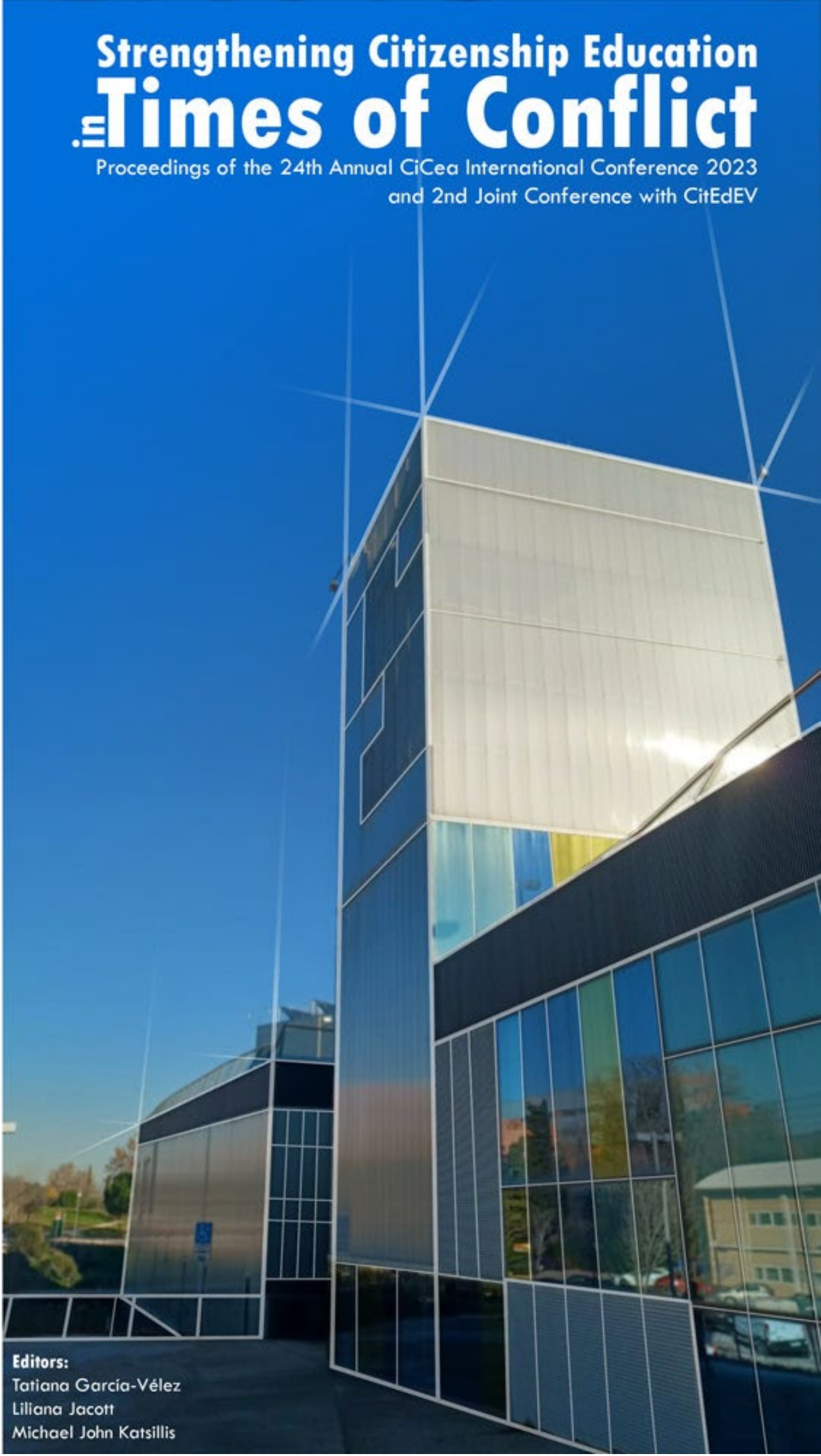
Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict

Proceedings of the 24th Annual CiCea International Conference 2023
and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV



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Editor's Note

The 24th Annual Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association (CiCea) International Conference 2023 and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV and Student Research Conference entitled "Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict" was sponsored and funded jointly by CiCea and the Jean Monnet Network Project: CitEdEV (Citizenship Education in the context of European Values). The conference was also supported by the Faculty of Education and the UNESCO Chair in Education for Social Justice of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. The Conference took place from the 25th to the 27th of May, 2023. It brought together a significant group of scholars and researchers in the field of citizenship and education, as well as research students, teachers and educational and policy actors from across Europe and around the world. They brought with them an interest in issues related to citizenship education and particularly with regard to issues related to the challenges of citizenship in times of conflict.

These proceedings include the titles, abstracts, presenter and discussant names and contact information, to allow the reader to contact presenters for queries, comments or requests. The papers included in these proceedings address these citizenship-related issues and were presented or discussed at the Conference in Madrid, Spain.

Tatiana García-Vélez, Liliana Jacott, and Michael John Kastsillis,
Editors

Children's Identity & Citizenship European Association

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Risk Identities: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greek University Students[1]

Efstratios Monioudis[2], Epameinondas Panagopoulos[3], Anthi Adamopoulou[4], Michael John Katsillis[5] & Ioannis Kamarianos[6]

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the student community, transitioning them into an identity at stake. Universities suspended physical attendance and moved to distance education. Governments implemented cautionary/containment measures to address risk related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These and other changes negatively impacted various aspects of students' lives, including though not limited to behavioral changes, the inception or exacerbation of psychological conditions, and shifts in their general perception of themselves, their fellow human beings, and societal institutions. All of these conspired to embed risk in their identity.

The study analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Specifically, it explores the consequences of the embodiment of risk in the identities of the students. This was examined using a sample of students from the University of Patras, Greece. Data was collected using a questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions, informed by international literature in the field. Responses were examined quantitatively, seeking insight into students' perceptions of risk of virus infection, the impact of the pandemic on their addictive substance use and anxiety, and the impact of the pandemic on students' identity.

Keywords: Education, pandemic, crisis, COVID-19, risk, identity

Introduction

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized the outbreak of COVID-19 as a pandemic. The uproar from this declaration and its ramifications were heard and felt across the world.

Restrictive measures were implemented to control the virus. Common measures included the closure of schools and businesses, the cancellation of high-attendance/mass events, bans on public gatherings, and travel restrictions. Lockdowns were among the most common measures. They reduced mobility and increased separation from others. Lockdowns frequently coincided with lost income, increased loneliness, physical inactivity, limited access to basic goods/services, and reduced family and social support (Jacques-Aviñó et al., 2020). Of course, COVID-19 pandemic did not leave the educational mechanism unscathed. It created disruptions in every educational institution around the world (UNESCO, 2020).

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[1] If this paper is quoted or referenced, we ask that it be acknowledged as:
Monioudis, E., Panagopoulos, E., Adamopoulou, A., Katsillis, M. J., & Kamarianos, I. (2023). Risk Identities: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greek University Students. In García-Vélez, T., Jacott, L., and Katsillis, M. J. (Eds.), *Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict – Proceedings of the 24th Annual CiCea International Conference 2023 and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV*, (pp. 1–12). Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association. ISBN: 978-84-09-56245-9.

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Universities closures created shifts in economic, social and educational norms in heretofore-unforeseen ways, while introducing obstacles as fundamental as finding a means to simply continue educational activity (Zagkos, et al., 2022). This forced extensive modifications to the manner in which courses were provided, taught, and assessed since, in an effort to better safeguard the health of students.

Significance of the Study

Contemporary society bombards the individual with constant, increasing, and multiplying risk and uncertainty. This changes the way the individual perceives, internalizes, and experiences risk -functionally embedding risk within the identity of the individual. This new, embedded risk identity affects not only the individual but also society as a whole, as it is translated into individual and collective risk management strategies.

Multiple studies have observed significant effects of the pandemic on the student population. These include increased fear of COVID-19 (e.g., Hawley et al., 2021), depression (e.g., Zhai & Du, 2020), anxiety due to family members contracting COVID-19 (e.g., Chaudhary et al., 2021), worsening pre-existing anxiety/depression (e.g., Chaudhary et al., 2022; Shai & Du, 2020, etc.), and shifts in hygiene habits (Faisal et al., 2022).

From an educational standpoint, the abrupt transition from face-to-face learning to online teaching negatively affected the mental health of higher-education students (Hawley et al., 2021). This created a secondary public health emergency, through increased anxiety/fear and their corresponding psychological ramifications (Liu et al., 2020). This included anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and insomnia (Zhai & Du, 2020). The disruption of normalcy resulting from lockdowns also exacerbated pre-existing mental conditions (Du et al., 2020). Of course, COVID-19 also had global ramifications on the social, economic, and political level. These included job loss, economic and political uncertainty, and substantial challenges for interpersonal relationships at all levels (Dubey et al., 2020). The pandemic was also characterized by extensive confusion, due to the proliferation of information through social media (Hawley et al., 2021).

Students and the Pandemic

Multiple studies have observed the substantial effects the pandemic had on both the global population in general and on student populations in particular. Kcojevic et al. (2020) found that students reported a range of academic and daily difficulties, as well as high levels of mental health burden, including increased anxiety (see also Faisal et al., 2022; Žilinskas et al. 2021). Children and young adults ran a particular risk of developing anxiety symptoms (Orgilés et al, 2020). Indeed, while surveying students between November and December of 2022, Chuadhary et al. (2022) found that 68.8% of students had a high fear of COVID-19, 51.5% mild to severe anxiety regarding having a family member contract COVID-19. While collecting data in Bangladesh, Faisal et al. (2022) found that more than three quarters of students (77.1%) reported substantial changes to their hygiene habits, due to the virus.

The mental health of students in tertiary education, however, has been a subject of growing concern in recent years. Even before the pandemic, one in five students worldwide experienced one or more diagnosable mental disorders (Auerbach et al, 2016). The disruption of academic routine, following universities transitioning to distance education in the spring of

2020, resulted in worsening mental health for many students (Agnew et al., 2019). For many students, university campuses offered familiar and welcoming surroundings. Having lost access to this space, some struggled with loneliness and isolation (Zhai & Du, 2020), while others raised concerns regarding the quality of online learning, education progress, and continued interaction with fellow students and professors. Some felt the transition to online learning negatively affected their performance (Hawley et al., 2021). Students who received on-campus counseling, could no longer access services, exacerbating their psychological symptoms and sometimes increasing the risk of substance abuse (Zhai & Du, 2020). Such changes can affect students' academic performance, social relationships, and later occupational and status attainment (Chen & Lucock, 2022). In extreme examples, they can even result in increased suicide rates (Saladino et al., 2020).

All of this denoted a substantial shift in students' core, motivating characteristics from, we would argue, a focus on social life, studies, and a broader future, to one centered on uncertainty, doubt, and short-term ramifications. Taken in whole, however, these core motivations comprise substantial portions of students' gestalt identity.

Societies and Identities at Risk

Personal identity has been the subject of ongoing debate for thousands of years. Indeed, echoing Plato, Bauman (1988) stressed the importance of self-awareness in understanding personal identity but also that it is fluid, evolving over the life-course, based on the experiences of the individual. In a modern society, identity can be examined in the context of a 'society at risk' (Giddens, 1991). This defines personal identity based on trust. Trust, in turn, acts as a metric of an individual's perception of the credibility of their contemporary society and its actors and, thus, as a measure of their ability to establish stable frameworks for social interactions. As societies become more fluid and changeable, the stable basis of interpersonal communication provided by trust and, thus, trust itself, become increasingly important. Obtaining this trust becomes a challenging proposition in advanced societies, however, where daily life is characterized by high levels of technological immersion, which can (and often do) impede individuals' ability to fully comprehend their fundamental needs (see Beck, 1992). This lack of clarity means that many of the challenges of contemporary life can become indeterminate and, as such, both unpredictable and uncontrollable. Such risks can contribute to a sense of vulnerability, anxiety, and insecurity (Beck, 1992). This increased uncertainty feeds back into the concept of 'society at risk' by contributing to the formulation of identities at risk, or 'risk identities', which are defined by the manner in which individuals (and, to some extent, social groups) perceive and experience risk and uncertainty in their daily lives.

Permacrisis, Pandemic and Risk Identity

The past few decades (at least) have borne witness to a seemingly interminable series of crises plaguing contemporary societies around the globe. Indeed, Collins Learning (2022) coined the terms "permacrisis" and "crisis continuum" to describe the ongoing and seemingly unending state of affairs. This does not seem unreasonable, given that, in the last twenty years, alone, Europe has suffered an ongoing refugee crisis sin the mid-2000s, a financial crisis (beginning between 2008 and 2011), the COVID-19 pandemic, a second wave of refugee influx, and, most recently, the war and commensurate energy crisis in Europe. Each of these crises on their own but also their sum, taken in totality have substantially physically, mentally, emotionally and

socially impacted younger populations (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011). Young social subjects, in an attempt to cope with the life changes brought about by the permacrisis, have incorporated structural crisis, liquidity and subjective risk into their daily actions (for more information on the effects of liquid modernity, see Bauman, 2000). The COVID-19 pandemic stands out among the ongoing series of crises. Beyond introducing a personal and active fear of death, the pandemic revealed the individual and collective inability to rationally deal with situations pervaded by uncertainty (Pietrocola et al, 2021).

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to present and analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on the student community. We attempt to do so by exploring the pandemic from the perspective of the risk inherent in the identity of the student community. We also attempt to examine and evaluate to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has embedded risk into student identity, as well as what form it takes. Specifically, we attempted to answer the following 3 questions:

1. To what extent do/did students perceive the risk of infection of SARS-CoV-2 during the pandemic?
2. To what extent do/did the COVID-19 pandemic crisis affect students' use of addictive substances and anxiety?
3. To what extent the does/did the pandemic affects students' identities, in terms of embedding risk?

Methodology

Our study was conducted on a snowball sample of 315 active students, sampled from the University of Patras, Greece, from March 4th until April 26th of the 2022-2023 Academic year. Students were predominantly from departments within the university's School of Humanities and Social Studies. Data was collected using a questionnaire covering topics including demographic descriptors, risk perception markers, COVID-related anxiety markers, pandemic-related changes to everyday life, issues of institutional trust, and behavioral changes. Two questions were open ended; the balance were closed. The final form of the questionnaire was constructed in 'google forms', through which it was distributed to respondents.

Convenient sampling, of which snowball sampling is an example, is relatively infrequently paired with quantitative analyses, such as those presented below. This is largely because such samples are not probabilistic –a necessary quality for them to be suitable for inference to a larger population. It is, of course, generally preferable to secure a representative sample. This is not always possible, however. The very restrictions and interventions whose impact on student identities motivated substantial portions of this study also influenced fundamental aspects of our data collection. Restrictions on student interaction, contact, and direct communication severely limited traditional forms of instrument distribution. Indeed, questionnaires were distributed electronically through social media (e.g., facebook, instagram, and the messenger app).

Results

Description of the Data

Of the 315 participants in the sample, 75 (23.8%) were male and 240 (76.2%) were female. This division is not necessarily representative of the university or students of Greek tertiary education, in general, but is not unexpected in the Department of Elementary Education and School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Respondent ages ranged from 18 to 50 years with. Ages were skewed understandably young (despite graduate student outliers), evidenced by the average age of 23.48, within the sample.

Figure 1. *Gender*

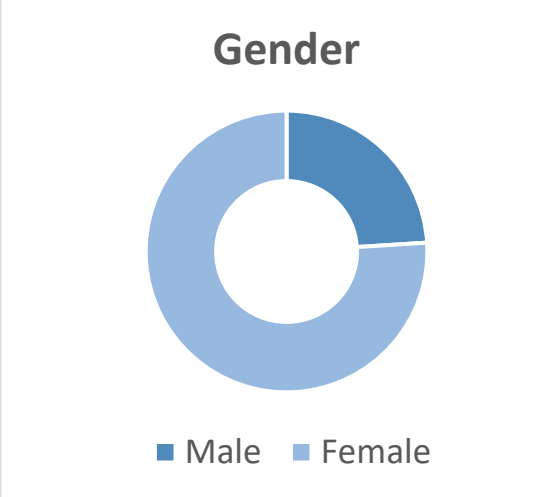
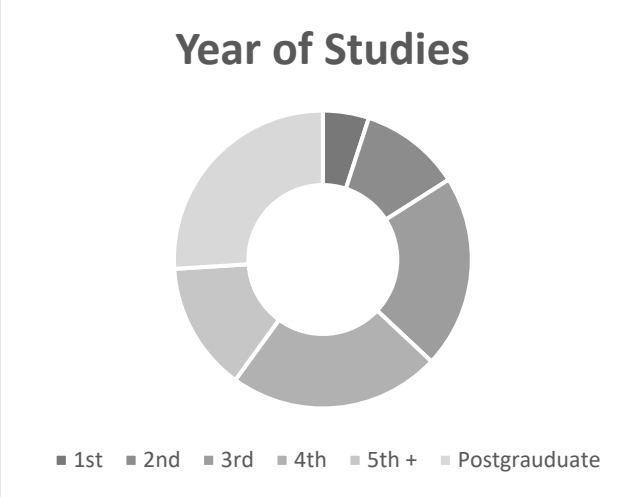


Figure 2. *Year of Studies*



The distribution of students across years of study is, more than likely, an artifact of the snowball sampling methodology. Questionnaire distribution began with postgraduate students, who in turn passed it on to postgraduate acquaintances, and thereafter slowly expanded to younger/undergraduate students who were acquaintances of acquaintances. With the exception of 5th year students[7], there is relatively clear trend in decreasing numbers of respondents, as students' current year of studies becomes progressively farther from that of the initial respondents (see Figure 2). 110 respondents (34.9%) reported prefecture capitals as their place of residence. 96 (30.5%) listed metropolitan locales other than prefecture capitals; 61 (19.4%) hailed from a town; 48 (15.2%) claimed living in a village. When asked if their educational institution was located in their place of residence, most (75.9%) responded in the negative. During the pandemic, the overwhelming majority of respondents (260, or 82.5%) lived at home with family, 40 (12.7%) lived alone in their own accommodation, 7 (2.2%) lived with a roommate, and 8 (2.5%) alternated between living at home with family and alone in their own accommodation. Respondents also provided information on indicators of socioeconomic status, including their parental educational attainment. The majority of respondents' fathers were secondary school graduates (38.1%). Respondents' mothers were,

[7] The exception is relatively easily explained; the overwhelming majority of tertiary education in Greece is comprised of 4 years (exception include medical and polytechnic/engineering degrees, neither of which was represented in our sample). Outside of exceptions to this rule, 5th (or higher) year students represent either comparatively small proportions of students who have not managed to complete their degrees within the initially prescribed timeframe.

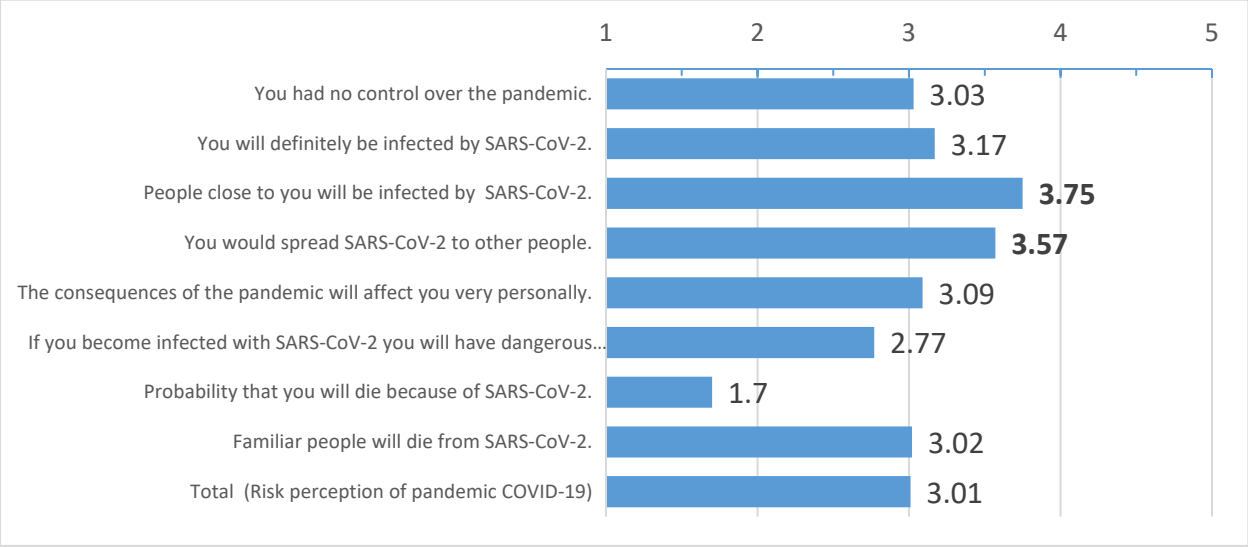
in general, more highly educated, with a slightly larger majority (42.5%) reporting their mothers held a tertiary education degree.

Perception of Risk in COVID-19

Beyond these socioeconomic characteristics, students were also asked about their perception(s) of risk during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Respondents were asked to answer a series of questions, presented in the form of 5 category Likert-type items. Responses were coded on a scale of 1 to 5, depending on the extent to which they agreed with a given statement. 1 indicated that respondents did not agree at all, while 5 indicated that they strongly agreed. An average value was calculated for each item, each representing the group perception of a given COVID-19 risk perception markers (see Figure 3).

Responses trended around the middle of the scale, implying neither strong agreement nor disagreement. This was notably the case for statements regarding control over the pandemic, assured infection by COVID-19, the personal ramifications of the pandemic, and the fact that (some) of their acquaintances would pass away because of COVID-19 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Average COVID-19 Risk Perception Markers*

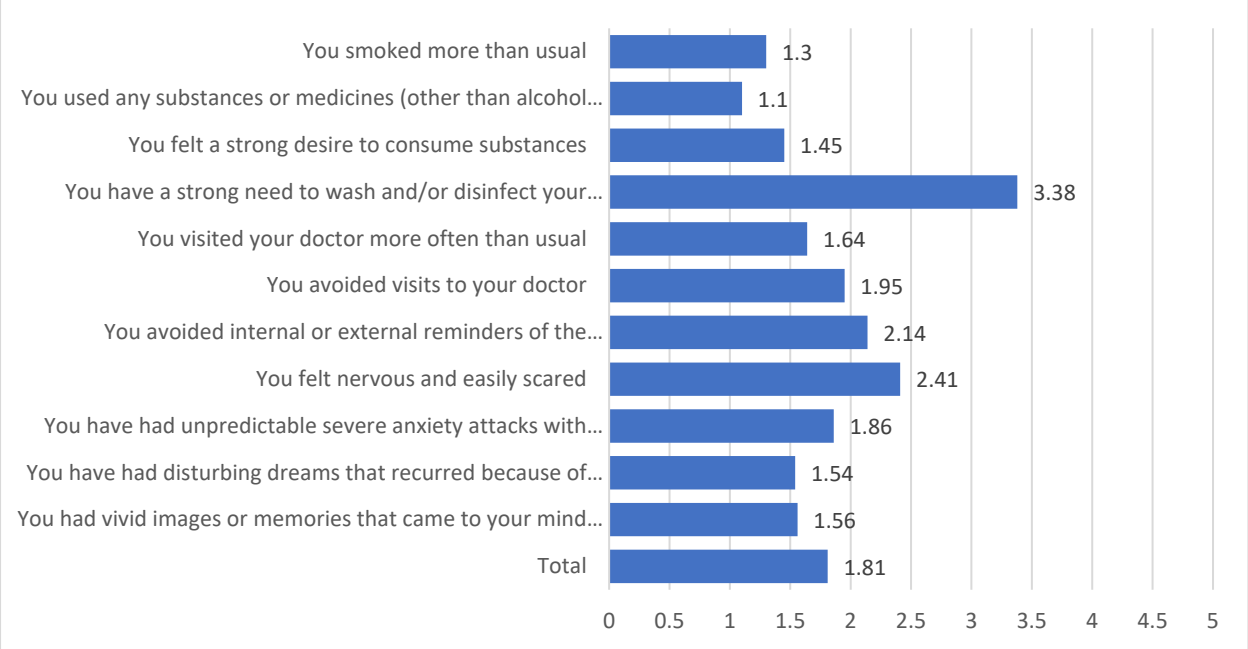


Students seemed less inclined to agree with the statement that contracting COVID-19 would be detrimental to their health (μ=2.77, see Figure 3) and even less so with the probability that contracting it would lead to their death (μ=1.7). This may be the result of increased severity in more elderly respondents (Abul et al., 2023) or the general perception of "invincibility" that accompanies youth in many respects. It is, in any case, worth remembering that our sample comprised entirely of students who were overwhelmingly in their late teens and early twenties. This did not dissuade our sample from an increased perception of risk that people *around* them were likely to be infected with COVID-19 (μ=3.75, see Figure 3) or that they themselves would spread the disease to others around them (μ=3.57, see Figure 3).

COVID-19 and Risk Related Behaviors

Employing items with the same five-point structure, we also queried students regarding the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic affected substance use, anxiety, and related behaviors. These included increased consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or third substance, increased fear and anxiety, sleeping disorders and changes in their willingness to and the frequency of their visits to medical practitioners.

Figure 4. *Average Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic (1: Not at all – 5: Very much)*



In all but one case, students indicated little or no change to their behaviors, because of COVID-19 (see Figure 4). The exception was the frequency with which they would wash and/or disinfect their hands (μ=3.38).

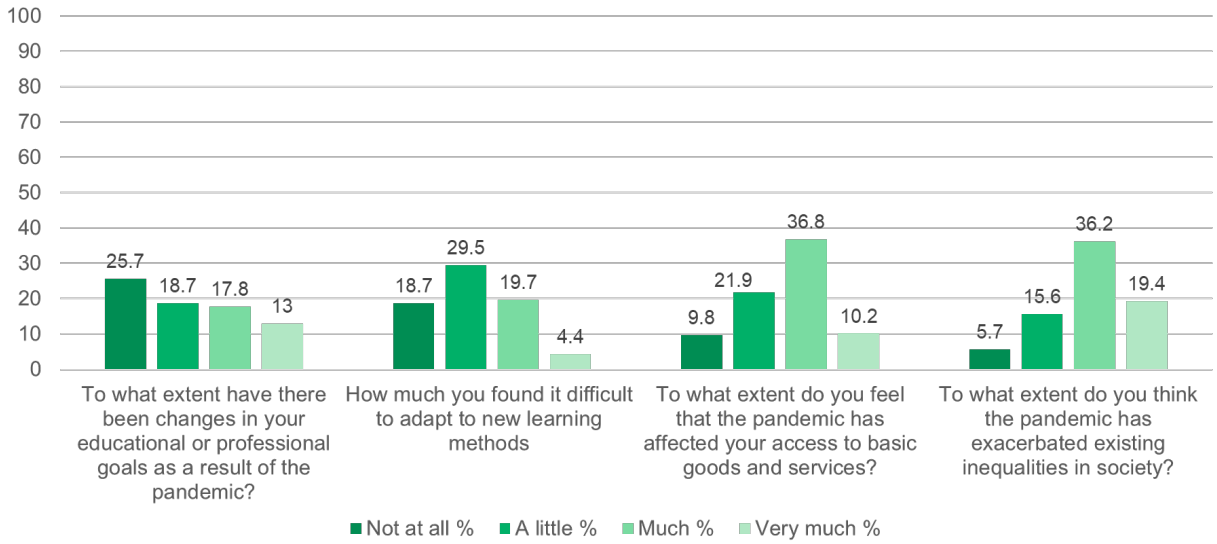
In short, while students were conscious of and concerned regarding COVID-19, it was more as an external threat, than something to which they would be subject or from which they would suffer serious ramifications. They expressed concerns regarding people around them contracting the virus; that they, themselves, would be the agent of its spread, to said individuals; passively acknowledged the dangers of the virus through increased, repeated disinfection of the primary means by which they came into contact with the outside world. Nevertheless, they indicated little to no concern regarding personal ramifications of the virus, including few if any other changes in their behavioral patterns.

Internalization of Personal and Institutional Risk and COVID-19

The seemingly odd contradiction between increased concerns over the ramifications of COVID-19 for others and a relative indifference on the individual level led us to question to what extent, if indeed at all, these students had internalized risk and embedded it into their identity. To this end, respondents were asked a series of four more direct questions, regarding specific changes that could indicate such a shift (see Figure 5). These questions were, again,

structured as Likert type items but with four potential response categories, in order to exclude the possibility of a noncommittal answer.

Figure 5. *Internalization of Risk as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic (%).*

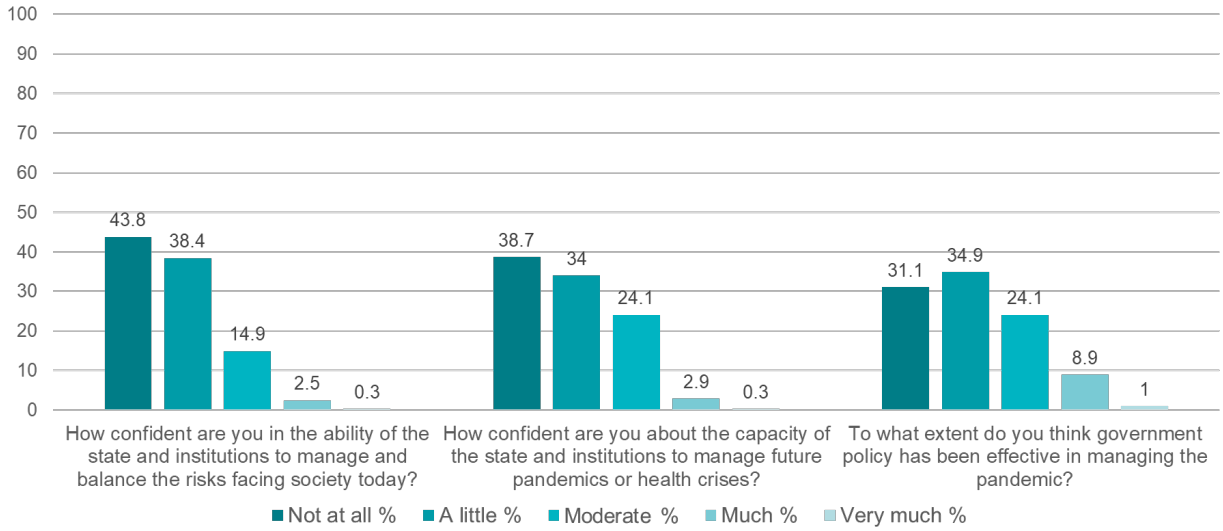


It is worth noting the large (and relatively consistent) proportion of non-response to each of these questions. Between 20 and 25 percent of respondents chose to not respond to these questions. This, in and of itself, may be silent testament to respondents' perception of the impact of COVID-19 on daily life, goals and so forth. And, while this is speculation, it is also important information to possess when qualifying the fact that 44% of respondents reported little or no change to their educational or professional goals and 48.2% reported little or no difficulty adapting to the new educational reality. These figures correspond to 59.1% and 66.7% (i.e., almost and precisely two-thirds) of valid answers, respectively. When asked about access to goods and services, 31.5% reported much or very much impact because of the pandemic, while 42.5% reported great or very great exacerbation of preexisting social inequalities because of COVID-19. To put these figures into perspective, they represent 59.8% and 72.3% of valid responses. This seems to reinforce our perception that students have embedded risk into their identities, but only insofar as it poses as an external risk, which is to say one affecting the broader educational and social paradigm, but leaving their personal sphere relatively unfazed.

Risk, however, can be internalized in multiple ways and for multiple reasons. As discussed previously, the COVID-19 pandemic was uniquely positioned, in terms of time and characteristics, to act as a propagator of this internalization. To examine the efficacy of this positioning, we asked students as series of three questions, evaluating their confidence in societal institutions past, present, and future. Bearing in mind that tertiary education in Greece is well-known for providing students with a platform to "rage against the machine", responses to these questions were overwhelmingly negative (see Figure 6). 66% of respondents reported little to no faith that the state had effectively managed the pandemic. 82.2% of respondents reported little or no confidence in the ability of the state to manage contemporary risks to society. 72.7% reported little or no faith that the state and its institutions would be capable of managing commensurate future crises. Even given the

particular group under examination, these percentages are indicative of a substantial lack of institutional faith and, by extension, an increased perception of risk, due to this failing.

Figure 6. *Institutional Trust and the COVID-19 Pandemic (%)*



These two sets of questions paint a seemingly contradictory picture. Students do appear to have internalized risk, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they seem to have done so only on the level of the "other", whether that refers to other members of society or societal institutions. To further clarify this issue, we questioned respondents directly regarding their behavioral patterns. Indeed, when asked if their "behavior changed as a result of the pandemic crisis?" more than half (54.3% or 171 students) said no. The remaining 144 (45.7% of) students in the sample were asked to report 2-3 major changes in their behavior as a result of the pandemic. The three most common responses were:

1. Hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing, disinfecting surfaces) [57 responses].
2. Social introversion (e.g., social isolation, avoiding crowding) [50 responses].
3. Anxiety or/and Nervousness [32 responses].

The Relationship Between Risk Perception, the Impact of COVID-19, and Embodied Risk

As discussed in the beginning of this study, changes in the social paradigm can result in shifts in individual (and group) perceptions, including though not limited to the embodiment of risk. We argued that COVID-19 was particularly suited to act as the instigator of just such embodiment. We operationalized the paradigm shifts in question via the COVID-19 risk perception makers (see Figure 3) and the COVID-19 impact indicators (see Figure 4). We further operationalized embodied risk via the personal and institutional risk indicators (see Figures 5 & 6, respectively).

To examine this dependency, we calculated a summary measure for each of the three characteristics described above and regressed Embodied Risk on Risk Perception and Pandemic Impact (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Regression of embodiment of risk in identity with risk perception of pandemic COVID-19 and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis*.

	b (SE)	Beta	t	Sig.
Risk Perception	0.092 (0.046)	0.120	1.996	0.047
Pandemic Impact	0.454 (0.077)	0.354	5.895	0.000

R^2=0.185 R^2_{Adj}=0.179
F=35.33 p_F=0.000

This analysis indicated statistically significant relationships between Risk Perception and Embodied risk, but also Pandemic Impact and Embodied Risk. Indeed, the two characteristics explaining approximately 18.5% of the variance in said Embodied Risk. Of course, as our sample was non-probabilistic, statistical significance does not connote the ability to generalize to a population (since we do not, of course, know what, if any, population our sample is representative of). Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that statistical significance is indicative of the magnitude of an observed phenomenon, relative to what we would expect to find, if our sample were drawn from a population wherein no such phenomenon was present. As such, in cases such as this, statistical significance still indicates that the magnitude of an observed phenomenon (in this case, a directional relationship) substantially exceeds what we would expect to find, due to random chance.

Summary and Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis created many changes in people's daily lives, especially in the student community. Students reported moderate to increased perceived risk of COVID-19 during the pandemic. This presented more as an expression of risk for the risk of infection and mortality in individuals around them, rather than their own mortality. The majority of students reported increased stress mainly in the form of repeated hand washing respectively. We found no strong indications of substance abuse. Contrary to other studies (e.g. Jacques-Aviñó et al., 2020) students in Greece found that the pandemic facilitated access to goods and services. Greek students also reported few if any problems adapting to the new digital educational reality and did not modify their educational goals.

Overall, we observed the integration of three primary characteristics into students' identities: hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing, disinfecting surfaces), social seclusion (e.g., social isolation, avoiding crowding), and increased anxiety and/or fear. We found indications that the last of the three has embedded itself in students' identities in the form of increased risk. Indeed, we found evidence that implies this embodied risk was directly related the increased perceived risk during and the behavioral changes because of the pandemic.

In short, we would argue that the COVID-19 has embedded itself in student consciousness. We posit, in other words, that the pandemic not only disrupted day-to-day life during its peak but also had long-term ramifications. It has altered the way in which they perceive governments, educational institutions, but also their fellow human beings. The pandemic made them more acutely aware of the potentially fleeting nature of existence -in others, if not in themselves. Fundamentally, and, we would argue, most importantly, by embedding risk into their identities, it has served to alter their function within the societal whole and, thus, the fabric of social reality itself.

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Teacher's Opinions and Expectations on the Co-education of Majority and Minority Students in Northern Evros, Greece[1]

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Abstract

In the region of Thrace and especially in Northern Evros, majority and minority Muslim students are educated together in secondary schools in an environment with challenges and problems. Many of them come from rural families and especially the minorities are treated stereotypically and with prejudice, but the minorities themselves, as well as the immigrants, are characterized by corresponding stereotypes.

In this work, through qualitative material of 10 interviews, the way in which the teachers deal with the presence of minorities and their co-education with the students of the majority, as well as the issues related to their bilingualism and their social position, but also the attitude of their parents.

These factors clearly affect the educational process and the learning of the language of the school and shape the course of the students at school. However, this is also connected to a significant extent with the attitude of the majority of teachers. The resulting inequalities are visible. In some places they are softened and in others they are not, depending on the attitude and the educational practices adopted on a case-by-case basis.

Keywords: Multicultural education; Muslim minority; Secondary education; Educators; Educational inequalities.

Introduction

The pluralistic character of multicultural societies like Thrace, where diverse religious, linguistic, national, and ethnic groups coexist, inevitably influences education. Student populations in schools reflect this mix, with students coming from different backgrounds. While there have been studies focused on Muslim students and their academic journey, there is a lack of investigation into interesting and unexplored topic of the perspectives of Greek teachers.

The past decade has seen commendable efforts to improve minority education by the scientific community, particularly through initiatives like the Muslim Children's Education Program (P.E.M.). With the exception of individual studies (e.g., Tsarketsi, 2013), however, general education has received limited attention.

This study aims to examine the role of teachers in upper grades of compulsory and general secondary education, where students develop their individual identities and roles, in response to the demands of multiculturalism. We specifically focused on the northern part of the Evros Prefecture, with the researchers' personal experience in the region informing the

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investigation. Hence, access to research subjects and the collection and processing of data will consider the experiential mixing in relation to the local context. We will discuss teachers' viewpoints, the influence of family environment, and the role of socioeconomic obstacles in shaping the identity and language skill development of minority students, throughout their engagement in the educational process.

In recent years, children of the Muslim minority have made a significant shift towards public Greek-language education, although the percentage increased at different rates in each grade. In this study, we focus on secondary education, which saw the most spectacular changes in terms of the number of children studying in the area's Middle and High Schools (referred to as Gymnasiums and Lyceums, respectively) (Askouni, 2006; Tsioumis, 2010).

Between 1989 and 2008, the minority student population attending high schools in the Evros prefecture more than quadrupled (Askouni, 2006). In Soufli High School, for example, of the of 241 total attending students, 76 are Muslims from the surrounding area, 27 returnees, 1 foreigner and 137 Christians (Lazaroudi, 2006). Indeed, examining data from 1998 to 2018, Kountourakis (2018) reports the percentage of Muslim at 37% of the student population. Studying the case of Soufli High School highlights the continuous growth in enrollment of Muslim students in upper secondary education and their corresponding (relatively) good academic performance (Lazaroudi, 2006).

One of the strongest factors leading to this increase is the ‘knowledge of Greek’. Both parents and students recognize that learning Greek is a prerequisite for their professional development and integration into society. After all, public, Greek-language education is mostly a one-way street for minority children at this level. Specifically, in the case of students from the villages of the Municipality of Soufli, only one type of education is available for the Gymnasium; in Lyceum students have alternative options, including Vocational High Schools (ΕΠΑ.Λ/EPAL) but attendance requires their transfer in nearby towns, (either Didymoteicho or Orestiada) (Kountourakis, 2018). There is, of course, an unspecified number of students who continue their education in schools in Turkey. As several researchers point out "the mobility observed towards public Greek-speaking education does not prevent minorities from heading for studies in Turkey" (Askouni, 2006; Kalliga, 2016; Tsioumis, 2010).

According to Lazaroudi (2006, p.116), the most important problem regarding secondary education is that the educational system itself, which "operates on the same terms for all children regardless of their educational peculiarities" but also the "existing educational opportunities of the region” perpetuate the existing social exclusion of minority students.

> … for multicultural education to be implemented successfully, institutional changes must be made, including changes in the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school. (Banks, 1993: 4)

The efforts to attract the minority to Greek-language education made in the previous three decades seem to have paid off in numbers and, to a certain extent, also highlighted the need of the minority itself to be included in the social process and develop at a professional level. Both parents and students recognize that all of the above is based on learning Greek as a basic condition. Modern social developments, however, both national and international, raise new concerns.

Methodology

We sampled 10 active teachers in total, employed in four (4) different Secondary Education school units: three middle schools and one high school. Participant Teachers were selected based on availability. They were informed about the purpose and duration of the research *a priori*. The We selected teachers as bearers of ideological standards and key factors for the formation of school culture. As such, they arguably function as a safe criterion for studying the encouragement provided to them at the level of educational policy implementation. (Tsioumis, 2010)

Participants originally hailed from the regions of East Macedonia & Thrace. The average age in the sample was 48.7 years. Three participants were men and 7 were women. Participants came from varied academic backgrounds. Nine were graduates of departments belonging to the Humanities and Social Sciences: Three (3) from a Department of Philology, one (1) from a Department of History & Archeology, two (2) from departments of Philosophy, Pedagogy & Psychology, and one (1) each from English Literature, German Literature, and Theology. The remaining participant was a held a degree in Mathematics. One teacher had a second degree, while 6 had postgraduate degrees, making them more familiar with the subject of our study. Two (2) of the teachers hold position of responsibility, specifically the position of deputy principals. Respondents' seniority ranged from 5 to 23 years. The large range facilitated the inclusion of views of more and less experienced teachers.

Participants took part in semi-structured interviews. We selected semi-structured interviews as a reliable technique for cases where the research is interested in the detection of the deeper meanings that arise during their preparation (Frydaki, 2015). Teachers were offered the (necessary) time to reflect and organize their thinking around both their experiences and their role. To some extent, we included elements of exploratory interview, based on Cohen and Manion's (2002) typology, as it is a type of interview that seeks to bring new hypotheses to the surface. It also allows individuals to communicate their experiences more freely and to engage with the issues that arise emotionally (Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2008).

Teachers' Point of View on the Presence of Minorities

Our research material comprises 10 in-depth interviews conducted with secondary education teachers from (typical) public schools in the Evros Prefecture. The analysis of the interviews involved identifying distinct themes and building categories based on the emerging data.

Seven (7) of 10 teachers perceived the presence of minorities in the local community to have a positive effect. They acknowledge, however, that their opinions might not be entirely objective, due to their personal involvement in the area. In their specific communities, the presence of minorities is not significant, but in places like Didymoteicho, where various religions coexist, the educational reality is more diverse. Some teachers, nevertheless, express concerns about negative effects arising from mutual prejudice between different groups. They have observed issues with certain students, particularly those from the highlands and the Roma community. That said, the other/remaining minorities were viewed as more disciplined and cooperative.

Other teachers highlighted the positive aspects of interaction among diverse groups. They believed that students learned from each other's habits and cultural backgrounds, fostering a richer educational experience.

> I live in Alexandroupolis, so I don't have much contact with the local community, but judging by the small community of the school and the presence of individuals in it, I see that the effect is positive, that is, they enrich the school. (E7)

This viewpoint also coincides with that of E5[4], which typically states that "[a] multicultural society is a richer society, because of course people get used to different views, different appearances." Some educators emphasize the importance of coexistence and interaction between majority and minority groups, within the educational context. The fact that other languages are heard during recesses paints an auditory picture of the existence of differences between people. Indeed, the fact that we are different is a given.

> I may be too optimistic but I think there is a good effect. Of course, for there to be a good effect, there must first be a good interaction, that is to say that they affect each other correctly. I think they blend in very creatively with the locals and calmly, for years now and I know that friendships and professional collaborations have been developed which are very important, which last for decades. So the effect, the interaction can only be described as positive.
>
> The effect is very positive. I think that where there are different cultures and they are in sync it is fortunate and it is rich and historical, while most importantly bridges are created between people and that stereotypes that exist are bridged as much as possible.

Overall, teachers' perspectives were diverse. Some favored coexistence and recognizing the benefits of diversity, while others acknowledged the challenges and potential negative aspects of the presence of minorities in the local community.

Academic Performance of Minority Students: Challenges and Support

Limited knowledge of the Greek language is a core challenge for students with different/other native languages. Some opt to enroll in majority schools to improve their Greek proficiency, seeking better integration and opportunities.

> In this school, the majority of students who come are from the mountainous massif. They are Muslim students from the villages of Sidirochori, Megalo Derio. We now have very few students from Agriani, who created, not intentionally, the biggest problems here, first in the school group and in the local community with complaints, because these children went to a minority school but had not assimilated well their role in it in the classroom, with the result that when they come to a small school first of all they cannot adopt the rules of the group and in high school there is not much scope for them to learn basic principles and manners of class. (E4)
>
> Usually minorities have a low economic profile and unfortunately also an educational one. In many homes where Turkish is of course also spoken, the father knows Greek, the mother not at all or a little, they have gone to primary school, they are farmers... this in itself is heavy for a child. It does not start on equal terms and of course there is this big problem with minority primary schools, which are unacceptable. (E2)

Students' varied origins contribute to their diverse behavior patterns. Families and friends continue to play important roles in shaping their development and choices. While economic status holds a dominant role in education, the main issue is not the parents' profession but rather the economic stability of the family.

Parental support is instrumental in assisting children with their studies. Active parental involvement significantly benefits children's educational journey. Educational Priority Zones also have a positive impact, but language limitations persist, as children predominantly,

[4] We established a coding system for quoting educators, using 'E' followed by a number between 1 and 10, where 'E' represents Educator, and each educator is associated with a distinct number.

sometimes exclusively, speak their mother tongue at home. Indeed, teachers identify the main problem as students from diverse cultural backgrounds lacking proficiency in the language of instruction. This language barrier hinders their academic progress and overall engagement in the classroom.

Differential value frameworks, corresponding to differential sociocultural and familial norms, contribute to some students discontinuing their education and opting for alternative paths. Family structure also plays a crucial role in the educational process. In patriarchal families, for example, children often face difficulty expressing their opinions. This is prevalent among Roma children, regardless of their academic level.

Repatriates/Returnees from the former Soviet Union are not regarded as a group with inherent problems but specific issues related to their unique experiences are recognized and addressed. They are also generally seen as successfully integrating and progressing within the educational system, to the point they are undistinguished among the majority students.

> These people have been slowly integrated here for almost 20 years, they are part of the local community and the children are second generation. They have learned Greek well, because they went to school here. They didn't have the problems of the Muslims, most of them went to primary school already, many of them are in universities continuing their studies, […] we wouldn't be able to single some of them out. (E4)

Socioeconomic disparities

Several additional issues significantly affect the educational experiences of minority students. One concern is the preference of many minority student families from semi-urban areas to send their children to native-majority schools. This choice is driven by a desire to enhance their children's Greek language proficiency, which is seen as a crucial skill for better integration and opportunities.

Another critical issue is the fear of ridicule and subsequent low self-esteem experienced by many minority children in the classroom. This fear often leads to minority children avoiding active participation during lessons, hindering their overall learning progress.

> They expect to work in school with groups, they expect to do things in school and they don't think they have to read at home, which students who are born and raised here do. This is a clear difference that we see in students who have known some other educational system, even more so when the origin is like this. That is, when the culture of the student's family makes him an extrovert, teaches him to be an extrovert, the child will be an extrovert and will ask in the classroom and teach a lesson and shout and give his opinion even if it is different, sometimes and at the limits of audacity. (E5)

When minority Muslim families experience an improvement in their economic situation, however, they can then provide their children with additional support through tutoring classes, leading to better academic performance. E4 states the following:

> I would say that parents, depending on their educational level and the things they have lived, have experienced, definitely give their children a better push for a better tomorrow. [...] There are parents who may have the financial means to send their children to a tutoring school, to do some extra lessons, to send them from a young age or to come here to the schools of Soufli or to go to language courses, English, French and so on. These kids are somewhat better off than the kids whose parents can't afford to send them here. I know cases of parents who have come to rent in Soufli, so that their children enjoy the best possible education beyond school, i.e. come restfully. Because, you know, many children come from remote villages and spend an hour or two in the morning getting up at 5 in the morning to come to school at 8:00 to attend classes. (E4)

Unfortunately, a significant proportion of children coming from minority schools face lower educational levels compared to their peers in majority schools.

> It does not start on equal terms and of course there is this big problem with minority primary schools, which are unacceptable. They teach lessons that would not be taught in Turkish. Half the program is in Turkish. These children do not learn Turkish well, nor Greek, they come to High School, and in the Lyceum where I am, it's too late now. (E2)

This disparity may be attributable to the limited resources and educational opportunities available in minority schools. Additionally, some Roma children are compelled into various occupations by their parents, further hindering their access to formal education.

For repatriate/returnee students, using the Greek language plays a crucial role in academic success. The more exposure they have to Greek, the better they tend to perform in school, highlighting the importance of language integration in facilitating their learning process.

There are also challenges in courses that require proficiency in the Greek language, while German language courses appear to fare better, suggesting the need for additional support and resources to help minority students excel in these subjects. Some students excel with the help of parents who are fluent in Greek, highlighting the positive impact of family involvement in the education process.

As far as what the family can go

Unsurprisingly, participants identified socioeconomic background as a significant factor in education. Children from privileged, educated families tended to receive more support. There are, however, cases where even financially well-off parents show little interest in their children's education. E10, for example, mentions the correlation between the educational/financial level of the parents and the will to provide further educational support through extra tutoring.

> It certainly plays a role, because a parent who does not know how to help his child in something, feels disadvantaged himself. […]. How much more so, when in 2019 the children are trying to be at school and the parent cannot show them, help them in this matter, because primary school mainly has very difficult material. (E10)

> The children of these families with a low educational level and perhaps financial problems or even social difficulties they face are definitely negatively affected. Nevertheless, these parents are very interested, so that the child who will learn acquires supplies at school, so that he can go ahead and create and live much better than themselves. They have the anxiety, they have the will to help them but unfortunately they cannot, neither financially nor educationally. On the contrary, children who come from wealthier, more educated families, there is again the interest of the family, so that the child gets the best out of the school, but they are also capable, both financially and mentally, to help them at least in their first steps. (E9)

> Usually minorities have a low economic profile and unfortunately an educational one as well. In many homes where Turkish is certainly also spoken, the father knows Greek, the mother not at all or a little, they have gone to primary school, they are farmers... this in itself is heavy for a child. It does not start on equal terms and there is of course this big problem with minority primary schools, which are unacceptable. (E2)

> Children from families with a low level of education have proven over the years that they have proven that they can do school, that they love learning, studying, and excelling, so it is not just the family. (E9)

> Now with the economic crisis, I see that in the end neither the ethnic nor the social matters, the economic has to do with it. In other words, parents who are housewives, who have a busy work

> environment, show a great interest in their children, they try very hard, they have an order in their home that is also reflected in the lesson. In contrast, parents from any social class who may not belong to the minority but are currently in a precarious financial position have almost no possibility to adjust their children to the regularity and daily needs of school. Not necessarily the profession, but professional stability. (E8)

Certain children face substantial challenges, not only in terms of academic shortcomings but also due to a different mentality. Some repatriates/returnees, for example, exhibit more interest in technical occupations than in pursuing formal education.

> The family plays a big role anyway, so the different origin of the parents gives the children different behavior patterns and also gives different behaviors in the classroom. So we see students who come from other backgrounds, not necessarily… they may be from another country, they may have lived in another country. We see that they have a different attitude towards school. (E5)

The issue of the obsolescence of education also came up, suggesting that the traditional educational system may not adequately address the evolving needs of the students and the modern world.

> There are cases where Muslim families who have a better financial situation, the father travels on ships and makes some money, and you see that there is of course also a parallel interest in educating the children. This can also be seen in the children, they are sent to tutoring schools, possibly, they are more organized in general, they are progressing better, but that is not enough. (E4)

> There are parents who may have the financial ability to send their children to a tutoring school, to do some extra lessons, to send them from a young age or to come here to the schools of Soufli or to go to language courses, English, French, etc. These kids are somewhat better off than the kids whose parents can't afford to send them here. (E3)

Female students occasionally encounter problems during excursions. E5 notes that some girls, some Roma girls in particular, however, assertively stand up for their rights.

> They are one of the children who are extroverted, that's why we say Roma are extroverted. […] they will speak their mind even if it offends you - as a professor (laughs at the last comment) they will speak their mind. That's why we say the Roma are different.

Language barriers pose a significant challenge for several students, particularly for those belonging to Russian-speaking, Turkish-speaking, or Pomak-speaking communities. These students face difficulties with articles in Greek because they do not exist in their native languages. As a result, some may opt to attend seminaries in Turkey.

> Muslim children encounter great difficulties in language. Usually in each year there are 1-2 cases of Muslims who stand out and we say "look he can go further". The majority are having a very hard time. Now what effect does this have on the classroom? Necessarily, the material progresses more slowly, because the professor has to stop more times to explain some things. (E3)

> “They can't understand, now in cognitive classes, when they can't understand they can't respond. Certainly, their self-confidence falls and their interest in the lesson because, when things are said that you cannot understand, you will make a fuss, you will be indifferent. I think Turkish speakers have a bigger problem. (E6)

Shyness and hesitancy affect some students who know the answers but refrain from speaking up in class. Many minority students struggle with reading literature and comprehending lengthy texts. Educators observe that repatriates/returnees exhibit a strong affinity towards school-related activities. Minority Muslim students encounter particular difficulties with the Greek language, primarily because they do not speak it regularly.

> "The vast majority do not participate even though they may know them [the answers]. They are afraid that if they speak they will get ridiculed, despite this cannot be supported by any examples.

> But they are generally shy to talk to the point that when they are alone you see a completely different child, that is, you find out that these students actually know a lot more than you thought.

The pervasive influence of social media affects many children's language proficiency and overall academic performance.

> The majority of children at the moment either because of the obsession with electronic media, or because of the obsession with self-photographing, or because the book is no longer even among the choices in free time have language problems. Certainly, the minority children have more problems, they can neither use the long period of speech, nor make complex sentences, nor make complex periods of speech rather, sentences are not complex. Let alone understanding such texts. (E8)

Ultimately, a significant number of students face challenges in understanding complex concepts due to their limited familiarity with Greek language and culture. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced and inclusive approach to education.

Students and their Identity

> In general, the school does not give students opportunities to talk about their own identity. I think it is the first thing that we must strive to do here in Thrace as well as in any multicultural environment. And it should not be multicultural, as long as there are different gender identities, different social identities. I believe that the first thing the school should see is to create bridges between students with different identities, to learn to respect each other's point of view, to recognize it.

Participants responded largely positively to the question of whether teachers allow students to express their identity. They acknowledged that students were given many opportunities to discuss their identity and address issues related to racism, in literature courses. This trend was also evident in history and literature classes.

> Within the context of the literature course, there are some moments that are offered, when we talk about some customs, some habits, another culture. I specifically remember a Christmas text we did that talked about a Christian custom and correspondingly then the children were given the opportunity to talk about their own customs. It's an opportunity then and in the language some courses can be given the opportunity. (E2)

> Almost once a month it is in the daily conversation, because we decode what is a Muslim, what is a jihadist, what is the one, what is the other, all these things... so that the children understand that you cannot put Muslims under the word jihadist, they have no relation. We're on the right track overall. (E3)

> "They spoke to us many times about their holidays, about Ramadan, about their Bayram, etc. about their own fasting, that is, their own holidays, mainly in presentations. However, this also happens on a daily [level], that is, in May Ramadan will start we will wish them and their other classmates will wish them a good Ramadan, when Bayram arrives they will wish them on their feast. (E4)

Teachers actively encourage students to express themselves, not just on matters of identity but also regarding their aspirations and goals. This nurturing environment allows children to freely share their thoughts and feelings, fostering a sense of belonging and self-confidence.

> In the classroom, German is actually a subject that is offered to talk about ourselves, anyway in the first high school we talk about ourselves, there we will talk about the languages we speak, about our family, hobbies us, different habits and beyond that which musician we like, which music we listen to, which group we like is a good opportunity for everyone to say what they like. What country is she from, what country is mom or dad from. (E5)

Despite, however, the genuine efforts of teachers, they face challenges in fully supporting the students. One significant issue is the lack of adequate training with regard to handling the various educational matters that arise. Even when some training is available, time constraints often prevent teachers from fully engaging in the learning process.

> The Roma. The house does not particularly help the Roma. We also have absentee Roma, two girls. When I asked her - she is now in the second year of high school, when I asked her sometime in the first year of high school "how do you study?" how many hours do you read at home?' "Hey ma'am, I don't study at home." She became a truant without reading at all at home, only paying attention to school. (E5)

> In our philological courses we are given opportunities, for example in the 2nd Lyceum we do about racism. It is a very good opportunity, since it is to ask and have the children tell you if they have experienced any bad behavior towards them. They don't easily talk about such matters and I think they hide their identity a bit even when they have the chance. [...] We are given other opportunities and experiences and with some games, but the children are a little afraid to speak, to express themselves. (E2)

> The point is for them to speak for themselves. We don't just give them opportunities to talk about themselves, what we set from the beginning as a student contract is that they don't judge each other. It is very important for a child in the classroom to be exposed, even the teacher, to know that he will not be judged for being tall, for being short, for being fat, for coming from a minority, for being a Christian or a Muslim. We clear this up.(E8)

Teacher's concerns

Distance was as a significant impediment in providing adequate teacher training. Indeed, respondents stressed that one of their main requests was frequent, systematic training related to the issues that concern them rather than short-termed, translocation-requiring training.

Educational Priority Zones (Ζ.Ε.Π., heretofore ZEP) have played a crucial role in supporting minority children. These specialized programs aim to provide additional resources and assistance to students facing socioeconomic challenges.

> The language factor is solved relatively quickly especially with programs that are made supportive in schools like ZEP, the programs that are remedial teaching help. Children very quickly acquire language skills when they participate in activities. […] They acquire language stimuli, the kids who don't fit in at all are the ones who have really big financial problems, and there, whether you're a minority or not, it isolates you from things. (E8)

Teachers expressed concerns regarding the propriety of current educational materials. They stressed the necessity for updated and relevant textbooks. They emphasized the essential nature of a curriculum that aligns with the students' needs and the evolving educational landscape.

Religion was a notable factor contributing to school dropout rates. Respondents highlight its influence on certain students' decision to leave school prematurely. A substantial number of the students who do leave school belong to the Roma. Pomaks tend to remain in education in higher numbers. Indeed, the participants placed special emphasis on the challenges faced by the Roma community in providing moral and material support to their children.

Discussion - Conclusions

Teachers did not perceive minority students as problematic. It is, however, evident that serious issues exist within this context. Family structure and its cultural values are crucial factors influencing the students' relationship with the school. The values and support provided to students at home significantly influence their academic journey.

Family socioeconomic status also plays a vital role in determining the possibilities for school success. Families with better economic standing often have greater resources and opportunities to support their children's education, leading to improved outcomes. Limited language proficiency in the language of the school and the differences between home and school language structures present a fundamental challenge for the education of *all* student groups. This language barrier can hinder comprehension and academic performance overall.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that addresses language barriers, self-esteem challenges, and educational disparities. Efforts to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment are essential in empowering minority students to participate in the classroom and express their identity. The importance of this necessity is hard to overstate, in light because of the need to shed some light on and their unique, yet often invisible, experiences within the native-majority-oriented Greek educational system.

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The Usefulness of Social Education in Relation to the Development of Empathy in Students on Issues Related to their Relationship with Others (in the Post-Financial Crisis and Pandemic Era). Students' Views.[1]

Christos Pavlos[2]

Abstract

From 2010 onwards in Greece, the economic crisis has affected a large percentage of the families of adolescents from the popular strata. Then the pandemic directly affected them as well. So because of all this, a very complex context was created in terms of analyzing their behavior towards those around them. Alienation from their peers and the feeling of loneliness from prolonged disengagement is a reality, which obviously created a potential anti-sociality in most of them. At the same time, on the other hand, the economic difficulties of the families of the weaker social strata deprived these adolescents of the possibility of finding alternative areas of social release (activities, excursions, etc.). This situation therefore led, fortunately not generally, to intense behavior, which in some cases bordered on delinquency (fights in the school environment, violation of personal data through the publication of various personal moments of the peers, fan violence, reactions to diversity, etc.). Therefore, at this time, when such behaviors are manifesting themselves, we believe that the school lesson, which talks about civil rights, democracy, diversity, citizenship, equality, inclusion and so many other issues related to living with others, has a special weight in the development of social empathy in the adolescent. Therefore, in the context of this belief, we asked the third grade students (15 years old) of a school in a deprived area (with a lot of students of immigrant or Roma origin) to answer us if they believe that the course they are taught, called Social and Civic Education, with the knowledge it provides through the topics it deals with, helps them to develop their social and political consciousness and their social behavior in general.

Keywords: Social consciousness: social empathy: political consciousness: social behavior

Primary Section Title

Since 2010 the Greek society was hit by the economic crisis. Thus, in the following years, families from the weaker social strata reduced most of their social activities to the bare essentials. As a result, the teenage students of these families also reduced their social activities (sports, additional extracurricular activities, music studies, etc.) as they were a burden on the family's financial budget.

When the previous situation began to normalize to a certain extent, the global health crisis due to the pandemic began, which, apart from the human victims, caused a forced reduction in human interaction worldwide. The entire population was forced to be largely confined to their homes. This for adolescents created a situation of isolation, far from their social relations

[1] If this paper is quoted or referenced, we ask that it be acknowledged as:
Pavlos, C. (2023). The Usefulness of Social Education in Relation to the Development of Empathy in Students on Issues Related to their Relationship with Others (in the Post-Financial Crisis and Pandemic Era). Students' Views. In García-Vélez, T., Jacott, L., and Katsillis, M. J. (Eds.), *Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict – Proceedings of the 24th Annual CiCea International Conference 2023 and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV*, (pp. 24–31). Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association. ISBN: 978-84-09-56245-9.

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and their school. This situation lasted for about three years. When the 2021-2022 school year began, a relative normality returned to the lives of the adolescents. They began regular attendance at their schools again and resumed their extracurricular activities. However, alongside the normality, there was a relative increase in the incidence of violence in schools and in the social interactions of students noticed. In Greece, these phenomena have fortunately not reached unimaginable proportions, but they are nevertheless known issues and are creating problems in schools and in relations between adolescents. On the other hand, in the Greek Educational System, there are courses that aim, as prescribed by the curricula, to educate Greek children in everything that has to do with their social existence. The course of Social and Civic Education, which is taught in the last grade of high school (9th grade of mandatory education), seeks to teach young students issues related to the functioning of the state and the concept of citizens' rights as well as their obligations in the context of living together with others. In addition, it seeks to contribute to the formation of adolescents' personalities in matters relating to tolerance, inclusion, acceptance of diversity, solidarity and empathy. It also refers to gender respect and gender violence, as well as gender equality. It talks about the obligation of people to live in harmony with others and refers to issues of protection and respect for our fellow human beings who are experiencing wars and uprooting in their homelands.

Therefore, starting from our own conviction regarding the usefulness of this course, especially in times when conditions (economic and health) have created a series of problems in the sociality of adolescents, we decided to carry out this research.

Theoretical approach to the usefulness of the Social and Civic Education course

In the curriculum of this particular course as defined by the laws of the Greek State (IEPPS and APS of 2003) until now, a series of concepts concerning the social coexistence with others are set as objectives that the student must cultivate and consolidate. The course in more detail therefore sets as objectives "the student's understanding of the interaction between the individual and society, but also examines the individual as a sociality and as an individuality" (IEPC 2003). In addition, "it examines the social changes that occur in space and time in societies, the international organization of society and the relationship with the Greek State" (IEPC 2003). Concepts such as the interaction between individuals, the acceptance of diversity, the democratic resolution of differences between social groups, gender equality and the rejection of gender violence are analyzed and discussed.

Issues that through the possible dialogue that must take place during the course, create a reflection on the as yet unformed personalities of adolescent students.

From the next school year (2023-2024) we have new curricula that broadly maintain the philosophy of the course themes. The fact is, of course, that in addition to all of the above, greater weight is given to reflection on contemporary issues, such as the issues of migration, refugees and solidarity of peoples in the contemporary international context, as well as "issues of digital literacy". Of course, the main differentiation of the new programs is not so much the subject matter, but mainly the way of teaching the subject matter (a point that in fact is not relevant to this paper) (IEPP 2023).

Generally, however, we must describe an undeniable reality that we observe in the democratic countries of the world in relation to their educational policies. All these policies have as one of their main objectives to provide young people with skills and knowledge related to social coexistence and political participation (Battistoni, 1985).

Later, in the context of the debate at the European level, there was a reflection developed concerning the theoretical education in all the above mentioned concepts, through the teaching of relevant lessons, which will be consolidated by students through more experiential teaching methods(Eurodice,2005).

Moreover, some theorists argue that in cases of bullying or even other types of violent behaviors, it is believed that social education can act as an aid to create deterrent behaviors (Saneleuterio & others,2023).

In fact, here it should be mentioned that in the Greek educational system through the social and civic education course, adolescent students are in essence approaching the concept of citizenship. Although this concept, depending on which science you approach it from, takes a different interpretation (Pavlos, 2020), we will give as the most appropriate definition, in our opinion, what Kymlica (1995) describes as citizenship: that is, it is the situation determined by a set of rights and obligations that the individual has as he lives in organized society. So this lesson therefore tries to discuss with adolescent students the use of both right and obligation.

Therefore, because we believe that this course is the one that actually talks to students about citizenship rights, democracy, diversity, citizenship, equality, inclusion and so many other issues related to living with others, teaching this course also has a special emphasis on developing social empathy in the adolescent.

Research Questions - Research Objective:

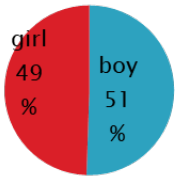
With this survey, we wanted to explore students' views on how much they think the course taught in their school (called Social and Civic Education as I have mentioned above), which is about social education, has helped them in developing resistance to racism, fan violence, social discrimination and anti-democratic attitudes.

The Survey

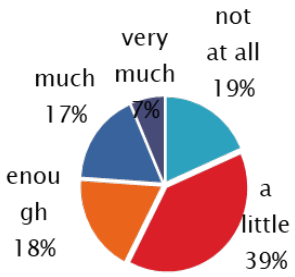
In the context of our belief in the great usefulness of this particular lesson, we asked the third grade students (15 years old) of a school in a deprived area (with a large student population of immigrant or Roma origin), to answer us if they believe that the course they are taught, called Social and Civic Education, with the knowledge it provides through the topics it deals with, helps them to develop their social and political awareness and their social behavior in general. In the following we will present their views and make the necessary commentary to enable us to interpret them.

We have therefore created 13 questions; 11 on a Likert scale, 1 on a nominal scale (referring to the gender of the respondents) and 1 on an ordinal scale, the elaboration of which we will see below.

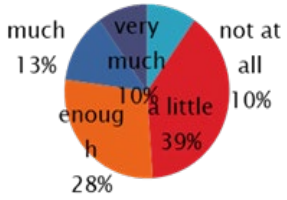
We asked 93 third-year pre high school students (15 years old), which was about the same number of boys and girls who had experienced the economic crisis and distance education during their schooling.



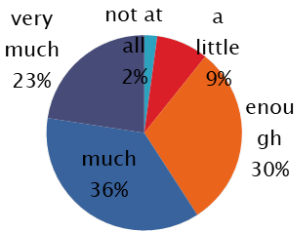
We asked them to answer us if they think that the time of the pandemic in which they were largely confined at home and outside of school affected their sociability? Most answered a little.



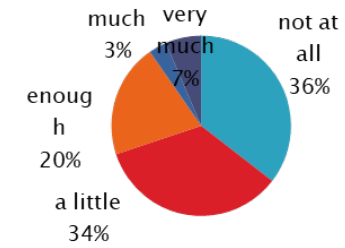
We asked them to answer us if they think that the post-pandemic era where schools have opened and social relationships have returned has brought your social relationships back to the extent you think they would have been if the pandemic confinement era had not intervened? Most answered a little.



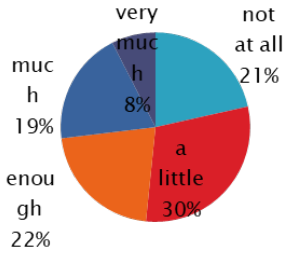
We asked if they think that violence among teenagers has increased in recent years. Most answered much.



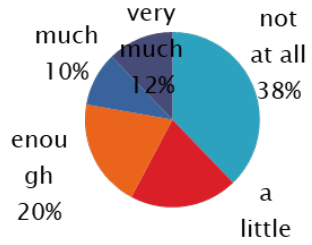
We asked whether they thought that any possible increase in violence among adolescents was related to the pandemic period due to the development of a form of anti-social behavior. Most answered not at all.



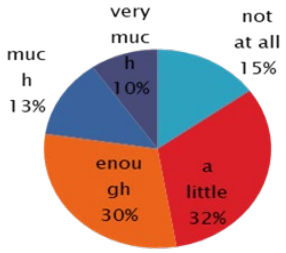
We asked whether they felt that the social education lesson helped them to understand the possible reasons for the existence of these forms of violence. Most answered a little.



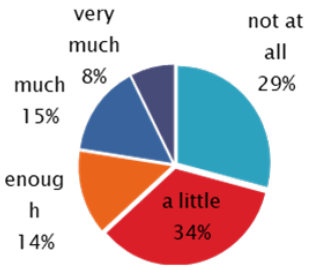
We asked if they felt that the social education course helped them to avoid engaging in acts of violence such as the above. Most answered not at all.



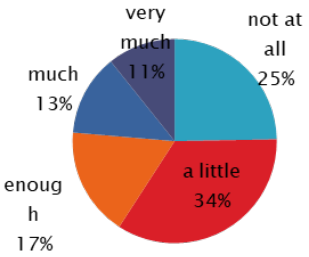
We asked if they felt that social education helped them to develop their social and political awareness more. Most answered a little.



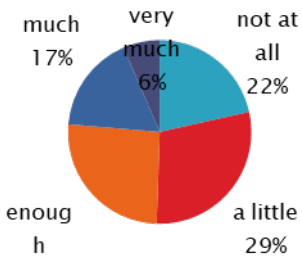
We asked if they felt that the social education course helped them to develop better social behavior (how we behave in our social environment, friends, family, etc.). Most answered not at all.



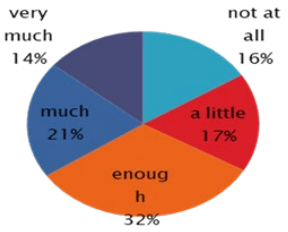
We asked whether they felt that the social education lesson helped them to develop their empathy (being able to put themselves in the other person's shoes and understand them). Most answered a little.



We asked if they felt that the social education lesson helped them to develop their democratic skills (learning to listen, learning to accept that others have the right to have a different opinion). Most answered a little.



We asked whether they think that social education helps them to understand that social problems affect all of us (regardless of whether they affect us directly). Most answered enough.



In question 5 (ordinal scale) we asked students to tell us in which order they think that certain forms of violence occur in terms of frequency. They responded that they believe that fan violence and violation of personal data are the most frequently occurring (28% of respondents). This is followed by racism (25% of respondents), then reactions to diversity (23% of respondents) and lastly gender violence (16% of respondents).

Conclusions

Our sample was relatively evenly distributed in terms of the gender of the respondents. So we cannot observe different opinions related to gender. When asked if they think that their sociality was affected by the incarceration, most of them seem to disagree. In our opinion this can be explained that in today's time young people have means of communication at a distance. Thus these social networks that develop in the adolescent's daily life allowed them to communicate with each other. When asked if they believe that the lifting of the measures has brought back normality in their sociality, most of them answered a little and several answered quite a lot.

This can be explained to a certain extent in conjunction with the answer to the previous question that is since sociality was not affected much therefore the restoration was small.

Most feel that there has been an increase in violence in our time. Furthermore, putting the forms of violence in order of frequency they find that fan violence and violation of personal data are the most frequently occurring, followed by racism, reactions to diversity and lastly gender violence. Respondents do not believe that living at home has played a significant role in increasing violence. Respondents' views on whether the social education course helped them to understand the possible reasons for the existence of these forms of violence are divided. Moreover, most do not believe that the social education course was what helped them to avoid participating in violent phenomena. On the contrary, they believe that the course helped them to acquire better social and political awareness, social behavior and empathy.

On the other hand, opinions are divided as to whether the course helped them to develop their democratic skills, but the vast majority believe that it helped them to understand that social problems concern all of us, regardless of whether they affect us directly.

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Teachers' Psychological Well-Being: An Investigation of Sense of Humor and Attitude toward Death in Terms of Some Demographics[1]

Betul Yilmaz Cam[2], Nuran Tuncer[3], Nilüfer Pembecioğlu[4]

Abstract

Teachers' psychological well-being is very important in educational processes. Therefore, maintaining and increasing teachers' psychological well-being is very important for the success of both teachers and students in the educational process. In the context of psychological well-being, teachers' sense of humor and attitudes toward death were examined in the context of teachers' demographic variables. The aim of the study is to discover teachers' sense of humor and attitude toward death in terms of several variables such as age, year of experience, gender, and major. The correlational method was used to reach this aim and 421 teachers were included in the study. As a result, teachers' sense of humor was found positively related to their age whereas their attitude toward death was negatively associated with age. In addition, no correlation was found between teachers' gender, major, and year of experience. As a result, the findings were discussed with the help of related literature.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being, Sense of Humor, Attitude Toward Death, Teacher

Introduction

Scientists have long invested effort helping the individual organize itself and their environment by living in harmony with the environment in which they live, to develop healthily, and thus lead a happier life. In recent years, more and more studies on well-being have found that individuals with positive characteristics in fundamental dimensions such as social, emotional, and cognitive competence have higher life satisfaction compared to those lacking such characteristics. As a result, human scientists have shifted their efforts to focus on the discovery and strengthening of the positive characteristics of the individual.

The philosophical discussion focused on feeling good about oneself and increasing life satisfaction by being in state of continuous development began with Socrates and Plato. It is thought that Aristotle's 'Eudemonia'[5], however, was the first treatise to tackle emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, and social processes. According to Aristotle, Eudemonia is the development of one's potential, the ability to maintain the capacity to develop as an individual, and a state of eternal happiness, away from daily and temporary pleasures. Examinations of Aristotle's definition of 'eudemonia' have influenced many scientists and produced substantial research in this area. Such attempts, to increase our understanding of

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Yilmaz Cam, B., Tuncer, N. & Pembecioğlu, N. (2023). Teachers' Psychological Well-Being: An Investigation of Sense of Humor and Attitude toward Death in Terms of Some Demographics. In García-Vélez, T., Jacott, L., and Katsillis, M. J. (Eds.), *Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict – Proceedings of the 24th Annual CiCea International Conference 2023 and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV*, (pp. 32–49). Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association. ISBN: 978-84-09-56245-9.

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[5] From the ancient Greek "Ευδαιμονία" (eβ.ðe.mo'nía; IPA: eu̯.dai̯.mo.ní.a), which literally means "bliss".

the process to develop and enhance the individual's feeling of wellbeing, are increasingly commonly handled within the framework of psychological well-being (Roothman et al., 2003).

Psychological well-being refers to any positive state that include mental, psychological and emotional aspects of an individual's life and which lead to development and growth (Linley & Joseph, 2004). According to Ryff and Keyes (1995), psychological well-being is related to whether the individual is aware of their current potential and life goals and whether they can establish a healthy interaction with others. Waterman (1993) considers psychological well-being the struggle and strive for personal development. Jung associated the psychologically healthy individual with the achievement of the basic functions of the life period (Cenkseven, 2004). Adler considers social harmony, love and marriage and professional effectiveness as the criteria of psychological well-being (Ewen, 1988, cited in Sezer, 2013). In this light, psychological well-being can be contributing factor to the solution of many of the individual's vital problems.

Attempts to evaluate and increase psychological well-being require consideration of the social and cultural factors in which the individual lives. Different individuals within the same social context, which is to say within the same social/cultural environment, may encounter differences in the path to positive self-evaluation. These differences may present in many contexts, including the continuity of growth and development, life-purpose, having qualified relationships with others, capacity to manage one's life effectively, and belief in making one's own decisions. Since the path to psychological well-being is socioculturally contextual, retaining this context is key in undertaking meaningful research on the subject (Fava & Ruini, 2014).

From a systematic point of view, the personal characteristics of the individual are in continuous interaction with one-another. Thus, the support individual characteristics mandates the concurrent examination of (relevant) structural characteristics. This is, of course, a difficult proposition, which has frustrated researchers and contributed to the linear (rather than concurrent) examination of familial and cultural influences on the individual (Bee & Boyd, 2009).

The impediments in conducting concurrent examinations of all of the influences, interactions, and other potential contributing factors are indeed substantial. Serious inquiries hoping to understand and evaluate the individual from different perspectives, however, can no longer limit themselves to such approximations –which arguably violate fundamental, functional aspects of our understanding by which these processes (and influences) occur. Indeed, it is our strong belief that research in this field must not only acknowledge these difficulties but actively face them and consider the individual from a holistic perspective. It is not enough, in other words, to exclusively examine the individual with regard to some specific characteristics but also with a holistic understanding, in which all individual characteristics interact with each other and function as parts of the same whole.

The scientific accumulation of data on individuals' mental health and positive psychological functioning indicates that mental health is not only an important issue in human life but one which increases in importance every day. Concerns regarding individuals' mental health have attracted more attention in recent years (Carr, 2016; Fava & Ruini, 2014). Seligman (2002) argued that the future mission of human scientists will be the investigating of all factors contributing to individual existential happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being. This positive

psychology movement aims to support the strengths and healthy aspects of individuals and to increase their life-power in this way.

Ryff (1989) argued for the existence of six basic dimensions of psychological well-being in the multiple psychological well-being model: self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental dominance, life purpose, and personal development.

- *Self-acceptance* is defined as a concept at the center of positive psychological health (along with the concepts of self-actualization, high level of functioning and maturity) and is considered an important feature of psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989).
- *Positive relationships with others* are defined by characteristics such as sincerity, trust in relationships, empathy, satisfaction, not avoiding close relationships, and helping others (Kuyumcu, 2012). These relationships (or, more accurately, their prevalence and positivity) can be interpreted as existing on a spectrum. Individuals with high levels of positive relationships with others trust people, derive satisfaction from their relationships, seek the happiness of others, can empathize, respect themselves and others, feel comfortable around others, know that relationships are built on a balance and are not for the benefit of one party. Individuals with low levels of positive relationships with others have difficulties in establishing relationships, do not warm up to people easily, act distant and aloof, have difficulty maintaining relationships, hesitate to open up, are withdrawn, have few friends, can cut off their relationships abruptly and interfere with those who want to establish relationships (Yılmaz, 2013).
- *Autonomy* is defined (Ryff, 1989) as a concept including free will, internal regulation of human behavior and independence. In other words, autonomy is the ability to use one's free will. Environmental dominance, the fourth dimension of psychological well-being, is seen that individuals which create or choose environments in line with their needs and priorities by taking advantage of the opportunities around them. People with low environmental dominance are considered to have difficulty managing their daily work and taking advantage of the opportunities they encounter (Sözer, 2017).
- *Having a purpose in life* and thinking that life is meaningful is a guide that determines the direction in which the individual will move forward (Ryff, 1989).
- *Personal development* includes having a sense of continuous development, seeing oneself as a constantly developing individual, being open to new experiences, having a sense of awareness, knowing one's potential, improving oneself and one's behaviors over time, and changing in ways that reflect one's self-knowledge and effectiveness more (Ryff & Singer, 1996).

Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff (2002) found that each dimension of psychological well-being is related to the challenges individuals face in life. Thus, for example, despite individuals being aware of their limitations, they try to feel better about themselves, develop warm and secure relationships, and shape their environment to meet their personal wants and needs. In order to maintain their individuality in a broader social context, individuals determine their own lives and seek a sense of personal authority; they develop their skills and abilities by trying to give meaning to their efforts and struggles. Humor is one mechanism by which individuals cope with distressing situations. Individuals use humor distance themselves from the stressful situations in which they find themselves but it can also contribute to their physical and psychological well-being of (Martin, 2001). Humor is, in other words, thought to contribute to the prediction of individual psychological well-being and thus the primary focus of this study.

Society generally accepts situations that mediate or incite laughing and laughing behavior as humor. Humor played an indispensable role in literature, theater, cinema, commerce, politics, and so forth, throughout recorded human history. The concept has been emphasized, resulting in the emergence of a plethora of humor related products. Humor, just like other human pleasures, is a social phenomenon. It is a fundamental aspect of daily human relations. Indeed, the use of humor in interpersonal relations is quite common in and intertwined with human life.

Contemporary society is characterized by a hunger for humor; the importance of this issue is emphasized by (arguably nearly universal) prevalence of efforts by individuals to show that humor is among their personality traits (Sayar, 2012). An examination of individuals who can effectively communicate with others around them (and who are sought after in their environment) indicates the existence of individuals with high humor ability, who possess the capacity to perceive the funny and entertaining sides of experienced events and life in general (Akıncı, 2015). Humor provides positive personality traits and adaptive coping skills, reduces stress and anxiety, and improves interpersonal relationships (Yerlikaya, 2003).

The overwhelming majority of humor studies indicate that humor nourishes social relationships, reduces work-related stress. People with a strong sense of humor can cope with stress more effectively, generally experience fewer negative emotions, are physically healthier and can establish more positive and healthy relationships with others (Tümkaya, 2009). Therefore, the use of humor has begun to attract the attention of researchers for its benefits to the individual and society, the work-life advantages it provides and its effectiveness in increasing quality of life (Sayar, 2012). Indeed, individuals with a strong sense of humor are believed to possess certain sub-dimensions of psychological well-being, including optimism, self-acceptance, self-confidence and autonomy. These components of psychological well-being are also examined as characteristics of interest in this study.

Realistic, and thus comprehensive, examinations of psychological well-being cannot be limited solely to those factors and mechanisms which are believed or have been evidenced to positively affect well-being; they must also take into consideration detractors. We posit that the individual's perception of and attitude toward death may be one such factor. Death is an unavoidable aspect of life and, as such, its impact on the individual is inevitable. Excessive, extreme and/or pathological thoughts of death, however, can have a detrimental effect on human psychology (Köknel, 1985; Karaca, 2000). Disruptions of attitude, balance and harmony in the face of death can result in increased levels of anxiety, in turn making it (more) difficult for them to adapt to their environment(s). The thought of death creates anxiety in people; it can connect them to life and give meaning to their existence. Knowing the reality of death can enable people to live their lives more meaningfully (Alkan, 1999; Heidegger, 2004).

Facing the reality of death helps the individual see themselves and their lives clearly and to understand and enjoy life as a whole (Wahl, 1959). Openly and courageously accepting that death is a part of life is a prerequisite for a holistic perception of both life and self. Indeed, Young (2006) posits that only when the individual fully accepts death can they truly gain mental health.

Humor and death can arguably be perceived as opposing concepts. This does not impede both of them potentially affecting psychological well-being.

Teachers' characteristics are substantively important, as they influence students throughout their educational lives (Altan, & Lane, 2018). Indeed, teachers' characteristics impact students' character development (Istiyono et al., 2021), the formation of their values (Istiyono et al., 2021), and their motivation in the learning process (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Teachers' characteristics are also integral in building students' self-esteem (Mbuva, 2016) and, crucially, providing a starting point in a healthy character education process (Aktepe, 2019). Teachers help students develop life skills and deal with problems as effective human beings. The students of today are the citizens of tomorrow. Teachers, who are in a position to have such a substantial impact on students' lives, are, in effect, a core aspect shaping the future of society (Nedim, 2019). Indeed, in the particular case of the teacher, their psychological well-being plays a substantial role in the educational process. Research has indicated that higher levels of teachers' psychological well-being correspond to increased academic achievement in their students' (Yurdaışık et al., 2013). Teachers' psychological well-being has also been found to be related to their professional resilience (Arslan & Tura, 2022). Teachers' humor, when it relates to their psychological well-being, can also affect their classroom management profiles (Yılmaz-Çam, 2023). Thus, maintaining and increasing teachers' psychological well-being is critical for the success of both teachers and students in the educational process. This study examines a series of common demographic characteristics, age, year of experience, gender, and major, in an attempt to gain further insight into the factors associated with teachers' sense of humor and attitude toward death.

Literature Background

Sense of Humor

Most of the psychological research conducted until recently has found (sense of) humor to be a personality trait positively associated with individual psychological health and well-being. It is thought that people with a high sense of humor are more successful in coping with stress, experience less negative effects in daily life, have better physical health, and are able to establish healthier, positive bonds in interpersonal relationships (Martin, 2004). Humor, and a sense of humor, create positive emotion(s), which in turn have positive effects, including the reduction of stress and problems, facilitating social communication, and facilitating influencing other individuals (Martin & Ford, 2018).

Sense of humor is an emotion in which individual differences are experienced, such as an individual's ability to see, perceive, and describe anything funny, the type of things they find funny, the way they experience and express humor, and the frequency of humor reactions in daily life (Erözkan, 2009). Sense of humor is a complex concept with cognitive, social, and affective components.

Personality theorists have discussed the importance of a sense of humor in psychological health. Sense of humor is a characteristic of self-actualized individuals (Ruch, 1998). The sense of humor of the self-actualized individual is non-aggressive and philosophical. It is not characterized by a derogatory or exclusionary attitude towards individuals or groups; it focuses on the situations in which individuals (or groups), including themselves, find themselves (Ruch, 1998). A mature sense of humor is characteristic of a healthy personality, including the ability to laugh at oneself, while maintaining a sense of self-acceptance (Kuipeh & Martin, 2010). These personalities are also characterized by a positive and integrated sense

of self, warm relationships with others, realistic perceptions, a unifying philosophy of life and self-insight (Ruch, 1998).

Eysenck (1972) posited that three different meanings could be ascribed to the concept of a sense of humor:

1. *Conformist Meaning*: other individuals laugh at the same things we do
2. *Quantitative Meaning*: the individual laughs a lot and is easily amused or
3. Generative Meaning: the individual entertains other individuals by telling funny stories.

Hehl and Ruch (1985) extended Eysenck's (1972) list, by noting that individual variations in the meaning of humor may be related to differences in:

1. the degree to which individuals understand jokes and other humorous stimuli,
2. the ways individuals express humor and mirth, both quantitatively and qualitatively,
3. individuals' ability to form humorous interpretations or perceptions,
4. individual's liking for various jokes, cartoons, and other humorous material,
5. the degree to which individuals actively seek out sources that make them laugh,
6. individuals' memory for jokes or amusing events and
7. individuals' tendency to use humor as a coping mechanism.

The term 'sense of humor' is often used to refer to a personal trait, with regard to which individual differences in the use of humor are emphasized. Thus, a sense of humor can be a habitual behavioral pattern (e.g., the tendency to laugh often, to joke and entertain others, to laugh at others' jokes), a talent (e.g., the ability to produce humor, to entertain others, to understand the joke, to remember jokes) or a temporary trait (e.g., the habit of joy). It can be conceptualized as an aesthetic response (e.g., the use of certain humorous materials), an attitude (e.g., a positive attitude towards humor and humorous people), a worldview (e.g., a puzzled view of life), or a coping strategy (e.g., the tendency to maintain a humorous perspective in the face of adversity). A sense of humor can also refer to the ability to laugh at one's own mistakes and weaknesses, to make fun of oneself and not to take every situation that happens to one too seriously (Yerlikaya, 2009).

The preceding paragraph illustrates one of the difficulties in incorporating sense of humor into rigorous research. The various definitions of sense of humor presented above do not necessarily align –conceptually or statistically (i.e., various pairs may be weakly positively related, if at all, while others may be negatively related). Thus, apart from understanding the concept, it is also necessary to be transparent and explicit in the selection of the appropriate operationalization of individuals' sense of humor, based on theory, empirical research and the particular needs of the current enquiry.

Attitude Toward Death

Attitudes toward death are related to how individuals feel towards the concept of death in general, both in the context of their own death and the death of others (Wong et al., 1994). Individual needs vary; what is beneficial for one individual may be detrimental for another (Jung, 2015). As a result, individuals may consciously or unconsciously exhibit different attitudes such as fear, avoidance and acceptance of death (Niemiec & Schulenberg, 2011; Wong et al., 1994).

Death is a solitary act that each person must experience alone (Yalom, 2008). No individual can take on the death of another, and being related to the process of death is an existential part of the human condition (Dastur, 2021). Successes and failures, struggles and difficulties and changes in living conditions that people encounter in life all contribute to the construction of a personal meaning for and attitude toward death. Thus, the meaning of death is a process which begins in childhood and continues until to the end of one's life –the resulting phenomenological meanings of which can also contribute to fear of death (Cicirelli, 1998). Each individual's fear of death is unique. For some it is like a background music that accompanies life; a subtle reminder that no passing moment will ever come back.

Experiences and reminders of death help make individuals more aware of the inevitability of mortality, including the ability to accept (or deny) it (Connelly, 2003). Experiences, however, are not situations that disappear after they are lived; they continue to exist in our memories (Frankl, 2018). Indeed, Logotherapy tells us that accepting the transience of existence should be used as a structure that drives people to action and as an opportunity to live life to the fullest (Guttmann, 2008).

Generally, people who think that they have made good use of their lives tend to have a calmer acceptance of death (Hökelekli, 2017). Not all acceptance of death can be explained in the same way, however. There are three different types of acceptance of death: neutral acceptance, approach acceptance, and escape acceptance (Wong et al., 1994). Gesser et al. (1988) define these as:

1. Neutral acceptance: accepting death as a reality that is "neither liked nor feared";
2. Approach acceptance: accepting death as "a way to a happy afterlife"; and
3. Escape acceptance: accepting death as "an escape from a painful existence".

It is worth noting that *acceptance of death* is not the categorical opposite of *fear of death*. Even individuals who cognitively accept the inevitability and goodness of their mortality may not be completely free from personal *fear of death* and its aftermath. Similarly, regardless of the magnitude of the individual's *fear of death* may be, all individuals must somehow learn to accept their mortality (Wong et al., 1994).

Avoidance is also both related to and characterizes the individual's attitude toward death. Although both *fear of death* and *death avoidance* imply a negative attitude, they are not interchangeable terms (or concepts). In fear of death, a person confronts death and the feelings of fear it evokes. In *death avoidance*, the individual avoids thinking or talking about death, in order to reduce death anxiety. *Death avoidance* is a defense mechanism that denies death and distances it from the individual's consciousness. Thus, two different individuals may both be characterized as having a negative attitude towards death but one exhibits *fear of death*, while the other exhibits *death avoidance* (Wong et al., 1994).

The existential emphasis individuals place on the necessity of a sense of meaning, both to survive and face death, provides a useful conceptual framework for integrating various death attitude patterns. Individuals who feel they lead productive, meaningful lives may be high in *neutral acceptance* and low in *fear of death*, *death avoidance* and *avoidance of acceptance*. Individuals who derive meaning and optimism from a belief in a happy afterlife may be high in *approach acceptance* and low in *fear of death*, *death avoidance* and *escape acceptance*. Those who find life meaningless due to, for example, an incurable disease may have high levels of *escape acceptance* and low levels of *fear of death* and *death avoidance* (Wong et al., 1994).

Methodology

This study attempts to shed further light on common demographic characteristics which may function as factors associated with sense of humor and attitude toward death. We examine these factors, including age, years of experience, gender, and educational major, particularly as they pertain to school teachers. In their most fundamental form, associations are a form of relationship and relationships, in turn, fundamentally refer to two characteristics changing in concert (i.e., either increasing /decreasing together, or one increasing as the other decreases). To this end, we have conducted a series of statistical tests, including correlation analysis, tests of differences, and analysis of variance, in order to determine the existence and degree of change between more than one variable (Karasar, 2009).

Sample

Our sample comprised of 421 teachers (34.9% (n=147) male and 65.1% (n=274) female), selected via convenience sampling. Convenience sampling has the benefit of selecting participants in the immediate vicinity of the researcher(s), easy to reach, available and willing to participate in the research. There are few drawbacks, so long as the participants' region is not in a characteristic of interest in analyses conducted on the sample (Erkuş, 2013). One of the more notable limitations of convenience sampling, however, is its non-probabilistic nature. Sample selection and data collection were carried during the (at the time) ongoing pandemic. This made any form of rigorously probabilistic sampling questionable at best and convenience sampling substantially more practical and efficient. As such, however, the sample does not correspond to a concretely defined population. Theoretically speaking, however, each sample can be expanded to a hypothetical population which it is representative of. Thus, any sample drawn from a given population is, in a sense, representative of *some* (hypothetical) population and findings drawn from it can be generalized to this (hypothetical) population.

Data Collection Instruments

During the data collection process, three instruments were used.

The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

The original Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale is a 24-item scale, comprised of five-point Likert-type self-report items (Thorson & Powell, 1993). Each item corresponded to a statement, for which participants could choose one of 5 options: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" and "strongly agree", which were given scores of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. Six of the items (15, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 24) bore negative connotations and were scored in reverse (i.e., "strongly agree"=0, "agree"=1, etc.) Thus, the Mutidimensional Sense of Humor Scale can take values from 0 to 96. Higher total scores correspond to a higher (or stronger) general sense of humor. The scale is comprised of 5 parts: an overall sense of humor score and four sub-dimensions of sense of humor. The sub-dimensions vary between samples, making use of their scores alone questionable (Corcoran & Fischer, 2013).

The Turkish version of the scale is comprised of 24 five-point, Likert type items ($\alpha_{Chronbach}$=0.92) (Aslan et al., 1999). Adapted to the necessities of the Turkish language, answers included options of "not at all suitable for me," "partially suitable for me," "moderately suitable for me," "largely suitable for me" and "completely suitable for me", again scored 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. In the Turkish adaptation of the scale, the scale was applied to 102 university and health directorate employees. Although the number of items per factor and its content changed in the Turkish version of the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale, a four-factor structure was found as in the original scale. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the Turkish scale were found to be 0.81 and 0.87 in the test-retest application, respectively. The coefficients of the sub-dimensions also ranged between 0.61 and 0.90 (Özdoğru, 2018). This study employs an updated version of the Turkish Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (Özdoğru, 2018).

Attitude towards Death Scale

The Death Attitude Profile-Revised Scale was developed by Wong et al. (1994). The validity and reliability of the scale has also been tested in the Turkish context (Işık et al., 2009). The scale consists of 26, seven-point, Likert-type items and has three sub-dimensions: "Neutral Acceptance and Approach Acceptance", "Escape Acceptance" and "Fear of Death and Death Avoidance". Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale is 0.81 and 0.82, 0.72, and 0.70 for the three sub-dimensions, respectively. Possible responses to the scale's items range from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). Higher total scores on the scale correspond to more negative (i.e., worse) respondents' attitude towards death is evaluated. Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale in this study is 0.92 and 0.92, 0.78, 0.87 for the three sub-dimensions respectively.

Demographic Information Form

Respondents were asked to provide specifics on various demographic characteristics via an online demographic information form, prepared by the researchers. The form included questions related to participants' age, years of experience, gender, and educational major.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the sample of teachers were processed into the SPSS-24 package program. Outliers related to the distributions of the collected data were analyzed and removed from the study. At the stage of examining the extreme values, the stem-leaf graph and boxplot graphs were examined and very high and very low values were interpreted as anomalously extreme values and removed, following Tan (2016).

Given the means of construction and number of categories in each of the two scales (i.e., Attitude Toward Death & Sense of Humor) discussed previously, it is arguably safe to treat them both as functional Interval level variables and, as such, conditionally suitable for incorporation in parametric analyses. Absolute skew and kurtosis values for the overall and sub-factor scores of the scales were universally less than 1 (See Table 1), which is to say sufficiently small for our scale data to be considered approximately Normal (Morgan et al., 2004). Levene's test also indicated that the variances of the scores for each scale were

homogeneously distributed (p<0.05), which is to say the homogeneity assumption was also met. Two samples (groups) being independent from each other, dependent variables being measured at interval or ratio scale level, normality and homogeneity assumptions being met meet the parametric test assumptions (Köklü et al., 2007).

Table 1. Test of Normality

		Statistic	S.E.
Humor	Skewness	-.304	.119
	Kurtosis	-.369	.238
Death	Skewness	-.029	.119
	Kurtosis	.113	.238

Findings

In this section, the findings of the analyses will be presented in the context of demographic variables.

Age

There is a strong positive relationship between teachers' age and their sense of humor within the study's sample. There is a weak, negative relationship between their age and their attitude toward death observed therein, as well. Only the relationship between their age and sense of humor is present in the hypothetical population our sample represents (p=0.018<α=0.05), however (see Table 2).

Table 2. Relationships on Age

		Humor	Death
Age	Pearson Correlation	.712	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.019
	N	420	420

Gender

The second variable included in the study is gender. Analyses conducted in the context of gender are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Diff.**	**S.E. Diff.**	**95% C.I. of the Diff.**	
									Lower	Upper
Humor	Equal var. assumed	.301	.584	.336	411	.737	.01877	.05585	-.09101	.12856

	Equal var. not assumed			.339	278.189	.735	.01877	.05533	-.09016	.12770
Death	Equal var. assumed	.016	.898	-.044	411	.965	-.00314	.07190	-.14446	.13819
	Equal var. not assumed			-.043	265.743	.966	-.00314	.07248	-.14584	.13957

As it is seen in Table 3, there is no difference between sense of humor gender [t(411)=.336, p<0.001]. Similarly, there is no difference between sense of humor gender [t(411)=-.044, p<0.001].

Educational Major

Another variable examined within the scope of the study is the educational level that the teachers' work on. The educational levels were preschool, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade, middle school, high school and special education classes. Analyses made in the context of teachers' majors are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Differences Between Major and Sense of Humor

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.636	8	.080	.264	.977
Within Groups	123.639	411	.301		
Total	124.276	419			

Teachers' grade level and their sense of humor were compared using one-way analysis of variance and no significant difference was found between the groups. [F (8, 411) = .264, p = .977] (see Table 4).

Table 5. Difference Between Major and Attitude Toward Death

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.439	8	.555	1.167	.318
Within Groups	195.366	411	.475		
Total	199.804	419			

Similar to the sense of humor, teachers' grade level and attitude toward death were compared using one-way analysis of variance and no significant difference was found between the groups. [F (8, 411) = 1.167, p = .318] (see Table 5).

Years of experience

The last variable examined within the scope of the study is the years of experience of the teachers. The categories regarding experience years were "1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, 31 and more years." The results of the analysis in this context are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Difference Between Year of Experience and Sense of Humor

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.627	6	.271	.913	.485
Within Groups	122.649	413	.297		
Total	124.276	419			

Table 6 presents the findings related to teachers' years of experience and their sense of humor. When the table is examined, it is revealed that teachers' year of experience and sense of humor were compared using one-way analysis of variance and no significant difference was found between the groups. [F (6, 413) = .913, p = .485].

Table 7. Difference Between Years of Experience and Attitude Toward Death

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.895	6	.649	1.368	.226
Within Groups	195.910	413	.474		
Total	199.804	419			

Finally, we examined the difference between teachers' years of experience and their attitudes towards death. Teachers' year of experience and attitude toward death were compared using one-way analysis of variance and no significant difference was found between the groups. [F (6, 413) = 1.368, p = .226] (see Table 7).

Within the scope of the study, teachers' sense of humor and attitudes toward death were examined in the context of age, gender, major, and years of experience variables. In the next part, the findings of the current study are discussed and presented with the relevant literature.

Discussion

The study examined the relationship and difference between a series of teachers' demographic characteristics, which can be indicators of psychological well-being, with regard to their sense of humor and attitude toward death. These included age, gender, major, and years of experience. We found evidence of a positive relationship between age and sense of humor. This is not unexpected. Indeed, Thorson (1996) also found a positive relationship between the two characteristics. Tümkaya (2006) also noted the association between age and sense of humor. Yalçın, Obalı, and Öztüren (2021) also found a positive relationship between age and sense of humor, in gifted children. It is worth noting, however, that this finding is also not universal. Talbot (2000), for example, found humor use decreased with age, within the study's sample. The positive relationship between age and sense of humor, however, seems to make more sense. Preceding generations have been socialized in a different manner and have more experiences related to humor. These increased experiences can also improve their sense of humor (Thorson 1996). Sense of humor can also be seen as a developmental trait and, as such, we would expect it to increase with age (Bergen, 1998).

Contrary to our expectations, we found no difference between sense of humor and gender, major, or years of experience. There are several examples of such difference within the relevant literature. Yavuz (2017) found that humor perceptions were differed by gender in a study on popular Turkish humor culture within the scope of gender in Turkey. Tümkaya (2011) also mentions the relationship between a sense of humor and several variables including though not limited to gender and age.

We found evidence of a negative relationship between age and attitude toward death. This was largely expected. Sönmez Benli and Yıldırım (2017) argued that individual characteristics (e.g., religious beliefs, social and cultural structure) may affect the fact that younger nurses show more positive attitudes towards and greater acceptance of death. Güder and Kaya (2023) argued that Generation X showed less, and Generation Z more, fear of and avoidance of death. Gama, Vieira, and Barbosa (2012) found that older nurses and nurses with more work experience had higher escape acceptance. In other words, the relationship between age and attitude toward death is extremely common, if not always consistent, across studies. Proposing a specific explanation for this variation goes beyond the scope of this particular examination. It is worth noting, however, that Martínez-Heredia (2021) proposes cultural differences as a potential explanation for differences observed in the attitude toward death.

We found no other statistically significant difference between attitude toward death and the remaining demographic characteristics. This is not unheard of. Gama, Vieira, and Barbosa (2012) found no statistically significant differences between the attitude toward death in terms of age, gender, marital status, and work experience. Several other studies, however, have found evidence of the existence of such relationships in studies focused on Turkish populations (Yaparel & Yıldız 1998, Yıldız 2001, Yıldız 1999). Thus, we argue that culture and other personality traits may hold substantive importance in revealing the underlying relationships between attitudes toward death and demographic variables and excluding them may preclude our ability to develop a deeper understanding of the subject, in general, and these relationships, in particular.

Conclusion

Teachers' psychological well-being is a crucial aspect of their professional life. Research shows that high levels of psychological well-being are related to teachers' positive leadership perceptions, perceived social support, finding meaning and purpose in life, and personal development (Arslan & Tura, 2022; Aydoğan, 2019; Yurdaışık et al., 2023). Teachers' psychological well-being levels have also been found to be related to their perceptions of school climate (Aydoğan, 2019). Higher levels of psychological well-being can also help teachers be happier, more productive, and more successful in their work.

It is, therefore, important to examine the situations that may be related to teachers' psychological well-being. This study focuses on the sense of humor and attitude toward death. These two concepts were examined in the context of a series of teachers' demographic characteristics. The findings of the study may provide the basis for an infrastructure for future studies, by examining the situations that can improve the psychological well-being of teachers.

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Populism in Greece: A Qualitative Study of University Students' Perceptions[1]

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Abstract

Populism can be understood as an approach that seeks to mobilize and empower the masses against a perceived threat or oppression. This phenomenon often emerges during an economic, social, or political crisis, where people feel the existing institutions and authorities are failing them. Populism has become an increasingly prominent force in the political landscape of Greece, particularly in recent years, in the years of permacrisis. Therefore, we must understand how this phenomenon impacts Greek society, particularly Greek university students (future teachers) and primary and secondary school teachers. Through qualitative analysis and two focus groups, we examine their perceptions of populism in the public sphere. In our first findings, populism is a familiar term for the participants and is considered a threat. Its influence exists in various areas, including education, media, and social relations. Concurrently, populism looks like hypocrisy, deceit, and serving selfish interests.

Keywords: Populism, Permacrisis, Values

Introduction

Populism is a political phenomenon that has gained increasing prominence in recent years. It is a powerful and influential force in shaping contemporary societies. Populism seeks to mobilize and empower the masses against perceived threats, inequalities, or perceived oppression, perpetrated by established elites and institutions. Populist movements often emerge during economic hardship, social discontent, or political turmoil, exploiting the disillusionment of those who feel that that existing systems and authorities have failed to address their grievances adequately (Müller, 2016).

At its core, populism revolves around the notion of 'the people' versus 'the elite' or 'the establishment'. Populist leaders typically portray themselves as the champions of ordinary citizens, positioning their agendas as a direct response to the concerns and aspirations of the ordinary people. They claim to be the authentic representatives of the people's will and use this claim to legitimize their authority and actions (Chwalisz, 2015).

The appeal of populism lies in its ability to simplify complex issues, offering straightforward solutions to multifaceted problems. This reductionist approach resonates with many citizens disenchanted with traditional political processes' perceived complexities and inefficiencies. Populism's ability to tap into the emotions and frustrations of the masses can, however, also

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lead to the oversimplification of complex challenges, resulting in policies that may be shortsighted or divisive. Populist movements can take diverse forms and ideologies, spanning the political spectrum. Whether right-wing populism, left-wing populism, or centrist populism, the common thread is the promise of change and the challenge to the status quo. While some populist movements have achieved considerable electoral success and attained power in various countries, others have faced staunch opposition and criticism for their polarizing rhetoric and policies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Significance and Purpose of the Study

Exploring the manifestations and implications of populism in Greek society arguably contributes to academic understanding. It sheds light on how populism affects various aspects of society, including education, media, and social relationships. It may also help us better comprehend youth perspectives. This study provides, among other things, valuable insights into how the younger generation perceives and responds to populism. As youth often plays a crucial role in shaping the future of a country, understanding their perspectives is essential for comprehending the broader societal impact of populism.

Populism plays a vital role in shaping politics. Populism has been on the rise in various countries worldwide, including Greece. Investigating its influence on Greek society can help policy makers, academics and the public better understand this political trend and its potential consequences. This information this study provides regarding students' perceptions of populism may help policymakers and universities in Greece form strategies and responses to address the challenges posed by populism, in both educational institutions and society in general. Indeed, this benefit may stretch beyond universities into schools, since our research examines two groups: one comprised of primary and secondary school teachers and one of university students who are future teachers.

Consequently, we had the opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis between active teachers and (student) future teachers. Our use of qualitative analysis and focus groups provided the opportunity for an in-depth exploration of participants' views. This allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the complex perceptions surrounding populism.

The rise of populism has been a subject of intense academic study and public debate. Scholars and analysts strive to comprehend its underlying drivers, its impact on democratic institutions, and its implications for social cohesion and governance. In an era marked by globalization, technological advancements, and interconnectedness, understanding populism's emergence and appeal has become even more critical in navigating the complexities of the contemporary political landscape.

This study hopes to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on populism, provide insights into the impact on Greek society and the attitudes of primary and secondary school teachers, as also university students, and offer practical implications for addressing this phenomenon in the context of education and beyond.

Unraveling the Nexus: Populism, Permacrisis, Social Welfare State, and Trumpism

The most recent global rise in populism has been characterized by its appeal to the grievances and frustrations of the masses. The global landscape has been marred by prolonged periods of interconnected crises, often referred to as a state of permacrisis. Within this context, the

social welfare state plays a crucial, although not always successful, role in providing essential services and social protection to citizens. Examining these concepts concurrently offers valuable insights into populism and its relationship with contemporary societal challenges and political dynamics.

Populism: A Chorus of Discontent

Populism emerges in response to perceived injustices and inadequacies in the existing political system. It taps into the frustrations of citizens who feel disconnected from established institutions and promises to represent the 'true' will of the people. Populist movements often employ simplistic rhetoric, dichotomizing society into 'us vs. them', with 'them' representing societal elites or the establishment. It also risks democratic values, as some populist leaders may undermine democratic norms and institutions in pursuing power (Binder & Blokker, 2022).

Permacrisis: A Persistent Conundrum

The term permacrisis refers to sustained economic, social, and political crises, presenting complex challenges to societies worldwide. It is rooted in economic instability, geopolitical tensions, and environmental concerns. Permacrisis erodes trust in traditional governance and exacerbates existing inequalities. Addressing permacrisis requires comprehensive and adaptable policy approaches that account for the interconnectedness of contemporary global challenges.

According to both international and Greek literature, the permacrisis (or the Greek equivalent "Crisis Continuum", representing the continuous crisis state from debt crisis to refugee crisis to today's crises) has had a direct impact on the transformation of welfare state factors. These include education, which has had subsequent repercussions, and especially substantial effects on young people (Gouga, 2021; Panagopoulos et al., 2022). Nevertheless, permacrisis is more than just economic in nature. The "Crisis Continuum" is also a crisis of trust in and institutional reason, which functionally transforms the economic crisis into a crisis of democracy (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011).

Social Welfare State: Safeguarding the Vulnerable?

Amidst the upheaval of permacrisis and the allure of populism, the social welfare state usually but not always stands as a crucial support for citizens. It generally embodies the principle of social solidarity, offering essential services and safety nets to those in need. The social welfare state is vital in fostering social cohesion, mitigating inequalities, and promoting equal opportunities. Balancing social welfare policies with economic sustainability remains a constant challenge, however, particularly during economic turmoil and political polarization. The transformation of the European welfare state has been a common topic of Greek and international literature since the 1970s. During the 1990s, the White Paper on social policy characterized debate at the level of European institutions. The decline of the welfare state is directly linked to deregulation, liquidity, privatization, and, finally, the consolidation of a differentiated digital capitalist production model. Fifteen years after the global economic crisis, the social subject is repeatedly faced with new crises, through which its realization of

this insecurity and uncertainty is even further expanded (Clarke, 2003; Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011).

Trumpism: A Distinct Brand of Populism

'Trumpism' emerged as a unique brand of populism during the tenure of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States. Characterized by nationalist rhetoric, protectionist economic policies, and anti-establishment sentiment, Trumpism appealed to a significant portion of the American electorate. The movement's focus on immigration, trade, and national identity resonated with many who felt left behind by economic globalization and perceived shifts in the country's cultural landscape. While Trumpism enjoyed support from a fervent base, it also faced criticism for its polarizing nature and divisive rhetoric (Urbinati, 2009).

Interplay and Implications

The interplay of populism, permacrisis, the social welfare state, and Trumpism highlights the intricate connections between politics, economics, and social dynamics. As permacrisis fuels discontent and disillusionment, populism finds fertile ground to thrive. Within this context, the social welfare state is critical in providing a safety net for vulnerable populations and addressing socio-economic disparities. Trumpism is a potent example of how populism can influence political movements and policies domestically and internationally. Its impact on the global stage and the enduring challenges of permacrisis underscores the importance of inclusive and sustainable solutions in governance.

Research Methodology

The qualitative approach is ideal for exploring complex and relatively unexplored topics. It allows us to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject. The importance and value of the qualitative method's lie in the researcher's volition to investigate the phenomenon by shifting it from identity to otherness. In other words, it offers the perspective of the phenomenon as it is recorded, understood, and internalized by the subject. Thus, the construction of the research instrument (i.e., the focus group, discussion grid, categorization, and coding) and, ultimately, the emergence of research data is a joint construction between researcher and researched, between identity and otherness in the fluidity of shifts and final understandings (Babbie, 2010).

Perhaps the most important aspect of qualitative research is its flexibility. This is a key characteristic of both the conception and design stages and in the implementation stage of the research project. Qualitative approaches presuppose the relationship of interaction and interdependence between social subjects in space and time, from the meanings and perspectives of otherness to the point where the researcher is surprised by the research findings (Creswell, 1998).

We believe a qualitative approach to better suit the issue of populism. We therefore conducted two focus groups. The first was comprised of primary and secondary school teachers who worked in schools at Patras, and the second was with university students of the Department of Primary Education (who are future teachers). This procedure gave us the perspective to be more precise about our results and concurrently conduct a comparative

analysis between these two teams: the teachers and the future teachers. We then implemented thematic analysis, to analyze the collected data, and form specific axes.

Change, technological speed, and the communicative relationship with digital tools are critical dynamic situations for the students in our sample who are also future educators currently in the lecture halls and university classrooms. Specifically, they are the kinds of situations that, in turn, shape what scholars call 'the kinds of bonds that are the starting points of common actions and events' (Bayne & Ross, 2007). They differentiate the context in which individuals grow and mature (Merriman, 2015).

Results

Primary and Secondary School Teachers

We began the focus group with a question about the term populism and if it was familiar to the participants. All participants said they were familiar with the term 'populism'. Indeed, they reported hear the word often in the media. Some of them pointed out that populism was a topic of discussion at schools and universities. Below, we cite some quotes from the participants. To preserve their anonymity, we have replaced their names with enumerated markers (P1-P9):

> "It is very familiar to me as a term. I used to know what it meant, but I need help remembering the exact definition. We were very involved with this term in our school and university years." (P7)

> "Populism as a term is familiar to me because I hear it used very often by politicians when they debate or disagree with each other on TV." (P9)

We then discussed what populism meant for them. Based on their responses, they seem to interpret populism as corresponding to hypocrisy, deceit, and the serving of selfish interests. The focus group also discussed the concept of populism as an ideology of specific politicians, meaning they connect populism with the political sphere.

> "… practices that supposedly benefit the people but, in reality, promote political interests on the altar of supposed justice for the people." (P2)

> "Populism is any effort by personalities involved in political events that aim to embellish events and situations to gain the sympathy and, therefore, the vote of the citizens." (P3)

> "… someone pretends to support the people and fight for their rights when in reality, this one is not interested in the people but only in his interests." (P9)

Another topic of the discussion was whether populism influences what happens in schools, and how children and young people might experience it. Throughout the focus group, populism had a strong influence or at least was detected very often in the daily life of schools. When the discussion turned to the presentation of personal experiences, participants struggled and half did not share anything with the others or us.

> "When children are divided into groups. Sometimes groups of people are created who conflict with their classmates because they differ racially, religiously, or even class-wise, creating this so-called "us-them" dichotomy as mentioned earlier in the "us-them" discussion." (P2)

> "Not me, personally. I have heard other people's experiences." (P4)

> "I do not recall any specific example." (P5)

> "If a teacher is a populist, this will affect daily school life because he will not be able to give children equal development opportunities. Consequently, he will sabotage them by creating insecurities, injustices, and instabilities in children's academic and personal efforts.

> I experienced it a lot when I was a student; teachers and kids treated me differently from other kids because I was a good student." (P7)

Since respondents mentioned that populism was a form of politics, we asked them if they thought that children should be protected from this sort of politics. We also discussed how this might be possible. All of the participants in the first focus group thought that children should be protected from such policies. Almost all consider achieving such a design difficult, however. They noted, for example, that a (relevant) safety net would be impossible to implement.

> "… they need protection against anything resembling or involving manipulation." (P3)

> "The protection would be a good choice, but there needs to be complete protection, which is not accessible to achieve." (P4)

> "I believe children should be protected from this kind of "politics" because it undermines justice and democracy. In addition, children believe in and imitate negative role models, which poses severe risks for the formation of non-democratic citizens in the future of this society. Therefore, every teacher must fulfill the role assigned to them by the state." (P9)

> "Yes, it is necessary to protect them, although this is difficult as the others around the children can easily mislead them." (P10)

Before moving on to our final question, we asked participants about populist politicians who challenge expertise and knowledge. For the participants, challenging science appears to be seen as a rather dangerous approach and, at the same time, one linked to serving selfish interests - in this case, the interests of populists. The impact is also damaging both for education and for the education system.

> "... means that it will create scope for the decline of education. If politicians are not interested in public education, then how will the state be able to provide honest and virtuous citizens?" (P2)

> "The challenge e of science marks the anxiety of awakening. Science broadens horizons and perspectives, raises concerns, helps us to evolve, and, most importantly, not to compromise. For all the above, populists challenge it to keep the masses immersed in ignorance so they can more easily get their messages across unhindered." (P3)

> "This approach does nothing for education because it puts it in the opposite direction. Science should not be challenged by anything. Only by the scientists themselves in the context of progress and revision." (P7)

> "Such an approach is harmful because it shakes people's trust in science, and citizens receive misinformation on serious issues." (P9)

The focus group ended with a discussion on values, highlighting the common approaches of the participants. The core values encompass values of the democratic state, such as respect for human rights, equality, and justice. 8 out of 10 participants claimed these values are linked to their European identity. Two (2) participants, however, reacted negatively to the term "European identity" and the European Union's construction.

> "Peace, equality, freedom, respect, solidarity, trust, honesty, etc. I would not say that these values are linked to my European identity as many of them are violated." (P2)

> "Respect, mutual help, understanding, love, cooperation. I believe they are linked to my European identity." (P5)

> "The most important values for me as a citizen are morality, justice, fairness, kindness, courtesy, respect, and empathy. These values are linked to my European identity because the creation of the E.U. came about through the need to integrate and defend these values in post-war society." (P7)

> "Democracy, freedom, peace, respect for human rights and justice. I see how these values are linked to my European identity, as they contribute to creating a united Europe where the future of its peoples is based on common values." (P9)

University students

This focus group also began with a question about the term populism and if it was familiar to the participants. It became apparent that the members of the second group struggled to tell us something consistent about populism. As such, it appears that not all of the participants in the second group were truly familiar with the term "populism". We cite some of their responses below, having again replaced their names with enumerated markers (SP1-SP9):

> "I know populism, but I cannot define it precisely, and I do not know if anyone can explain this term." (SP6)

> "Yes, I know populism as a term, and it is familiar to me." (SP8)

This focus group primarily discussed the concept of populism as a political ideology. They felt a strong connection between populism and the field of politics.

> "Populism is a form of ideology where the wishes and needs of ordinary people are represented." (SP5)

> "Populism is an attitude or behavior that is mainly political and focuses on misleading the target audience." (SP9)

Some participants thought that university students should be protected from such populist policies. Some others, however, noted that new measures would only create new problems. Almost all agreed that achieving this protection would be very challenging.

> "No one needs to be protected by such a policy. On the contrary, it can only create trouble." (SP4)

> "Yes, it is necessary to be protected, although this is difficult as those around them can easily mislead young people." (SP5)

> "Yes, they need to be protected, but it is not easy to achieve this." (SP7)

> "They should be protected. Moreover, of course, it is possible." (SP8)

When questioned regarding the most important values for a citizen, the core values reported encompassed the ideals of the democratic state, such as respect for human rights, equality, and justice. All the participants noted respect, cooperation, kindness, and peace. Seven out of 10 participants claimed these values were linked to their European identity. Three participants reacted negatively to the term European identity and the European Union's construction.

Comparative analysis of the two focus groups: A similar approach for teachers and students

Having both teachers' and students' perceptions, we can make a comparative analysis. The analysis naturally concerns the common questions asked in the focus groups. This clarification is worth noting, as we asked the teachers additional questions due to the nature of their profession and resulting from their active role teaching in the classroom daily. Insofar as whether the term populism is familiar to them, teachers answered that they are familiar with it and often hear about it in the media. Students were more hesitant, as they could not concretely define populism and were visibly doubtful about the content of the term.

With regard to the meaning of populism, both teachers and students placed populism in the context of politics, associating it with persons, parties, and specific ideological approaches. They spoke of populism as if it only characterized politicians. There seems to be an inextricable link between populism and politics today. Many present populism as a hollow tool for equality, while others present it as a tool for getting votes and serving interests.

Teachers argued that children must be protected from populism and other such approaches but stress that this is a difficult task. They were particularly concerned that populism is a danger to democracy and, consequently, populism threatens future citizens, which is to say the current school pupils they teach. Students do not seem to be such strong advocates of protecting themselves from populism. The views of those who answered in the affirmative, however, converge with teachers that creating a safe environment away from populism may be utopian but also create individual problems.

As for the values they consider important as citizens, teachers and students support almost the same set. Both groups arrived at the same core set of values, mentioning democratic ideals, respect for human rights, equality, and justice. Most participants in both focus groups argued that these values were linked to the European identity.

Conclusion

Populism remains a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon that shapes politics. It mobilizes the masses with promises of change and restoring the *vox populi*. Its appeal lies in its ability to tap into the grievances and frustrations of marginalized segments of society, offering a seemingly straightforward solution to complex problems. Populism, of course, has its pitfalls. Its simplistic rhetoric can oversimplify issues, polarize societies, and undermine democracy. By painting a picture of "us versus them," populists often create a divisive atmosphere that impedes constructive discourse and collaboration.

The participants in both focus groups seem to know the concept of populism. However, some need help to decipher the term's content fully. The participants of both focus groups discussed the term as a political ideology, a utilitarian approach, and a characteristic of political figures. Most participants believed that school students and university students should be protected from populism. They pointed out, however, that this would be a demanding and challenging process as the most critical values that characterize them as citizens are democratic values, respect for others, and equality. Most people consider these values to exist in the European identity they have created.

Of course, what emerged from the present study is that populism is a phenomenon that warrants persistent investigation. This effort acted as an initial approach to the term and its outline in the Greek context, where the research on this issue is currently lacking. Consequently, this study is a starting point, making it clear that further future investigation of this issue is necessary.

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Democracy, Citizenship, Interculturalism in Higher Education: a Case Study in the Subject of History[1]

Eleni Karamanoli[2]

Abstract

The fundamental purposes of the educational process are related to the ideals of a society, the future it envisages and the type of person and citizen it wishes to shape through education. The cultivation of historical and critical thinking, democratic consciousness, humanistic values and the formation of a pluralistic and tolerant national identity are fundamental purposes of the education in modern democratic and multicultural societies. History subject is chosen to this survey as it offers many opportunities to examine conflicting or controversial issues, such as how aggression, assertive ethnicity and eroded sensibilities take on flesh and blood and spread, especially in situations that seem to defy reality. It is possible to dismiss such acts as inexplicable and to see the darker aspects of human behavior as unlikely to be repeated. Particularly important, an understanding of the history of the world's various cultures can help promote the kind of mutual patience, respect and political courage needed in our increasingly pluralistic society and increasingly interdependent world. This paper is an empirical research based on teaching sequences and data were analyzed using qualitative method. The research took place in the higher education in the context of internship training. The present survey contributes to this issue by proposing ways of teaching and managing teaching resources in order to shape and cultivate skills that characterize an active democratic citizen.

Keywords: Citizenship, Democracy, Diversity, Internship Training, Multicultural Education

Conceptual clarification of the term democracy

The word democracy is derived from the Greek words "demos", meaning people, and "cratos" (i.e., “state”), meaning power; thus democracy can be seen as "power of the people": a way of governing that depends on the will of the people. There are so many different models of democratic government around the world, that it is sometimes easier to understand the idea of democracy in terms of what it most certainly is not. Democracy, then, is not an autocracy or dictatorship, where one person rules, nor is it an oligarchy, where a small section of society rules. Properly understood, democracy should not even be "majority rule" if it means that the interests of minorities are completely ignored. Democracy, at least in theory, is government on behalf of all people, according to their "will". Today there are as many different forms of democracy as there are democratic nations in the world. There are presidential and parliamentary democracies, democracies that are federal or unitary, democracies that use a proportional voting system and democracies that use a majoritarian system, democracies that are also monarchies, and so on.

The choice of concepts raises anew the question of the choice of content and begets debate to the starting point regarding the choice between content and its objectivity. Are there any

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'pure examples' of revolution or democracy? Are there pure concepts? History makes the concept specific to the particular historical context. Do concepts of this kind constitute concepts of history or the structure of history as a particular form of knowledge? Drawing on the familiar distinction of concepts into degrees, Lee (1983) refers to two basic degrees, classes of concepts, the essential, first degree, concepts where all the concepts through which historians think about the past and narrate it fit in. In the context of these transformations, the question of conceptual learning emerges to renegotiate old contradictions of content and methods, knowledge and skills, to raise new questions and to contribute to the goal of understanding in schools.

Democracy and education

Democracy in modern education

Educational research has long suggested that to promote democracy it is important to consider an open classroom climate. An open climate is one " in which students are able to raise issues of concern, are allowed to discuss controversial issues, are encouraged to express their own views and listen to each other, and are allowed to explore a variety of different perspectives" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 117). In an open classroom climate, students feel that the classroom is a safe, inclusive, respectful, and inclusive space where all perspectives are welcome. In an open classroom climate, educators model democratic attitudes and behaviors and facilitate democratic and participatory processes. This is the opposite of authoritarian methods where the teacher's perspective always takes precedence.

Democracy as an expression of pluralism and diversity

If we accept that universities themselves are public spheres and that democracy is an educational process constituted through deliberative debate (Dewey, 1922), the opposition between anti-capitalist perspectives and democracy raises the question of the kind of civic participation offered in the sphere of the school and the national public. Democracy, whether understood in participatory, deliberative or agonistic terms, recognizes the importance of pluralism and contestation, "the presence of different views or arguments, which are able to negotiate or counter each other in argument" (Englund, 2000, p. 311).

An open classroom climate requires tolerance of others' views and beliefs. There are, however, limits to tolerance. Undemocratic perspectives (e.g., racism, misogyny, and homophobia) perpetuate undemocratic structures and may result in some students feeling harassed and marginalized. Educators are advised to react to undemocratic comments. It is usually recommended that, rather than responding to these comments in an authoritarian manner, educators should stop the class and focus on the anti-democratic issue as the topic of discussion. If young people feel that they are being blamed for openly expressing their views, their views will likely be reinforced.

Teaching in Modern Education

Teaching with a Focus on the Development of Democratic Values, Citizenship, and Interculturalism

Cultivating National Identity

Teaching history aims to cultivate national identity, which is to say a sense of belonging to a national community shaped through long historical processes. The main aim is to develop critical collective self-awareness, so that students can understand the present in which they live and the content of their national identity - that is, to be able to understand that their national identity and its formation have a history. Adopting a historical perspective in approaching the national past allows for the 'historification' of collective identity and the recognition of otherness, not only outside but also within the nation-state (e.g., differences and discrimination based on gender, social class, language, ethnic origin, etc.). After all, history is a critical reconstruction of complex social relations and the emergence of the lived experiences and mental worlds of entire groups with constituted but also constantly changing identities. Educators should analyze national time, highlight the complexity of national identity and focus their attention on the concepts of continuity and change. Therefore, the primary objective of teaching history must be the cultivation of a pluralistic and tolerant national identity, free from intolerance and xenophobia. This is combined with the cultivation of democratic consciousness and the cultivation of humanistic values.

Cultivating Democratic Awareness

The educational process should seek to cultivate democratic consciousness, both by encouraging pluralism of opinion, dialogue and interaction and by challenging authority and renouncing the dogmatic uniqueness of historical truth. It is a common conviction in international education organizations that it can play a crucial and decisive role in fostering the democratic consciousness of young people and in acting as a brake on xenophobia, hatred, intolerance and ethnic and cultural enclosure. In present circumstances, the democratic culture of young citizens is shaped by a set of skills developed through education. These include empathy, the need for documentation, understanding, respect and tolerance of cultural diversity, responsibility, analysis and critical understanding of different perspectives on the same event, the discovery of the logical sequence of events, the deconstruction of propaganda rhetoric, evaluation based on logical criteria and well-founded arguments, and the critical treatment of stereotypes and prejudices.

Cultivating Humanistic Values

It is essential to link education to the present and future of societies, by fostering values and attitudes. Values shape frameworks for social interaction and produce patterns of behavior, motivate people's action and act as guiding principles in the decisions they are asked to make about how to act. In this sense, if the past is studied in terms of scientific validity and with the methodological tools of multi-personality and empathy, it can facilitate the cultivation of humanistic values such as responsibility, mutual respect and solidarity. The emphasis on social history and its various manifestations, the illumination of the impact of 'major' events on the lives of ordinary people, and the analysis of the attitudes they developed in marginal situations such as wars, persecution and disasters, can contribute to a deeper awareness of the value of fundamental components of human dignity.

Highlighting and studying the multicultural and intercultural character of past societies -whether in periods of peaceful coexistence or in phases of conflict- can contribute to the formation of positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. In this way, education should constantly critically examine and undo stereotypes and prejudices -national, racial, religious, social, gender, political and cultural. This does not mean that differences and historical conflicts between peoples should be silenced or downplayed or that contentious and traumatic historical events should not be addressed. On the contrary, teachers and their students should highlight them, deal with them responsibly with sufficient knowledge, analyze and understand them calmly and methodically, avoiding nationalist or populist rhetoric, as well as ideological dogmatism.

Cultivating Historical Thinking

Another purpose of education is to cultivate critical thinking. Critical thinking is the structural integration and combination of cognitive and psychological skills that can be cultivated during the educational process. Such skills include analytical and synthesizing skills, argumentation, documentation, discerning the causality linking historical events to each other, uncovering the values and motivations that guided the actions of individuals and groups, understanding the historicity of events and phenomena, multifaceted historical empathy, tolerance, and acceptance of diversity.

Cultivating Citizenship

The definition of citizenship is complex and multifaceted. This is especially true with regard to the relationship between citizenship and culture. Inherent complexities challenge attempts to define, articulate and implement citizenship education in a pluralistic society. It is therefore essential that citizenship education incorporate issues such as identity, human rights and diversity into the curriculum. Redefining the relationship between citizens and the state in terms of practices, dilemmas and contradictions seems necessary in contemporary multicultural societies. Cultivating citizenship refers to those aspects of education at the school level that aim to prepare students to become active citizens, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to the development and well-being of the society in which they live.

Cultivating Interculturalism and Diversity

Schools and education in general must play an important role in increasing diversity in our society. Intercultural Education is the response to diversity in the classroom. Its aim is to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a growing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding, respect and productive dialogue between different groups. Intercultural education is valuable for all students, as it equips them with skills for participation in an increasingly diverse society. Through programs that encourage dialogue between students of different cultures, beliefs, religions and individual characteristics, education can make a significant and substantial contributions to the formation of democratic, intercultural societies.

Methods, Forms and Teaching Strategies

Education plays an important role in shaping the socio-political identity of future citizens. It is essential for promoting democratic values, managing socio-cultural diversity, and defending human rights, which are vital for the preservation and strengthening of European democracies. These democracies, although increasingly diverse, seek to be inclusive. They seek to address the main current challenges immediately and with a view to developing policy recommendations on how to teach to strengthen diverse and inclusive democratic societies.

Didactics uses specialized concepts to approach and organize its subject matter, such as 'method', 'form' and 'teaching strategy'. By 'method' we sometimes refer to a method of processing data and sometimes to a method of teaching. There are two primary methods of data processing: inductive and deductive. Combining the two results in analogical, comparative and analytical-synthetic methods. What teaching method a given teacher follows is defined by its elements and is classified as analytical-synthetic, total, exploratory, comparative, scientific, interdisciplinary, and so forth. The scientific method, for example, is the method used by scientists to investigate their subject matter.

Each teaching strategy uses a combination of different teaching methods that lead to better teaching and rejects some that are not in line with the particular teaching strategy. Thus, teaching strategy is a broader concept than teaching method, both because it uses more than one method and because it is organized with clear principles to realize specific teaching goals, sometimes approving and sometimes rejecting teaching methods (Walberg & Paik, 2003).

The 'form' of teaching refers to the way the lesson is presented, which is to say both the organization of activities and the use of teaching aids. The main forms of teaching are monologic, dialogic, dialectic, exploratory and demonstrative, with their variations. These forms are divided into three categories: offering, processing and reflection. The first category includes narrative, introduction, presentation and demonstration; the second includes questioning, dialogue, discussion, dialectical debate and Socratic. The last includes investigation, discovery, project work and other forms of laboratory teaching.

The general teaching objectives of the history course are the development of critical thinking and the formation of historical consciousness (De Silva, 2006; Lee et al., 2007). The use of sources (written and descriptive) and their treatment is crucial. Multiperspectivity facilitates the examination of events from different perspectives and the citing of evidence from different sources. Archaeology can act as an educational model for approaching the past through the identification and evaluation of archaeological sites, monuments and museum exhibits. Indeed, the method of synthesis offers experiential learning that derives from experience and leads to the active participation of students in the process.

Teachers can also use narrative and dialogue (guided or free). During their narration, teachers can provide necessary information accurately. Through narration, which must be lively and varied, teachers seek to arouse pupils' interest. Through dialogue, teachers can activate the whole class and involve everyone in the learning process. Dialogue draws on pupils' knowledge and experience, current events, compares facts already known with those taught, and combines elements from other subjects. The exploratory process, which can be achieved by studying and making use of the images and quotations in the textbook or others chosen by the teacher (Moniot, 2000; Husbands, 2004), is also beneficial.

By “teaching strategy”, we refer to the organized sequence of teaching-learning activities, organized according to clear principles, for the realization of specific teaching objectives. The following are among the strategies considered most suitable for teaching:

1. Targeting, which requires psychological and cognitive preparation of students by searching for previous knowledge, the integration of new knowledge in a historical context, as well as the creation of a situation of reflection. It also involves presenting data, checking for understanding of information, formulating hypotheses and selecting possible solutions. Furthermore, the processing of information based on Bloom's taxonomy or others, the application of the new knowledge, feedback, recapitulation, response to the initial reflection and, finally, the evaluation of the students (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2000).
2. Another strategy focuses on process, which is to say change, development, continuity, and historical time (Blow, 2011). Causal factors and the hierarchy of causes are sought, as well as traces from primary and secondary sources, in order to determine whether traces of the past can provide evidence through which present events can be interpreted. The emotive use of language, which is to say the detection of relevant evidence with an emphasis on intentionality and effectiveness, also plays a substantial role. Checking of validity and reliability is also important, as is the learning of technical vocabulary.
3. Teachers can also employ a heuristic strategy, aimed at understanding diverse. The method follows the following phases: the source-focused heuristics (heuristic sourcing), the identification of sources, and the contextualization and the corroboration heuristic, which refers to the correlation of sources with others in order to cross-reference them (Drake, 2002; Nokes et al., 2007; Westhoff, 2009; Wineburg, 2010).
4. The strategy aimed at students' language development, where students join 'expert' groups, examine different aspects of a topic and discuss them. Students then form new groups, examine a source and think about what might have taken place before and after the events narrated by the source. This is followed by 'expert' immersion, where students try to draw on several sources. Next comes the position of responsibility and drama: one student takes on the role of a teacher, researches a historical figure and takes questions from the (other) students. When this is complete, a presentation is made through collaborative activities (Wells, 2002; Husbands, 2004).
5. The strategy for developing chronological thinking, based on the use of one extensive source and the secondary use of other sources. In this inquiry strategy, the learner becomes a 'researcher' and requires the provision of an environment of social interaction. Here, learning takes place through authentic activities.
6. The strategy for the development of historical thinking: in this case, sources are used in three stages: a) introductory source(s), b) sources of different perspectives, which can be used to cross-reference and systematically explore the topic, c) search for new sources in order to correlate them with the previous ones and synthesize the text.
7. The strategy for teaching "conflict issues". In this case, "distancing" is chosen as a basic strategy, the "historical" language is analyzed, conflicting sources on the topic are used and critically approached. In particular, an analysis of the conflict nature of the topic is carried out, the reasons why the topic is conflict are analyzed, the students' 'natural knowledge' around the topic is identified and the learning benefits of the teaching are emphasised. A prerequisite for the above teaching strategy is the

students' specific skills related to deeper understanding, multi-tasking, critical analysis and utilization of sources, basic essential concepts, and so forth. (Stradling, 2003).

Methodology

Research Methodology

This is an empirical study based on 26 teaching sequences, the data from which were analyzed qualitatively. The research took place at the Faculty of Philosophy and Pedagogy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. The research was based on 26 teaching sequences (13x2 semesters) and was developed in the context of internship training the sample of the research was 300 students (150 each semester) who were past their 5th semester of studies. History, specifically the historical event of Balkan wars, was the chosen subject. The main purpose of the planned research is to examine whether students are able to grasp the essential concepts of democracy, citizenship and interculturalism, in their respective historical and socio-political contexts. More specifically, the primary objectives of this study are to examine:

a. how students understand the concepts of citizenship, humanism, empathy, democracy
b. how they handle these concepts, and
c. whether utilization of specific strategies to understand these concepts is effective.

In order to achieve the above objectives, we ask the following research questions:

a. How do students perceive these concepts?
b. What problems and difficulties do students face in understanding of these concepts?
c. Are students sensitized and aware of these issues?

The main hypotheses of the study are as follows (a) the cultural diversity and citizenship is an advantage for a society, (b) people can learn and benefit from others different perspectives, (c) people should be encouraged to interact despite their cultural differences.

The choice of history was made as history can help students understand the complexity and diversity of human life, the process of change, the diversity of societies and the relationships between different groups, as well as their diverse identities and the constraints and challenges of their time. Students are also expected to be able to understand the way in which the society in which they live is constituted and, more generally, the various causes that have contributed to the creation of the modern world.

The teaching was dialogical, with guided dialogue and narrative with annotated narrative (i.e., a combined teaching method). The identification and development of activities was based on the aims and objectives of the teaching. Feedback was gained through short answer questions, which helped guide the study. Tasks were be research-based so that students could learn to reflect, analyze and extend learning.

A corpus of sources was given to students about the historical event of Balkan wars, on which they were later questioned:

A Serbian Soldier helps the Turkish Children

The big cities of the currently liberated areas filled with poor, miserable, naked and barefoot, hungry and thirsty Turks. Their tutelary, those who brought bread to families, enlisted in the army in order to defend the empire, while the women, the elderly and the children stayed

behind without any protection. Their fear for the enemy leads them to leave their house and all their belongings and to escape to the cities with the hope that there would be easier to find protection. Hunger makes them to beg for a piece of bread. In that way, in the newly liberated cities, no one can walk to the roads without being disturbed by the poor Turkish begging for anything edible. An officer described the following scene that took place in Kavardacy to me: Kavardacy is full of poor Turkish who are starving to death. In a corner a Serbian soldier, a simple soldier that was sitting on a stone, held two Turkish boys. One was sitting on one of his knees and the other on the other one while he was hugging them with both hands. In one hand he held the bread allotted to him, and in the other the bayonet. He cut the bread with the bayonet and gave a bite to one boy and then to the other and he ate the third one. I was observing them sitting aside and I felt pain in my heart, because I did not have a camera to capture this wonderful scene -the gesture of love of the Serbian soldier to the children of the defeated enemy and the compassion he showed for their misfortune.

Balkanski rat u slici i reči 12, 7(20) April 1913.

Efforts for Money Gathering for the "South Slav Brothers" in Croatia Zagreb for the Red Cross of the Balkan Nations

In today's meeting at the city hall at 4PM, it will be proposed to donate the amount of 20.000 crunas from the cash desk to Zagreb, the metropolis of the Kingdom of Croatia, for the Red Cross of the Balkan Nations. The proposal will be accepted. It is the greatest amount which has been gathered until now by any city council. If the economy of Kolo was in better shape it would give more money to Zagreb. "On Thursday in the practice of our croatian Music Company "Kolo", its vice-president, Mr. Prilepits, announced that a fundraiser will be organized soon to gather money for the Red Cross of Balkan Nations and the company "Kolo" must definitely participate. The news was received with great enthusiasm. Everyone applauded and cheered. Afterwards, it was decided to schedule a concerto on Thursday, 7 November, and to donate all of the proceedings to the Red Cross.

Newspaper, Hrvatski pokret, 4 November 1912.

Proclamation of King Nicholas the Montenegro, 27 July 1913 Montenegrins!

[...] Overwhelmed by the victories and glory of his allies, our fourth partner wanted to seize our common maneuvers by force, defying divine justice and the judgment of the Cha -of our patron 28 [...] The Bulgarians got it wrong, separated from the Slavic flock [...]and attacked their brothers and allies. The Bulgarians must be prevented with the same weapon and learn to respect the common interests and Slavic solidarity. This decision is very hard on my heart, because in cutting of a hand must be answered by the cutting of a hand but we cannot do otherwise. We cannot do things differently. My soul is overwhelmed with grief, because I must encourage you to bravely repel with courage. But I hope that when the angel of peace spreads its wings in the Balkans, a new and strong tree of Slavic unity will spring from our common Slavic blood.

Nicholas Cetinje, 27 July 1913

Which is the meaning of the word "brother" in this source? Can you detect citizenship in it?

- Student A: "I think that during such difficult situations all people regardless their color, religion should show humanity, above interests this what citizenship is for me "

- Student B: “I think that people during the war should take care only for themselves because they are in danger, they should care for their own lives, citizenship is not detected in such situations”
- Student C: “human being must never lose his humanity because we are humans above all despite what the politicians decide, citizenship is a part of someone’s character, the culture of a nation”

Do you believe that there are similar moments of humanism in a time of war?

- Student K: “I believe that it depends on the person and the way he is educated to act and react in such situations”
- Student L: “I believe that no one is so tough as to remain unmoved in front of another person in need”
- Student N: “I wish there are because above all must be human life and empathy should be shown to another”

Have you read at any textbook so far for expressions of humanity towards the enemies?

- Student L: “no, I don’t remember, I haven’t read such moments so far, they are a little bit strange”
- Student K: “the only thing I know is that there can be no compassion and humanity in war everyone care about its own good”
- Student N: “I have read so there will not exist such a manifestation”

Why do you think the daily life at the war makes friends of enemies?

- Student M: “it is that moment that you understand that all people are the same and you have nothing to separate from your fellow man”
- Student P: “I think that enemies become friends because they face the same difficulties and these difficulties unite them”
- Student D: “when you are during a war you understand that you can die at any time, so you understand that there is no reason to hate your fellow man”

Which were the reasons that led to this charitable movement in Zagreb? Why were the authors of the article so sure that the authorities of the city would support the donation? Do you think that the participation in such activities was a matter of social prestige?

- Student E: “charity movements whatever motivation may have help and are precious for the people that suffer, like a light in the dark”
- Student Z: “by this movement many people were benefited during difficult times”
- Student A: “the participation in such activities was a matter of social prestige and of humanity”

Research Results

Through this research process, students understand essential concepts, develop critical and creative thinking, and approach facts in a multidisciplinary way. They improve their skills in the light of critical literacy, to critically examine the evidence in a given historical context, and to discover abstract concepts that are often misunderstood and take them away from historical understanding.

In modern times, a period of global crisis affecting, among other things, political affairs on several levels, democracy in many countries of the world is either threatened or degenerating. This study explores the concepts of democracy, democratic consciousness, humanistic values, citizenship, diversity, and interculturalism in school (an institution that is hierarchical, guiding and normative), through the didactics of the history course. The present study contributes to the improvement of the educational process so that students acquire critical thinking, have a continuous interest in the historical past, present, and envision the future, the preservation of historical memory and develop in such a way that they become critical and active democratic citizens in a modern multicultural society. Moreover, the expected results are such that, through the provision of coherent material and an adequate body of knowledge, students will be able to approach data critically, without stereotypes and prejudices, and to reflect on ways of thinking.

As far as educators are concerned, it will become clear that it is beneficial to provide socio-political contextualization during teaching -even by going beyond the textbook material- through the multi-level presentation of the curriculum. At the same time, it is advisable to present the various meanings of these concepts as they have been shaped historically and socio-culturally, in the historical context in question. Moreover, the educational and teaching proposals provide new perspectives, with the aim of creating more democratic school classes that respect citizenship and interculturalism, democratizing modern education. Through this educational process, teachers and students are stimulated to establish more democratic relations and develop a democratic culture.

The didactic approach and originality of the implementation is based on a teaching model that combines the new social reality, the teaching process, inclusive learning, aiming to encourage students to look to the future, exploring the issues of citizenship, interculturalism, democracy and the challenges that arise as a result of the perpetual changes in the social environment. Thus, students gradually become familiar with the most important essential concepts and elementary terminology, as new methods of approaching these concepts, which are considered necessary for a deeper understanding of socio-cultural events, are offered. It is also advisable to pay due attention to the linguistic culture of the pupils, so that they develop the appropriate skills. This is done to provide an education that responds first and foremost to the needs of all students, the new social reality and the new scientific knowledge of teaching, learning, subjects and their practices, as well as to the development of the skills needed by the citizens of the 21st century. Ultimately, students become creative people and conscious citizens of their country, their nation, Europe and the world through cooperation, self-awareness, linguistic awareness, communication skills, responsibility, tolerance, discipline, sense of justice, democratic sensitivity, fair play, solidarity and aesthetic culture.

Conclusions - Proposals

Historical education is linked to democratic education consciousness in the context of a comprehensive revision of historical teaching and learning. Broadening the content of historical knowledge is rooted in multiple fields, including social aspects, cultural history, and diversity of past societies. It is also informed by the interconnection of the local with the national, regional and global, the historification of perspectives, attitudes and behaviors of people. These people must then be comparatively contextualized in different historical and cultural contexts, the ethical dimension of the decisions of leaders and the peoples who

follow must be reflected upon. These are just some necessary aspects of questioning the historical background of leaders and leaders their peoples.

Democratic historical education means an open and pluralistic learning process. Such education entails collaborative learning, multimodality and alternation of expressive means. This acts to avoid the exclusion of students with poor language skills and encourage those with other talents. Democratic historical education also draws upon a variety of historical sources, preferably empathic and multi-prismatic teaching strategies, and learning, discourse struggles with evidence-based arguments.

The study of history can play an important role in shaping socio-political identity of Europe's future citizens. In particular, teaching history can contribute to the promotion of democratic values, the management of socio-cultural diversity, the enhancement of human rights and the promotion of citizenship. Human rights ought to strengthen European democracies, without losing their internal diversity due to the marginalization and exclusion of other social groups. The aim of the education should be to create democratically minded people, which is to say citizens who are inspired by democratic values and attitudes, which in turn dictate political and social policies and social attitudes that transcend the boundaries of individual and group interests and aim at the common good.

In modern times, in a period of global crisis that affects, among other things, political affairs on several levels, democracy in many countries of the world is either threatened or degenerating. The present research explores the concepts of democracy, democratic consciousness, humanistic values in university an institution that is hierarchical, guiding and normative, through the didactics of the history course. This research has the potential to contribute to the improvement of the educational process. Using these findings, students can acquire critical thinking, have a continuous interest in the historical past, present and envision the future, the preservation of historical memory, while also developing in such a way that they become critical and active democratic citizens in a modern multicultural society. Furthermore, we expect results such that students, through the provision of coherent material and an adequate body of knowledge, will be able to approach data critically, without stereotypes and prejudices, and reflect on non-historical ways of thinking.

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Participation workers, conflict, and young people's democratic socialization[1]

Roy Smith[2]

Abstract

Drawing on research with youth participation workers, this paper explores the role of conflict in work that supports young people's democratic socialization. Conflict is a reoccurring theme when youth participation workers talk about their practice. They speak about incidents of injustice, arguments with authority figures, disagreements between young people and adults, as well as with young people and families and conflicts with other youth workers. Navigating conflict is also essential for young people's democratic socialization as they encounter challenges, resistance, and barriers to their freedom to act. Youth participation workers support young people's development but also immerse themselves in their own conflicts, which can threaten their work. Nevertheless, organizations put them in positions where conflict is inevitable and potentially desirable. This paper examines youth participation workers' relationships with conflict, considering how moments of tension provide valuable opportunities for democratic learning and development and can shape the experiences of young people, informing their relationship with democracy. Embracing these conflicts and understanding their democratic potential can enrich youth participation work. However, the role of conflict in youth participation work is often ignored, and a greater understanding of its role is needed to improve the ethical underpinnings of its practice, ensuring that young people better understand the aims of the work. A better understanding of the role of conflict could also help prepare workers for the inevitable opposition and frustrations they are likely to face.

Keywords: youth participation work; young people; conflict; democratic socialization

Introduction

This paper discusses a workshop delivered at the 2023 CiCea conference "Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict" in Madrid. It explores the role of conflict in youth participation work; work that supports young people's democratic socialization. By this, I mean their learning about and acclimatization to democracy through participating in democratic processes and activities with organizations interested in developing young people's political awareness and engagement. There are various issues, tensions and conflict within how the concept of youth participation is applied and discussed, ranging from issues with deficit assumptions and institutionalization to questions about its legitimacy and authenticity, limitations to approaches such as listening and achieving change when faced with 'powerful organizations' (Horgan et al., 2017; Percy-Smith, 2010). I acknowledge these concerns, which are better explored elsewhere, some of which will feature through the experiences of workers engaged in participation work with young people and reported in this paper.

Fundamentally, working with young people about politics and democracy intersects with their transition to adulthood and developing their political identity. It is argued that young people's

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political identities are initially shaped by parental and cultural influence but develop through interaction with peers and other mediating influences as they participate in multiple groups beyond their family context (Flanagan, 2013). Further, involvement with multiple groups of those with differing perspectives is seen to have a strong influence on young people's political development, whether the group's purpose is related to politics or not (Quintelier, 2008). Moving from parental to peer influence provides opportunities for conflict, as young people may start to challenge assumptions they have inherited, observe inconsistencies, or entirely reject parental values. By delivering work focused on politics and democracy, youth participation workers create spaces where young people encounter different views and perspectives that often intend to challenge existing views. This paper argues that participation workers would benefit from additional understanding and competence in handling conflict and the tensions experienced by young people and those who support their learning.

The Role of Conflict

We can understand conflict as something that "exists whenever incompatible activities occur" (Deutsch, 1974, p. 10). With constructive and destructive potential, it can lead to both 'danger' and 'opportunity' (Galtung, 1996). Cooperative and creative approaches to handling conflict have greater potential for producing constructive outcomes than competitive approaches (Deutsch, 1974). Therefore, if participation work with young people aims to work toward positive outcomes, then cooperation and creativity are essential. These qualities are highly compatible with participation work, which is itself an attempt to introduce or develop democratic solutions to organizational or societal problems that rely on cooperative problem-solving. Even where there is competition between ideas, the democratic approach values the ability for opposing views to exist alongside each other.

Conflict is an inevitable part of human existence; how we respond and live with it shapes much of our day-to-day lives. It has been suggested that "if conflict is essential for life, then life may also be essential for conflict" (Galtung, 1996, p. 71). This interaction helps us understand how conflict affects socialization processes, whereby conflict emerges from people's life experiences within society and leads to the growth and development of their understanding of the world around them. The conflicts experienced by young people arise from their interactions with parents, peers, teachers and society in general. Experience from these conflicts, in turn, informs future thinking, actions and responses to people, places and ideas, as well as future conflicts.

Some have argued that it is naïve to suggest that conflict can be resolved, instead arguing the goal is for it to be transformed so that people, organizations or nations have "the ability to handle the transformations in an acceptable and sustainable way"(Galtung, 1996, p. 90). Understanding that the conflicts experienced by young people are unlikely to be solved, resolved or to go away helps develop work that supports young people's learning and experiences. It prevents wasting time and frustration developing perfect but impossible solutions. It suggests that supporting young people to 'handle' conflict rather than trying to remove it is more valuable. Like Deutsch (1974), Galtung (1996) favors non-destructive approaches, recommending compromise, transcendence, integration, and sometimes decoupling between conflicting parties to reframe or come back together with the potential for constructive change. It is helpful to consider how these approaches can inform

participation work to understand how they support young people's experiences handling conflict.

In contrast, Lo (2017) argues that purely deliberative approaches that emphasize compromise can minimize the more passionate views of young people, regardless of their validity, and fail to attend to conflict fully. Lo (2017) points out that in "a pluralistic democracy […] society governed by a diverse populace, whose comprehensive ideals of what it means to "live well" is often in contention with one another" (Lo, 2017, p. 2) and therefore advocates for the use of both agonistic and deliberative approaches in the classroom, which acknowledge the passion of young people and better model a society, where differing opinions can exist alongside each other without the need for comprise.

The Impact of Conflict on Participation Workers

If we consider participation work in terms of its relationship to conflict, it is helpful to reflect on how it is experienced by those delivering it. Not only are they supporting young people who experience conflict, they are often involved in their own conflicts, whether with management, colleagues, partners, communities or directly with the young people. Writing about Youth Work illustrates a context marked by conflict with the government and funders over funding (Bradford & Cullen, 2014) with austerity measures linked to issues with inequality, homelessness, mental health and poverty (Davies, 2019, p. 354). These issues provide a backdrop for young people's democratic participation and youth worker's practice; if these conflicts are drawn from young people's lives, it is reasonable to apply Galtung's (1996) idea that this will shape their experiences of conflict, the nature of those conflicts and how they are handled.

Lack of funding and resources has led to a highly pressurized work environment, with some workers reporting that "repeated alteration and accumulation of duties created confusion about the boundaries of the job, as well as what constituted operating within the scope of practice for the role" (Bloomer et al., 2023, p. 295). They argued that workers with lower self-efficacy and confidence displayed more rigid and less successful approaches to working with youth conflict, but that organizations where workers "had greater access to professional development opportunities, supervision and supports experienced more role clarity" (Bloomer et al., 2023, p. 299). This enabled relationship-based approaches that promoted youth voice. It is reasonable, therefore, that those working with young people who lack the relevant training and support will experience more significant difficulties working with conflict in participation work.

Research and Findings

This paper draws from and expands upon the author's doctoral research dealing with youth participation workers and young people from across the UK. The full project involves workers in a participative enquiry examining different aspects of their role and work with young people. The complete research considers the role of conflict, equality, diversity and inclusion and the need for greater clarity about the aims and purposes of participation work. The research methods were influenced by participative research, collaborative ethnography and action research methodologies, seeking to involve participants in decision-making about the next steps of the research as well as involving them in sense-making about the findings (Agar, 1980; Banks & Brydon-Miller, 2018; Lassiter, 2005). Participation workers took part in a series

of online workshops. The first wave explored various aspects of their role and experiences working with young people. It identified three areas of enquiry: making youth participation matter, inclusivity, and the role of supportive adults. It then pursued an iterative exploration of each area, using appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2011) as a basis for discussions that looked at what was working well, what could be improved and what actions could be taken to further develop participation practice. Six workshops regarding the three areas were delivered, with a revolving group of thirty participants. Alongside these sessions, approximately 70 young people participated in a British Youth Council event, further reflecting on the emerging themes. Following these sessions, participants and members of a local authority youth council were invited to reflect upon the findings, helping to identify implications for participation work.

The role of conflict in participation work emerged as a critical concern for participation work, workers and young people. Workers spoke about frustrations with the government, management and funders, expressing concerns about how this negatively impacted the authenticity of their work. They held strong concerns about balancing organizational and adult-led agendas with those of young people, describing increasingly individualized approaches to participation and work with young people focused on risk and deficit narratives. Conflicts with management revealed concerns over status and job security, with youth participation workers occupying a vulnerable and ironic position of being employed in low-status positions but expected to find fault with their employers on behalf of young people. The precocity of their position was considered to vary based on factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, experience, training, and economic security. Some described their role as challenging or holding their employers to account, whereas others spoke about wanting to be more 'bolshy' or confident in their ability to challenge authority. They were, however, unified in feeling that a direct challenge approach was desirable, if not always realistic. Where it was difficult to challenge authority, some gave accounts of more subtle or passive forms of challenge, from avoiding meetings where they might be told to do something they found unethical or finding ways around the system that avoided direct challenge but achieved the desired result. In some cases, these passive methods were considered part of supporting young people learning how to 'play the game'. Young people participating alongside youth workers likely take different messages from the varied examples set by their workers, and it is worth considering the impact of their observations of different youth participation workers' approaches to conflict.

Participation workers also discussed their position in relation to family and young people. They explained tensions in challenging perceptions of fake news and discriminatory views inherited from parents. It was also noted that family could be a powerful force in inspiring and supporting young people's political participation, with young people observing parental involvement in democracy as a model for their own and replicating skills and confidence learnt from their family. These issues led to debates about the conditionality of youth voices. Workers felt it was essential to think about when it is appropriate or accept young people's views as an expression of their truth and when they need to challenge young people whose views may harm others. This choice can put participation workers in the delicate situation of arbiters of truth/acceptability, which can have uncomfortable links to colonial or missionary practices.

Discussion of the Workshop

The conference workshop presented a selection of conflicts and tensions that emerged from the research. It encouraged participants to reflect on the opportunities and risks they might present in participation work and suggest how participation workers might or could respond to them to facilitate constructive outcomes. Dual statements were placed in different parts of the room, each articulating opposing positions or those with compatibility issues. Participants were asked to circulate the room and write their ideas on colored post-it notes. Afterwards, the group discussed some of their reactions as a group. The workshop participants included academics attending the conference and students supporting the delivery of the conference. This contrast led to observations on the activity that presented both the views of academics interested in citizenship and young people who are involved in what could be seen as a participation activity. Below is an exploration of these statements and some of the comments received.

Table 1. Conflicts in Participation Work.

	vs.
Young people value the fun and social elements of participation work	Influencing democratic change requires hard work and focus
Systems and decision-makers who support young people's participation	Systems and decision-makers who resist young people's attempts to influence change
Holding clear values and ethical principles about participation work	Compromising values and ethical principles to ensure continued support for participation work
Needing confidence and competence to challenge oppressive views, systems and decision-making	Challenging oppressive views, systems, and decision-making is a democratic responsibility
Being clear about the scope and purpose of participation work	Making room for young people to influence the scope and purpose of participation work
Youth participation workers who share their values and beliefs with young people	Youth participation workers who keep their values and beliefs to themselves
Young people want to feel safe and comfortable when working together	Personal growth and development often emerge from risk-taking and discomfort
Young people brought together by similar issues and shared identity	Young people who encounter a diversity of views and identities
Young people skilled at engaging with democracy whose views are often heard	Young people who lack democratic skills whose views are seldom heard

Young People Value the Fun and Social Elements of Participation Work vs. Influencing Democratic Change Requires Hard Work and Focus

Young people involved in the research spoke at length about the importance of fun and social connection to their experiences of participation, as well as wanting to make sure that their work is taken seriously. The tension here is based on a cultural bias that associates fun with play and unserious, and therefore unimportant, pursuits. Huizinga (1955, p. 5) rejects this view, arguing "for some play can be very serious indeed", with play occupying various important roles in the development of society. Some of the participation workers involved in the study expressed frustration at young people who did not take their role seriously enough or who were only there to meet friends. Others felt it was important to ensure activities were enjoyable and stressed the importance of increased social connection in developing young people's involvement in democracy.

Participants in the workshop noted that young people are often "perceived as unserious political actors" (see Slide 2, in Appendix), highlighting the risk of participation work, where young people's participation is purely decorative (Hart, 1992) and their actions, however authentic, exist only to benefit adult actors or demonstrate a process has been followed, with little room for them to make a real difference. It was argued that "the medium is NOT the message" (see Slide 2, in Appendix), suggesting the methods and motivations of young people participating are less important than what they have to say. Others argued that fun and social elements of participation indicated positivity instead of "punishment" (see Slide 2, in Appendix) for those who might view serious work as negative. This contrast suggests a potential tension between youth and adult interpretations of what counts as worthwhile in the realm of democratic or political activity, with the adult world placing more value on perceived seriousness and hard work and young people on fun and social elements. This view is supported by one participant who argued that this conflict held the "potential to change how politics is done", noting how this could enable young people's voices to "be respected on their own terms rather than because they are playing by 'adult' rules" (see Slide 2, in Appendix). This tension does not suggest young people are unserious about their aims or motivations, only that their methods place less importance on the appearance of seriousness and that perceived seriousness can be a demotivating factor.

Systems and Decision-Makers who Support Young People's Participation vs. Systems and Decision-Makers who Resist Young People's Attempts to Influence Change

This tension was discussed at length as part of my research project, where participation workers commented on the positive difference made by supportive decision-makers who understood and valued young people's input. Examples from practice highlighted how supportive decision-makers elevated young people's voices, gave them additional opportunities, and acted as guardians of participation work. Challenging this, the participation workers also considered how only being exposed to supportive decision-makers might give young people a false impression that their voices would always be easily heard and offer fewer opportunities for them to learn how to overcome or be heard in situations where there is opposition. While working with supportive decision-makers might offer greater opportunities for young people to influence change, these experiences may be less educative and model false expectations for young people.

The workshop participants explored this tension, linking the benefits of supportive decision-makers with "genuine exchange" (see Slide 3, in Appendix), broadly feeling that this aided young people's ability to see their ideas put into action and how this supported their future self-belief. Some criticism suggested a risk of "making young people's engagement superficial" (see Slide 3, in Appendix) and concern over the potential exploitation of their participation for "institutional self-justification" (see Slide 3, in Appendix). Support can be seen as a means of manipulation, whereby decision-makers abdicate responsibility for their decisions, by following young people's views without expressing their own knowledge or expertise. Authenticity and kudos are claimed by the decision-maker for listening to young people, but if there has been no dialogue or input from the decision-maker, there has not truly been a collaboration, only assent to young people's ideas. This approach devalues youth participation by exposing a lack of care from the decision-maker. It assumes that young people's views are always correct, both reducing the risk for an organization if things go wrong and allowing it to boast of its participatory credentials. A more balanced response to this

tension would be for decision-makers to enter dialogue with young people where both agreement and resistance are equally present, requiring decision-makers to learn to listen and young people to learn how to persuade.

Holding Clear Values and Ethical Principals about Participation Work vs. Compromising Values and Ethical Principals to Ensure Continued Support for Participation Work // Needing Confidence and Competence to Challenge Oppressive Views, Systems and Decision-Making vs. Challenging Oppressive Views, Systems, and Decision-Making is a Democratic Responsibility

Participation workers describe how they often feel the need to balance their commitment to their ethical principles against their desire to maintain positive working relationships within their organization. Many spoke about uncomfortable trade-offs with managers and funders, where they either had to stand up to internal pressure or give in to be able to continue their work. This tension demonstrates the reality of ethical work, where purity can mean extinction. They also spoke about how skills, resources, conditions, and personal attributes contribute to their ability to make ethical stands. Confidence and competence to challenge were important but also relied on the security of their position in the organization or as a person in relation to someone holding (or perceived to hold) more power than them. Beyond this are commitments to professional standards and ensuring that work with young people is authentic and that young people are treated fairly. The debates around this topic indicate that it is rarely possible for participation workers to always manage their own conflicts in ways they find completely satisfactory, but like with many of these tensions, they need to decide how far they should stretch their ethics and when they have no choice but to stand up for themselves.

The workshop participants struggled with these statements, which may not have been articulated as well as needed. Some comments applied the conflict directly to young people rather than participation workers, and others seemed to misunderstand. Where participants appeared to better understand the topic, they suggested that it was important for workers to have “awareness of the institutional structures you are working within” (see Slide 4, in Appendix), which is no doubt important and key to understanding how well the values of the worker align to those of the organization. It is reasonable to think that these tensions are easier to handle where there is a good match of values and ethical understanding of the work. There was also caution about workers “imposing their values on institutions” which could be a warning to participation workers not to assume that their values and understanding of ethics are universal, even within their field of work. Effective articulation and exploration of both organizational and personal values at recruitment and as part of organizational development could support better understanding and support better navigation of this conflict.

Beyond organizational alignment, comments supported the need for building the “confidence and competence” (see Slide 5, in Appendix) of both workers and young people to “both recognize and criticize oppressive positions” (see Slide 5, in Appendix), with another comment suggesting participation work needs to “focus more on the social justice problems that are important for young people” (see Slide 5, in Appendix). The difference suggests a need to focus on both conditions for an effective challenge and the skills required.

Professional supervision may provide a strategy for managing conflicts and tensions within youth participation practice. By improving and quality-assuring professional judgement, supervision acts as both a learning and safeguarding tool. The 'world engaged' model of supervision (Belton et al., 2011), demonstrates how professional ethics, government policy, cultural aspects, young people's agendas, local authority requirements, partners agency aims, and regional and local policing strategies meet in the space provided by supervision. The variety and volume of agendas, policies and factors that influence decision-making and practice suggest workers need to understand and analyze them to be effective, indicating that if supervisors and supervisees "can achieve a clear and honest perspective of our role in the context of practice, then we might be able to assert ourselves on the situation" (Belton et al., 2011, p. 115). The 'world engaged' model highlights supervision as a space for handling potentially competing and conflicting agendas, where the worker may consider options outside of their daily practice and where the supervisor enhances reflection through asking probing questions and holding the supervisee's decision-making up against organizational and professional standards.

Being Clear About the Scope and Purpose of Participation Work vs. Making Room for Young People to Influence the Scope and Purpose of Participation Work // Youth Participation workers who Share Their Values and Beliefs with Young People vs. Youth Participation Workers who Keep Their Values and Beliefs to Themselves

These tensions relate to how direct and honest participation workers are with young people, both about the purpose of their work and their own political views and values. Both tensions are between a position of being clear and honest and one ensuring there is space for young people to be themselves. The first statement relates to the degree to which organizations should set the agenda or make its agenda clear. Doing so makes for honest, transparent work but can block the opportunity for young people to form their own agenda. The second statement is a more personal balance of the worker managing their own authenticity and honest communication of their values against the concerns influencing or indoctrinating young people. The participation workers involved in my study debated these tensions but sometimes struggled to agree clear conclusions, suggesting they were very fluid and contextual. In general, honesty and transparency were highly valued, with young people agreeing this was important but also keen to ensure workers were not pushing their views upon them. Most felt that the most beneficial resolution was to find a way for both honesty and freedom to exist alongside each other.

One workshop participant picked up on the need for both honesty and freedom, suggesting these statements exhibited overly "binary thinking – it doesn't have to be either/or good practice will include both" (see Slide 6, in Appendix). Indeed, the workshop exercise encourages binary thinking, which is artificial and may inhibit more creative solutions to some of the conflicts presented. However, presenting these conflicts as such may create the opportunity to ask: 'what else is possible?' One solution to the first conflict is for the organization to state its purpose as allowing young people space to form their own agenda so they can practice and learn democratic skills and influence change. Even with this open definition, however, it is assumed that young people will come to democratic conclusions and that young people wish practice, learn about them and influence change. Others have said there needed to be greater flexibility in structures and approach, which suggests a need to navigate this tension on a case-by-case situation.

The same could be said of workers sharing their values with young people. Some of the comments indicate that by sharing their views, participation workers model different perspectives, which are important for young people learning to accept difference "because […] there isn't just one way of thinking" (see Slide 7, in Appendix). The workshop participants demonstrated less concern over indoctrination than the participation workers and young people from the study, which may be due to lower amounts of time spent exploring the issues or may suggest greater acceptance of workers being authentic about their values in academic circles as opposed to working with young people or in organizations that seek to understand their views.

Young People Want to Feel Safe and Comfortable When Working Together vs. Personal Growth and Development Often Emerge from Risk-Taking and Discomfort // Young People Brought Together by Similar Issues and Shared Identity vs. Young People Who Encounter a Diversity of Views and Identities // Young People Skilled at Engaging with Democracy Whose Views are Often Heard vs. Young People Who Lack Democratic Skills Whose Views are Seldom Heard

These conflicts relate to the conditions that support young people's participation. The first relates to relative levels of comfort, the second to diversity and the third is experience. There is potential for interplay between the three in that levels of diversity and experience can impact comfort or discomfort, especially if young people feel issues related to their identity are challenged. Participation workers involved in the study handled these conflicts either by attempting to achieve a balance or by creating parallel opportunities for participation and then bringing young people back together to achieve greater representation. These options could be likened to concepts of compromise and integration or decoupling (Galtung, 1996). When making these decisions, participation workers are weighing the benefits for young people of encountering those who are different either in their thinking or experience level against the likelihood of young people disengaging because they feel threatened or uncomfortable.

One worker spoke about a participation model, where young people work together in separate groups, often with different organizations delineated by themes such as sexuality, religion, environmental issues, and disability. Each group can maintain a level of focus and commonality. The groups are linked by the alliance, and representatives from each group come together to inform decision-making on wider matters. This model has the potential to handle issues of comfort and discomfort while retaining the possibility for interaction and representation of diverse views. However, it could be argued that the model segregates young people while there are opportunities for collaboration. This depends on how different groups handle their differences.

Young people from a local authority youth council had mixed views about models that separate young people. They could see some of the benefits but were concerned about segregation and spoke about the value of encountering those with different views and how this helped them understand different perspectives, leading to a more open-minded approach that they valued. They also spoke about having the opportunity to explore uncomfortable views through debate, where they might argue a point that they do not believe or play 'devil's advocate', developing rhetorical skills but also forcing themselves to think about alternative positions to their own. The group valued these opportunities and felt it was important for young people to understand different views and to experience defeat in

arguments, reminiscent of the agonistic approach (Lo, 2017). In contrast to the aims of political education, they suggested that this approach could also depoliticize young people. Some feel that combining the emphasis on non-party political action and considering lots of different opinions leads to a loss of conviction and young people holding fewer strong opinions about politics. This depoliticization could be seen as a positive outcome if there were concerns about radicalization but may be incongruous with work that aims to support democratic learning.

Workshop participants stressed the importance of creating a "safe environment […] a space to explore and disagree about contentious political views" (see Slide 8, in Appendix) but also the importance of "discomfort and having risk-taking" (see Slide 8, in Appendix) for growth and development. They also understood that young people are likely to push boundaries and questioned the consensus on what was considered "safe" and "risk". This debate shows an understanding of the need to be clear on definitions and to work with young people to appreciate the balance required for growth and development. Some comments suggested the relative safety experienced in participation work may create false expectations for how people will be treated in other parts of their lives where they might not have the same level of security. This issue may suggest a need to reflect on how to support the development of skills for navigating more risky conflicts. This links to concerns about supportive decision-makers, where, if young people only encounter supportive decision-makers in participation work, they may struggle to handle resistance they experience elsewhere. Workshop participants focused on skills development and the issue that some participation activities privilege those with existing skills as "some vulnerable groups they don't know how to participate in the democracy, so they are seldom heard", leading to "alienation and disempowerment" (see Slide 10, in Appendix). They felt that it was important to tackle this within the design and execution of participation work, ensuring a balance of "the need for vibrant atmosphere with inclusivity" (see Slide 10, in Appendix). The vibrancy here can be linked to the creativity and level of challenge present within the work, which might be enjoyed by those with existing democratic skills at the expense of putting off those with less experience.

Conclusion

This paper has presented research with young people and participation workers exploring the role of and responses to conflict, considering how these impacts work with young people that aim to engage them in democratic processes. It outlines and reports on a conference workshop considering conflicts identified within the research project and explores the responses of conference participants to broaden and deepen understanding of these concepts.

Discussions with conference participants tended to confirm existing research findings, indicating that these conflicts or tensions are an inevitable part of participation work with young people. There are rarely definitive answers to how to respond to these conflicts, and participation workers benefit from developing a high level of reflexivity, to guide their decision-making. This reflexivity enables them to consider the risks, benefits and opportunities that arise from conflicts and respond in ways that lead to constructive outcomes. This type of approach benefits from a clear agreement between organizations and workers over the means of managing conflicts that recognize and embrace the potential for

disagreements between workers, young people, management, and funders –demonstrating that handling these conflicts is a part of the role played by people who are engaged in democratic work with young people. Workers need to be well prepared to handle these conflicts, and therefore, exploration of organizational conflict and workers' position in relation to conflict needs to be part of their training and development. Further to this, participation workers would benefit from ongoing exploration of the tensions in their work as part of reflective supervision. Non-managerial supervision may be ideally suited to this function as it is a step removed from organizational power structures.

The workshop delivered at the conference is a valid training tool to support worker reflexivity. It facilitated lively conversations and reactions to the conflicts presented and promoted thinking about their meaning for participation work with young people. Inevitably, there are some issues and improvements that could be considered. The workshop had a relatively small number of attendees, it would be beneficial to deliver similar workshops with more people to better explore its benefits. Nonetheless, it supported group conversations. Larger numbers may have struggled to input effectively and benefit from small group work. Some of the conflict statements were harder to understand than others and would benefit from further consideration and editing. Indeed, considering a substantially increased number of conflicts could have added to the confusion. Fewer conflict statements may focus discussions and enable the facilitator to ensure all participants understand the core principle. A broader issue with the activity is that presenting binary tensions can give the false impression of either or thinking. Many responses to the conflicts presented suggest both statements can be true, either in varying amounts or with both considered in how a conflict is handled. It may be helpful to explore alternative ways to present these conflicts that facilitate a better understanding of their complexity.

Future studies could examine how organizational policy supports workers around ethical conflicts within participation work. They could also explore the role of training and supervision, focusing on how they might improve worker confidence and competence in handling conflict and tensions within their practice.

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Appendix

Slide 2

Comments

Young people perceived as unserious political actors.

Awareness that the medium is NOT the message.

I think it is good they value the fun and social elements of participation work because this way they are able to see the working as something positive and not like a punishment.

Potential to change how politics is done.
Young people's voice respected on their own terms rather than because they are playing by 'adult' rules of the game.

Young people value the fun and social elements of participation work

vs

Influencing democratic change requires hard work and focus

Slide 3

Comments

Focus on decision-makers being accountable to young people.

Positive because they are preparing them for their future and considering their opinions as something important which makes them also feel more powerful about theirselves.

Creating genuine way exchange between young people and decision-makers where young people can see how their views translate into action.

The danger that decision-makers make young people's engagement superficial.
Young people's voice exploited for institutional self justification.

With this way of thinking they just focus on a way of working that do not supply the needs of today's society. They just imitate their actions by doing them as in the past.

Systems and decision-makers who support young people's participation

vs

Systems and decision-makers who resist young people's attempts to influence change

Slide 4

Comments

I think that young people participate and it's a very good idea because they are going to be the future.

Opportunities to challenge convention and introduce fresh ideas.

Having awareness of the institutional structures you are working within

Danger of imposing own views onto institution.

Existing in permanent opposition to the structures you work within.

Young people can pick up on the contradictions.

Many young people doesn't participate in democratic events because I think that this kind of thing are not motivating young people to participate.

Holding clear values and ethical principles about participation work

vs

Compromising values and ethical principles to ensure continued support for participation work

Slide 5

Comments

The young people should have more confidence and competence to communicate with each other.

Developing skills to both recognize and criticize oppressive positions.

Cognitive dissonance – young people may find their own views challenged as problematic and double down on them rather than question.

Participation workers should be more open to discuss about their own political views.

Participation workers needs to focus more on social justice problems that are important for young people.

Needing confidence and competence to challenge oppressive views, systems and decision-making

vs

Challenging oppressive views, systems, and decision-making is a democratic responsibility

Slide 6

Comments

Participation workers should be more clear about the purpose of their work because many times they are not and young people notice that.

Flexible structures / Flexible approach

Bringing young people in at the planning stage.

Understanding preferences and needs of a specific group.

Binary thinking – it doesn't have to be either / or good practice will include both.

Give more chances to these young people and sometime be clear means restricted participation.

Being clear about the scope and purpose of participation work

vs

Making room for young people to influence the scope and purpose of participation work

Slide 7

Comments

Young participation should share difference idea of each other.

I think is important to defend the values you have, and you shouldn't be afraid of thinking one way. Because, at the end, there isn't just one correct way of thinking.

Is very important to respect everyone, and understand that we are all different, so our way of thinking will also be this way.

Youth participation workers who share their values and beliefs with young people

vs

Youth participation workers who keep their values and beliefs to themselves

Slide 8

Comments

Creating the 'sweet spot' where young people take risks within a safe environment. For example – a space to explore and disagree about contentious political views.

Growth comes from difficulties but success is not means growth and not equal to growth – people need to know how to growth!!!

Everyone can be wrong some times and having discomfort or having risk taking is a positive way of making things better and have a good development in social treatment.

Young people may want to push boundaries of 'safe' environment as part of their democratic socialization.

Lack of consensus amongst young people about what is constitutes 'safe' and 'risk'.

Being clear on your own risk / comfort level.

Young people want to feel safe and comfortable when working together

vs

Personal growth and development often emerge from risk-taking and discomfort

Slide 9

Comments

Having different points of views or identities is a very positive aspect because now, in the time we live, there is a very variated population and this can benefit our development.

Translate – His views on the mutual names of young people in China.

We should know more and more different views and build a social pluralism.

Young people brought together by similar issues and shared identity

vs

Young people who encounter a diversity of views and identities

Slide 10

Comments

Positive peer influence
Skills development
Learning listening skills / tolerance
Opportunities for empowerment

Some vulnerable groups they don't know how to participate in the democracy, so they are seldom heard.

The problem is related with how we approach young people engagement with participation because young people should one this work by themselves – why adults have to propose young people how to participate when they are participating in very different ways (social networks, protest, march etc…?

Unquestioned power dynamics
Danger of marginalization leading to alienation and disempowerment.
The usual suspects control conversation agenda
Services priviledge the 'voice' of the already empowered.

Balancing the need for vibrant atmosphere with inclusivity
Awareness of taking the 'easy' choice of designing and executing activities that emphasize those with skills already.

Young people skilled at engaging with democracy whose views are often heard

vs

Young people who lack democratic skills whose views are seldom heard

Slide 11

Comments

Different cultures

They are easily influenced by propaganda

I think there isn't a motivation for young people to participate in democratics or even social events and also there isn't available spaces for this kind of events.

Forgetting about people's feelings, just because you don't like how they work or how they think.

There are not places and opportunities for youth to participate

INFANTIZATION

ADULTCENTRISM

Young people not have really a voice

Young people are not allowed to take decisions.

Young people as researchers

What other conflicts might exist within participation work?

The Value of Diversity: Focusing on the Expectations of the University Student[1]

Nikos Analytis[2], Epameinondas Panagopoulos[3], Anthi Adamopoulou[4], Michael John Katsillis[5] & Ioannis Kamarianos[6]

Abstract

The preceding two decades have seen a perpetual increase in the magnitude of waves of refugees entering Western Europe, and especially Greece. This has substantially affected the Greek educational system. The integration of refugee students into schools and classrooms is exceedingly important from both an educational and sociological standpoint. This integration is the purview of education leadership and the educational community. University education largely determines teachers' sense of pedagogical readiness, but also the adequacy of future teachers' diversity management. This is accomplished through the curriculum. This makes future-teacher, university students' aspirations and their expectations, as they are tempered through the educational process, regarding diversity management and the handling of refugee student classes a critical consideration. We examined these issues using a sample of 311 undergraduate students, drawn from all years of study in the Department of Education and Social Work of the University of Patras. Taken as a whole, the future-teachers surveyed expressed strong expectations of readiness to manage diversity in their future classrooms. Examined pre- and post- exposure to materials related to intercultural education, their perception of their readiness dropped and their initial, more optimistic aspirations became more tempered, realistic expectations.

Keywords: University students, Diversity, Expectations, Classroom

Introduction

Through the first half of the 20th century, Greece was a source of immigration. In 1990, however, it became a receptacle of emigration. The resulting immigrant influx forced the Greek government to adopt or innovate ways to expediently integrate immigrants into society. Something similar is happening now, with regard to refugees. In the case of refugees, however, the influx has been so great and so persistent, over the preceding 20 years, that accommodating, supporting and, to the degree possible, integrating them quickly attained crisis status. The flow of refugees has also increased, particularly in recent years, due to groups fleeing civil war/conflict situations and seeking asylum (Ministry of Immigration Policy, 2018).

Increasing numbers of refugees led to phenomena of acute nationalism and xenophobia in Greece and a number of Western European countries. A large proportion of the Greek population perceived refugees as a threat, either in terms of finding work or in terms of

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[1] If this paper is quoted or referenced, we ask that it be acknowledged as:
Analytis, N., Panagopoulos, E., Adamopoulou[1] A., Katsillis M. J., & Kamarianos, I. (2023). The Value of Diversity: Focusing on the Expectations of the University Student. In García-Vélez, T., Jacott, L., and Katsillis, M. J. (Eds.), *Strengthening Citizenship Education in Times of Conflict – Proceedings of the 24th Annual CiCea International Conference 2023 and 2nd Joint Conference with CitEdEV*, (pp. 89–99). Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association. ISBN: 978-84-09-56245-9.

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language, culture, and religion. At the same time, many believe that the population influx into the country has contributed to increased crime (Theodosiadou, 2015). Regardless of the veracity of these claims, these phenomena, in conjunction with prevailing socio-economic conditions and other issues (e.g., unemployment), proved substantially detrimental to the refugee groups.

Population migration between countries impacts all levels of society, including education. The relationship between education and migration, however, is arguably largely reciprocal. Education is affected by students with different cultural and linguistic characteristics. The smooth integration of these students, however, is expedited by normalizing their relations with native students and fostering attitudes of respect, communication, and equality (Miliou, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Integrating into a group such as a school is particularly difficult and stressful for refugee children. Children are initially confronted with the stereotypes and prejudices which have become prevalent after protracted years and many waves of immigration. These may also be accompanied by racism and intimidation (Theodosiadou, 2015). Teachers may also adopt stereotypical and prejudicial behavior toward refugee students, although younger teachers seem to eschew such perceptions (Miliou, 2013). This may be the result of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they create while attending contemporary curricula and subsequent training sessions. As a result, how refugee students are managed may be influenced by the level of knowledge and skills teachers have acquired before entering the educational process and the attitudes they have adopted.

Education, however, is an interactive process. The degree to which students are (or must become) adjusted to their educational reality is also substantively important. Of course, this differs substantially between native and refugee children. Refugee students have yet to develop the Greek language, so they cannot follow the school curriculum equivalently effectively, compared to their classmates. Language characteristics, family background, cultural characteristics, and experiences may also influence adjustment time in the school environment. The difficulties refugee students face adjusting to Greek (and, we would argue, any foreign-to-them) educational reality may foment a series of problems. These include, though are not limited to the inability to establish relationships with their peers, poor communication, and emotional stress, which can all result in marginalization. Refugee students often unfairly receive labels such as "annoying," "difficult," and "inappropriate", as a result of misdiagnosed difficulties adapting to local educational reality (Theodosiadou, 2015).

The integration of refugee students into local school is becoming increasingly complex. As a result, there has been an increase in early school dropouts (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). Abandoning education has far-reaching consequences, as individuals that do so will face substantial impediments to their development, employability and social integration. Indeed, for these and other reasons, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2017) has declared educating refugee children is a primary goal of all societies.

Although educational policy has begun shifting towards a multicultural operating framework, which should enhance refugee students' learning, many issues persist. Teacher's play an

integral role in the effective integration of refugee students in local schools. Teachers facilitate knowledge acquisition and contribute to the development of students' personalities. Where refugee students are concerned, teachers are responsible for providing not only knowledge but also counseling and emotional support (Aggelopoulos et al., 2019). These necessities arise as a result of language barriers, and conflicts that may arise in the school environment. All the while, teachers are the link between refugee students and their classmates and between the school and students' parents (Aggelopoulos et al., 2019).

Childhood is a critical time in for the development of students' personalities, the adoption of attitudes, and the establishment of behavioral patterns. Teachers play a substantial role in this period, through their integration of diverse students into the school body. They are responsible for ensuring that children (native and foreign) cultivate attitudes that promote equality and diversity, work for the benefit of learning and not for the emergence of racist attitudes (Arabatzi, 2013). The integration of foreign children in the native school environment, however, holds even higher importance because the inability to foster and integrate children into a healthy and equal environment can have far-reaching results. In its simplest form, failure to integrate in early life can result in later social exclusion, with the commensurate feelings of isolation, loneliness, and so forth that accompany it. In extreme cases, Richardson, MacEwen, and Naylor (2018) posit that it may even result in vindictive behaviors, inclination toward conflict, and other forms of socially deviant behavior.

The persistent influx of refugees has changed Greek schools' demographic profile. The school has become a recognized multicultural environment –both more quickly and more officially recognized as such, than the society housing it. In early stages, diversity can be divisive, inciting instances of racism, school violence, and bullying (Karagianni, 2019). Education policy must, in turn, take into account the new and shifting conditions and adapt schools' operational parameters, for the benefit of all pupils. Teachers are the *de facto* actors of the educational institution and, as such, an indistinguishable part of this process.

Purpose of the Study

Changes in schools' contemporary socio-economic and the demographic profile(s) have resulted in the formation of a new multicultural reality. Teacher play a crucial role in effectively managing pupils from other cultures and/or with specific characteristics that deviate from the established sociocultural norm. Ostensibly, they act to manage diversity in schools, by managing cultural identity and developing relationships between children from different cultural backgrounds.

Future teachers, which is to say students in departments of Education, who will comprise the teaching body of the future, hold unique interest in this context. They provide us with a means to examine the next generation of teachers before they are introduced to their student body (and the realities of a shifting classroom). Of course, we cannot assess the *in situ* experience of such teachers-to-be, but we can extract valuable insight from a careful examination of their understanding of and expectations for the multicultural classroom they are preparing to enter. Thus, this study aims to investigate the expectations of student-teachers who will manage a diversity in the relatively novel and persistently evolving multicultural classrooms of Greece. Specifically, we will attempt to discern:

01. What are university students' attitudes on diversity and its management?

02. What are university students' expectations for readiness regarding managing diversity?

Research Methodology

The questionnaire we employed was comprised of 28 questions, examining respondents' demographic characteristics but also their views on a series of social issues, phenomena, and other subjects[7]. Restrictions in due to the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic severely limited our ability to collect data for this study. As a result, we contained our endeavor to all students of the Department of Education and Social Work (DESW) of the University of Patras, Greece. The instrument was created via Google Forms and electronically distributed to all students in all years of study in the aforementioned department. We received 311 responses between November and December 2020.

It is worth noting that while we were contained, by "convenience", to the DESW, once it was selected, sampling from within it was, by definition, probabilistic. The questionnaire was circulated to all students, within all years, at the same time and, to the extent possible to control, under the same circumstances. While it could be argued that this would only make our results generalizable to the population of teachers who studied at the DESW, of the University of Patras, this group has historically been a successful predictor of trends, opinions, and other characteristics across Greece.

Description of the Data

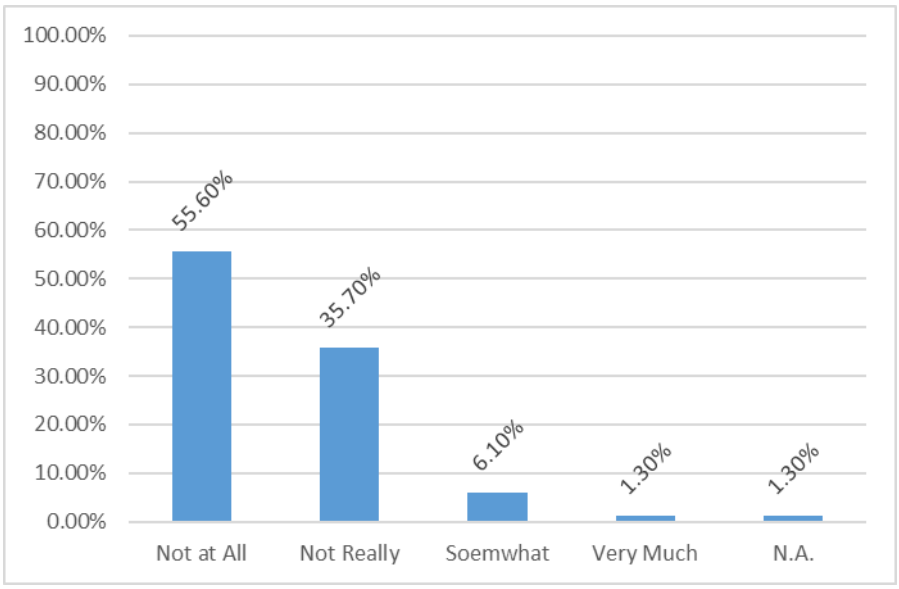
The overwhelming majority (81.4%) of respondents were between 18 and 20 years old, with increasingly diminishing outliers ranging from as low as 17 to has high as 24 years old. Approximately two-thirds (67.2%) of our sample was in the first year of studies, 4.2% in the second, 18.3% in the third, 6.8% in the (normally final) fourth year, and 2.6% in their 5th. Approximately two-thirds (67.1%) of our sample reported an urban locale (i.e., major metropolitan area, prefecture capital, or smaller city) as their area of permanent residence and, as is often the case in Departments of Education in Greece, our sample was overwhelming (84.6%) female.

More than two-thirds (67.8% or 211) of respondents reported not having attended courses dealing with intercultural education in the department. 29.3% (91) answered in the affirmative and nine students provided no answer at all, to this question. These figures may seem disheartening, at first but it is important to note that there are no courses dealing with intercultural education in the DESW's first year curriculum. In other words, just 0.7% of those who *could* have attended such a course, at the time of data acquisition, had not done so.

Respondents were also queried with regard to whether they believed diversity in the classroom was a barrier to teachers' work (see Figure 1). Better than 9 out of 10 (91.3%) future teachers responded in the negative. Less than one-in-ten (7.4%) future teachers reported some expectation of diversity impeding their future work.

[7] Complete questionnaire available upon request.

Figure 1: *Expectation of Diversity as a Barrier to Teachers' Work*



Respondents overwhelmingly disagreed with the idea of separate schools for refugee students (see Figure 2). Indeed, nearly three quarters (71.7%) objected to the idea. Perhaps troublingly, 27% reported being in favor of the idea, however.

Figure 2: *The existence of separate schools for refugee students*

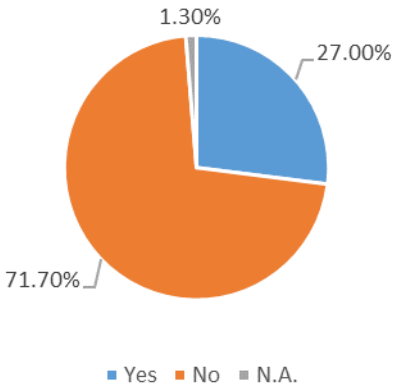
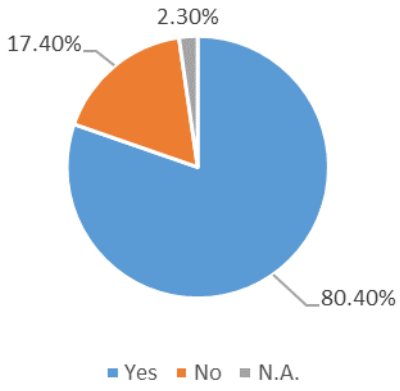


Figure 3: *The internship with refugee students*



This was followed up with a question regarding whether future-teachers would like to do their (compulsory) teaching internships in classrooms with refugee students and refugee reception centers (Figure 4). Despite their previous position on the necessity of special, separate schools for refugee students, 4 out of 5 respondents (80.4%, or 250 respondents) claimed that they would like to work in classrooms with refugee students and in refugee reception centers, while just 17.4% (54) responded negatively.

We then presented respondents with a series of questions regarding what they expected regarding their level of training in refugee management, when they graduate from the department. Questions were formatted as Likert-type items, comprising of four-categories each, denoting respondents' level of expectation. Responses were, generally speaking, positive (see Table 1). When asked if they felt they would be adequately trained to manage a class of refugee students, nearly two thirds (65.27% or 155 respondents), responded in the affirmative (Adequately /Very Much So). This was almost identical to their response when

questioned on their ability to meet the teaching responsibilities in classroom with pupils from diverse linguistic and intercultural backgrounds (65.28%). Apart from the strongest affirmative responses, these were also the questions with the least amount of non-response (2.57% and 2.89%, respectively). Responses remained generally positive when students were asked if they expected to have the competence to identify the educational needs of refugee pupils (52.41% Adequately/Very Much So), if they would be able to adopt appropriate practices to teach such pupils (54.98% Adequately/Strongly Agree), and if they would be able to satisfactorily problem manage in a classroom with students from different cultural backgrounds (54.98%). Student confidence seemingly dipped, to 48.87% affirmative (Adequately/Very Much So), when students were asked if they would be able to help students with psychological problems/trauma. In the latter four cases, however, it is also worth noting that negative responses regarding student expectations never surpassed one third of respondents[8].

Table 1. University Students' Sense of Readiness in Managing Refugee Students

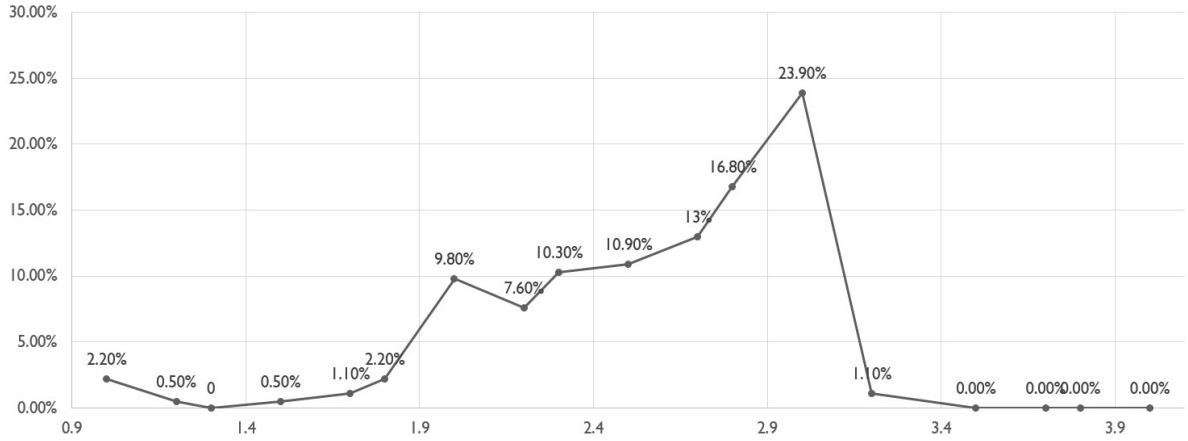
	Not at all **N** ***%***[1]	Somewhat **N** ***%***	Adequately **N** ***%***	Very Much So **N** ***%***	N.A. **N** ***%***
Will you be adequately trained to manage a class of refugee students?	11 *3.54%*	89 *28.62%*	155 *49.84%*	48 *15.43%*	8 *2.57%*
Will you have the competence to identify the educational needs of refugee pupils?	10 *3.22%*	81 *26.05%*	163 *52.41%*	0 *0%*	57 *18.33%*
Will you be able to adopt appropriate practices to teach refugee pupils?	9 *2.89%*	64 *20.58%*	171 *54.98%*	0 *0%*	67 *21.54%*
Will you be able to meet your teaching responsibilities in classes with pupils from different linguistic and intercultural backgrounds?	10 *3.22%*	89 *28.62%*	160 *51.45%*	43 *13.83%*	9 *2.89%*
Will you respond satisfactorily to problem management in a classroom with students from different cultural groups?	6 *1.93%*	62 *19.94%*	171 *54.98%*	0 *0%*	72 *23.15%*
Will you be able to help refugee students with psychological problems/trauma?	10 *3.22%*	59 *18.97%*	152 *48.87%*	0 *0%*	90 *28.94%*

[1] *Percentages are presented relative to the entire sample.*

The average of each respondents' answers to these six questions comprises a summary measure of future teachers' expectations regarding their readiness for managing diversity in the classroom. Examined in this manner, approximately one-in-six (16.3%) students reported being anywhere from "Not at All" to "Somewhat" prepared to manage diversity in their future classrooms. More than half of future teachers (58.7%) claimed they expected to be from "Adequately" to "Very Much So" prepared to manage diversity. Indeed, on average, nearly one-in-four future teachers (23.9%) expected to be adequately prepared.

[8] Even taking into account non-response, in all but the final question, regarding future teacher's ability to handle students with psychological issues/trauma, overall sentiment remains, on the whole, positive.

Figure 5: *Overall expectation of readiness for managing diversity*



The Relationship between Knowledge and Expectations

While this information paints a reasonably comprehensive picture of both the future teachers and their expectations regarding diversity in the classroom, it nevertheless ignores a rather salient point, which we have already touched on. The majority of respondents had not received any formal education regarding diversity, multilingualism, or intercultural education, at the time of data collection. Indeed, the first such relevant course is not offered until the second year of DESW studies. This creates a *de facto* salient divide, since knowledge and understanding invariably affect expectations. Lacking a specific measure of which such courses students had taken and when they took them, we separated students into two categories, based on year of study. Students in their first year could not have been exposed to the concepts of multilingualism, intercultural education, and so forth, from the DESW. Students in later years would either have attended such a course, or been exposed to it through socialization with their cohort-mates who had.

Examined in this manner, there is a stark difference between the two groups (see Table 2). Better than four-out-of-five (84.4%) of first-year students responded that they expected to be "Adequately" or "Very Much So" prepared to manage diversity in the classroom, while more than two-thirds (69.8%) of students in later years reported they expected to be "Somewhat" or "Not at all" trained for the same task. Indeed, this relationship between year of study and future teachers' expectations is statistically significant (χ^2=94.102, *dof*=3, p=.000).

Table 2: Crosstabulation: Expectation of Adequate Training for the Management of Diversity by (Grouped) Year of study

			Will you be adequately trained to manage a class of refugee students?				
			Not at all	Somewhat	Adequately	Very Much So	Total
Year of Studies	1st Year	Count	0	32	129	44	205
		%[1]	0.0%	15.6%	62.9%	21.5%	100.0%
		Count	10	57	26	3	96

	Later Years	%[1]	10.4%	59.4%	27.1%	3.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	89	155	47	301
		%[1]	3.3%	29.6%	51.5%	15.6%	100.0%

1. *within (Grouped) Year of Studies*

Chi-SquareTests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
PearsonChi-Square	94.102[a]	3	.000
LikelihoodRatio	98.106	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	82.657	1	.000
N of ValidCases	301		

a. *1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.19.*

This discrepancy is somewhat ameliorated when we examine students' (average) overall expectation of readiness by grouped year of study. It should be noted that the averaging employed to create the summary expectations measure necessarily changed the range of reported values. This is most evident in the amelioration of the (relatively few) maximally positive expectations (see Table 1). This resulted in a range of values (across both groups) or 1.00 to 3.17. These new summary responses were ostensibly coded on the preexisting scale, adapted so that values from [1,2) were considered "Not at all" prepared, [2,3) were considered "Somewhat prepared, and [3,4) "Adequately" prepared. From this perspective, 64% of first years students reported less-than-adequate expectations of preparedness, compared to 87.4% in students from later years (see Table 3). This becomes more telling, examined in terms of a positive expectation of readiness. Indeed, 36.1% of first year students reported expecting adequate readiness –nearly triple the 12.8% reported by students in later years. Even diminished in this manner, this difference was also statistically significant (χ^2=65.587, *dof*=11, p=.000).

Table 3: Crosstabulation: Overall Expectation of Readiness by (Grouped) Year of study

			Overall Expectation of Readiness												
			Not at all				Somewhat						Adequately		Total
			1.00	1.50	1.67	1.83	2.00	2.17	2.33	2.50	2.67	2.83	3.00	3.17	
Year of Studies	1st Year	Count	0	0	0	0	3	5	2	8	18	26	33	2	97
		%[1]	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	5.2%	2.1%	8.2%	18.6%	26.8%	34.0%	2.1%	
	Later Years	Count	4	1	2	4	15	9	17	12	6	5	11	0	86
		%[1]	4.7%	1.2%	2.3%	4.7%	17.4%	10.5%	19.8%	14.0%	7.0%	5.8%	12.8%	0.0%	
Total		Count	4	1	2	4	18	14	19	20	24	31	44	2	183
		%[1]	2.2%	0.5%	1.1%	2.2%	9.8%	7.7%	10.4%	10.9%	13.1%	16.9%	24.0%	1.1%	

1. *within (Grouped) Year of Studies*

Chi-SquareTests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
PearsonChi-Square	65.587[a]	11	.000
LikelihoodRatio	74.984	11	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	49.771	1	.000
N of ValidCases	183		

a. *10 cells (41.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .47.*

Summary and Conclusion

Taken as a whole, DESW students do not seem to perceive diversity as a barrier to their duties as future teachers. They report it will have little or no impact on their educational work. These same students report a desire to work in a classroom with refugee students. They largely report expecting to have been appropriately prepared in issues of managing refugee students in the classroom. They also expect to be ready to adopt appropriate educational techniques. We also found evidence that future teachers expect to feel prepared to manage conflicts and problems between refugees and native or migrant students. To a lesser extent, students report expecting to feel prepared to identify refugee students' educational needs, communicate with their parents, and develop their language skills. Their greatest struggle (and even then, relative to their other expectations) was in their expectations regarding their ability to offer refugee students psychological support in the classroom.

None of the first year respondents received any formal education in diversity, multilingualism, or intercultural education. Indeed, the overall values are drawn up by first year students, who are more (and arguably more naïvely) confident about their abilities (probably due to being, relatively speaking, uninformed). We would expect and, indeed, found evidence that such experiences, knowledge, and the corresponding shifts they necessarily entail, may have substantial impact on the expectations described above.

When examined separately, we found substantial differences between first-year students, who had not yet been formally introduced to the concepts of diversity, multilingualism, and intercultural education, and their counterparts in later years, who had received the relevant education. This is not, or at least should not be, entirely unexpected. What we have observed are arguably two different, though inextricably linked, phenomena: the *aspirations* of the first year students and the *expectations* of students in later years. While it is often difficult to define the exact point at which expectations functionally stabilize, we would argue that there is an obvious divide between a lack of no knowledge and some knowledge on the subject of said expectations.

This divide is evident in the statistically significant relationships between future teachers' expectations of both readiness, both single–issue and overall, and whether they were in their first or later years of study (see Tables 2 & 3, respectively). One could argue that age tempered their expectations. The much simpler implication, however, is that students' opinions on readiness are substantially tempered as they progress through their education degrees. They learn about the challenges, limitations, and structural impediments inherent in dealing with diverse/refugee students. These, in turn, challenge their established perceptions of their own

readiness and, in turn, inform their expectations regarding their ability to deal with such situations in future classrooms.

In short, we note that while students initially aspire to competency and readiness in the diverse classroom, the more they learn about it and are exposed to the complexity of issues facing it, the less they (realistically) expect to be in a position to do so. This is not to say that these students do not retain a desire to help all students or experience the intercultural classroom firsthand –quite the opposite. Such classrooms, however, are complex microcosms, rife with their own politics, hierarchies, and feuds. Teachers entering the workforce are already expected to be in a position to effectively deal with this subset of social reality, despite an educational system that has been historically adapted at a much slower pace than the world has changed around it. The shift from optimistic aspirations to more tempered expectations arguably indicates prudence on the part of future teachers, as they recognize this reality and its concomitant difficulties. If anything, the persistently high levels of expectation of optimism regarding their preparedness to deal with the multilingual, multicultural classroom are encouraging, as these future educators retain hope of their ability to rise to the needs of their students and facilitate not only their integration into not only the classroom but, arguably, society as a whole.

The reality of the multilingual, multicultural classroom and the need for intercultural education are, by now, well-established realities in many parts of the world. In Greece, in particular, they are an increasingly pressing facet of reality and one that, if the last two decades are any indication, shows no sign of abating. In this light, we argue for the need for greater emphasis on future teachers' multilingual, multicultural education and on intercultural education in general. Although it could be argued that there is little opportunity to do so, beyond pushing into first-year studies, we question if the importance of these issues has not reached such a point as to warrant, if not outright necessitate, their transition into the general curriculum and mandatory, early studies, core course components.

Critically, the goal of teacher education must remain preparing teachers for the realities of their future classrooms and arming them with the skills necessary to support and advance their future students. If a ground-level reassessment of the curriculum is what is required to do so, then we argue that such assessment is not only beneficial, but necessary.

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Teaching the EU in a Sustainable Way - An EU-related Model Game on the Plastic Waste Crisis and the Sustainability Policy of the EU[1]

Ulrich Kerscher[2] & Andreas Brunold[3]

Abstract

Initially, the paper introduces the inherent didactical potential of the sustainability policies of the EU on the plastic waste crisis, to synergistically combine EU-related Learning and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at secondary and tertiary teaching facilities. Adapted for the model game (introduced later in the text), the paper further outlines an integrated competence-model for the two scopes of Civic Education: to underline the potential skill- and competence-acquisition connected to this didactical approach. We introduce a concise overview of the plastic waste crisis and the EU-policies aimed at solving this issue, as the context of the model game. This thesis depicts the transformation process of the EU-economy towards a circular economy as the fundamental goal of the European Green Deal introduced by the European Commission. Finally, the paper provides a ready-to-play model game, simulating a meeting of stakeholders from politics, the economy and the public sector. The aim is to find regulations for the future of the European plastic and recycling industry, the export of plastic waste and the involvement of consumers on the way towards a circular economy. We designed the model game following the best practice approach, assessed and validated by numerous teaching professionals from secondary and tertiary teaching facilities.

Keywords: EU-related Learning, ESD, Plastic Waste, Model Game, Circular Economy

Introduction

During the last decades, plastic waste generation has increased exponentially, to nearly 10,000 million combined metric tons, in 2023. Predictions for waste accumulation foresee its further increase to over 25,000 million metric tons by 2050. This adds up to 56 Gigatons of CO_2 by 2050, in terms of emissions for the production and waste treatment of plastic. Predictions for 2050 expect the plastic lifecycle to be responsible for emissions equivalent to 615 coal plants (Maurer, 2023). As the European Commission (2018a) pointed out, there are many more problems connected to plastic and plastic waste:

> *If we don't change the way we produce and use plastics, there will be more plastics than fish in our oceans by 2050. We must stop plastics getting into our water, our food, and even our bodies. The only long-term solution is to reduce plastic waste by recycling and reusing more. This is a challenge that citizens, industry and governments must tackle together […]. We need to invest in innovative new technologies that keep our citizens and our environment safe whilst keeping our industry competitive* (EC, 2018a).

Against this background, the paper argues that the sustainability policies of the EU on the plastic waste crisis encompasa the didactic potential to synergistically combine EU-related Learning and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In support of this claim, we propose and introduce a competence model adapted for a model game on the plastic waste

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[1] If this paper is quoted or referenced, we ask that it be acknowledged as:
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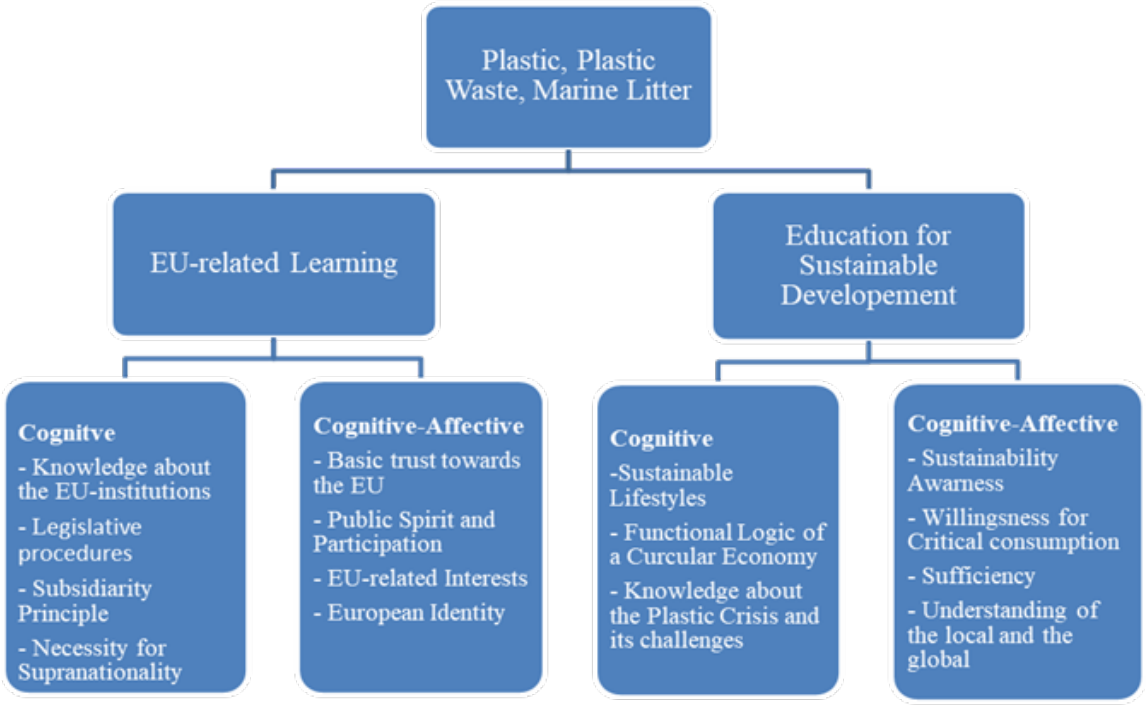
crisis and provide the relevant teaching materials. We designed the simulation following the best practice approach and was assessed and validated by numerous teaching professionals, from secondary and tertiary teaching institutions.

Relevance of the Plastic Waste Crisis for EU-related Learning and Education for Sustainable Development

An analysis of the transformation process of European sustainability policies, as well as the EU's economic system towards a circular economy, reveals that low recycling rates, excessive production of plastic waste and resulting ocean and sea pollution are fundamental 21st century environmental issues. The plastic waste crisis has become a socially visible sustainability discourse in Europe. Given the ongoing legislative activities of the EU – solving the plastic crisis is a key goal of the *European Green Deal* (Fetting, 2020) by the European Commission – and the societal anchoring of the plastic waste discourse, the model game introduced in this thesis offers the didactic potential to combine *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)* and *EU-related Learning* (Kerscher, 2019a). Plastics and plastic waste play a crucial role for sustainability processes, such as the transformation of the EU towards a circular economy. Considering that every individual can either support or undermine this process, the simulation game aims at fostering awareness for sustainability and critical reflection of (plastic) consumption patterns, among learners. It is possible to create a fundamental understanding of interdependencies among actors in a circular-oriented economy, by simulating *solution- and future-oriented* negotiations of problems inherent in a linear economic system, such as the low recycling rate in the EU or water pollution. In this way, we can convey the necessity of combining bottom-up and top-down processes for successful sustainable development processes (Kerscher, 2019b).

Figure 1. *Cognitive and Cognitve-Affective Competence Dimensions for the Learning Field Plastic* (adapted from Kerscher, 2019b)

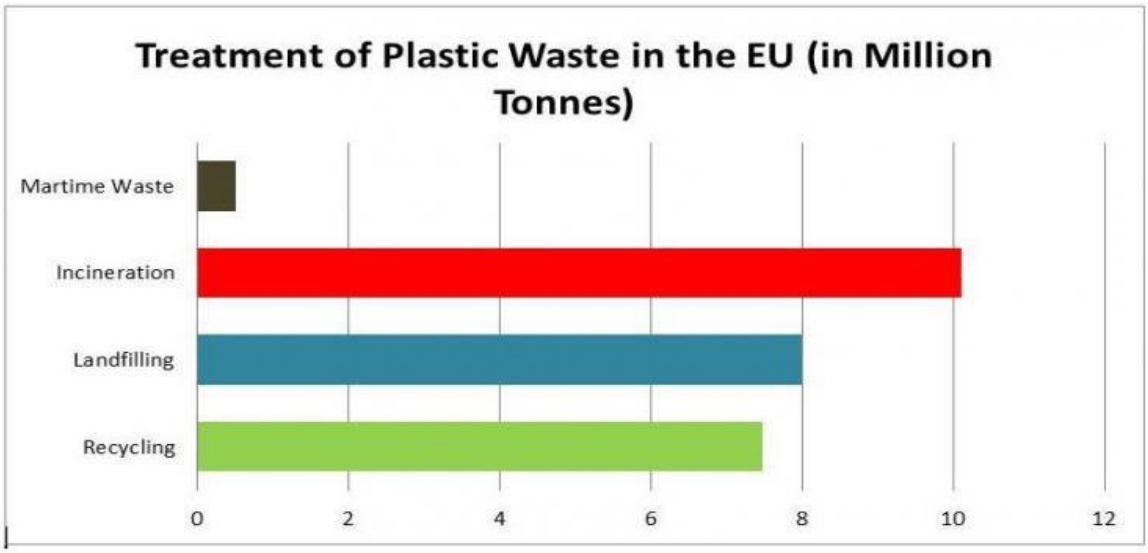


Following Oberle and Forstmann (2015), learners should develop a conceptual understanding of the multi-level political system of the EU, legislative procedures and the principle of *subsidiarity* by simulating the actors or veto-players in the legislative process concerning the plastic crisis as a transnational problem. By simulating the action- and competence-oriented internal perspective of the EU, learners are supposed to nurture EU-related interests, basic trust in EU institutions and a positive evaluation of the EU as a supranational institution for solving transnational problems. Ideally, on a more abstract level, the simulation game promotes the development of a European awareness and a European identity (Oberle & Forstmann, 2015).

Plastic and Plastic Waste in the EU

The nature of the plastic waste crisis is threefold. First, there are already approximately 150 million tons of macro- and microplastics in the oceans, with an additional 10 million tons added each year. This has serious long-term consequences for both the ecosystem and human health. Microplastics, for instance, find their way into the human body through the food chain. Marine creatures die due to plastic ingestion leading to agonizing deaths. The increasing plastic waste pollutes the air, water and soil, tarnishing the natural landscape (EC, 2018b). Second, there is a significant need to improve waste management, recycling and the reuse of plastic as a secondary raw material, both within the EU and worldwide (see, e.g., Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Treatment of Plastic Waste in the EU in Million Tons per Year* (Kerscher, 2019a).



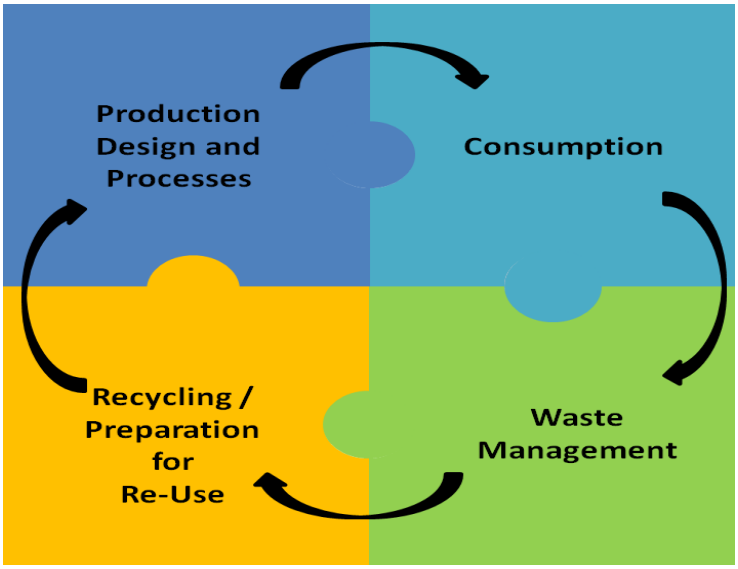
Third, low recycling rates are rooted in the design and manufacturing processes of plastic products. From an economic perspective, plastic producers lack incentives to ensure the recyclability of their products, as doing so would incur higher production costs. This reveals the contradiction between economic and ecological goals. During production, producers enrich plastic with various chemical substances, allowing for a high degree of design flexibility to meet the market's aesthetic desires. The variety of product designs, however, complicates the recycling process, increases waste treatment costs and reduces the quality of recycled plastic. Consequently, recycling is currently not economically viable in the EU and the

recycling industry is discouraged from investing in the modernization of its infrastructure (EC, 2018a).

Closing the Loop – An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy (2015)

The European Commision introduced the first strategic initiative to address the issue of plastic waste and marine pollution in December 2015 (EC 2015). The main objective was to achieve the transformation of the EU towards a circular economy. This initiative also aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the EU economy and stimulating sustainable economic growth. The EU-Commission defines a circular economy as a system "where the value of products, materials, and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste is minimized" (EC, 2015, p. 2). This definition highlights the fact that a circular economy is not compatible with disposable products and low recycling rates.

Figure 3. *Conceptualization of the Circular Economy (Kerscher, 2019a)*



Both the design phase and the production process have significant impacts on the use of resources, the reusability and recyclability of a product. These early stages of a product's lifecycle determine whether a product is suitable for a circular economy or not. Therefore, products must be designed with the end of the lifecycle – their recyclability or reusability – in mind (EC, 2015). The role of consumption is also crucial. Only by achieving further changes towards a more sustainable consumption behavior can the transition to a circular economy become realistic and feasible. It is essential to promote the willingness for sufficiency, which is to say refraining from unnecessary consumption, and establish it as a predominant consumption pattern (Kerscher, 2019b). The interplay of all phases in a product's lifecycle characterize the fundamental principle of a circular economy. To enable circularity, all four phases must align with each other (EC, 2015).

The European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy 2018

On January 16, 2018, the European Commission published another strategy paper to address the plastic issue and lay the groundwork for a new plastic strategy within the circular economy (EC, 2018b). The EU is highly dependent on all stakeholders involved in the lifecycle of a plastic product for an effective transformation of the economy towards a circular economy and the implementation of this strategy. The plastic strategy encompasses six areas:

1. Improving the design of plastic products to make them more recyclable and reusable.
2. Strengthening recycling processes and infrastructure to increase the recycling rate and improve the quality of recycled materials.
3. Reducing single-use plastics and encouraging alternatives.
4. Curbing plastic littering and addressing the issue of microplastics in the environment.
5. Promoting voluntary action by the plastic and recycling industry to foster more sustainable plastic production and use.
6. Mobilizing global action to address the international dimension of the plastic problem.

This strategy addresses different aspects of the problem. It seeks to reduce the use of disposable plastic products, following the *precautionary principle*. It follows an *efficiency strategy* to stimulate growth and innovation, transforming the design, production, consumption, and recycling of plastic products. Concurrently, the strategy aims to make the recycling industry more profitable, to attract investments from the private sector (EC, 2018a).

As the first step towards implementing the plastic strategy, the European Commission published a directive on reducing single-use plastic on May 28, 2018 (EC, 2018b). As a result, plastic products like plates, cutlery, straws, and cotton buds have been banned since January 2021.

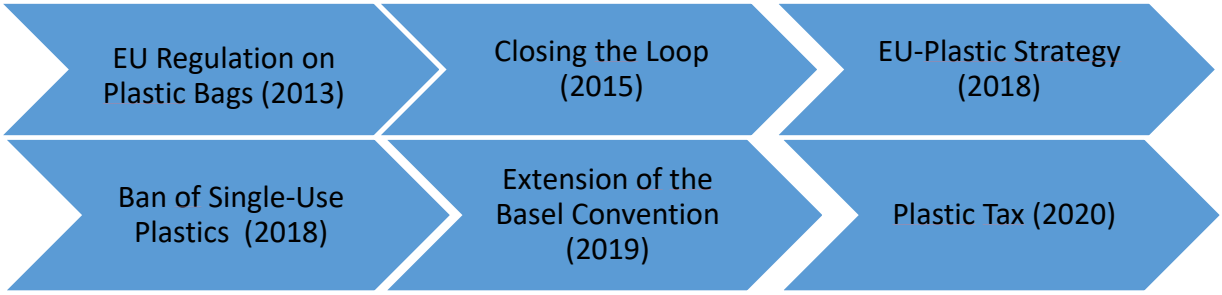
The Export of Plastic Waste and the ‘Plastic Tax‘

Approximately half of the plastics collected for recycling in the EU were and still are exported to countries outside the EU. In the past, the EU was one of the largest exporters of unsorted plastic waste. Until 2018, EU member states exported up to 87% of all plastic waste to China. Reasons for these exports included the European recycling industry's insufficient capacities, technologies and financial ability to process all the waste within the EU. In 2018, China imposed an import ban on plastic waste from the EU. Since the ban, there has been an increase of plastic waste exports to Southeast Asian countries. Export figures from Germany, for example, show increasing amounts of waste shipped to Malaysia. The country finds itself in a delicate balance between economic interests of their recycling industry and environmental protection efforts. While some companies made significant profits, enormous waste dumps emerged in the country, leading to illegal processing and incineration of imported plastic waste. As a reaction to the devastating consequences for waste-importing countries, the export of plastic waste is now conducted under the provisions of the *Basel Convention* (UN General Assembly, 1989). Since then, several ships carrying unsorted European plastic waste have been rejected by the importing countries and sent back to European ports (Perras & Timmler, 2018). Unsorted or contaminated plastic waste that is difficult to recycle is no longer allowed to be traded internationally and shipped, as there are concerns that it may be illegally dumped or incinerated in importing countries (BMU, 2021).

A plastic levy came into effect in January 2021 as part of the EU's multiannual financial framework. Often referred to as the ‘plastic tax’, member states are obligated to pay 80

(euro)cents per kilogram of non-recycled plastic. According to this calculation basis, Germany is expected to face an additional burden of approximately 1.4 billion Euros per year (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020).

Figure 4. *EU Sustainability Policy Concerning Plastic and Plastic Waste* (Kerscher et. al., 2021)



The Model Game: The Sustainability Policy of the EU on the Plastic Waste Crisis – Courses of Actions towards a Circular Economy

The aforementioned model game was initially designed in the context of a Jean-Monnet-Project, at the Chair for Civic Education at the University of Augsburg. The final didactic materials, presented below, were then assessed and validated teaching professionals from secondary and tertiary teaching facilities. The ready-to-play materials were updated and adapted several times during this process of assessment and validation. Following the best practice approach, the materials now consist of the synthesis of several simulation phases. The reflection phases, post-simulation-interviews with the learners and a feedback-questionnaire indicate the actual skill- and competence acquisition (all of which follow the simulations) are in line with the competence model introduced above.

Scenario, Roles and Role Cards of the Model Game

The model game simulates an informal stakeholder meeting in Brussels, focusing on the sustainability policy of the EU addressing the plastic waste crisis. Stakeholders form politics and the economy and the public actors engage in negotiations concerning possible steps to transform the EU's economy towards a circular model. The EU-Commission's objective is to increase recycling rates within the EU, without pitting the economic interests of the plastic and recycling industries against each other, as both are crucial for a circular economy. Amidst this complex setting, the EU Commission aims at developing an EU directive with majority support, outlining concrete measures to implement the European Green Deal. The selection of individual roles aligns with the stages of a plastic product's lifecycle. The chosen roles were designed to reflect the economic interests of the two represented industries and the general conflict between economic and ecological objectives, which are expected to be the main focal points during the simulation phase. The role cards directly address the learners, to increase the identification with the roles they play, supporting the process of assuming the perspective of their role. Model scenarios are presented below.

M 1. Scenario of the Model Game

Stakeholder-Meeting in Brussels

The European Commission invites various stakeholders from politics, the economy and the public to a meeting in Brussels. The goal of this meeting is for the participants to agree on a roadmap addressing the plastic waste crisis. As political stakeholders participate the President of the EU Commission, the German Ministry of the Environment and a delegation from Southeast Asian countries. Representatives from the economy include members of Plastics Europe, a trade association representing European plastic producers and the European Recycling Industries Confederation (EuRIC), which represents the interests of the recycling industry. Activists from the Rethink Plastic Alliance, a non-governmental environmental organization focused on combating plastic waste, are also present at the negotiations, to provide input towards a Zero-Plastic solution. The European Commission expects to take concrete steps towards the implementation of its Plastic Strategy from 2018 during this stakeholder meeting. The starting point for the meeting is that both the European plastic and recycling industries are, in principle, open to modernizing their sectors but not at the expense of their economic profitability or jobs. Furthermore, they do not want to bear all the costs of environmentally friendly investments in innovative technologies, as this would go against profit maximization. At the same time, Southeast Asian countries link further plastic waste imports to their participation in this modernization process. Additionally, the Rethink Plastic Alliance makes demands that go beyond the proposals of the Plastic Strategy.

Agenda and Aims of the Stakeholder-Meeting

The goal of the European Commission is to develop an EU directive with concrete measures that significantly increase the recycling rate by 2030 and regulate the role of plastic waste exports in a binding manner. The aforementioned stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the development of this directive. Within the framework of this roundtable discussion, the participating actors must address fundamental questions:

1. How can the recycling rate in the EU be increased while also reconciling the different interests of the plastic and recycling industries?
2. Under which circumstances can the plastic waste export from the EU to Southeast Asian countries continue?
3. How can consumer behavior be influenced in favor of sustainability?

These questions are crucial to finding a comprehensive solution to the plastic waste crisis and to formulating effective policies that align with the European Green Deal objectives. The stakeholders' active involvement is essential to achieving a consensus that promotes both environmental sustainability and economic viability for the industries involved.

M 2: Role Card – EU-Commission

As the President of the executive body of European politics, you implement the regulations and directives that the Ministerial Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have agreed upon. You also ensure that all member states adhere to the decisions that taken at the European level. Moreover, you are responsible for the future development of the EU. To do so, your institution holds the exclusive right of initiative, which means only the EU Commission can draft and propose new laws for the Union.

Your Challenge

As the host, your role involves leading and moderating the stakeholder negotiations. Your greatest challenge is reconciling the partially conflicting economic interests of the plastic and recycling industries, while aiming at ecologically sustainable solutions to the plastic waste crisis. It is essential to strike a balance between these interests while also ensuring that the Southeast Asian countries are constructively engaged as equal partners in the problem-solving process. Given the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis, your investment options are limited. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize cost-effective solutions that can still drive meaningful progress towards achieving the EU's plastic waste reduction and recycling targets. But you can't pay for it all.

Your Position

- You aim at increasing the recycling rate in the EU by improving the recyclability of plastic products. This requires changes concerning product design and the manufacturing process. You try to hold the plastic industry accountable without losing it as an economic partner.
- You aim at an increase of the plastic waste levy, also known as "plastic tax".
- You aim at increasing the profitability expectations of the recycling industry and boosting the demand for recycled plastics to achieve a circular economy.
- One potential instrument for you is setting a minimum percentage of recycled raw materials (recycled plastic) in new plastic products. This would enhance the profit prospects for the recycling industry, but could also increase production costs for the plastic industry.
- You aim at shifting the responsibility for influencing the consumption behaviour of EU citizens to individual member states. To this end, you propose the establishment of preventive measures such as awareness campaigns.
- You aim at continuing the export of waste to Southeast Asian countries, while interpreting the Basel Convention laxly. You want keep the expenses for this objective within limits.
- You aim at ensuring that the plastic levies from member states continue to flow into the EU budget without specific earmarking. You want to decide on its spending.

Your Strategy

- You use bilateral informal negotiations with other stakeholders and offer possible concessions on other substantive issues. You attempt to tie several decisions together.
- You use your legislative initiative right as leverage in the negotiations. In particular, you can use economic instruments to steer the recycling rate as pressure (e.g., the plastic tax).
- You promise a budget for the research and development of innovative technologies for the plastic and recycling industries. However, you are not willing to directly fund the modernization of the recycling industry's infrastructure.
- You point out the necessity for EU-wide regulations to ensure economic prosperity.

(EC, 2018a)

M 3: Role Card – German Environment Minister

As the delegate of the *Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety*, you represent the German government. As such, you try to pursue national interests at the EU level. You run the German ministry implementing EU guidelines and directives regarding plastic waste and plastic products in Germany. A German veto in the Council of the European Union effectively prevents the adoption of any law at the European level. Generally, your ministry is responsible for promoting sustainable environmental and nature-conservation policies in Germany. Plastic waste is currently a top priority of your ministry's efforts, as expressed in your general approach: 'Less Plastic and More Recycling.' Overall, your ministry agrees on key points of EU Plastic Strategy.

Your Position

- You aim at reducing the use of unnecessary plastic products and packaging. You plan to achieve this through alliances with manufacturers and retailers, as well as by implementing bans on single-use items.
- You explicitly support the polluter-pays principle and advocate for the plastic industry to contribute to the costs of plastic waste disposal. You promote this idea at the European level and endorse the EU's plastic levy.
- You intend to influence product design through economic instruments. Well-recyclable products receive financial incentives; poorly recyclable products face financial sanctions.
- You demand that the EU legislation ensures resource efficiency, reparability, and recyclability. Your goal is to extend the product lifecycle.
- You announce your intention to increase the demand for products made from secondary raw materials in public investments to support the recycling industry. You suggest a minimum quota of secondary raw materials in new plastic products.

Your Strategy

Your primary focus is on sustainable environmental and nature-conservation policies. However, you also need to consider economic interests, particularly in regards to the significant plastic industry in Germany, which provides numerous job opportunities. Additionally, you have to keep in mind the interests of the *Industrial Union of Mining, Chemicals, and Energy*, which represents a significant part of the population. Therefore, you have to take into account the implications if your decisions on the upcoming federal elections.

- You threaten to withhold Germany's approval in the Council of the European Union if the negotiations do not go as planned.
- You advocate for more leeway for national states in the implementation of future EU legislation.
- You insist on using economic measures to influence product design and recycling rates. Voluntary commitments from the industry are not sufficient for you.
- You propose the support of the recycling industry in emerging countries as a reciprocal measure for accepting European waste.

(BMU, 2018)

M 4: Role Card – Delegation of Southeast Asian Countries

As representatives of *the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, you advocate for the interests of the entire Southeast Asian region. Since China banned the import of plastic waste in 2018, countries in the ASEAN region have become new destinations for (plastic) waste exports from Western countries. Due to the inclusion of plastic waste under the provisions of the Basel Convention, the import of sorted and cleaned plastic waste remains lucrative for the ASEAN region. Your willingness to continue importing (plastic) waste is, however, tied to certain conditions.

Your Challenge

As the political representation of Southeast Asian states, you find yourself in a field of tension between the economic interests of your recycling industry and necessary environmental protection efforts in your countries. In 2018, for example, 54 companies from Malaysia actively imported plastic waste, generating substantial profits. Only eight of these companies complied with the existing environmental regulations, however. This resulted in the creation of huge waste dumps in the country and the subjection of imported plastic waste to improper processing and burning. Your main challenge now is to modernize the recycling industry of your countries, to continue participating in the lucrative plastic waste trade. At the same time, you must address the demands of the protesting population for enhanced environmental protection.

Your Position

- You aim at preventing the emerging economies of the Southeast Asian region from becoming dumping grounds for waste from developed countries.
- You insist on implementing the Basel Convention, which states that only sorted, cleaned, and recyclable plastic waste should be traded.
- Your state that your countries are generally willing to issue new licenses for plastic waste imports.
- You point out that China could act as an alternative partner for the modernization of your recycling industry. Consequently, you are not unilaterally dependent on the EU.

Your Strategy

- You threaten to send back ships carrying unlicensed plastic waste as a mean to exert pressure on the international community and negotiation partners.
- At the same time, you signal a willingness to potentially issue import licenses for European plastic waste. But you want something in return.
- You attach conditions to these new licenses: you ask for the provision of technology for your recycling industry (technology transfer) and financial payments from the EU.
- As an additional leverage, you can also point out the possibility of expanding cooperation with the Chinese recycling industry at the expense of the EU. In recent years, Chinese waste processing companies have already invested 20 billion Euros in Southeast Asian countries.

(Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, 2019)

M 5: EuRIC – European Recycling Industry Confederation

As the representative of the *European Recycling Industry Confederation*, you advocate for the recycling industry of the European Union. You are the spokesperson for the umbrella organization of the recycling industry encompassing over 5.500 companies across Europe. Your economic sector is responsible for recycling numerous materials and hence essential for the realization of a circular economy. Your companies recycle millions of tons of plastic, metal, glass, and paper annually generating nearly 100 billion Euros in revenue. The 300.000 jobs your members provide in the EU, which cannot be outsourced to countries outside the EU, further underline the significance of your industry. Your primary goal is to promote effective legislative frameworks that support recycling in Europe and ensure the economic competitiveness of the European recycling industry.

Your Position

- You support the inclusion of plastic waste under the provisions of the Basel Convention.
- You demand a legally defined minimum percentage of recycled materials for the production of new plastic products
- You also demand a legally mandated minimum recycling rate for various plastic products. You do not consider voluntary commitments from the plastic industry to be sufficient.
- You declare an increased demand for recycled materials, as a prerequisite for subsequent investments in the modernization and expansion of the recycling industry. Setting non-binding recycling targets alone is not enough.
- You call for financial penalties for plastic manufacturers that do not consider the recyclability und reusability of their products during the manufacturing process.
- You propose economic incentives to increase the use of recycled materials. One measure would be subsidizing secondary raw materials.
- You request European subsidies for the modernization process of the European recycling industry.

Your Strategy

As the representative of the European recycling industry, you find yourself in a complex situation. On the one hand, the EU strongly depends on your industry to implement the transformation process to a circular economy. On the other hand, the global demand for recycled plastic has declined due to China's import ban, posing a threat to the profitability of your industry and potentially leading to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. Therefore, the expansion of the intra-European recycling market is also one of your key necessities.

- You declare a guaranteed minimum demand for recycled raw materials, as a prerequisite for future investments in the modernization process.

- You stress the critical role of a well-functioning recycling sector in achieving a circular economy and highlight the dependence of the EU on the recycling industry.
- You call on the EU to provide financial support for the modernization process of the recycling industry. For example, directing the plastic levy towards funding recycling initiatives would be beneficial.
- You urge the EU to ensure the recyclability of plastic products by implementing regulations and standards in the production process.
- You hold the plastic industry responsible for producing recyclable products and advocate for their involvement in covering the costs of waste management.

Branchendachverband der Recycling- und Entsorgungswirtschaft (BVSE), (n.d. a; b)

M 6: PlasticsEurope

As the representative of *PlasticsEurope*, the association of plastics producers, you advocate for the political and economic interests of the pan-European plastic industry. Your organization comprises the companies that produce over 90 percent of plastics in the 27 EU member states and other countries such as Norway, Switzerland and the UK. PlasticsEurope is connected internationally through the *World Plastics Council (WPC)* and the *Global Plastics Alliance (GPA)*. Additionally, you closely cooperate with national plastic associations in Europe and around the world. Prominent members of your organization include BASF, Exxon Mobile Chemical Company and Total Petrol Chemicals. Your industry sector provides up to 1.5 million jobs in nearly 60,000 companies across Europe. What is more, your members generate over 300 billion Euros in revenue. As the seventh-largest industry sector in Europe, you consider plastics to be the materials of the 21st century. You express skepticism towards EU regulations and instead advocate for voluntary commitments within your industry.

Your Position

- You emphasize the positive contribution of single-use items to the quality of life and the preservation of food freshness.
- You call for measures by the EU to raise awareness among consumers regarding plastic recycling. You argue that waste generation primarily originates from consumers and not your industry.
- You emphasize your willingness to engage in voluntary commitments for the elimination of marine litter and the reduction of plastic waste in the future.
- You emphasize that existing regulations and laws are strict enough and only have to be properly implemented by member states. You aim at avoiding specific new laws.
- You stress the importance of waste reprocessing and recycling and call for the expansion of related infrastructure.
- You reject Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in the form of payments or the introduction of a plastic tax. You warn that this could prevent innovations in the plastic industry.
- While you generally support the use of recycled materials, you reject the legal introduction of minimum proportions for the usage of secondary resources for the production of plastic products. You seek to increase the use of secondary raw materials through dialogue between the plastic and recycling industries. Voluntary self-commitments are the way to go.

Your Strategy

As a representative of the European plastic industry, you find yourself in a complex situation. On the one hand, the EU strongly depends on your industry to implement the transformation process to a circular economy. On the other hand, you must prevent the EU from setting strict regulations that could negatively affect the profitability of your companies.

- You warn against the potential loss of jobs in the plastic industry if the EU were to introduce a mandatory minimum share of recycled materials in the production of plastic products or a plastic tax.
- You emphasize the critical role of a profitable and innovative plastic industry for facilitating the transition to a circular economy.
- You call on the EU to provide financial support for the modernization process of the recycling industry.

(PlasticsEurope, 2017)

M 7: Rethink Plastic Alliance

Rethink Plastic is a transnational coalition of leading European NGOs with thousands of active regional groups and supporters across Europe. They are part of the global network *Break Free From Plastic*, which is a coalition of over 1.000 NGOs, with millions of supporters. In general, your aim is to influence European legislation towards a future without plastic waste. With the ability to generate critical public awareness, you see yourselves as equal stakeholders for the roundtable.

Your Position

Your supranational NGO identifies three main problem areas: the manufacturing processes of plastic products, consumer behaviour and the recycling of plastic for reuse or as a secondary raw material.

- You call for the unconditional reduction of plastic waste, to decrease the plastic footprint. This can be achieved through incentives for the recycling industry and consumers, restrictive legislation concerning plastic production and promoting sustainable plastic consumption.
- You advocate for increasing the plastic levy and introducing a minimum share of recycled materials in new plastic products.
- You demand a redesign of plastic products to extend their lifespan and improved recyclability to enable the use of recycled materials.
- You demand the plastic industry contribute to the costs of plastic waste disposal.
- You call for improved waste treatment in Europe, including ending landfilling and incineration of plastic waste.
- You urge emerging countries to stop importing plastic waste and follow China's example.
- You promote the implementation of a meaningful plastic tax to influence consumer behavior and internalize the damages caused by plastic products.

- You advocate for comprehensive educational programs, to increase critical consumption practices.

Your Strategy

As a representative of a supranational NGO without direct competencies in the legislative process and without the possibilities and influence of an entire economic sector, you rely on the public visibility of the plastic issue. You are dependent on being able to persuade other stakeholders of your positions through informal negotiations.

- You highlight your potential to generate critical public awareness through social media campaigns and active protests on the streets.
- You try to act as a moral compass for other stakeholders.
- You announce that you have indirect influence on legislation due to your connection to the Green Party fraction in the European Parliament.
- As a last resort, you threaten direct actions, such as occupying plastic manufacturing facilities, recycling centers and ports to generate media attention and cause economic repercussions to the negotiating parties.

(Rethink Plastic Alliance, n.d.)

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How to Teach Diversity by Using Multicultural Literature Based Teaching Scenarios[1]

Vasiliki Resvani[2] & Julia-Athena Spinthourakis[3]

Abstract

In the last decade societies and educational systems have had to deal with a variety of highly challenging crises, including those linked to migration, economy, health, and the while not something new, the most recent the geopolitical conflict between the Ukraine and Russia. Throughout these crises, modern societies have become increasingly multicultural and where schools should be a place where everyone is welcome. Citizenship education has and continues to be a means of developing knowledge, skills and understanding to be able to play a full part in society as active and responsible citizens. A teacher in their classroom is constantly asked to responsibly relate with the world around us, past, present and future in order to prepare their students to be active citizens. Teacher's views on diversity, otherness, conflict and their influence on the educational process during times of conflict and crisis have and continue to be the subject of study in previous research but less in relation to enhancing acceptance of otherness through the use of multicultural children's literature. Our research sought to study of teachers' views on cultural otherness, the strategies they follow in order to approach it by smoothly integrating the foreign student and c) the use of literature with references to otherness in their teaching. The method followed was mixed quantitative and qualitative with opportunistic simple random sampling for the quantitative internet survey. A total of 399 primary education teachers who taught in public Greek schools participated in the research. The research included the development of teaching scenarios using multicultural literature. These scenarios were used as teaching resources with several groups of in-service primary school teachers in Western Greece. Our presentation shares our findings and focuses on the in-service teacher training aspects of teaching about diversity and otherness through the interactive use of teaching scenarios. Keywords: citizenship education, otherness-diversity, literature, multicultural classroom, teaching scenarios.

Keywords: otherness, literature, multicultural classroom, teaching scenarios

Introduction

The multicultural evolution of societies signals and dictates a completely new situation, with many and different facts, where cultures and groups are involved and interact in the context of a postmodern situation (Nicolaou et al., 2008, p. 293). As people migrate, they bring with them their culture, their values and their language (Columna, Foley, & Lytle, 2010). This fact changes monocultural societies into multicultural societies and this differentiation affects science, technology, mathematics and even education (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012). At the same time, globalization leads to a diversification of social life through the spread of values, practices and ways of organizing societies (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2020). Cultural otherness is an issue observed in society and the school is called upon to bridge the gap this differentiation creates, with targeted and systematic actions for the acceptance and companionship of

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foreigners and non-students. These actions correspond to changes, which affect education. The teacher can focus on the development of a culture of acceptance of the other in their classroom but also in the wider school community, in the context of a diverse school that cares not only for the learning progress but also for the social and emotional development of children and adolescents (Hatzichristou, Lampropoulou, & Lykitsakou, 2004).

Cooperation, team spirit and activities that help students get to know one-another positively contribute to this goal. The need for adequately qualified teachers and intercultural education, in a gradually but progressively more intercultural world, has been emphasized in the literature for more than a decade and a half (Spinthourakis, 2007). Teachers are required to work in classrooms that have students from different cultures as well as different levels of language proficiency. Indeed, "[e]ducational programs that take diversity as a starting point and address it from all angles prepare teachers to become subject matter experts capable of supporting students from immigrant backgrounds" (Severiens, 2014, p. 1).

The thesis used the term literature with references to alterity to explain the type of literary texts used to create the teaching scenarios. The literature of alterity is highlighted by the following research: (see e.g., Arellano, (2011); Yokota, (2009); Bonisonne, Rougle & Langer, (1998); Iwai, (2015); Livingston & Birrel, (2016); Pylarinos, (2002); Kanakidou & Papagianni, (2003); Rodriguez, (2012). The author, Mr. Manos Kontoleon is chosen in the thesis as one of the advocates of contemporary literature for children & young people (Kanatsoulis, 2002). He also contributes positively to the construction of identity through “otherness” (Belesi, 2009). Through the literature with references to otherness, the authenticity of the culture is projected through intercultural image books (Yoo Lee et al., 2014). More specifically for modern literature for children and young people, while in the past the foreigner had a small, secondary role in Greek literature, now the foreigner acquires a leading role without any negative element of it being highlighted (Lalagianni, 2009).

Method

The purpose of this research was threefold:

i. To examine teachers' views on cultural otherness,
ii. to investigate the strategies they follow in order to approach cultural otherness:
    a. by smoothly integrating the foreign student and
    b. by using literature with references to otherness in their teaching.

For the purpose of this study, we used a set of five scales regarding teachers' views on cultural diversity and the practices they follow. These comprised a combination of four pre-existing scales and one created specifically for the purpose of the study. Specifically:

1. Munroe & Pearson’s (2006) composite KNOW-CARE-ACT (KCA) scale, which consists of three subscales. The first of which is made up of seven (7) questions relating to what KNOW teachers know. The second consists of six (6) questions, concerning the awareness of CARE teachers. The third subscale consists of five (5) questions dealing with coping, which ACT teachers do.
2. The "Teachers Cultural Beliefs Scale" (TCBS), created by Hachfeld et al. (2011). The scale consists of ten 5-point Likert-type questions (1 = 'Strongly Disagree' through 5 = 'Strongly Agree') and investigates teachers' cultural (6 items) and equality beliefs (4 items).

3. A subset of 19 of the 25 items comprising Küçükoğlu and Arikan's (2011) scale concerning teachers' opinions on the use of literature.
4. A Scale of Good Practice, comprised of ten (10) questions concerning good practices used by teachers, and
5. A teacher competence scale, comprised of six items, created by the researcher in the course of a broader doctoral study.

In short, our research sought to study of teachers' views on cultural diversity, the strategies they follow in order to approach it by smoothly integrating the foreign student the use of literature with references to diversity in their teaching. We followed a mixed (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) methods approach, with opportunistic simple random sampling for the quantitative survey, conducted via the internet.

Results

399 primary education teachers, who were active in Greek public schools, participated in the research. 79 of these teachers were men and 320 were women. 125 were substitute teachers and 274 held permanent positions. They ranged from 1 to more than 35 years of service experience. 84.5% of the teachers who participated in the research were graduates of departments of education. 46.1% of the sample held postgraduate (i.e., master's and/or doctorate) degrees, while 39.8% only had a basic title (degree) of studies.

Respondent ages ranged from 20 to over 50 years old. 17.8% was 20-30 years old, the majority (60%) was 31-50 year old, and 20.6% were older than 50. 69.9% of respondents live in an urban area, while the remaining 31.1% live in a semi-urban locale. The specialization that the teachers of the sample have and one finds that 85% are unspecialized teachers while 15% comprise specialties, such as educational visual gymnasts, drama teachers and so forth.

The selection of the teachers was made in an opportunistic - convenient manner since the coordinators of the educational project who chose the training proposed by the researcher had under their supervision the specific schools. For all the scales used in this thesis, a total score was calculated per participant. Cronbach's α indices were calculated to measure the reliability of each scale (see Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach's α indices for the survey scales

Scale	Number of Questions	Index α
TCBS	10	.904
	6	.889
Equality subscale	4	.880
Munroe (KNOW – CARE – ACT, KCA)	17	.839
KNOW	6	.768
CARE	6	.731
ACT	5	.632
Good Practices	10	.848
Competence	6	.806
Using Literature	11	.893

Separate comparisons with the criterion t-test for independent samples revealed statistically significant differences only in the Ability scale and in favor of teachers with a master's degree

(t=4.18, df=397, p<.001, d=.419) and in the scale for the Use of Literature in favor of permanent teachers (t=2.21, df=397, p=.028, d=.238). As no other statistically significant differences were found in the various occupational and demographic characteristics of the participants, the sample was treated as a single group in subsequent analyses.

Basic descriptive statistics (i.e., the mean and standard deviation) were extracted for each scale, both for the entire sample (see Table 2) and separately, by Level of Education and Permanency. Following a series of t-tests to compare between these groups, resulting in no significant differences, however, we analyzed all the responses as a single sample. We then conducted correlation analysis and finally presented the results of the hierarchical regression to calculate the percentage of variation of the Good Practices in Diversity variable Practices, using TCBS , Munroe KCA , Use of Literature, and Teacher Competence as independent factors.

Table 2: Basic Descriptive Statistics of the Scales – Total Sample

Scale	M	sd	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
TCBS	4.39	.55	4.34	4.45
Munroe (KCA)	4.12	.46	4.07	4.16
Good Practices	4.02	.55	3.97	4.08
Competence	2.71	.86	2.62	2.79
Using Literature	4.17	.53	4.12	4.22

There were statistically significant bivariate correlations (p<.001) between all of the scales. Only the Good Practices and TCBS, however had a strong positive relationship (r = .661). The remaining relevance indicators are indicative of a moderate and/or low relevance relationship.

Following the survey, the variables analyzed and presented previously were used in hierarchical regression analyzes to predict percentage variance of the dependent variable Good Practices from the independent variables of the survey (see Table 3). In these analyses, the variables TCBS, KCA, Teacher Competence and Literature User (i.e., the scales employed in the study) served as independent factors of the Good Practices scale. Model 1, including only the KCA scale as a factor, explained about 22.4% of the variance of the dependent variable Good Practices. Model 2, which added TCBS as an independent predictor, explained 45.8%. Model 3 (adding Competence) explained 46.8% of the variance, while in the 4th and final model, including teachers' opinions on the use of literature explains 53.3% of the variance in Good Practices.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression of Good Practices on Other Scales

Independent Var.	B	SE B	β
	Model 1		
KCA	.574	.053	.475*
	Model 2		
KCA	.217	.052	.180*
TCBS	.574	.044	.568*
	Model 3		
KCA	.191	.053	.158*
TCBS	.557	.044	.551*
Competence	.069	.025	.108**
	Model 4		

KCA	.099	.051	.082***
TCBS	.465	.043	.460*
Competence	.049	.023	.076***
Use of literature	.315	.042	.302*
	R^2 = 0.226 (p < .001).	R^2 = 0.224 (model 1)	
	R^2 = 0.461 (p < .001).	R^2 = 0.458 (model 2)	
	R^2 = 0.472 (p < .001).	R^2 = 0.468 (model 3)	
	R^2 = 0.538 (p < .001).	R^2 = 0.533 (model 4)	

* p < .001. ** p = .005. *** p = .05

For the training seminars, we gave a pre- and a post-test and the results from the answers given by the teachers to the questionnaires before and after the trainings, which are feedback on the proposed teaching material. 71 teachers from 6 public Primary schools of Patras and 47 teachers from 4 public Primary schools of Patras, other than the first group, participated in the distance training. Their ages ranged from 24 to 60 years (M = 45.7 years, sd = 9.07 years) and their years of service from 1 to 38 years (M = 19.5 years, sd = 10.5 years). Respondents educational attainment Regarding educational attainment, 42 teachers declared only a basic degree (Pedagogical Academy with or without emulation and some university department), while 26 declared higher studies (Postgraduate, Master's Degree or Doctorate).

The Training Seminars

We found evidence of high levels of multicultural beliefs and sensitivity on the part of the teachers. Teachers expressed willingness to use literature with references to otherness, in order to talk about cultural otherness in their classrooms. However, it appears that they do not feel adequately prepared and do not know how to talk about cultural diversity in their classes (for a more extensive presentation of both our results and their theoretical underpinnings, see Resvani, 2023).

After the analysis of the research part of the thesis and drawing suggestions of good practices from the responses of the research teachers, we created teaching scenarios, with Modern Greek literature containing references to otherness as their main methodological tool. These are teaching interventions, which are extensions (small projects of two to ten teaching hours) and can be combined with selected courses of the syllabus for the three levels (1st & 2nd, 3rd & 4th , 5th & 6th grades) of primary school. The teaching scenarios have a specific structure and can be used by the classroom teacher and in skills workshop hours.

Finally, four live experiential training seminars were held for 71 teachers who served in 6 public Primary Schools of the Directorate of Primary Education of Achaia, as well as two seminars using modern distance training, due to the coronavirus pandemic (SARS-Co-V2 (COVID - 19)), in which 47 participated teachers. These seminars presented teachers with scenarios dealing with otherness through literature. The teachers then collaborated and created their own scenarios from excerpts (chosen at random) from the proposed literary texts from the published works of the author Manos Kontoleon (author's permission granted).

This study indicated the need for further study of the issue of cultural diversity, for systematic training and education of teachers as well as the need for a new (and different) didactic approach to this major, social and educational issue.

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Outcasts and the Consequences of the Lack of Education in Romania in the 40s-50s[1]

Nicolae Hurduzeu[2]

Abstract

Times of conflict are periods when educational systems are deprioritized and have much to suffer as funding diminishes considerably too small sums from countries' GDP. If during these times, moral values are not promoted to school children, society will fail morally and become easy to manipulate and disunite. The purpose of history is that of helping children learn from the mistakes of the past in order to avoid repeating them. After the second world war, Romania entered under the influence of the communist Soviet Union which promoted the outcasts, and uneducated members of the society and placed them in critical positions. Besides specialized literature there are many documentaries such as Memorialul Durerii (the Memorial of Pain), a TV documentary series with more than 200 episodes that present the testimonials of those who witnessed the Romanian communist death camps from Jilava, Sighet, Pitesti, the forced labor camps, were deported to Bărăgan, or supported of fought with the resistance troops hiding in the mountains. All social categories were subject to these ordeals, starting from secondary or high school students, illustrious intellectuals, politicians, men and women, priests, and peasants. In other words, all those who opposed the Communist regime. The atrocities to which those from the communist prisons were subject at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s are hard to comprehend. These were even portrayed in artistic movies such as Undeva in Est (Somewhere in the East) or Intre chin si Amin (Between torture and Amen). The present lecture presents the testimonial of a former high school student who was a political prisoner in communist times and his life lesson by emphasizing the idea of RESPONSIBILITY. The present lecture also forwards several good practice solutions which can be used in class with the students.

Keywords:

Introduction

Times of conflict are those times when education is often neglected (Muthanna, Almahfali, Haider, 2022), its financing falling to derisory proportions of the a country's gross domestic product. If this coincides with a failure to promote values among students, society is doomed to fail and it becomes easier to manipulate and divide. The role of history is to help students learn from the mistakes of the past, in order to avoid repeating them. After the Second World War, Romania came under the influence of the Soviet communist bloc, and the communists validated the outcasts of the society, more or less educated, and promoted them to important official positions. In any country, institutional changes determine the replacement of old symbols. Lack of reaction and proper motivation divides society into two categories: the first consists of a very rich minority, and the second of very poor majority. The presence of numerous outcasts can destabilize society, reinvigorating latent conflicts (Rakadjiiska, 1996). Outcasts play central roles in social, political, and moral contradictions from the oldest

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narratives of the societies to the present day (Wiehn, 1996), and have one or more seemingly negative influential features.

In search of new identities, outcasts lack clear purpose and necessary mental balance. Due to the human tendency to see the negative in others and not in themselves, old values are replaced by new values and turn personal activism into aggression. The collapse of the system of value gives individuals the opportunity to justify violence as a behavioral pattern (Rakadjiiska, 1996). Outcasts from the bottom of the society break social norms through public aggression. Upper-class outcasts do the same but they disguise their aggressive behavior by justifying and protecting at any cost a generalized attitude, which generates multiple negative effects (Rakadjiiska, 1996).

In Romania, from 1949 to 1951, state authorities annihilated the social elite: intellectuals, diplomats, priests, militaries, magistrates, police officers, and politicians of the former "bourgeois-landlord regime" were imprisoned; wealthy peasants were deported to forced labor camps. They were all deemed 'enemies of the people'. When Romania adopted the communist regime, a series of problems arose from the process of marginalization that swept Romanian society, and the outcasts created in its wake.

This study deals with the issue of outcasts from various perspectives. It analyses how, under the communist regime, the under- or un-educated outcasts became torturers. This study also examines how young educated students became torturers, as in the case of young students re-educated in Pitești prison, during the so-called the *Genocide of the souls* (Iliesiu, 2005). It has been argued that Auschwitz taught society what men are capable of (Miklós, 1946), while Alexandr Soljenitîn[3] claimed that the experiment in Pitești is "*the most terrible barbarism of the contemporary world*" (Iliesiu, 2005)

In an attempt to annihilate the youth, the communists invented the "reeducation" experiment in the prison of Pitești. They applied barbaric psychological torture to the young "refractories", in order to make them humiliate and abuse each other, both physically and mentally. The victims were turned into torturers, the prisoners being tortured by their own friends and colleagues. The aim was to "reeducate" by destroying their physical and mental health, to transform the young into atheists and informers on their friends. Their drama was later presented in artistic movies such as *Between Pain and Amen* (Enache, 2019). The subject was also presented in numerous literary sources but also documentary films, such as *Memorial of Suffering* (Necșulea, 1991). The latter comprises more than 200 documentary films presenting the testimonials of the persons who were prisoners in the Romanian death camps from Jilava, Sighet, and Pitești, in the forced labor camps, who had been deported to Bărăgan or fought or supported the Resistance movement from the mountains. Highly illustrative of the mountain resistance is the movie *Somewhere in the East* (Mărgineanu, 1991). All social categories, from secondary and high school students to university students, renowned intellectuals, politicians, men and women, priests, and peasants (i.e., all the opponents of the communist regime) fell victim to these atrocities. When we listen to the testimonials of the survivors, the tortures to which the prisoners were subjected in the communist prisons in the late 40s and early 50s are hard to both imagine and comprehend. People have yet to comprehend that there was an island of absolute horror in Romania like

[3] Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature in 1970

no other in the entire geography of prisons of the communist period: the prison from Pitesti (Iernuca, 2016).

The leader of the torturers from Pitesti, Eugen Ţurcanu was a heinous person in the history of the Romanian communism. He was convicted to 7 years' imprisonment for concealing that his wife was the daughter of a legionary commander. As a convinced communist, in prison Țurcanu became the leader of a group of inmates responsible with the abuse and torture of other inmates for their "re-education in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism" and to extract from them valuable information for the communist repression authorities ("Eugen Turcanu", n.d.). Țurcanu was extremely cruel. Numerous prisoners from Pitești were victims of Țurcanu in what historian François Furet considered "one of the most atrocious experiences of de-humanization that we experienced in our epoch" (Marcu, n.d.). Țurcanu studied law for 3 years in Iași before being sent to Pitești. He was intelligent and strong, opportunistic and revengeful, cruel and violent. He was the *de facto* leader of the 're-education' program from Pitești prison, having been recruited as an informer by the prison authorities. He had a less strict regime than ordinary prisoners, received extra food ratios, and had liberty of movement within the prison. He tortured hundreds of students, coordinating the entire torture process, and went down in history as the single darkest individual in the entire "reeducation" process (Mureșan, 2017). He brutally beat hundreds of students and forced them to renege their families, faith and values for which they had been incarcerated and to declare everything they had concealed during prior investigations. Many of the victims, having nothing else to declare, invented persons and names during the tortures. With the permission of the head of the prison, Alexandru Dumitrescu, and the deputy chief of the Security, Alexandru Nicholschi, Turcanu and his group organized unimaginable modes of torture, starting on Christmas Eve, 1949. Approximately one thousand young men were forced to deny their personality, were humiliated and mocked and were forced to torture one another until their personalities were destroyed. Christians were forced to renege their faith, and to sing religious hymns whose lyrics were replaced by obscene words. The last stage of the "reeducation" process consisted of forcing prisoners to torture their best friend. Those who resisted were brutally tortured and usually died from the resulting injuries.

Examples of psychological torture included:

a. *On Easter Night, prisoners who refused to make a total self-denunciation (to tell everything that they supposedly did not declare during Securitate interrogations) were forced to take a "holy communion" of faecal matter;*
b. *Those suspected of having concealed information about participants in anticommunist actions had their heads thrust into chamber-pots full of urine by their torturers;*
c. *Prisoners were forced to spit in the mouth of their anticommunist leader, in order to force him to revenge himself by unmasking them;*
d. *On Christmas Day, a prisoner was forced to go to stool on a bedpan, to "symbolize" the nativity of Christ, while the other political prisoners were forced to kneel and cross themselves before him.* (Iliesiu, 2005)

Stancu (2018) presented the testimonial and life lesson of Gheorghe Nichifor, a former high-school student, who experienced the realities of the communist prisons firsthand and who, at 87 years, emphasizes the importance of responsibility in education. Gheorghe Nichifor was born in 1931 in Bessarabia (in the present republic of Moldova) to the family of an aviator. He finished the military high school and, after the installation of the communist regime,

organized a clandestine resistance unit called the National Guard, consisting exclusively of high-school students from Bucharest. The organization aimed to fight against the Soviet occupation and the communist regime. The members of the organization manufactured a machine for reproducing manifestos, printed thousands of anti-communist flyers, and distributed them in Bucharest and other Romanian cities. The members of the organization planned to contact the partisans from the southern part of the Făgăraș mountains and join the armed resistance. They were arrested by the Securitate before they could manage this. Gheorghe Nichifor was the last member of the National Guard arrested, on October 28, 1949. The entire group was held in the underground cells of Fort 13, in Jilava, where they were investigated and put on trial by the military tribunal. For almost four years, Gheorghe Nichifor was sent to various prisons and camps, such as Fort 13 in Jilava, Văcărești Prison, and the work camp from the Danube- Black Sea Canal. After release, he studied at the Polytechnic University but was expelled due to his record as a political detainee. He earned his living by working as an energy technician. In 1987 he was fired from his workplace for the last time because of his anti-communist background.

One episode that stands out in the testimonials of George Nichifor. He said about his torturer:

> He would call all of us 'Yo!'. This is how he talked in his family, this is how he talked to us: 'Yo, come here!' I stood up and walked to him. He said: 'Yo, I am a hammer from Malaxa factory. I better beat you than the hammer'. It was this in his primitive brain. How much schooling do you think he had? How many books do you think he read? And he was a lieutenant, 15 years my senior. He opened a drawer where were numerous different-sized cobbler's needles. He told me how he would make the prisoners talk: 'I stab them in the calf until I reach the bone. I do that just to give them and **infection** and to cause them pain'. This is not from my imagination. I tell you word by word what he said and how the thought! (Stancu, 2018, *emphasis added*)

> They were uneducated primitive persons! This is why I say that my parents' generation was, to some extent, guilty for what we went through, for 50 years. **My parent's generation is guilty of neglecting the underprivileged categories of society, who were left uneducated, and who offered their services to the Soviets because precisely these people, the uneducated and primitive, got at the leadership of the country**. (Stancu, 2018, *emphasis added*)

Whose fault was it? The educational system? Society? The politicians? It does not matter anymore. What is important is the lesson. History repeatedly teaches you the same lesson until you learn it. Hopefully, this lesson will never repeat itself, although it has the tendency to repeat itself. The lesson repeats itself when people are incapable of learning from the mistakes of the past. Let us hope it is not too late to be responsible and that there will never come another moment for our children to say *the generation of my parents is guilty* and that, at least in the final hour, we acknowledge the importance of value-centered education.

History can help us learn from past mistakes: to avoid them and find better solutions for the societies in which we live today (MOOC BLOG TEAM, 2021). Some stories can be inspirational, others are chaotic and immoral, but all past experiences and events can provide valuable life lessons. Experiences can reference times of suffering as well as times of joy, all of which can be applied to the personal life experiences of the readers. Personal moral principles and values can be tested and verified against the events and experiences of the past (Kitson, Husbands & Steward, 2011)

The present study suggests several good-practice solutions, which can be employed in a classroom setting the students, such as inculcation, moralizing, modeling, role-play, and positive/negative behavioral reinforcement. *Inculcation* is the process of instilling moral

values in others as behavioral standards or norms, which are culturally and socially accepted (Iluţ, 1995). The personal and social well-being of the individual depends on the extent to which they behave according to a 'common code', recognized by the main institutions of society. Individuals should be educated about adequate relations between the state, its organisms and institutions, and individuals as citizens of a society grounded on laws, rules and norms which ensure peaceful living, and the efficiency of all activities within society so that each individual and the society as a whole should thrive and develop.

Certain values are widely considered universal and absolute, regardless of whether they focus on individuals (e.g., freedom to learn and to choose, human dignity, self-knowledge, etc.) or on society (e.g., law and justice, mutual respect, etc.). An important part of the teaching and learning processes is represented by the models or representations, which deeply influence the behavior of the students, especially during their training to achieve moral autonomy. The models presented to students are considered "moral authorities" worth respect.

The following examples constitute some methods for teaching social values:

- Special occasions, such as June 1, the International Day of Children, could be used to teach about solidarity, by presenting situations centered on moral values such as cooperation, respect and help, using various methods such as games and experience exchanges;
- presenting materials that illustrate the negative consequences of racial or other forms of discrimination;
- creating an atmosphere of respect for fundamental rights;
- Establishing a set of rules for the group of students that clearly specifies what their rights and responsibilities are, so that all students feel safe. This practice has the advantage of students not perceiving the rules as exterior and binding, but rather as their own creation, making them responsible for their observance (Iucu, 2006).

Moral development

Moral development is achieved in progressive stages (Sarivan et al., 2005). The teaching/learning of a set of values alone is not sufficient; lifestyle, relationships with others, and school teaching environment are also important. The value of these lessons lies in their efficiency and the extent to which students acquire moral beliefs through their own efforts. Thus, students bring an important personal contribution to shaping their personal civic conscience. The most important methods used for the moral education of students is the *example and the exercise, explanation, and persuasion*. Using these in conjunction with one-another facilitates the successful achievement of educational tasks in school.

One of the objectives of involving students in direct activities is acquiring and using favorable attitudes in decision-making and having them express their opinions regarding the activities of the groups to which they belong. These activities may involve either groups of students or the entire class and can take different forms: dramatizations, simulations, debate on real events, workshops for the creation of civic actions, commenting on or revaluation of news, watching movies followed by a comment session (Păun, 2007), visiting particular sites, and so forth.

Cross-curricular approaches are of utmost importance in teaching moral values. These methods are not new. Teaching requirements are associated with a renewal of concepts specific to several disciplines, under new and more appealing forms, offering a comprehensive image of the studied subject (Păcurari et al., 2003). Students must be exposed to the circumstances of moral conflict for their moral development. They must come into contact with persons with a higher level of ethical thinking. Moral dilemmas and role-play are both useful methods for this purpose.

A 'moral dilemma' or a 'conflict of values' (Sarivan et al, 2005) involves the presentation of a hypothetical or real situation which is afterwards discussed by students in workgroups (Cerghit, 2006). Within these discussions, students are asked to present alternative attitudes regarding the discussed theme. Identifying various different attitudes and the perception of "moral" difference helps them progress to a superior moral status.

For the successful implementation of moral dilemmas in teaching activities, they must have the following features:

- they must be grounded on the activities of that particular course,
- they must be as simple as possible, focusing on one central figure or one central group of characters,
- they must have an open ending,
- they must address two or more moral issues,
- they must present alternative approaches and address the question "What is to be done"
- they must generate an atmosphere of trust in the classroom which encourages students to express themselves freely, and
- they must have a leader for the debate who can keep the focus on moral thinking.

In teaching moral values, role-play (Cerghit, 2006) may also be used due to the social interaction processes and to the active exchange of moral values that it implies. Role-play can help students use logical reasoning and scientific research to address ethical problems. The analysis of ethics focuses mainly on social values. By using role-play, students increase their ability to acquire and understand moral values, through specific analytical exercises (Hurduzeu, 2005). The role models used with students are considered 'moral authorities' worth respect.

Role-play represents a fundamental method for reaching the objective of the curricula. The educational aspects of the role-play are seemingly endless; the civic interpretations performed and brought to the moment are filled with emotion, but more clearly expressed and obvious than by other means. Role-play involves more general elements, significant features and affective reasoning. Thus, it manages to shape and unify emotional meaning with rational sense. Behaviors improve, and characters of similar age receive great empathy by generating strong and stable emotions towards the moral issues concerned. The above is achievable under certain conditions:

- Students must always be guided during role-play (students should not assume the same role all the time, especially the role of the villain)
- Students should be allowed to change the behavior they play
- Students should be guided to achieve not only flexible behavior but also the ability to accept the change required by others and must also accept the perspective of others

- Students should be asked to perform role-play that puts positive characters in various situations
- Role-play should involve certain negative behaviors typical to real life situations the students must stand up against.
- Students should be guided during role-play and the relations that appear between the students that are not required by their part should be corrected.
- Students should be discretely helped to take attitudes towards those who wish to break the rules of the game.

The analysis of moral values

Moral values defining elements of the social life and, as such are the utmost objective of persons and communities. It is, therefore, necessary to identify the way in which they manifest themselves in behavior but especially in attitudes, which represent the direct expression of moral values. Rokeach (1968; 1973) considered moral values similar to attitudes. Attitudes are more elementary; values are more profound and determine attitudes. Today, this is the generally accepted position, in sociology. Moral values do not exist on their own (i.e., independently). Any moral value is determined by and generates other moral values. Rokeach (1968; 1963) noted that these interrelations are not casual. People are consistent beings, implying that there is a minimal synchronization between the ethical values of each individual.

Moral values reflect how person understands of good or evil or of the way in which "things should be". Such representative moral values include, for example, "equal rights for everybody" and "people should be treated with respect" (Sarivan et al., 2005, p. 119).

Students can only give a proper response to a changing reality if they can think critically and actively insert themselves socially, while also possessing a set of personal values and attitudes. Students should also be motivated and willing to react positively to change, as a requirement for personal development, and have the capacity to critically reason about moral values and accept multiple values. Thus, knowledge of the self and of others is very important.

Parents, friends, teachers, and other reference groups may influence individual ethics. Moral values are also acquired as a result of a learning process and of experience and interfere with the cultural environment in which people live. The teaching/learning process focuses on individual and group study, debate and role-play. Exercises for the analysis of moral values usually follow six stages:

i. Identifying and addressing the ethical question/issue,
ii. Gathering and organizing relevant information for the subject,
iii. Assessing the truth of this information or facts,
iv. Clarifying the relevance of the information for the moral value problem,
v. Shaping a possible ethical decision, and
vi. Assessing the appropriateness of the decision.

The main methods used within this model are group conversations, hypothetical or real dilemmas, listening techniques (Iucu, 2006), self-analysis, personal diaries, and simulations (Cerghit, 2006). In democratic societies, decision-making is a process in which groups reach consensus through dialogue, discussions, debates, and analysis. In open and dynamic

societies, students, as individuals, have the privilege of being involved in the process of decision-making within the society. They are involved in making a significant number of decisions concerning their own well-being and the well-being of others. In democratic societies, decision-making is a complex process of cooperation in analysis. Decision-making should be more than a mere gathering of expressed opinions. Personal views should be validated in the public domain and all the participants in the public debate should carefully listen to everybody's arguments. In order to take true democratic decisions, no group should be left out. To this end, teachers must present students with the steps to follow in the decision-making process, which are:

- Having discussions with others on the given situation,
- Searching for sufficient concrete information on the subject and identifying whether biased attitudes on the matter are present,
- Reporting the situation to the own set of moral values for personal validation and appreciation,
- Identifying the difference between the matter in self and its possible solutions (separating the methods from the objective),
- Imagining various solutions and identifying the situations that can hinder the solution of the problem, and
- Analyzing within the group the various possible solutions.

Educating people in sharing and devolution of power aims to give students particular moral concepts, abilities, and duties that they could identify themselves with and can adopt for their own interest. It is not enough just to make students listen to arguments. Professors should actively teach students to lead, work together, adapt and develop.

Teachers must create situations within classrooms, in which students belonging to one or several groups should be able to make the proper decisions on their own. Only those capable of making their own decisions are independent. Thus, students understand that the freedom they have does not allow them to act according to their wishes, but that they have the moral obligation to do what is right. All students must have the right to express their own free opinions with confidence. It is important and necessary for students to express their own opinions. They must learn to discuss, to argue their opinions, and to accept and respect the opinions of others.

The study of controversial issues helps students develop their analytical and argumentative thinking, as well as their resistance to acting impulsively based on first impressions, teaching them tolerance (Oulton et al., 2004). History teachers should focus on helping students understand the way in which politics, mass media, and society use historical facts and how these narratives function in the contemporary society (Stradling, 2001). They should also develop empathy, introspection and investigation in their students (Hand & Levinson, 2012; Hess, 2009; McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Oulton et al., 2004) by grounding these concepts in multi-faceted historical sources (Nakou & Barca, 2010). Teaching several perspectives makes use of primary and secondary sources and involves interactive teaching, research, and work on projects. Debates, visits to museums, and the use of numerous primary sources and guest speakers are more useful for younger students. Educational policies should change to reflect such teaching styles (Recommendation 1880, 2009). Teaching history from multiple perspectives provides students with information about subjects as well as the capacity to analyze them, which can help them develop critical minds.

One could ask whether, in this process, teachers should present their personal opinions on facts. It could be argued that the authenticity of the debate and equivalence, which show a level of respect towards students, indicate that teachers should present their personal perspectives. This, however, entails the risk of teachers indoctrinating students with their own opinions (Barton &, McCully, 2007). IT is worth remembering that students often criticize the opinion of their teachers and it may be improbable to expect them to change their previous opinions based on teachers' perspectives (Barton & McCully, 2007; Cotton, 2006). The counterargument is that it is not entirely appropriate for teachers to present their own opinions on race, gender, and religion, in the classroom, as this could strongly influence students' perception of identity and self-esteem (Journell, 2011).

In order to ensure a proper environment to discuss controversial and sensitive historical issues in the classroom and to avoid unwanted conflicts during these debates, we recommended teachers employ strategies such as distancing, compensating, empathic, or exploratory strategies. This allows them to critically analyze historical facts, to avoid forming stereotypical representations of some historical facts and offer a perspective on the possible consequences of the present behavior.

The educational system plays a key role in promoting integrity. To achieve this, however, requires both system reforms and motivated teachers, who are well prepared in psycho-pedagogy, methodology and their particular subject fields. These teachers must also be ready and willing to inculcate respect, honor, self-control and dignity in students.

An educational system performs as it should, educating and truly promoting values and attitudes this has a positive effect on all the aspects life. High levels of education influence societal development and quality of life. Education enriches civilization, happiness and existential fulfillment, as well as present and future satisfaction. The 'seed' of education has a snow-flake effect and grows and multiplies in similar behavioral patterns in times and space and forces the society to create the appropriate (material and formal) conditions for each person to rise according to the personal 'biblical talent' they carry.

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Breastfeeding Values: An Exploratory Study on the Sociocultural Values of Brotherhood in Egypt[1]

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Abstract

Breastfeeding is a distinct form of adoption that spread in some societies and is accepted by the human conscience. In addition, Islam has organized a legislative framework for breastfeeding and fostering which makes society accept the phenomena and may even revive it until our current era, due to its extremely embedded and important social benefits. This importance comes from the statement of scientists about the importance and benefits of breastfeeding. On the other hand, this image presents a natural family affiliation that no society can deny. Islamic law has been unique in detailing the framework of breastfeeding kinship, in the best way for a woman to go to a child who did not reach weaning, and breastfeed to include the child as a family member. In this way, the child becomes a legitimate relative to her family through fostering. For the legitimacy of the emergence of this relationship, the Sharia organized its provisions to be within its correct framework, so that it included breastfeeding siblings in the family without embarrassment in its achieved goals. This article discusses the breastfeeding brotherhood phenomenon, from the perspective of Egyptian society.

Keywords: Breastfeeding, Value Transmission, Family, Society, Education

Wet Nursing as an Old Profession

The profession of a wet nurse is one of the oldest professions in history which has a rich lineage related to Egypt and the region. A wet- nurse cared for the children of other women, providing dedicated support when the mothers were unable or made the personal choice not to breastfeed their infants, which created multi-faced dynamics between the three parties, this complex relationship is marked with gratitude in most cases. Which played a focal role in shaping the interaction between the three parties, the infant, wet-nurse, biological mother, and later between the families.

The wet nurse or "Mnat" as the ancient Egyptians referred to, was one of the most important jobs that women occupied at that time, as breastfeeding was one of the most important roles that ancient Egyptians were keen on. In ancient Egyptian manuscripts and illustrations, wet nurses can be depicted in a revered status mostly wearing veils reminiscent of Hathor, the goddess of fertility. This representation highlights the importance given to the wet nurses and their vital role in ancient Egyptian society (Fildes, 1986). The practice of a mother nursing children other than her own or breastfeeding a child who is not her biological offspring, commonly referred to as "kinship" breastfeeding, has persisted as a longstanding tradition in modest, traditional societies. Particularly in Arab and African countries, breastfeeding non-biological children has served as a means of generating additional income for some individuals. Many women have undertaken the responsibility of breastfeeding multiple children, and numerous anecdotes recount their dedication and loyalty to the children they

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have nursed, often surpassing the rewards they receive for their benevolent efforts (Carsten, 2012).

A mother may adopt a child after facing a health condition that may prevent her from having children again, or with a very weak hope as she takes the initiative to breastfeed the adopted child alongside her son so that he will support her if she grows old. Experience results in her son having a good number of brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles from outside the family, and with it breastfeeding aims to strengthen the relationship in a better way, especially if they are between relatives (Gribble, 2006).

In the past, mothers did not mind sharing breastfeeding their children with each other, especially between relatives, neighbors, and friends since life at that time was not complicated as any mother who had a health problem, or a social condition could find support from those around her without hesitation. This leads to the presence of many brothers through breastfeeding at that time, and the continuity of interdependence between them, and then extending after that to reflect on their children. In the past, any woman was able to be breastfed a large number of children because "God had blessed them" two facilitators just leaving for the children. As a result, these women became a valuable resource for many families when considering potential marriages, as they could provide information on the nursing history of a young man or woman, thus influencing marital decisions.

In various societies, the witness was highly regarded by families. Some of whom help them with great importance and regard. Exploring the historical account of leaders, emperors, kings, and Califas reviews close magnificent impact nursing mothers had with some even being consulted and valued for their opinions Rather, the sons of these nursing mothers reached advanced positions in the courts of these countries thanks to the bond of milk and the great prestige and favor that the nursing mother enjoys. And many leaders and rulers relied on their brothers in breastfeeding in managing the affairs of the state or made them responsible for important sectors of the state. This was the practice of the pharaohs, the Roman and Greek emperors, and even in the eras of the various Islamic caliphates, and in recent decades the phenomenon of interest in breastfeeding has returned, and reduced dependence on artificial milk, so associations of nursing mothers have spread in some countries of the world, carrying out the task of alternative breastfeeding, as it was prevalent and lived in the past (Abdel-Fattah, 1985).

The Impact of Breastfeeding on Family Relationships: A Comprehensive Review of Research and Phenomenon Exploration

Researchers like Parkes (2004), Fortier (2007), and Carsten (2012) have noted some breastfeeding-related publications that cause family relationships to develop.

Gribble (2006) examines physiological and behavioral research showing that nursing can significantly contribute to the growth of the attachment bond between mother and child. The impact of nursing can be significant in adoption situations, particularly when the child has suffered abuse or neglect, as shown in the case studies described in this article. Due to the regular, personal relationship between mother and child, the calming, relaxing, and analgesic

effects of nursing on children, and the stress-relieving and sensitivity-enhancing effects of breastfeeding on mothers, breastfeeding may help with attachment development

The positive impact of breastfeeding can be observed in various situations, including adoption cases. However, it is noteworthy that certain vulnerable parent-child pairs, particularly those with a history of intergenerational relationship trauma, may derive greater benefits from breastfeeding. This observation highlights the need for further research to explore and understand this phenomenon more comprehensively.

Even though the relevance of the milk familial link is acknowledged in Islamic family law as a kind of marriage impediment in complex situations, Altorki claims in her study that anthropological academics still pay little attention to it (Altorki, 1980).

The difficulties moms who endure induced nursing and re-lactation for infants who are adopted, born via surrogacy, or born to same-sex female partners were documented and interpreted by Cazorla-Ortiz et al. in 2019. Interviews were performed with Spanish women who had chosen to have induced lactation or re-lactation using a qualitative research methodology. The interview questions, which were constructed based on prior literature, served as the basis for the researcher's deductive theme analysis, which resulted in categories. Participants stated that nursing boosted the mother and child's sense of closeness and that this feeling tended to diminish once breastfeeding was discontinued.

Carsten (2012) contends that milk kinship—even though it is not an easy relationship—is the result of nursing moms' emotional and physical connections to the children they breastfed.

The procedure of induced lactation by Goldfarb and Newman (2009) is one of several topics of discussion that Western researchers have pioneered in the field of nursing an adopted kid.

The first example of preterm twins whose adoptive mother forced lactation was described by Kinga et al. (2010). At two months old, both infants are entirely fed human milk (adoptive mother's milk). This outstanding accomplishment is the result of thorough preparation by the adoptive mother beginning in the prenatal stage, her active participation during the infants' hospitalization, and assistance from medical professionals and family members. Professionals in the medical field are urged to assist any adoptive mother who expresses a desire to nurse her child.

In their descriptive retrospective study, Livinstone and Armstrong (1999) reviewed the perceptions of women regarding nursing and adoption. They discovered that mothers who gave nursing a try enjoyed it since it strengthens relationships and is worth the effort. They only need to commit to the time that lactation takes. However, 30% of moms decided against trying to breastfeed because they lacked information and minimal forewarning.

Abdel-Fattah (1985) dealt with the issue of breastfeeding in terms of impending marriage, and in this research, he readily mentioned many controversial issues, in the case that concerns the Egyptian countryside, where there is cohesion and cooperation between people, which leads to a frequent occurrence of breastfeeding and an increase in its spread.

A woman who breastfeeds a child who is not her biological child shall be considered mahram to that child, according to Islamic fiqh law. Saari and Yusof (2015) sought to investigate the elements that influence a Muslim Malaysian community's decision to nurse a foster child. In this qualitative study, grounded theory and case studies are both used. This study included a

total of 12 foster mothers who had successfully used the induced lactation approach to breastfeed their foster children. Semi-structured interviews are the method used to gather data. Following an analysis of the qualitative data, the study identified maternal instinct, psychology, nutrition, technology, offspring, and obligations as secondary motivators for foster mothers to nurse their foster children. In the setting of a Muslim community in Malaysia, breastfeeding a foster child tries to accomplish two goals: Islamic principles and human rights ideals. Science, specifically the technology that induces lactation, connects these two objectives. According to the study, a Muslim foster mother can use forced lactation to develop a fosterage (milk kinship) bond with her foster child, which will ultimately make their family life easier.

The historical prevalence of wet nursing

In the past, breastfeeding was practiced for various reasons, depending on the variables and requirements of life, such as being busy visiting relatives in a distant area, or because of death, illness, orphanhood, disability, lack of milk in the mother, and other compelling matters, or it was practiced as a profession for some, which made It is imposed on women to breastfeed the child so that he does not feel alienated or afraid.

What supported the spread of this phenomenon in the past is the high fertility of women. The women were either pregnant or breastfeeding, and the mothers and grandmothers were close in age, which made it possible for many women to breastfeed mostly. He was loved by all relatives, neighbors, friends, and strangers, even if the mother was present, pointing out that the child at that time could breastfeed from any woman who was sitting in the same council, so he did not feel hungry, thirsty, or tired.

Consequently, this phenomenon generates a sentiment among siblings both male and female that they possess new or numerous siblings from different mothers. Fostering emotions of affection, such as security, and spiritual, visual, and physical connection during their visits. Such encounters do not evoke any discomfort for them in terms of coexistence seating arrangements or communal dining moreover, this practice affords them both material and moral support cultivating a sense of approximately to all family members. This moral sentiment signifies a profoundly robust bond with the breastfeeding woman.

A sense of pride arises in women who breastfeed not only their own children but also the children of family members and neighbors, particularly if they have only a few offspring. Consequently, their children continue to seek nourishment through visiting and revering their mother, an act that manifests as a distinctive and exceptional display of familial unity. This form of connection is attainable solely through breastfeeding, as it transforms communication into a relationship imbued with sentiments of love, safety, and spiritual, visual, and physical closeness between the lactating woman and the infant. It is the outcome of both reliance on breastfeeding and the provision of optimal attention and care simultaneously.

The phenomena showed several indications of the state of family harmony provided by the advantage of wet nursing. The children within the neighborhoods perceived their milk fathers as their own fathers and wet nurses as their mothers establishing " taboo/Muharram " relations. This recognition fosters a social norm that reinforces the concept of family and kinship. In addition to the health benefits of providing the child with natural food adding that this situation was at one time widespread in the local community in abundance. Naturally,

those infants who are breastfed feel that they are part of many families according to the number of breastfeeding women. As a result, children gain from that many positive qualities the foremost of which are acceptance, respect, appreciation, and solidarity. which facilitates their rapid integration and adoption in society, as a society needed great interdependence and breastfeeding had a role in providing this feature.

Reasons for nurse lactation cessation

Society in the past did not express its disapproval of the phenomenon of breastfeeding and wet nursing, as a societal reaction it was easy to memorize the names and persons and the circumstances of their breastfeeding, to know the incest without confusion or fear. Later, this process became complicated due to its impact on generations, in addition to the expansion of the school and size of families which negatively affected the state of confusion and uncertainty in the future in many matters. The most important of which is providing the proposition of breastfeeding evidence witnesses and publicity.

Even though the phenomenon of witnessing is a social conviction and praiseworthy and desirable behavior among people, it has diminished a lot and no longer enjoys the great status it used to have in Egyptian society, despite the religious and health importance, which aims at the same time to strengthen the bonds between those who breastfeed from one breast. This phenomenon is presently experiencing apprehension from numerous families including relatives for various reasons. Primarily, an increasing societal consciousness caused conflicting views on verifying with nursing, especially when it comes to matters of betrothal. Additionally, the existence of viable alternatives such as artificial milk restricts the prevalence of breastfeeding to a narrower scope, potentially limited to immediate family members.

Kinship breastfeeding is a pioneering social, psychological, and educational project that works on the bonding of society through breastfeeding mothers, and dependent brothers in breastfeeding, even if it is a habit that has now receded in the narrowest limits, to be somewhat limited to members of the same family, to the point where future generations become without a brother through breastfeeding. This type of breastfeeding is no longer as prevalent as it was in the past, and its presence among the children of relatives at present is a praiseworthy matter, given its contribution to increasing and strengthening the relations between children and families. A son may find a brother or sister through breastfeeding from relatives if he is deprived of blood relations, provided that this breastfeeding is documented by the Sharia authorities in order not to mix lineages.

Among the reasons for the law wet nursing cases in the current times due to the sociological context, the mother's decision to refrain from witnessing can be attributed to various factors. It may stem from a lack of belief and its effectiveness or doubts about the impact of her physical agility. for the love of comfort and not exerting effort in breastfeeding, and also due to the mother’s absence for hours at work on the one hand, and as a result of the availability of food alternatives on the other hand. Also, mothers’ breastfeeding of many children leads, after years, to the existence of an intertwined society, which reduces the chances of girls marrying relatives, neighbors, or residents in the same neighborhood, so that the possibility of a girl’s marriage has become slim given the shrinking number of young men who may be associated with them from outside. Incest circle. According to the vision of society today, the children of future generations will have a better opportunity to choose spouses from their

close social environment, especially considering the great decline in the phenomenon of breastfeeding to the point of extinction.

Fears of Nurse Lactation

Some breastfeeding cases led to some negativity in Egyptian modern society, represented by the fact that the breastfeeding process must fulfill the rulings, and some wetnurses do not remember the incident until too late. Society members have now become more aware of and are not lenient with the issue of wet nursing noting that breastfeeding prevents the marriage of two infants from one breast in the light of the great danger surrounding this issue on the religious and social levels. Now many members of society are aware of the provisions of breastfeeding, and its consequences. This type of breastfeeding may not be resorted to except when necessary, such as if the newborn does not have one of his relatives and acquaintances, and several matters must be taken into account for breastfeeding to become legitimate, and people must follow the legal controls and provisions, to preserve the legal rights of milk-siblings ties. In this context, everyone must not be complacent about the issue of Sharia rulings and the consequences of wet nursing from non-mothers in terms of mahrams.

Wet- nurses who breastfeed other children a sufficient number of times must announce this in their social environment, to avoid marriages within mahrams. A study conducted at Istanbul University proved that if siblings marry through breastfeeding and gave birth to children their next generation will be 100% sterile. That is why the Islamic religion stressed the necessity of investigating accuracy, verification, and certainty by knowing the people who were breastfed by other women to know their siblings and avoid mixed lineage and health problems, according to men of religion and society members.

This leads to the importance of documenting wet nursing at present due to the increase in population to avoid leniency and randomness of breastfeeding among several families, who are ignorant of the legal controls.

Methods and Findings

This study is a qualitative research design using case studies carried out on 5 participants who experienced breastfeeding in Egyptian society. The method of data collection is either through social media channels such as Messenger While others were face-to-face interviews with the participants. Data were collected during 2022/2023. Participants were selected from Muslim and Christian married couples who either have children or adopted one through breastfeeding. Semi-structured interviews were carried out and recorded then form it to manuscript. A recorded consent from participants to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of ethics. Qualitative data analysis involves three techniques: content analysis word-based analysis reach researchers save and included the data and built a system of classification.

Based on the interviews this study found that there are some factors to breastfeed fosterage children among the community in Egypt. Factors such as Mahram relationship, maternal instinct, psychology, nutrition, obstacles, and obligation, each factor is determined based on the amount of code generated.

Breastfeeding and Mahram's relationship

A mahram is a person with whom marriage is prohibited, either because of their blood relationship, their foster care relationship, or their in-law relationship. This means that a mahram is a close family member, and who cannot be married to the other person within the family (Zaydan, 1997). the primary motivation for women to nurse their foster children is to establish a mahram relationship with the child's family. This is because, by nursing the child, the woman becomes a mahram to the child, and this allows her to have close contact with the child's family. Sub-theme for mahram relationship factors is Touch, Marriage, and Awrah. Awrah refers to the parts of the body that are private or confidential, and it is important to respect the awrah of others.

Touch:	*shake, kiss, physicality, hug, shake*	2%
Marriage:	*Marrying, married, marry*	12%
Awrah:	*Show up, freely, free, Hijab, Mahram*	2%

The participants also valued the importance of the sub-factors related to touch. These touch concerns included gestures such as shaking hands and hugging, as described by the participants.

When discussing why a biological child should not marry his foster brother, all participants considered the issue of marriage in addition to the touch issue. This is because a foster child who marries their foster sibling becomes a mahram to their foster mothers and their other biological children, and it is illegal to marry a mahram.

Two participants mentioned the word "awrah." However, other participants also took the issue of awrah between foster children and either themselves or their other biological children very seriously.

Breastfeeding and Maternal instinct relationship

Maternal instinct is a strong motivator for breastfeeding foster children. Some participants have never been pregnant or given birth, but they still believe that breastfeeding foster children is the best way to provide them with the nutrients and antibodies they need.

Breastfeeding is seen as a way to bond with a foster child and provide them with the same level of care as a biological child. It can also help to establish a sense of security and belonging for the child.

Even though not all foster parents choose to breastfeed, those who do often report feeling a strong sense of connection to their foster children. They believe that breastfeeding is a way to give back to the child and provide them with the best possible start in life.

The sub-theme is derived from the Maternal instinct relationship and the relevant words are:

Woman instinct:	*my children, chest, feel, woman, mother*	5%
Pleasure to breastfeed:	*Breastfeed, nice*	1%

Some participants in the study reported that they felt a strong sense of connection to their foster children when they were breastfeeding them. They felt that breastfeeding was a way to provide the child with nutrition, love, bondage, and care.

Other participants in the study said that they believed that breastfeeding was the best way to provide foster children with the nutrients and antibodies they need. They also felt that breastfeeding was a way to bond with the child and provide them with a sense of security and belonging. An important way to connect.

Breastfeeding and psychology relationship

Psychological factors can play a role in encouraging foster parents to nurse their foster children. Some participants in a study emphasized that they wanted to nurse their foster children because they wanted to create a loving bond between themselves and the child, as well as between the child and their siblings.

Still, other participants said that they simply felt an instinct to nurse their foster children, even if they had never breastfed their biological children. They felt that breastfeeding was a way to connect with the child and provide them with the nutrients and antibodies they needed.

The sub-theme is derived from psychological relationships and the relevant words are:

Love and affectionate:	*no difference, Closer, praise, Real, kind, hospitality, love, furious, sorry, friend, cried, heart, Favourite, kind, passionate, generous, like, genuine enthusiasm, comfort, feeling, care, heart, passion*	17%
Support and solidarity:	*need, powerful, protect, supporters, support, scold, large, Step, "solidarity, Ashira, mixed, not alone, unity*	22%
Connection:	*Visit, invite, call, equally, stronger, bond, connected, together, ties, closer, Contact, attachment, relatives, part, relation, communication, Blood, Flesh*	25%

All participants agreed that the psychological factor of "love and affection" is important in breastfeeding foster children. They felt that breastfeeding created a sense of love and connection between themselves and the child, and this was like the feeling of breastfeeding their biological children.

Another important psychological factor was "support and solidarity." Participants felt that breastfeeding foster children helped to create a sense of family and community and that this was especially important for children who had experienced trauma or neglect.

The third psychological factor was "connection." Participants felt that breastfeeding helped them to connect with their foster children on a deeper level and that this helped to build trust and understanding.

Breastfeeding and nutrition relationship

The benefits of breast milk are a major motivating factor for breastfeeding a child.

The sub-theme derived from nutrition relationship and the relevant words are:

Need feeding:	*radaa'ah, weak, Body, Health, Milk, Nutrition, Stronger, meals, nutrition, Sustenance, Razik*	5%

The sub-factor "need feeding" was confirmed by most of the participants. They used phrases such as "radaa'ah," "weak," "body," "health," "milk," "nutrition," "stronger," "meals," "sustenance," and "razik." These phrases all refer to the importance of natural feeding, especially for weak children. "Razik" refers to Provision or sustenance refers to blessing resources, a means of livelihood that a person received from God or the universe it comes from maternal and spiritual resources such as well-being food wealth knowledge opportunities, and other blessings.

The participants felt that breast milk was the best for children to develop. They also felt that breast milk was a way to provide these children with a sense of security and belonging.

The participants' use of the phrase "need feeding and love" suggests that they believe that all children have a basic need for both natural feeding and love. This need is especially important for weak children, who may be more vulnerable to illness and infection.

Breastfeeding building and preventing relations

The inability to conceive or carry a child can be a strong motivator for adoption.

The sub-theme derived from these factors and the relevant words are:

Getting old:	*Age*	1%
Health:	*Could not have children, did not have milk, not real mother, lack, health, depressed, sick*	5%
Mother death:	*Died, died*	5%

The sub-theme of getting old, poor health, and the mother's death are critical reasons for adopting children. This means that biological mothers may have health issues that prevent them from conceiving a baby.

Some participants referred to these reasons using the words "age," "could not have children," "sick," and "depressed,". These words all suggest that the inability to conceive a baby or the death of a biological mother can be a strong motivator for the adoption and fostering of a child.

The participants' use of the word fosterage suggests that they believe that adoption is a way to give a child a loving home and family, even if the child's biological parents are no longer able to care for them.

Breastfeeding and obligation relationship

In Islam, breastfeeding a foster child is seen to fulfill one's religious duties and provide the child with the best possible care. The theme of the obligation factor and the relevant words are:

Implement Islam rules:	*Religious, obligation, Islamic teaching, Shari'ah, shari'ah, haram*	2%
Public traditions:	*Norms, manners, social, society, Cultural*	3%

All participants followed Islamic law. For the adopted children to engage normally with their foster brothers and the mothers who provided their milk as they grew up, including shaking hands, hugging, and kissing, all participants considered Islamic principles when adopting the children through breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding and technology relationship

Technology refers to the methods that mothers use to help induce lactation. The sub-theme of technology factor and the relevant words are:

Facility*:*	*bottles, chest, breast*	2%

Breast milk is the most important source of nutrition for infants, and most participants in the study reported that they breastfed their children. Putting the child on the chest is one of the methods to induce lactation. Bottle-feeding can be used as a tool to feed milk to the child.

Results and discussion

The interviews were conducted with individuals who had close ties to different families because they had breastfed the children of those families. This allowed some of them to acquire siblings through breastfeeding, while others adopted children and gained the status of legal prohibition through breastfeeding them. Still, others acquired multiple family relationships through their descent from parents who had one or more of them as breastfeeding brothers.

The interviews revealed that the phenomenon of breastfeeding brotherhood was widespread due to the widespread practice of wet nursing at that time. This was done either for adoption, to give children siblings from outside the family, out of sympathy for an orphaned infant, or to provide support to a mother who was unable to breastfeed her child due to illness or other reasons. This phenomenon led to the overlapping of families, such that the number of breastfeeding brothers reached a large number. Breastfeeding brotherhood creates close and strong bonds between siblings. These bonds are no less than those between biological siblings. Parents believe that breastfeeding their children can strengthen their relationships with families and neighbors, thus expanding the circle of the family. Mothers believe that breastfeeding creates a bond between the mother and the infant that is no less than the bond between a mother and her biological child. This bond remains strong even after the children reach puberty.

Breastfeeding siblings often live close to each other, visit each other often, and move freely between each other's homes. They may even live in the same house even after puberty. Even after they get married and start their own families, they continue to visit each other regularly and stay in touch, even if one of them moves to another country.

Breastfeeding siblings often gather for different occasions and special events. Sometimes, mothers may resort to bottle-feeding their babies. Some people believe that breastfeeding a child gives them some of the characteristics and personality of the mother, while others believe that children acquire their characteristics from their biological parents. The strength of the bond between a son and his nursing mother is also linked to the duration of breastfeeding. The longer the breastfeeding period, the stronger the attachment between the son and his nursing mother. Communication between the son and his nursing mother is also an important factor in maintaining the affection and love between them, as well as between him and his breastfeeding siblings.

Breastfeeding brotherhood can transcend religious differences. For example, some Muslim and Christian children who were breastfed by the same mother developed close bonds. In these cases, some people consider solidarity and brotherhood to be both social and religious matters. As a result, it is not uncommon to find a Christian man with Muslim brothers or a Muslim child with Christian uncles. The mixing of breast milk between families was a major reason for the merging of these families, despite their different religions. After all, they are relatives and have a sense of belonging to each other.

Everyone agreed that there was no attraction between breastfeeding siblings because they completely felt like real brothers to each other. They were fully aware of the religious prohibition against any marriage relations or anything else of this kind between them, and they refused to even think about the possibility of such things happening. While they did not object to the marriage of the second generation between the sons and daughters of aunts or the sons and daughters of uncles, since the teachings of religion allow this and because they were fully aware of their good morals and upbringing, some preferred the continuation of the relationship between the second generation as if they were brothers as well.

In many cases, parents reject the idea of other mothers breastfeeding their children to avoid suspicions in this matter. The analysis of the interviews found that the most effective motive for breastfeeding is psychology, while the least effective one is technology.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that psychological factors, such as social solidarity, and religious factors are two main motivating factors in regulating the relationship between breastfeeding siblings or adopting a child by breastfeeding him.

Some women are unable to have children for health or other reasons. The easiest way to add a family member is to adopt a child in a manner consistent with religious instructions. However, adopting a child requires taking care of religious and social boundaries, especially at the age of puberty. The best way to include a child in the family in the light of religious teachings is to breastfeed him.

In addition to achieving religious goals, there is also a human aspect to breastfeeding. This is because it allows the child to benefit from breastfeeding in the event that he is deprived of

obtaining it from his mother. Breastfeeding has also been shown to strengthen the bond between mother and child, as well as between the child and his breastfeeding siblings.

In the context of this study, the role of breastfeeding the child is considered a very important factor in meeting the child's needs for proper nutrition and for acquiring a new family in whom he finds love, care, support, and protection. Thus, breastfeeding the child in society is the main link between the families of this society, the integration of families, and the extension of the bonds of love and interdependence between them that last for life.

The study also found that the strength of breast milk remains the basis for establishing a family relationship equal to the biological family. It also highlighted the importance of spreading awareness among families and documenting cases of breastfeeding to avoid falling into suspicions and taboos.

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What do we want Human Beings to Become When We Educate Them? What does Citizenship Education Propose about This?[1]

Marcus Solon Sá de Oliveira[2]

Abstract

Education as a process of human formation is associated with the concept of integral education, focused on citizenship. We address the dimensions of human educability in its entirety. Education focused on human formation, in a context where the teacher's interaction is considered a universal and irreplaceable mediation of this process, takes into account the condition of human educability. Comprehensive education is intrinsically linked to human development, and it relates to the very essence of the philosophy of education. It goes beyond shaping culturally informed individuals and reaches the potential of each individual, allowing them to fully develop by combining all their capacities, connecting various dimensions of the individual (cognitive, affective, ethical, social, playful, aesthetic, physical, and biological). Therefore, we conclude that our vision for human beings' development through education aligns with the common understanding of an educated human being and follows the guiding principles of the Bologna Project concerning the development of cross-cutting skills. This training aims to nurture students as more humane professionals, enabling them to live harmoniously with others, respecting differences, and carrying out their professions with ethics, technical competence, kindness, and for the common good. From the perspective of integral education, the teacher assumes a significant role in their students' lives. Consequently, teachers must fully develop themselves and perceive education as an instrument for the process of humanization and human development, in which they are deeply involved. The challenge of a new educational reality awakens us to the idea that it is not enough to learn how to learn; one must also learn how to be. Only through this approach can individuals become more humanized and contribute to the humanization of others.

Keywords: Education for Citizenship; Comprehensive Education; Philosophy of Education; Human formation

Introduction

When we ask people about the term ‘education’, they initially relate it to schools or universities; something that involves scientific technical training, diplomas and curricula. In other words, an education restricted to academic training. Common sense also dictates that an educated person is one who knows how to greet people when they enter a room, or one that behaves properly at a dinner table, and displays good manners. Is education restricted only to good manners, good customs, and academic training, though, or is there something that goes beyond the limits of social, cultural and technical science, reaching something even more significant –something that involves the promotion of a whole human being?

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Dealing with Tannhäuser's poem about courteous manners, Elias (2011, p. 100) says: "I consider a well-mannered man to be one who always practices good manners and never shows himself to be rude". In this, he references the fact that an educated subject is someone who has acquired skills in dealing with others. An educated individual exhibits acceptable behavioral attitudes in a given society.

In this context, we ask: Is it possible to conceive of education as something that contributes to the growth of the integral human being? How can the educational practice of teachers contribute to this comprehensive training? This leads us to other, even deeper questions: What do we want human beings to become when we educate them? What does the philosophy of education propose on this subject?

We assume that education has three goals: to educate, to learn and to teach. It involves humanization and socialization (Charlot, 2006). When educating someone, "we cannot fail to educate, at the same time, a member of a society and a culture and a singular subject" (Charlot, 2006, p. 172).

In addition to this, the Bologna process required European university professors to undertake a continuous reflective analysis of their teaching practice, as well as the formation of transversal skills of their students, through teaching that embraces education integral in the technical-scientific and human dimensions. (Fernandes & Leite, 2013).

Several authors have addressed the theme of comprehensive education. In his conceptualization of integral education, Arroyo (2013) understands the human being as a complete individual, integral as a subject of knowledge, culture, values, ethics, identities, memory, and imagination. He affirms that education must take care of all these dimensions of the formation of the human being (Arroyo, 2013).

Savater (1998) considers that it is not enough that we are born human, it is also necessary to become human, which is to say, to humanize ourselves. Despite being born human, man can perform inhuman acts. Savater (1998, p. 30) states that there are several living beings in nature but these are already born "being what they definitely are, what they will irremediably be, whatever happens, whereas for us humans, what seems more prudent to say is that we were born for humanity". That is, biological humanity "needs a later confirmation, something like a second birth". We become human through our own efforts and through the relationship we build with other human beings. Thus, "The human condition is in part natural spontaneity, but also artificial deliberation: to become fully human – whether good human or bad human – is always an art". In this sense Savater (1998) understands that we only become fully human when we are reached by the deliberate humanity of other human beings.

Savater (1998) explains that anthropologists call this process of becoming full neoteny, and pedagogues call it educability. Just like pre-cooked foods, which require cooking over a fire to become fully edible, "all human births are, in a way, pre-mature" (Savater, 1998, p. 31) and the device that takes man to maturity is his educability. It is through the quality of being teachable beings, beings who are able to learn, that we are able to humanize ourselves. Therefore, it is only through education that man becomes human in his full humanity.

For Savater (1998), each human being's destiny is not culture, nor, strictly speaking, society as an institution, but the similar other. Thus, the fundamental lesson of education is to better empower human beings to relate to the other.

Various philosophers deal with human formation and the meaning of the Philosophy of Education in different ways. Opinions vary, regarding the relationship between integral education and the formation of the cultural subject, how integral formation interacts with other knowledge and with the community, what are the demands of the educator in this dialogue and, finally, if comprehensive education and human improvement are necessarily involved. We examine these various views below, through the lenses of a variety of philosophers.

Human Formation and the Meaning of the Philosophy of Education

If we consider that philosophical thinking is characterized by reflection, philosophy becomes a "knowledge of knowledge, that is, to philosophize is to act on scientific knowledge itself, questioning it and problematizing it" (Santos & Bonin, 2018).

In this perspective of philosophical thought, pedagogy is understood as

> […] a science and its principles must be submitted to philosophical reflection, since philosophy is not limited to the domain of what can be observed by the senses, orienting itself towards the knowledge of principles that escape the perception of the senses. In Philosophy of Education, philosophy is seen as a form of knowledge and education as a philosophical problem. The two terms together represent the study of the foundations of educational theories and practices in society. The essential function of the Philosophy of Education is to critically monitor the educational activity in order to explain its foundations, clarify the role and contribution of the various pedagogical disciplines and evaluate the meaning of the chosen solutions. (Dos Santos & Bonin, 2018, p.1)

Saviani and Duarte (2010) consider the definition of education as a human formation to be consensual. But, they present the following philosophical question: what does human formation consist of? They explain that this issue is linked to the problem of freedom, conscience, "the possibility, legitimacy, value and limits of human actions" (Saviani & Duarte, 2010, p.422).

If we consider only the elements that make up the characteristics of the structure of man in its empirical aspect, education is impossible. Thus, "while being situated, determined by the conditions of the natural and cultural environment, education was impossible". In the aspect of freedom, education showed man as a being who "revealed himself capable of personally intervening in the situation to accept, reject or transform". In this sense, during the time he assumes his freedom, man reveals himself to be a subject capable of making choices and decisions. That alone would constitute a positive response to the question of the possibility of education. If it is possible for a human being to educate another human being to the extent that it makes him free, then, being free, man would also be able to contribute to the formation of new generations. It becomes necessary, however, to explain the legitimacy of education, and ask ourselves: what right does the educator have to interfere in the life of the student if both are "equally free" given that both belong to the human race?" (Saviani & Duarte, 2010, p.422).

The answer to the question about the legitimacy of education lies in its own value, which is to promote man as a free being. Education becomes an instrument of communication between subjects with different degrees of maturation. In this light, Saviani and Duarte (2010, p.423) define education as "communication between free people in different degrees of human maturation", and affirm that the value of education "is expressed as the promotion of man" and in this it manifests as the legitimacy of education, in the promotion of the free man,

both the student and the educator. Human formation "coincides, in this sense, with the process of human promotion carried out by education". Thus, if education is a specific human activity, and "if it coincides with the process of human formation, this means that the educator worthy of the name must be a profound connoisseur of man" and freedom. Since the philosophy of education participates in this formative process as the "most elaborate form of the highest degree of understanding of man reached by man himself".

Integral education as formation of the cultural subject

Severino (2006) presents education as a process of human formation, noting that the meaning of this formation has undergone several changes throughout philosophical tradition and contemporaneity, according to which men conceived of the ideal of their humanization. Faced with this perspective, he discusses the relationships between the various dimensions of human educability, highlighting the ethical and political dimensions, which, for him, are essential for understanding the very nature of education. He understands that human formation, through education, is understood as cultural formation. And that this is why this idea gives education "an intrinsic purpose of an anthropological nature rather than an ethical or political one" (Severino, 2006, p. 619).

Severino (2006) explains that, in Western culture, education has always been seen as a process of human development. This development is about the very humanization of man, conceived as a being who is not born complete, a being entirely made, but who needs to take care of himself, someone who seeks a stage of greater humanity, a being who seeks a "condition of greater perfection in their way of being human". Thus, training can be understood as a "process of becoming human as becoming humanizing, through which the natural individual becomes a cultural being". However, education goes beyond the institutional and instructional process, these are just the visible side of education, the other and more grounding side is perceived, which is the training investment of the human, "whether in the particularity of the personal pedagogical relationship, or in the scope of the collective social relation". In this context, teacher interaction is considered "universal and irreplaceable mediation of this training, bearing in mind the condition of man's educability". (Severino, 2006, p. 621).

For Severino (2006, p. 626) the purpose of education "is the reconstruction of man". However, the idea of education as cultural formation gives education itself an "intrinsic purpose of an anthropological nature rather than an ethical or political one, in a strict sense". Therefore, Severino (2006) understands that the possible proposal of education is training as a cultural subject. Severino (2006) also observes that, for education to transform individuals into ethical people and free human beings, it must become effective as a cultural formation. However, education "cannot guarantee, directly, that people become ethical" (Severino, 2006, p. 633) and free, as it understands that becoming ethical is an "eminently personal experience" (Severino, 2006, p. 633), which goes beyond the teaching/learning process, and reaches the individual's personal decision-making. Given this, not being able to directly guarantee that people become ethical would be one of the limits of education.

In this sense, education requires the educator to develop fully, for comprehensive training dialogues with other knowledge and with the community. For education to be integral, it must overcome the barriers of curricular knowledge, training that transcends the classroom and

occupies the territory, community knowledge and different social instances, and offers conditions for pedagogical, personal, cultural and social growth of teachers and students.

For Mendonça, Lobato and Faria (2013) integral education is based on the formation of the subject in several dimensions. Integral education must contemplate the ethical, social, cultural, cognitive and political dimensions. And for that, it is necessary to dialogue with other knowledge, among them, the community.

Guará (2006) explains that comprehensive education, when associated with comprehensive training, brings the individual to the central position of education questions. In this sense, the philosophical idea of the integral man highlights the need to integrate the development of the "cognitive, affective, corporal and spiritual faculties, rescuing, as a priority task of education, the formation of the man, understood in his totality" (Guará, 2006, p.16).

When dealing with the understanding of man as a multidimensional being Guará (2006) argues that education must respond to a multiplicity of:

> […] demands of the individual and the context in which he lives. Thus, comprehensive education must have objectives that build relationships towards human improvement. By placing human development as a horizon, it points to the need to realize the potential of each individual, so that he can fully evolve with the combination of his capacities, connecting the different dimensions of the subject (cognitive, affective, ethical, social, playful, aesthetic, physical, biological). (Guará, 2006, p.16).

Education that is concerned with the integrality of man must, therefore, perceive and respect human multidimensionality. This humanistic perspective of education as integral formation signals educational relationships in which the educator also fully develops, and from that, can understand and give meaning to the process of

> education, as a condition for expanding the human development of its students. This may favor a comprehensive pedagogical practice of the human being, in its entirety, its multiple relationships, dimensions and knowledge, recognizing it in its uniqueness and universality. Education, as a constituent of the humanization process, which is expressed through mediations, assumes a central role in the organization of human coexistence in their relationships and interactions, raw material for the constitution of personal and social life. (Guará, 2006, p.16).

This perspective strengthens the importance given to the teacher, as an educator focused on understanding the meaning that the educational process imparts on the lives of their students, as well as their own teaching practice. This practice involves the human development of their students for scientific technical training and much more. Guará (2006) recognizes that, for this to occur, the teacher must fully develop themselves, so they can observe education as an instrument of the humanization process in which the teacher is inserted.

The Integral Education and Human Improvement are Necessarily Involved

Education and human improvement are notions that necessarily imply one-another. This means that one cannot conceive of a pedagogical proposal whose summit does not lead to the construction of the subject's self as a theoretical-practical rational instance. Understanding that the development of the individual includes understanding their theoretical-speculative position, to their scientific position, as well as their moral position. It presents that the education proposal coincides with the proposal "of the self-construction of

the subject as master of himself, as an open horizon in permanent improvement" (Filho, 2019, p. 59).

Guará (2006, p.16) argues that the philosophical idea of the integral man highlights the need to develop the "cognitive, affective, corporal and spiritual faculties, rescuing, as a priority task of education, the formation of man, understood in its totality", in an integrated way.

Conclusion

We conceive of integral education as an instrument of human development, through which teacher and student build a path to human development. We consider that it is only possible for a human being to educate the other, to the extent that it makes both of them free. When teacher and student are free, they become capable of contributing to the formation of new generations that are also free. It is through the pursuit and development of freedom that education becomes an instrument of human development, as it must lead human beings to freedom to make choices and decisions. This form of education is legitimate because its value is the promotion of man as a free being. Thus, educating is possible and legitimate, and its value lies in the promotion of the human being, when it meets the limits of human actions.

Several authors have examined the theme of integral formation. Arroyo (2013) conceptualizes integral education by perceiving the human being as a complete individual, integral as a subject of knowledge, culture, values, ethics, identities, memory, imagination, affirming that education must take care of these dimensions of the formation of the human being. Mendonça, Lobato and Faria (2013) explain that the formation of the subject, in its various dimensions, involves the affective, social, political and cultural area –an education that transcends the classroom environment and reaches community knowledge and the various instances social. Savater (1998, p.29, p.31) notes that, "we are born human, but that is not enough: we also have to become one", and we only reach the fullness of human beings, when others "infect us with his deliberate humanity" through the paths already traversed by other human beings.

Filho (2019) explains that education and human improvement are notions that necessarily imply each other and that, for Kant, "man cannot become a true man, if not by education. He is what his education makes him". In turn, Severino (2006, p.619) highlights that the place and role of the Philosophy of Education is to "contribute to the hermeneutic effort of unveiling the educational practice", and reveals that in order to have a human formation, it is essential the development of sensitivity to values and perception of concepts. However, the development of sensibilities does not happen spontaneously; they are developed in contact with human beings, who already have them, and in formal educational institutions. Severino (2006) also states that the integral educational process is fundamental for human existence, because it is through this process that the human being becomes human. Severino (2006) adds that this is the task of the Philosophy of Education, the search for the meaning of human formation. Therefore, this training can be perceived as a process of becoming human; a becoming; humanizing. Saviani and Duarte (2010, p.423) corroborate this argument when they explain that the philosophy of education "fulfills a preliminary role of establishing the very identity of its object, which is education itself".

According to common sense and the guidelines of the Bologna process, what we want human beings (i.e., students formed through an integral education) to become when we educate them is more human. We want them to become capable of coexisting with others, become

qualified individuals in gestures of respect for differences, acquire skills and technical-scientific knowledge that make them capable of exercising their professions successfully, and who are also kind and seek the common good. Therefore, the importance of the teacher as an educator who is focused on understanding and on the meaning that the educational process exerts in the lives of their students must be reinforced. For this to happen, however, the teacher needs to develop fully, observing education as an instrument of the humanization process, in which the teacher is inserted.

In light of the condition of man's educability, we conclude that the teacher's interaction mediates integral formation for citizenship. What we want human beings to be when we educate them corroborates common sense regarding the concept of an educated human being, involving the formation of subjects capable of living with others. They become individuals, immune in gestures of respect for differences, who acquired skills to exercise their profession with ethics and technical competence, who are kind and seek the common good.

Education for citizenship reinforces the importance given to the teacher, in the position of an educator focused on understanding and on the meaning that the educational process has in the lives of their students.

There are 3 bases for establishing education for citizenship. First, the teacher needs to fully develop himself in an integral way. Second, education must be considered as an instrument of the humanization process in which the teacher is also inserted. Third, integral education needs to be established in an educational process built in a classroom environment, in which the teacher can teach and learn while teaching and the student learn and teach while learning. Comprehensive education involves an affective pedagogical relationship based on agreements made in the classroom, on respectful dialogue, in a safe and welcoming environment. A pedagogical relationship built on the student's autonomy and the feeling of belonging to the school, in which the student has a turn, a voice and a vote.

Education for citizenship and human improvement are necessarily involved, they go beyond the formation of the cultural subject and reach the potential of each individual.

There are, however, challenges facing the current educational reality. It is not enough to learn solely to learn. It is also necessary to learn to learn to be. This is the way to make the individual a more human being, that is, to train human beings educated for citizenship, civility and ambassadors of peace.

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Pandect Law in Media Culture: Snowpiercer Analysis[1]

Nilüfer Pembecioğlu[2]

Abstract

As AI advances and media becomes increasingly digitalized, there's hope of getting a more peaceful world as well as futuristic features that will advance social order, justice, and civilization for citizens. Yet, the media does not genuinely advance societies since it often distorts them and manipulates all types of information, leading to a loss of confidence globally, leading humanity to social alienation and by extension potentially distorting issues related to individual citizenship are perceived. Media narratives and applications take us back to ideas that have been forgotten in the depth of history and show us how they are used in a variety of visual mediums, from TV show scripts to blockbuster films. As a result, we miss the opportunity to be holistically human. In the type of common law used between the 12th - 19th century among the nations and civilizations where German culture predominates, the phrase "Pandect law" is used to characterize the structure that Roman law developed through doctrine and practice. With the adoption of new legal and ethical criteria, national and international laws were modernized, and Pandect law was seemingly forgotten. However, it is still possible to see the traces and application of Pandect Law in many modern time narratives, especially Snowpiercer, which is an important film reflecting the dystopic future of humanity. This study aims to provide the links to see how modern media is taking its core power from myths and earlier times and connecting them to the predicted future of humanity even in the age of digitalization and AI. Specifically, the paper aims to exemplify the links between the Pandect Law of the 12th century and famous television serials or blockbuster films such as Snowpiercer. Based on a descriptive approach, this study aims to analyze the images, actions, TV series, and movies using both structural and semiotic analysis methodology.

Keywords: Pandect Law, Snowpiercer, Dystopian Movies, Futurism, Media Literacy, Citizenship

Introduction

In a world characterized by the existence of global conflict, citizenship brings with it the issues of offenses and penalties. For crime and punishment to exist, there must be precursors. Priority and necessity apply to every civilization structure, layered or not. Every action that might occur must be thought out in advance. This necessitates a transparent system, since administrators or managers make, approve, implement or appeal choices –all of which takes place in a public setting. Indeed, when this is presented to the public in a written form, or screenplay, similar to a board game, all that can be done is to watch, learn from, and endure what occurs.

First Written Words and Law

It is important to consider how democracy, equality, rights and citizenship have evolved over time (Burchell, 2002) while discussing these topics in modern times (Smith, 2002). There is a dystopian belief that mankind will be framed by more limited rights, despite the optimistic

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perspective that human rights will eventually grow to encompass all rights and all of humanity.

In order to understand others or comprehend themselves, individuals have created general or specialized meanings with the use of pictures from the dawn of civilization up until the present. As a result, today's value and relevance of images and visualization are increasing (Domingo, 2022).

The items and codes of iconographic systems similar to those social pictures of the cinema are very different where the choice of appropriate analytical criteria is already more pronounced (Metz, 2011). And according to Miller (2012), the ways in which the symbolism of language matters are best illustrated by the ideographic visuals interwoven into tales that offer analytical skills.

The Sumerians were pioneers in a number of domains, not least of which being the first society to record the laws that correspond to their own methods of thinking consistently. It is believed that Sumerians established the tradition of law and judgment (Van De Mieroop, 2013). The earliest known materials for drafting laws were the Urukagina statutes (Işık, 2018). The Code of Hammurabi, composed in Mesopotamia *circa* 1755-1750B.C., is among the oldest and best-protected legal systems. All of the tribes following the Sumerians inherited their culture (and advanced as a result). Indeed, the Sumerians, who initiated Mesopotamian civilization, not only developed a written society but also made sure that it continued and expanded it by transforming previously established rules into legal texts (Gökçek & Akyüz, 2013).

Pandect law emerges much later. It is a complete code of laws, derived from the collection of 50 books encompassing Roman law compiled in 530AD, published and given statutory force in 533AD, by the Roman emperor Justinian. Its study, and the broader examination of Roman-law scholars, became prolific in 19th century Germany, under Savigny (Brittanica, 2022). The term Pandectes (*pan-déktēs*) is a Latin incorporation of the Ancient Greek "πανδέκτης", literally meaning "that which receives all".

Kantorawicz (2014) discussed the nature of law and the science of law defining law as "the totality of those rules of external conduct to whose application a judge is appropriate". Rules do not state what happens, but what ought to happen under certain circumstances. This distinguishes rules from general statements describing *de facto* habits (i.e., economic, linguistic, or social) or fashions. To understand the rules most central to and characteristic of the nature and behavior of crime and punishment, individuals and societies need law. Given the complexity of the crime and punishment process, the populace preferred being responsible for the whole flow in order to be sure about the decision. Therefore, pandect law also generally means the implementation of a decision made by the unanimous vote of all. It also refers to compilation 'all-containing' list laws.

Rules, anxieties, and beliefs were required at the beginning of socialization in order for individuals to coexist in a peaceful, egalitarian fashion. It could be argued that the polytheism of the inhabitants of populated areas like Egypt, India, and China is based on this kind of thinking, insofar as the rulers, who represented God(s) in the universe, might convene and decide on the appropriate form of retribution for every offense. One needs to supplement the 'time-free' conceptual staples of modern jurisprudence with an understanding of the nature and behavior of traditions in social life (Krygier, 1986). View thus, traditionalism is present in practically all legal systems, not as a supplementary but as a primary aspect of the

'tradition'; as a result, traditionalism in law is unavoidable. The topic that needs to be considered may be what tradition interprets as the law. For instance, no one objects to the sentencing procedure because the crime's punishment is predetermined. However, the present tendency is toward increased mobility in the law, and since the degree of adaptation of the conventional law is determined by how differently the various areas respond to the stimuli of modern life, the inevitable outcome is an increase in the diversity of legal practice (in the Muslim world as well) (Coulson, 1964).

Narratives: A New Form of Conveying Messages

Man learns from narratives and adds to himself more than he can learn on his own. Perhaps this is why it's so crucial to digest verbal narratives of the ancient times in a visually appealing and effect-adorned format that is tailored to our twenty-first century tastes. The tendency of portraying the future as dystopian versus the reality of the past, is becoming a trend. Trent (2004, p. 11), comments on the easy and comfortable life of today's men and refers to the earlier struggles of life: "*The scavenging life of the earliest human ancestors who tread the narrow threshold between survival and extinction is forgotten – the winters that drove them into caves, the mortal combat with wooly titans of yesteryear, the young aspirations of a being who could hope for twenty, maybe twenty-five years of life*.".

The dystopia is a fictitious civilization that strayed off track on the route to utopia. It differs from standard science fiction by focusing more on political and social systems than on science or technology (Berg, 2008). This allows filmmakers to make wild predictions about the political future. According to Branigan (2013), a tale emerges as a perceptual action meant to serve as a special theme that captures and describes a certain moment and experience. This sense is so strong that it is obvious that the behavior happens in public. Contrarily, the dystopian film offers a singular experience that speculates on what might occur to people in the present due to shifts in the axis of values, notably the envisioned future. Th depicted experience has a component that calls for a stronger adherence to contemporary values, even though it can pain the audience a little and make them ponder. According to Muwaffaq et al. (2020), despite their similarities, a distinction between dystopian and apocalyptic movies is necessary. Dystopian film narratives are unrealistic because their major goal is to show how difficult the ideal society is, forcing viewers to imagine how they would construct the real world. Thus, dystopian fiction merely provides humanity's (or the world's) impending demise a symbolic meaning. Given the existence of a final battle for humanity, dystopia clearly aims to instill optimism in people and society.

There have been a number of dystopian films with a focus on cities, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s (Set & Lekesiz, 2019). These films depicted the concerns of society over issues like population growth, and how industrialization and technology were changing the world. They argue that the essential component is the absence of the idea of privacy. Private life in the developed world must therefore be eliminated in the name of pseudo-freedom and improved access for people to what they want.

Aim and Methodology

This study focuses on *Snowpiercer* as a dystopian story that appears in both the film and the Netflix serial form. In general, the story portrays the fear that a more traditional social

structure may replace the individualized world of today and that all rewards and punishments may be carried out in front of this society. The movie uses a narrative style in which presents almost everything in accordance with the Pandect law, underlining the significance of visualization in the public domain.

This paper attempts to show how contemporary media draws inspiration from myths and historical figures while relating them to the predicted course of human history –even in the age of digitization and AI. In particular, the study seeks to demonstrate the connections between well-known television series or blockbuster movies, like *Snowpiercer*, and the Pandect Law of the 12th century. Using a descriptive approach, we attempt to evaluate the images, TV shows, and movies utilizing semiotic and structural analysis techniques.

Findings and Interpretations

There were specific reasons why this study dwells on a certain film and its reflections. IMDb results list *Snowpiercer* as one of the top 30 rated movies. *Snowpiercer* (2013) is presented as a cinema film telling us the story of a handful of people surviving the dead end of the world. In a future where a failed climate change experiment has killed all life except for the survivors who boarded the Snowpiercer (a train that travels around the globe), a new class system emerges. (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1706620/) It is based on "Le Transperceneige". The plot is set in 2031, the entire world is frozen except for those aboard the Snowpiercer. For seventeen years, the world's survivors are on a train hurtling around the globe creating their own economy and class system. Led by Curtis (Chris Evans), a group of lower-class citizens living in squalor at the back of the train are determined to get to the front of the train and spread the wealth around. Each section of the train holds new surprises for the group who have to battle their way through; a revolution is underway.

Throughout the film, the main injustice stands as the class distinction provided in the film. The passengers on the train are segregated, with the elite in the extravagant front cars and the poor crammed into squalid tail compartments overseen by armed guards.

But it seems like there are a lot of discrepancies between the Netflix version and the independent one. They witness a polar bear in the movie, which shows them there is life outside the train. In contrast, a portion of the train arrives in a new Eden for humanity in the television series. People make their own decisions and cast their own votes by deciding what they believe and what they want to accomplish in life within the context of the trains arriving at the crossroads. The train divides in two at a crossroads, and as a result, one side is doomed to eternal entanglement while the other side arrives at the paradise that they hope the leaders will lead them to. Legally, it is crucial that people have the freedom to make their own decisions without being forced to. The tail of the train, which represents the reunion of children and families, can also now see the sun and nature. For example, the guard and the artist, who chose to be together after going through several love trials, are now able to see the sun and nature once more after all the difficulties they have faced in order to be together and stay together thanks to the tolerance and understanding of the other passengers. Reaching a point where the ice is melting and the world is normalized is offered as a reward for all their suffering. People are led to believe that this new community, located by the ocean and at the foot of the mountains, is a new paradise. There is hope for others now that people may start to breathe, experience nature, and reorganize their life as they like.

Snowpiercer the Film - Literature Review

The movie *Snowpiercer* has been the subject of numerous scholarly studies. Among these was the research that looked at the language used in the movie (Rivah & Thamrin, 2021). As a result, the question of whether the classes represented in the film have a different language usage seems to have been addressed in this way. Similarly, Diaz (2015) argues that all cultural products contain an ideological charge placed voluntarily or involuntarily by their creators, and that Snowpiercer's analysis of discourse can help us see how ideologies permeate everyday cultural products and transform our contemporary visual culture.

Of the academic research papers (10,62%) on *Snowpiercer* many were published in the last year (2022). Most of the academic analysis of the film (31,87%) dwells on the comparative and contrastive analysis of the films *Parasite* and *Snowpiercer* due to the emphasis given to class differences, and its representations as the story of the oppressed. Kline (2022) points out that the release of Adam McKay's *Don't Look Up* has reignited academic dialogues to review climate fiction (cli-fi) and applied drama as a vehicle to promote public dialogue on climate change in lieu of traditional fear-based climate communication predicated on the Information Deficit Model. This thesis analyzes the ability of high-profile cli-fi texts to bridge gaps in climate narratives. An interdisciplinary analysis methodology of social psychology theory, viewed through the combined lenses of dramaturgy, eco-criticism, and climate communication, is used to explore the potential impact of the narrative. As applied dramatic works continue to grapple with the intensifying impacts of climate change, scholars have identified the creation of a new creative genre: cli-fi. Social psychology theories reveal that the surveyed cli-fi pieces continue to over-emphasize apocalyptic tropes of the disaster genre.

Separate semiotic analyses are also necessary to examine the Marxist codes inherent in dystopian stories, the heroes' psychological histories, and the social structure of the society the story represents. For instance, Bjelkendal (2020), who attempts to present a critique of *Snowpiercer* within a Marxist theoretical framework, deviates from the analysis of the existence and operations of ideological state apparatuses in movies and instead concentrates on how the exhibited ideology is presented to the audience.

Tangalycheva, (2019) handles the film not only as a sociological analysis but also the future of modern society. Lee and Manicastri (2018), on the other hand, argue that *Snowpiercer* exposes the limits of technocratic environmentalism that hide the links between ecological degradation, capitalist development, and colonial domination. They also argue that *Snowpiercer* is concerned with whether the contemporary political economy has rendered the emancipatory strategies of recent centuries obsolete. For them, the film suggests that the global order is still capitalist and colonialist, but that leftist projects must transcend state socialism and anti-colonial nationalism, or "decolonial immigration," as Bong calls it, demanding a real alternative to both ideology and ideology and the so-called alternative to authoritarian populism. Martín Carpio et.al., (2022) consider *Snowpiercer* as the realization of cosmopolitan hopes in the films of globalization. As Spaethen, (2020) handles the film as a Transnational Challenge To Eurocentrism, Snowpiercer looks like a blockbuster that does not smell like Hollywood. Kim (2018) looks at it as a cultural hybridity, while Spalding et. al., (2022) handle the film as explorations in mobility.

One other objective idea is to make use of film as an educational material as Baum (2014) suggested discussing how they can be used for sustainability education. Gerhardsen, (2022) as well looks at the film as a potential material that might help learning empathy. Cole and

Bradley, (2016) ask what a pedagogy of cinema' tell us about contemporary life as defined by globalization and how 'a pedagogy of cinema' (re)invent theory.

Research on the social class differences reflected in people's lives in the *Snowpiercer* movie proves the findings that social class is divided into two main classes and differentiated through behavior, social life, and goods. And those things cause an impact on people's lives in the *Snowpiercer* movie which ultimately caused the deaths of both classes. Cannibalism, rebellion, and even population reduction (74%) occurs as the consequence of social class differences. Taylor (2016) highlights a larger trend that presents the events, specifically the ideology to the society, with large-scale 'global' blockbusters. Pratiwi (2021a) claims that the result of the film analysis proves that there are two types of power relations. To her, first, sovereign power is a type of power that dominates all individuals in society. Second, disciplinary power aims to discipline bodies. Then the result also reveals that some characters have done manipulation of knowledge and truth, by using power relations (Pratiwi, 2021b).

Out of the many academic research about Snowpiercer, most of them (38,25%) are doctoral dissertations or MA thesis. Lima (2021) in her doctoral dissertation states that her results prove that there are three forms of capitalist power: economic, political, and ideological. In *Snowpiercer*, the causes of capitalist power are exploitation, alienation, and class division. If in *Snowpiercer* the main cause of class is class struggle, then the dominant form of capitalist power is the economic form. The class divide between the upper and lower classes generates capitalist power from all classes to maintain their welfare and economic status.

Bjelkendal (2020) argues that with increasing inequality in the world, having knowledge about the apparatuses maintaining unequal social structures is important. While claiming that utopian and dystopian science fiction films are a good source for analysis of social structures, due to their inherent interest in social critique and the role of semiotics in the spreading of ideology, he examines how ideology is presented and represented. The analysis of the films shows that several different ideological state apparatuses, such as school and politics, are represented in the films. The apparatuses are also shown to use a variety of pedagogic actions for teaching the dominant ideology of the respective film's ruling class to the citizens of the films, such as lecturing, singing, and communicating through clothing and architecture. The analysis also shows that while two different political ideologies are represented in the films, neoliberalism in *Snowpiercer* maintains the capitalist order of the films' societies: the division of labor. The essay also argues that the findings motivate a Marxist approach to teaching, in order to actively work against inequality and provide all students with a well-rounded education, no matter what social class they belong to.

Whereas Özbey and Gezen handle the topic through the cinematographic projection of the capitalist system, Weninger (2021) with the addition of revolution, an altered ending, and a skillful blending of corporeal imagery into the cinematic conventions concerning railways, asserts that *Snowpiercer*, becomes a cogent commentary on the biopolitical manipulation of narrative. To him, train compartments, however, were never neutral zones, but stages for ideology or sites of anxiety, taboo, or trauma. The myth of the sacred engine (particularly in the film) represents more than a caricatured fetishism or primitive psychological dependence. It serves to authorize the regime's claim that human extinction can only be avoided through absolute order and life preserved only through lethal culling. Mac Laughlin (2022) too, has an approach to handle the *Snowpiercer* in the form of a myth, yet this time he looks at it as the hope and wonder in the wasteland, representing it to fiction as a Tolkienian fairy story (MacLaughlin, 2022). Similarly, Lam et al., (2022) handles the film as a convergence of crises

just like COVID-19 becoming a type of climate change created by the scientists. McGuire, (2022) adds it up as a fear of the future of the modern men.

Claiming that the society in the train is an allegory of society now and looking at the *Snowpiercer* as a new type of anti-heroic narrative in relation to Foucault's power, Choi (2015) asks if society can be changed by a hero. Many other researchers including Nuraeni and Nugroho (2015), Manalu (2017), and Lee and Manicastri (2018) concentrate on the equality of the classes and their imperfection whereas, Turner et al., (2021) concentrate on food consumption. They aim to prove that *Snowpiercer* depicts the separation of class and the way it impacts food security in a very literal sense, and these class separations impact not only how they are treated but how they live and what food they have access. This becomes clearer as the small band of rebels, inhabitants of the last and societally lowest-ranked train car, works their way up through the train cars towards the front, seeing just how differently they were forced to live from those of higher classes living towards the front of the train. This, in the most literal sense, is a signifier of class division and social separation through the lens of food theory and food studies—while the back of the train eats what can be most accurately described as protein blocks, people of higher societal class toward the front of the train live in luxury and eat gourmet meals. Methods of consumption as well as food location show how the elite dominate the impoverished through abuse and punishment.

Lee (2022) handles the success of the *Snowpiercer* as an example of cultural diplomacy. While Giuliani (2020) looks as *Snowpiercer* as the narrative lifting the veil on the monstrous. Yi (2017) argues that *Snowpiercer* is a transnational film. It identifies how categorizing it as either Korean cinema or American cinema falls short of accounting for its unprecedented mode of production, distribution, and storytelling. Yi situates Snowpiercer in the larger context of Korean cinema by identifying the heritage it belongs to, shows that the filmic text embodies the complex notion of nation in today's world, and argues that cultural signs in the film indicate a transnational imaginary. Yi (2015) also explores the nature of space by focusing on its significance through visual observation in the film Snowpiercer. It links showing spectacles as consolidating the space knowledge. By claiming that visual observations define space, it questions the fixed meaning of space in the film.

Not only the food but also the architecture plays an important role according to Chen (2022) arguing that Parasite and City of God reveal a vertical social stratification of living with the rich and the poor being on the top or bottom of the hierarchy of spaces, whereas Snowpiercer explores a horizontal arrangement. However, while some arrangements of living spaces are linear, others fall out of the linear stratification and mirror the complex social arrangements of lived spaces. It will bring into context the state of the urban slums of South Korea and the cities and favelas of Brazil: São Paulo and the favela of the City of God in Rio de Janeiro. Snowpiercer provides a horizontal stratification of social class as well as creating a brand-new dystopian city within a train in a "locked world" film. However, to Kim, (2020) the image of the train is neither a class distinction nor a space to live, it is the reinterpretation of the posthuman Cyborg and the New World. Dima (2016) also emphasizes that Snowpiercer complicates the phenomenological definition of Being by blurring the lines between man and machine – man is mechanized, and the machine is humanized – to such an extent that they essentially coalesce.

Kim, (2014) argues that the Snowpiercer provides concrete results regarding the big data's effect of film marketing. Imanjaya and Amelia (2021) put forward that Bong Joon-Ho films depict the discourses of ecological problems. The results indicate how strong messages

regarding environmental issues are represented in the three films, metaphorically and literally, and become valuable lessons for environmentalists and film scholars/filmmakers. Whether it is the "biological terror", or actual ecological disaster, *Snowpiercer* is a story of survivors that portray the impact of global warming in the cold and frozen era. According to Altınkaya (2016), it carried out the most detailed analysis of the 'sense of illumination", which is criticized and wherein movies (particularly in the last 15 years) take part in "instrumental rationality" as being responsible for the post-apocalyptic situation of the world or the emphasis on human constantly instead of "science and power relationship" and that human was essentially an insatiable being. In other words, these movies miss the system criticism focusing on the philosophical concepts that concern the fields of morals and ethics such as "good" and "evil".

Snowpiercer Film Analysis

When *Snowpiercer* and justice relationship is considered, in the film are scattered many types of crime and punishment scenes. First scenes start with an animation meaning that the story is told in an unknown time and place in future. The main storyteller narrates the beginning. Of course, there were crimes, from the very beginning and these were not visualized until the audience is introduced to the people in the tail (last train compartments called 'wagons'), who were the survivors left behind, invaded the last wagon of the train. So many of them were injured or dead but managed to get on the train in the last minute. This last part of the train is called the "tail" meaning that it does not belong to the real part of the body. The fight goes on in the train yet, the tail gets the advantage of staying there. Depending upon the conditions they have at that minute, they do not even realize how the other carriages of the train are different in size, conditions and higher standards. The class distinction is emphasized frequently and most of the human rights were limited in the lower classes. The story takes us deeper into the climax when it's been six years, nine months, and 26 days from departure.

There seems to be many unknown reflections of the ultimate bodies in the *Snowpiercer*, one of them is the untouchable Mr. Wilford who has never been seen and is actually replaced by Melanie. The tail is provided meals but there's always trouble and fight between the guardians and the poor folk ending with the savage violence in front of everybody to make them all know that if they try anything to change the situation worse awaits them. However, Melanie, aiming to put an end to this endless discussion and class fight in the same train, enlists queue leader Layton to assist with an investigation on who will soon become leader of the lower-class tail-section passengers, as they rebel against the elite of the front of the train. The justice provided here is the sharing of the given food. Even if they were all in the same tail car, they also have differences in between the participants, regarding the weaknesses, ages, gender, etc. So, the scenes provided here give us a more "human" communication, understanding and that sharing is possible. The multilingual and multicultural atmosphere of the movie seems to be reflected in the movie characters as well. It depicts a society in which there are almost all kinds of people with red hair, blonde, brunette, black, yellow, or white, tall and short, and they use translation tools or translators to understand each other. The children are depicted here as the ones not obeying the rules or acting as if they are in real world, playing or stealing bites from each other. Even if this part of the train is proclaimed as the part of the world not civilized or not socialized in its modern sense, they depict the notions of exactly the opposite. On the other hand, Melanie and Ruth deal with the problems of the higher class passengers of the.

Regarding the crime issues bringing up the upper class and lower-class collaboration, justice becomes very important to all. Dowler and Antonowicz (2022) mention that the criminologists' focus was primarily on the lower classes, not the crimes of big business and the elites within society and classify it as the cost of corporate wrongdoing. Similarly, Marque, (2022) states that *Snowpiercer* can be interpreted as a critique of social stratification, social engineering, and government overreach, but deep down, it is essentially a commentary on authoritarianism and humanity. From the beginning, the film provokes the viewers to take the side of the tailenders and join them in their revolution to overthrow the train's oppressive regime so that a better government can take its place. However, the message of the film is much more complicated than it appears. Ultimately, it is a question of how far humans are willing to go to ensure the survival of their species and for the preservation of their humanity. By analyzing every aspect of the film, this article aims to portray that what can be more dangerous to humanity than any authoritarian regime is humanity itself.

The beginning of the movie reveals how hard the people in the tail position live in despite being on the train and with scarce opportunities. Everyone who opposes the "train", "order" or "Mr. Wilford" as a new world order, that is seen as "holy" with the influence of a strict dictatorial regime, is punished mercilessly and this punishment is applied in front of the everyone. It is understood that the conditions of this punishment, which appeared in the 14th minute of the movie, were predetermined. The father, who tried to save his son by attacking the officers who came to pick up the children in the back car, was sentenced to amputation. The scene where his arm is cut is important. Officers calculate how many minutes it will take to amputate the arm. Beforehand, the arm is taken out of the train in a controlled manner and kept outside for 7 minutes to freeze it. Afterwards, the torment is performed by separating the frozen arm from the body with a sledgehammer. It is important that the punishment is executed in front of everyone. After that, those in the queue, who are constantly evaluated as rebels, are considered to have such a severe consequence that they cannot even think of acting in a similar way. However, although the filmic time seems beyond the time we live in now, the behaviors and reactions of individuals and groups bear the traces of primitiveness in the early times of humanity. So much that the guards of the train, whose bullets are exhausted, will attack the rebels in the tail section with their axes, taking advantage of the darkness. However, in the meantime, as a result of waking up those who were imprisoned in a drawer and punished with eternal sleep, the people of the queue, who received a box of matches, lit the torches with as much enthusiasm as the joy of the person who discovered fire for the first time, giving support to the fighters and the fight is won. This event also symbolizes that in times of scarcity, the human reverts to its oldest time to remember the primitive tools and actions of war.

At one point during the film, despite the loss of his best buddy, the protagonist chooses not to kill his foe. He is aware that keeping her alive is necessary for him to accomplish his main objective. Well into the films progression, those in line will be able to enter a compartment that was impassable during earlier demonstrations. This is a greenhouse-like setting that is tranquil, serene, and peaceful and in which plants flourish in the sunlight and greenery. To reach to Mr. Wilford, the captive deputy was taken with them in further wagons, and her wrists were interlaced and chained together as they did to the ancient people. The joke about the shoe being a hat being carried to the payoff point when the shoes are put on the imprisoned woman's head is one of the most intriguing scenes in the film. The fact that the lady whose child was taken away and the man whose arm had just been amputated do this

together with tremendous joy and happiness is actually an essential moment of revenge. Once more, this may be seen as a fight for rights in the presence of everyone.

It is vital to analyze pandect legislation as a norm of comparison or criterion of superiority rather than simply seeing it as a means of punishment. It's intriguing that the imprisoned agent served sushi to the crew as they passed by the aquarium truck. During this treat, she also discussed the importance of "balance" in life. It is quite ironic that sushi is provided to individuals who are almost "scarce-fed" even though they do have a wide range of foods. In the next carriage, we see meat and chickens hanging, followed by the next carriage, which turns out to be a school for children -our first encounter with upper-class kids.

The tutor who is also a mother-to-be, makes use of vintage films as educational material. The students here have misconceptions and misinformation about what's in the tail section. Once more, when speaking in front of others, one of the children is not afraid to mention that he has heard that people in the tail are sloths that sleep all day and eat their own shit. For the student, getting up off the bench and saying it aloud in front of people is a bravery and "challenge." In return to her challenge, the imprisoned attorney steps in and says, out loud that: "*They are not what they believe they are, they are very wonderful people, they are very just, they are very merciful*." This shows that when someone violated someone else's rights in front of everyone, they were silenced and punished by having their case answered in public. The same student could still say, "*The folks of the ancient world are idiots transformed into popsicle.*" The instructor keeps up his engaging style of instruction while praising Mr. Wilford's originality and the train's brilliant design. After the song they sing, promptly "*Long live Wilford*!".

Afterwards, the teacher, who started to tell about the revolt of the sevens who wanted to stop the train, points out that some of the children were born long after this incident, implying that many births took place on the train after the train departed. The re-consecration of the train and the repetition of Mr. Wilford's stewardship of the train, the reason for the children's existence, where the mere thought of being Wilford is repeated like a prayer.

While everyone is receiving their eggs for the New Year celebrations, we observe that the egg cart has weapons that extend all the way to the back, and many more survivors in the line are slain by these guns. Last but not least, the queue's wise man is also executed in a live on-screen broadcast. The teacher's attempts to shoot those entering the classroom from the queue while holding a gun in her hand illustrates the extent of her hatred for those outsiders, despite the fact that the space is a classroom, and it is populated with young children. The audience is shocked when they experience that the teaching profession, which is known for its tolerance, is identified with prejudice and weapons, and that those who should teach peace instead of polarization are party to hatred and violence.

As they pass through the wagons, they discover a much higher quality of life and luxury. Up to that moment, they thought that the fundamental issue presented to them was the rule that the characters from the tail can't move on to the other wagons. Yet, as they move forward the tale twists and from the hero's perspective, the amount of injustice perpetrated on them becomes more obvious, despite the fact that they are on the same train.

The crew moves forward on the train, past other passengers who are relaxing in the hot water pools or sauna, despite the fact that a few gunmen are still after them. It moves through the areas where bizarre music is played, and medicines called chronals are utilized after suffering

significant losses and defeating the assailants. The degree of decadence depicted here is really remarkable, especially when paired with the suffering of those waiting in line.

They begin speaking when they are worn out. Despite all the cutting - edge technology and the age of progress, this part consists of a speech-based narrative, visualizing only the body language, facial expressions, just like the archaic, primitive type of narratives. Curtis starts to discuss what it means to be in the tail section of Snowpiercer. He talks about how, in the days of scarcity, people would eat one another and how an elderly man would cut off his own arm by pleading with people for knives and telling them to "*eat this, not the baby*" to those trying to kill a baby. Even after all this time, he is still troubled by these recollections, which remain stored in his heart and memory. In this way, we are hearing a prior event regarding the operation of pandect law. The fact that Curtis personally used the knife is what most startled people about the mystery. Edgar was the boy who was saved at the sacrifice of his mother's life. Curtis would also claim that in order to uphold justice, everyone started presenting one of their organs in order to achieve equality rather than killing the others. At this point, what is emphasized is that people make sacrifices in order to abide by social laws, uphold standards, and thrive. The fact that all of these events are occurring in the epicenter of the social structure and in broad public view further highlights the effectiveness of the ancient law's rules. Mr. Wilford said that when the rules are broken, the system is also broken, and that balance is truly extremely vital for life. Thus, it is questionable how realistic or concrete his offer to Curtis is to become a leader instead of himself. However, upon discovering that there is actually child labor behind the train's mobility and children stolen from the families of the tail section, Curtis is forced to disrupt the entire order of the train because he has started to accept the leadership that has been attributed to him so much that he can almost ignore the ongoing battle for life right outside the door. Curtis accomplishes this change and stops the train at the risk of his arm as the movie comes to a close.

Conclusion

Regardless of conflicts and situations that may exist or be perceived as existing and where every citizen must be satisfied with his/her social position (Kim, 2022), *Snowpiercer*, can clearly be seen as dealing with class, status and citizen rights. The film portrays a very drab, futuristic, or even primitive future in comparison to the Netflix series. The Netflix narrative has been updated to a more opulent and digital point of view, in which linguistic and cultural hurdles are depicted in various ways, and the service and hospitality department of the train operates with more seriousness and dignity. Although most of the story remains the same, this narrative also includes the notion of an elected leadership.

Imagining an unstoppable train like Snowpiercer requires high technology, pre-established routes, possibilities and algorithms and many other details. Being in the train does not mean too much in a frozen world, since people need to be connected to the real world through the AI. The main difference between the Snowpiercer film and Netflix series lies in the high technology and AI presented in the latter. They all seem to be transferred into Snowpiercer in Netflix. For example, the process of "throwing into the water" (water ordeal) was applied as a means of crime determination and punishment in Ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolian societies, which are chains of the Cuneiform law system. This method, which is included in Cuneiform law articles, was generally accepted by ancient societies based on the belief in the holiness of water and its ability to reveal and cleans evil deeds –this is also the reasoning for

the characteristics of God often attributed to rivers (Florioti & Demirci, 2013). The river of God determined the truth against aspersion and punished the guilty. The person who was suspected of committing an offense was thrown into the river in order to determine whether they were innocent or guilty. The guilty was, thus, punished. This method was established in Mesopotamian law and perpetuated in Hittite society, as a tradition. It was not even restricted to ancient societies and was used as a method of hunting witches in the Middle Ages (Kerr et al., 1992).

Ünür (2015) asserts that crime is crime, regardless of who commits it. In terms of offenses and penalties in relation to citizenship both today and in the past, however, it is important to consider who commits the crime, against whom and in which community. The Ana-Ittuşu statutes, for instance, have distinct penalties in the third and fourth articles for children who rebel against their parents. The punishment for rebelling against the mother is to be exposed, as opposed to the son who disobeyed his father who was to be shaved and sold as a slave (Arslantaş & Septioğlu, 2016).

As Brown et.al., (2019) pointed out, ignoring equity and justice ignores critical mechanisms and mediational pathways that contribute to developmental outcomes and observed disparities in the citizenry. It is possible to debate the issue of what constitutes justice and what sustains rivalry. One of the major differences between the Snowpiercer film and the Netflix series, however, is the different applications of justice across different classes. One may even argue that the second, more contemporary version of the story has more crime and punishment and that, eventually, almost all the punishment takes place in front of other people. Witnessing the crime and doing nothing brings more pain than the crime itself (Bock, 2021). Portraying both criminals and the arms of justice introduces moral and psychological problems, due to the durability of the photographic imagery having a huge impact on the human brain and public conversation alike. Whether the events take place in a public space or not, public individuals' stance on the event can also affect whether the event will be punished or not. Often times, situations such as the injury or death of parties intervening at a crime scene can cause innocent people to be adversely affected by the crime.

Indifference is defined as inaction in the face of death, such as in the case of vacationers swimming and having a good time while someone dies from a heart attack on the beach. There is now a controversy over whether society and unwritten rules should be observed, even if there haven't been any crimes.

When a crime is committed in front of the media, people anticipate retribution. Without these penalties and when the perpetrator gets away with it, individuals are more likely to breach the law and commit crimes in an effort to learn a lesson that will help them in real life. Even worse, it demonstrates the acceptance of crime and impunity. Crime may become less personal or accepted in some circumstances. Di Tella et al., (2019) discovered that witnessing a crime leads to desensitization to crime, and their findings point to a phenomenon where victims become accustomed to being exposed to crime. Wu (2022)'s field research indicated that the theory of uses and gratifications aids the audience in developing a deeper grasp of cross-cultural communication. Numerous other studies have demonstrated that the more times a visual message is presented to an audience, the more effectively that message is internalized. It is still unclear, however, how the audience may be impacted by negative content or context since the volunteer crimes and criminals of the past are still in the memory of humanity.

There is a common assumption that punishing criminals in public places in front of everyone will lower crime rates, much like the pandect legislation of the past. Does the fact that crime scenes are routinely exposed in the media indicate that society's crime rates are declining and that everyone has hope that equality and justice will one day be possible? Since the dawn of humanity, people have found entertainment, theatrical materials, and visualized occasions in all forms to be pleasurable. Numerous spectators, including women and children, watched as emperors engaged in battle with the gladiators in the arenas or lined up to witness the execution of those who were about to be put to death. Sport in Classical Greece and Rome was closely linked to high levels of economic activity. This comprised regularly scheduled events, large-capacity sporting venues, professional athletes who had free agents and trainers, sports tourism, and sports betting (Vamplew, 2022).

We cannot know how the audience reacts to what they see, in terms of critical thinking and evaluation, because they are unable to intervene. On social media, however, it is clear just how polarizing, inconsistent or contradictory viewers might be. It is evident that there is a distinction between participating in a hypothetical dispute on television, passing judgment, and participating in a conflict in real life. In a similar vein, seeing a crime or a criminal punished on film differs from experiencing the same events in real life. This can have a deleterious effect on the citizenry as what they see may in fact not be what is or will be reality.

Pandect law is the result of people coexisting in a community. Assuming that undesirable events and behaviors in society can be prevented, it uses the modern concept of "Fear Appeal" to teach a lifelong lesson to every member of the community in the face of events that have happened and might still occur. However, the idea that the societies of the future cannot advance any further than they did in the past confronts us when we see pandect law in contemporary films and more frequently visualized examples of how such processes of action, decision-making, and punishment work. With this in mind, it becomes apparent that in *Snowpiercer* different forms of punishment are applied to people in different train compartments. This already gives the impression of a sufficiently segregated and stratified society. Thus, the same offense and penalties can result in different sentences in various compartments (or countries). It therefore becomes crucial to emphasize class distinctions, visualization of crime and punishment, and the discouragement of bad behavior. All they seek is equality and a healthy life. There is a strict hierarchy in effect in the train's other carriages, however. For the other passengers higher up in the hierarchy, Tail is the primitive one. Thus, Tail's revolt against the entire train is a punishable point, just as the masters in Roman law punished their slaves.

As a dystopian approach, the film exaggeratedly illustrates a catastrophic future for humanity. Returning to the era of humankind's darkest times is one of mankind's greatest fears (Mumford, 1956). Harper (2022) emphasizes that in the film *Snowpiercer*, cannibalism is described as more than disturbing alimentary anxiety that lends aesthetic "shock value" to contemporary narratives of future ecological collapse and political catastrophe. However, whether carried out singly or in large groups, cannibalism was the worst crime of humanity, and this was never demonstrated or visualized within the Netflix series. In the grimmest times, one encounters the most rudimentary punishments, attitudes, and uses of force. Perhaps owing to this, the idea that violence and (both physical and emotional) torture can still exist in a time in which we expect the usage of cutting-edge technology to provide the spectator with a narrative plane and experience is incredibly astounding.

It appears that pandect law was applied in a fashion similar to what we perceive as face-to-face education, in earlier times. Solutions to problematic cases were generally created according to the emerging situation, and decisions were taken with the approval and consensus of all members of society. In the contemporary world, however, face-to-face education and interaction have given way to online and virtual alternatives. Applications are on screens as opposed to taking place in person. Evaluation and punishment roles tend to be carried out through the media, as being more expedient and able to be effectively disseminated to society. While things change, however, the advent of numerous narratives provide instances of crime and punishment in action, indicating that Pandect Law is still in effect.

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Understanding Knife Crime in Greece: The Narratives of University Students[1]

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Abstract

This study attempts to contribute to the emergence of a social phenomenon of students carrying and sometimes using knives (knife crime). As the phenomenon is reported to rise, socio-economic conditions are conducive to developing related offending behavior. Poverty, stress, lack of trust in the educational process, and the risk of deviance caused by weakness are distinctive aspects. The continuation of the crisis in Greece and its socio-economic consequences has revealed pre-existing social protection problems and the welfare state's weaknesses, the most important of which are those of the school. From the theoretical perspective of the crisis continuum, this paper attempts to contribute to the reflection of the educational community and Greek society by exploring the effects of the crisis condition (socio-economic, refugee, health). The research was conducted based on the qualitative approach, and we implemented two focus groups, with 10 participants in each. All the participants were undergraduate students of the Department of Education and Social Work of the University of Patras.

Keywords: Knife Crime; Risk; Deviance; Permacrisis

In Lieu an Introduction: "...they just asked him for his phone..."

In early 2023, a group of fifteen-year-old teenagers were caught on surveillance cameras attacking a sixteen-year-old boy, in Athens. Initially, the group of teenagers verbally abused the victim. They immediately started chasing the 16-year-old, isolating him and, at one point, stabbing him and stealing his mobile phone. The 16-year-old had gone for a walk with a friend in a central area of the Greek capital when four people, believed to be minors, trapped them, and demanded that the teenager hand over his mobile phone.

When he resisted, they stabbed him in the chest, thigh, and back. The child called for help from passers-by and was taken to hospital, where he underwent surgery. "He didn't know anyone. They just asked him for his mobile phone, and he refused to give it to them because it was his and they hit him from behind," said the teenager's mother.

This case is not unique. On the contrary, the frequency of such attacks is on the increase. This phenomenon has specific characteristics. They are attacks made using small, sharp objects carried by the perpetrators. The attacks are often bloody and involve the theft of valuables -

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usually the victim's mobile phone. These attacks are spread throughout the socio-geographical region of the Greek capital.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

The above case is part of a social phenomenon, which we believe reveals the emergence of an important social issue. This study attempts to contribute to this discussion. Indicatively, the case of 26th of June (2022), where minors became involved in a violent incident, resulting in the injury of two children, had similar characteristics. A few days later, a similar incident occurred outside the same school. This time the incident was filmed by those involved and posted on social media. The video publicizes the dispute between minors in the 15-16 age group outside a school. These cases are not the only ones. On Saturday evening, shortly after 22:00 in a neighborhood in the northern suburbs of Athens (Kifissia), a group of 14-year-olds were robbed and beaten. Money and mobile phones were forcibly taken from the victims. One 14-year-old boy was taken to hospital bleeding to death; similar cases still occur in Syntagma, the busy center of the Athenian capital (Panagopoulos, Gouga, & Kamarianos, 2022). The increase in juvenile delinquency in Greek society is analogous to what has been observed to occur for years in European societies. Particularly in the UK, studies highlight the phenomenon. The increase in juvenile delinquency in Greek society is similar to what has been observed for years in other European societies. In the UK, in particular, several studies highlight the phenomenon (see, e.g., Ben Kinsella Trust, 2020). According to these studies, knife crime is one of the foremost delinquency issues in European societies. Indications are similar for Greek society, where, in 2020, Greek Police arrested more than 2,629 young people for theft (Greek Police, 2020; Ben Kinsella Trust, 2020; Dinesh, Hughes, Bellis, Mitis & Racioppi, 2010; Panagopoulos, Gouga, & Kamarianos, 2022; Gouga, 2022).

Thus, we can more specifically define the purpose of this paper as attempting to contribute to the study of the specific phenomenon of delinquency, which directly affects young people. The basic hypothesis of the study is that crime involving knives or sharp objects is a social problem directly related to the emerging changes and transformations caused by the state of perpetual crisis (Permacrisis) in Greece. It is indicative of the intensity of the perpetual crisis state that the word 'permacrisis' has been named word of the year in the prestigious international Collins dictionary (Collins English Dictionary 2023).[5]

The term Permacrisis refers to the prolonged period of risk and uncertainty in which European societies find themselves, particularly after the second wave of the refugee crisis and the outbreak of war on the European continent with the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. In a condition of Permacrisis, serious juvenile delinquency such as knife crime is a symptom of increased vulnerability, which is, in turn, a direct result of the crisis of the welfare state and the weakening of individual and family support networks, a structural crisis after years

[5] By the term Permacrisis experts mean the prolonged period of risk and uncertainty in which European societies find themselves, particularly after the second wave of the refugee crisis and the outbreak of war on the European continent with the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. For more see: *Collins English Dictionary* 2023.

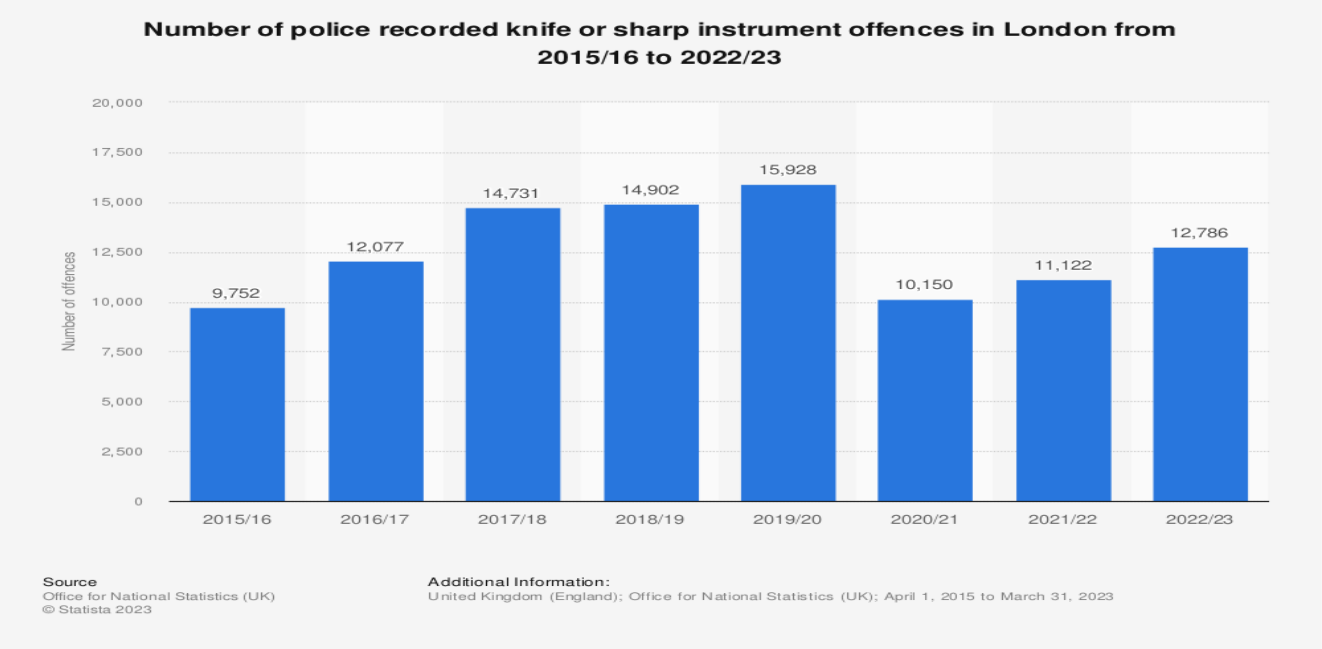
of cuts in public services and the welfare state (Kamarianos, Kiridis, Fotopoulos, & Halkiotis, 2019; British Youth Council, 2019).

Knife Crime: Status Symbols and Permacrisis

Crimes involving the use of a sharp object or knife have serious consequences for both the perpetrator and the victim. Knife crime is a social phenomenon where students carry and sometimes use light blades. Young social subjects, the majority of whom are students (whether on or off school premises), commit violent acts and use sharp objects, often targeting the victim's expensive mobile phone or other high-status symbols such as expensive footwear (i.e., sneakers/trainers). Young perpetrators also post their actions on digital social media. These individual characteristics highlight the specificity of this phenomenon. It is also important to note that many young victims express their fear of the frequent possession and use of a sharp object or knife and the posting of these traumatic incidents on social media. According to official figures from the UK Ministry, 1.1 million young people aged between 11 and 18 said that knife crime was their most urgent fear (Ben Kinsela Trust, 2020; Dinesh, Hughes, Bellis, Mitis & Racioppi, 2010).

For instance, young people who have faced problems, adverse socio-economic childhood experiences or live in vulnerable socio-economic environments (risk status) are more likely to possess sharp objects and/or be involved in knife crime. Knife crime is reported to be at its highest level in the last decade (British Youth Council Youth Select Committee, 2019).

Figure 1. *Frequency of Police Recorded Knife Crime incidents in London 2015/16 – 2022/23*



Source: *Office of National Statistics (2023).*

In 2007, alongside the Tackling youth knife crime project, the UK Home Office launched The Knife Crime Prevention Programme (TKAP) in close collaboration with other government departments and key stakeholders including local authorities, police forces, community groups and

professionals. In March 2009, TKAP was extended to young people aged 13 to 24. The projects aimed to reduce the number of young people killed or seriously injured by a knife (Home Office, 2009). To what the UK research experience documents, as summarized in the British Council's eighth report on knife crime as a broad social phenomenon affecting young people in terms of a generational epidemic (British Youth Council, 2019), we would like to add the issue of the relationship with the digital tool (Gouga, 2021).

More specifically, "[...] this generation of children is different from the previous one, because as opposed to growing up in the context of the socializing values of the local community they belong to, they are now probably also growing up in the context of the socializing values of digital social networking communities" (British Youth Council, 2019, p.30). Generation Z possesses significant digital characteristics that constitute digital native identities, with a high degree of technological readiness and digital needs and skills, which strategically mediate the conception and implementation of their daily lives (Holland et al., 2021; Adamopoulou, Panagopoulos & Kamarianos, 2021). In particular, the relationship with the world and the importance of digital connectivity leads us to associate socio-economic characteristics and structural conditions (such as crisis and risk) with generational characteristics. This association situates our study within the discussion of the generational characteristics of actors as they were formed under the consequences of the prolonged Greek permacrisis (Merriman, 2015; Mack & Palley, 2012).

Finally, the above characteristics and actions need to be examined within the Permacrisis framework, which refers to a continuum of crises that, in the case of Greek society, started in 2008 and continues to this day, highlighted by major crises such as the debt crisis, the refugee crisis, the pandemic, the energy crisis and the war in Ukraine. Thus, the increase in juvenile crime, with regards to the deterioration of living standards of citizens, vulnerable social groups, and management of diversity, and its connection to the rise of inequality, has significant critical importance in relation to the socio-economic framework of knife crime, permacrisis. The decline of the welfare state is directly linked to deregulation, liquidity, privatization, and the consolidation of a differentiated digital capitalist production model. Fifteen years after the global economic crisis, society faces new crises repeatedly. This expands the realization of insecurity and uncertainty among the social subject. (Panagopoulos, Gouga, & Kamarianos, 2023; Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011; Clarke, 2003).

Methodology

To achieve the purpose of this study, we adopted the qualitative approach, as the phenomenon is multidimensional and relevant research studies are limited and the choice of the qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. In this context and with the same criteria, the research technique of focus group and thematic analysis was chosen (Babbie, 2010). The specific choices of the qualitative methodological approach and the focus group technique allow us to adopt with flexibility, both the conception and design stage and the implementation stage of the research project. Thus, we will be able to understand the dynamically changing and differentiated contexts in which individuals grow and mature (Merriman, 2015). Hence, we conducted focus groups with university students of the

Department of Primary Education. A thematic analysis was implemented to analyze the collected data, and specific axes were formed (Creswell, 1998).

Results

The first question the focus group was asked was about the definition of the term Knife Crime. As we noticed, all participants said they were familiar with the term they reported that they often hear the word in the news. To maintain anonymity, participant names were replaced with alphanumeric pseudonyms (P1, P2, etc.).

> " …. I used to know what it meant. I have been aware of several incidents. I've seen them on the TV news." [P1]
>
> "I know from friends and also from the TV news." [P6]
>
> "I have discussed it with friends and also from stories on social media." [P3
>
> "…. It is a form of violence from young kids to young kids. We had discussed it at school……" [P7]

Then we discussed the importance of the phenomenon to them. This form of youth violence seems to have been a concern for them and is also associated with fear. Some of the participants linked this form of crime to unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, social inequality, and lack of education.

> "...these practices have increased since the last few years ..." [P2]
>
> "…. you can find yourself in a difficult situation for a phone..." [P9]

It is still important that several participants stated that they had the experience of having a sharp object or even a knife mainly as they had friends who carried it with them. Thus, the discussion expanded on the personal experiences of the participants. Mostly, the discussion focused on experiences from school life.

> "I've never had one personally, but my friends have." [P4]
>
> "…I know several kids at school who had something like this on them…" [P6]
>
> "…one time the teacher found a small knife that two boys were playing with in class […] I think they were expelled that day..." [P7]

A common theme of the discussion was the conclusion that something should be done about the problem as many expressed their fear of what might happen inside or outside the school.

> ".... I am worried because there is no protection…" [P1]
>
> "...something should be done ... but as long as there are children who have no food […] I don't think it will stop .... " [P8]
>
> "...I don't think it's children who don't have food or are from poor families […] it's children who like expensive items and can't afford them, like mobile phones which have become very expensive and parents can't buy them anymore…" [P10]

The debate concluded with a reference to the importance of new technologies. On the one hand, the theft of mobile phones at knifepoint is one of the most frequent incidents, and on the other hand, this young offence is often completed by its promotion on social media. This discussion

brought into focus the value framework of Generation Z (Adamopoulou, Panagopoulos & Kamarianos, 2021; Gouga, 2022).

> "…I know of one case where after beating the victim they then posted the incident on social media […] it was unacceptable […] [the perpetrators] think it is some act of cleverness..." [P9]

> "…think they are like those rappers in the video clips…" [P1]

To summarize, the majority of the participants linked delinquent acts to the socio-economic context and values of the present generation. Most of them believed that the target of the criminal act are symbols of status. Moreover, a number of the participants argued that the social media postings are indicative of the perpetrators' perceptions and values.

Conclusion

This study attempted to contribute to the understanding of the social phenomenon of young people carrying and sometimes using knives, also referred to as knife crime. Based on research data obtained through a focus group composed of undergraduate students from the Department of Education and Social Work at the University of Patras, it is clear that socio-economic conditions, and specifically the permacrisis, contribute to our understanding of this phenomenon. The continuation of the crisis in Greece and its socio-economic consequences has brought pre-existing social welfare problems and weaknesses of the welfare state to the surface, the most important of which are those of the educational system. The analysis suggests that the causes of this delinquent behavior can be traced back to socio-economic inequalities and emerging value frameworks, which differ from the value framework of contemporary education and are closer to the value framework of today's entertainment society.

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Digital Citizenship Education in Primary Schooling in Greece: Teachers' Perceptions During the first wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post-COVID Educational Recovery[1]

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Abstract

The present quantitative research investigated the implementation of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) in primary education, during the first wave of pandemic in Greece. A total of 141 teachers responded that they perceive Digital Citizenship (DC) as identical with digital social responsibility and participation in the digital society. Within this frame, human rights, knowledge, and critical understanding of them are crucial. Teachers approached topics of DC mainly through cooperating teaching. During the implementation of emergency remote teaching, inadequate infrastructure, technological equipment, and teacher's training, and restrictions imposed by the curriculum, are the most important obstacles against the effective implementation of DCE.

Keywords: digital citizenship; digital citizenship education; primary education teachers; cooperative teaching method; Covid-19 pandemic first wave; educational recovery

Introduction

The growth of digital technology has contributed to the creation of a new form of digital citizenship (DC) (Choi, 2016), a field that has attracted growing academic and research interest and challenged traditional approaches of citizenship education (Vagen et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2021). Democratic citizenship is experienced and exerted not only in the 'real' world, but also in the 'virtual' world, as well as through their interconnectedness. DC involves new forms of rights, duties, social networking, political acting, and democratic participation (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020). The digital notion of citizenship provides new opportunities for active social participation and integration, the development of intercultural competencies and lifelong learning, which result in the enhancement of the overall democratic culture (CE, 2020). Additionally, the proper use of digital environments can ensure that all citizens will be able to master certain

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competencies and equally enjoy the benefits of the digital revolution, thus enhancing social pluralism (CE 2020).

The field of DC has not attracted extensive research, although it is rapidly growing (Chen et al., 2021). Most research on digital citizenship education (DCE) is carried out on the level of highest education (Richardson et al., 2021). At the same time, there is insufficient empirical research for the development of DC for children (Chen et al., 2021). Accordingly, insufficiency is observed in understanding the importance of the implementation and of the key elements and aspects, which define DC (Pliogou et al., 2022). Studies on DCE are even more limited, especially within the subjects of Social Sciences (Choi, 2016). More intense and further research may promote the integration of DC into the Social Sciences curriculum, aiming at promoting active digital citizens (Chen et al., 2021; Romero-Hall & Li, 2020; Martin et al., 2020). The pedagogical dimensions of both DCE and active interventions must be further explored, especially with regard to children in primary and early childhood education (Fediy et al., 2021). Such enquiries must focus equally on DC as it relates to responsible online behavior (Jones and Mitchell 2016), psycho-emotional aspects of personality (Ohler, 2011), social engagement (Frau-Meigs et al., 2017), and as a crucial skill for responding to the increased demands of the digital world (Ribble, 2015).

The role of teachers is equally important. Their knowledge, beliefs, perspectives, attitudes, expectations, skills, competencies, self-efficacy in ICTs and access to digital resources play a significant role in the teaching practices of DCE, in learning outcomes, educational goals and the entire educational process (Vagen et al., 2023; Gözüm et al., 2022; Pliogou et al., 2022). There is, however, a research gap regarding teachers' knowledge and perspectives on DC, skills and competencies which are considered essential for its effective implementation, and what actions they take to integrate notions of DC while teaching, especially in primary education (Vagen et al., 2023; Tadlaoui-Brahmi et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2021).

Digital Citizenship Education

DC is arguably a multifaceted phenomenon (Choi, 2016). When the term 'digital citizenship' first appeared, it was closely related to the notions of digital access and digital literacy (Chen et al., 2021). Searson et al. (2015) provide a broad definition, where DC relates to individual attitude, under interactive and cooperative conditions, which involve the use of all digital tools. The conceptual frameworks and definitions adopted by most researchers who examine DC are those which focus on the responsibility of the digital citizen, according to rules defining proper and responsible behavior toward the use of technology. They encapsulate aspects such as cyberbullying, digital footprint, digital privacy, digital netiquette, and digital identity (Ribble 2015), according to pertinent norms and digital ethics (Komalasari & Anggraini, 2020). Lately, however, there has been a shift toward approaches which focus more on economic, social, and political participation (Chen et al., 2021). DC has begun to be related to active social participation and upgraded to a global right (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2016). DC is largely dependent upon special skills tightly connected with the internet access, such as critical evaluation of digital information, privacy and security policy (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019).

The content of DC in school settings is primarily integrated into the Computer Science and Social Sciences curricula, which elaborate notions of democracy and human rights (Başarmak et al., 2019). It has to be stressed that the learning process of exercising, defending, promoting, diffusing and safeguarding of democratic ideals values and rights, along with respect toward human dignity, justice, equity, the rule of law, and promoting the recognition of cultural diversity (CE, 2016) is a pertinent goal of DCE (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020). Broadly speaking, DCE involves modes of participation in democratic processes and in digital environments, and aims at helping students acquire knowledge and develop the skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values they need to be effectively competent digital citizens (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020; Frau-Meigs et al., 2017).

Drawing from the insights of Biesta's (2020) critical approach toward citizenship, Choi's definition encompasses four main categories: media and information literacy, ethics, participation, and critical resistance. It attempts to include all approaches of DC by referring to skills, thoughts, and actions while using the Internet, which allow people to understand, browse, participate and transform themselves, the community, society and the world (Choi, 2016).

The Present Study

This study was designed to provide answers questions concerning DCE in primary education through the exploration of teachers' perspectives. Specifically, it aimed to explore the importance of DC and the pedagogical conditions under which Social Sciences lessons were conducted within the Greek educational system, during the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020.

In April 2020, the operation of all school units was suspended on an international level, and emergency remote education was implemented at all educational levels, in an attempt to preserve the continuity of the learning/teaching process (UNESCO, 2020). However, while the pandemic intensified the digital transformation of the society on a global scale, something that could have facilitated the enhancement of DC, it also exacerbated pre-existing inequalities concerning digital access and digital literacy (Henry et al., 2021).

This study was conducted during the first wave of the pandemic in Greece. At that time, the implementation of emergency remote teaching on a national level caused a series of difficulties and challenges. These included difficulty in access to digital resources, effective transfer of educational and pedagogical practices of traditional schooling to distance education, insufficient teachers' training in ICTs, parental involvement, social inequalities and psychological-emotional pressure on all participating members (Papandreou & Vellopoulou, 2022; Samioti, 2021).

We aimed to explore teachers' perspectives toward DCE during the first wave of the pandemic. Specifically, we wished to:

a. investigate the importance of DCE and
b. explore the implementation of DCE within the Greek educational system through the module of 'Social and Political Education' (SPE).

To this end, we attempted to answer the following six research questions (RQ):

RQ1: *How is DC defined*?

RQ2: *Which values, skills, attitudes and aspects of knowledge and critical under-standing are cultivated, promoted, or supported through DC*?

RQ3: *Is there a connection between values, skills, attitudes, and aspects of knowledge and critical understanding*?

RQ4: *Are there any aspects of DC within the school textbook of 'SPE' and to what degree are aspects of DC processed within the specific module*?

RQ5: *Which teaching methods are applied while teaching DC within the specific module*?

RQ6: *Which are the main obstacles against an effective implementation of DCE during the Covid-19 pandemic*?

Materials and Methods

Data collection took place during the first wave of the pandemic. It began in April and was completed in the first ten days June of 2020, which is the typical end of the school year. All data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, available on an online platform with a first page instructional cover letter. Participants were informed of aims of the research as well as the possibility of refusal or withdrawal, as well as the protection of confidentiality and privacy, following the ethical guidelines of the research process.

The survey was distributed to approximately 580 teachers who taught the module 'SPE' to the sixth grade of Greek primary schools at the region of Peloponnese. Because of the voluntary approach employed in this research, the April Easter-break closely following initial distribution, the time-pressure of the incumbent end-of-the-school-year in June, and the strict pandemic restrictions of physical isolation, which functioned as an obstacle against communication between teachers, only 141 completed questionnaires were collected; a response rate of 24.31%. Although the sample is small, we argue that it is valid and credible for the purposes of quantitative research in the field of Pedagogics, particularly as we do not intend to articulate any inferences from it. We should also note that 4 out 5 participants were female. This deviation from the general population is not unexpected, as the over-representation of women is common in primary education (The World Bank, n.d.). Participants' gender did not affect the results.

The research instrument included 24 items, divided into three main sections. The first section contained ten items related to respondents' demographic characteristics. These included their gender, age, municipality of teacher employment, educational level, ICT knowledge, training in citizenship education, aims and priorities of the education of the 21st century, cooperation with other teachers, students' involvement through freedom of speech and participatory practices and the importance of cultivating the notion of active citizenship to students inside/outside the school. The second section contained five items exploring the importance and basic notions of DC (values, skills, attitudes, and knowledge). The third section contained nine items exploring the concept of DC in the module of 'SPE' and the main obstacles against an effective implementation of DC during emergency remote education. Items were varyingly measured on nominal (single selection, question catalogue, networking questions) and ordinal (primarily 5-point Likert items [1: Not at all, 5: extremely] and one 10-point numeric item). Two questions were open-ended.

The survey items led to the definition of the variables employed in the analysis presented below. The resulting data was tested for accuracy of data entry and missing values. Data were transferred to a statistical suite (IBM SPSS), for the production of tables and figures. These included the presentation of absolute and/or relative frequencies of the survey item responses and Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficients, to investigate the magnitude of the ordinal correlation coefficients.

Results

RQ1. How is DC defined?

Data analysis was based on descriptive quantitative analysis. The first question that teachers answered concerned how they define DC (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequencies of participants answering the definition of 'DC'.

	Not at all		***Slightly***		***Moderately***		***Very***		***Extremely***		***Total***	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Digital social responsibility	0	0	5	3.5	22	15.6	47	33.3	67	47.5	141	100
Participation in the digital society	1	0.7	5	3.5	33	23.4	62	44.0	40	28.4	141	100
Digital civic literacy	0	0.0	4	2.8	23	16.3	57	40.4	57	40.4	141	100

Just under half of the teachers (47.5%) responded that DC is extremely defined as social responsibility. 40.4% responded that they define DC extremely as digital civic literacy. DC is very much defined as participation in the digital society for the 44% of the participants and as digital civic literacy for the 40.4%.

Teachers provided additional definitions for DC. Some of them connected DC with digital literacy and mentioned various definitions, including the 'cultivation of digital skills' and 'development and enhancement of digital competence'. Other definitions emphasized the importance of civic/political ideology and the cultivation of a civic culture, mentioning, for example 'development and formulation of political thought, suggestions, action and interaction through a digital environment'. Finally, they perceived DC as identical to promoting active citizenship (a concept which strengthens and fosters democratic values) and mentioned notions, such as 'openness, inclusivity, the pursuit of common good and equal participation'.

RQ2. Which Values, Skills, Attitudes and Aspects of Knowledge and Critical Understanding are Cultivated, Promoted or Supported through DC?

Teachers were called on to rank values, skills, attitudes, and knowledge, as concepts connected and promoted through DC. Teachers were initially asked to define the values connected with DC (see Table 2).

Table 2. Frequencies of participants concerning the values connected with 'digital citizenship'.

	Not at all		***Slightly***		***Moderately***		***Very***		***Extremely***		***Total***	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Human dignity	1	0.7	5	3.5	27	19.1	44	31.2	64	45.4	141	100
Human rights	1	0.7	2	1.4	24	17.0	34	24.1	80	56.7	141	100
Cultural diversity	2	1.4	2	1.4	23	16.3	50	35.5	64	45.4	141	100
Democracy	1	0.7	2	1.4	19	13.5	41	29.1	78	55.3	141	100
Justice	1	0.7	2	1.4	19	13.5	46	32.6	73	51.8	141	100
Equality	1	0.7	2	1.4	18	12.8	42	29.8	78	55.3	141	100

When asked about the skills promoted through DC (see Table 3) participants' responses prioritized two values as extremely promoted: 'digital civic literacy' (54,6%) and 'participation in the digital society' (52,5%). 'Cultivation of analytical and critical thinking' follows in ranking (39%). 'Communicative skills' and 'cooperation' share the same ranked preference, and 'flexibility and adaptability' (30,5%) are following. Skills highly ranked, as indicated by respondents, are 'autonomous learning skills' and the last is 'hearing and observation'. While 'empathy' and 'conflict resolution' are very much cultivated. Teachers indicated other skills which are also cultivated through DC: 'pluralistic perspective and inquiry political thought', 'skepticism with a clear glance', 'empathy and the sense of justice', and, finally, 'learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together'.

Table 3. Frequencies of participants referring to skills promoted through Digital Citizenship.

	Not at all		***Slightly***		***Moderately***		***Very***		***Extremely***		***Total***	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Autonomous learning skills	2	1.4	7	5.0	36	25.5	56	39.7	40	28.4	141	100
Analytical and critical thinking	2	1.4	11	7.8	29	20.6	44	31.2	55	39.0	141	100
Listening and observation	1	0.7	16	11.3	33	23.4	49	34.8	42	29.8	141	100
Empathy	2	1.4	23	16.3	43	30.5	34	24.1	39	27.7	141	100
Flexibility and adaptability	1	0.7	13	9.2	31	22.0	53	37.6	43	30.5	141	100
Language skills	1	0.7	20	14.2	46	32.6	49	34.8	25	17.7	141	100
Communicative skills	1	0.7	15	10.6	26	18.4	54	38.3	45	31.9	141	100
Multilingual skills	1	0.7	18	12.8	33	23.4	48	34.0	41	29.1	141	100
Cooperation	2	1.4	20	14.2	29	20.6	45	31.9	45	31.9	141	100
Conflict resolution	4	2.8	30	21.3	45	31.9	33	23.4	29	20.6	141	100
Participation in digital society	0	0.0	7	5.0	16	11.3	44	31.2	74	52.5	141	100
Digital civic literacy	0	0.0	9	6.4	20	14.2	35	24.8	77	54.6	141	100

Respondents were asked to choose among six (6) attitudes, and they ranked 'responsibility' and 'self-efficacy' as extremely (34%) promoted through DC (see Table 4). 'Openness to difference/diversity' and 'respect' are the following ones (31,2%). According to the gradation scale, in the indication 'very', teachers' first choice was 'self-efficacy', followed by 'tolerance of ambiguity'. The attitude which is promoted through DC and was not mentioned in previous choices is 'politeness'. In conclusion, DC promotes all six attitudes, either 'moderately', 'very' or

'extremely'. Other attitudes indicated by teachers were the following: 'self-improvement', 'positive attitude toward globalization and modern technologies', and 'the development of education and tolerance'.

Table 4. Frequencies of participants concerning attitudes promoted through Digital Citizenship.

	Not at all		***Slightly***		***Moderately***		***Very***		***Extremely***		***Total***	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Openness toward difference/diversity	2	1.4	15	10.6	41	29.1	39	27.7	44	31.2	141	100
Respect	1	.7	20	14.2	36	25.5	40	28.4	44	31.2	141	100
Politeness	1	.7	19	13.5	43	30.5	42	29.8	36	25.5	141	100
Responsibility	2	1.4	13	9.2	35	24.8	43	30.5	48	34.0	141	100
Self-efficacy	1	.7	7	5.0	29	20.6	56	39.7	48	34.0	141	100
Tolerance of ambiguity	6	4.3	21	14.9	44	31.2	44	31.2	26	18.4	141	100

When asked about knowledge and critical understanding promoted through DC (see Table 5), respondents reported that students acquire knowledge and critical understanding of human rights through DC to an extreme extent (33.3%). Respondents also proposed that knowledge about other cultures, language and communication, and the Media. Knowledge concerning the Media (41.8%) and language and communication (40.4%) are very much promoted through DC. Knowledge about politics and culture/civilization of the country were also very much promoted through DC. Knowledge and critical understanding of economy, law and themselves were moderately ranked.

Table 5. Frequencies of participants concerning knowledge and critical under-standing promoted through DC.

	Not at all		***Slightly***		***Moderately***		***Very***		***Extremely***		***Total***	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
…of ourselves?	2	1.4	15	10.6	52	36.9	40	28.4	32	22.7	141	100
…of language and communication?	2	1.4	12	8.5	37	26.2	57	40.4	33	23.4	141	100
…of politics?	1	.7	10	7.1	48	34.0	56	39.7	26	18.4	141	100
…of law?	0	0.0	12	8.5	52	36.9	51	36.2	26	18.4	141	100
…of human rights?	0	0.0	13	9.2	33	23.4	48	34.0	47	33.3	141	100
…of our culture/civilization?	0	0.0	12	8.5	42	29.8	55	39.0	32	22.7	141	100
…of other cultures/civilizations?	0	0.0	11	7.8	47	33.3	48	34.0	35	24.8	141	100
…of religion?	5	3.5	25	17.7	50	35.5	43	30.5	18	12.8	141	100
…of history?	1	.7	17	12.1	48	34.0	51	36.2	24	17.0	141	100
…of the Media?	0	0.0	12	8.5	37	26.2	59	41.8	33	23.4	141	100
…of economy?	1	.7	10	7.1	56	39.7	47	33.3	27	19.1	141	100
…of the environment?	1	.7	12	8.5	50	35.5	52	36.9	26	18.4	141	100
…of sustainable development/sustainability?	1	.7	15	10.6	47	33.3	50	35.5	28	19.9	141	100

RQ3. Is there a Connection between Values, Skills, Attitudes, and Aspects of Knowledge and Critical Understanding?

We also examined the existence of relationship among values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding, notions encapsulated within and promoted through DC (see Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation between values, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and critical understanding promoted through DC.

1st variable	2nd variable	Kendall's tau-b	Sig.
Attitude:	*Skill*:		
Respect	Empathy	.632	.000
Respect	Cooperation	.621	.000
Respect	Conflict resolution	.635	.000
Responsibility	Analytical and critical thinking	.628	.000
Knowledge and critical understanding of:	*Attitude*:		
Ourselves	Respect	.669	.000
Ourselves	Politeness	.656	.000
Ourselves	Responsibility	.644	.000
Human rights	Respect	.604	.000

The analysis of the degree of correlation Kendall's tau b correlation coefficient between values, skills, attitudes, and knowledge and critical thinking, which are all promoted through DC, resulted in strong positive correlations (from .604 to .669), which affirms the relationships between the two variables of each pair. More specifically, when the attitude of respect is promoted, skills of empathy, cooperation and conflict resolution are more effectively cultivated. While, when responsibility is promoted, analytical and critical thinking are cultivated. Knowledge and critical understanding or conceptualization of our self is correlated with the attitudes of respect, politeness, and responsibility. In cases where teachers indicated that DC promotes and supports knowledge and critical understanding of human rights, they argued that it equally promotes respect.

RQ4. Are there any Aspects of DC within the School Textbook of 'SPE' and to what degree are Aspects of DC Processed within the Specific Module?

Teachers were asked whether they could discern topics of DC within the school textbook of the module 'SPE', which promotes civic education in Greek primary education. More than half of the participating teachers agreed that there are "many" or "too many" topics of DC within the school textbook. 43% of respondents (61 teachers) reported the existence of "enough" topics of digital citizenship within the 'SPE' school textbook. 10% (14 teachers) indicated that there is a "broad range" of topics within the specific textbook, while 37% of respondents indicated the existence of "few" topics. Almost half of the respondents indicated that there few or not any topics of DC.

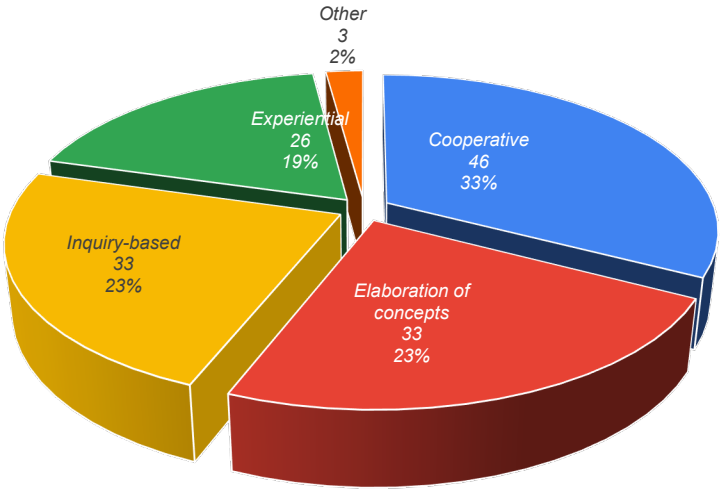
Teachers were also asked to what degree they elaborate notions of DC while teaching 'SPE'. Almost half of the teachers indicated that they sometimes elaborate concepts of DC within the

module of 'SPE'. Almost 1/3 of teachers indicated that they elaborate concepts of DC very often. Fewer (19%) indicated that they rarely elaborate such concepts, and, finally, only 2% and 1% respectively indicated that they "always" and "never" elaborate concepts of DC.

RQ5. Which Teaching Methods are Applied while Teaching DC within the Specific Module?

Teachers asked to define the teaching methods they applied while teaching DC (see Figure 1). They reported most frequently teaching using cooperative methods (33%), followed by elaboration of concepts and inquiry-based methods (23%) and then experiential methods (19%). Teachers indicated 'other' teaching methods including "task-based teaching", "classroom discussion" and "explanatory teaching".

Figure 1. *Frequencies and percentages of participants according to teaching method applied for promoting DC*.



RQ6. What were the main Obstacles against an Effective Implementation of DCE during the Pandemic?

The final question respondents were called on to reply concerned the most important impediments against an effective implementation of DCE, while considering the specific conditions of emergency remote education, imposed due to the pandemic. Responses were grouped thematically. Many teachers highlighted the lack of material resources and specifically indicated: "proper equipment", "school digital equipment", "lack of resources", "lack of digital resources", "pressure of distance teaching in front of a computer screen", "lack of interaction with students/children". Some respondents indicated the lack of teachers' training, reporting: "there was no proper training", "lack of training", "no systematic teachers' training". Restrictions imposed by the curriculum also posed a problem, with the following indicative responses: "extensive content of the curriculum", "the subject content", "lack of open educational programs" and "complying to the curriculum". Respondents also reported the problems including: "lack of interest of teachers", "lack of critical thinking", "parents' reactions",

"unequitable access to the digital world", "protection of privacy", and "unrestricted/unlimited time of access to the internet for students".

Discussion

Based on our findings, teachers seemed to understand the pivotal elements and aspects and the overall content of DC and perceive it as a multidimensional phenomenon with various proliferations, in accordance with the extant literature (Chen et al., 2021). Their responses indicated that they perceive and approach DC more as participation within the digital society, and not only as digital literacy. However, while they perceive social, economic, and political participation as a crucial aspect of DC, they fail to connect the term with more contemporary definitions, which move away from learning to participating and actively engaging (von Gillern et al., 2022; Buchholz et al., 2020) and focus on critical resistance and empowerment (Vagen et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2021).

Prior literature on DCE highlights the inadequacy of approaches concerning the development of digital skills within educational settings (Zimmermann, 2022). This is especially true in primary education, which focuses on the development of a broad array of other skills (van de Oudeweetering & Voogt, 2018). This study highlighted the increased teachers' preference for digital skills, such as digital literacy, which can be cultivated, developed, and enhanced through DCE, accentuating at the same time its significance for future digital citizens. As Walters et al. (2019) suggest, however, students especially of primary education can be inflicted by unattended, irresponsible, and unlimited access to technological resources, as they are on their first steps toward digital literacy and cannot fully comprehend the interaction between the real and the digital world, the offline and online ecology (Garcia & Santiago de Roock, 2021).

The inherent value of human rights and their contribution to the knowledge and critical understanding of students are a pivotal aspect of DCE. Modes of active participation in the digital community align with human rights, along with fundamental notions of freedom encapsulated within democracy (CE, 2014), thus highlighting their increased intersectionality (Perry & Roda, 2017). The extensive diffusion of digital technology is a highly contested area, as it influences individual lives more than ever and, ironically, creates the ability to both exercise and suppress human rights. Extant literature, however, supports global digital environments' ability to advocate for and promote human rights in a way that exceeds narrow national and/or cultural boundaries. Citizenship rights, ideas and visions can be mobilized and motivate action, unite the individual subject with collectivizes to progress more effectively goals and confer power across space and time, by breaking local, national and global boundaries, disrupting prevailing discourses on digital addiction and passivity (Green, 2020; Monshipouri, 2017). DC is dependent on a wide array of specified skills and competencies, which have to do with the internet use, such as the critical approach and process of online information, internet safety, protection of privacy and anonymity. It also relies on broader concepts of skills attributed to citizens, such as respect to others, empathy, tolerance and acknowledgement and appreciation of democracy as a common good (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020). Thus, DCE entails aspects of human rights education (Raulin-Serrier et al., 2020), and as Frau-Meigs et al. (2017) suggest, students can accomplish

their role and fulfil the vision of DC in a holistic perspective only if human rights education becomes an integral part of modern curricula.

Even from an early age, students can acquire knowledge, cultivate skills, competencies and endorse the values of democracy and human rights. This makes the implementation of DCE important. Teachers perceive and define DC more as digital social responsibility, digital civic literacy and participation in the digital society. They also provided alternative definitions of DC according to their own conceptual framework. These were similarly related to the concepts of digital literacy and active citizenship. These findings align with extant literature (Örtegren, 2022; Tadlaoui-Brahmi et al., 2022; Romero-Hall & Li 2020; Martin et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Hollandsworth et al., 2017), which highlights teachers' perceptions of DC in primary education as mainly constructed by responsible use of Information Technology (IT) (Richardson & Milovidov, 2021; Jones & Mitchell, 2016) and democratic participation.

As core values connected and embedded within DC, human rights, equality, and democracy are at the forefront of teachers' preference. Teachers emphasized the cultivation of skills through DC, and indicated digital civic literacy as the most prominent skill promoted, followed by participation within digital society. Teachers also suggested that DC cultivated skills such as analytical and critical thinking, communication skills and cooperation as well. To a lesser extent, this was also true for empathy and conflict resolution. Participants suggested that responsibility and self-efficacy, followed by openness to diversity and respect, were the most crucial DC-related attitudes. According to participants, DC enhances knowledge and critical understanding, especially with regard to human rights, Media, language, and communication. Human rights were considered a highly important value promoted through DC, but it was also suggested that knowledge and critical understanding of them is equally developed. These findings are supported by existing literature, with similar research in teachers' indicative preferences of values, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge promoted trough DCE, while emphasis is also drawn upon other notions, including Media, rights, responsibility, empathy, conflict resolution and human rights (von Gillern et al., 2022).

Respect as an attitude is correlated with empathy, cooperation, conflict resolution, knowledge and critical understand of ourselves, and human rights. This too aligns with extant literature (Martin et al., 2020; Kim & Choi, 2018). Specifically, similar research that explored the significance of respect, as an attitude promoted to young people through DCE, highlights the positive relationship between respect and active citizenship that encompasses tolerance and empathy (Jones & Mitchell, 2016).

Responses regarding teaching materials and methods, specifically within the 'SPE' course, were particularly interesting. More than half of teacher respondents reported "enough" or "many" aspects/topics of DC within the 'SPE' textbook. One-third indicated an inadequate number of topics. The cooperative teaching method was reported as most commonly employed for the 'SPE' course, followed, to a lesser extent, by the elaboration of concepts, inquiry-based teaching, and, finally, experiential teaching, while other teaching methods, task-based learning and discussion, were also indicated. Extant research on literacy in the Media as an element of DC (Chlapoutaki & Dinas, 2014) advocates the practice of cooperative teaching/learning and discussion methods as the most prominent in primary education (von Gillern et al., 2022; Buchholz et al., 2020). Task-

based learning seems to have an effective influence on the comprehension of educational material provided on DC (Fediy et al., 2021). Teachers were also asked to indicate to what extent they elaborate and process aspects of DC during the lesson of 'SPE'. Their responses portrayed an overall positive assessment. Indeed, almost half reported that they process "enough" elements of DC, and the one third reported accordingly "much".

Finally, we attempted to explore most common impediments to the effective implementation of DCE, during the pandemic. Most of the participants indicated the lack of infrastructure, material resources and equipment, insufficient teachers' training and restrictions posed by the curriculum, which are common within the entire educational system (Başarmak et al., 2019). Our findings are supported by extant literature, which traces teachers' insufficient training in DC and highlights the importance of the design and implementation of specific educational programmers that will effectively respond to such demands (Örtegren, 2022; Arredondo et al., 2020). The majority of participants indicated the conditions of the emergency remote education, where all stakeholders involved were abruptly called to get involved without any prior training in ICT and with inadequate preparation. Emphasis was placed on the fact this, despite acknowledgement of the fact that it was a temporary option to ensure the continuity of the school year and provide a digital space for students, teachers and families to see, communicate and interact with each other. Extensive extant literature supports this finding and connects it with social inequalities driven or exacerbated by the pandemic (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Atiles et al., 2021), which strengthened teachers' and students' interaction and digital literacy practices under harsh conditions (Hodges et al., 2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020). It also moved the entire educational community to critically reflect, move and expand further, from narrow perceptions of digital equipment, reading and writing (Gözüm et al., 2022; Buchholz et al., 2020).

The pandemic undoubtedly severely affected education, albeit disproportionately across global settings. There is nevertheless a shift, after crisis management, toward recovery and mostly toward the digital transformation of education along with sustainable development (Galzada, 2022), primarily based upon the idea that humanity can capitalize lessons learned from the unprecedented crisis. The post-pandemic era is primarily dominated by increased digitalization, accelerated forms of digital citizenship, and demand for innovation in education (Wolfenden, 2022). The above are also driven by the frame of the European Skills Agenda (2020) and the Digital Education Action Plan (2020), which aim to enhance digital use, preparedness and resilience of educational systems in EU countries, all of which were pre-existing notions within the European agenda (Simeonidis et al., 2021).

The digital transformation of the educational system cannot happen effortlessly or instantly. It is a long and complex process, which demands a combination of research, policy and practice. The main digital transformation key aspects for 2020 were the customization of the learning experience, issues of accessibility, the Internet of Things, security, and financing of schools (Begicevic Redep, 2021). The European Commission (2019) report on key findings of the '2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education', in which 31 countries participated, refers to issues of connectivity, related to coding and the gender gap, teachers' training, parents and parental involvement on the topic, students' and teachers' efficacy and confidence while using digital resources, and so forth (Begicevic Redep, 2021). The findings of the 13th Policy Dialogue Forum in Kigali, Rwanda (2021), which dealt with innovation in teacher practice and policy as key aspects

of educational recovery, are equally important. These findings, which treat the professional role of teachers as crucial, argue that the concept of innovation is not a vague term. To the contrary, they argue it can be realized and fostered through:

i. teachers' autonomy and agency,
ii. the creation of appropriate conditions for teachers to be able to innovate,
iii. the recognition of teachers as contributors to innovation,
iv. the integration of inquiry into teacher preparation and development,
v. moving to a teacher professional development that will be teacher-led and connected to practice,
vi. creating sustainable innovation in teacher education,
vii. recognizing how important social dialogue is in teacher policy development,
viii. fostering partnerships for innovation, and,
ix. policies that combine structural aspects and flexibility to foster innovation (Wolfenden, 2022).

The entire discourse on students' engagement with ICT should further explore the various forms of digital literacy and examine whether they have a general purpose, they are school-related or for personal/recreational use (Fraillon et al., 2020). The intensification of access to the digital world due to the pandemic can shift toward more ethical and/or critical perspectives and pedagogic interventions that problematize the evaluation a number of subjects. These include the validity of the online information flow, the development of spaces for students and young people to respectfully interact with others who express different opinions, the digital interaction driven by social empathy for the community's benefit, and how people can more effectively balance digital engagement with social interaction in the real, post-pandemic, world (Buchholz et al., 2020). Under this framework, future educational policies reactions will be more prepared in similar conditions of emergency remote education. As such, they will be in a position to function more effectively and concretely and increase the resilience and sustainability of the entire educational ecosystem, both inside and outside the school context.

Implications

This study has important implications for both future policies and academic research, as it highlights the increased demand for further research in the field of DC. We argue, particularly, for the further and more focused exploration of the pedagogical conditions, which can most effectively mobilize and promote DC. Teachers' perspectives of other educational levels, along with students' and parents' perspectives and demands could be investigated as well, to foster a comprehensive model for integration within the formal curriculum, responding to the needs of each educational level. We also see merit in further and more general research on school-text books within the Greek educational system, to shed in-depth light to the topic through a comparative perspective. Moreover, the findings of this study can be also capitalized on by Social Sciences educators, who can further acknowledge the significance and the wide array of values, skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors embodied within DC, and grasp the immense potentiality of DCE.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the present research. Our findings should be interpreted with a certain degree of caution, as they were drawn from a relatively small sample in a specific country. As such, they may not be indicative for educators at other educational levels within the same country or for foreign educational systems. As a result, we cannot infer at either the local or, especially, the global level, given the variety of cultural, economic, political, and social conditions characterizing each country. Further examinations could have involved other aspects, which have previously been found to influence participants' perceptions towards DCE, such as gender.

Conclusions

This study was an immediate response to an unprecedent global upheaval and an attempt to explore teachers' perspectives on DCE within the Greek educational system. As such, it can provide a useful, explanatory framework and a methodological tool for further or similar research, especially if we consider that data were drawn meanwhile the decisive and crucial first wave of the pandemic, which was, at that point, unmapped, educationally.

Notwithstanding the increased demand for DCE, there is insufficient intent for the integration of the field in educational curricula. The ideological and conceptual framework of DC and the acknowledgement of its overall contribution and positive impact are lacking (Pliogou et al., 2022). The educational hierarchy, leadership and administrators responsible for the formal educational design and implementation, could endorse DCE within the broader educational settings more comprehensively. Indeed, they could assist and facilitate teachers with the provision of material resources, digital equipment, and teacher training. This could more effectively promote DCE, as an integral aspect of modern schooling, which is the core of participatory democracy, especially under the unprecedented conditions during the pandemic that overwhelmingly affected all sectors of human life –and especially education (Mirra et al., 2022).

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