bound by the Convention which allegedly violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

13. With a view to protecting children and young people, Article 7 asks member states: “1) to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education; 2) to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 18 years with respect to prescribed occupations regarded as dangerous or unhealthy; 3) to provide that persons who are still subject to compulsory education shall not be employed in such work as would deprive them of the full benefit of their education; 4) to provide that the working hours of persons under 18 years of age shall be limited in accordance with the needs of their development, and particularly with their need for vocational training; 5) to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair wage or other appropriate allowances; 6) to provide that the time spent by young persons in vocational training during the normal working hours with the consent of the employer shall be treated as forming part of the working day; 7) to provide that employed persons of under 18 years of age shall be entitled to a minimum of four weeks’ annual holiday with pay; 8) to provide that persons under 18 years of age shall not be employed in night work with the exception of certain occupations provided for by national laws or regulations; 9) to provide that persons under 18 years of age employed in occupations prescribed by national laws or regulations shall be subject to regular medical control; 10) to ensure special protection against physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed, and particularly against those resulting directly or indirectly from their work”.
14. Following Rule 36 (Measures required to bring the situation into conformity) “in cases where a decision finds that there has been a violation, the defending State shall present in every subsequent report on the provisions concerned in the complaint the measures taken to bring the situation into conformity”.

and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities ... The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination."

The Framework Convention, rather than defining the concept of "national minority", which has been conceptualised very differently in a wide range of studies,¹⁵ makes clear that it covers "acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity".

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is the Council of Europe's organ entrusted with the task of combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, from the perspective of the protection of human rights. It was set up following a decision of the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Vienna in October 1993, and ECRI's action covers all necessary measures to combat violence, discrimination and prejudice faced by persons and groups of persons, notably on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality and national or ethnic origin.¹⁶

ECRI's fight against discrimination can be traced predominantly (but not solely) in its recommendations. In particular, the General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on National Legislation to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, adopted by ECRI on 13 December 2002, aims to recommend member states "to enact legislation against racism and racial discrimination if such legislation does not exist already or is incomplete" and at ensuring "that the key components set out [in the Recommendation] are provided in such legislation". This recommendation also provides key definitions of racism, direct racial discrimination and indirect racial discrimination.

Particular attention has been paid by ECRI to the need to tackle discrimination against minorities after the events of 11 September 2001. In fact, the fight against terrorism engaged in by the member states of the Council of Europe led, in many cases, to the adoption of directly or indirectly discriminatory legislation and practices on grounds of nationality, national or ethnic origin and religion and, more often, to discriminatory practices by public authorities. With the General Policy Recommendation No. 8 on Combating Racism while Fighting Terrorism, ECRI attempted to discourage member states "from adopting new legislation and regulations in connection with the fight against terrorism that discriminate directly or indirectly against persons or groups of persons, notably on grounds of 'race', colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin" as well as enhancing member states' commitment "to guaranteeing in a non discriminatory way the freedoms of association, expression, religion and movement and to ensuring that no discrimination ensues from legislation and regulations – or their implementation – notably governing the following areas: checks carried out by law enforcement officials within the countries and by border control personnel, administrative and pre-trial detention, conditions of detention, fair trial, criminal procedure, protection of personal data, protection of private and family life, expulsion, extradition, deportation and the principle of *non-refoulement*, issuing of visas, residence and

15. Maya, Grekova, "Rethinking the Concept of Minority", *Sociological Problems*, Special Issue (2002), pp. 101-114.

16. www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri (retrieved 17 April 2010).

work permits and family reunification, acquisition and revocation of citizenship". This recommendation has a particular impact on young people as well, because many practices (such as racial profiling) focus on young Muslim men.

On 7 May 1999 the Council of Europe instituted the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights,¹⁷ with the mandate to promote awareness of and respect for human rights in 47 Council of Europe member states.

The Commissioner also supported the European Youth Campaign All Different – All Equal and is now engaged in the Dosta Campaign.¹⁸ During country visits, the Commissioner evaluates the effectiveness of national non-discrimination norms.

Apart from ad hoc committees and bodies, social inclusion and equal opportunities have been constantly enforced by the different directorates within the Council of Europe. In particular, the Directorate General of Social Cohesion fosters social cohesion and the effective overcoming of substantive obstacles which limit the enjoyment of individuals' fundamental human rights. With this view, the directorate promotes ethnic and cultural diversity, the implementation of social development co-operation and respect for human dignity. The directorate also seeks to implement holistic policies providing policy makers, professionals and field workers with its legal standard-setting instruments, transnational activities and groups of experts who meet regularly.

With a specific focus on youth, the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport promotes human rights education and intercultural dialogue, youth participation and democratic citizenship, social cohesion and inclusion of young people and youth policy development.¹⁹ In this context, the Resolution on the Priorities of the Council of Europe's Youth Sector for 2006-2008 was accepted during the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth, held in September 2005 in Budapest. The resolution emphasises a number of priorities, including the promotion of "intercultural dialogue, inter-religious co-operation and respect for cultural difference" and "facilitating the access of young people to working life and to social rights". The Council of Europe has defined four programmes in the youth sector for the period 2006-08: human rights, education and intercultural dialogue; youth participation and democratic citizenship; social cohesion and inclusion of young people; and youth policy development.

A major emphasis has been put on the European Youth Campaign on Diversity, Human Rights and Participation (2006-07), conceived in the spirit of the 1995 campaign All Different – All Equal, set up following a decision of the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Vienna in October 1993. Its task is to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance at the level of greater Europe.

17. www.coe.int/t/commissioner/default_en.asp (retrieved 17 April 2010). The current Commissioner, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, assumed the position on 1 April 2006.

18. www.dosta.org (retrieved 17 April 2010). Moreover, an Experts' Committee on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) was set up in 1995 in order to fight specifically discrimination against Roma. For more detailed information see the webpage of the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division at www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/default_en.asp (retrieved 17 April 2010).

19. For the activities of the directorate, see: www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation (retrieved 17 April 2010).

→ The European Union

The European Commission has been committed to the fight against discrimination for the last three decades, even if the main focus for many years was the prevention of discrimination on the basis of nationality and gender. More recently, the focus has enlarged, in response to the demand from civil society generally and to the changing needs of European society. New powers for combating discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation were conferred under substantive amendments to the Treaty Establishing the European Community introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997.

The broadening of the competencies of the European institutions led to the passing of the so-called Equality Directives (the anti-discrimination directives 2000/43/CE (Racial Equality Directive) and 2000/78/CE (Employment Equality Directive)), seeking to provide everyone in the EU (citizens and third country nationals) with a common minimum level of legal protection against discrimination.²⁰

In 2000, the principle of non-discrimination and the principle of equality were proclaimed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as well, whose legal status was still uncertain and had no full legal effect until the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

The promotion of “equal opportunities for all” was also set as a priority by the European institutions with Decision No. 771/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 17 May 2006, establishing the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007) – towards a just society.²¹

In order to draw up an effective implementation at national level of the new policy enhancing equality, the directives encouraged member states “to take adequate measures to promote the social dialogue between the two sides of industry with a view to fostering equal treatment, including through the monitoring of workplace practices, collective agreements, codes of conduct, research or exchange of experiences and good practices”. The European institutions themselves tried to improve social dialogue with EU citizens by promoting a public consultation process linked to the Green Paper on “Equality and Non-discrimination in an Enlarged EU”,²² the results of which led to the communication from the EU Commission in 2005.²³

The EU Commission invited comments and reactions to the Green Paper from all the relevant stakeholders (national authorities, specialised equality bodies, non-governmental organisations, regional and local authorities, the social partners, experts and individual members of the public).

In July 2007, the European Commission launched an online consultation on combating discrimination in the member states and at the European level, which

20. See below, the paragraph titled “The European directives”.

21. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?page_id=13 (retrieved 17 April 2010).

22. COM(2004)379 at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2004/com%2004_0379en01.pdf (retrieved 17 April 2010).

23. SEC(2005) 689 at www.lex.unict.it/eurolabor/documentazione/com/com%2005.htm (retrieved 17 April 2010).

helped the European Commission to plan new measures to tackle discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in areas beyond the job market.

With specific regard to the youth field, the European Commission's new Youth in Action Programme (2007-13) complements the general European equality policies, stressing, among its priorities, access to its activities for young people with fewer opportunities and the promotion of cultural diversity.²⁴

Despite the significant efforts of states, institutions, organisations and citizens in the implementation of anti-discrimination legal instruments and policies, many young people are still far from enjoying equal opportunities in practice and suffer social marginalisation and daily inequalities as they try to improve their lives in different sectors (at work, in access to education and vocational training, health assistance, housing, access to goods and services, etc.).

According to the Eurobarometer report "Discrimination in the European Union", published in January 2007, "to be young and aged under 25" is not considered a major disadvantage in itself, compared to the following conditions/categories: disabled, Roma, different ethnic origin than the rest of the population, homosexual, having a faith different from the main religion in the country. Among the youth living in the EU, the situation has improved but many of them are treated as "other" because of their religion, sexual orientation, colour of skin, and so on, or are faced with different kinds of "phobias" (homophobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, etc.).

→ The European directives

As described in the previous paragraph, for many years the European institutions' introduced by the treaty of Amsterdam efforts aimed at the prevention of discrimination have been with regard to nationality and gender.

After the amendments introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, the European Union was empowered with new effective instruments for combating discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation, whereas new Article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community gives the Council of the European Union the power of "acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, [to] take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation".

Consequently, two anti-discrimination directives have been produced: Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000,²⁵ implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, whose protection extends beyond employment, to the areas of vocational training, education, social security, health care, housing and access to services; and Directive 2000/78/EC,²⁶ of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in

24. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm (retrieved 17 April 2010).

25. Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000, implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

26. Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

employment and occupation, which considers all the other forms of discrimination contained in Article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, apart from gender, which is addressed in specific directives. These directives are complemented by a community action programme to combat discrimination.²⁷

The aim of the directives is to establish minimum standards of protection against discrimination throughout Europe and in this way achieve a system whereby the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination are effectively pursued.

Even if the “Equality Directives” do not directly tackle discrimination based on nationality as such, their protection against discrimination is not limited to European citizens, but extends to all those who are staying in Europe, even on a transitory basis, irrespective of their nationality and residence status.

Before going in the depth into the analysis of the subjective and objective scope of the directives, it is worth underlining once again that the directives have different subjective scope: race and ethnic origin covered by the Directive 2000/43; religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, covered by the Directive 2000/78.

Regarding the subjective scope, some problems of interpretation arose concerning: a) the meaning of the terms “race” and “ethnic origin”;²⁸ b) the problem of reasonable accommodation, i.e. necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments where needed to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis:

a) With regard to the first point, Directive 2000/43 does not make clear what should be understood, for its purposes, by the concepts of race and ethnic origin. Anyway, it is politically relevant that the 6th consideration of Directive 2000/43 states that “the European Union rejects theories which attempt to determine the existence of separate human races. The use of the term ‘racial origin’ in this Directive does not imply an acceptance of such theories”.

In European literature, it has often been assumed that the concept of ethnicity is in fact broader than that of race, since it is not limited to physical characteristics, but extends to culture, traditions, customs and shared history.

Directive 2000/43 has been criticised because of the omission of any reference to other discriminatory factors alongside those of race and ethnic origin, such as

27. Community action programme to combat discrimination (2001-06), Council Decision No. 2000/750/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a Community action programme to combat discrimination (OJ L 303 of 2.12.2000).

28. Brown C. (2002), “The race directive: towards equality for all people in Europe?” *Yearbook of European Law*, Vol. 21, pp. 195-227; Chieco P. (2002), “Le nuove direttive comunitarie sul divieto di discriminazione”, *Rivista italiana di diritto del lavoro*, 1, pp. 74-117; Guild E. (2000), “The race directive on race discrimination”, in *Industrial Law Journal*, No. 29, pp. 400-421; Schiek D. (2003), “Diskriminierung wegen der Rasse oder Ethnischer Herkunft. Probleme bei der Umsetzung der RL 2000/43” in *Arbeitsrecht, Arbeit und Recht*, pp. 44-51; Sewadono I. (2000), “The race directive and the general anti-discrimination law”, *Social Economic Wetgeving*, No. 6, pp. 218-226; Toggenburg G. (2002), “The race directive: a new dimension in the fight against ethnic discrimination in Europe”, *European Yearbook of Minority Issues*, Vol.1, pp. 231-244.

language and culture, unless these are considered to be included by implication in the concept of ethnic origin.²⁹

b) Concerning reasonable accommodation, Article 5 of Directive 2000/78³⁰ binds member states to introduce structures for disabled people, in order to allow access to and effective participation in employment. There are no equivalent provisions to tackle the specific needs of the members of certain ethnic or religious groups, leaving the issue unresolved as to whether the lack of adequate provision for the cultural/religious needs of certain specific groups, required by the European Convention on Human Rights,³¹ may be considered a violation of the principle of non-discrimination.

As far as their objective scope is concerned, the two directives also diverge. Directive 2000/43/EC forbids racial and ethnic discrimination in employment, training and education, social protection – including social security – health care, social advantages, access to and supply of goods and services, including housing. Directive 2000/43 formally recognises that discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin requires safeguards in all contexts of social life. The scope of Directive 2000/78/EC is not so wide, because it limits the prohibition of discrimination (based on religion and beliefs, age, disability and sexual orientation) only to occupation and employment. Therefore, the common area shared by the directives is equality of access to employment and training, which should allow all individuals the chance of reaching the standards of living that their human and professional capacities permit in order to achieve their own potential and to be able to take part in economic and social life. That is, everyone should enjoy equality of opportunity as regards their “starting points”.

Concerning the concept of prohibited discrimination, Article 2 of both directives provides sanctions for four types of conduct: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and giving instructions to discriminate. For the purposes of the directives, direct discrimination “shall be taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin”. The concept of direct discrimination is not particularly complicated and could be easily reconnected to the concept of formal equality.³² Indirect discrimination occurs when “an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons having a particular religion or belief, a particular disability, a particular age, or a particular sexual orientation at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.” This concept is consistent with the European

29. Religion is included separately in Directive 2000/78/EC.

30. Article 5 “Reasonable accommodation for disabled persons”. “In order to guarantee compliance with the principle of equal treatment in relation to persons with disabilities, reasonable accommodation shall be provided. This means that employers shall take appropriate measures, where needed in a particular case, to enable a person with a disability to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment, or to undergo training, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer. This burden shall not be disproportionate when it is sufficiently remedied by measures existing within the framework of the disability policy of the Member State concerned”.

31. So far as religion is concerned, this interpretation is assisted by Article 9 and Article 14 of the Court.

32. See paragraph 2 of this chapter.

Court of Justice's case law elaborated in the field of indirect discrimination, based on nationality and sex equality. Due to its subtle forms, indirect discrimination is very difficult to fight in practice, but protection against this form of discrimination can be better implemented by reconnecting it to the instruments belonging to a substantive equality perspective (for example, positive measures).

Article 2.3 of both directives considers harassment as a form of discrimination in cases where "unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. In this context, the concept of harassment may be defined in accordance with the national laws and practice of the Member States". Even if the directives have the merit of considering harassment as discriminatory, giving an objective definition which disregards the will of the individual who practises it ("unwanted conduct ... having the purpose or effect"), they do not impose a single, binding notion of harassment, leaving the definition to the member states in accordance with national legal traditions: this could cause unjustifiable differences of protection in the national implementation. Last but not least, Article 2 of both directives states that giving instructions to discriminate belongs to the concept of discrimination.

The directives provide a number of instruments to tackle discrimination in practice, among which positive actions and the reversal of the burden of proof deserve a special mention.³³

Regarding positive actions, Article 5 of Directive 2000/43³⁴ and Article 7 of Directive 2000/78³⁵ establish that "the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to any of the grounds referred to in Article 1".³⁶ By allowing positive actions, which has for a long time been the traditional "battlefield" between supporters and detractors of the principle of substantive equality in the gender field, the directives clearly embrace the concept of substantive equality. This step ahead was taken thanks to the amendment of Article 141 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. The new version of Article 141 expressly states that the EU pursues the objective of "equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation" and that "the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity". The 17th preamble's consideration in Directive 2000/43 and the 26th preamble's consideration in Directive 2000/78

33. Both instruments were already introduced by the EU in relation to protection against gender discrimination (e.g. Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex).

34. Article 5: "With a view to ensuring full equality in practice, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin".

35. Article 7: "With a view to ensuring full equality in practice, the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to any of the grounds referred to in Article 1".

36. Positive actions are also expressly recognised also in the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.

are confined to allowing the maintenance or adoption of positive measures, whose main objective is the promotion of the special needs of vulnerable groups, without reference to the length of time they should last.

The second instrument introduced by the Equality Directives, the reversal of the burden of proof between the complainant and respondent in a proceeding, attempted to facilitate the trial position of the former at the expense of the latter, given the complainant's difficulty in proving the existence of discriminatory conduct at trial (particularly with regard to indirect discrimination).³⁷

Article 10.1 of Directive 2000/78³⁸ imposes the duty on member states to ensure that, when persons consider themselves discriminated against and lodge a claim before a court or other competent authority, it is enough for them to present facts from which it may be presumed that there has been direct or indirect discrimination, while it shall be for the respondent to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment. This regime is useful in many discrimination cases, in which the difficulty in obtaining evidence may damage the result of the proceeding. However, the directives have not gone as far as introducing complainants' right of access to information to enable the case to be built.

This short description of the Equality Directives can be concluded by mentioning Article 13.1 of Directive 2000/43, which provides that the states must designate "a body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. These bodies may form part of agencies, charged at national level with the defence of human rights". Among these bodies' competences the following are expressly included (Article 13.2): "independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination; conducting independent surveys concerning discrimination; publishing independent reports and making recommendations on any issue relating to such discrimination". On the other hand, the equality bodies are not authorised to start legal proceedings without the victim's consent.

In any case, any action is without prejudice to the rights of associations, organisations or legal entities with a legitimate interest in ensuring that the directive's provisions are complied with.

In order to demonstrate neutrality, the bodies should enjoy complete autonomy in decision-making and financial independence in order to realise their objectives. They should be able to carry out their mandate without government interference;

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37. The procedural measure of reversing the burden of proof was introduced as an exception by Directive 97/80 with regard to sex equality only, and over many years the case law of the Court of Human Rights looked forward to the general introduction of this regime.
38. Article 8 of Directive 2000/43/EC provides: "1. Member States shall take such measures as are necessary, in accordance with their national judicial systems, to ensure that, when persons who consider themselves wronged because the principle of equal treatment has not been applied to them establish, before a court or other competent authority, facts from which it may be presumed that there has been direct or indirect discrimination, it shall be for the respondent to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment. 2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Member States from introducing rules of evidence which are more favourable to plaintiffs. 3. Paragraph 1 shall not apply to criminal procedures. 4. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 shall also apply to any proceedings brought in accordance with Article 7(2). 5. Member States need not apply paragraph 1 to proceedings in which it is for the court or competent body to investigate the facts of the case".

they should be neutral with regard to the individual groups for protection (that is, the equality bodies must not merely represent certain vulnerable groups, or be concerned with one discriminatory factor, unless it is the only one coming within their mandate); they should be able to take action independently from other governmental bodies. It goes without saying that these aspects of the equality bodies' independence involve both autonomy in human resources management and in budgetary allocation. In order to foster the maintenance of independence, a network of national equality bodies was established throughout the enlarged European Union (Equinet or the EuroNeb programme).³⁹

→ Conclusion

This contribution briefly outlines the milestones in the fight against discrimination, which have enhanced the growth of human rights in the member countries of the Council of Europe and the EU over the last decades. It underlines that only in the latter stages of this process has the concept of substantive equality been embedded in the legal framework with the aim of overcoming concrete obstacles which prevent the equal participation of all human beings.

Thanks to this change of perspective, a new set of legal instruments binds member states to effectively foster equal access to opportunities, goods and services.

Far from being a top-down process, the equality strategy which has been implemented both in the Council of Europe and the EU since the end of the 1990s aspires to be proactive, to respect the diversity of human beings and their multiple identity in a multicultural society. The new powers of the EU in the anti-discrimination area overlap the Council of Europe's traditional role in the enforcement of human rights. The twofold consequence of this common commitment is that, on one hand, the Council of Europe and the EU can provide an increasing and strategic anti-discrimination protection; on the other hand, where their legal interpretations of the principles of equality and discrimination diverge, a disambiguation between them is to be hoped for through their future co-operation. In any case, the harmonisation between the work of the Council of Europe and the European Union in this field should be enhanced by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which, on the one hand, establishes the legal basis for the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union) and, on the other hand, should make sure that European Union regulations and directives do not contradict the European Convention on Human Rights through the binding effect of the Nice Charter.

39. www.equineteurope.org (retrieved 17 April 2010).



Equal schooling opportunities for Spanish Gitano students? Obstacles and possible solutions

Bálint-Ábel Bereményi

As opposed to immigrants, other minorities such as the Gitano (Spanish Roma) and their (dis)integration into the school system are invisible matters in the mass media of Spain. Whereas several international and national research projects, EU reports, EU directives and state or regional reports point out the Roma's disadvantaged social situation, particularly with regard to unequal schooling conditions, in Spain the Gitano undergraduate students are as hidden in academic statistics and reports of school performance as they are in political and professional debates on intercultural education. Based on a two-year ethnographical fieldwork study, we intend to show that legal discourses on cultural diversity and equal opportunities, transmitted by the legal framework of the Spanish school system remain at the level of the official school documents. Meanwhile, teachers' interpretations of cultural diversity stem from the essentially negative social representations of the Gitano and from teachers' limited ability to analyse the sociocultural context of their work, which often triggers school practices that build further barriers towards equal opportunities, instead of breaking them down. We will also refer to those in-school aspects that may create conditions for academic success. The paper

suggests that insufficient teacher training is one of the main obstacles to Gitano students' equal schooling opportunities.

→ Introduction

"The presence of 133 000 immigrant students exacerbates school deficits." The title of this recent article, published in a leading Spanish newspaper (*La Vanguardia*, 9 September 2007) is just one example of how the omnipresent issue of the school performance of immigrants' children is presented from a negatively biased perspective. As opposed to immigrants, other minorities such as Gitano and their (dis)integration within the school system are ignored by Spain's mass media, whereas several international and national research projects (Abajo and Carrasco, 2004; Giménez, 2002; Liégeois, 1998), EU reports, EU directives and state or regional reports have pointed out the Roma/Gitanos' disadvantaged social situation, with regard particularly to unequal schooling conditions. In Spain, the estimated number of Gitano undergraduate students exceeds 110 000 (Giménez, 2002), however, they are as hidden in academic statistics and reports on school performance, as they are in the very political and professional debates on intercultural education.

This paper approaches some aspects of the complex issue of the schooling of Gitanos in Spain. Firstly, basing our conclusions on a two-year ethnographical research project, we will show that the predominant rhetoric of the legal framework of the Spanish school system on cultural diversity is represented only in official school documents and is missing from teachers' discourse and educational practice. Local interpretation of this concept, merged with the predominantly negative social representations of Gitano people, often trigger school practices that build further barriers towards access to equal opportunities, instead of breaking them down. In the second part of the paper, we will mention the study of Abajo and Carrasco (2004) exploring some in-school aspects that create favourable conditions for the socio-academic integration of minority students.

We will argue that even though legal discourse over equal opportunities to schooling is reflected in formal school texts and in some teachers' views, teachers cannot apply this theoretical-conceptual knowledge in their daily job. On the other hand, we can also see that in-school factors can create positive conditions for Gitano students' socio-educational integration, in contrast to what teachers tend to think.

Finally, we will suggest that insufficient teacher training is one of the bottlenecks which hampers the flow of knowledge between recent findings of social scientific research and the teachers' school practice, as well as between the legal framework – which is partially built on those findings – and daily school practice.

→ The Spanish Gitano and schooling

The Gitano represent the largest minority group in Spain, with a population of more than 650 000 people, though there is no exact figure. This is proportionally the largest Roma minority of all western European states. Fieldwork has been carried out in Catalonia, a north-eastern autonomous community of the country, where approximately 10% of all the Gitano population live.

For some Gitano, the history of continuous marginalisation, "minoritising" and social inclusion has led to assimilation into mainstream Spanish society. For the majority of Gitano, however, history has brought about different phases of acculturation and ethnical opposition. Not all Gitano are poor, but the majority of them

live in below average socio-economic conditions with less than average access to social institutions and services, such as the public health service or public schools.

It is worth emphasising that the long conflictive relationship between the Gitano and the mainstream Spaniards has forged a widely shared negative social representation of the Gitano minority. The Gitano have been representing the “intrinsic otherness” of Spaniards for centuries, mostly in the negative sense. Old documentation mentions the Gitano almost exclusively as a “social problem”. Opinions published in the press and political rhetoric often contribute, though in a more covert manner, to the consolidation and reproduction of prejudices based on these negative and positive – but rarely contrasted – social images of the Gitano. Surveys and field research repeatedly show that Gitano families are unwelcome neighbours and Gitano children are unwelcome schoolmates for mainstream Spaniards.

Spain did not start to define its “Gitano policy” until the mid 1980s. While in the 1980s and 1990s the most widely used term for state plans and measures towards national minorities was “social integration”, by the 21st century “integration” has been complemented by the concept of “inclusion” and the “elimination of inequalities”. The Spanish school system, with its continuous reforms, has been attempting to keep up with these conceptual and ideological shifts.

The school system reform of 1990 replaces earlier deficit-focused compensatory measures with responses to “inequalities derived from social, economic, cultural, geographic, ethnic or other kinds”. The “Integrated Project for the Gitano People” of 2004 in Catalonia, was probably the first project to take multiple social, economic and cultural factors into consideration, in order to resolve the low attendance and poor academic performance of Gitano students. In practice, however, it is often difficult to track down school projects and teachers’ practices with clear pedagogical, didactical and organisational guidelines corresponding to that rhetoric.

→ The San Antonio case

A two-year ethnographic research project (Bereményi, 2007) has been carried out in an infamous “Gitano quarter” on the periphery of Barcelona. This district has long been struggling with insufficient infrastructure, security problems, rising crime and the general disrepair of the neighbourhood. The proportion of Gitano families, especially marginalised ones, has constantly grown, and recently a large number of “third world” immigrants have appeared to buy or rent relatively cheap flats. San Antonio, with its approximately 3 000 mainly Catalonia-born Gitano inhabitants, is probably the district where the biggest Gitano community resides in all Catalonia. The Gitano of San Antonio, children and grandchildren of Spanish immigrants who long ago lost the use of Romanés, the Roma language, usually do not use the Catalan language. Despite their great inner-group variability, they all claim to be “Catalonian Gitano”. Most of them are self-employed, selling various goods in daily markets, but there are also employed workers, generally unskilled ones. The educational level of the Gitano is lower than average, while functional illiteracy is higher, which is one of the reasons why their unemployment rate is very high.

The Gitano tend to enrol their children into low-prestige schools, where there are fewer students from mainstream Spanish families. At the present time, all Gitano children between 6 and 12 years of age in San Antonio are enrolled in primary schools, but with erratic attendance, and a general tendency towards low academic performance. In compulsory secondary school (for those aged between 12 and 16 years) these tendencies intensify and there are very few Gitano students who

reach graduation. Apart from low academic performance and absenteeism, Gitano students often present disciplinary problems both for their teachers and their schoolmates. Amongst Gitano adults there has been a recent discursive shift concerning schooling. Nowadays, almost all Gitano claim that schooling is important for social relations and work opportunities, however, this rhetorical shift is difficult to detect in their parental attitude towards the school. They verbally encourage their offspring, but at critical moments they rarely oblige their children to continue studying. After a certain age, Gitano students, especially the girls, tend to be dissuaded by the Gitano family and community from further schooling, which is perceived as a negative influence and a waste of energy.

→ School and teachers against the Gitano?

Researchers (Abajo and Carrasco, 2004; Giménez 2002; Liégeois, 1998; Abajo, 1997; San Román, 1980) agree that schooling of the Gitano, and minority schooling in general is a complex question and it would be an error to reduce the phenomenon to just one or a small number of variables. However, in this part of the paper, our intention is to highlight some of the in-school factors which act as barriers to equal opportunities for Gitano students in their intercultural peer relations, good academic performance and school continuity.

Having reviewed some representative official documents of the observed secondary school, the most surprising aspect was the lack of references to Gitano students. "Diversity" is the concept into which issues related to Gitano children are gathered in a rather opaque manner. Controversially, in the documents relating to the Educational School Project and the School Curricular Project, Gitano students are dealt with under the general concept of "cultural diversity", while in the more detailed Strategic School Project, this global category changes into "diversity of interest and necessity" and does not deal with ethnic-cultural diversity. This contradiction between the rhetorical and practical approach relating to ethnic-cultural minorities is present not only on a school level, but is also manifested in teachers' discourses and practices.

In practice, three sorts of palpable action towards student diversity have been observed. Firstly, "streaming" or "tracking" is generally applied, despite the empirical evidence which shows that the compensation of inequalities in "low level groups" almost never occurs. On the contrary, this type of selection based on academic performance creates negative self-esteem and low academic self-expectation in students. The second type of intervention is the so-called "open classroom". "Open classroom" was created as a specialised compensatory measure for students' inequalities, a kind of "attention to the diversity" where teachers can devote more time to them, thanks to a higher teacher/student ratio. "Open classroom" works with no underlying project whatsoever, and with an ever-changing staff, which severely hampers the fulfilment of its main goal: the reintegration of those students to ordinary groups. So in low-performing "tracked" groups such as in "open classroom", minority students, and particularly Gitano students, are over-represented. Meanwhile, in high-performing groups there are very few students of minority origin. Finally, we should add to the list of actions an extra-curricular in-school club organised by an open-minded teacher. This club, called "intercultural relations" has the clear objective to be a point of reference for students from a minority background, mainly those of immigrant origin, with the participation of majority students, too. Though the club has been a notable success, it still is a very limited space with a small number of students, and with Gitano students having almost no presence. Hence, the club unfortunately has no real influence on Gitano students' peer relations and sense of belonging in the school.

The measures described above are the main ways of catering for diversity in this secondary school, although there are other actions of a rather particular character. All these facts lead us to think that school practices towards Gitano students, rather than being inclusive, tend to be segregating, while underlying documentation systematically makes Gitano students invisible and conceals the existence of all the corresponding problems experienced by the school.

To become a teacher in Spain, one needs to have a university degree and to pass a three-month official teacher training course, designed in the 1970s. Even the trainers are convinced that this is an absolutely insufficient and obsolete way of preparing would-be teachers for the actual social reality. Because the course is extremely short, it touches upon only the most fundamental aspects of specialised didactic and psychopedagogy and offers some 10 weeks of preparatory school practice. Basic comprehension of present Spanish society is not included in those fundamental aspects.

Initial university training of teachers follows a training plan designed in the 1970s and even trainers are convinced that it is insufficient and obsolete and does not correspond with actual social reality. Furthermore, teachers tend to avoid in-service courses because they do not trust in their practical relevance. Perhaps the absence of well-designed training courses from the professional career of teachers is one of the reasons why they have a fairly limited awareness of the previously discussed school documents and their ideological and conceptual bases. The teachers observed do not voice positive opinions about the school. One of the reasons for that, though not the only one, is related to the ethnic composition of the student intake. As children of cultural and ethnic minority groups tend to challenge traditional school models, teachers associate high cultural and ethnic diversity of the student population with hard, unrewarding working conditions. Negative self-perception seems to be a demotivating factor in teachers' daily work with minority students. While they do not analyse their educational methods and practices, they often despise minority students' academic level, or even their intelligence and capacity, and they therefore hold lower-than-average expectations towards them. Teachers' depreciation and low academic expectations of Gitano students, according to fieldwork observations, lead to the transmission of a downwardly adjusted, or "watered-down" curriculum. Gitano students are more likely to be expelled from the classroom and from school, and they are also more frequently demoted to "open classroom" than their non-Gitano peers.

Teachers identify four reasons why Gitano students tend to fail academically in school. Firstly, they argue that the Gitano family is irresponsible and does not care about its children's studies or set a good example, and some teachers even say that Gitano culture is incompatible with school culture. Secondly, they say that Gitano students themselves are responsible for their failure at school, because they do not make an effort and are demotivated. Thirdly, teachers mention the education system as an important factor, because the system does not provide the necessary resources that could enable teachers to deal with school problems. Finally, capitalist society is blamed for reproducing conditions of marginalisation and poverty, as well as educational inequalities. There have been very few reflections by teachers about their own didactical/pedagogical work or school and classroom organisation, which means that teachers fundamentally blame out-of-school circumstances for Gitano students' low performance and remain uncritical of the efficiency of their own professional practice. On the contrary, several teachers mention that the treatment of "special" cases is not their responsibility, rather that of other professionals such as school psychologists, street educators or social workers.

Teachers have a more or less defined opinion about how the “problem of the Gitano students” should be resolved. First of all, they demand external resources, such as a better teacher/student ratio and specially-adapted didactical material related to minority students. Furthermore, many teachers would like to have more information about “the Gitano culture” or “the Gitano world” so that they can understand the students and be able to deal with them more effectively. However, more sceptical teachers underline that it would be impossible to have a real knowledge of all the cultures represented in the school. Apparently, a good number of teachers are aware of what should be done to resolve the “problem”, but observation has shown that the great majority of these ideas never turn into a detailed project in practice.

→ School conditions for success

Before analysing the case of San Antonio, it might be useful to consider a contrasting viewpoint and examine some in-school aspects underlined by Abajo and Carrasco (2004) as factors and conditions which facilitate good school integration and academic continuity of Gitano students. The comparative research of this analysis was carried out in five autonomous communities in Spain, both in urban and in rural areas. The findings have been organised into three dimensions: socio-economic, educational and affective-relational, of which the latter two are examined here.

First, all Gitano people involved in the research – more than 300 people – continued their studies in non-segregated schools and in non-segregated groups and they have not made use of any “special” compensatory resources of the school system within or outside the school. The authors argue that integrated classes with a normal curriculum tend to increase expectations of academic continuity, while ethnic segregation and separate treatment of educational needs are unlikely to foster normal school performance. These statements underline the importance of the school’s organisational policy with respect to students’ diversity and hence the ways in which educational and social inequality should be treated.

The second key factor to which Abajo and Carrasco refer is the school atmosphere. There are two basic elements of an integrating school atmosphere. On one hand, it is the role of the teacher within the classroom and his/her treatment of the students. On the other hand, it is the advocacy function of the school, especially in key situations such as the shift from primary school to secondary school. The figure of the teacher has proved to be very important as he/she can transmit a positive evaluation of the Gitano student’s capacities and high expectations towards the continuity of his/her academic career. In key moments, such as those of uncertainty and doubt, family problems, transition from one school to another, teachers can have a strong influence on the continuity of a student’s studies. This advocacy role of the school, and particularly of the teacher, is even stronger where the student’s family situation is socially less integrated and the neighbourhood in which they reside is more segregated. As for the affective-relational aspect (focusing here only on in-school factors), the authors emphasise the mostly positive experiences of academically successful Gitano students in their intercultural relations with non-Gitano peers. Non-academic but in-school activities, such as afternoon clubs, also proved to be key conditions, as they facilitate social and school integration. The authors emphasise that cohesion of peer groups should be reinforced by the school, and that teachers should actively provide an atmosphere of respect and co-operation within the classroom.

These are only some of the findings and recommendations of the research concerning Gitano students’ academic success. However, it is sufficient material to compare with the rather harsh school reality observed in the first part of the paper.

→ Discussion

Social sciences, especially in Anglo-Saxon contexts, have been theorising about different aspects of minority students' school performance for more than half a century. Some initial explications focused on genetic factors were challenged by other theories centred on cultural variables, rather than genetic ones. While genetic explications are clearly refuted in recent research, the principle of "cultural deficit" is still present in some arguments. "Cultural mismatch" theories deal with cultural elements of the minority groups, which create difficulties in the academic process. For example, Méndez (2005) refers to the differences between the ordinary "school cycle" (that is the social development of the majority students) and the Gitano "vital cycle" (that is, the phases of social development of the Gitano people). Others (for example, García, 2005) emphasise the communitarian tendency of the Gitano, as opposed to the individualist expectations of the school. The difference between socio-labour models of the Gitano, which are not based on an academic process, and models of the mainstream society is another mismatch factor that is often mentioned by researchers with regard to the Gitano (Fernández Enguita, 1999). Learning styles, communication strategies or cognitive styles are also important elements of explications based on cultural difference between minority and mainstream society. All these elements contribute to the understanding of this complex phenomenon. However, none of them explain why those differences persist in one minority group and not in the others. Nor do they detail why the same minority group does well in school in one context, and not in the other.

In spite of the partial and sometimes simplistic character of these arguments, they are known and applied by educational professionals who work with Gitano students. One of the best-known works in Spain on the low school performance of Gitano students describes the incompatibility of "the" Gitano culture (in the singular) with the school culture and emphasises the right of the Gitano to maintain their own social and work model. By this means, the author naturalises the Gitano/mainstream school opposition and obscures the great flexibility and dynamics of Gitano cultures (in the plural) as adaptative responses to particular social contexts and also leaves out of consideration the capacity of ethnic-cultural group members to develop multiple competences and to gain multiple identities within and outside school.

Teachers' explications of the academic failure of the Gitano are akin to these arguments. They blame ethnic-cultural background, different social and labour models and learning styles in a fatalistic way, while failing to consider the strong influence that the school's and teachers' practices might have, both directly and indirectly, on these students.

In the late 1960s, John U. Ogbu suggested a fundamental change in the approach to the issue. He claimed that schooling strategies of minority groups should be seen as an adaptive response to the past and present opportunity structure. The ecological-cultural model of Ogbu and its later critical development by other anthropologists of education (Fordham, 1996; Gibson, 1988; Ogbu and Simons, 1998) offer a multifocal approach to the problem that generates newer and more complex theoretical models based on comparative empirical studies, which undoubtedly challenge those explications based on cultural differences alone.

In addition to a growing amount of social research into the academic performance of minority groups, we should also bear in mind that educational sciences have developed a series of recommendations for an inclusive school model that should foster students' intercultural skills, allowing them to respond positively to their

multicultural reality. Legislation in Spain, though with slower steps and more indirectly, has gradually responded to the new findings of multidisciplinary educational research. If we study the corresponding legal instruments thoroughly, we can observe the effort that has been made to renew theoretical references and vocabulary with respect to the relationship between school and minority students. This shift, at least its rhetorical part, is perfectly palpable in official school documents and to a lesser extent in teachers' general statements about diversity.

We have found that the normative documents of the observed secondary school were elaborated in such a way that they reproduce the vocabulary and the discourse of the current legal framework, but without any further interpretation or a real and detailed practical application of this framework to the specific context. Hence, concepts and terms remain hollow, with no real relevance to school practice. It seems that while documentation does not define the school's particular problems well, teachers perceive some of them as a consequence of the Gitano students' presence in the school. Furthermore, we have raised the point that these documents have been elaborated by one person from the teaching staff, hence their content does not represent the agreed opinion of all the teaching staff. In this sense, these documents do not serve as ideological, theoretical-methodological and didactical guidelines for teachers' daily educational practice.

Teachers' knowledge of the legal framework and their theoretical-methodological recommendations concerning the treatment of cultural diversity of the pupils remains superficial and out of date. Their source of information on these issues is often limited to their initial training and to further informal or non-professional channels, such as the press or teachers' meetings. As we have been able to observe, this shortage of knowledge has serious consequences on the treatment of students from a minority background.

First, teachers are not aware of, or are resistant to, the widening range of responsibilities to which the law requires that they should be able to respond.

Secondly, teachers' training does not provide them with methodological and theoretical instruments in order to help them investigate more about the context of their teaching practice within a global multicultural society, including the minority students' sociocultural situations, and to be able to analyse their own non-inclusive teaching practices. The opinions of the teachers about the reasons for Gitano students' school failure and the possible solution of this phenomenon make clear their limited capacity to link these reasons and solutions with in-school and extra-curricular processes and relations. Furthermore, they seem to be unaware of the fact that most of their opinions about the issue are based on challenged social theories and are strongly influenced by the negative social representation of the Gitano.

Thirdly, superficial training and preparation of teachers has not brought about a profound shift of thinking in order to integrate the principles of inclusive intercultural education, even if they can recite some of its principles, such as the "richness of diversity".

From the research on Gitano students' school success (Abajo and Carrasco, 2004) we know that in-school factors can have a considerable positive influence on Gitano students' academic performance and educational continuity. A non-segregated school context, inclusive "school atmosphere" and in-school affective-relational factors may strongly contribute to successful school integration, especially for those Gitano students whose family situation is socially less integrated.

Taking into consideration that in-school factors represent only one aspect of the complex phenomenon, we must raise the logical question: how is it possible that socio-educational exclusion of Gitano students persists in school practice when legal instruments foster inclusive school models for intercultural education and research shows empirical evidence of the factors that create conditions for equal schooling opportunities? Where is the bottleneck in the flow of knowledge between research findings and school practice? Why don't professionals in school education put the legislators' intention into practice? One of the possible answers, that we emphasise here, puts into focus the insufficient transmission and updating of knowledge with regard to both the legal framework and the educational research findings to educational professionals. A thorough initial and in-service training is one of the fundamental axes of this transmission, in the absence of which it is extremely difficult to demand an inclusive school practice for the socio-educational equality of all students.

→ Conclusion

This paper has discussed some critical aspects of Gitanos' schooling in Spain. Whilst the children of immigrants remain a central issue in all the debates concerning school education, other minority groups, such as the Gitano, seem to be hidden in statistics, documentation or even action plans.

We began by introducing the treatment of Gitano students in a particular secondary school, looking at school documentation, teachers' opinions and educational practice relating to these minority students. We have seen that while legal discourses over equal opportunities for school access and to high academic achievement are reflected in formal school texts, these texts do not provide any contextual information about Gitano students, nor do they mention measures by which they should respond to socio-educational problems. Teachers express their generally low expectations of Gitano students, which are undoubtedly influenced by predominantly negative prejudices held by mainstream society towards the Gitano. Their opinions about the failure of Gitano students at school are based on challenged "cultural mismatch" theories; while they do not follow the inclusive model fostered by educational law, other legal instruments and international recommendations in their practice. In fact, teachers cannot apply that theoretical-conceptual knowledge, rather they create their own, generally more simplistic interpretation of it, often biased by negative social representations of minority populations.

Secondly, we briefly introduced some findings of a research study concerning the academic success of the Gitano, focusing on the in-school aspects. The authors of the study show that school context, school atmosphere and the affective-relational dimension are key in-school aspects, which can create positive conditions for the socio-educational integration of Gitano students, especially if they are from socially less integrated families.

The comparison of the legal framework, the observed school reality and those favourable conditions drives us to the question: if there is a pool of knowledge about how in-school factors can foster Gitano children's equal schooling opportunities, why is it not put into practice? This paper has suggested one of the possible reasons. Short initial teacher training is insufficient and in-service training is generally avoided by teachers. As a result, these forms of training cannot transmit the necessary theoretical-methodological knowledge and analytical skills to educational professionals in order for them to critically analyse their working context and their own teaching practice.

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Admission policy and social inequalities in primary education in Hungary

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One of the most important indicators of access to education is the actual age of school admission and the ratio of over-aged children and school drop-outs (Tegegn, 2003). While significant differences can be found in the age of children starting school throughout the world, a general consensus can be identified on the importance of early years education and its positive effects on long-term success in school as well as the integration and inclusion of immigrant and ethnic minority children (Esping-Andersen, 2001). Despite this agreement, in countries where the age of admission is not connected solely to the child's biological age, there is a growing tendency to hold back children from entering school (that is, kindergarten) for an additional year.

Research has shown ambiguous results as to whether delayed school entry increases academic performance. Bredekamp and Shepard (1989) caution that raising the entrance age in school districts establishes an academic environment that divides the advantaged children from the disadvantaged ones. Raising the entrance age equals denial of public education for one year to previously age-eligible children. The impact on upper and middle class children may be low, as they are likely to spend their

time in preschools, or at home in a stimulating environment, while low-income children have less access to these resources (March, 2005).

The theoretical argument behind flexible school admission policy is connected to the concept of school readiness. Although the concept has been around for over a century, it is still being discussed. While children are always ready to learn, they have different social, cultural, educational and environmental experiences, different abilities and a different degree of practice in school-like activities which enable them to adjust to and benefit from schooling to a different degree. The inherent problem in defining school readiness has to do with whether to locate it within the child or identify it in the interaction between the child and his/her environment, including the expectations of the school. While traditional approaches attempt to list the necessary abilities and capacities of children to succeed in school, decades of critique have shifted the attention to the child's environment, and stressed the importance of the readiness of schools to receive children from various backgrounds. Despite the great variety of definitions, there is a general agreement that "school readiness refers to the state of child competencies at the time of school entry that are important for later success." (Snow, 2006, p. 9).

Ferenc Mérei, a prominent Hungarian psychologist, pointed out in the early 1970s that the term "readiness" is misleading, as what educational counsellors assess as school readiness is in fact fitness for school: the status of the child is measured against the expectations of the school. The conditions of "school fitness" according to Mérei were the following: understanding the situation, awareness of tasks, perseverance, the need for achievement, certain mental capacities, physical development and a diminished level of emotionality in thinking (Mérei, 1978).

The definition reflects an individualistic and psychological understanding of the concept, while its social determination is revealed by research. Different studies have indicated a strong association between the child's social, ethnic and racial background and performance related to school readiness (e.g., Kende, Neményi, 2006; Zill, West, 2001). These studies point out that children coming from ethnic or racial minority backgrounds or socially disadvantaged families are less likely to possess the abilities and capacities which enable them to succeed in school, in comparison to socially more advantaged and non-minority children.

Compulsory education starts relatively early in countries which follow the tradition of the British education system, (such as the US, Canada, Ireland, the UK, India, Malta and recently the Netherlands) where children start their compulsory education in kindergarten or primary schools at the age of 4 or 5. A relatively late start is prevalent in Scandinavian and east central European countries, where compulsory education in primary schools starts at the age of 7. Children in most other countries in North America and Europe enter school at the age of 6. The situation in northern Europe is entirely different from east central Europe, as Scandinavian children tend to attend institutional care from an early age. In east central Europe children enter educational institutions between the ages of 3 and 5 to a varying degree: 93% of the children attend pre-primary education in Denmark, in contrast to 83% in Hungary.

→ Inequalities in Hungarian schools

The case of Hungary highlights the importance of understanding the effects of educational policy through an account of the political, sociological and demographic context, educational traditions and "school science" (that is psychological

theories of school readiness and development, pedagogical theories of early childhood education, etc.).

The political and economic instability characterising the first decade of democratisation was not conducive to social justice. In the pre-1989 socialist era, school catchment areas strictly determined which primary school children could attend. It also meant that there was no competition between schools, each school used the same materials and followed the same curriculum. Some elite schools managed to exist in the socialist regime, but most primary schools offered a similar quality of education. This apparent equality was far from ideal: ethnic segregation was manifested in special education classes and institutions, where the percentage of ethnic Roma children sometimes reached 100%; and the high ratio of literacy concealed widespread problems of reading comprehension.

The political and economic transition, new forms of financing education, along with a steady population decrease created competition among schools. Parents became free to choose a primary school for their children and schools started to compete for a decreasing number of applicants to ensure their own subsistence. This resulted in a great differentiation between schools, school materials and the curriculum. Competition and differentiation reinforced the existing but well disguised inequalities and while there were significant changes at all levels of the education system, there was no reform radical enough to tackle the problem of inequality in its entirety.

Inequality in education has been corroborated by the results of various international assessment tests (for example, PISA). Hungary is the only OECD country with a lower than average achievement on the 2003 PISA test and a greater than average effect of children's socio-economic background (OECD, 2003). A number of sociological studies pointed out that the Hungarian education system reinforces rather than reduces social disadvantage (Kende, Neményi, 2006; Luyten et al., 2005). Undoubtedly, the improvement of the situation of socially disadvantaged, especially ethnic Roma children, is a high priority in educational policy to confront inequalities and discrimination in education, not only in Hungary, but in the entire east central European region.

→ Academic redshirting

“Academic redshirting” is a term used for delayed school entry. It is borrowed from sports, where players waiting to be called into the arena are called “redshirted”. The policy of flexible school admission age makes academic redshirting possible, which is a tendency closely connected to social inequalities in education.

Academic redshirting only occurs in countries where, on the one hand, primary school entry is not solely dependent on age, and on the other hand, parents are motivated to keep their children back because the change from pre-primary to primary education is substantial. These two conditions are necessary and additional factors can add to the significance of the issue. In Hungary, kindergartens and primary schools are administratively separate institutions; they have different expectations from children and they do not share a concept of childhood. These are reflected in their different approaches to children: in kindergarten, the primary activity of the child is play, in school it is studying. In kindergarten, children enjoy relative freedom, activities are initiated by teachers but children are free to participate in them or not, while they are compulsory in schools. Kindergartens often have children of different age groups together, compelling teachers to accommodate the children's different needs, while schools work with homogenous age groups – though less

so with the spread of academic redshirting – as there is less pressure on them to accommodate children’s specificities. Thus the differences can be large and it is up to the individual teachers or institutions how smooth the transition from one institution to the other is.

As noted earlier, in the new democracy, educational policy supported individual rights and competition between schools, as a means to improve the quality of education. In this context, the spiralling effect of growing academic expectations from the first year of primary education and the spread of delaying school entry seemed unavoidable. It was crowned by a three-month adjustment in the threshold of admittance age in 1986, which opened a new chapter in the debate on school readiness. The discourse has been dominated by new findings on dyslexia and national surveys on children’s school performance, and has put great pressure on kindergartens and parents to “pre-train” children for school.

Compulsory education within the framework of kindergarten starts at the age of 5. Kindergartens can host children from the age of 3 to the beginning of school. The primary concern in choosing a kindergarten is its closeness and there is a shortage of places. Thus kindergartens do not compete with one another and offer a more equal education to children than do schools. Parents and kindergarten teachers can decide on sending the child to school if he or she has turned 6 by 31 May, or agree on an additional year of kindergarten. If a child’s readiness for school is questioned, or there is a disagreement between the kindergarten and the parents, special examinations are performed by psychologists and special pedagogues. Various tests are in use for these examinations, with the so-called school aptitude test being the standard initial exam for most children. The test has remained unchanged since its introduction in 1971. The test results are presumed to describe the status of children’s abilities in various areas of social, emotional, psychological and cognitive development. The sub-tests were developed on the basis of various standardised, international and Hungarian assessment and intelligence tests (Császár, 1989).

There is a growing number of 7-year-olds among children starting primary school, and statistics suggest that a trend of academic redshirting is spreading, as the percentage of 7-year-olds in 1990 was 11%, and in 2000 it was already 31%. The number of 8-year-olds has doubled in that period, from 1.5% to 3% (Vágó, 2005).

Research on academic redshirting

This study looks at the role of academic redshirting in the educational gap. The first hypothesis is that delayed entry does not help the transition from pre-primary education to primary school, as it relies on maturationist theories of development and considers none of the problems of the actual transition issue, which is the source of the problem. The second hypothesis is based on evidence that a socially defined pattern of academic redshirting can be identified, despite the fact that theoretically individual decisions are made about the age of admission, based on the child’s school readiness. The third hypothesis is that academic redshirting has different effects on children of different social backgrounds. It advances the educational achievement of middle- and upper-class children, and hinders lower class and Roma pupils’ success in school, furthering the educational gap between social classes, and ethnic Roma and non-Roma pupils.

A questionnaire survey was carried out in the school year 2006-07 among second-year primary school students in two regions of Hungary, one district in the capital

and one city, with its surrounding villages, in the countryside. The regions were selected based on the following criteria:

- A mixed socio-economic make-up, where extreme poverty or wealth is not dominant.
- Ethnic Roma people are present in both regions in a ratio similar to the national average.
- Different settlement types can be found in the countryside sample.
- Schools represent the nationally available variety: municipal, parochial, teacher training, large and small, village schools with mixed grades, and special education institutes.

Each school from these two regions participated in the research, with the exception of one village school and two schools in the capital, which meant that 4.5% of the pupils studying in the area were left out. Altogether 72 classes in 40 schools were studied, and 1 332 second graders made up our sample. The research was preceded by a pilot study consisting of 17 interviews with kindergarten (pre-primary) teachers throughout the country, and supplemented by interviews with 58 teachers of the second year primary pupils involved in the study. While the sample of these children covers both regions in their entirety, and therefore offers valuable – but not representative – information for the country, the kindergarten sample is merely enough to point to relevant issues, offering no representative or informational results nationally.

The questionnaires on children were completed by their principal teachers. This principal teacher remains the same for the first two to four years of primary education. Our method has several advantages as well as limitations. The practical advantage of such a questionnaire is to secure anonymity of the pupils and receive information about children who are too young to fill in questionnaires themselves. There is a theoretical advantage too: while objectivity of data can be raised by trying to trace back existing statistics on the pupils, absolute objectivity is impossible to achieve. However, a teacher's construction of the child's abilities and background is a major determinant of a child's educational career, and therefore it is important from the point of view of educational achievement. We do not argue that a child's actual abilities are less important than how the outside world perceives them, but their relevance cannot be denied. If a child has the capacity to enter the next grade, but his or her teacher does not think he or she should, the child will be retained, so in this case the teacher's perception overrules – the measurable or immeasurable – quality of the child. The limitation of the method is that we receive only one person's perspective of the child, when their educational career is determined by other factors as well. Moreover, the teacher may not have full knowledge of a child's personal and social background.

Using the questionnaire, data were collected on children's socio-economic and demographic background, family, ethnicity, type and length of pre-primary education and care, school readiness, background information on achieving school readiness, the way admission age was determined, the child's abilities, performance and perspectives for the future.

In the survey, 41% of the children lived in the capital, 40% in cities and towns outside the capital, and 19% in villages. The gender ratio of the participants was almost even: 657 girls and 670 boys; 18% of the children were born after 1 January 1999 (age-appropriate or young group), 51% between 1 June and

31 December 1998 (older entrants), and 31% before 31 May 1998 (academic redshirted group).⁴⁰

Based on the cluster analysis of data on children's socio-economic background and parents' education, five groups emerged indicating children's social status.

Table 1. Children's social status

| Social status | Number of children | Percentage of sample |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Elite group (tertiary education of parents, good financial situation) | 225 | 17 |
| Potential elite (secondary education, good financial situation) | 166 | 12 |
| Middle class (secondary education, average financial status) | 288 | 22 |
| Lower class (working class parents, below average financial status) | 284 | 21 |
| Disadvantaged (low educational level, unemployment, extreme poverty) | 175 | 13 |
| Missing data | 194 | 15 |
| Total | 1332 | 100 |

Fourteen per cent of the children were considered Roma by their teachers. This rate is similar to the national average for this age group. They are over-represented among the disadvantaged group.

Table 2. The rate of Roma children in various social status groups (N=1137 (%))

| | Roma | Non-Roma (undecided) |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Elite | 0.5 | 99.5 |
| Potential elite | 4 | 96 |
| Middle class | 2 | 98 |
| Lower class | 12 | 88 |
| Disadvantaged | 65 | 35 |
| Total | 14 | 86 |

40. The reason children are divided into three rather than two groups is explained by the fact that for children born before 31 May, academic redshirting takes place without the need of an official explanation. For children born in the summer or autumn months, an educational advisor needs to suggest delayed entry to primary school. Therefore the two groups who start primary education age-appropriately are, in fact, not in the same situation.

Results

School and kindergarten teachers agree that school readiness is an important condition for entering primary school, and children reach that stage at different ages. As far as schoolteachers are concerned, there is an agreement about the preference for delayed entry as well. Most teachers (91%) agree with the possibility of delayed entry. Sixty three per cent answered affirmatively the question of whether it makes the job of a teacher easier, if children only enter school after their 7th birthday. There was only one teacher in the sample who clearly stood up against flexible school admission age, and argued that it is exclusively children's age that should be taken into account and it should happen earlier:

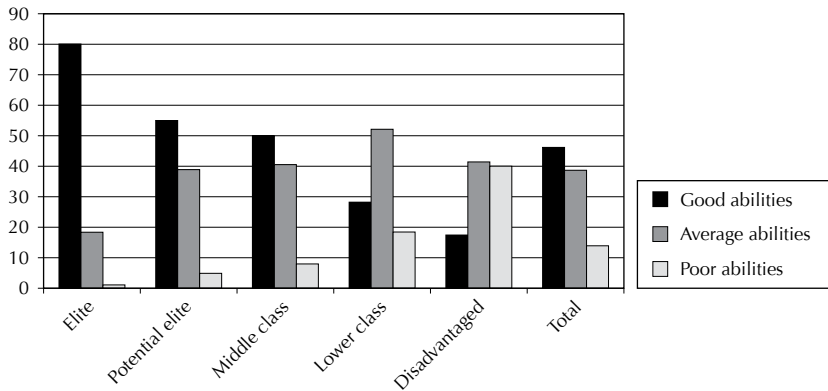
I prefer the system of England or Holland, where children enter school relatively early, and they get used to work in school gradually. Every child should enter school at the age of six and participate in a preparatory programme. (Schoolteacher, town)

In contrast to schoolteachers, kindergarten teachers had a less unified and positive view on flexible admission age and delayed entry. Many disagreed with keeping children who are ready for school in kindergarten. While it may be easier for the school to have "over-mature" children in school, kindergartens do not have pedagogical programmes for these children. Hosting them creates a problem and most kindergarten teachers decide individually how to deal with over-aged children. As one of the interviewees expressed it:

I do not always agree with this. I don't think that we can offer enough for these kids to keep them occupied. And that is when they start playing, disrupting our activities, which we must correct somehow, leading to negative experiences. (Kindergarten teacher, town)

School readiness, according to what was expressed by teachers about individual children in the questionnaires, is primarily a state which allows the child to bear the monotony of exercises and be able to sit still for a prolonged period of time. While additional aspects, such as emotional stability, physical development, and fine motor skills, were almost always added to this expectation, it is clear that some children will never be ready for school based on these expectations, and that school readiness is used as a synonym for good adjustment to the school setting. Significant differences can be found between children of different social status in their school readiness, with lower class children being overall less ready than others. While a child's mother tongue, cultural background and family socialisation were designated as unimportant in determining a child's school readiness in general, they appeared important in connection with Roma children.

Less ambiguous terms, such as abilities, also show a strong and significant correlation with children's social status. Data on abilities were obtained through different methods, such as the results of a national aptitude test, an overall description of the child's abilities, and a categorisation of the child into three ability groups. Eighty per cent of the elite children had good and 1% had poor abilities. Only 17% of the children in the disadvantaged group had good abilities, 42% average and 40% had poor ones.

Table 3. Social status and children's abilities (N=1137,%)

Some important determinants of school performance are also correlated with social status, such as motivation, discipline, mental capacities, psychological and social maturity, controlling for abilities.

Gender

There is a noticeable relationship between age and gender. There is a significantly higher rate of girls starting school young, or at the appropriate age, than of boys. There is a significantly higher rate of boys in the group of redshirted children, and their rate is equal among the older children (turning 7 in the summer and autumn months).

Table 4. Admission age according to gender (N=1327%)

| | Boys (N=670) | Girls (N=657) |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Age appropriate (born after January 1999) | 33 | 67 |
| Older (born between June and December 1998) | 50 | 50 |
| Academic redshirted (born before May 1998) | 60 | 40 |

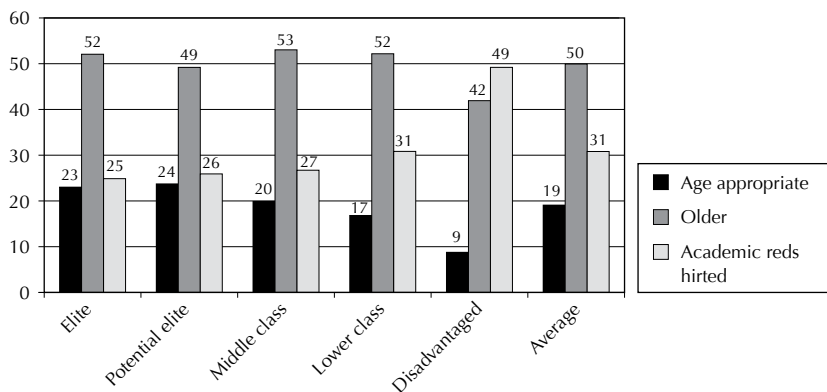
Academic redshirting seems to successfully solve the problem of gender differences in school readiness. While there is a considerable disproportion of female and male students in the age-appropriate and in the academic redshirted groups, looking exclusively at the oldest children in the sample, we can identify a compensatory tendency. It seems that girls are as much affected by retention and other problems that cause more serious delays in entry as boys are. The ratio of boys and girls changes from 60:40 among all academic redshirted children to 58:42 among those who are half a year older, to the reverse 40:60 ratio among those who are at least one year older than the average academic redshirted children. Gender differences do not show significant correlations with any other aspect of academic redshirting.

Social status

As expected, delayed entry shows significant correlations with children's social status and the social categorisation of classes. Disadvantaged children are most likely to be held back in kindergarten, and middle- and lower-class children are

on average significantly younger than elite and disadvantaged children. There are significantly fewer age-appropriate and older children, and more academic redshirted children than in any other type of class.

Table 5. Children's social status and academic redshirting (N=1137,%)



The main question here is what the consequences of academic redshirting are, knowing that it is seriously affected by social status. The correlation between delayed entry and low achievement is significant: overall, in our sample, children who entered school late demonstrated lower academic performance. However, this result was seriously modified when social status was taken into account. Measures of performance of the three age-groups correlated with children's social status, producing the following result: the performance of academic redshirted children of the disadvantaged group was worse than the performance of all other academic redshirted children, while the performance of academic redshirted elite children was better than all other academic redshirted children.

Educational perspectives

Delayed entry has different consequences for the educational perspectives of a child. Academic redshirting does not have consequences for higher status children's educational perspectives, which means that in the elite group, children entering school at different ages have similar perspectives for the future. While academic redshirted disadvantaged children have the worst educational perspectives, they are the most likely subgroup to drop out of school. It is important to note that the correlation between social status and future perspectives is significant between the academic redshirted and older group and not significant in the age-appropriate group. Thus, it seems that it is not social status per se that determines educational perspectives, but social status together with late or delayed entry that is connected to school drop-out and a shorter educational career.

Table 6. School admission age and future perspectives of the most disadvantaged and the elite group (N=392,%)

| | | Special education class or lower | Primary education | Vocational training | Secondary education | University degree | Total |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Age appropriate | Disadvantaged (N=15) | 13 | 33 | 47 | 7 | | 100 |
| | Elite (N=52) | | | 4 | 10 | 86 | 100 |
| Older | Disadvantaged (N=70) | 7 | 28 | 49 | 14 | 1 | 100 |
| | Elite (N=115) | | | | 6 | 94 | 100 |
| Academic redshirted | Disadvantaged (N=84) | 18 | 42 | 33 | 5 | 2 | 100 |
| | Elite (N=56) | | 3 | 2 | 5 | 90 | 100 |

Abilities

In order to understand the role of academic redshirting in the educational gap, we must go beyond correlations and analyse causation. A simple cross table helps to show whether poor, academic redshirted children perform worse in school and have poorer perspectives than younger peers, because they already have weaker abilities, or whether it is academic redshirting which adds to their social disadvantage. Our results suggest the latter: disadvantaged, academic redshirted children have significantly poorer academic perspectives than younger children, if they are in the same ability group. This significant difference can be identified among children with poor, average and good abilities as well. This explains why we find children in the disadvantaged, academic redshirted group who are not likely to finish primary education despite their good overall abilities according to their teacher's opinion. The role of academic redshirting in expanding the differences is further emphasised by the fact that the exact opposite difference can be found in the elite group. Academic redshirted elite children have better educational performance than younger elite children if they have the same abilities. This difference appears at all ability levels. This suggests that academic redshirting is not only the wrong solution to educational problems of socially disadvantaged children, but it is also a source of their problems.

→ Conclusions

Delayed entry seems to be a generally accepted and preferred solution by teachers as a way to deal with the transition from kindergarten to school. However, a number of problems with this solution were identified in this study. Parents' decisions and teachers' preferences can easily be understood. No parent wants their child to be the youngest and least mature in a classroom where competition and achievement dominate. Teachers – under pressure for children to achieve – may find it easier to follow the curriculum with children who are older than those the curriculum is designed for. These motivations led to a high proportion of academically redshirted children. About 30% of all classes, and an even higher proportion of disadvantaged ones, consist of academic redshirted children. This ratio is much higher in Hungary than in any other country.

Academic redshirting does not solve the problems of transition from kindergarten to school, because it does not produce better academic outcomes on the whole. It cannot do so, as academic redshirting was designed to help overcome problems of school readiness, a concept based on maturation theories, while most facets of the problem of transition are not rooted in the child. It has institutional aspects: the transition from kindergarten to school is burdened by a lack of co-operation between institutions. The majority of the teachers question kindergarten teachers' competence for preparing children for school in the last stage of pre-primary education. Kindergartens do not have specific programmes and often insufficient room for their over-aged pupils. The pedagogical practices of the two types of institutions differ greatly and they do not share a concept of childhood. The difficulties in the transition process are mainly rooted in these differences.

The expectation of school readiness is thus important because children need to transfer to an entirely different institute from the one they are used to, and not everybody is ready to do that at a given age. What teachers understand by the term "school readiness" has little to do with psychological concepts of child development: there is no time and opportunity in school to wait for children to adjust to school, to develop tolerance for monotony, to learn to hold a pencil properly or to overcome insufficient preparation for school in kindergarten. They are expected to arrive at primary school having developed most of these skills.

However, results of this study show that most academic redshirted children are not kept in kindergarten longer to achieve school readiness. They are kept behind with the hope that social disadvantages, cultural and linguistic differences, the lack of kindergarten experience and learning difficulties will be reduced by an additional year in kindergarten.

This is underlined by the fact that primarily disadvantaged, and predominantly Roma children are affected by academic redshirting. Their lack of school readiness is not attributed to the maturational factors, but rather to unchanging and external reasons such as poverty, and cultural and communicational patterns and a lifestyle differing from the majority expectations, none of which are connected to a child's age. While these factors can negatively influence school readiness, they cannot be changed as a result of delaying school entrance. Therefore, delayed entry cannot produce school readiness in the case of children who are held back for reasons other than immaturity.

Although 40% of disadvantaged children enter school late, they profit the least from academic redshirting. Even with the same abilities, older children from a disadvantaged background have poorer perspectives than younger ones. In terms of the societal consequences of academic redshirting, it is important to note that the opposite association is true for elite children, who profit from academic redshirting and perform better in school when compared to younger children of the same abilities.

It seems that flexible school admission age is most suitable for dealing with the differences between boys and girls, and least suitable for helping to alleviate the problems disadvantaged Roma children have with entrance to primary school. This result is not independent from the fact that it is among this group that we find the lowest level of regular kindergarten attendance, as a result of which some children begin their educational career in a pedagogical institution only after the age of 8.

What policy measures need to consider is that, on the one hand, flexible school admission age or delayed entry has serious consequences for the educational gap between children coming from different socio-economic backgrounds, and on the other hand, that flexible school admission age is an inadequate answer to the problem of transition from kindergarten to school. The transition from kindergarten to school constitutes a problem for many children and the present findings suggest the problem is not rooted in a child's age. It is connected to significant differences in the style of teaching in the two types of institution and to a lack of co-operation between the institutions. Therefore, the policy answer has to deal with the transition problem in its entirety, including the institutional aspects, pedagogical methods and the psychological and pedagogical understanding of childhood.

Consequently, our research suggests that considering a flexible admission age policy is an inadequate answer to the transition problem. However, the primary goal is not to abandon the flexible admission age, but to find a better solution to the problems of transition. The policy answer needs to pay special attention to the fact that delayed entry does not solve the problem of transition. It deepens the educational gap between children coming from different socio-economic backgrounds.

In conclusion, the policy of flexible school admission age has to be reconsidered institutionally, pedagogically and socially. Apart from the obvious policy consequences of the results – which urge the rethinking of transition from kindergarten to school – the results are in line with the critique of maturationist theories, and urge developmental psychologists to take into account the social realities in which children grow up.

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Umut Aksungur

Youth and social exclusion in disadvantaged districts in Ankara, Turkey

Social exclusion is a complex and problematic concept with no agreed conceptual definition. This is primarily attributable to the newness of the debate (Atkinson, 2000). Most have concentrated on various aspects of economic exclusion or more precisely the exclusionary effects of economic restructuring (Paugam, 1996). Others have restricted their use of exclusion to analysis of poverty (Room, 1995; 1999). Yet others have explored social exclusion on the basis of other dimensions such as the political (Powell, 1995).

Jordan (1996), although his central focus is also poverty, has sought to develop holistic theoretical approaches based on the concept. Burchardt, Le Grand and Piachau (1999, p. 230) offer the following more restricted definition of social exclusion: an individual is socially excluded if (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society and (b) he or she does not participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society. Other possible definitions are the "inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, alienation and distance from the mainstream society" (Duffy, 1995, p. 21) or "the dynamic process of being shut out from any of the social, economic, political and cultural

systems which determine the social integration of a person in society” (Walker and Walker, 1997: 8).

In this study, social exclusion is accepted as a process of long-term non-participation in the economic, civic, and social spheres, that integrate the society in which an individual lives. Therefore, the definition of social exclusion centred on the notion of “lack of integration” is accepted as a background to the study. In this respect, social exclusion is accepted as an endpoint in an irreversible process of being placed in the margins of society.

In this study, I try to answer some crucial questions with regard to the social exclusion of young people living in Altındağ, focusing on three components – education, labour market, and social capital (locality/neighbourhood disadvantage). I examined key mechanisms linking the experience of multiple disadvantages to various dimensions of social disintegration, which is conceived of within the theoretical framework of social exclusion. In this context, not only are the vulnerability factors such as low education level, early school drop-out, unemployment and marginal labour market positions accepted as structural factors, intensifying the social exclusion of the youth, but also the protective social factors such as family support and social networks, which are assumed to prevent or reduce the risk of being disadvantaged, have been taken into consideration as affecting social exclusion of young people.

→ Methodology

Because I aimed to examine processes and issues that are not only complex and to a certain extent exploratory, but also stress the importance of context, setting and an individual’s understanding of life phenomena, a qualitative methodology was adopted. In order to provide maximum opportunities for young people to have a voice and at the same time provide a structure for useful comparative purpose, I adopted semi-structured interview techniques to generate the data.

A sample of 100 young people aged 18-24 years from disadvantaged districts of Ankara, was selected. Within the sample, there was a 51:49 percentage of young men to young women. Due to limited financial resources and time, I needed to ensure that the young people in my sample were not too widely distributed across a large geographical area. Therefore, in my study I do not have an overall aim to produce results, which can be generalised to apply to wider contexts.

Because this study was dealing with young people’s experience of social exclusion, the crucial question was “Which district in Ankara, is the most suitable place for this research, or which district has the relevant characteristics related to social exclusion?” In order to answer this question, I used the 2000 census data to analyse the most recent statistics regarding the socio-economic patterns of all the districts of Ankara. A comparison of the socio-economic indicators of those eight central districts of Ankara provided a background to determine the most suitable district for the field research. This exercise identified Altındağ as the most suitable place for field research and therefore it was selected as the main district for the research.

The data were gathered through interviews carried out from July to November 2006, using a semi-structured interview technique, based on open ended-questions divided into a number of broad areas of enquiry including: experience of schooling; training and further education; opportunities and experiences of employment and unemployment; the relationship with family; the nature of social capital; social

activities; hopes, fears and future aspirations. I talked to the young men in parks, Internet cafes, and coffee houses, because these were the places in which they spent much of their time. All interviews were taped and transcribed, and analysis was based on thematic analysis. The female interviewer talked to young women, mostly in their houses, because they frequently spend their time at home.

Educational dimension

It is not wrong to argue that education is one of the most significant and crucial stages in an individual's life trajectory, with long-lasting effects. Furthermore, education has long been recognised as a key social institution that reinforces social inequalities as well as providing opportunities for social mobility.

In this study, it is observed that structural analysis is crucial for understanding the process of exclusion from education of young people living in disadvantaged areas. There is an emphasis on structural factors among the accounts of young people in explaining their educational failures. The most hostile comments were directed towards the quality of teaching in schools in disadvantaged areas. Those who want to continue their educational career by going to university, refer to the low quality of education that they experienced in public schools located in these disadvantaged areas. They claimed that if they could have continued their education in a different part of city, they would have been more successful.

Another structural factor is the relationship between education and the entry into, or exit from, the labour market. A comprehensive review of the literature on social exclusion and education has showed that the dominant mode of analysis of education and social exclusion has focused on the concept of human capital. In this respect, field research has shown that the interviewees' accounts of education focused on its relationship with human capital and its role in relation to labour market participation. Young males in particular mention the close link between their low-level education and their marginal positions in the labour market.

Another important theme in this study and one which was most common among both male and female interviewees, is linked with the school environment. Social environmental factors, as well as structural ones, play crucial roles in understanding exclusionary processes of young people living in Altındağ. In their view, being in a low-achieving school, especially in a school environment where other students place no value on school and education, resulted in their receiving a poor quality education. There is another way in which being a student in a neighbourhood where education has no meaning and no positive influence is significant. Not only does being in a school environment with other pupils who attribute no value to school and education have a negative effect on their educational careers, but young people also refer to the negative effects of the neighbourhood, in terms of lack of encouragement.

It can also be exclusionary if the process of education fails to promote equal participation and access. In that context, exclusion from education is much more severe for young females. The study shows low educational attainment to be very common among the young females and the educational dimension of social exclusion is much more emphasised by young females as compared with young males. It was observed that gender stereotypes and parental attitudes towards, and expectancies of, education are major obstacles to educational attainment for young females. Young women who continue their educational career after compulsory education, refer to the effects of structural factors, such as the low quality of education, on their

life chances. On the other hand, young females who have a low level of education or are uneducated, mostly mention negative parental attitudes towards education or family poverty as obstacles to their educational careers.

Labour market dimension

It can be said that the prime determinant of social exclusion is generally held to be a person's labour market integration or disintegration. This supports the thesis that work is one of the main mechanisms for overall social integration.

In this study, I identify general trends or trajectories among young people living in Altındağ. A final point for analysis is the distinction between three types of school-to-work trajectories that differ in status, qualification level and degree of precariousness:

- unskilled trajectories (labour market entry directly after compulsory schooling or after dropping out);
- semi-skilled trajectories (post-compulsory school qualifications that have no career value as they are not related to labour market demands);
- skilled trajectories (qualification from post-compulsory education – especially in technical high school – or vocational training routes, corresponding to relevant skilled occupational sectors in the labour market).

In terms of overall trend, it is probably true that unskilled and semi-skilled trajectories are more common than skilled trajectories in the sample. Misleading trajectories are most likely to be unskilled trajectories although semi-skilled trajectories have the potential of a high risk of unemployment and social exclusion as well. However, it is also important to emphasise those early school leavers in the sample who follow an informal vocational training route as an apprentice and do not end up in well-paid, high status and protected occupational positions.

A considerable number of jobs, such as low-skilled or unskilled ones, do not have integrative characteristics of employment for young people living in Altındağ. A considerable number of the jobs the young people in the sample are doing do not provide such opportunities. Indeed, they often do not provide the regular income or job security that would support full involvement in the life of society. The young people occupying such jobs claimed that they have a very restricted form of participation and limited opportunities to escape this position. In this context, it might be argued that low-skilled employment not only provides limited life opportunities but it enhances the risk of labour market marginalisation for the young people taking part in the study.

The study showed that job insecurity is another crucial structural factor that restricts opportunities for social participation. Again, it is particularly those in less skilled occupational positions who suffer from job insecurity the most. The findings make it clear that poor quality jobs are not only harmful to people's capacity for self-development through work, but also for the quality of their non-work activities. Thus it is clear that poor quality work does not provide social integration but rather a restricted form of social participation for young people living in Altındağ.

Lack of resources, combined with the stigmatic effect of unemployment, might lead to a fracturing of people's social ties, especially those with other parts of the city, and to growing social isolation. Lack of money is likely to make it difficult for young people to maintain previous patterns of sociability with friends in the

community, given the importance of exchange in the maintenance of social relationships in this study.

This study shows that disintegration in the labour market is much more significant for young females, whereas for young males, a marginalised position in the labour market is more crucial. It is clear that participating in the labour market is one of the major problems for both young men and young women, and one which has various implications for their current circumstances, such as lack of social activity and family dependence on their future chances – including their opportunities to start their own family.

One of the main structural reasons for exclusion from the labour market is the lack of or poor job qualifications. The lack of access to or marginal participation in the labour market implies a financial limitation, which means that young people have to be dependent on the family, which obstructs and/or delays the transition from youth to adulthood. Furthermore, young people are, in most cases, completely excluded from any type of state support, because of their lack of labour market participation. This means that young people's families have to take on the responsibility to support their children economically.

There is a close link between job quality and social exclusion. There is a growing awareness that, even within the integrated position of employment, processes of social exclusion might be operating. Those employed in poor quality jobs are also at a much higher risk of becoming unemployed or dropping out of the labour force. Despite its temporary integrative capacity, temporary work does not provide a route into more stable employment. The concept of irregular employment involves a combination of different factors: instability, lack of protection, insecurity and social and economic vulnerability. In this respect, it is very apparent from this study that irregularity of employment is a much more common reality for young males living in Altındağ.

Social capital dimension

By focusing on a sense of belonging, in terms of local identity, young people's positive source of identity derived from a sense of belonging in terms of relationships with their family and friends, rather than from a strong sense of place. Young people's experiences of their neighbourhoods differed slightly, according to gender and age. Young women did not feel safe in their neighbourhood and had a strong sense of mistrust towards their neighbourhood as a consequence of a high crime rate, drug dealing and an insecure environment. Also, for young men in particular, there was a strong sense of mistrust towards adults around them and they were well aware that they were perceived negatively by people from the town centre, because of where they lived. This is mostly pertinent to younger males. Indeed, it could probably be argued that they develop their own communities or habitus in the face of a strong sense of isolation from their neighbourhood and other parts of city.

Young people's experiences of public spaces were particularly unsatisfactory. They were able to spend very limited time in the town centre. Practical issues such as the cost of transport and facilities caused difficulties for young people and in many ways they were effectively excluded from participation in the wider social life of the city. Discrimination and stereotypes such as that of a "poor, drug using, and criminal squatter boy" are other factors which make them feel excluded from the rest of society.

The issue of young people's participation was problematic in social capital terms. All young people described having limited efficacy and participation in decision-making in their family and community. They felt well supported by networks of friends and family, but the balance seemed to go the other way when their sense of self-efficacy and participation in their family and community was explored. It also seems viable to suggest that disengaged young people are likely to become politically disengaged. Civic engagement for the young people in this study barely existed and they were well aware of their limited efficacy, even where structures were supposed to enable participation (such as general or local elections). The centrality of friendship to the everyday lives of the research participants was very clear. Friends were central to many activities outside work and were also a source of emotional support.

It might be concluded from this study that bonding social capital derived from friendships does not necessarily contribute to social cohesion. On the contrary, the way that young people construct their relationships based on a lack of trust appears to have a negative effect upon social cohesion. At the individual level, young people need both forms of social capital: bonding social capital for their social support and emotional well-being in the here and now; and bridging for the future to enable them to escape from disadvantage. Linking social capital to influential others and enabling access to power structures were also processes that were clearly lacking for the young people in the study.

Thus, while the socially excluded may be relatively deprived in terms of social interaction, it is the isolation of people from those social networks that have access to economic resources and jobs which prevents them from actively participating in the mainstream economy. That is, the main problem stemming from low levels of social capital is not necessarily the lack of any network (vertical networks), but rather the lack of horizontal networks. Pessimism about the future is also another feeling commonly shared by young people in this study. Most of the young people express pessimism about their future.

→ Conclusions

One of the major conclusions of this study is that there is not one single and uniform experience of social exclusion among young people taking part in the sample. This differentiation in the experiences of young people in the sample should be explained by a wider view of social exclusion. Although their present experiences are critically important in understanding the structural, local and individual factors contributing to social exclusion and their longer-term implications, recording young people's experiences before and after the moment of the interview is necessary, in order to understand the whole picture of social exclusion which is defined as a process. The concept of social exclusion is challenged because of its static dimension, its fixedness and its inability to show the variability of the situation to which it refers. If I decide whether young people are socially excluded or not on the basis of data generated by recording their experiences at the moment of the research, this study will be static and unable to show the variability of the situation. Furthermore, by following the social exclusion literature, I defined social exclusion as the endpoint of a process for individuals placed in situations of multiple and cumulative disadvantage which hinder full participation and integration in a society. However, I would like to propose another typology for describing the situation of young people in the context of social exclusion. Here I divide young people into three categories: high risk of social exclusion, increased risk of social exclusion and low risk of social exclusion.

The high risk of social exclusion arises from multiple disadvantaged positions in three areas: education, labour market, and social capital. Young people in this category experience long-term unemployment, economic hardship and social isolation. Due to financial and other problems in their families, these young people are at a disadvantage from childhood. They are not sufficiently supported by their families, by their social environments or by governmental institutions, and they tend towards problematic behaviour such as drug dependency and deviance. The main factors which increase the risk of social exclusion are low educational attainment, low level qualifications and especially the absence of family support. These young people also exhibit high passivity towards labour market involvement.

A moderate risk of social exclusion is much more closely linked with marginal positions in the labour market (insecurity, low-paid employment, long working hours, no social security insurance). With regard to qualifications, a lack of educational resources is a factor for young people in this category. The risk of social exclusion for this group is mainly counteracted by a high degree of family support. Their social capital is based on dense networks resulting in higher social support at the micro level, however they lack dispersed networks which are very useful for accessing a better position in the society. A strong link to their immediate social surroundings (friends and family) can in fact increase the risk of social exclusion. Furthermore, a generally low level of social activity is common which must be regarded as a vulnerability factor. The strong link to the family described in the study is not necessarily always positive. Although the existence of dense social networks reduces social exclusion, the resulting economic dependence of the young people on the family can add to their exclusion. The young people in this group are not as much affected by problems as those at high risk of social exclusion but, nevertheless, their situation is still vulnerable.

The third category is a low risk of social exclusion; young people in this group are at most affected by only one dimension of social exclusion. Compared with the other groups, youth at low risk of social exclusion have higher qualifications, such as graduation from technical high school, are in a relatively secure financial situation and are well supported by their family and social environment.

The second most important conclusion of this study is that a context of social exclusion does not generate just one response for young people living in Altındağ. For instance, while young females emphasise the educational dimension for explaining their disadvantaged situation, young males tend to stress labour market disintegration or marginal positions. There is also another differentiation between young males. While those who completed their military service emphasised the educational and labour market factors as leading to social exclusion, for younger males, consumption, poverty and cultural discrimination are much more significant. Therefore, age and gender play an important role in understanding the entire picture of the social exclusion discussion in the context of Altındağ.

The third major conclusion confirms the multidimensional character of social exclusion. It can be argued that lack of resources has enormous importance for the whole range of life chances for young people living in Altındağ. Nevertheless, financial indicators, such as low income, are insufficient to see the whole picture: multidimensional indicators are needed, directly illustrating different aspects of disadvantage. Moreover, it is important to separate different elements of hardship and to identify their inter-relationships. Therefore, it can be argued that the social exclusion of young people in this study is multidimensional and that the factors are inter-related. Young people's experiences of social exclusion are cumulative

and involve the compound effects of interconnected factors. In other words, the multiplicity of the dimension of exclusion experienced by them is closely related to its cumulative nature. So, we can talk of social exclusion for young people living in Altındağ because several forms of multiple and cumulative disadvantage in different dimensions act as part of a chain reaction.

Young people's experiences of social exclusion can also be defined as multi-temporal. This refers to the dynamic nature of the exclusionary processes and the dynamic change in the circumstances of the young people's lives. Although the ages of participants in the study are very close to each other, it is apparent that there are different forms and levels of social exclusion among young people.

Another important conclusion from the study is that the social exclusion experiences of young people in Altındağ could be described as an exclusionary process, a "vicious circle" or a "spiral of disadvantage". In other words, not only do the various causes of exclusion compound one another, but social exclusion itself is a causative factor in the sense that being excluded brings about more types of exclusion. Moreover, the disadvantages and social exclusion of young people living in Altındağ are dynamic and many processes are involved. Young people who have low or moderate risk of social exclusion, or who escape from it, still remain on its margins and fall into it once more. Hence, their vulnerability in terms of being excluded continues all the time, even if they seem to overcome it. Therefore, young people's experiences of social exclusion can be defined as cumulative, multidimensional, cyclic and embedded into a web of disadvantages.

Social exclusion is commonly conceived of in terms of social relationships. In this study, the "process" of social exclusion can be seen as the breakdown of the social ties and social and symbolic bonds of young people. Their experiences of social exclusion can be defined in terms of social isolation. It is observed that young people faced with social isolation from other parts of the city also face stigmatisation as being potential criminals and drug users. This has important exclusionary effects in this social isolation process. According to the social exclusion discourse, the value of discussing social exclusion in terms of social relationships is obtained when it is defined on the basis of the common norms and values of the community. That is, social exclusion is said to occur where the community does not work or it just does not exist, or where the fabric of community is falling apart. Similarly, this study also shows that there is another form of social isolation experienced in the context of the community for young people living in Altındağ. This is stigmatisation in terms of being viewed as a potential criminal and/or a drug user, as experienced by the young people being interviewed. Although only some of them said that they may turn to drugs or alcohol when they are really desperate psychologically and cannot find any way out, nevertheless the whole group of young people living in Altındağ are labelled as deviants, drug users or dangerous people by the larger community. However, most of these young people declare that they are very careful not to get involved in any criminal activity and try to stay far from the people who use or sell drugs. They have a strong sense of staying away from criminality, but they still cannot escape from being seen as potential criminals.

Finally, it is the social capital, through greater participation in the community, that is seen as an antidote to social exclusion. In this study, I argue that young people's experiences of social exclusion can be defined as a lack of social capital. On the other hand, we see that young people in this study have strong links with their families and friends. However, this form of social capital only consists of horizontal relations within the community – with people who are more or less in the same

disadvantaged position as the young people themselves. Therefore, the lack of vertical social capital, which can be proposed as a possible antidote to the social exclusion of the youth, is another factor explaining their experiences of social exclusion. For this reason, family is proposed as a form of survival strategy by young people. As discussed earlier, social exclusion must be defined and dealt with in a way which recognises the specificity of the context. At this point, it would not be wrong to argue that this dependency causes another form of social exclusion, which constitutes the specificity of Altındağ and other disadvantaged area contexts. Being subject to the family support mechanisms makes young people more vulnerable, because the conditions of the family might change or the young person might fall out with his family, thereby losing his only support. So being dependent on the family support may prove to be helpful to avoid being subjected to absolute poverty, but it also leads to a risk of vulnerability. Thus it is possible to argue that, as discussed in the social exclusion literature, family and community support is important for not being excluded economically and socially, but it can also create a dimension of exclusion when such support systems are the only support mechanisms of the individual, and hence of the disadvantaged young person.

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“What is it like to be young and hard of hearing in Europe?”

Survey of hard of hearing young people across Europe

Karina Chupina

*Blindness cuts us off from things;
deafness cuts us off from people.*

Helen Keller

Social inclusion and equal opportunities are increasingly becoming buzzwords to which everyone subscribes. Behind the rhetoric lies a struggle for human rights, which is still to be won. Social inclusion of people with disabilities is based on a social model conviction that the solution to disability problems lies in restructuring society.⁴¹ The social model of disability replaces a traditional view of disability as a medical issue and defines disability as a form of social oppression. The inclusion of people with disabilities and equal opportunities for them can therefore be achieved through moving away “from a focus on individual impairments ... and towards removing disabling barriers, revising social norms, policies, cultures and promoting a supportive and accessible environment”.⁴² It places an emphasis on ability and the provision of active support measures.

41. K. Chupina, (2008) *Disablism and Disability*. Human Rights Education Manual COMPASS Supplement.

42. The Madrid Declaration, www.disabilityworld.org/09-10-02/news/madrid.shtml.

This paper is an attempt to shed light on the situation of hard of hearing (HoH) young people in different countries of Europe, through analysis of the results of the first ever international survey of HoH youth on identity, access to information, education, employment, communication, governmental support and knowledge of the national protective legal framework, international human rights institutions and disability legislation. Another of the objectives of the survey was to collect recommendations on how regional organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission could contribute to creating equal opportunities for HoH people.

No survey of, or research on, HoH young people and their needs, access to social benefits and rights has ever been conducted on an international level in Europe. There is the hope that this survey will help us find ways of conceptualising what it means to be young and HoH in today's Europe.

The equal opportunities model, with its particular emphasis on non-discrimination, will be the key departure point for analysing the situation of people with hearing disability. Granting equal access to HoH people means identifying and acknowledging their specific needs in such fields as rehabilitation, education and employment. Disability equality is still a long way off; even if discrimination against minorities is diminished, people with disabilities will still have to cope with the physical and social impacts of impairment in their daily lives.

The Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-15 and the recently adopted UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities explicitly call for research on the human rights of people with disabilities. There is the hope that such research will contribute to a better understanding of the needs of people with disabilities, described by the UN as "the world's largest minority".

There is evidently a necessity for a more in-depth survey on HoH people, the results of which may also serve as an indicator of, or a tool for enhancing, equal opportunities for people with disabilities at large. The pilot survey described in the paper is the basis for further research that is to be conducted in 2008.

→ Prerequisites for the survey on HoH young people

The factors that served as an impetus to conducting the survey were:

- lack of research about HoH people and their needs;
- societal stereotypes and misconceptions about HoH;
- focus of existing research largely on medical/psychological aspects only;
- need to explore hearing loss in the context of social inclusion and disability as a human rights issue;
- the need to formulate policy recommendations on social inclusion of HoH youth that would contribute to development of social rights policies underpinning non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

→ Introduction into terms and concepts: Deaf, deaf and HoH

People with hearing loss make many self-defining choices of communication method, language, cultural, social, and political allegiance.

"Hard of hearing" is not a universally accepted term for identifying people with hearing loss. More often, the term "deaf" or "Deaf" is used in research and everyday

realities (not to mention the lack of existing research on “hard of hearing”). The latter “Deaf” with a capital “D” is used to indicate the political self-definition of deaf persons who have a strong Deaf-defined identity implying allegiance to the Deaf community, formation of political self-identity, conceptualisation and sense of Deaf culture; the use of sign language as a primary means of communication and being part of linguistic minority; recognition of Deafness as a cultural identity.

There are two meanings and interpretations in relation to the definition of D/deaf and D/deafness. In some ways these can be said to mirror the medical and social models of disability; however, this should not be taken as a statement that deafness or hearing loss is perceived as a disability. Some D/deaf and HoH people identify themselves as disabled; others reject equating hearing loss with a disability. This can be explained by the social model understanding that invisible impairments may not generate disability, but may have impacts on functioning and implications for personal identity.⁴³

The term “deaf” is used to imply a definition on the basis of medical descriptions of deafness and manifests an audiological experience. In these ways, the term “deaf” is closer to the term “hard of hearing”. From a medical perspective, HoH are those who have a mild (up to 40dB), moderate (up to 55dB) or severe hearing loss (up to 90dB). The social definition is much more expansive. HoH are, first of all, the people who identify themselves as such. They can be medically deaf (in need of amplification of 90dB and more), but with a hearing aid or cochlear implant, early rehabilitation, integrated upbringing and education they have the functionality to perceive and understand speech and environmental sounds to varying degrees – and thus identify themselves as personally and socially HoH. Usually, HoH people rely on residual hearing for understanding: they lip read, gesture, observe body language of a speaker and speak. One recurring misconception is that HoH people always use sign language. In fact, most of them use sign language only as a support to enhance understanding if necessary and use it less frequently if at all (exceptions to this can be found in countries with an emphasis on bilingual education, employing both sign and oral language, for example, Sweden). HoH people also rely on the use of such technical assistive listening devices as hearing aids, induction loop systems, FM systems, subtitling on TV, phone volume amplifiers and others.

The boundaries between “Deaf” and “deaf” as well as “deaf” and “HoH” can be fluid. HoH people position themselves between the deaf community and the hearing community and have a very complex identity. Overlapping identities with people who have hearing loss are also possible. In different cultural spaces and contexts, deaf and HoH may choose different forms of expressing their identity: at a local organisation HoH youth may use sign language in communication with their deaf or HoH peers, while in a mainstream workplace or at school they may use exclusively oral communication within the hearing context. In this way, many HoH people approximate their performance to that of a hearing person. Besides, many HoH people with a mild hearing loss may choose to hide it from employers, co-workers and even spouses (such a trend has been indicated in the interviews with HoH people from eastern European and Asian countries).

HoH people are a unique, though heterogeneous group, with different needs from those manifested by those who are socially or culturally Deaf (Ross, 1996). The condition of the HoH has been termed “an invisible condition” (Stone, 1993),

43. T. Shakespeare, N. Watson, *The social model of disability: an outdated ideology?*, *Research in Social Science and Disability*, Volume 2, pp. 2-98, 2002.

mainly because its explicit and implicit effects can be misunderstood, even by the HoH persons themselves. What also stands in the way of fully understanding the complexity of this condition is that total deafness is much easier to comprehend than partial or developing hearing loss. HoH people are less visible than D/deaf people, partly due to use of oral communication and partly due to difficulties with self-identification (and as a consequence, a lesser tendency to form established groups of their own). Within disability circles, they constitute a “minority within a minority”. Access to information and communication is one of the major problems facing HoH people in everyday life. Consequently, their active participation is impeded.

That said, many potentially integrated HoH children and young people function as socially deaf because of lack of access to regular education, or a family decision to send HoH children to study at specialised schools for the deaf. In future, these children and young people may choose to use sign language only, identify themselves as D/deaf and join Deaf organisations.

→ International survey

Within the International Federation of Hard Of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP) Multimedia project “What is it like to be young and HoH in Europe?”, IFHOHYP made an unprecedented attempt to investigate the actual situation of HoH young people aged between 18 and 35 across Europe. This age range was chosen as a period of transition for young people from school to employment who are analysing themselves in relation to their identity and place in society. The survey was conducted through addressing questions to small groups of HoH young people about identity, access to information, education, employment, communication, governmental support and knowledge of national protective legal frameworks, international human rights institutions and disability legislation.

Survey methodology

Quantitative data were gathered with a questionnaire covering 47 questions. A total of 130 questionnaires were returned from Belarus, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK: 127 questionnaires from 9 countries were analysed. The response rate was 70%.

It should be noted that the results of this first-ever survey attempt have mainly an indicative character, due to the unfortunately relatively small amount of returned questionnaires (in comparison with the size of the actual HoH youth population in target countries), and are the source of preliminary information about the actual situation of HoH youth in Europe. The summary of the results, therefore, does not always present a fully comprehensive account of the situation in each country.

Target audience

The respondents had to meet the following criteria:

- to identify themselves as HoH;
- to be aged 18 to 35 (period of transition from school to employment);
- to have at least a college education (which implies an active role in education) and mainstream school education (higher probability of social inclusion);
- 80% have to be/were employed – full-time or part-time (being active in the workforce);

- 50% have to be active in youth organisations or organisations for HoH and deaf (youth) – this group had a higher level of sensitivity to social changes and increased knowledge of the legal and social conditions of the HoH.

In addition, the following partition was respected:

- a gender partition male:female – 50:50,
- a minimum of 20 questionnaires per country.

Such a profile for the sample was chosen with the aim to: a) interview a small group of HoH people who at different times in their lives experienced social exclusion due to hearing loss and are knowledgeable about issues of disability, hearing loss, education, employment and social inclusion for HoH; b) serve as a pilot group for future international surveys.

Since most HoH young people lack access to learning foreign languages, the original questionnaire was translated from English into native languages by national co-ordinators of the project, and then the completed questionnaires were translated back into English for processing of the data.

The questionnaire was composed in Excel format in two forms:

- 1) questionnaire for national co-ordinators – leaders of local or national youth HoH organisations who are more knowledgeable about the political, social and economic realities for HoH in their countries. The questionnaire for co-ordinators contained extensive questions with regard to social policies and the legal framework of disability;
- 2) questionnaire for HoH individuals aged 18-35 years old, usually members of a local or national HoH youth organisation, with a minimum 20 respondents per country (a higher number was at times not achievable, due to lack of youth HoH groups in some countries). These questionnaires contained questions about personal experiences of access to education, employment and the obstacles that had to be overcome.

The type of questionnaire chosen was structured, containing a set of straightforward sequential questions with multiple choice and open answer options.

The questionnaire focused on three key socio-spatial institutions: the family and social environment, addressing the correlation between the primary circle of individual and social inclusion; education (school/college/university) as a bridge or a barrier to inclusion; workplaces (employment and self-employment), thus addressing specific needs for inclusion of HoH young people into the job market. It also addressed participation in community spaces such as organisations.

→ **Brief summary of the findings**

Education

Almost half of the respondents indicate that they received mainstream education on all levels (primary and secondary): 48% received a mainstream university degree and 35% received a mainstream college degree; 11% attended a college for the deaf and 4% have a diploma from a university for the deaf.

Financial support from the government

Forty-seven per cent of the respondents receive financial support from the government. The percentage is close to 100% in Bulgaria and Russia, while 81% of Spanish, 86% of Dutch, 94% of Serbian and 79% of Swedish respondents indicate that they do not receive any governmental financial support.

Family and societal attitudes

Seventy-five per cent of respondents feel that their family supports them and only 27% feel that they are protected more than is necessary. Most respondents indicate that they have good communication with hearing peers (71%), with deaf or HoH peers (77%) and with co-workers (69%). Only 65% of respondents rate their communication with service providers as good.

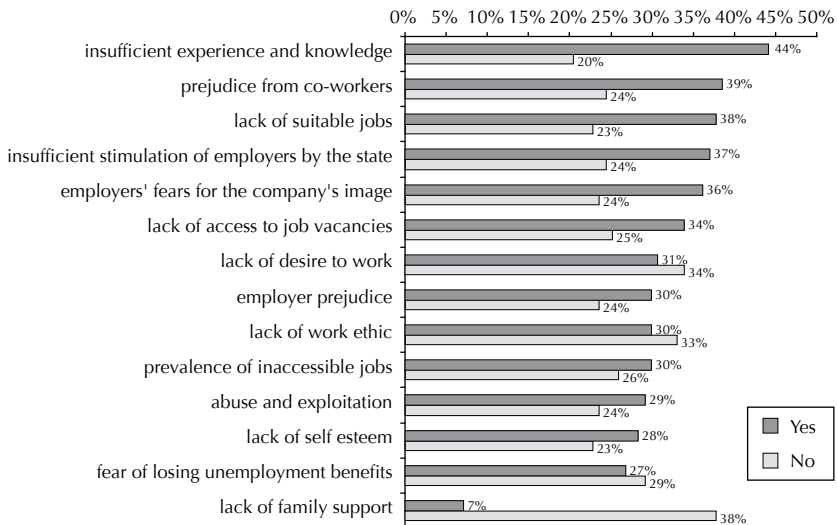
Ninety-five per cent of the respondents declare that they experience negative feelings when left out of their social circle due to their disability. 50% have come into contact with people who have prejudice against people with a hearing disability; 47% of the respondents believe that today's society still treats people with hearing disabilities negatively, but 54% indicate that societal attitudes are improving.

Only 22% think that the media pay enough attention to people with hearing disabilities and 28% believe that the HoH and deaf are shown in a positive light by the press and entertainment industries.

Fifty per cent of the respondents have encountered different treatment by peers and 52% by others, which they believe to be due to their hearing disabilities.

The job market

Seventy-eight per cent indicate that those HoH people who have more qualifications than hearing competitors will be more successful on the job market; 51% believe that people with hearing disabilities should be given priority on the job market and 52% support the idea that all companies should hire a set number of HoH or deaf people. Sixty per cent of the respondents prefer that employed people with hearing disabilities still receive financial support from the government. When asked what affects the participation of HoH people in the job market, the respondents indicate lack of knowledge and experience (44%), prejudice from co-workers (38%), lack of jobs that can be done by people with hearing disabilities (38%), lack of incentives for employers to hire HoH people (37%), prejudice from employers (36%) as well as the unwillingness of the HoH to work (31%).

Table 7. Employment/underemployment of hard of hearing people is affected by...

Equal rights protection

Respondents indicate that the government (indicated by 65% of respondents), employers (43%), local authorities (38%) and assemblies/parliaments are most responsible for safeguarding the equal treatment of people with hearing disabilities. The media (24%), the social service sector (24%) as well as the HoH and deaf people themselves (20%) are also pointed to as a source of protection of equal rights. Ninety per cent of Bulgarian, 100% of Dutch, 100% of German,⁴⁴ 89% of Russian, and 63% of Swedish respondents answer that they need more legal protection, compared to only 11% of Serbian respondents, 6% of Spanish ones and none in the UK.

Bulgarian respondents unanimously express serious dissatisfaction with the legislation supposed to assist them in education and employment. One respondent comments that “the laws exist only on paper, they are not implemented at all”. A chief complaint for German respondents is the affordability of good hearing aids. The subsidy the government allows for hearing aids is perceived to be small. Respondents indicate that “obviously the government and health insurance have absolutely no idea what needs HoH people have” and that the planning of the government is “short term”. Most Spanish respondents believe that their integration laws are good, but they are not budgeted well. One respondent explains that “lots of laws are not well implemented because of lack of money, resources, good professionals and lack of interest by the politicians, but in recent years the situation is improving a lot”. Britons express a liking for their Disability Discrimination Act but assert that it is not yet very powerful because “some work places are not aware of the DDA act, making it useless”. Dutch respondents express happiness with the legislation that guarantees education and employment to people with

44. In the analysis, Germany and Switzerland were analysed as one country, due to similarity of social and legal conditions; this reduces the probability of discrepancies in the analysis.

disabilities but feel that society needs to be more aware of those laws. “You must find these laws by yourself if such things come into play” says one respondent. Russian respondents indicate that under their education law people with disabilities can sometimes bypass competition when entering universities, but one admitted that they do not benefit from any special treatment. One respondent feels that “the professions we have aren’t required in today’s life”. Most of the respondents explain that whatever laws there are, they are not implemented at all. Swedish respondents express approval of the laws against discrimination and for protection of people with disabilities. A respondent also indicates that a bigger problem is “discrimination in everyday life and ignorance about disabilities”. Italian respondents are dissatisfied with their legislation with regard to disability. They assert that due to “no money, no good will” the proper legislation is not developed and implemented well.

Accessibility

All respondents indicate that people with disabilities in their country can be eligible to receive financial support from the government in the form of a pension, living allowance or social package, as well as a subsidy for or full coverage of hearing aids and sometimes cochlear implants. In Serbia, Russia, Bulgaria and Italy, people with hearing disabilities also receive discounts for university studies, car purchase, transportation, television, Internet, telephone and even movie and museum entrance (Russia). A Bulgarian and Serbian HoH person can have an interpreter for free in court sessions only. Bulgarians receive 25 euros per year to be used for interpreter services. Tax exemptions and reductions are available to the deaf and HoH in Spain, Germany, Serbia and Bulgaria. In Spain and the UK students in universities can receive technical aids and other forms of assistance. In the UK, psychological help is available to people with hearing disability free of charge.

Information and knowledge of the legislation framework

Twenty-two per cent of respondents know about the activities of the United Nations with regard to the protection and promotion of rights for people with disabilities; 24% know about similar activities and legislation by the Council of Europe and 19% are familiar with the actions of the European Union to promote equal rights for people with disabilities.

Only 5% of the respondents rate their knowledge of local anti-discrimination laws as “good”. Also low is knowledge of employment and education laws – 8% and 11% respectively. Knowledge of international legislation is also low: 2% of respondents say they know international anti-discrimination law well, 6% know international employment laws and 7% know international education laws.

Recommendations

What kind of recommendation/directive would you like the Council of Europe or the EU bodies to produce for the government of your country in order to improve access of the hard of hearing to education and employment?

“Strongly recommend the EU to have a Disability Ombudsman.”

“Improved access to information on our rights as well as programmes that teach tolerance.”

“To make an intercultural exchange programme between universities to share educational practices towards HoH students and improve education for HoH (sort of ERASMUS project for the deaf/HOH).”

“Campaign on disability and equal opportunities.”

“The media should help to defend, make public our rights and equate them in European countries, because there are very different situations across Europe.”

“To secure a legislative basis for more funding for assistive listening devices that should be at an accessible price.”

“In some countries there are good laws, maybe it would be good to collect the best laws and make them international EU laws.”

“I want them to consider all the needs that HoH people have in education and employment; more economic support, discounts on telephone/mobile telephone use, 100% subtitles on TV and more help to parents with HOH/deaf children.”

“To organise more international events involving HoH people so that there is an active social sphere where people with hearing loss can develop on a cultural, social, economic, sports, creative and psychological level (such as building higher self-esteem and improving interpersonal skills), and learn how deaf and HoH people in other countries live and overcome barriers.”

“Foreign language programmes adapted for HoH youth are needed!”

→ Conclusions

The rejection of a disabled identity and, at times, a lack of knowledge of legislation concerning disability may mean that for many HoH people there is an ambivalence about a relationship with the disability movement. Only a few HoH young people participate in broad-spectrum disability organisations (also due to lack of awareness about HoH, even within the disability movements), being more involved with the organisations of and for HoH that function largely as support or self-help groups. Results of the survey also imply that formal politics is perceived by HoH youth as distant and irrelevant, and often failing to connect with young people who have a disability, even when it explicitly concerns people with disabilities.

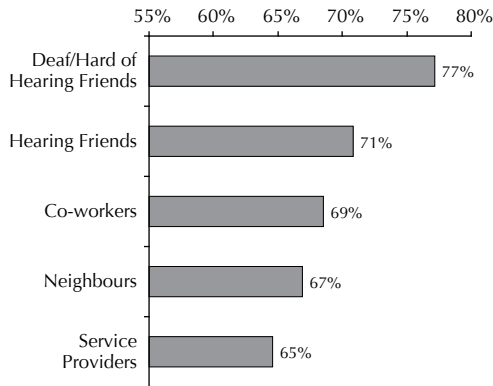
A social and medical construction of young HoH people as passive recipients of benefits and services and their experiences of family dependency could easily lead them into a life of inactivity. However, for quite a few respondents this is not the case. As one survey participant answered:

At first, society interpreted people with disabilities as passive users of subsistence allowances and specialised homes, then it turned out that people with disabilities should learn something as well, instead of just idly sitting about, which led to people with disabilities getting education. However, a problem emerged because people with disabilities are still not involved in the life of social communities ... we have reached a culturological belief ‘people with disabilities have to live with us’, which means involvement of people with disabilities in all spheres of social life, i.e., looking after all of their rights, including the right to work.

Increasing confidence in the immediate environment of hard of hearing people is also evident in the following table:

Table 8. My family...

| My family... | YES | |
|---|-----|--------|
| ... supports me in most of my decisions | 95 | 74.80% |
| ... supports me in my decisions concerning education | 89 | 70.08% |
| ... supports me in my decisions concerning employment | 85 | 66.93% |
| ... protects me more than needed | 34 | 26.77% |

Table 9. I can have good communication with...

It is evident that communication is easier in an environment where people have similar difficulties (hard of hearing friends) than with hearing friends or in the context of workspace and service provision. The lowest level of communication is with the wider social environment, for example, service providers who are not in everyday contact with HoH people.

Connecting with other HoH people is important for creating a positive self-identity, increasing self-esteem, finding role models, and challenging stereotypical images of the HoH or deaf in society (as one participant noticed, “society thinks that HoH equals being dumb”). This also implies that many HoH are involved in HoH spaces that, for them, disrupt hearing hegemony and help them feel at ease.

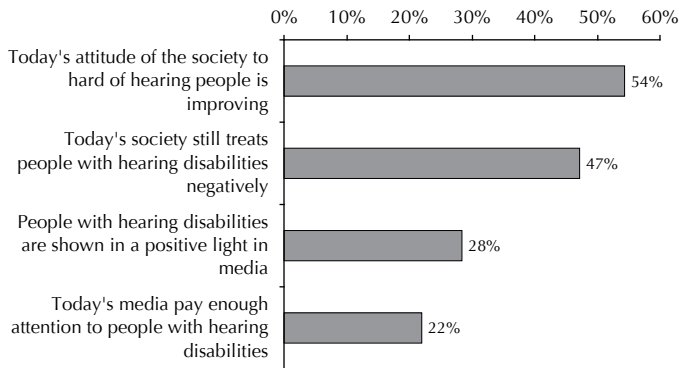
HoH young people who are educated in regular schools, may feel their “difference” very sharply. Often, they need the comfort of a group, young people with similar problems with whom they can identify, who can validate them as people of merit in spite of their hearing loss (Ross, 1996). IFHOHYP is the organisation that tries to meet such needs – not to mention its educational work and lobbying of disability rights activity in Europe. National and local organisations for HoH people (and especially youth) are lacking. Often a HoH young person joins the youth group of an adult HoH organisation or the youth sector of a Deaf organisation. At times, having not satisfied his/her personal, cultural and social needs with a D/deaf organisation or having been simply rejected due to a different self-identification, he/she compensates for lack of participation in HoH context at a local level by joining IFHOHYP international activities.

Against this background, access to participation in regular youth organisations is impeded due to a lack of accessibility, general awareness, and lack of confidence, motivation or competences of HoH youth themselves. Disability organisations or organisations of/for HoH would often be the first space where a HoH person acquires necessary competences for organisational work; after this, a HoH person would be more ready to participate in a mainstream club or an organisation.

One of the main problems participants cited is visibility. To be able to claim their rights, HoH people need to achieve a certain level of visibility. As an HoH respondent said, “we are a part of a population in which most of us are isolated, invisible in

society". As has been stated, the public at large is not informed about the specific needs of people with disabilities generally, or HoH people in particular, which leads to great number of prejudices towards the abilities and potential of HoH young people. This has been partly contributed to by the lack of media coverage on the needs and rights of HoH people. Hearing aids or cochlear implants are very rarely the subject of the news. On the other hand, an invisible impairment does not always trigger a social response, contrary to a visible one – and this can also be considered a reason for the reduced political activity of HoH compared to other disability groups.

Table 10. I think that...



As a consequence, the low level of public awareness produces insufficient implementation of existing laws, despite their good quality. An example is a viewpoint that installing assistive devices and recruiting interpreters is not of much importance since "everyone can hear" and people with hearing disabilities exist in their own small group and rarely participate in the mainstream. Attitudinal barriers lead to structural barriers. As a result of the lack of knowledge in society about the rights and needs of HoH people, HoH individuals often face direct or indirect discrimination.

Not only is the public not well informed about the needs of the HoH, but HoH people themselves experience difficulties in accessing information or legislation concerning their lives that could enhance quality of their participation in mainstream society. The flow of information between HoH people and HoH groups at large is sometimes low. As one respondent says: "I don't know if in Europe there is a university for the deaf or HoH like Gallaudet University in the United States. Maybe something like that exists, but noone has told me about it."

The establishment of education and employment programmes for HoH people which includes, besides institutions, the business sector, is mentioned as crucial in all countries, where 64% of the HoH young people interviewed believed that they can contribute to development of their community:

"...For a person in the active age (16-64 years) the probability to find a job or develop a business is 66%; for a person with a moderate disability this probability lowers to 47% and for a disabled person with severe disability the probability is reduced to 25% ..." (quotation from a HoH respondent from Germany of Eurostat, *Disability and Social Exclusion in the EU – time for change, tools for change.*)

Thus, the status of a HoH person, on the one hand, may provide concrete social welfare benefits and an opportunity to exercise his/her rights. On the other hand, it evokes segregation, stigmatisation and discrimination in education and employment.

The bottom line is that without self-acceptance and self-awareness by HoH young people themselves, they would not be able to organise themselves, articulate their needs adequately – and no support would be given to them. This is where organisations of HoH adults can and should help the younger generation come out of the (often) self-constructed isolation, engage them and provide visibility of the HoH condition. On the other hand, active and well-integrated HoH young people, by acting as role models and advocates, can help other young people to participate. More groups and organisations of HoH people are needed, not to establish a “hard of hearing” identity versus the “Deaf” identity, but rather for support and self-help purposes, something that can ease their transition into the society. The reality, then, even for young people, is that being HoH does not consign them to a recognisable group, a common identity recognised by society (Ross, 1996). They remain members of larger society, with variable abilities to participate fully in all of its aspects. Despite the complexity of a HoH condition and its lesser visibility in comparison with strong D/deaf-defined conditions, it is important not to see the HoH identity as a totally apolitical one. Sometimes young people may be involved in political activity through volunteering in organisations but they do not define it as such themselves. Organisations should therefore represent the interests of HoH young people, reducing the impact of hearing loss and enabling their fuller participation in the society.

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Critical views on multicultural youth work and equal opportunities

Veronika Honkasalo

In Finland, generational relations have been developed in an educational atmosphere where young people's detachment from their parents is emphasised (Nieminen, 2003). Along with the decline of the welfare state, the individualisation processes of youth and youth cultures (for example, Rattansi and Phoenix, 2005) and the growing multiculturalisation of the young generation, the question of how cultural pluralism should be *governed* and *managed* in leisure time settings has become an often posed question, where multiculturalism is linked with diversity management rather than with conditions of social citizenship and inequality (Ålund, 2005).

The starting point for this article lies in my preliminary ethnographical findings, based on a two-year fieldwork study (2003-05) in Helsinki's metropolitan area where I looked at leisure time activities, which had been planned and realised both by communal and NGO workers and which had included a gender-sensitive and multicultural approach. In these leisure time projects, designed for girls with a migrant background, the youth workers wanted to contest traditional youth work and its masculine character by presenting a more multicultural understanding of the concern for the invisibility of girls in leisure time

activities. In the background was also the societal position of migrant girls, which was defined as oppressed, and lacking gender equality vis à vis Finnish girls and their life circumstances. The main target of the leisure activities was to empower the girls in a Finnish way and introduce a wide spectrum of hobbies. However, despite good intentions to question the hierarchies and the masculine domination of youth work activities, the arguments were sometimes coloured with notions that defined the migrant girls' "cultures" as mainly family-orientated, which was thought to explain why the girls were locked into the sphere of home. This reason was defined as being the main impediment to integration with the rest of society. The objective and opposite picture of what these girls should strive for was the Finnish woman as the norm and an example of gender equality in a country which has a reputation for a high level of equality between men and women (see also Raevaara, 2006).

In this context, it is important to point out that the picture of the Finnish woman as a model of equality should actually be regarded as a general way of building up nationhood (Raevaara, 2006; Tuori 2007) shared in some way or other by all Nordic countries (Ålund 2005, p. 10; de los Reyes and Molina, 2002). This kind of discourse easily builds up a normative definition of how a woman should be and what kind of equality "we all" should strive for, whereas differences according to sex, class and ethnicity are easily drowned out (Raevaara 2006, p. 259; Suurpää 2005, p. 55). "Integration" is then defined through mainstream gender equality; and the goal is to integrate the girls, so that they attain the same gender equality that Finnish women and girls already have. In this context, an urge to critically evaluate the consequences of this sort of normative understanding of equality is not focused upon (Mahmood 2006, p. 62).

The goal of this article is to question the role of the family as a hindering factor for civic participation and to focus on it as a way of constructing a normative understanding of gender equality. Thus, my aim is to look at how the girls themselves negotiate the roles of parents and family, Finnish peers and participation in leisure activities, with the help of a critical understanding of feminist post-colonialist traditions which focus on questioning the gender equality discourses and identity construction. The ways in which girls resist cultural norms and tendencies and how they thus perform their agency are interpreted not only as an opposition to dominant relations of power, but as re-inventing new forms of cultural practices and identities (Mahmood 2005, p. 9).

→ Post-colonial context, youth and gender in Finland

Questions of multiculturalism, post-colonialism and racialised youth cultures have been a growing field of youth research both in the international and Finnish context (for example, Rastas, 2005; Rattansi and Phoenix, 2005; Suurpää, 2002). This area of research, linked with the concepts of civil society, active citizenship and civic participation, has not however received much interest, especially in Finnish youth research (Harinen, 2005). Civic participation has been problematised mainly from the viewpoint of political participation such as voting activities and less attention has been put on how leisure activities are prioritised, according to cultural background and sense of belonging.

The concept of multiculturalism has been criticised for being vague in its efforts to try and characterise and cover a variety of uncertainties and confusions on how cultures should relate to each other (Kuriyama, 1994) and for its tendency to classify people in the centre and in the periphery according to "race", cultural belonging

(de los Reyes and Molina 2002) and according to whether they are minorities and majorities (Ålund, 1997). Stuart Hall has introduced a distinction between “multi-cultural” as an adjective and “multiculturalism” as a noun, in order to pay attention to the theoretical contested discourse of the former and the meaning of policy governing in nation states of the latter (Hall, 2000; Ponzanesi 2007). Reluctance to use the concept of multiculturalism can also be observed in its tendency to be used in a carnivalistic sense which solemnises differences (Gunew, 1997) instead of looking critically at concepts like equality, anti-discrimination and “race” and what kind of dimensions these concepts have in the everyday life activities of young people (Suurpää, 2002).

The usage of postcolonial feminist theory is embedded in the importance of grasping the Nordic gender equality discourse as a cultural and nationalist construction, which relegates women to marginal positions, especially in the heart of negotiations on Nordic welfare feminism and its aims (Molina and de los Reyes, 2002). As a theory of managing cultural diversity, the postcolonial theory therefore benefits this discourse in a larger perspective than multiculturalism, as it frames the national context in relation to colonial history (Gunew 2004), which manifests itself according to particular geopolitical contexts. A postcolonial understanding of feminism also highlights the agency and the hybridity of identities, which puts weight on negotiating strategies for young people in racialised cultures, which in turn enables us to notice the “complex forms of cultural expressions related to the social conditions” young people experience and how they also revolt against discriminative cultures and practices (Ålund, 2005, p. 2). The girls’ perspectives are therefore not regarded in this article as outside social relations, but in relation to how girlhood is constituted both in the family, Nordic welfare discourses and peer structures (Mohanty, 1984, p. 351).

→ Context

For this article I have selected and analysed 16 interviews with girls⁴⁵ aged between 14 and 23 years for whom the identity negotiation is described by a notion of culture in terms of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).⁴⁶ By this I mean that in these interviews girls are constantly bringing up the fact that, due to their background, they have to negotiate their role and identity in everyday life.

In the interviews, the aim was to focus on how the girls describe their leisure activities, what kind of wishes they have regarding time spent outside school and home, what kind of experiences they have regarding hobbies and communal youth work and what obstacles they face regarding their participation in leisure activities.

In the following paragraphs I will concentrate on three different negotiation strategies based on gender and cultural differences by providing the stories of Sabina and Aisha,⁴⁷ born in Turkey, and Nasrin, born in Iran. In these stories I look especially at how questions of gender roles and equality emerge in the girls’ stories and how the girls negotiate between different discourses related to family and friends.

45. The background countries of the girls’ interviewed are China, Iran, Iraq, Ukraine, Turkey, Russia, Estonia and Vietnam.

46. The interview material that was gathered in 2005 as part of a bigger national research project “Multicultural youth, leisure time and civic participation” consisted of 39 interviews conducted with young people at least one of whose parents was born outside Finland.

47. All the names have been changed in order to protect the anonymity of the informants.

Sabina – equality as a process

Sabina is 20 years old and lives in a small town in eastern Finland where she works in her family's restaurant business. She is the only girl in a family of six children. She has been active in youth politics and is interested in improving the life circumstances of young people with a background similar to hers. She has been experiencing racism through attacks that have focused on her parents' restaurant, forcing her family to move several times inside Finland. According to Sabina, her Muslim and Kurdish background has affected her relationships with her Finnish peers, leisure activities in general, and her role as a young woman. Sabina feels a big responsibility for her smaller brothers and is worried about their upbringing and them becoming "too Finnish".

In the following example, Sabina tells about how her parents often question her about the Finnish culture and way of life. She therefore defines her role as being an interpreter between her family and Finnish society as a whole. Consequently, she often finds herself in a perplexing role, as the Finnish culture is full of unanswered questions for her, too. She thinks that Finnish behaviour is something that cannot be explained in words but understood only in thoughts. In Sabina's answer, the interesting fact is that she picks up gender equality as an example of contradictions between her and her family, but one which she is willing to fight for. Protecting her own rights has, in Sabina's words, given her social space and respect in the family. In her case, however, it is clear that the essence of equality is a self-evident value and the equality itself is in constant flux. Sabina does not see the question of gender equality or the role of gender as a more difficult or demanding question than any other question that all young people living in Finland are faced with:

I: Are there then any particular questions [in the Finnish culture] that have made you ask why?

S: Equality (laughs).

I: You mean gender equality?

S: Yes, especially gender equality. And the equality differences. In the sense that I have five brothers. And especially as my character is quite selfish and stubborn. So they have learnt to be afraid of me (laughs). But this is constantly coming up. It comes up by force. But it appears everywhere. In Finland, even among Finnish people, about this matter or something else. For some people about dressing, for some other people, how would I say it, about your close friends. There are a lot of these issues. What other things are there that make me feel western? Yes, I have of course lived half of my life in this country. It's difficult to say. Behaviour. That of course depends on the character of the person. I am the kind of person who adapts everywhere.

In Sabina's life, identity negotiations have become evident, especially since she turned 18. The structure of her friends' leisure activities has changed, which poses a more controversial question about how to hang out with friends. Before turning 18, Finnish peers' leisure activities are concentrated in sports and youth clubs or at cafés. However, many girls mention that the age of 18 brings about a difficulty in hanging out with friends because Finnish peers starts to hang out in bars and feel totally independent. In Sabina's story, age assumes a different meaning in her own family than in Finnish culture. At the same time, alcohol consumption and relations with boys draw a clear line on Finnishness, on what a gender-equal Finnish girl is actually like. Her freedom is to get drunk, as many interviewees like Sabina point out. Sabina describes this well when the interviewer asks her whether the alcohol-orientated youth culture and leisure time causes difficulties for Muslim girls when they turn 18 and young people can go to bars. Sabina acknowledges the

generalisation about “Muslim girls” and pictures different behaviours as personal choices rather than having religious or cultural perspectives:

S: You are immediately in discos when you turn 18. I also had a problem with this. When my friends turned 18 I was also in college. Before this we met and saw each other, planned different kind of things. I was always allowed to be with them, when I fixed it somehow. But then I started to notice, that now, now all their meetings are only in bars. Bars and discos, yes I can go there too, but not as often as they do... It was even enough that I could go there once a month. I don't mean that I would have been thinking that “Now, one month passed, I have to go again”. Yes, I went, but I did not drink. If I drink, I drink exactly one glass. And this is my own choice. I could booze around, even throw up or faint there. But why I do not do this depends only on me, because of course I don't want to, I don't let these kinds of things happen to me. I don't want, for example, my brother to see me in that kind of condition. And when I look at women who are drunk or girls. It looks so awful. I never want to drop to that kind of position. It does not suit a woman. Simply. And this has nothing to do with culture or religion.

Sabina's answer is interesting, especially if it is viewed as a critique of the majority's way of defining a migrant girl's behaviour, mainly from a religious perspective. Her actions can therefore be defined as opposing the essentialist picture of the “Muslim woman”, for whom Islam is seen as a burden (Mahmood, 2005, p. 189) when she draws the picture of a “typical Finnish” girl and girlhood by putting the emphasis on alcohol consumption and masculine behaviour. Her statement can also be seen as a critique of an oppressed girlhood that forces girls to behave in masculine ways in order to get social acceptance.

What is, however, essential in Sabina's story is the worry and anxiousness she is constantly carrying with her because of the responsibility she feels for bringing up her brothers as decent citizens and the racism her family has experienced and which has forced them to look for “social exile” several times within Finland. Therefore racialisation processes and racism in Finnish society are factors that affect Sabina's feelings of marginal exclusion, more than generational differences within her family (see also Ålund, 1997; Andersson, 2003).

Aisha – negotiating religion

Nineteen-year-old Aisha is finishing her last year at school and lives with her younger brother, sister and parents in a big multi-ethnic town in southern Finland. Her father has a restaurant business and her mother works as a cook in a retirement home. Aisha describes her family as a secular Muslim family, but for Aisha herself religious practices have become more important as she has grown older. Aisha has had a wide range of leisure activities varying from sports to arts. Aisha defines herself as a Finnish-Turkish girl and her circle of friends is wide and multi-ethnic.

Aisha's distance from the alcohol-centred way of life is a result of “trying” it out first herself. Aisha negotiates crucial issues with her parents, is aware of their opinions but ultimately decides what her standpoint is herself. In the same way, the meaning of religion as a way of life has become more important for her as she has grown older; she picks up the elements of religion that suit her life best. What characterises Aisha's relation to religion, is how she organises her daily “conduct in accord with principles of Islamic piety and virtuous behaviour” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 4). For Aisha, fasting, praying and living a healthy life mean that she has a better control over herself and her life:

A: I drank before. I mean I drank huge amounts. Basic teenage life, you know. But now I just don't like it anymore. If we go somewhere and I take one cider for example, it takes me three hours to get it down.

I: How did it change then?

A: I don't know. I mean, really, it just changed suddenly. Was it one and half years ago? I did not feel like drinking. We are again going to spend little-Christmas. I said to my friends that I would come by car. And everybody replied to me "Hey, you can't come by car, you are drinking". I just answered that I don't feel like it, I am not interested. My sister drinks. Or she drinks when she goes out partying, so she drinks.

I: What are your parents' attitudes towards drinking?

A: Hmm. They do not know that my sister drinks. She is only seventeen. So they ask often, "have you been drinking?" and then I say "Yes, like this amount". And when I go somewhere they usually say, "Don't drink much"... I am quite like my mother; she also does not drink anymore. We both had actually this same kind of feeling at the same time, this kind of "no". My father drinks. I mean they don't say that "Yes, you are allowed to drink", but they say, "You better take care that you don't drink".

Girls like Aisha, similarly to Norwegian researcher Åse Strandbu's informants (Muslim girls), share an interest in both the western youth cultures and that of their parents' country of origin, which emphasises the character of hybrid identity (Strandbu, 2005, pp. 10-11). However, even the girls who experience more control from their parents than their Finnish peers do not automatically deny the role of their parents, but instead restrict their own behaviour according to what they think their parents expect them to do for a decent life. Strandbu calls this "voluntary adjusting" as "culture as practice".

Aisha herself has only been to communal youth clubs a few times. Her leisure activities have instead been focused on sports and arts. However, when she was younger she participated in one of her city's first multicultural projects. In Aisha's view, gender segregated youth work is needed especially because the "open" activities of youth clubs do not attract girls. She also thinks that in girl groups girls are freer to express their opinions and practise self-expression in general.

A: Girls have ... I mean if the groups were only for girls, they would get more space to express their opinions. Because if there are these kinds of groups that include boys, girls are usually more silent. They are more silent, because boys usually have the power of speech. I mean, they think so. It is good that girls have this kind of thing, that they could express their opinions.

I: Yes and then if you think about young people who go to youth clubs, are the girls often in the minority?

A: Yes. Or especially foreign girls are really in the minority. I mean, there are huge amounts of foreign boys. I mean especially in Helmix,⁴⁸ ... and then Finnish girls, but there have not been a lot of foreign girls.

I: Why do you think it is like that?

A: Maybe foreign girls don't get permission from their parents. Or maybe there are their little brothers or big brothers, who don't want them to go there. That's because you don't see foreign girls. And Finnish boys might be a little bit prejudiced towards foreign boys. That's why there are no Finnish boys.

I: How could you encourage these girls to participate?

H: This is actually only a matter of the girls' parents. That you should try to explain to the parents, that it is not a harmful place, that it does not matter. But some parents are just like that, that they do not want their girls to go anywhere. And in that kind of situation there is not much you can do.

48. Youth club in the city which is popular among the young migrants, name changed.

Nasrin – negotiating compromises

For 20-year-old Nasrin, transnational friendship networks are an essential part of her leisure activities. Like Aisha, she lives in southern Finland in a big city with her mother, father and a smaller sister. She characterises her family as “strict” compared to what she defines as a typical Finnish family. She traces the strictness as being partly due to cultural values and the new educational demands her parents have to face in Finland. Negotiating about her upbringing and leisure time has been a central part of Nasrin’s life and she mentions several compromises and strategies she has developed in order to live both a Finnish and an Iranian life. Nasrin mentions human rights and women’s rights as her most important values.

The role of Nasrin’s father is central in the interview and she describes him as “strictly following the oriental rules, even if we have already lived 16 years in Finland”. However, Nasrin remarks that her father has loosened his grip during the last few years but is constantly following the way of life of Nasrin’s friends. Nasrin also mentions that the demands on her way of life do not only come just from her father but also from friends who openly question the role of her parents.

N: I try to balance the differences between the Finnish and the oriental cultures. But sometimes it is very difficult. For example when my friends asks “Why do you not go to the bar? You are already eighteen. You must be able to decide yourself.” But I still have to ask for permission from my parents. But I have good friends, who get it and understand it. They do not demand these kinds of things from me, where I would have to choose. Sometimes it is really hard, but I just have to try my best, I just have to act according to the situation.

Nasrin defines “good friends” as those who respect her for who she is and are sensitive about her background. Good friends do not demand that Nasrin changes to Finnish standards which would mean a break-up with her parents. At the same time, Nasrin feels defensive about the prejudiced attitudes towards her family which she tries to protect them from. She therefore feels simultaneously pushed from two opposite directions, by her friends and her family (Andersson, 2003, p. 131).

Nasrin argues that it would have been possible for her to participate in youth club activities with girl groups when she was younger. What is interesting in Nasrin’s answer is that she points out that the possible reason why parents do not let their children go to youth club activities is that their picture of Finnish youth culture and of communal youth work as a national construction is obscure.

I: What kind of (a) picture do your parents have of a youth club?

N: Hmm, they think that all kinds of young people go there. And that one sells cigarettes and another sells drugs. So they think in this way.

What is evident in all the girls’ accounts is the negotiation process and transformation of new identities, which are affected both by the parents’ expressions of cultural belonging and the dominant racialised discourses of difference (Dwyer, 1999). However, it seems that the “Finnish” youth culture and its national ethos do not allow space for a collective hybrid identity or a positive cultural image of “otherness” (Rastas, 2005) which would strengthen the girls’ options for acceptance in front of their peers, help the establishment of independent selves or the imagining of alternative femininities (Dwyer, 1999, p. 21).

→ Discussion

I started my article by referring to my ethnographical findings, in which the need for gender-sensitive youth work among girls from a migrant background is addressed in the Finnish youth work context mainly by the need to give gender equality education and feminist empowerment to the girls. One could also state that, due to the character of the welfare state, the gender equality discourse is maintained by pointing to those (migrant girls, in this case) who need Nordic welfare surveillance from parents and families. This sort of gender equality discourse embeds itself as an innocent duty of care and protection. After an analysis of three different girls' stories on gender equality and family, it seems that this discourse is actually socio-historically institutionalised and so strongly constructed that it appears to be a way of taking for granted the customs and national discourses on racialised differences between "us" and "them" (see, for example, Hautaniemi, 2004, p. 129).

In the Finnish youth work context, the absence of girls has been on the agenda for almost 20 years now. It seems that there is a steady balance between a "girlhood" that should be neither too passive nor too active. In this sense, the presence of girls in the public sphere and from an institutionalised point of view, is seen as problematic. Aleksandra Ålund has pointed out in her own study on youth in multi-ethnic surroundings that there seems to be a striving to keep girls away from spaces that are regarded as socially problematic youth areas. This is remarkable in the rhetoric that highlights the absence of migrant background girls and the "forced" restrictedness at the same time, and simultaneously defines the activity of migrant background girls as problematic. (Ålund, 1997, p. 120). Therefore it seems that the majority can tolerate migrant girls' activeness only when it is put in the context of understanding what is proper for girls with a migrant background, assuming that their cultural background is more essential in their life than anything else. Therefore there seems to be a double standard – blaming the role of family actually eliminates the responsibility of authorities to face up to the problem of how open youth activities are for young people with different backgrounds. The problem of recruiting migrant girls to youth work activities seems to be obvious. However, as long as the reason for the problematic recruiting is pushed onto the role of "strict migrant families", the organising institution gets a remission, because the autonomy of parents does not have to be touched upon. Thus, active moral discussion on what is best for young people is not done in co-operation with the families. In this sense, the youth work system is not aware of different educational values, but normalises its own understanding of upbringing and education. Ålund asks in her research why girls in general are not allowed to hang around or to take part in spontaneous activities.

After completing my participant observation of multicultural activities for girls in Helsinki's metropolitan area, I have taken notice of the fact that the phenomenon seems to be more evident in practice. The shared concern of many youth workers is that girls from a migrant background very seldom participate in communal youth work activities and thus the most efficient way to recruit girls to youth clubs is to organise gender-segregated activities (Honkasalo and Souto, 2007). In practice, it seems that girls may eagerly participate in girl groups but not in the youth clubs' open activities, thus the groups do not work as a route to other youth club activities, for the girls do not experience these activities as their own. Therefore, the activities should emphasise changing the masculine character of communal youth work in general and not try to adapt and integrate the girls to the old practices.

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Alissa Tolstokorova

Labour migration as a mechanism of social exclusion: case study of Ukrainian youth⁵⁰

During the last decade of transition to a free market economy, occupational mobility with the purpose of external employment acquired a large-scale character in Ukraine. Youth, being at the same time the most flexible and mobile section of society and one of most socially and economically vulnerable groups, migrates most often. Young people between 21 and 30 years of age make up 20-40% of all migrant stock, and around 11% are aged between 31 and 35. Among them the largest share is made up of highly educated and qualified young people: 36.7% have had a university education, 36.5% had a college education and

49. This article is based on materials from a research paper, *Economic Inequality, Social Exclusion and Labour Migration: Challenges to Ukrainian Youth Over Post-Soviet Transition*, presented at a research seminar Equal Opportunities for All, organised in the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth in the European Youth Centre Budapest, 7-9 November, 2007. An extended summary of the paper may be found in: Forum 21. *European Journal on Youth Policy*, S. Becky, A. Hopkins, D. Bacry (eds), No. 10/12, 2007, pp. 97-107 Berlin, London, Paris.

professional training, 24.9% received a secondary school education and 0.9% dropped out of university.

Furthermore, migration from Ukraine is a gendered process, because motivations and trajectories of labour migration differ for women and men, they encounter different risks and hazards in external employment, react to them differently and the social consequences of international economic mobility for the sexes also differ. Besides, males and females with a negative experience of migration require different approaches from social assistance. Thus, labour migration to some countries is predominantly male, while to others it is largely female. For example, in 2001 68% of Ukrainian migrant workers in Portugal were men, while in Greece and Italy the majority are currently women – 75.5% and 90.2% respectively. Male Ukrainian migrants usually work as builders, drivers, mechanics and fitters, while women are more often employed as office cleaners, domestic workers, factory workers, nurses of the elderly and as dancers in restaurants and cafés (Ombudsman of Ukraine, 2003).

Age and gender perspectives in migration scholarship are significant, in terms of prognosis for the development of the demographic structure of society and for outlining perspectives of gender composition of the workforce on the labour market. Research findings show that young men and women seeking employment abroad are the most economically active, mobile, highly skilled and well-educated section of society. Therefore, migration takes away those who compose Ukraine's national middle class, in the traditional sense – those who are usually viewed as the society's intellectual potential and major investors of its human capital, on whom society's economic security and well-being will depend in the future. This means that the socio-economic backbone of modern Ukrainian society is moving away from the country, which is a threat to both the social structure of society and to its national security.

The paper argues that labour migration in Ukraine functions as a mechanism of social exclusion, based on socio-economic inequalities facing young people from disadvantaged social groups. Special emphasis is given to the gender-based character of social and economic inequalities as an incentive for migration.

→ Theoretical framework

The period of transition to a free market economy in Ukraine was marked by multiple transformations in social and economic life. The most significant negative effect of this period was the emergence of structural social inequalities. This notion is one of the central issues in sociological theory, given that all developed social systems are marked by an unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities among individuals and social groups. Representatives of the functionalist approach in sociology refer to inequalities as conditions, defining unequal access to money, power and prestige which exist in three principle arenas: economic, political and cultural-ideological (Smelser, 1994).

A central notion of the current paper is “economic inequalities”, generally defined as inequalities between individuals regarding their role and participation in the process of production, exchange, distribution and consumption of material wealth. According to A.M. Okun (1996), income and consumption rates are the major criteria enabling measurement of the economic status of an individual.

A significant component of social inequalities is educational inequalities, which are an inalienable element of social differentiation. In the knowledge economy of

post-industrial societies, education acquires value as a social resource, which is important not only as an indicator of the intellectual capital of an individual, but also as a major mechanism of social reproduction and a trigger of social mobility. Since the turn of the 20th century, education – both comprehensive and professional – has been gradually transformed into an imperative condition for individual advancement in the labour market, which demands fewer unqualified workers and more highly skilled labourers.

An important concept in the analysis of educational inequalities is “equality of opportunity” (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon, Walsh, 2004). In a democratic society, equal access to educational opportunities by all who are capable, motivated, and proactive in acquiring knowledge and skills, is regarded as a realisation of the principle of social justice and social equality. Both sociological and economic theories of education acknowledge that equal opportunities in access to education may be achieved through minimisation of the dependency of educational possibilities on the socio-economic background of an individual, and their increased correlation with personal merits, capabilities and efforts (meritocratic principle).

Another central notion in this paper is “social exclusion”, which derives from concepts of discrimination and restricted access to resources as mechanisms of social exclusion in the conditions of post-industrial societies. In economic theories the principle of social exclusion is approached via the framework of conceptions of social welfare redistribution. Sociological theories accentuate the economic nature of this notion and regard it as a strategy of “creating barriers” (Lowson, Gerrod, 2000, pp. 115-116) by some social groups in an attempt to restrict the access of other social groups to certain advantages and privileges.

In research literature, social exclusion is usually understood as a partial or absolute exemption of individuals, or social groups, from the social processes, accompanied by the creation of barriers to their access to decision-making positions in society. This does not mean that socially excluded groups are limited to marginalised social strata alone. They incorporate all those whose lives are defined not by their own free will and choice, but by circumstances, imposed by those who control social processes in a society. The well-being of these groups is grounded on a residue principle and their interests are considered only when their further neglect challenges the well-being of society as a whole.

There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the inventory of mechanisms and forms of social exclusion. Most generally it is associated with deprivation in access to resources, like unemployment, poverty, homelessness. In his classical work on social exclusion, P. Abrahamson refers to this phenomenon as lack of rights and restricted access to the institutions responsible for distribution of resources (Abrahamson, 1998). A Russian scholar, N. Tikhonova, also stresses the rights-based approach to research on this issue. Her classification of indicators of social exclusion includes several scales (Tikhonova, 2003):

1. Right to stable paid work (“Work” scale).
2. Right to health care and medical services in case of necessity (“Health” scale).
3. Right to education and culture (“Education and culture” scale).
4. Right to meaningful relationships in the immediate surroundings and inclusion into community (“Communication” scale).

5. Right to access to social networks as one of the principal mechanisms (together with social policy) of redistribution of resources ("Networks" scale).
6. Right to autonomy, understood as the ability to initiate action, by formulating goals and performing purposeful actions, aimed at their achievement ("Autonomy" scale).
7. Right to adequate housing ("Housing" scale).

The current work will follow the above cited rights-based approach to the problem of social exclusion and will regard it as a form of discrimination and a breach of the basic rights of individuals and social groups.

In the materials of the European Commission it is emphasised that "gender differences and inequalities are a fundamental feature of social exclusion and poverty. Women are less likely to secure a decent individual income through employment ... Gender inequalities in employment, combined with design inadequacies in social welfare systems, produce a situation whereby poverty is disproportionately borne by women or is "feminized". However, this policy perspective is often absent from policy debate. This signals that a gender perspective is relevant for social inclusion policy design and monitoring" (European Commission, 2006, p. 7). This is why the current paper will focus special attention on the study of the gender dimension of economic inequalities as a factor triggering social exclusion, leading to migration.

→ **Socio-economic situation of Ukrainian youth: degree of social exclusion**

To identify the scope of social exclusion among Ukrainian youth I applied the above cited rights-based approach to this phenomenon, offered by N. Tikhonova. Although the space constraints of this paper do not allow analysis of all the seven scales offered in her classification, yet, the scales which have been analysed in the framework of this approach showed negative indexes of practical realisation with reference to the younger generation. More specifically:

- The right to stable paid work ("Work" scale). International statistics shows that youth employment is a highly problematic factor, even in the world's most affluent countries. For example, youth unemployment in the EU reached 18.6% in 2004, double Europe's overall rates (Securing a Fair Deal for the Young, 2007) and remained at the same high level until 2007.⁵⁰ In this context, it is not surprising that in transitional Ukraine, which survives a deep structural crisis in all areas of life, the unemployment rate among youth and adolescents also remains high and the employment rate correspondingly low: in 2003 the unemployment rate reached 14.4% among urban youth and 11% were young people from rural settlements. The proportion of young people among the total stock of the unemployed population was 41.9% for rural youth and 36.9% for urban young people (Rural Youth in Ukraine, 2004: 57). It is noteworthy that these figures are somewhat lower than overall in the EU, although it is possible that the distinction is mainly in different methods and principles of gathering statistics. In any case, what matters is that both in the EU and in Ukraine, unemployment rates among young people are significantly higher than among the overall population, which confirms that N. Tikhonova's "work scale" applies as one of factors which contribute to social exclusion of youth both in Ukraine and the EU.

50. Report highlights the progress in EU growth and jobs strategy, *Social Agenda*, 12 (October 2007), p. 22.

- Right to health care and medical services in case of need (“Health” scale). The break-up of the USSR led to the collapse of the national health care system, aggravation of the ecological situation and lack of proper material conditions to ensure the quality nutrition of the population. These factors resulted in the overall deterioration of public health, growth in the rate of sickness and disease and worsening of reproductive health. Development of costly private forms of health care and medical services and a dramatic rise in prices for pharmaceutical products led to increased inequalities in access to health care by different strata of society. Youth and seniors, as the most economically disadvantaged demographic groups, suffer from growing health care inequalities more than others. For example, the number of pregnant women with anaemia caused by malnutrition doubled in 1998 compared to 1989. Besides, young people living below the poverty level faced the danger of calorie starvation, leading to serious diseases. Sociological surveys demonstrated that, under the conditions of state budget deficit, the quality treatment of adolescents, provision of health care and prevention services become increasingly dependent on family income and standards of living. Yet, because people have to spend over half their family budget on nutrition (it was highest in 1999 at 65.5%), most of them have to significantly reduce their expenses for medical treatment and pharmaceutical products. Thus, in 2001, all urban households spent as little as 2% and rural households just 1.1% of their aggregate expenditure on paid medical services. Among the households who required medical assistance, medicines and medical equipment for some of their members in 2002, only 27.5% could afford them, primarily due to the high cost of these services and commodities. It is noteworthy that the largest share of households in this category are families with children (Reproductive and Sexual Health of Adolescents in Ukraine, 2004: 16-19).
- Right to education and culture (“Education and culture” scale), and right to access to social networks as a principal mechanism of redistribution of resources (“Networks” scale). Results of empirical research (Oksamytna, 2006) showed that the younger generation faces an increasing correlation between access to educational opportunities and the socio-economic/class background of individuals, especially as compared to their parents’ generation, who received higher education in the Soviet period, based predominantly on egalitarian principles. Research findings showed that educational inequalities are derivative of socio-economic inequalities and mirror the growing social stratification of the Ukrainian society. In this context, young people who come from middle and upper class families have better opportunities to access higher education than representatives of low income groups. Young people from rural areas and from economically disadvantaged strata of society are especially vulnerable in this context. The former group already faces educational inequalities at the level of secondary education. It is more often rural children who do not complete basic secondary education, mainly as a result of the absence of secondary schools in their localities. For example, in the academic year 2000-01 only 52% of rural settlements had secondary schools. As a result, 38% of rural high school pupils could not afford to study in their places of residence. Also, in contrast to their urban contemporaries, rural children start earning a living at an earlier age, which further contributes to their lower level of education (“Women 2000”, 2001, p. 474). So, educational inequalities deny access to education and culture to socially and economically disadvantaged groups of youth, thus not only creating barriers in their access to the intellectual and cultural capital of society, but also excluding them from social networks of the highly skilled elite, who have access to decision making and therefore to control over resources. This form of social exclusion leads to a low rate of income and a high poverty rate among young people.

- Right to adequate housing (“Housing” scale). Throughout the decade of economic transition the general amount of state-financed housing has been gradually decreasing. Over recent years, the potential to obtain housing from the public budget was reduced to a minimum. This problem is particularly acute among young couples, given that housing directly influences the realisation of the reproductive function of young families. In 2003, only 35.4% of young couples had their own household, compared to 92% overall across the country. Among them, a large share had no housing of their own: 3.4% lived in public dormitories (compared with 1.2% on average throughout the country), 4.3% were in communal flats or rented sections in private houses (versus 3.9% on average across the country). Among single-headed households, which are predominantly female-headed, the share of those with their own housing was 23%. Around 39% of young families lived with their parents or other relatives that is, were dependent on the owners of these households.⁵¹ In 2002, 37% of nuclear families and 52% of single-headed families lived in such conditions. In this way, young people are socially excluded even from a minimal level of decision making in the framework of their own extended family and household.

Thus, although all the above-mentioned rights are officially guaranteed to Ukrainians of all ages, they do not work in practice and for the younger generation they work even less well than for other age groups, and at the same time they work less well for young women than for young men. A European Commission Report in 2006 provided an inventory of statistical indicators for gender gaps in age-related risks of poverty and social exclusion (European Commission, 2006, a: 49-51). For young people these include:

- at-risk-of-poverty rate;
- employment rate;
- early school leaving;
- youth unemployment rate;
- economic activity connected with motherhood.

My research findings showed that all these indicators are applicable to the Ukrainian situation too, given that they have an obvious gender dimension, in particular:

- 1) At-risk-of-poverty rate. In the course of a sociological survey of young couples for 2003 (Junior Family in Ukraine, 2003: 54), over one third of young couples (34%) reported that their income was spent only on foodstuffs and essential commodities and 11% of young couples admitted that their budget was insufficient to buy even minimal foodstuffs. Thus, every third junior family continuously lacked finances to buy the most essential commodities and every tenth young family could not afford even sufficient foodstuffs. In 2003, per capita expenditures of 74.6% of young families with their own households were below the official minimal living rate, as compared to 72.5% on average over the country. Yet, the poverty rate in such families was 23.9%, that is somewhat lower than the average of 27.2% across the country. At the same time, despite a relatively small share of the poor among junior families, their budgets were below the minimal living rate, which implied a considerable outspread of extreme poverty in this category of families. Data from the aforementioned sociological survey showed that every second young couple was concerned

51. Homelessness as an extreme form of social exclusion was not considered in this work in view of the absence of reliable statistics for the age group under analysis.

about the possibility of impoverishment in the future, which signifies a high degree of uncertainty among young people.

At the same time, impoverishment had a clear gender dimension, as women, together with the young and the elderly, turned out to be more vulnerable and more affected by the consequences of the transition to a market economy and therefore faced a higher poverty risk than other social cohorts. Grouping of the population by their level of material well-being as of 1999 (Libanova, 2003) showed that the poverty rate was highest among the unemployed (21.5% of all members of the group), female home-makers (17%) and students (13%). Young women make up the majority of those who are at greater risk of poverty. Among these are first of all single parent families with young children, especially mentally disabled children – 70% of these households are headed by single mothers. The same is true of single women taking care of an elderly family member – 90% of these households are female-headed, and among families with many children 80% are female-headed (Gender Issues in Ukraine, 2003: 47).

- 2) Employment/unemployment rate. In 2002, only 71% of the stock of young people of active working age between 15-19 years (539 300) were employed. Among young men, the employment rate was higher than among young women – 14.8% and 13.6% respectively. At the same time, in 2002 the proportion of young people among the total stock of the unemployed population was 41.9% for rural youth and 36.9% for urban young people. Obvious gaps in unemployment rates and economic activity are gender specific. Women make up over 70% of all the unemployed in Ukraine and their average salary does not exceed two thirds of the salary of men, although the educational level of Ukrainian women is higher than that of men. In recent years, gender asymmetries in the level of income increased. If in 1998 the average salary of women was 74.9% of that of males, in late 2002 it fell to 70.2% and in some regions, for example in Donetsk, this index for 2005 dropped to 50% (524 UAG versus 911 UAG).

Moreover, according to data from the Research Institute of Labour and Employment of the Ministry of Ukraine for Labour and Social Policy, the average duration of unemployment among women is longer than among men, and over recent years it even increased – from 22 months searching for work in 1999 to 24 months in 2001. This may result in less competitiveness from females in the labour market and decreased motivation to further professional advancement.

- 3) Economic activity connected with motherhood. Research showed that the level of economic activity among young men is higher than that among young women. For example, in 2002 it was 14.8% and 13.6% respectively (Rural Youth in Ukraine, 2004: 56). A UNIFEM report on women and employment in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for 2006 admitted that throughout the years of transition (in this case 1990-2004) economic activity rates in the age group 20 to 24 years old in all CEE countries decreased significantly, the decline for women being greater than that for men. The lower economic activity of younger females can be attributed to their high level of school enrolment, their difficulty in finding jobs and their tendency to drop out of work to bear children. The problems young women have in finding jobs in the new market economies can lead to migration and to a situation which puts them in grave danger (UNIFEM, 2006: 24).

Furthermore, regional employment centres report that recruiters are unwilling to hire women graduates, first of all because young women in the early stages

of their careers lack professional experience, but also because employers fear prospective marriages of young women and subsequent pregnancies and child-bearing, which will require additional expenses for maternity leave and childcare benefits. Also, a common belief is that in conditions of a dynamic knowledge economy, women who stay home for maternity leave (in Ukraine it is up to three years of absence from the work place) become deskilled and their knowledge gets outdated, which makes them less competitive in the labour market.

- 4) Early school leaving is also gender specific. It is more characteristic for boys, especially from rural areas, than for girls, who have an overall higher school enrolment rate, which to some extent explains their lower economic activity. Secondary school drop-outs come mostly from unsuccessful families and in 2000 made up a total of 90 000, most of whom were boys. At the same time, as mentioned above, a tendency to drop out of work to bear children, together with a difficulty in finding jobs, are principle reasons of the lower economic activity of younger females (UNIFEM, 2006: 24).

Thus, analysis shows that the approach to the problem of social exclusion, both in the framework of conceptions of social welfare redistribution and from the perspective of a rights-based approach proposed by N. Tikhonova, leads to a conclusion that all the indicators and scales taken into account in this work speak for the disadvantaged position of young people as compared to the overall population, which creates a background for social exclusion. In this context, it is not surprising that migration incentives for young people increase from year to year and the share of young people among those who are ready to migrate to solve financial problems is growing too: in 2004 it reached 38% among young people, compared with 21% overall in the country (Situation of Families in Small Towns, 2005).

→ **Social exclusion as a result of inequalities and as a trigger factor for youth migration**

Wide outspread of poverty among young people, documented and undocumented unemployment, unequal access to economic, social and cultural capital of society in the context of social exclusion, serve not only as factors reducing consumption possibilities for young people, but primarily as factors that exclude the younger generation from social, economic and cultural areas of societal life. In these conditions, probably the only possible strategy to secure a minimal means of survival for young people is to seek informal employment, which only deepens the level of social exclusion of disadvantaged individuals. In view of the restricted opportunities to secure employment in the internal shadow labour market, young people have to rely on services, provided by numerous employment agencies, offering employment in the informal economy abroad. Yet, in these conditions informally employed Ukrainians are excluded from the areas of legal and social guarantees in the employment domain, both at home and in recipient countries and are trapped into a situation of so-called “double exclusion”, which deprives them of basic social rights and civil liberties. This is why national experts consider it impossible to qualify circular labour migration even as a tentative solution to the unemployment problem in Ukraine. Thus, the general conclusion confirms the hypothesis of this paper that labour migration results from socio-economic inequality and insecurity as mechanisms of social exclusion and push-off factors that induce Ukrainian youth to seek external employment.

→ **Creating equal opportunities for youth: policy proposal**

In terms of migration, Ukraine currently holds fourth place in the world (after the US, Russia and Germany) as a receiving country and third place (after Russia and Mexico and before India and China) as a sending country (World Bank Report, 2006, pp. 23-24). But the main concern of experts is not so much the scope of migration in Ukraine, but primarily its character: presumably, 95% of it is irregular, which makes Ukraine one of the major suppliers of irregular immigrant workers to western Europe. Taking into account that the rate of remittances that Ukraine receives from its migrant citizens is estimated from 8 to 35 million US dollars – between 8% to 25% of the GDP – there are grounds for claiming that today Ukraine can be classified as one of the “labour exporting countries”, in which human resources serve as its major “export commodity”, allowing it to survive in globalised economic and trade systems.

The highly challenging and contradictory character of the phenomenon of circular labour migration encourages a conclusion that public policy in this area should be largely targeted at the minimisation of its negative consequences and at efficient implementation of available positive experience in this area for the benefit of society at large. An overview of the research literature shows that all the actors in the migration process, including current and would-be migrants, migration researchers, NGO activists and even representatives of private employment agencies, have a unanimous opinion on the following major issues:

- 1) Efficiency of migration policy in current conditions increasingly depends on the more active role of state agencies at all levels of migration management.
- 2) Strategies for national migration policy should be informed by an understanding of employment and recruitment policy. The activity of decision-making bodies should be aimed first of all at minimising the outflow of the workforce from the country and creating more favourable employment opportunities at home for economically vulnerable groups of the population, who are at higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- 3) A priority principle for decision-making bodies in considering migration management should be first of all the respect of the right to freedom of movement and free choice of occupation by citizens. Therefore, administrative methods, based on forceful restriction of economic mobility should be excluded as unacceptable.

It is noteworthy that the European Commission proposed to make 2010 the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Therefore, it should become an immediate policy priority for Ukraine to develop a coherent programme of public policy responses to challenges created by increased labour mobility of the workforce. The programme should be aimed at the enhancement of socio-economic security for Ukrainian young people, working both at home and abroad, and at the promotion of their social rights. It will allow society to combat socio-economic and cultural inequalities and foster social inclusion of vulnerable social groups. In this context, it is important to make sure that in today's highly dynamic and flexible globalised world the principles of “security” and “flexibility” should be mutually complimentary and intertwined in order to enable the implementation of so-called “flexicurity strategies” aiming to modernise labour markets and make them better able to address the challenges and opportunities of globalisation.

In this respect, Ukraine can benefit from the study and accumulation of international and particularly European experience in this domain. In my opinion, it can be especially useful in this respect to encourage countries – which like Ukraine have expressed their commitment to follow European values and democratic norms – to get involved in the design of equal opportunity policy by preparing national action plans and, correspondingly, national reports on the implementation of issues such as “Equality and Discrimination”, “Social Justice”, “Social Protection and Social Inclusion”, “Gender Equality”, “Social Policy Perspectives” and so on, which are prepared on a regular basis by the EU member states. Experience of this kind can be a good school of democratic, socially equitable governance for aspiring democracies and make them prepared for a highly competitive and demanding EU accession process.

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Ali Akbar Tajmazinani

In the mainstream or at the margins? Muslim youth inclusion and exclusion in the UK

Muslims are the largest religious group in the UK after Christians and have the youngest age profile of all the religious groups in this country. The youthful nature of the British Muslim community, alongside other findings which claim the rise of extremism among British Muslim youth, make the issue of “social inclusion/exclusion” of vital importance. While it is widely accepted that the Muslim community, especially its younger generation, is among the most excluded and marginalised communities in the UK, there is little consensus about the main causes and factors of their exclusion.

There are two main lines of explanation in this regard: the first viewpoint is that their exclusion is mainly a structural phenomenon, resulting from the discriminatory treatment of the Muslim population in various sections of society; and the second viewpoint asserts that the disadvantage of Muslims is not related to their religion, but should be explained in terms of such factors as Muslims’ cultural orientation, ethnicity, family background, socio-economic status and places of residence.

Using a multi-level analysis model of social exclusion, based on data obtained from various sources, this paper aims to

illustrate different aspects of Muslim youth exclusion in the UK and examine the relevance of existent explanatory viewpoints in this respect.

→ Introduction: why study inclusion/exclusion of Muslim youth?

Although Islam is a relatively new arrival in the UK, mainly in the last two centuries, it is now considered to be an influential religion in this country. Muslims are the largest religious group in the UK after Christians and based on the 2001 census, 1.6 million Muslims are living in Britain. This group comprises 3% of the total population and over half (52%) of the non-Christian religious population (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2001a).

The debate about the situation of Muslims in the West as a whole and in Great Britain in particular, as well as their interaction with the dominant mainstream society is a very important issue in the current era – especially after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the USA and the 7 July 2005 London bombings. While this issue has several dimensions and has been discussed in various disciplines, it seems that an approach based on social policy methodology is a vital tool for the understanding and addressing of the issue in policy and practice. This leads us to a central concept in social policy, namely “social inclusion/exclusion”, which has proved to be among the most suitable explanatory instruments for social phenomena, as well as for devising appropriate policies and programmes to deal with them. Moreover, this concept is closely related to the core issue of “equal opportunities for all” in the Council of Europe’s recent initiatives. Since the Muslim community and its young generation constitute a considerable part of the minority population in Europe, their situation in terms of entitlement to equal opportunities and full inclusion should be studied and dealt with as an integral element of these initiatives.

On the other hand, Muslims have the youngest age profile of all the religious groups in Great Britain: about one third of Muslims (34%) are under 16 years of age and more than half of Britain’s Muslims (52%) are under 25, compared to one fifth and 31% of the general population respectively. The average age of Muslims in the UK is 28 years old, 13 years younger than the national average (ONS, 2001b; Scott et al., 2001).

Therefore, the issue of “youth social inclusion/exclusion” deserves to be the subject of serious research and consideration. Youth is a vital period in the life course of every human being and determines to a great extent the remaining path of the individual life. Normal inclusion of the younger generation in the fabric of society will ensure the future of young people and society as well. This, alongside the fact that young people are considered to be among those groups that are especially vulnerable and exposed to the risk of exclusion, makes the issue of youth inclusion of greater importance.

To explore various aspects of the above-mentioned theme, the paper addresses the following questions: are Muslim youth in the UK actually suffering from social exclusion? And do they see themselves as excluded? What dimensions and indicators of exclusion are more severe for them? What are the main causes of their exclusion at different levels? Applying a “secondary analysis” approach by using a wide range of information obtained from national statistics and surveys, this paper explores the situation of Muslim youth inclusion/exclusion in present British society and its policy-related implications. It develops a multi-level analysis model of social exclusion to illustrate the interplay of various exclusionary forces or factors which lead to the exclusion of Muslim young people.

→ Theoretical explanations of social exclusion

Social exclusion has been approached from a range of diverse and competing theoretical perspectives. One could easily notice that each theory is focusing on one or more specific aspects and ignoring some other features. This section is devoted to reviewing these theoretical explanations and presenting a synthesis of them in the form of a new and comprehensive model.

Cultural versus structural theories

The core idea of cultural theory is that the root of social exclusion should be traced in the attitudes and behaviours (broadly, the culture) of an “underclass” who are defined as a social layer or category outside the main recognised social classes and share the following characteristics: being dependent on welfare provisions; long-term unemployment or under-employment as a result of devaluing work; lack of respect for legitimacy and family (especially in the case of lone mothers with illegitimate children and dependent on welfare benefits) leading to the break-up of the nuclear family structure; lack of proper socialisation; and even committing crimes as a way of maintaining life (Murray, 1990; 1994).

Structural theory, however, focuses on the structures of society which cause certain groups to be deprived of the normal and average advantages of a given society. These structures are “labour market” and “state” which are related to two other important issues of “social class” and “social citizenship” respectively and define the position of any given individual or group within each society (Morris, 1994). However, Peter Somerville (1998, p. 766) suggests that it is not possible to draw sharp and clear boundaries between cultural and structural factors: “A social structure is, after all, only an ordered set of social relations, and these relations could just as well be ‘cultural’ as ‘economic’” (Somerville, *ibid.*, p. 767), thus for example – as Morris herself points out – informal patterns of connection and association can be of great importance in determining the successful individuals in search of employment and these associations seem to be more “cultural” than “structural”.

Solidarity, specialisation and monopoly paradigms

Among other attempts to explain the sources and nature of social exclusion, is the triple categorisation introduced by Hillary Silver (1994) who bases her work on three conflicting social science paradigms and political ideologies. The “solidarity” paradigm which is rooted in French Republicanism, believes that exclusion is a by-product of the breakdown of organic and mechanical social bonds (or “social solidarity”) which constitute a system of rights and duties and regulate the society. The social solidarity paradigm of inclusion has been criticised by Levitas – who calls it social integration discourse (SID) – for focusing on paid work while claiming to encompass all social bounds (Levitas, 2005), although Levitas herself has been criticised for ignoring different versions of this paradigm which pay attention to factors other than paid work – an issue that will be discussed in detail later.

The second paradigm is that of “specialisation” which refers to economic division of labour and separation of social spheres, ascribed to Anglo-American liberalism tradition. According to this paradigm, since individuals differ from each other, the resulting social differentiation and specialisation in the market and in social groups is a normal phenomenon. Moreover, the social order is seen as networks of voluntary exchanges between autonomous individuals and social groups, based on their own interests, values and motivations. Therefore, exclusion arises

when a society experiences inadequate separation of social spheres, application of inappropriate rules to a given sphere or existence of barriers to free movement and exchange or mobility between spheres (Silver, *ibid.*, pp. 542-3). The role of the state is to provide and protect an environment of competition, co-operation, exchange, free choice and social mobility between separate spheres, apart from any discrimination. Dermot O'Reilly (2005) believes that theories of underclass and dependency are moral discourses aligned to this paradigm, perhaps because it does not pay attention to structural factors.

"Monopoly" is the third paradigm recognised by Silver, being based on leftist ideologies inspired by Marx and Weber's views. As is obvious from the term, social order is considered coercive, with unjust and hierarchal relations of power, within which those who have the means of production (and consequently the power and resources) try to maintain their dominance over those who lack them. Thus, exclusion is a corollary of the interplay between class, status and political power, and serves the interests of the included and reinforces the deprivation of the excluded (Silver, *ibid.*, p. 543).

RED, SID and MUD discourses

One of the main alternative theoretical categorisations has been developed by Ruth Levitas (1998; 2005) who identifies three paradigms of conceptualisation, theorisation and policy making with regard to social exclusion: the "redistributionist discourse" (RED) is rooted in critical social policy tradition and its core concepts are multifaceted poverty and inequality in society which cause social exclusion. The redistribution of power and wealth or resources is seen as the key to eliminating social exclusion and this will be achieved through the establishment of full "citizenship" rights (political, social, economic and cultural) for all members of society.

According to Levitas (2005, pp. 21-7), the second discourse (SID) is influenced by the French notion of social solidarity, which in turn is dominated by Durkheimian thought. By analysing the main policy documents which have been introduced under this discourse, she suggests that the main feature of this discourse lies in its emphasis on work – and even paid work – as the main criterion for inclusion and exclusion, although it literally refers to "social" insertion and inclusion. However, O'Reilly (2005) cites Paul Spicker's critique in this regard, pointing out that there are two versions of social integrationist discourse, with the first being identical to what Levitas identifies as a "new Durkheimian hegemony" that justifies differences between groups, and the second, more republican, version that identifies solidarity as transcending individual, class, ethnic and regional interests, which Levitas fails to take account of.

The "moral underclass discourse" (MUD) is attributed to neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism which prevailed in the United Kingdom and the United States during the last two decades of the 20th century. As was explained earlier in "cultural theory", it was argued that the existence of a culture of dependency among the poor themselves causes their social exclusion. Thus, the welfare system was reformed to reduce such dependency and serve only those who are seriously in need (Levitas, 2005, pp. 14-21).

Labour process, social reproduction, and ideological analyses

After explaining the cultural and structural theories of social exclusion and citing their weaknesses, Peter Somerville (1998) argues that there are three dimensions of the causation of social exclusion (economic; legal/political; moral/ideological)

and therefore it is necessary to present a holistic theoretical view which covers all these dimensions. Using Katznelson's idea of several levels for the analysis of social class (1986), he introduces the following levels for the study of social exclusion: labour process, social reproduction process and ideological factors, which are respectively related to the three dimensions explained above.

At the first level lies the basic and fundamental cause of social exclusion, namely the labour process and the nature of exploitation within it. Among different types of labour processes in the advanced capitalist countries, the "generalised commodity production" and the "domestic labour process" are of relevance to this debate. In the first instance, labour itself is dealt with as a commodity and is exploited by being paid less than the value of the provided goods or services, and in the second case, labour is exploited by not being paid or being paid at a very low and inappropriate rate compared to the real value of its work or product. Therefore, the capitalist and domestic forms of exploitation lead to social exclusion of certain groups, especially unskilled people and women (in particular lone mothers), which may, in turn, affect the future exclusion of their children.

Social reproduction is the second level of analysis which refers to all means of labour reproduction in the wider society. According to Somerville (1998, p. 769), the most important types of social reproduction processes are related to state regulations and consist of legal and political institutions, national economic and financial management, and education and welfare in its broad sense. All of these factors can increase or reduce the level of exclusion arising from the first level, that is the labour process. It has been argued that state regulations and policies usually reinforce – or at least reflect – the dual exploitation of labour which was explained at the first level.

The third level of analysis concerns the ideological or moral dimension. Generally speaking, all rules and legal principles in every society have the potential to be used as exclusionary tools against those who fail or refuse to conform (for example, offenders). While most of these rules are intended to maintain the social order, it is possible that certain rules serve to reinforce current forms of exploitation, or discrimination and domination.

Post-modernist and critical realist approaches

If the main criterion for inclusion or exclusion in most previous theoretical models was that of "production" and paid work related to this notion, it is "consumption" which constitutes the cornerstone of the post-modernist account of exclusion (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 82). However, citing O'Reilly's viewpoint, Robin Cohen (2005) believes that it is difficult to find a real protagonist for this view, so this position is inferred rather than stated.

The critical realist approach is another theoretical view regarding the inclusion/exclusion debate. Developed by O'Reilly (2005, pp. 85-7), it relies on three features of inclusion/exclusion drawn from philosophical anthropology: material social interaction, individual value orientations and group value relations. The first feature is concerned with the issue of whether or not people have access to those material resources that enable sound social and human relationship in a society. The second feature considers whether individuals are enabled (through material resources available to them) to be autonomous and not adversely included in relations of domination and dependence; moreover, are they free to pursue their own ethical ends within society (compared to those ethical ends or values that are sanctioned or tolerated in the society)? In other words, to what extent are different

ethical ends integrated or included in the cultural and, more importantly, the legal and institutional frameworks of the related society? The third feature is inevitably related to the second one and its core idea is whether or not various groups within society have the opportunity to be and are actually involved in the negotiation of co-responsibility in the society, since it is obvious (for example, through the history of social movements) that group claims have greater potential for the advancement of individual autonomy, rights and values.

Toward a holistic approach to social exclusion

Having reviewed the main theoretical explanations of social exclusion, we can take a holistic approach to the understanding and explanation of this phenomenon. To this end, a new theoretical model is presented, titled “the multi-level analysis model of social exclusion”. The following table illustrates the main parts of the proposed theoretical model. It categorises and uses different explanatory elements of various existing theories and adds some levels and elements which have not been covered by them, but have been cited by critics as relevant and necessary to be studied in future research.

Table 11. The multi-level analysis model of social exclusion

| Levels | Factors/causes | Related theories |
|---------------|--|---|
| Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value orientations • Qualifications and expectations • Gender • Ethnicity/race • Disability • Criminal/residential care record | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUD • Cultural • Labour process (domestic) • Structural (gender, race) |
| Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic status/social class • Family environment • Family structure • Family value orientations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialisation theories |
| Local | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical location • Availability of and access to services • Opportunity structures • Local environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical realist • Structural |
| National | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market system/structure • Welfare system • Political ideology • Transitional society • Economic system/situation • Education/training system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural • SID • RED • Risk society • Labour process (commodified) • Social reproduction • Ideological analysis • Monopoly • Specialisation • Solidarity • Critical realist |
| International | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • Regional or international crisis linked to a country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation |

→ Measuring social inclusion/exclusion: definitions, dimensions and indicators

Numerous definitions have been provided for social exclusion and inclusion, based on different theoretical stands as well as policy orientations. Although there are differences between definitions, one can identify a range of similarities and common features. The literature suggests that a) social exclusion is not a simple matter of economic deprivation, but also includes social, political and cultural aspects; b) it is a situation resulting from a process of interplay between various factors; c) it is a context-based notion and can have different meanings and manifestations in various contexts, including different countries. In contrast, and based on the common features of various definitions, the following definition can be used as a composite definition of social inclusion: the desired situation whereby all members of the society have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live.

This overarching conceptual framework could be used to assess the levels of social inclusion and exclusion of young people after being operationalised and translated into appropriate dimensions, indicators and themes.

As is evident from the definition above, youth inclusion is a multidimensional and multi-faceted issue. It is a combination of interplaying factors that determines the inclusion or exclusion of young people. Andrew Mitchell and Richard Shillington (2002) have identified five dimensions (physical, economic, political, human assets, social assets), 15 aspects (location, infrastructure, housing, income, labour market, assets, health, education, social background, civic engagement, psychological, power, participation, agency, citizenship) and 33 indicators of social exclusion with regard to children and young people.

Gallant 2000 (2004) introduces a different set of dimensions and indicators of social exclusion, adding locality, diversity and individual dimensions to the above-mentioned list. Based on a decision made by the European Council to define appropriate objectives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the Social Protection Committee carried out some work in 2001 to define related indicators. The committee defined 18 indicators and divided them into two main categories, namely "primary indicators" consisting of 10 lead indicators covering the broad fields that have been considered the most important elements in leading to social exclusion, and "secondary indicators" intended to support the lead indicators and describe other dimensions of the problem (Social Protection Committee, 2001). Although the list was revised and then approved by the committee in July 2003 (European Commission, 2004), it mainly focuses on economic indicators (employment and income) and refers only briefly to education and health.

Based on the main literature, one can suggest the following list of dimensions and indicators as a basis for the measurement of social inclusion and exclusion.

Table 12. Dimensions of youth inclusion and related indicators

| Dimensions | Indicators |
|--------------------------|---|
| Economic | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having a sound employment status (including job security and lack of long-term unemployment) 2. Parents having a sound employment status 3. Having a reasonable financial situation (income) 4. Lack of chronic debt 5. Having a proper housing status |
| Physical | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being covered by health insurance 2. Access to proper health services 3. Lack of chronic health problems 4. Lack of disability 5. Proper nutrition 6. Access to sports facilities |
| Social | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having an intact family status 2. Availability of social institutions (sports clubs, religious groups, NGOs, voluntary organisations) 3. Participating in social institutions 4. Belonging to social institutions 5. Good educational achievement 6. Educational streaming (not dropping out) |
| Political | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having the right to elect and to be elected 2. Voting participation 3. Other forms of political participation 4. Having confidence in the political process 5. Sense of internal and external political efficacy |
| Cultural | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of cultural facilities (library, cinema, etc.) 2. Ability to use cultural facilities 3. Participating in cultural activities |
| Electronic (e-inclusion) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having basic computer literacy 2. Having regular access to computer/Internet in a place other than home 3. Having a personal computer 4. Having other electronic devices (video, TV, telephone, mobile phone) 5. Having access to Internet at home |
| Locality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to good public transportation 2. Access to public parks and recreational facilities 3. Access to public health facilities 4. Living in a clean and proper environment 5. Not living in a geographically isolated area 6. Non-concentration of marginalised and poor people in the area |
| Subjective | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being appreciated/respected 2. Considering the society as inclusive 3. Sense of belonging to the social and political system 4. Believing in the existence of equality/non-discrimination in the society 5. Sense of having a responsive system 6. Believing in the existence of justice in society |

→ Multi-level analysis of Muslim youth inclusion/exclusion in the UK

The theoretical framework alongside the categorisation of dimensions and indicators presented in the previous section, provide a suitable instrument for the analysis of Muslim youth inclusion and exclusion in contemporary British society. However, since this paper relies on existent data and research, and is not based on a new field study to gain independent and specific data, it may not have enough data for fully addressing all aspects of each level. Therefore, it is recommended that the present paper and the analytical framework presented herein is used for guiding future research with regard to all young people within the Council of Europe member states, especially those groups which are more vulnerable to social exclusion, including minority subgroups such as Muslim youth.

Individual level

Gender

Gender is believed to be among the most important exclusionary factors at the individual level in every society, from the East to the West. It could be argued that all feminist schools of thought and movements are based on the assumption of women's exclusion from mainstream male-dominated society and lack of entitlement to equal rights and opportunities. It is also widely accepted that women are more excluded in traditional societies or in communities practising traditional rituals and codes of conduct within modern societies. Muslim women, especially girls and young women, are usually portrayed as a group suffering from severe exclusion and discrimination, both in originally Islamic societies as well as in Muslim communities within western societies. It is enough to have a glance at what is presented in various media as well as academic research in the West to observe this portrayal.

As an example, it is interesting to read a short part of the speech presented by Claude Moniquet, Director General of European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre to the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the United States House of Representatives on 27 April 2005:

Ten years ago, the Islamic veil was mainly worn by older women. Now at least half of the female Muslim population wear the veil. In some municipalities in France, the figure is about 80%. From field investigation we know that in most cases those girls and women didn't really choose to wear the veil but were "forced" to do so by family or community pressure. In some European cities, a Muslim girl who refuses to wear the veil leaves herself open to insults, physical aggression, sexual harassment and even collective rape. In France, those aggressions happen regularly. (Moniquet, 2005).

Muslim girls and young women in the UK are not exempt from this rule and they are considered to be among the most excluded and disadvantaged groups in the country. In fact, there are several signs which point to this issue including: up to 68% of Muslim women are economically inactive compared to no more than a third of any other religious group (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006, cited in Mirza et al., 2007); the rates of higher education participation amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (mostly Muslim) are relatively lower than those of women from other South Asian backgrounds (Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006); 16% of Muslim women reported "not good" health compared to 13% of Muslim men (ONS, 2001b).

Literature about Muslim girls and young women in the UK suggests that the following factors lead to their exclusion in British society:

1. Parental family orientations and environment: many accounts of Muslim families portray them as patriarchal and inherently oppressive, thus posing barriers to women's participation in the public sphere, including higher education, the labour market and recreational facilities. Ahmad (2006) criticises these studies as relying on discourses of "degradation and despair" and tending to present racialised and pathological accounts of ethnic minority families, especially "arranged marriages". Echoing some other studies, the empirical data gathered by Tyrer and Ahmad (2006) demonstrate that many Muslim women cited their families as key sources of encouragement and motivation towards higher education study and in thinking about future careers.
2. Self devotion to family life and domestic duties: some studies (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006; ONS, 2005) suggest that a large number of Muslim women choose not to work because they tend on average to have their first child earlier than women from other groups, and they also tend to have more children. For example, the Labour Force Survey undertaken in spring 2005, shows that only 23% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women aged 16-34 who are not in employment actually want to be in work. However, Tyrer and Ahmad (2006, p. 12) found that care responsibilities, marriage, and the presence of young children did not prevent Muslim women from taking up degree courses and following better career prospects.
3. Adhering to principles of modesty and piety: it will be discussed in more detail later that value orientations could play a significant role in social exclusion. Based on Islamic teachings, Muslim women (and men) should adhere to principles of modesty and piety which include avoiding – for example – mixed sports and recreational facilities like swimming pools, clubs and so on. Bearing in mind that such single sex facilities are quite rare, the result is their exclusion from such settings and services.
4. Appearance and clothing: Muslim girls and women are more visible than Muslim boys and men in the public sphere and this could be a cause of disadvantage for them. Although fortunately the Hijab is not banned in formal public settings in the UK (as it is in France and Germany), it leads in some cases to exclusion because of stereotypes associated with Muslim women. A considerable number of respondents to the study undertaken by Tyrer and Ahmad (2006, p. 20) "reported feeling that men and women experience Islamophobia in different ways and this was linked to their greater visibility as Muslim women wearing the Hijab". This situation would be worse if it is accompanied by wearing the Niqab (Johnston, 2007). Of course, this situation could also occur for Muslim males if they adhere to such styles of appearance (for example, long beards) and clothing generally considered as typical of strict Muslims.

Ethnicity

The absolute majority of the Muslim population in the UK is from ethnic backgrounds, with almost 74% from an Asian ethnic background. In 2001, 43% were Pakistani, 16% Bangladeshi, 8% Indian and 6% of other Asian ethnic background. Moreover, there are Muslims from Arab, Afghan, Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish, Kosovan, North African and Somalian origins. Only 12% declared themselves as "white" and these were of British as well as other white origin (ONS, 2004a).

Mirza et al. (2007) believe that levels of social disadvantage in the UK actually relate more closely to ethnicity and, even more importantly, to socio-economic class rather than religious grouping. Therefore, Muslims are marginalised and excluded not because of their religion but due to their attribution to ethnic minorities. Moreover, more than 50% of Muslims living in the UK have been born outside this country, usually in less developed or developing countries and have imported their disadvantages to British society through immigration.

Value orientations

Personal or group value orientations can play an important role in the inclusion and exclusion of individuals and groups in a given society. If these orientations conform to the value orientations of wider society, they will be easily integrated and included and if they are at odds with the dominant value sets, those individuals and groups essentially become excluded.

Muslim youth hold a set of cultural and religious values which make them distinct from the other groups. Although they have acquired many values of British society, they still have many features which differentiate them from the majority of young people.

Many young Muslims find themselves cut off from a British culture that includes alcohol and looser sexual mores. As Ummul Choudhury – a London-based Middle East analyst for the (Persian) Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies – says: “If you don’t drink, it really cuts you off from English society ... The view of the older generation is also that you do not integrate. If you do, you are told you are betraying your culture and religion” (Brandon, 2005).

Mirza et al. (2007) found that while religion is very important to the Muslim population, there is also a difference between generations, with younger Muslims being more likely to identify and feel a greater connection with their religious community (Table 13).

Table 13. Generational differences in value orientations of Muslims in the UK

| Items | All ages | Youth (16-24) |
|---|----------|---------------|
| My religion is the most important thing in my life | 86% | - |
| I feel more in common with Muslims in other countries than I do with non-Muslims in Britain | 31% | - |
| Younger people living in my area are more religious today than 10 years ago | 48% | 38% |
| I feel that I have as much in common with non-Muslims as I do with Muslims | 66% | 62% |
| I prefer that Muslim women choose to wear the veil | 53% | 74% |
| If I could choose, I would prefer to live in Britain under Sharia law rather than British law | 28% | 37% |
| If I had a choice, I would prefer to send my child to an Islamic state school that follows the national curriculum and achieves good results than to a mixed state school that achieves equally good results. | 35% | - |
| Homosexuality is wrong and should be illegal | 61% | 71% |

| Items | All ages | Youth (16-24) |
|---|----------|---------------|
| British society offers strong moral and cultural values to young people | 48% | - |
| Many of the problems in the world today are a result of arrogant western attitudes | 58% | - |
| I admire organisations like al-Qaeda that are prepared to fight against the West | 7% | 13% |
| On the whole, I feel I have been treated fairly in this society, regardless of my religious beliefs | 84% | - |

Criminal/residential care record

Having a criminal or residential care record forms a basis for disadvantage. Nearly 10% of the prison population is Muslim, two thirds of whom are young men aged 18-30 (National Youth Agency, 2007). Between 2001 and 2003 there was a 302% increase in “stop and search” incidents among Asian people, compared with 118% among white people (Home Office, 2004). Having in mind that Muslims and Asians constitute 3% and 5% of the general population respectively, their share of the inmate population as well as “stop and search” incidents under the new terrorism laws shows a biased treatment toward them.

Family level

It was mentioned in Table 13 that family affects the inclusion and exclusion of young people in several ways. Family socio-economic status/social class, family environment, family structure, and family value orientations are among the most important factors.

The study of the above-mentioned factors with regard to Muslim families indicates that they suffer from many disadvantages which, in turn, affect the levels of Muslim youth exclusion: 35% of Muslim households have no adults in employment, more than double the national average (Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2004, p. 7). Nearly three quarters of Bangladeshi and Pakistani children (73%) are living in households below the poverty line (60% of median income). This figure is under a third (31%) for children in all households (Department for Work and Pensions, 2001). A third of Muslim households (34%) contained more than five people, while 25% of households contained three or more dependent children (ONS, 2001c).

Concerning family value orientations and their impact on Muslim youth exclusion, there is not enough empirical evidence available and existing accounts in this field provide a mixed picture.

Local level

The Muslim population of the United Kingdom is located disproportionately in the most disadvantaged and deprived areas and districts. According to a report by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2004), 67% of people from minority ethnic communities live in the 88 most deprived districts in England, as compared to 37% of the white population. The concentration of Muslims in the poorest areas of cities is indicative of the marginalisation of Muslims, and means that the inter-faith and inter-ethnic interactions are often of a confrontational nature, resulting from fear and mistrust of the “other side” (Open Society Institute, 2005, p. 13).

National level

Labour market

Unemployment rates for Muslims, especially young people, are higher than those for people from any other religion, for both men and women. In 2004, Muslims had the highest male unemployment rate in Great Britain at 13%. This was about three times the rate for Christian men (4%). The unemployment rate for Muslim women at 18% was about four times the rate for Christian and Jewish women (4% in each case). Muslims aged between 16 and 24 years had the highest unemployment rates. They were over twice as likely as Christians of the same age to be unemployed – 28% compared with 11% (ONS, 2004a).

In 2004, 37% of Muslim men in employment were working in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industry compared with 17% of Christian men and no more than 27% of men in any other group (ONS, 2004b).

Educational system

In 2004, a third (33%) of Muslims of working age in Great Britain had no qualifications – the highest proportion for any religious group (this was 23% for Sikhs and 15% for Christians). They were also the least likely to have degrees or equivalent qualifications (12%). However, Muslims and Sikhs who were born in the UK are more likely than those born elsewhere to have a degree or equivalent qualification, irrespective of age. Among those under the age of 30, UK-born Sikhs and Muslims were almost twice as likely to have degrees in 2004 as those born elsewhere (ONS, 2004c).

With regard to school performance and achievement, there is a mixed picture: according to one report, 31% of young British Muslims leave school with no qualifications, compared to 15% of the total population (ONS, 2004d), while another report indicates that in 2004, 67% of Indian, 48% of Bangladeshi and 45% of Pakistani pupils gained five or more grades A* to C at GCSE (or equivalent), compared with 52% of white British pupils. Moreover, half of young Muslims aged 18-30 are in post-compulsory education compared to 38% of the general population (Modood, 2005).

Housing system

According to the 2001 census, Muslim and Buddhist households were the least likely to be homeowners (52% and 54% respectively). Muslim households were the most likely to be living in social rented accommodation, that is accommodation rented from the council or housing association. In 2001, 28% of Muslim households were living in social rented accommodation (ONS, 2001c).

Muslim households are the most likely to experience overcrowding (the average number of persons per Muslim household is 4.9). One third of Muslim households (32%) lived in overcrowded accommodation in 2001, as did 22% of Hindu and 19% of Sikh households. Just 6% of Christian households experienced overcrowding. Muslim households were the most likely (12%) to lack central heating (ibid.).

International level

Muslims in the UK, including Muslim young people, are hugely affected by factors at the international level. A number of shocking events have occurred during

recent years that have had undeniable implications for the Muslim community in the UK, including:

- attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the USA (11 September 2001)
- wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with the participation of UK
- London bombings (7 July 2005)
- the Danish cartoons controversy (January/February 2006)
- the Jack Straw veil remarks (2006).

The effects of these events were twofold: first, they helped to create and strengthen the portrayal of Muslims as a special and troublesome community, the implication of which was reflected in increased levels of Islamophobia, as well as the distrust between the Muslim community and wider society. Second, it strengthened the already existing sense of belonging to the wider worldwide Islamic community (global *Ummah*) and seeing the British government as opposing the Islamic world. As illustrated in Table 13, Muslims in the UK and especially young Muslims strongly identify themselves with their religious identity at individual, national and international levels and these kinds of events help to cut them off from individuals, groups and entities that are considered as anti-Islamic by them.

→ Conclusions

Based on a range of data obtained from official authorities, as well as field research and studies, this paper has illustrated various manifestations of exclusion and disadvantage experienced by Muslim youth in the UK, applying a multi-level analysis model of social exclusion.

Gender and ethnicity are the most influential factors on Muslim youth at the individual level, with women suffering from more exclusion, partly because their Islamic identity is more visible. At the family level, the socio-economic status of the family (including the employment and financial situation) plays a prominent role in defining the extent of inclusion or exclusion of young Muslims, bearing in mind the fact that a considerable portion of Muslim households (34%) are overcrowded, have no adult in employment (35%), and are living below the poverty line (73%). The same situation is the case at the local level, with 67% of minority ethnic communities living in the 88 most deprived districts in England. At the national level, labour market processes have the most adverse effect on Muslim youth exclusion, given that 28% of them are unemployed (compared to 11% of Christian youth) and a considerable proportion of those employed are working in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industries. Their exclusion has deteriorated further due to a set of shocking events in recent years, resulting in distrust between Muslims and the dominant system and a stronger sense of belonging to the wider Islamic community.

With regard to explaining this situation, it was mentioned that the current research and information at hand give a mixed picture about the causes and roots of these disadvantages; while some argue that these are based on religious foundations, others assert that they have little to do with religion and are more likely to be related to such factors as individual, family and group cultural orientations, family socio-economic status, ethnicity, locality and the like.

However, it is noteworthy that whatever the source of exclusion, Muslim youth are suffering from this phenomenon and, most importantly, consider this to be based

on their religious identity as Muslims. Therefore, research is needed to show the exact levels of exclusion and disadvantage of Muslim community and to define the shares of various factors at different levels on the one hand, while more policy and practice initiatives are needed to deal with these disadvantages, based on the accurate findings of the proposed research, on the other.

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Young and Muslim in Britain: how responsive are mainstream services?

Momodou Sallah

This chapter is based on action research and critically explores how mainstream services in the fields of formal and informal education, employment, criminal justice, health and housing, are responsive to the cultural and religious needs of young Muslims in Britain. Tariq Ramandan (2007) argues that Europe is undergoing an “identity crisis” given its demographic reconfiguration and is consequently going through labour pains in search of a new identity. The assassination of Theo van Gogh in November 2004, the 2001 riots in the northern cities of England, the riots in France in November 2005 and the incident of the Danish cartoons in autumn 2005, evidence the birth of a new identity being forged in the heat of battle.

In Britain, especially after the bombings of 7 July, this “identity crisis” has become magnified as evidenced by the UK government’s policy departure from multiculturalism to integration (Dacombe and Sallah 2006; Sallah 2007). The emphasis has shifted away from different cultures co-existing side by side, to everyone accepting British values (Brown, 2006) whatever these are meant to be.

Young Muslims have increasingly become a focus in the fight against

extremism and the “War on Terror”, which has largely concerned the prevention of extremism and radicalisation. However, the core causes of deprivation and exclusion have largely been missing from this equation (Briggs et al., 2006; Sallah, 2007). In addition, research suggests that mainstream services struggle to deliver responsive services (Ashrif, 2007; Sallah, 2007).

This research focuses on young Muslims in Leicester in order to explore how mainstream services respond to their increasingly significant religious identity and needs (Choudhury 2007; Sporton et al. 2006). There were 5 871 young Muslims in the study, between the ages of 10 and 19 (2001 census) – 14.5% of the Leicestershire Unitary Authority’s population in this age bracket. Leicester is known as one of the most diverse cities in Europe, both in terms of ethnicity and religion, and provides a microscopic view of the situation across Europe.

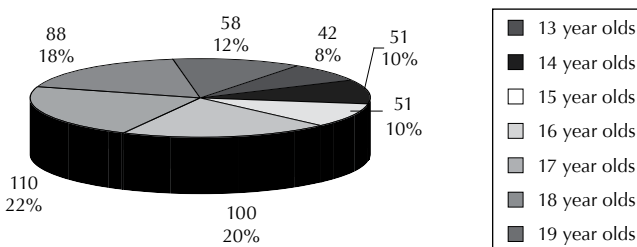
→ Research process and objectives

Given the above-mentioned existing climate in relation to Muslims in Europe generally and those within the UK specifically, the research focused on:

1. The needs of Muslim youths with a specific focus on those in Leicester;
2. The barriers Muslim youths face in accessing mainstream provisions;
3. How barriers affect the community’s cohesion/integration agenda;
4. Recommendations for making provisions more culturally competent and promoting good practice.

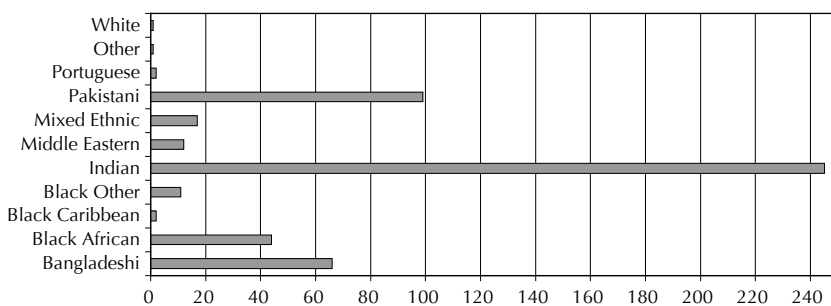
A fundamental feature of this research is that it incorporates the Participatory Action Research (Whyte, 1991) approach where members of the population being researched play a cardinal role in designing and implementing the research process. Secondly, it also incorporated a dimension of “cultural affinity” (Oakley, 1981) where the researchers understand and relate to those being researched; this in no way taints or devalues the objectivity of the research process, but works towards empowering the affected population. The researchers worked with seven young Muslims to design and implement the research process. We used a variety of methods to gather data and by triangulating data, collected from the following sources:

Figure 1. Ages of young Muslims



1. Six focus groups with 40 young people from most backgrounds, representative of the Muslim population in Leicester and Leicestershire, taking into consideration gender, race/ethnicity, age, occupation and postcode.
2. Eight semi-structured individual interviews with representatives of statutory organisations including the police, education, children and young people's services, youth services and politicians.
3. Eight semi-structured individual interviews with representatives of voluntary/community/madrasah groups serving Muslim communities in Leicester and Leicestershire.
4. A focus group interview with Muslim parents.
5. Five hundred structured, individual, self-administered questionnaires for young Muslims between the ages of 13 and 19.

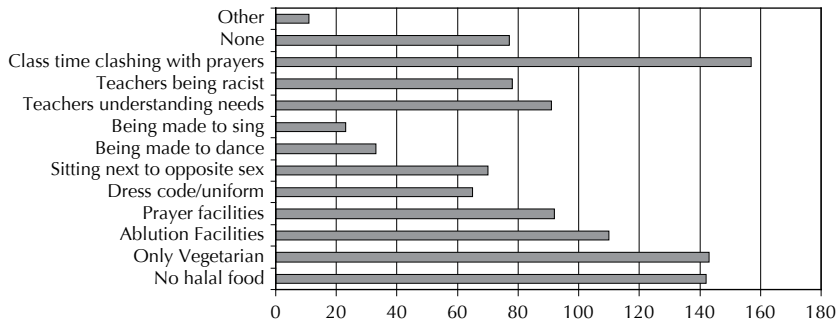
Table 14. Ethnicity of participants



→ Formal education

Out of the 500 young people, 80 felt teachers were racist and 18% felt that they did not understand their needs as young Muslims. This could be manifested in the form of racist jokes, lack of sensitivity to religious issues like fasting, and focusing only on the young person's Muslim religion, whilst young people of other religions do not receive similar treatment. The competency and sensitivity of some mainstream practitioners have been called into question, for being either unintentionally or deliberately discriminatory in dealing with young Muslims. The following quote, whilst possibly an extreme view, gives us an insight:

M.A: In _____ College, it was Ramadan, we asked the teacher can we go home early coz we were fasting, he goes ok and he asked a couple of questions about Islam and that. He would ask how devoted are you? Are you gonna bring a bomb into college and blow us all up?

Table 15. Problems in formal education

Practitioner training, especially teacher training, should incorporate a robust religious dimension; educational establishments with significant Muslim populations should also include this in staff training days, as well as give it significance in staff induction. The Department of Education should also work with Muslim organisations like the Federation of Muslim Organisations (FMO) and the Council of Faiths to produce accessible guidelines.

Halal options must be available for young Muslims in any multi-faith and multi-cultural school. The lack of halal options was raised as an issue by 49% of young people and 144 out of the 500 young people interviewed said that even where the halal option is available, it is mainly a bland vegetarian option without halal meat; this results in them trying to go out and look for food, bringing a packed lunch, or going hungry. Educational establishments have a duty to recognise young people's different needs and should make halal options available especially where young Muslims are a sizable minority. Religious practices, such as the consumption of only halal food, is very important for Muslims and if "faith sensitivity" is not observed, it can potentially be seen as indirect religious discrimination (Choudhury, 2007).

About 32% of young people surveyed listed prayer times clashing with classes as a barrier. It is worth noting that the Muslim prayer times change all year round. It is very important for a significant number of young Muslims to go and pray, especially in respect of Friday prayers. An example of good practice is Moat Community College, where prayer time is set with the necessary facilities and an imam. In the same vein, about 20% of the participants cited the lack of ablution facilities as a barrier in formal education. We recommend that educational establishments make adequate and reasonable adjustments to provide this.

The curriculum also needs to reflect the diversity of the area it serves, for example including Arabic as a language choice in areas where the Muslim population is significant. The syllabus, where applicable, should be tailored to include Islamic art, culture and history, in response to local needs. One aim stated in the Community Cohesion Standards for Schools (2004: 4) is that the mainstream curriculum "provides pupils with opportunities to learn about and become involved in the life of their communities."

In the same vein, it would be helpful to have one point of contact in schools to report racially/religiously motivated acts, as young people have said they feel frustrated when they have to approach several teachers to resolve issues. This recommendation is in line with the Community Cohesion Standards for Schools (2004: 11) in which actions have been set for staff to "receive regular training to

deal effectively with racial incidents, harassment and bullying". However, this does not extend to religiously motivated incidents. Schools should nevertheless take such action through a formal structured system, so that young people are aware of what protocol to follow. All educational institutions should recognise Islamophobia in all its forms and should take effective measures to address harassment and bullying based on faith.

Issues of culture and religion have been barriers for young Muslims who are passing through the education system. One of these is conflicting commitments, where prayer and madrasah times conflict with homework and coursework requirements. Compulsory educational establishments need to be aware which after-school priorities are distracting young Muslims from achieving their very best in educational requirements.

Central government has recognised the need for colleges and further education institutes to "support faith needs" (Preventing Violent Extremism – Winning Hearts and Minds, Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007: 6). They recommend "Faith Awareness weeks, and Muslim Student Voice Councils". This is to allow colleges to gain a better understanding of Islam and young Muslims' needs. We could not agree with this more, however having a better understanding does not necessarily mean incorporating their needs into mainstream services. We further recommend that educational establishments conduct current needs assessments for the young Muslims in their establishments and act upon the issues identified.

Table 16. Informal education

| | |
|---|-----|
| Timing of session clashes with madrasah | 131 |
| Mixed gender session | 81 |
| Prayer and ablution facilities | 100 |
| Parents deny permission | 77 |
| Not aware of session/facilities | 75 |
| Being a minority | 74 |
| Staff not knowing enough about the needs of Muslims | 95 |
| Not having sessions that meet my needs | 61 |
| Reputation of youth club | 65 |
| None | 152 |

From the young people's point of view, informal education facilities need to be more inclusive; 26.5% stated that madrasah sessions clashed with the timings of the youth club and other informal education sessions, which makes it impossible for them to attend. It is also interesting to note that 20% of young Muslims felt that staff do not know enough about their needs, whilst 16% cited mixed sessions as barriers to accessing these services. Fifteen per cent cite parents who deny them permission as a barrier and upon exploration we found that parents may deny young people permission mainly because of what is perceived (negatively) to go on, as well as issues to do with trust:

L: Some parents might not [allow you to] go to youth clubs, because it's mixed, they don't like the idea of their kids being mixed with opposite sex groups, there have been issues in the Highfield centres, and parents refuse and say the centres are not good because they are, boys and girls are mixed, word spreads around and then parents don't like the idea of them going. (Muslim parent)

Of equal significance is the fact that over 14% of young people are not aware of informal activities like youth clubs. We recommend the following, in relation to the Leicester Youth Service, as the primary provider of informal activities in Leicester:

1. Start engaging with Muslim parents and explain the nature of their services.
2. Advertise their services to the Muslim communities in a number of creative ways, including working with community/voluntary/madrasah groups, especially partnership work with these groups.
3. Train their staff in cultural competency; this should be done through staff training days, incorporated in the induction programme, NVQs and working with Muslim organisations to produce accessible guidelines.
4. Consider changing some of the timings of their sessions to accommodate madrasah times.
5. It is also important to note that in the eastern part of the city, where the bulk of the Muslim population resides, we are only aware of two officially-run youth clubs and perhaps it is time this imbalance is redressed.
6. The youth service is one of the best-placed organisations to promote community cohesion, by promoting exchanges between young people from different parts of the city and beyond.
7. Explore reasons why Muslim parents feel uncomfortable in sending their children to access informal education and leisure facilities and address the concerns parents have in collaboration with Muslim organisations such as the Federation of Muslim Organisations (FMO).

→ **Barriers to and in employment**

Lack of facilities for prayer (34 young people), ablution (31 young people) and absence of halal food (46 young people) were some of the barriers faced by some of the young Muslims at work. A significant number also cited encountering racist staff, lack of understanding of their needs as young Muslims and dress code, as barriers they face. In relation to problems young Muslims face in accessing employment, the biggest factor is the lack of prayer facilities; 60 young people stated the job involved forbidden “haram” items like pork and alcohol; 38 people mentioned management not understanding the needs of young Muslims and 34 cited the dress code/uniform as a barrier. In this light we recommend:

1. Staff training to raise awareness and promote cultural/religious competency;
2. Conducting another study to explore in greater depth the negative statistics in relation to young Muslims, unemployment and lack of qualifications;

3. Having a clear and accessible complaints procedure for those who experience religious discrimination;
4. Reviewing the dress code in some organisations so it is more sensitive to the religious needs of young Muslims;
5. Making adequate provisions for halal food to be available on the menu;
6. Making adequate arrangements for prayer and ablution facilities;
7. Ensuring the job takes into consideration the religious needs of young Muslims and does not place them in positions where they are required to compromise their religious beliefs, by handling pork or alcohol for example.

Table 17. Barriers to leisure facilities

| | |
|---|-----|
| Timing of session clashes with madrasah | 86 |
| Mixed gender session | 173 |
| Lack of prayer and ablution facilities | 81 |
| Parents deny permission | 68 |
| Not aware of session/facilities | 68 |
| Being a minority | 69 |
| Staff not knowing enough about the needs of Muslims | 63 |
| Not having sessions that meet my needs | 51 |
| Reputation of youth club | 43 |
| Other | 6 |
| None | 155 |

In relation to barriers faced in accessing leisure facilities, over 170 out of 500 young people identified mixed gender sessions. Other significant barriers include timings of sessions clashing with madrasah, lack of prayer and ablution facilities, not being aware of facilities, staff not knowing enough about the needs of young Muslims as well as parents denying permission. We recommend:

1. Provision of some single sex sessions;
2. Timing of activities to take into consideration madrasah commitments;
3. Work with Muslim parents to assure them that facilities are inclusive;
4. Have prayer and ablution facilities available.

Table 18. Barriers to accessing voluntary/community/madrasah groups

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Different sect | 157 |
| Different ethnic origin | 75 |
| Don't feel welcomed | 86 |
| Too expensive | 78 |
| Parents will not approve | 52 |
| Poor quality | 67 |
| None | 179 |
| Other | 15 |

Whilst this research focuses on barriers to mainstream services, it is significant to note that voluntary/community/madrasah groups provide invaluable services to the Muslim communities and, by implication, to young Muslims. It is equally important to note that young Muslims also face barriers in accessing these groups. Belonging to a different sect was seen as a barrier by 31.6% of young people, 15% cited belonging to a different ethnic origin and 15.8% mentioned cost. The following discussion within one of the focus groups illustrates this point:

SF: Even when I use to go to [the] play scheme, me and my friend were the only Indian girls, the rest were Pakistani and Kutchi speaking and like they all made us feel uncomfortable and they would always make us feel like it's a Paki thing.

SF: They used to leave us out and hold this segregation and you'd think what's going on, why you all holding a racist thing we're all Muslim and we're coming to this thing.

SF: Both the workers were racist and they didn't like us, like some of the Pakistani workers didn't like us. It was a Khatri place! How can you look down at the Indians just because there were less of us?

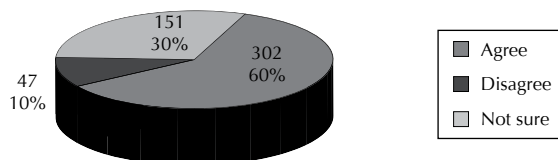
Perhaps statements such as that by this young Muslim girl suggest that some organisations need to monitor such incidents and be more inclusive.

This evidences our earlier assertion that the Muslim community is not homogeneous and whilst community cohesion should be promoted between Muslim communities and mainstream agencies, there is also a lot of work that needs to be done within and between the Muslim communities. In this light we recommend that:

1. They make their services more inclusive, not just by being inclusive but by actively promoting inclusion;
2. They organise events that bring people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together;
3. Management committees of Muslim organisations reflect the diversity of their users;
4. More volunteering opportunities are made readily available to young Muslims through community groups. In addition, there needs to be recognition through accredited schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Youth Achievement Awards and Getting Connected.

Figure 2. Barriers to the criminal justice system

Response of young Muslims when asked if they felt the police interacted with them differently, for the worse, after the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings



The police are said to be the most visible manifestation of government policy and some strong findings emerged. Thirty-five per cent felt that the police treated them less favourably because of their religion, whilst 36% cited their colour; 59% stated that their view of the police has changed for the worse after 9/11 and 7/7; 61% felt that the police interacted with them differently and for the worse after 9/11; additionally, 29% felt that the police were not sensitive to their needs as young Muslims. It is also interesting to note that 34% felt young Muslims were treated negatively by courts. The above sentiments are captured in the statements of young people in focus groups:

M: Police and the courts and authorities might be discriminative and single out Muslims.

L: Police, if they see a Muslim person, they think all Muslim people are terrorists.

Parents who participated in the focus groups also had strong views regarding the police:

RV: My son was flying to Cyprus with two of his friends. He was just going on a general trip to see his friends for 4 or 5 days. At the airport they were being harassed by the police and when they got on to the flight, police with gunmen came to get them off the flight and said you can't travel on this flight, because they thought he was a terrorist, and because he had a beard.

BC: They look at the colour of the skin and some of them are really racist. I know my son has been stopped many times just because of the colour of his skin by the police and has been searched.

The perception of the police by young Muslims is negative and efforts need to be made to counter this. These could include training in working with young Muslims, informal interactions between young Muslims and the police and consultation with Muslim youths. We concur with Briggs et al. (1996) that there needs to be a much more open relationship between the police and Muslim communities, using "open channels" of communication.

The perception of authority/government, symbolised by the police, is very poor and bridges need to be built if community policing is to be effective and young Muslims' sense of belonging is to be strengthened. In the absence of this, much of the activity geared towards countering terrorism would be futile.

Table 19. Barriers to health

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Language | 80 |
| Doctor/nurse of the opposite sex | 136 |
| Needs of young Muslims | 61 |
| Halal option in hospitals | 153 |
| Medicine | 132 |
| Prayer facilities | 103 |
| Community view | 60 |
| None | 171 |

In relation to barriers to health, 153 young people mentioned lack of a halal option in hospitals, 136 cited being treated by a doctor/nurse of the opposite sex, 80 people mentioned language and 60 mentioned how they might be viewed (negatively) by the community if they were to be seen accessing certain services like the provision of drugs or contraceptives. A drugs advice worker captures this point:

... the pros and cons of living in a small close-knit community, is the fact that there is a feeling everybody knows everybody's business, if you go to small centre where they do work around drugs, it tends to be felt if "I go in there then someone will see me", or "talk about me"; this lack of trust even goes as far as your local GP ... in case someone will find out. (Imran Mahomed)

We recommend that health services:

1. Be sensitive in the location and delivery of health services;
2. Take all reasonable steps to ensure the availability of halal options;
3. Work with community-based organisations like FMO to sensitise the Muslim community to the availability of services;
4. Seek advice from established Muslim organisations about religiously sensitive issues;
5. Produce a handbook for staff in relation to the religious dimension of cultural diversity.

Table 20. Barriers to housing

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Access to local mosques | 57 |
| Discrimination | 90 |
| Access to halal food | 85 |
| Access to halal finances | 67 |
| Fear of attack | 92 |
| Other | 3 |
| No problems | 279 |

Whilst about 275 young people said that they have no problems in relation to housing, 90 cited the fear of being attacked within their neighbourhood and over 80 mentioned discrimination on the basis of their religion. We recommend that:

1. Housing policy should seek to promote community cohesion.
2. Mainstream organisations should work with Muslim organisations to make residents feel safer.

Table 21. Barriers to social services

| | |
|--|-----|
| Not understanding needs of young Muslims | 120 |
| Parents' responsibilities | 116 |
| Reputation of parents | 125 |
| Other | 3 |
| No problems | 266 |

Whilst the majority of young people stated that they did not have any barriers towards social services, 125 would not want to engage with social services for fear of bringing the reputation of their parents into question; 120 felt that those within social services do not understand their needs as young Muslims and 115 felt that social services do not understand parents' responsibilities from an Islamic point of view. As seen from the above diagram, a number of barriers were pointed out in relation to social services and one of them is perceived to be an insensitive response to social services regarding Islamic child-rearing practices. The following discussion among young people illustrates this point:

YR: Social services – Muslims believe that you should still respect your parents no matter what they do to you. Some people might be scared because of their religion to go and talk.

LR: In Islam it's ok to discipline your child, its normal, but in this country they would arrest you.

SM: They would not really call social services if their mum hit them.

LR: In Islam you are allowed to discipline your children and Muslims believe that no matter what your mum does, she is your mum at the end of the day.

YR: She is the one that brought you in this world.

LR: Basically, if you go to social services they will take it another way and probably lock your parents up and take them to court and go to extremes.

YR: If you wanted to talk to someone about what is happening, but they might do something you didn't want them to do, like lock them up or take them away from you, I think that would be the hardest thing to take them away from you.

YR: I just would not go anyway because they will take people away, only if it gets really bad.

This view was reflected in the majority of focus groups and represents what the role of social services is perceived to be, in contrast to how a child is supposed to be brought up as a young Muslim.

Another important point mentioned by the young people across all the focus groups is the issue of the community's influence and its negative impact on the family concerned, should a young person decide to report a parent to social services; the following exchange makes the point:

DK: People hear that your parents, that you ... I mean people find out you went social services, and they gonna think bad of your parents.

MU: Community you know, whatever.

Researcher: So what will the community be saying?

DK: They think bad of you.

Researcher: Will they, kind of like say this person told his family.

MU: They can't control their own son, and that it gives them a bad "rep" or something like that.

Researcher: So how would it affect the parents and the young person?

DK: The parent's name will go down and like in the area.

Researcher: Does it matter?

MU: Well, for them parent it does matter coz they take respect very seriously.

In this light, the following suggestions could be made:

1. Social workers' training to incorporate a more religiously robust dimension, especially towards the role of child-rearing in Islam.
2. Staff to undergo separate in-house training where they work with a significant section of the Muslim community.
3. Social Services to work with Muslim organisations to produce an accessible handbook for practitioners.
4. Social Services to generate a list of reliable Muslim scholars and community leaders to consult when in need of advice.

Clearly a significant number of young people have trust issues in relation to Social Services. Social Services need to engage Muslim young people and explain the nature of their business as well as build trust.

→ Recommendations and conclusion

We have decided to research the needs of young Muslims and the barriers they face in accessing mainstream services, given that the UK government's focus has largely been on the threat of extremism and radicalisation, especially after 9/11 and 7/7. At times this focus was devoid of a critical analysis of the socio-economic deprivation that blights a significant section of the Muslim community in Britain and the factors that discourage the fostering of a sense of belonging and cohesion. These barriers, in the form of both formal and informal education, employment, health, social services and criminal justice have been exhaustively explored from the perspective of young Muslims and we conclude with the following recommendations after a thorough analysis:

1. A fundamentally flawed philosophy, which underpins a significant proportion of mainstream service delivery is the "religion-blind" approach and this needs critical re-examination in order to recognise the different needs of the Muslim community and the significance of religion in their lives. Statutory organisations do not keep faith-based statistics; only one out of those we interviewed was able to produce them. Ethnicity is the baseline of measurement and this sometimes obscures pockets of deprivation on the basis of religion. The growing significance of identity definition on the basis of religion needs to be recognised. We call for statutory organisations to have an evidence-based profile of all the communities they work with, not only on ethnic lines but also on the basis of religion, where this is significant in the definition of the self. We concur with Choudhury (2007) that the duty of public authorities to eliminate

discrimination and promote equality is extended from just race, gender and disability to incorporate religion, because of its growing significance.

2. Prayer facilities and times, as well as ablution facilities, need to be available in mainstream provisions as every service delivered in multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-racial Britain needs to recognise the different needs of its constituent communities.
3. The role of *madresah* in the lives of young Muslims needs to be taken into consideration in the design and delivery of mainstream services such as youth clubs, after-school clubs and leisure facilities.
4. There needs to be sensitivity to the location of mainstream services within the Muslim communities and the potential consequences of the visibility of such clients accessing services, such as those of substance misuse and contraception.
5. The responsibility of addressing the needs of young Muslims should not be solely left to Muslim workers: all members of staff must be trained to be culturally competent to work with all young people, including young Muslims. Diversity training delivered to staff should incorporate a robust religious dimension. Mainstream services also need to reflect Muslims in their staff population.
6. The government must make the policy-making process as transparent and accountable as possible, in line with recommendations made by Briggs et al. (2006), through open dialogue and also by opening up the decision-making processes and engaging on issues where there is “political discontent”; only then will agencies forge trust with the Muslim communities.
7. Ways of attracting Muslims to service provision could be through involving them in constant dialogue, through the design and delivery of services that affect them and through services being sensitive to their cultural and religious needs. Also diversity training for all practitioners should have faith-based training specific to young Muslims.
8. Voluntary/community/*madresah* groups enjoy a huge amount of trust within Muslim communities and have been successful in reaching the most hard-to-reach young Muslims. Therefore, mainstream organisations should recognise and utilise their strengths in the form of partnership work to access the Muslim communities. Central government has recognised the need for constant dialogue with *madresahs*. The immediate priorities set out in “Preventing Violent Extremism – Winning Hearts and Minds” (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007) need to be filtered into local government.
9. We found that most mainstream organisations would not engage with voluntary/community/*madresah* groups, due to their religious affiliations. This, in turn, has left the majority struggling with financial, capital and human resources. Funding needs to be accessed due to the nature of the work these groups do. “Winning Hearts and Minds” (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007) felt that local activities funded through the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund worked “best when local communities are directly involved”. We feel the majority of these groups still struggle. The new £6 million fund aimed at Muslim communities needs to be far more accessible to Muslims

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Ideological resistance as a form of subcultural youth participation in Lithuania: the case of punk subculture

Reda Šatūnienė

Ideological resistance is a key form of political activity – all challenges to a ruling class depend on people who are convinced that society could be organised otherwise, that present social arrangements aren't “necessary” or “natural”. Deviant youth styles are a real threat to the ruling class, then, because they challenge dominant ideas – which is why they provoke “panics”. (Frith, 1984, p. 45)

In this paper I focus on subcultural youth who represent an ideologically oriented and socially active part of today's Lithuanian youth. The subculture I am researching, from 2005 up until 2008, is the punk subculture. Members of this subculture are concerned about social, economic and political issues. Informal punk subculture activists in Lithuania have expressed themselves actively in social life over the last six to seven years. Their activities became more visible when Lithuania was about to join a military organisation and the European Union (EU). In 2003, punks started their protests (sometimes direct, sometimes only ideological) and demonstrations against international alliances and the capitalistic system in general. Latter-day punk subculture members declare values of equality, liberty and critical thinking; they are consciously involved in an informal struggle for equal human rights and for animal rights. Thus

punk subculture members represent an intellectually conscious and active part of contemporary Lithuanian youth.

The main goal of this paper is to find out and present how and why punk subculture members understand and construct issues on social and economic inequality and how they perceive and resist social inequality. The objectives are: a) to represent the uniqueness of the Lithuanian subcultural context; b) to represent the main ideas and philosophy of punk subculture members; c) to underline the main forms of punk subculture members' participation; and d) to envisage the values subcultural youth resist and how they do so.

Research is based on ethnological fieldwork carried out in Lithuania from July 2005 to November 2007: observation, 27 in-depth interviews, photographic, audio and video data on punk subculture. People deeply involved in subcultural activity (fanzine publishing, organising concerts, festivals, etc.) were chosen as interviewees. Afterwards, snowball sampling was used to find other interviewees.

→ Theory and methodology

Research is based on the theory of interpretative ethnography and on qualitative research methodology. It is informed by the works of Clifford Geertz (2005 (1973)), Joseph A. Maxwell (1996), Norman K. Denzin (1997), and Pertti Alasuutari (1995). Academic studies by Johan Fornäs (1995), Dick Hebdige (1994), and Simon Frith (1984) were used as a basis for theoretical framing of the object of subculture, its place in the larger cultural context and the ideological resistance of subculture.

The paper relies on applied methods of interpretative writing, which were developed and applied by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz offers a methodological plurality in order to research cultural phenomena and to describe the networks of (cultural) meanings in which real people live. Social discourse can be created by different languages – not just people's words, but their actions and behaviour too. The meanings of cultural behaviour are crucial in culture research (Maxwell, 1996, p. 17). In order to reveal the meanings of different forms of cultural behaviour, a plurality of research methods in qualitative research is used.

Norman Denzin goes along with the ideas of Geertz. He claims that ethnography has been transformed in the 21st century: the contemporary world has changed, so ethnography has to be changed too (Denzin, 1997, p. xii). According to Denzin, the contemporary ethnographer isn't able to produce an "objective, non-contested account of the other's experiences" (ibid., p. xiii). He supports an idea of interpretive writing and the role of a reflexive ethnographer. Geertz states: "good interpretation – of a poem, person, history, ritual, institution, society or anything else – takes us to the very essence of a matter" (Geertz, 2005, p. 19), and that's why interpretative writing in ethnographic research is important and useful.

The "essence of the matter" or, in this case, the essence of ideological resistance within Lithuanian punk subculture, can best be represented if we try to understand and scientifically describe the ways in which members of subculture understand their activities themselves, how they explain their subculture. Alasuutari (1995) states, that it is important "how ... interviewees conceive of and construct a phenomenon in their speech" (ibid., p. 67). This means that the mind of the people researched (interviewees) is very important.

The definition of belonging to a subculture is important when we want to ensure the validity of research which plays a crucial role in academic research. While writing about subculture members' involvement in subculture, Swedish researcher Fornäs (1995) states that there is no very evident limit between conscious and unconscious subcultural belonging, "but one could argue that some minimal degree of consciousness is necessary, since culture is a symbolic communication, and meaning-creation presupposes a certain degree of interpretative effort and purposeful action" (Fornäs, 1995, pp. 115-6). Using the above-mentioned snowball sampling in order to choose the interviewees, each interviewee was asked how he or she described his or her involvement in subculture. The research showed that every interviewee was conscious of his or her involvement, but in unique, individual ways.

A major part of the insights, problems and ideas presented in this paper were taken from the interviewees' texts and discussions with the representatives of punk subculture. I have tried to represent the viewpoint of punk subculture members as much as possible, in order to reveal the essence, the core ideas of the subculture and to represent their ideological resistance and participation.

→ Lithuanian cultural context and main ideas of punk subculture

Lithuanian punk subculture has a unique historical, political and cultural context. During the Soviet period any democratic thought in Lithuania was forbidden; it was not permissible to dress, behave or express oneself in an unusual way. That is why the first Lithuanian punks in the mid 1980s were the ones to contradict the Soviet system, and focused mainly on suppressing the politics of the USSR (Ramanauskaitė, 2004, pp. 210-11).

In the mid 1980s, during the Soviet period in Lithuania, the concept of DIY ("do-it-yourself") culture or ethics, which is the root of punk subcultural ideas, was reflected in the slogan "not to belong to the system and to do everything in the contrary" (Ramanauskaitė, 2004, p. 210). Some of the punk representatives have argued that DIY was understood in a very different way in Soviet times than it is understood now. Now DIY is understood as an ethical system, according to which everything in the subculture (subcultural media 'zines, their own gigs, websites, etc.) can be achieved, because that way one can avoid "the system". Values were different at that time and they have changed a lot since the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990.

According to older informants (aged between 27 and 30), people did many things by themselves in Soviet times, because they did not have money, or because some things were not available in the shops. In those times DIY was cultivated because of economic necessity. In Soviet times, ideas of anti-commercialism were absent, (they are present now) because there was no context for them. This context emerged only after the restoration of independence because of economic reforms, and an influx of information and culture from abroad. Because of close contact with western youth, the Lithuanian trend of DIY culture became more western and ideas of anti-globalisation, equal human rights, animal rights, organising info-shops and so on, appeared within the punk scene. Because of these influences, punk subculture in Lithuania became such as it is nowadays. It would be reasonable to note, and it was mentioned by all interviewees, that subcultural (or DIY) events (concerts, festivals, etc.) are organised for different people: this subculture is open to others.

I think DIY culture can be joined by very different people, they find something in common, because they decide not to be conformists. This can really unite people. (male, 19)

Figure 3. Main ideas widespread among punk subculture members.

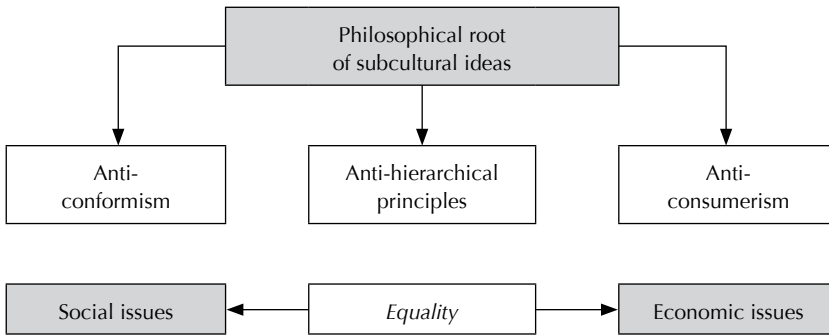


Table based on qualitative research 2005-07. Ideas representing subculture are structured according to the themes of the paper.

Punk subculture naturally arose as a network of young people following particular interests and activities. Young people interested in punk share the realities of various social problems, national politics, ideas of equal human rights, animal rights, vegetarianism, feminism, ecology and so on (see Figure 1).

Main forms of subcultural participation

Subcultural expression is the way subcultural ideas become visible and known to society at large and other (or possibly new) members of the subculture. In order to spread ideas, members of subculture write fanzines, create websites, engage in various artistic activities, and participate in public life.

The main forms of subcultural expression of ideas are: a) subcultural media: fanzines, comics, stencils, Internet, b) artistic expression: photography, CD covers, t-shirt designs, posters, badges, and c) participation: protests, demonstrations, critical mass, seminars, festivals and info-shops.

Hebdige (1994) treated subculture as a sort of seismograph for society, which captures any change within society. According to him, the “idea of style is a coded response to changes affecting the entire community” (p. 80), so subcultural style origins are closely connected with the cultural context, where the subculture emerges.

According to Brake, “subcultures arise as attempts to collectively solve problems that arise from existing societal structure” (Brake, 1980, in Firth, 1984, p. 43). From this it follows that subcultural youth, by creating its own culture, or subculture, react reasonably towards contemporary society’s challenges, represent its problems, and reflect the problems of youth as well.

Critical subcultural philosophy

The current research showed that in punk subculture, subcultural philosophy is expressed very strongly, especially ideas of anti-conformism and critical thinking. Ideas serve both as a reason and an ideological basis for many subcultural activities. Critical thinking is needed because it helps us avoid any kind of mind-manipulation that is widespread in today’s society (for example, commercials). Punk subculture members strongly support the idea of liberation from any methods of mind control,

and that's why they especially emphasise the freedom of mind, freedom of thought, and critical thinking.

You are not a passive observer. You are a creator. That means you can do, organize, change. ... What do you need? Not to be afraid. Don't be afraid to express yourself. Culture isn't the thing that you get after you have paid for your seat at the theatre hall. We create culture ourselves, so it would be better if we could explain for ourselves, what does that mean. This could become possible only after abolishing of so-called "order/obey" relations. Only the dialog enables creation. For real dialog it is needed that its participants would think critically ... (an extract from a brochure on "D.I.Y.")

The idea is that people have the right to choose their way of life, to decide consciously, and express themselves actively. Members of punk subculture call on each other to act as creators of their lives and influence the society around us positively.

Critical thinking as a principle in punk subculture is connected with a critical view towards the official media. Quite often interviewees have mentioned misunderstandings between journalists, politicians and their activism – demonstrations and actions are quite often misunderstood. There were some TV reports about punk activists' actions which were depicted misleadingly. As some informants say, they were wrongly portrayed as "young anarchists against the government" (female, 19; male, 23).

Some television stations ... and press broadcast the information that is useful for someone. That's why we edit 'zines, where we can transmit information from both sides. ... We usually are told the things that we can hear, but some things are concealed. (female, 19).

Figure 4. Picture from punk 'zine. Kaunas, 2007. Photo: author



While comparing themselves with society at large, punk subculture members strongly underline their efforts to be self-conscious, critical, and to stand for themselves.

Critical thinking, as an opposition towards conformism, is crucial for humans, because it serves as an instrument that enables the owner to quote existing stereotypes, to think independently about any political, economic and social processes, to have and express self-determined thoughts. Criticism towards the rest of the society could be treated as a response to society's taints, which are reflected in subcultural youth activities. This idea reflects Hebdige's idea mentioned above that subculture is a reflector of the character of larger society (Hebdige, 1994, p. 80). It follows that the biggest growing problem in Lithuanian society is conformist, uncritical thinking, and punk subculture members try to resist it both ideologically and practically.

→ “The system” – source of social inequality

“Everyone is equal, everyone is different” (male, 19).

The present study indicates that punk subculture members see “the system” as the main negative influence on society. “The system”, which is maintained by the state, is held responsible for education, health, security, and other public services. Firstly “the system’s” hierarchical power model is criticised because of its natural pressure (Jastramskis, 2005, p. 6). This compulsion then becomes a stereotype, which could be best illustrated by following quotation:

Society conditions such point of view, that you only can dream, but it doesn’t provide a reason for them [these dreams] to come true ... All that is happening in society happens somewhere “there”, between other people, whom you are not in touch with ... It is artificially exaggerated, so that you can’t even imagine you could ever reach it. This is myth ... But all happens now and between us. It is told only, that some people are above, and others – beneath. DIY tells us that we all are the same, and we can do all we want. If you want something – you can, you can reach it. (male, 28).

The system is trying to persuade us ... to work and to buy. It is given to you that you have to go and work ... and you work for someone, you serve someone. But in fact, someone makes money from your work ... This is the machine. Capitalism (female, 23).

Figure 5. Picture of punk 'zine. Kaunas, 2007. Photo: author



“The system is wrong because it is too far from common people”, punk members state. Common people are not involved in making political, social and economic decisions. Political power is detached from people. The bigger the bureaucratic apparatus, the more people are detached from “high” politicians. They do not hear the problems of the common people, and that is why citizens sometimes suffer more than benefit from political decisions. This should be the contrary. That is why punk subculture members declare that communities are better systems than any “so-called democracy” system. According to some punk subculture members, a community-based system is preferred because local authorities are able to be closer to common people, to see and understand their problems.

From the above-mentioned ideas within punk subculture the idea of anarchism arises. "Anarchism" means that punk subculture members tend to create their own system, where power should be based on leadership (male, 29), but not on hierarchical division of people and their duties. "Anarchy" in punk subculture does not mean "chaos", as it is usually understood (male, 18). A system based on hierarchy is old fashioned, it "kills any innovation. In these days, innovation is the most expensive thing. And innovation can arise only in network-based structure, which is non-hierarchical and flat" (male, 29).

Anarchism is "no gods no masters" (female, 23).

"Anarchy" is a wish to escape officially established institutions both ideologically, and practically: anarchism is freedom, practically, independence, it is freedom from the state ... [freedom] from state norms – one cannot bear the limits of a state, but it cannot cross them too ..." (male, 25). Implementation [of] "do-it-yourself" politics, or ethics, is the main strategy for avoiding these norms.

DIY ... is ... when you do not hire people for a job. In general, you do everything not because of money, but because you are doing it for yourself ... If you want to make a club, you make it. It means someone will collect money near the door, someone will arrange audio equipment on the stage, another will organize concerts with bands, provide meals and beds for band members, and another will clean after a concert. And people do all these jobs for free – you do not hire them. These people do it by their own wish. (male, 29). Why should you have to support any corporation, give them money, if you can do it all by yourself? ... The point is that you do as you can, you try ... and there is no such thing as benefit (male, 19).

The conflict between punk members and society at large arises because punks describe themselves as the ones who think different from mass society. Part of society usually criticises particular personalities who are in power, but not the system in general. Punks on the contrary declare that the system is rotten, and we will not resolve any problems by changing old political figures into new ones.

Punk members encourage all people (not just punks) to be active, to participate, to believe that they can influence political and social decisions. This is how they perceive the main difference between them and the society at large. Action, the belief that participation can influence and thus change the situation between them and society at large is the force that carries subcultural ideas of resistance forward.

→ Resistance against economic inequality

We strictly speak against any manifestation of nationalism, racism, militarism, constraint, sexism and any other matters that restrict inherent human rights. (Report of anti-NATO action participants (online, posted 30/05/2001), www.hardcore.lt/columns/pareiskimas.html).

Research revealed that within Lithuanian punk subculture there is very strong ideological resistance against any form of inequality, including economic inequality. The issue of economic inequality is clearly expressed in the negative attitude towards economic globalisation, and the unequal arrangement of economic power in the world. The anti-globalisation movement is closely connected with punk subculture at the international level (O'Connor, 2003) and is also reflected in the Lithuanian context. According to the members of punk subculture, anti-globalist ideas assert that small countries which are engaged in the global trade market should have equal economic conditions to the bigger ones.

"[We] are not against globalisation. Let's say, we are against cultural and economic domination ... All this [anti-globalist] movement isn't against, but is for equal rights of all the countries." (male, 20).

Here punks stress the difference between them and society at large, because many people do not think much about the above-mentioned issues. They criticise society's indifference to the issues of economic globalisation, war and militarism at the international level. The main idea that punk activists state is that people can always be active: they can choose to fight for their rights instead of being passive, and they implement this idea by participating in social life, by organising various activities (such as making of 'zines, organisation of various actions, info-shops, discussions and conversations, artistic activities, etc.).

The negative attitude towards international alliances among punk scene activists is related to the above-mentioned negative attitude towards unequal economic conditions for smaller countries in the global trade market. This refers to military or any commercial alliance and any other unions or corporations that were established for political and economic purposes.

I think our parents cannot see Lithuania as an independent country. After the Soviet period, now they are so frightened of Russia that they seek to join other alliances again. (male, 28).

Research showed that negative attitudes towards economic globalisation and joining international alliances are mainly evoked by fear of possible inequalities between smaller and politically stronger countries. Punk subculture members criticise that part of society, which is usually indifferent to such issues as globalisation. It is stated that everyone should be conscious and have a position not only on national, but also on international issues.

→ Conclusions

This study shows that the main values Lithuanian punk subculture members assert are: equality, non-conformism, and critical thinking. These ideas can be reduced as follows: anti-hierarchy, anti-globalism, anti-consumerism, economic equality, social justice, and a community-based system.

Punk subculture members respond to what they consider to be a stagnant society and this is connected with subcultural participation. Subcultural youth organise info-shops, protests and demonstrations, write 'zines, and engage in artistic activities. Thus, they implement anti-hierarchical principles in their everyday activities, and try to implement the idea of social equality.

It could be stated that the resistance ideology present in punk subculture is a form of participation in public life. The members' participation is not formal or very evident for every citizen, but is visible if one examines subcultural life in more detail. It means that participation can take place not only through public actions or demonstrations, but can also exist as philosophy, cultivated between members of an informal group and these are both features of punk subculture.

Some informants declared that they contradict the stereotypes of society at large, which could be described as discriminating. Society lacks tolerance for non-traditional young people (as punk subculture members are), and for other socially vulnerable parts of the society: homosexuals, people of different races and nationalities. In more abstract words, the values that punk subculture members resist are: indifference, passivity, a consumerist lifestyle.

The ideas punk subculture members support are new and up to date, such as the idea of network-based communities, instead of a hierarchical model. The notion of equality is also strongly supported, because in this subculture there is a special emphasis on ideas of equal human rights and equal economic rights. Thus, by being civically active, punk subculture members represent a conscious and active part of contemporary Lithuanian youth, who are influencing changes in today's society.

Based on the present study, it could be stated that the points where punk subculture members contradict the society at large means that these problems really exist and we should pay attention to them. It would be simplistic to state that punks are "anarchists" and that they seek to destroy everything. The results show that by declaring "anarchy", subculture members speak out for social justice and equality for all humans within our society.

The issue of equality that punk subculture members underline is very important, primarily because it shows that today's society still experiences a lack of tolerance. Such subcultural reaction shows that subcultural youth reflect contemporary society and its needs and point to the issues that should be resolved in the future.

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So near and so far: cherished diversity, feared otherness

Marianna Kosic

The cultural diversity and ethnic plurality to which minorities contribute are supposed to be cherished and seen as valuable in Europe. In the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM)⁵² it is, *inter alia*, written that minorities have the right to the respect, preservation and development of their cultural, religious, or linguistic identity, to be protected from practices leading to assimilation and to be effectively equal to the majority in all areas of life.

The legal framework of protection and promotion of a multicultural and pluri-ethnic society in fact exists, but its concrete implementation and observance can take a long time. The FCPNM, for instance, entered into force in Italy in 1998. It was formally adopted regarding the Slovene minority in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region in 2001. Since then it has not been applied, because an official list of territorial areas that should be covered was missing. Towards the end of 2007, it is finally slowly coming to life, allowing some of the entitled citizens the opportunity of visible bilingualism. In the meantime though, several projects were being carried out by the communities

52. <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm>, accessed 12.12.2007.

themselves with cross-group and cross-border co-operation to promote minority languages and culture and to foster mutual knowing and understanding among the communities living in the territory, as suggested by the convention itself.

The aim of this contribution is to stress the importance of legal protection going hand-in-hand with an active and effective promotion of a respectful attitude among different members of a given society in everyday life, bridging the gap between formal and concrete equality. This “informal” part needs ongoing action to be actually attainable because mere legal remedies cannot guarantee and ensure equality of treatment and equal rights.

Despite anti-discrimination laws and policies, it is quite common to find disrespect, rejection and discrimination. It is also likely that not all different ethnic-cultural or religious identities (out-groups) are equally socially accepted and liked.

My general research interest concerns the dynamics of identification and inter-group relations affected by the creation of “us” and “them” categories among members of majorities or minority groups. These issues are very interesting to follow in the border region between Italy and Slovenia, an area generally considered to be a natural laboratory where one can observe group and identity dynamics.

Talking about “national minorities” we can generally distinguish between autochthonous local minorities, historically present on the territory, and allochthonous or “new” minorities, resulting from more recent migration flows.

The number of migrants crossing borders is continuing to increase and to challenge, even more than autochthonous minorities may, the common perceptions of concepts like national identity, accepted diversity, affirmative action, equal recognition, multicultural and multi-ethnic citizenship.

This paper is intended to stimulate reflections on the following issues:

1. By what means can we determine how much room for diversity is concretely present in a group/area? Can the integration model of a country reflect this?
2. Are multiple identities sufficiently accepted and recognised in the process of integration into the dominant culture?
3. What opportunities do autochthonous and allochthonous minorities have to develop a sense of national belonging? Are they eventually allowed to be successful in negotiating belonging to the community?
4. What are the elements needed/required to be or to feel that one is an active member in the society (beside getting legal status as a member) and to be considered a member of the national in-group (Italian)?
5. To what extent do religious and ethnic identifications affect the sense of belonging to and acceptance in the (national) in-group within wider society?

I suggest that these issues are connected with the question of inclusion and exclusion of groups, related to social categorisation and openness towards diversity, perhaps showing some latent, hidden, or biased perceptions and normative expectations that a host society may hold about given groups.

The reflections are discussed in relation to social psychological theories about group identification and inter-group attitudes.

→ **Social categorisation: in-groups and out-groups**

When people identify as members of an in-group, they form a sense of “us” (the in-group) perceiving some common characteristics with other people and differentiating themselves from some other ones (the out-group). Scholars following the Social Identity Theory and the Self Categorisation Theory (Tajfel, 1982) agree that people create and use social categories, assessing through comparisons of one’s own and other’s “fit” into several categories, so as to organise and simplify the complex reality surrounding us and to maintain a positive self-view. In this cognitive process, people tend to perceive the out-group as more homogeneous, while within the in-group they notice more differentiations and subcategories. Such prejudiced generalisations within social categorisation can lead to the biased evaluation in favour of the in-group (Devine, 1995; Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001), a mechanism that helps to maintain a positive social identity.

→ **Perceived threats and biased intergroup attitudes**

Another explanation of these processes is proposed by Stephan and Stephan (1993). They argue that out-groups can be a source of potential threats for the in-group (see Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999). They distinguish four types of threat that can lead to negative reactions and prejudice towards out-groups:

- *realistic threats* (to the in-group’s resources, political/economic power, status, physical and psychological well-being);
- *symbolic threats* (to the in-group’s values, beliefs, world view, way of life, norms, language, religion, morality, attitudes);
- *inter-group anxiety* (from social interaction with out-group members due to anticipation of negative consequences); and
- threats deriving from *negative stereotypes*.

→ **In-group membership, citizenship and multiple identities**

Minority members and migrants usually have to integrate and find a healthy balance in between two or more worlds to achieve acceptance by both the minority in-group and the dominant majority, struggling to find a place between (cultural, if not de facto) “homeland” and “host land”.

The identification process is not limited to the private sphere, but requires social recognition of each other too, which in turn depends on the context and actual groups involved. Moreover, it is possible to have dual or multiple national identifications. The sense of membership of different identifications has varying degrees of strength and possible affiliations and it does not exclude the sense of citizenship.

Nevertheless, some subgroup, cultural and ethnic identities can be perceived to be incompatible with the main national identity by the dominant group that does not have the internal experience of multiple, hybrid or hyphenated identities which are, instead, common in the self-perception of minority members and immigrants, who exhibit both identification with their ethnic or religious minority group and with the national category at the same time (Verkuyten, 2007).

→ Inclusion, citizenship, integration

Citizenship laws regulate the inclusion of newcomers within societies and are a very relevant issue in policy agendas and a tool to promote social cohesion (Bertocchi and Strozzi, 2005). Each country has its own rules to attribute the legal status of full membership in a state. Having legal citizenship, people have some duties and rights which are supposed to apply equally to all in society.

However, it might happen that some minority members have their citizenship on paper, subjectively share a sense of belonging with the dominant group and yet are still not accepted wholly by it. Having permanent residence, nationality/citizenship, or mastery of the language of the majority may not be enough to be accepted as equals. Non-acceptance and rejection can successively contribute to isolation, segregation and discrimination, or exclusion instead of bi-directional integration and inclusion.

An interesting comparative cross-temporal and cross-national analysis of European immigration politics demonstrated that parties of the Left are more likely to adopt integration policies (citizenship, anti-discrimination) when they are in power (Given and Luedtke, 2005). Moreover, the restrictiveness of immigration policies and public opinion in France, Germany and the UK varied with issue salience, measured by newspaper articles, and mass media coverage of immigration.

→ Securitisation of migration, mass media and public discourse

Migrants in the European Union's discourse continue to be seen as "not us", possessing some characteristics that trigger perceived threat, leading to generalised suspicion, intergroup anxiety and hostility (Collyer, 2006; Echebarria-Echabe & Fernandez-Guede, 2006).

Public discourse on immigration in Italy, for instance, is significantly affected by the mass media. Sciortino and Colombo (2004) analysed mass media coverage of immigration issues in the period 1969-2001 and found some interesting results. According to their study, the politicisation of immigration as a major national problem in Italy started in 1982-91. In the same decade, the mass media highlighted risks of immigration flows and magnified their quantitative dimensions. In the next decade (1992-2001), the association of immigrants with deviance and criminality became dominant and the generic term "immigrant" remained predominant (replacing all other previously used terms, such as "foreigner" or *extra-comunitario*, alias, "from outside the European Community"), together with a growing concern over security. The mass media is an important source of knowledge and has the power to influence to some extent the perception of reality, sensitising public opinion, contributing more or less inadvertently to homogenised views of some groups, guiding common perceptions and, in turn, behaviours.

→ Voices from Italy

Autochthonous minorities

Officially recognised cultural minorities (for example, Germans and Ladins in the province of Bolzano, Slovenians and Croatians in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Greeks and Albanians in southern Italy and Sicily, and Catalans in Sardinia) are citizens whose cultural rights are supposed to be granted with national and regional legislation (for example, Law 482/1999 on the protection of historical linguistic minorities).

There are more than 100 000 estimated Slovenes in the autonomous region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (mainly in Trieste and Gorizia provinces, near the Slovenian border, but some also in Udine) which remained under Italy after the Second World War delimitation of the border between Italy and Yugoslavia.

By signing formal laws (for example, the London Memorandum in 1954 and the Treaty of Osimo in 1975), Italy granted some legal protection of specific minority rights, after the minority claimed several decades of waiting for their implementation. The Law on the Protection of the Slovenian Minority was adopted in 2001, but applied only recently in 2007.

Allochthonous minorities

According to the most recent statistics (ISTAT 2007, Dossier Caritas/Migrantes 2007),⁵³ there are about 3.7 million immigrants in Italy (whose total population is 57 million). About 50% come from eastern Europe (15% from Romania, 10% from Albania and about 5% from Ukraine), 22% from Africa (mainly from Morocco – 11%), 18% from Asia and 10% from America.

Half of the immigrant population is Christian. Between 960 000 and 1 030 000 legal and illegal immigrants are estimated to be Muslims. Most of them come from different ethnic-national cultures, social and religious backgrounds. North African immigrants come mainly from Morocco (150 000) and Tunisia (50 000). To a lesser extent, there are Libyans, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Bengalis, Middle Eastern Arabs and Kurds.

The Muslim population represents 1.4%-2% of the total Italian population and around one third (36%) of the “foreign residents”. Around 55% of them live in the north, 25% in central, and about 20% in southern Italy. About 40 000-50 000 (among them about 10 000 Christians who converted to Islam) are Italian citizens with equal rights to the rest of Italians.

Under Law 189/2002,⁵⁴ issued by the former centre-right coalition, access to Italian citizenship and residence permits has been more difficult. With the newer centre-left coalition in 2006, integration of “new minorities” became a priority. The draft law (4 August 2006) on citizenship proposes five years (instead of 10) of legal residence in Italy as the minimum needed to apply for citizenship; acquisition of citizenship by birth (*ius soli*) for children born in Italy to (at least) one parent regularly living in Italy for five years; and an entry test in Italian language and culture to ascertain “the foreigner’s effective degree of integration” as a condition for granting citizenship. Furthermore, the “Charter of Values, Citizenship and Immigration”, proposed by the Interior Minister in April 2007, also has among its key themes gender equality, and the respect for freedom of conscience and religion to promote acculturation to local values.

→ Selected findings

When subgroup minority and national identity are seen as incompatible, discrimination is quite likely to arise, threatening the distinctiveness and value of one’s own sense of belonging, a threat that can in turn lead to enhanced identification

53. See www.caritasroma.it/ and http://demo.istat.it/strasa2007/index_e.html, accessed 29.2.2008.

54. www.culturalpolicies.net/web/italy.php?aid=421, accessed 29.2.2008.

as a minority and further inter-group discrimination (Schmitt and Branscombe, 2002). The same dynamic may happen concerning religious identification (Verkuyten, 2007).

The flexibility in defining “us” and “them” should take into account the fluid and dynamic nature of identity narrations, which are never rigid and crystallised definitions. Moreover, categories of classifications that require one to choose either this or that label are restrictive and may not correspond to one’s self-view, limiting the complexity of self-perception.

Young members of the Slovene minority in Italy,⁵⁵ for instance, showed “hybrid” primary identities, embodying elements of both Italian and Slovene identities that were not mutually exclusive. They preserved the minority category and adopted this label to describe themselves with an optimal level of distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991) with flexible, malleable and dynamic boundaries: feeling varying degrees of “closeness” and “distance” in perceived (dis)similarity and identification with Slovenes in the “mother nation” and the Italian majority, sometimes defensively finding ways to demonstrate that they are from there, where they live (Kosic, 2004; 2006).

The first two most relevant elements perceived as required in order to be recognised and feel a sense of belonging to a certain national identity among Slovenes in Slovenia, Italians, and Slovene minority members in Italy (Kosic, 2004) were language and, secondly, the observance of culture, traditions and customs. Lower positions were attributed to parental descent and birthplace. However, larger scale research on Italian teenagers showed that parents’ ethnic origin was among the most common way to describe ethnic self-identification (Mancini, 2001).

Moreover, our research (Kosic and Caudek, 2006) showed, as predicted by the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Osbeck, Moghaddam and Perreault, 1997), that people are more willing to associate with a target group as perceived similarity with that out-group increases.

When a minority is relatively near in cultural proximity with the dominant group, coping strategies and negotiations in the construction of new categories to define oneself (good enough to switch between them) may be relatively easier than for other minorities who, even if supposed to be equal, are continuously downgraded due to traits of “otherness”. Some distinguishable elements seem to be more challenging in the process of acculturation than others. Becoming similar, acquiring the local language may be, for instance, a simpler task (and less risky to assimilation) than to accommodate to other cultural mainstream characteristics. Along a subtle “threshold between too much and too little accommodation”, the majority may continue to have expectations of more “successful” acculturation on many levels, sometimes losing awareness that too many similarities and homogenisations are perhaps expected, not willing to recognise too much differentiation within the common national in-group.

55. In that research (Kosic, 2004) 412 adolescents aged 16-19 from 12 secondary schools in Gorizia (northern Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia) completed a questionnaire and two projective tests, aiming to measure identification and liking of in-groups and out-groups. One hundred and sixty-eight (41%) students belonged to the Slovene ethnic group living in Slovenia, 134 (32%) belonged to the Italian ethnic majority group living in Italy and 110 (27%) belonged to the Slovene ethnic minority living in Italy. All students from this last group were Italian citizens attending Slovene schools in Gorizia.

In the small-scale qualitative study by Kotic and Nordio (2007), the discourse analysis of the in-depth interviews to immigrant key informants⁵⁶ revealed that some characteristics tend to be seen as “abnormal” (Verkuyten, 2001) by the dominant majority group and contribute to a more vulnerable position for the ones possessing those characteristics. The presence of salient indices for diversity, such as a foreign/Muslim name, skin colour, limited knowledge of the local language, speaking a different mother tongue, appeared to be (in their own perception) used by the host population to highlight differences and exclusion from the in-group, even when the person possessed objective and not only subjective, elements to be considered part of the Italian in-group. Some elements of diversity, like those signalling a possible Muslim sense of belonging, seemed to trigger in the majority group fear-based responses more than others.

Furthermore, we gathered some data from questionnaires completed by ethnic Italians.⁵⁷ Asked about their readiness to grant civil rights to legal migrants,⁵⁸ most of them agreed, *inter alia*, about the appropriateness of the fact that a regular immigrant obtains citizenship after at least 10 years of residence, recognising that citizenship contributes to integration and in turn to safety for local citizens as well. On the other hand, they accepted the idea that children of immigrants born in Italy should be considered as Italian citizens immediately.

However, assessing perceived symbolic threats posed by immigrants, half of the participants were convinced that the majority of immigrants come from a different culture, which cannot easily integrate with Italian culture. At the same time, most of them showed high levels of declared openness towards diversity. When asked about perceived similarities/differences with Muslims, the distance related to individual freedoms, the way of raising children and their education, the family system and norms of behaviour were felt especially strongly. To accept and be committed to the Italian way of life was considered most relevant in deciding whether a person, born and raised in a different country, is able to live in Italy, followed by the ability to speak Italian and also to have close relatives living in Italy. Furthermore, the participants shared the idea that the possibilities for immigrants to participate socially is quite low, nearly all affirming that most Italians are scared of immigrants in general, due to news shown on television (see Eurobarometer 2007).

Our respondents overall reported little contact with Muslims and immigrants in general, but expressed agreement that knowledge of other cultures

56. Immigrant participants were five key informants (an Ecuadorian and a Colombian woman, a Tunisian, a Somali and a Bengali man) recruited through local contacts and associations. They were service providers who were living stably in Italy (up to 20-25 years) and working with other immigrants. Two of them were also leading members of regional institutional organisations. The in-depth interviews, conducted in Italian, lasted from 30 to 50 minutes.

57. Italian participants (10 males, 18 females) answered a semi-structured questionnaire which took from 30 to 45 minutes to be completed. Some of the questions were taken from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer, some others were developed ad hoc. Sixteen respondents were aged 20-35, while the others were older (37-69). The majority (16 people) had completed 17 or more years of education.

58. Following the European Social Survey, opposition to the granting of civil rights to legal migrants may be seen as a tendency toward social exclusion of migrants and related to greater perceived threats posed by them.

and religions would help to diminish the fear of diversity and media-fuelled misconceptions/stereotypes.

Such results are in line with broader national data. The Ministry for Internal Affairs, for instance, carried out research in March 2007, interviewing a representative sample of 1 000 people. Forty-two per cent of them showed openness towards immigrants (reporting emotions like understanding, compassion, solidarity, trust), while 33% expressed a more closed attitude (worry, distrust, suspicion, indifference, fear, bother, discomfort, insecurity, anger). The majority of Italians favoured a reduction in the number of years needed in order to acquire citizenship as proposed by the 2006 draft law. However, 40% were against this, arguing that five years is not long enough for integration. While 63% were in favour of the law adaptation for adults, 79% were in favour of the same for children.

Along with these results showing predominant attitudes of the majority population, it is interesting to review some numbers from the recent Dossier Caritas/Migrantes 2007. About 14% (400 000) of all resident foreigners were born in Italy (56 765 in 2006, born in Italy to two foreign parents) and 666 000 are underage children growing up in Italy. One in six is from a mixed marriage. However, the number of foreigners acquiring citizenship in Italy is only about 19 000 per year, mainly through marriage.

→ Further reflections and conclusions

In general, based on available data examined so far, my conclusions concerning the questions raised in the introduction may be summarised as follows:

There appears to be an attempt to show appreciation of diversity (maybe due to social desirability), yet some elements of “otherness” continue to be more or less blatantly perceived with apprehension, expecting “them”, these “others”, to conform to what is perceived to be the norm for “us”, before being accepted within – the smaller the difference, the better the integration. Some members of society are persistently seen as “other”, diverging from the typical norms, expectations and pressures of the receiving population to become more similar (to assimilate?). Moreover, aspects like religion may be particularly salient in determining social acceptance or rejection of a given group.

It is not enough to proclaim being in favour of diversity. People may not openly admit discriminatory attitudes, thus they need to be accessed through narrations of both dominant groups and minorities by means of conversational and discourse analysis as new methodology. It might also be useful to integrate and deepen research observing more indirect and subtle forms of prejudice and resistance to diversity, for instance exploring people’s concepts of what successful integration requires and what characteristics they consider distinguishable in categorising and setting boundaries of who can be considered part of a common in-group. Orientations that support pressures for conformity and homogenisation of differences may be included as relevant indirect measures.

The perception of proximity (perceived similarity/difference to the target groups), familiarity, quality and quantity of contact, are relevant factors to keep in consideration.

In order to ensure integration of minorities into the majority population in a way that would benefit both sides, successful adaptation with mutual accommodation

has to be facilitated and negative reactions mitigated. Increased knowledge may help refute stereotypes created out of generalisation and simplification (Coenders and Scheepers, 2003), thus promoting more accurate information about local communities and dialogue among them.

It might be useful to shift the discourse to multiple types of immigrants, recognising that situations vary a lot and cannot be generalised.

Failure to recognise the other's self-identification may imprison that person in forced and restricted ways of being that do not fit his or her self-definition, enhancing tensions and diminishing general well-being, due to not feeling accepted and recognised.

Active inter-group contact (see Pettigrew, 1998 for a review of the "contact hypothesis") needs to be facilitated and encouraged to replace mere exposures, avoidance and feelings of social exclusion. Planning opportunities for encounter, mutual learning and cross-group co-operation would then help to step out of biased images, prejudices and stereotyped misconceptions, that are more or less consciously held about a certain group and its members, or at least to acknowledge and raise awareness of them – to allow the possibility that how we perceive and understand the other may not correspond to the way those others see and understand themselves – hopefully enhancing readiness to multiple perspective-taking and recognition of fellow citizens in an increasingly inclusive society.

One of the main actors involved in the implementation of the respect for diversity and anti-discrimination is civil society. Legal protection and rights promotion need to be placed side by side with an effective and efficient promotion of equal recognition and treatment in everyday life. This might be achieved by encouraging groups to a harmonic coexistence through reciprocal exchange – not requiring homogenisation, but acknowledging and trying to know better the distinctiveness of the constituent elements that compose the community of which they are a part, an intercultural society open for dialogue with a polyphony of voices expressing themselves and cherished for what they are.

Is it possible to have a collective sense of belonging where everyone has equal opportunities to participate, where they are continuously accommodating each other with respect and openness to reconsider old and new concepts that may challenge views? Some of the young people with whom we were in contact through interviews and questionnaires were very much aware of the need for inter-group contact and learning opportunities to foster a better mutual understanding. They recognised the important role of institutional support and NGOs, which may be crucial in encouraging co-operation with different local, national and international institutions, by working together to change discriminatory attitudes and practices, running programmes, training schemes, projects, continuing awareness-raising campaigns, encouraging and enabling young people to participate in building peaceful societies, based on diversity and inclusion.

Most of the young respondents questioned so far confirmed my belief that the promotion of friendship bonds between young (and less young) people is a good tool by which to foster inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, because friendship can then go on and transfer from people to communities and other subjects.

Doing things together, with frequent opportunities for interaction, having some common projects and activities, enhances the potential to meet more people too, and hear more personal voices, which may not fit the over-generalised image we perhaps had about “all” members of a certain group, regardless of its different schools of interpretation, historical traditions, local settings, cultural and generational influences, degrees of identification with the group, and so on. Therefore, slowly what one was somehow conditioned to exclude or demonise as an enemy and a threat, or completely bad, out of ignorance, disagreement or lack of understanding, allows one the potential to be enlightened with a new viewpoint. Thus it enlightens us to see the differentiation within each general label too, discovering and learning through the exchange of new aspects of each other, leading in time to more peaceful ways of being together.

Feeling included and valued is crucial in order to create and consolidate such a positive relationship, a platform which provides a safe atmosphere where everyone is granted equal participation and comfortable expression. Activities related to human rights education promoted by different European institutions may provide a good platform to tear down barriers of physical, mental and emotional separation and to raise awareness, step out of ignorance and closure, thereby acquiring a sense of security and mutual trust, recovering from fear and rejection of diversity, holding as a core foundation respect for the dignity of every individual and an acceptance and respect for diversity of convictions, languages, cultures, religions, ethnicities.

*We ought to claim the right to be different whenever equality is oppressing.
We have to fight for equality whenever we risk discrimination.*

Boaventura Sousa Santos

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