DIVERSITY
CRISIS
CONFLICT
& EDUCATIONAL ADAPTATION

Editors:

Michael John Katsillis, Tatiana García-Vélez and Liliana Jacott

CiCea Children's Identity & Citizenship

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Diversity, Conflict, Crisis and Educational Adaptation

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Editor's Note

Society and its actors exist in a constant state of flux. Understanding society is, thus, an inherently ongoing endeavor. Some may perceive this perpetual moving of the proverbial goalpost as uniquely frustrating. It corresponds, however, to a perpetually expanding body of knowledge. For social scientists and members of the humanities, this as a unique opportunity to delve deeper into those concepts and phenomena, which they chose to define their lives.

Sometimes, the changes represented by this fluid state are subtle. Perhaps, where once one group prospered, another arises to take its place. Perhaps we gain the means to break a well-established process down into finer mechanisms. Sometimes, these changes are coarse. These changes are not always abrupt, nor are they necessarily evident, as they occur. Once they come to the forefront of our society, however, they affect economies, social and educational policies, mass media and even daily lives.

We live in a time of multiple, meaningful, and substantial changes. War has skirted the borders of the European Union and displaced populations across its borders, but remained largely abstract concept for most of living memory. In 2022, renewed hostilities and a continuation of the 2014 invasion of Ukrainian territory brought major international conflict to the borders of the European Union, displacing nearly ten times as many people as the previous closest conflict in Kosovo, 30 years prior. It directly and indirectly affected the lives of its citizens in an immediate, substantial, abrupt, and ongoing fashion. Fear of the ramifications of modern war suddenly loomed in the forefront of the public consciousness.

Fear was not a new concept, for the European citizen, by this point; nor for citizens of the world, for that matter. Indeed, the entire world was nearly two years into a pandemic crisis that had fundamentally altered the lives of every citizen on the planet. Fear had come to define daily life in ways that were previously only the purview of society's vulnerable members and groups. This fear and the preventative measures it necessitated altered daily life in heretofore unheard of ways. In a world of modern medical marvels, the concept of a pandemic was so far removed from the public consciousness as to be the subject of fiction and idioms.

In the grand scheme of human history, however, neither of these two changes were novel. Indeed, outside the relatively narrow scope of the "Western" world, war and plague are distressingly commonplace expressions of conflict and crisis. Often, however, the most interesting opportunities to study phenomena stem not from their own novelty, as such, but rather the novel circumstances in which they express themselves.

This is also the case for diversity within societies. Diversity is a well-established concept and one, which, if societies were more honest with themselves, has been prevalent throughout large swathes of their histories. Nevertheless, expressions of diversity are often as varied as the societal mélanges they represent. As such, each corresponds to a slightly different set of characteristics and characteristic needs. This perspective is especially beneficial in societies that have chosen or been conditioned to regard themselves as mono-linguistic, mono-cultural, or mono-ethnic and for whom the advent of plurality can represent severe culture shock.

None of these changes, however, exist in a void. Nor are the examples presented above the only expressions of each. Indeed, all three concepts frequently interact with or mediate each other. Conflict can create crisis, resulting in population migration and increasing diversity.

Increased diversity can lead to conflict, which can in turn spark crisis conditions. Diversity, Crisis, and Conflict impact and are, moreover, guided and characterized by the reactions of social actors and an ever-evolving set of media outlets and platforms. Formal and informal media outlets alike collaborate (or collude) in informing and shaping public discourse. Indeed, media can masterfully underplay the extent and overplay the ramifications of diversity within societies, increasing tensions and conflicts –setting in motion the vicious cycle outlined above.

The fundamental characteristic of each of these and, really, *any* substantial changes in the status quo, however, is arguably the change they, in turn, impose on society as a whole. These changes provoke shifts in the social paradigm, which the education of the social actor must shift to meet. It is the means and mechanisms by and through which the educational mechanism and its actors, the educators, adapt to these conditions that we concern ourselves with, in this anthology.

To this end, we have gathered representative examples of research examining the ramifications of change, diversity, plurality, crisis and conflict from researchers across Europe and beyond. Some of these studies delve into the way crisis impacts fundamental formative education. Others deal with the ramifications of externally imposed diversity on contemporary societies still attempting to come to grips with their own multicultural character. Some examine long-term effects and historical ramifications of media and the public consciousness on the aftermath of both conflict and diversity. Some concern themselves with how societies evolve in the face of a changing world and what this means for their fledgling and future citizens. Some examine how ongoing change challenges established notions of the fundamental character of the existence of the social actor and, thus, the character of society as a whole. Still others examine not how society adapts to these changes but rather how the social actor evaluates the past, present, and expected future role of society in addressing such change.

Each of the studies comprising this anthology actively employ the reality of the present to address the needs of the future. They examine the ramifications of change, conflict, crisis, and diversity for contemporary society, in hopes of better educating the society of the future. Of course, we cannot hope to provide either definitive or final answers to any of the questions examined in this volume. We firmly believe, however, that the research contained herein can inform a more considered, well-founded argument for education leading to a better tomorrow.

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Michael John Katsillis, Tatiana García-Vélez, and Liliana Jacott

Editors

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Table of Contents

Changes in Hong Kong Education: Considering Factors Influencing the Organization of Study Tours to China[1]

Eric King-man Chong[2]

Abstract

This study conducted in-depth interviews with 41 civic and national education teachers in Hong Kong on the factors that facilitate and hinder the organization of study tours to China. The geographical proximity gives Hong Kong teachers' an advantage to assess what factors can affect organizing study tours to China. Before the global pandemic, there has been an interest in arranging students to visit China for experiential learning purposes, and such exchanges are likely to flourish again when the global travelling resumes after the pandemic. The findings revealed several facilitating factors, including the government's push for national education, the openness of the school sponsoring body and school management, the teacher's own background, like-minded teachers in schools, immersion in various subjects, good student–teacher relations, and parents' and students' understanding of the school curriculum. Limiting factors include teachers' workload, low attractiveness of the sites visited and low quality of the study tours. The study contents should be informed by the schools' and students' needs, and teachers should have the relevant skills and commitment. This study recommends thoughtful consideration of the above facilitating factors and hindrance before organizing study tours to achieve the benefits of using study tours as experiential learning.

Keywords: Study tours; facilitating and hindering factors; experiential learning; active citizenship education; China Hong Kong

Introduction

Study tours constitute a form of experiential learning. Hong Kong teachers have been arranging study tours to China since the early 2000s, following the education reform. The study tours, which usually took place in nature, outdoors or in cities, stopped between 2020 and 2022,

as a result of the global pandemic. Similar to many places, which witnessed significant changes in school education after the global pandemic, Hong Kong teachers must once again consider experiential learning opportunities such as study tours, as a means of providing active citizenship opportunities for their students. This study examined Hong Kong teachers' perceptions of study tours to China, in an attempt to explore the factors that hinder and facilitate their organization.

There is increasing educational interest in and need for greater awareness of nature and outdoor learning in educational research (Hayes & Leather, 2019). Calls for exchanges between China and the outside world will inevitably surface after the anti-pandemic measures. Experiential learning can provide opportunities for students to construct the meaning of active citizenship through social interactions, which can enhance their civic knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Blevins et al., 2016; Fudge & Skipworth, 2017).

Background

This study investigated 41 experienced civic and national education teachers' perceptions on the facilitating factors and hindrances in the planning and implementation of study tours to China. They come from different school sponsoring bodies, religious and non-religious background, and which accept students from different socio-economic status. They have educational duties of arranging students to visit China for learning and educational exchange purposes. Data collection was implemented in 2019. The 41 teachers were invited to join the interviews following completion of another questionnaire (Chong et al., 2021a; Chong et al., 2021b). Facilitating factors and hindrances could include such things as familiar challenges in educational policy and teaching practices (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011) that seek to put ideals into schools and extend them outside the classroom. Experiential learning highlights the role of the teacher as a facilitator and the active engagement of students (Gearon, 2010).

Teachers' professional perceptions affect their teaching practices (Long et al., 2019). Teachers' roles in and personal beliefs regarding civic education, which certainly include study tours as a means of experiential learning, are of critical significance in helping students construct the notion of active and participatory citizenship (Ng, 2009).

Post-colonial Hong Kong presents a unique setting for this study, as it is experiencing a contest between identities and how to teach citizenship. Of course, there have been conceptual and ideological shifts involved in characterizations of citizenship in different national/transnational contexts. Variations at the regional, county, state, and national levels mean that simple summaries of the key issues are not possible (Davies et al., 2018). Given its geographical proximity to China, it is worthwhile to understand the complexities in the interplay of citizenship and education between Hong Kong and its motherland context of China. Hong Kong has become a special administrative region since returning to China in 1997 under the "One Country, Two Systems" framework, which granted the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereafter Hong Kong) a high degree of administrative and policy autonomy and economic freedoms. This includes the perpetuation of a capitalist system, under Chinese sovereignty. In recent years, however, the Hong Kong people have witnessed increasing societal changes in various areas (Chee, 2019). Civic education in Hong Kong is designed to enhance students' understanding of China through both the formal curriculum and informal learning activities. The latter include after-school learning activities and study tours to China, despite most Hong Kong schools tending to be conservative, authoritarian, paternalistic, and they not encouraging student participation in any provision like democratic education (Tse, 2000). Teaching about China is called "national education", which attempts to instill a political identity invested solely in China and the ideal that it is the greater good of the Chinese nation that is most important (Morris & Vickers, 2015). While school-based ceremonies and other activities shape identity and deepen the sense of citizenship among the students in their schools (Abbas, 2020), study tour can provide a chance for students to mediate and reflect their identity (Cheng & Szeto, 2019) and learn about global citizenship (Davies et al., 2018). National education in Hong Kong can be described as what Kellas (1991) called ethnic nationalism, as it emphasizes ethnic bonding and blood ancestry. It also encourages the development of a commitment to nation-building (Fairbrother, 2004) and a sense of patriotism in school education (Yuen & Byram, 2007). Hong Kong youths' major source of information on current affairs, however, is the Internet (Han, 2013), so having direct and personal experience in China is important to inform their understanding of China. We recently understood that if teachers were supported by others, they were more likely to

support moral and national education (Wong et al., 2020). Beyond this, however, there is an educational need to understand more about how Hong Kong teachers organize study tours to China that are intended to develop a sense of national identity, so that we can identify considerations of taking study tours.

To collect the data, written invitations were sent to all civic or moral education head teachers throughout Hong Kong in 2019. The sample was limited to teachers with more than 5 years of experience in organizing study tours to China to ensure that their views were relevant and valid. They were invited to participate in face-to-face focus group interviews to obtain their views on factors of study tours to China for experiential learning. The author provided written information about the purpose and questions of the interviews, data protection, and safety issues by email and sought informed consent. With subsequent follow-up efforts made in late 2019, the author was able to obtain a representative sample of 41 secondary school teachers who come from different subsidy types (e.g., government, public fund-aided, and private direct-subsidy schools), locations, and socioeconomic background.

The interview findings indicated that experiential learning in study tours can be tailored for educational purposes, which is to say, learning about belonging to a nation (Mathews et al., 2007). There are several factors that facilitated and hindered the implementation of national education, which can implications for nearby East Asian regional cities. Facilitating factors included supports and resources from the government, teachers' knowledge and professionalism, and having students and teachers from mainland China help to teach about China in the schools. Major hindering factors include teachers' high workloads, low attractiveness of the sites visited, and the low quality of the tours in terms of touring contents. Effective study tours to China should have tour contents informed by schools' and students' needs, and teachers should have the necessary skills and commitment. This paper shall contribute to the field of organizing experiential learning in the form of study tour.

Theoretical Frameworks: Study Tours as Experiential Learning and the Factors
Studies have shown that educational learning experiences similar to study tours can be found in fields such as experiential learning and outdoor education. Constructivist theories (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978; Dewey, 1997; Kolb, 1984) have built on experiential learning. Dewey argued that pupils need to be taught not simply through the imposition of knowledge but should experience the world (Gearon, 2010). Indeed, "[e]xperiential learning offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process" (Kolb, 1984, p.3), where "[l]earning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p.38). When learning incorporates social and environment elements, children interact with others and their setting(s), to modify existing or adopt new way(s) of thinking (Vygotsky, 1978; van Oers, 2003). Study tours can provide educators with international experience (Ellington & Rice, 1992). Alongside this, extensive outdoor learning research has focused on nature, outdoor learning, play, and the health, wellbeing, and educational benefits that can be obtained through a broad range of activities, contexts, and locations (Hayes & Leather, 2019).

Experiential learning is usually characterized by active engagement with both the environment and other social actors (Waite, 2010). In doing so, experiential learning can expose students to aspects of deprivation or inequalities, of which they were unaware (Haste & Hogan, 2006) and provide them with opportunities to transfer their knowledge of being

good citizens into action through helping others. Avery (1997), Annette (2008), and Schwarz (2011) all found that experiential learning can be linked with service learning and that local community support can enhance youth engagement. Chiu (2019) proposed implementing experiential learning with the adoption of information communication technologies in a general education course in higher education. This enhanced students' learning motivation and consolidated their learning experience (Chiu, 2019). Experiential learning effectively facilitates learning processes by enhancing students' construction of knowledge, civic competency (Trnka, Dureau, & Park, 2013), and civic participation (Boehnke & Boehnke, 2005).

Learning outdoors has several benefits. Students initially comprehend concepts in terms of more concrete characteristics and gradually progress to understanding more abstract dimensions (Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013; Van Sledright, 2008). Coates and Pimlott-Wilson (2019) found evidence that blending the forest school experience with mainstream formal learning settings contributed to children's social, cognitive, emotional, and physical skill development, using play-focused learning activities. The implementation of such activities can also develop children's problem-solving skills, cooperation ability, confidence, self-motivation, and self-esteem (Knight, 2009; O'Brien, 2009). Children also learn more effectively when engaged in experiential learning (van Oers, 2003). Waite (2010) found that memories associated with outdoor teaching and learning are associated with social behaviors, challenge, risk, creativity and sensory engagement for both practitioners and children. Davies et al. (2013) argued that engagement in outdoor learning environment can have positive effects on both children's motivation to learn and their educational attainment. And the importance of outdoor learning remains consistent as children grow (Wood, 2014).

Johnson and Jordan (2019) proposed a framework to help small business schools structure their undergraduate international business experiential learning offerings. They suggested the establishment of tracks with supplemental skill focus, emphasis on foreign language proficiency and requiring at least two international internships or service-learning-practicums. Indeed, the learning experience may be most effective when the learning incorporates educational activities that promote experiential and deep-level learning (Tang & Rose, 2014). Students' perceptions of national identity, however, are complex and appear to become more complicated following a study tour to China (Cheng & Szeto, 2019). Several factors that could hamper the implementation and outcomes of experiential learning have been identified in international contexts. These include students uninterested in experiential learning programs, competition with other programs, and schools' facing difficulties organize experiential learning (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). This study attempts to specifically examine such hindering factors in the organization of school study tours to China.

The Educational Context: Study Tours as Active Citizenship in Hong Kong

Previous studies (Liu, 2016; Li, 2019; Mi, 2020) have investigated the reasons for Chinese students going abroad for study tours, the characteristics and preferences of outbound Chinese tourists (Agrusa et al., 2011), and outbound Chinese tourists' value perceptions of ecotourism trips (Li et al., 2020). This study examines the factors of organization of study tours *into* China. In Hong Kong education, study tours are usually linked with aspects of civics or national education dealing with understanding and belonging to China. Civic education can take the form of formal/informal curriculum or activities, such as the study tour's topic. Civics

includes teaching students about their rights and responsibilities, the rule of law and justice, identity and belonging, elections, environmental protection, volunteering, and so forth.

It is important to bear in mind the conceptual challenges and significant political and cultural consequences related to terms such as "citizenship," "patriotism," and "nationalism" (e.g. Canovan, 2000), which usually take the form of experiential learning and study tours in Hong Kong schools. Hong Kong schools frequently adopt a "hidden/informal curriculum" (e.g., school culture and ethos via civic or moral education activities), in which pupils are socialized into ways of learning and thinking that compound on what is taught in the classroom-based formal curriculum (Hayward, 2007). National character, as designated in citizenship education, is not statically defined but rather adapted to a country's particular historical situation, whether that entails modernization, colonization, independence, decolonization or globalization (Arfani & Ayami, 2020). Research on teachers' understanding of the term "good citizenship" has revealed an emphasis on social and moral responsibility in the form of positive local action (Davies et al., 1999). Meanwhile, citizenship education, which defines and presents the traits of good citizens (Johnson & Morris, 2010), also fosters its critical elements in schools' citizenship curricula. In Hong Kong, specifically, citizenship education has been argued to play a leading role in enhancing community cohesion (Warwick & Cremin, 2010).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also provide civic education for Hong Kong schools through contracted services (Shoesmith, 2006). This usually presents in the form in school periods or extra-curricular activities such as learning programs, outdoor visits, and study tours to China or overseas. Such civic education may also take the form of overseas visits and global citizenship education, which covers the philosophies that are influenced by neo-liberalism and global capitalism, nationalism, and internationalism and issues of post-colonialism, indigeneity, and transnationalism (Davies et al., 2018). Nevertheless, civic education has seldom been a compulsory subject in Hong Kong (Morris, 1992, 1997), although, since 2009, moral and civic education has become a part of Other Learning Experiences in the New Senior Secondary curriculum to engage students (aged 15 to 17 years old) in outdoor learning and study tours. More recently, Chong (2015) argued for the reconstruction of civic education.

With the onset of Hong Kong's public education reform in the early 2000s, the organization of study tours to China and to other parts of the world became a common form of experiential learning. These tours attempted to engage students in the study of foreign languages, society and culture, and science and technology. Indeed, one of the priorities of Hong Kong's public education, following its reintegration in 1997, was and remains the strengthening of its ties with and understanding of China (Curriculum Development Council, 2002, 2011). Given the prevalent nature of civic education in Hong Kong, however, many teachers emphasized the subject matter's cultural dimension (Ng, 2000; Leung, 2006). In other words, learning about the nation's culture should be conducive to student learning. Hong Kong's contemporary national identity construction is part of modern Chinese history, situated in the production and transmission of Chinese national ideologies through education (Morris & Vickers, 2015). Indeed, the organization of study tours for Hong Kong students to gain personal experience

is an official educational recommendation to achieve the nationalistic aim of strengthening ties with and understanding of China. In 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao stated that national education must be delivered in a more concerted manner. This included shifting and integrating relations with mainland China (Morris & Vickers, 2015). Community support can be found in Hong Kong's public museums, which include mainland Chinese exhibitions, celebrating various aspects of China's heritage and history (Vickers, 2005, 2011), and Chinese Olympic athletes, astronauts, and other national heroes, who have been invited to Hong Kong and paraded before the locals to honor China's national triumphs (Ma, Fung, & Lam, 2011). Patriotic song-and-dance routines and other teaching materials were produced for use in kindergartens and schools (Morris, 2009). Study tours have been increasingly organized using government funding –including student leadership training in Chinese cities (since 2004), and various forms of study tours (since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games).

The controversial Moral and National Education (MNE) Curriculum Guide (Curriculum Development Council, 2012), however, triggered a huge anti-national education campaign in 2012. This MNE controversy arose from a conflict between the promotion of nationalistic patriotism and strong local civic values (Kennedy, 2012). Demonstrators, who were mostly parents and students, feared indoctrination. This sparked debates on how students should be educated about their national identity and understanding of China.

Hong Kong also has many supporters of patriotic nationalistic education and Chinese national identity (Morris & Vickers, 2015). Both sides of Hong Kong's identity wars have accused the other of indoctrination (Fung, 2011; Morris & Vickers, 2015), although the pro-Beijing political parties are better funded and more cohesive than their pan-democrat opponents (Pepper, 2006). In 2014, the large-scale Occupy and Umbrella movements against the proposed nomination process and electoral framework of the Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive elections negatively affected the ties between Hong Kong SAR and China. Despite this, schools have continued national education by organizing study tours to China, between 2008 and 2019. Some Catholic diocese schools in Hong Kong also implemented their national education curriculum to shape students' knowledge and attitude toward China with Catholic social ethics (Tang et al., 2019). Teachers believe that socialization in education is a dynamic process through which the youth interact with and respond to socializing and experiential factors. Youth construct, refine, and reconstruct the conception of citizenship and identify the cultural, social, and political contexts in which these concepts are formed (Flanagan & Gallay, 1995). Teachers also seek to improve students' citizenship socialization in the digital era, which encompasses their views on digital tools and attitudes toward the world (Prensky, 2001; Twenge, 2017).

The 2020 pandemic halted all study tours to China. The situational factors describing the contextual dynamics emerging from COVID-19 significantly influenced student's online readiness (Al Mamun et al, 2022). It is unclear, however, how schools approach topics of national education, in the post-pandemic era –especially topics about China that may

arguably be better experienced by the students themselves. To examine this, this study proposes the following research questions:

1. *How do teachers perceive and understand using study tours as experiential learning to understand China?*
2. *What are the perceived factors facilitating the organization of study tours to China*?
3. *What are the perceived factors hindering the organization of study tours to China*?

Methods, Sample, and Analysis

Most perception studies are qualitative (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009) and used to gain information from individuals to provide systematic descriptions and explanations (Cannel & Kahn, 1968). This study examines the perceptions, meanings, and viewpoints of key individuals (Newby, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018) on the factors that facilitate and hinder the organization of study tours to China.

Research ethics approval to carry out this research from 2018 to 2020 was obtained from the Human Ethics Research Committee of The Education University of Hong Kong (#2016-2017-0142). Interviews were conducted between January and August of 2019, just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample

The study's population was civic or national education team heads in Hong Kong secondary schools (for students aged 12 to 17 years old), with more than 5 years of experience organizing study tours to China. There were 454 secondary schools in Hong Kong in 2019. Hong Kong, secondary schools belong to one of four types, with regard to funding sources: government schools, aided schools, direct subsidy scheme (DSS) schools, and private schools. Government schools, while few in number, strictly adhere to official educational policies and curriculum guides. Aided schools receive government funding and follow official policies and curriculum guides, but have religious or social charity sponsors to inform their school missions, values, and characteristics. Comparatively rare Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools are self-managed, and can be characterized by a degree of autonomy in charging tuition fees, setting their own admission criteria and school curricula. Private schools are self-financed and managed by their own management committees. Written invitations were sent to each of the secondary schools, resulting in a final sample of 41 teachers, who broadly cover the different subsidy types and socio-economic statuses of Hong Kong's secondary schools.

The sample included 24 men and 17 women who are diverse in teaching experience. 2 were from government schools, 31 from religious schools, and 8 from charity, education organization, or other types of school sponsors. This is not unexpected, as Hong Kong is, indeed, characterized by a larger proportion of aided schools. Participants were either team heads or senior members of moral, civic, or national education teams. A summary of participants' background information is presented in Table 1.

Informed and voluntary consent was obtained from all participants prior to the commencement of the study's interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted in a classroom or study corner of participants' schools (i.e., an undisturbed location, thus giving them the

required comfort and safety to participate) in 2019. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, to ensure adequate opportunity for sharing of views on the questions.

Table 1. Background information of the interviewees

Teacher	Gender	School Sponsoring Body	Religion/ Background	Types of School	Geographical Location
T1	M	Caritas	Roman Catholic	Aided	New Territories
T2	M	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Kowloon Peninsula
T3	M	A local education organization	Christianity	Aided	Hong Kong Island
T4	M	China Holiness Church	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T5	M	Po Leung Kuk	Charity group	Aided	New Territories
T6	F	Sheng Kung Hui	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T7	F	Roman Catholic Diocesan	Roman Catholic	Aided	New Territories
T8	M	Govt.	Govt.	Govt.	Kowloon Peninsula
T9	F	Sheng Kung Hui	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T10	F	A religious order	Roman Catholic	Aided	Hong Kong Island
T11	M	Tsung Tsin Mission	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T12	M	Local Merchants Association	Merchants association	DSS	Kowloon Peninsula
T13	F	Local Education Organization	Education organization	Aided	New Territories
T14	M	Caritas	Roman Catholic	Aided	Hong Kong Island
T15	F	Buddhist Association	Buddhist	Aided	New Territories
T16	M	Church of Christ in China	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T17	F	A religious order	Roman Catholic	Aided	Hong Kong Island
T18	M	Sheng Kung Hui	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T19	M	Lutheran Church	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T20	F	A religious order	Roman Catholic	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T21	M	Roman Catholic Diocesan	Roman Catholic	Aided	New Territories
T22	M	Church of Christ in China	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T23	M	Church of Christ in China	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T24	F	Church of Christ in China	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T25	M	Buddhist Association	Buddhist	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T26	M	Local Chinese Organization	Pro-Beijing	DSS	New Territories
T27	F	Po Leung Kuk	Charity group	Aided	New Territories
T28	M	Caritas	Roman Catholic	Aided	Hong Kong Island
T29	M	Mission Covenant Church	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T30	F	Mission Covenant Church	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T31	M	Tsung Tsin Mission	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T32	F	Roman Catholic Diocesan	Roman Catholic	Aided	New Territories
T33	M	Local Education Organization	Education Organization	Aided	New Territories
T34	M	A graduates' association	Graduates' Association	DSS	Hong Kong Island
T35	F	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals	Charity Group	Aided	New Territories
T36	M	Church of Christ in China	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T37	M	Sheng Kung Hui	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T38	F	Local Education Organization	Christianity	DSS	Kowloon Peninsula
T39	M	Sheng Kung Hui	Christianity	Aided	Kowloon Peninsula
T40	M	Baptist Convention	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
T41	M	Lutheran Church	Christianity	Aided	New Territories
Summary	M: 27	Government-run schools:	02		Hong Kong Island (urbanized): 6
		Public fund aided schools (religious):	31		Kowloon peninsula (urbanized): 15
	F: 14	Public fund aided schools (non-religious, charity and others as sponsors):	08		New Territories (less urbanized): 20

Data analysis

This study employs deductive coding to analyze the interview data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Deductive coding is a theory-based method that begins with the development of a provisional "start list" of codes, which precedes fieldwork and is based on the research questions, hypotheses, and/or key variables (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Codes and themes were also identified from the interview transcripts based on the literature review, including experiential learning, learning outdoors, citizenship education, facilitators, and hindrances.

As part of a subsequent thematic analysis, themes were created and compared across the interview transcripts, in an attempt to provide their selection with a coherent underlying logic (see Clarke & Braun, 2017). Examples of these codes include 'engaging students in study tours to China', 'learning and reflection during a study tour', 'workloads', 'site attraction' and 'study tour quality'. The consistency of the judgment of the codes was determined in conjunction with an examination of relevant literature.

Findings and Discussion

Using Study Tours for Learning About China

Experiential learning is marked by learners' active engagement with the environment and other social actors (Waite, 2010). Several teachers (T1, T9, T3, T14) suggested that experiential learning could be used to teach about China, by tailoring the learning contents to allow students to obtain first-hand experience for clarifying their understanding (T1, T9) about their nation, including digital technologies (T14) for the future (Twenge, 2017).

> We use study tours to let students know more about "One Belt, One Road" Initiative, especially the relationship with the economy and culture of Hong Kong. Then, students think more about their travel, further study, or even work. (T1)

> A study tour is a teaching approach to understand more about China. After they visited the mainland, they will develop more understanding about China. (T3)

> Our senior form students went to China by high speed railway. They visited outdoor places and had meaningful exchanges with students in China. (T9)

> We need to arrange more in-depth study tours to mainland China so that students can learn about the social and technological development there… These tours counter students' misconceptions of China in the news. (T14)

This speaks to the potential for study tours to create experiential opportunities for the development of cultural ties with students' nation (Ng, 2000), skills of cooperation, problem-solving, and self-reflection (Knight, 2009; O'Brien, 2009), and their propensity and skill to evaluate information against background knowledge and context using reflective skepticism (McPeck, 1981, 1990).

Factors Facilitating Study Tours for National Education

Teachers in experiential learning are *de facto* facilitators of students' experiential learning (Gearon, 2010). Interviewees identified several facilitating factors below.

Government Policy on National Education

Governmental policy on national education helps schools organize study tours to China (T2, T7, T30). Teachers perceive both a mandatory nature and support provided by the

government as necessary. This is especially true for government school teachers (T2). This is consistent across different types of schools.

> The government encourages organizing different types of study tours to China to understand the overall national development and the daily life, which include sister school partnership schemes, learning tours, voluntary teaching tours, and aerospace study tours. Students can realize something different from what they read on the Internet. (T2)

> If it is required by the government, then you must teach it. If schools have made what to teach and their expectations of teachers clear, this is a push factor. (T7)

> If the schools allow some room for teachers to plan and teach according to the government policy, this would also be a facilitating factor. (T30)

Openness of the School Sponsoring Body and School Management

The openness of school sponsoring bodies and management is also important following periods of social turbulence (T6, T10, T25) for organizing a study tour to China. Teachers specifically emphasize the concept of "trust" (T10, T25). Teachers' perceptions of how to teach national education vary across the management of school sponsors in Hong Kong (Chong et al., 2021).

> If the school management board are just chasing any simplistic goals but not a balanced education, then it will create pressure for teachers. Therefore, the school management board should keep an open mind on the school curriculum. (T6)

> It is important that our school supports and trusts teachers. No unexpected force intervenes in our planning and teaching. Hence, teachers can use their professionalism. (T10)

> The school sponsoring body still prefers a neutral standpoint on some sensitive issues, but they give teachers room to discuss sensitive issues with students based on the teachers' professionalism and neutrality. (T25)

Teacher Background and Competency

Some teachers (T36, T11, T6) considered their own background and characteristics to be important in helping students learn about different dimensions of China. These teachers smployed teaching knowledge to make informed judgements when studying issues from multiple perspectives and contexts (CDC & HKEAA, 2007). Teachers are role models, emphasizing particular forms of reasoning within their disciplines, and citing examples of how these forms of reasoning can be applied within and outside the discipline (Jones, 2004; Pithers & Soden, 2000). Indeed, Lee et al. (2021) found personal efficacy to be the strongest predictor of teacher efficacy for moral education.

> Role models are important. There are more teachers coming from China who had their undergraduate study in China. Then, they studied teacher training in Hong Kong. They are already Hong Kong people and they can work here. They know China very well. (T36)

> The peculiar characteristics of teachers, such as their knowledge background and professional capabilities are important. When you teach about China, you are not just raising the national flag and singing the national anthem, but also Chinese society. (T6)

> If teachers can grasp the knowledge correctly, maintain openness and a balanced view or multiple perspectives, they can attain the learning outcomes. (T11)

Like-minded Teachers in School

Having like-minded teachers involved in a given study tour facilitates the smooth delivery both its planning and any teaching involved in it (T25, T11). Interviewees believed that like-minded teachers have the ability to plan and teach together. This is akin to creating an informal school curriculum that include values, beliefs and citizenship ideas (Hayward, 2007) in which all teachers can play a part.

> Those senior secondary Liberal Studies and junior secondary Life and Society teachers think in a similar way, and this is a facilitating factor when planning a study tour. We can plan and teach with similar knowledge backgrounds and pedagogical considerations. (T25)

> Having like-minded teachers enables us to smoothly implement national education. (T11)

Immersion of National Education in Different Subjects and Study Tours

Study tours can be incorporated into relevant subjects and curriculum (Cheng & Szeto, 2019). Some teacher-respondents recommended an immersion approach to the curriculum (T4, T13) or different subjects (T25), to facilitate students learning about their nation state. This approach seems to be endorsed by the teachers.

> Senior and junior secondary lessons have learning contents related to China. Of course, some students may have low receptiveness to such content, and so teachers should tailor the content. (T4)

> Our humanities subjects immerse students in learning elements of Chinese history, geography, economics, life and society. Because the junior secondary curriculum has flexibility in planning, our teachers usually incorporate national issues. (T25)

> We can plan and teach national education in different subjects according to our professionalism, and we will provide updated information for students to know what has happened through different subjects and study tours. (T13)

Johnson and Jordan (2019) argued for the incorporation of skill into experiential learning. There were, however, questions (T5) with regard to the effectiveness of the immersion approach in subjects or study tours to help students learn about China. This is consistent with the findings of Tang et al. (2019), who noted difficulties incorporating social ethics into the teaching of national education. While subject matter treatment might well be integrated, skills such as critical thinking principles may not be explicit (Ennis, 1997).

> The government is using different ways to incorporate national education into different subjects, or giving resources to conduct services and activities in China. But are they effective for learning about China? How deep and comprehensive are such learning? (T5)

Good Relations between Students and Teachers

Maintaining good student–teacher relations is also important for organizing study tours to China. Such relationships enable students to communicate and express themselves during the study tours (T8, T13). Indeed, teachers should ensure that a diverse range of student views can be shared and that participation is afforded to all students, not only to those who are articulate and literate (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004).

> Normally, the student–teacher relations in secondary schools are better than in other learning stages. There can be more communication between teachers and students during a study tour. There is an advantage for secondary schools. (T8)

It is important to maintain a good relationship between students and teachers so that   students trust and talk with their teachers. (T13)

Parents' and Students' Understanding of the School Curriculum

In view of previous anti-national education campaigns in 2012, organizing study tours to China requires that teachers improve parents and students' understanding of the school curriculum, which in turn allows students to better understand different dimensions of China (T2, T25). Obtaining such community support (Warwick & Cremin, 2010; Schwarz, 2011) is key for the organization of study tours.

> Our school's study tours include mainland Chinese general facts, political institutions and the Basic Law. There are no complaints from parents. Our students are also receptive to national education and learning about Chinese geography, cities, forests, and economy. (T2)

> Our whole-school attitude is that students need to learn some basics about China. Before having study tours, our school has carnivals that take place regularly, and our learning themes are diversified, which includes environmental protection in China. (T25)

The teachers quoted above see themselves as only one influence on students. This indicates the need to approach national education sensitively and to consider the views of other stakeholders, such as parents and students. Both government and financially aided school teachers (e.g., T8 and T40) noted that students often make judgments based on relevant information regarding China they receive from different media.

Factors that Hinder Study Tours for National Education

Several participants (T4, T16, T17, T18, T27, T28, T29) cited teacher workloads, low site attractiveness, and low-quality tours hindered study tours.

Teacher Workloads

Teacher workloads in schools may sound like a common concern but it was also a key factor to several interviewees. They mentioned several aspects of their workloads, including time (T4), preparation work (T16), routine (T17), manpower (T18), and eligibility (T28).

> There are many issues to consider when preparing a study tour, such as whether teachers are willing to reschedule the time for taking students to visit China, how much time should be spent on such visits, and how much efforts and expenditures are needed. (T4)

> We have many works to do in schools, and we have to organize both overseas and mainland China study tours. The preparation works are demanding. (T16)

> When can we plan for a study tour that is far away? There is always a teaching routine. We can hire a substitute teacher, but when teachers come back from a study tour, we still have to follow up on what was taught, especially if students are preparing for the public examination. (T17)

> Experience outside is good for enhancing students' horizons. But the problem is manpower. How can a teacher handle all the planning and implementation? (T18)

> Teachers need to do pre-assessment on who are eligible to join; otherwise, it would be a whole-school approach, which will raise questions about resources and money. (T28)

Low Visited Site Attractiveness

Common study tour sites may present problems if they are too familiar to the students (T16, T29). Most notably, teachers may struggle to garner student interest in such study tours easily.

> If the destinations are nearby or the students have relatives there, then students may have already been there. (T16)

> The attractiveness of study tours to nearby Guangdong province can be rather low because many students have already visited there or even going there frequently because of their family members. (T29)

Low Tour Quality

Study tours to China may not be of high quality. Indeed, some teachers were concerned about the quality of learning (T16, T19, T27).

> Those earlier study tours, such as to the Great Hall of the People and taking photos with important political leaders, had great values. Unfortunately, there are many study tours nowadays, and the quality can vary. (T16)

> Study tours to China should include opportunities to meet some important people instead of limited quality contents. Then, the tours will be more attractive. (T19)

> What is the reason that previous study tours were more attractive? There were chances to meet political leaders in China, or we could visit famous higher education institutions. (T27)

School-specific Requirements for Study Tours

Participants also identified some school-specific requirements for organizing study tours.

Contents informed by teaching and students' needs

Some interviewees stated that the content of study tours to China should be informed by schools' and students' needs (T15, T26) and include some field-based project(s) (T36), as this would be more beneficial than any pre-planned itineraries to historical sites or scenic spots.

> We like to arrange a visit to a water conservancy project in China. The experts there will teach our students on topics of physics and science. Usually, the learning themes of official study tours may not include such physics or science topics. Therefore, we have to find other educational providers. (T26)

> Study tours will be more effective for learning if a provider can plan the tours according to school needs and requirements. If not, study tours can be just visiting common historical sites without much learning impacts. (T15)

> Outdoor experiential learning includes not just study tours but also field-based and project learning on different aspects. They will enhance students' understanding of their nation. (T35)

These statements emphasize the necessity of better understanding how to tie the contents of study tour to teaching needs. Waite (2010) argued that experiential learning allowed students to benefit from active engagement with the environment and other social actors, as students learn more effectively when engaged in experiential learning (van Oers, 2003), which was echoed by the interviewed teachers. Their language also indicated that immersion tours should meet students' needs (as suggested by Weiler & Black, 2015), and that, as Varela (2017) proposed, students should be exposed to information that cannot be obtained through local learning methods, language situations, and contexts.

Teachers' Skills and Commitment

Some respondents (T15, T22) mentioned teachers' skills and commitment using questioning techniques (T23, T24, T31) in organizing study tours.

> Teachers' skills and commitment are important for organizing study tours that help students learn about China. This requires a different teaching attitude and set of skills. (T15)

> Maybe even the teachers themselves need to be committed to national education. Teachers shall think along the same lines on educating our students. For example, teachers' explanations on what the students have seen and experienced in China should be similar. (T22)

> I always ask students to raise a question from their experiences in China. I use different questions to stimulate their thinking about their experience. (T23)

> Teachers need to use effective question techniques to ask students, for example, "After visiting China, is there any change in your thinking?" (T24)

> Students need our teaching skills to enhance their affective development in a study tour. But some teachers are not so well equipped with affective strategies. (T31)

With proper teacher preparation and commitment, students can better understand concepts in terms of both concrete characteristics and more abstract dimensions (Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013; Van Sledright, 2008).

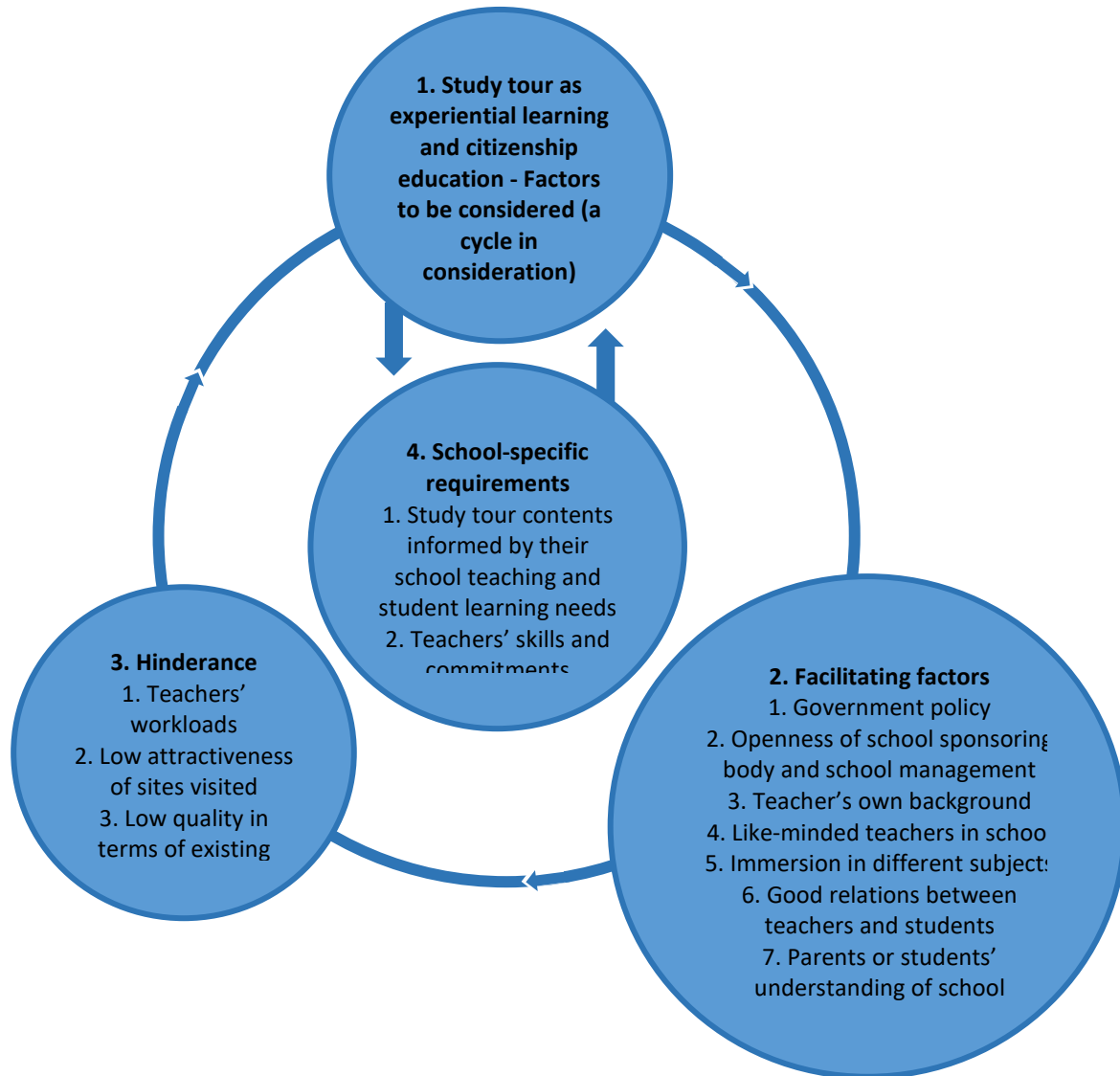## Implications and Recommendations – Building a Framework for Organizing Study Tours

Interviewed teachers believed that, as Dewey (1997) proposed, allowing students to develop experience of the world is valuable and that their views on both facilitating and hindering factors are largely constructivist in nature (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). They did not, however, underestimate the complexities, noted by Canavan (2000), involved in using study tours as experiential learning to help students understand concepts such as active citizenship, patriotism, and nationalism. They supported the use of study tours to China because of their educational benefits (see also Hayes & Leather, 2019), such as helping Hong Kong students to learn about belonging to a nation (see also Mathews et al., 2007). They also held the view that the importance of engagement in outdoor learning remains consistent as children grow (see also Wood, 2014). They believed that study tours to China should be tailored for educational purposes and involve experiential learning, marked by active engagement with the environment and social actors (see also Waite, 2010).

The participants identified several hindering and facilitating factors in the organization of study tours to enhance students' understanding China. These factors broadly relate to the school management board, teachers, students and parents, which also cut across different subsidy types of schools. This indicates that educational researchers or practitioners would likely benefit from a thorough understanding of relevant factors both within and outside the classroom. This is also true for subjects such as civic or national education, which have seldom been compulsory subjects in Hong Kong (Morris, 1992; 1997). Experiential learning may, however, expose students to aspects of deprivation or social inequalities, which they were unaware of and, as a result, potentially expand their political perspectives (Haste & Hogan, 2006). As a result, teachers must also incorporate contextual considerations into their planning.

Interviewees frequently noted that content should be informed by school teaching and students' learning needs. They argued that teachers' skills and commitments were important.

Such reflections can be integral to their ongoing and sustainable professional development (Macintyre Latta & Kim, 2010; Cheng et al., 2017). Thus, based on all of the baove, it is possible to create a model of the factors that facilitate and hinder experiential learning study tours to China (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A model of considering factors that facilitate and hinder organizing study tours

1. Study tour as experiential learning and citizenship education - Factors to be considered (a cycle in consideration)

4. School-specific requirements
1. Study tour contents informed by their school teaching and student learning needs
2. Teachers' skills and commitments

3. Hinderance
1. Teachers' workloads
2. Low attractiveness of sites visited
3. Low quality in terms of existing

2. Facilitating factors
1. Government policy
2. Openness of school sponsoring body and school management
3. Teacher's own background
4. Like-minded teachers in school
5. Immersion in different subjects
6. Good relations between teachers and students
7. Parents or students' understanding of school

Achieving meaningful active engagement with the environment and other social actors (Waite, 2010) and more effective learning (van Oers, 2003) requires the thoughtful integration of authentic school learning and experiential learning. This learning must, in turn, be based on consideration of facilitating factors and hindrance by the study tour planners or teachers who act as facilitators and the experiential learning of students (Gearon, 2010). In the context of experiential learning, participants' ability to think and reason can be enhanced, when cognitive learning activities are explicitly included in the process of teaching knowledge and skills, rather than being taught as add-ons to what is being learned. These are, after all, the objectives of education and training (Glaser, 1984). The transformation of experience can also be achieved where new knowledge is created through experiential learning by meeting with local people in a study tour (Cheng & Szeto, 2019). The ultimate learning goal of such

15

study tours is the cultivation of social and moral responsibility, leading to positive actions and good citizenship (Davies et al., 1999). This may also result in further positive outcomes just as what (see, e.g., Waite, 2010). Pre-service professional development programs for teachers must, however, also incorporate training for planning and leading study tours, with due consideration for the aforementioned factors, in order to achieve a sustainable design (Cheng et al., 2017).

Limitations

This study is potentially limited by its heavy reliance on interviewing, to the exclusion of other forms of data, such as observation of classroom activities or the processes of study tours. The COVID-19 pandemic also made the collection of any face-to-face, triangulated data impossible from 2020-2022. This study furthermore limits its discussion to teachers' perspectives, electing not to delve into the perspectives of parents and students. We argue, of course, that the core value of this study lies specifically in *teacher's* perspectives, which more directly influence the organization of study tours, following the global pandemic. Having said that, the perspective(s) of parents and students can and arguably should influence teachers and, in this light, remain an important aspect for future study.

Conclusions

Hong Kong teachers use study tours as a form of experiential learning, to help their students understand and learn about China. Their hope, in doing so, is that they may engender qualities of active citizenship, such as fostering their national orientation and commitments, in their students. They provided their perspectives on the facilitating and hindering factors they encountered in planning and implementation of study tours to China. Possibly most interestingly, it seems that Hong Kong teachers do not believe that their students should be non-questioning, non-participatory, passive, and docile citizens in the study tours (Ho et al., 2011; Raby, 2005) but rather that students should be properly guided by skills to learn in a well-planned and high quality study tour.

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Drawing on Community Knowledge to Engage Diverse Communities with their Children's Learning[1]

Jane Carter[2]

Abstract

Minoritized groups are not always comfortable engaging with schools through traditional pathways (Moll et al., 1992). Without the engagement and inclusion of all groups, mistrust and conflict have space to grow. Being a reader and learning to read is the foundation for academic and future economic success, as well as engagement in democratic society (Breadmore et al., 2019). This paper will outline a research project located in inner-city Bristol, England, which aimed to engage groups often considered to be 'hard to reach' (Bonevski et al.,2014), with reading and school. The research design involved community researchers identifying members of the school and wider community, considered to be 'influential', drawn from religious organizations, community and parent groups, as well as community elders. This group of 'influencers' (Briggs et al., 2012) shared their experiences of learning and understanding the barriers for families in engaging with reading and schools. 'Messages' were collaboratively designed and shared over six weeks through the 'influencers'' channels of communication – informal WhatsApp groups, social media sites and word of mouth. During these six weeks, the school opened its library after school for families. Data was gathered to identify the number of families that visited the library (n=69), the books borrowed (n=144) and then analyzed to identify if any of the 'harder to reach' families had made use of the library. Twenty-six of these families were considered to be 'harder to reach'. Further data indicated that it was possible that at least eight of these families had engaged with the library as a result of the 'influencers'. This suggests the use of 'influencers' may present a promising area for further research.

Keywords: Community Engagement; Education, Influencers

Introduction

Without the engagement and inclusion of all groups, mistrust and conflict is given the space to grow. Not only is learning to read one of the most important skills a child will learn as part of their school education (Castles et al., 2018), it is a passport to engagement in community, citizenship and democracy (Breadmore et al., 2019). Learning to read is often the focus of government education policy across Europe and this is true in England (Moss, 2020). The foundations for becoming a reader are often laid down before the start of formal education: the home impacts on early attitudes to reading and future reading attainment (Fletcher & Reese, 2005). When positive attitudes to reading are secured in the home in the early stages of learning, future attainment, active citizenship, social and economic success often follow despite other challenges the child may face in relation to socio-economic disadvantage (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014). Shahaeiana et al., (2018) and Hoff, (2003) identify fewer parents from socio-economically deprived communities engage with their children in book sharing. In England, public libraries, which were once a feature of towns and cities, have diminished in numbers (Robertson & McMenemy, 2018), meaning that families do not always have access to children's books. The research reported

in this paper focused on these potential barriers to becoming a reader. The research was conducted in a large inner-city primary school where many of the families were from the Somali community. A socio-cognitive model of learning to read underpinned the study. This approach views reading "as an individual cognitive-linguistic accomplishment" (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011, p.3), that is socially situated. The research had a case study design: the case being a large primary school in a diverse and vibrant community in a city in the west of England. It aimed to identify and then work with, individuals within the local Somali community who were considered to be 'influential'. Through focus groups, these 'influencers' provided insight into the local community as readers. This same group collaborated in sending out messages to the wider community about the practical arrangements for book borrowing from the extended hours of the school library, and messaging about the cultural, social and educational significance of engaging children in reading. The main aim of the research was to identify whether this approach, using local 'influencers', could affect the engagement with reading of 'hard to reach' groups within the school.

Literature Review

What counts as reading, in many European contexts is often viewed through a narrow lens of being able to lift words from the page (Hall, 2006). However, many studies that identify reading as both a social and cultural construct (e.g., Brice-Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). In England, Levy (2011) and later, Levy and Hall (2021) have demonstrated a need to reach into communities, to explore their literacy practices, which may or may not match the dominant view of what constitutes 'literacy'. Clearly, schools play a foundational role in how children view reading and what it means to be 'a reader' (Cremin et al., 2014). Scherer (2016) identifies the importance of the child's identity when learning to read and particularly that of children from minoritized groups. Identity impacts on a child's access to and engagement with learning to read, and children from minoritized groups often do not reach the same standard of reading as those in the dominant group. In addition, groups report feeling uncomfortable, by virtue of not quite 'matching' the dominant view of literacy, culture and reading. Levy and Hall (2021) explain the importance of drawing on the social and cultural knowledge and practices of the child and their community –and so reflect on how this shapes the child's identity as a reader. The complex interrelationships between the cognitive, the personal social-identity and cultural and social capital is explored by Ellis and Smith (2017) in the 'Three Domains' model of reading. They view reading as a socially situated practice, where the home, family and cultural context impacts the children's identity as they develop as a reader and citizen. Preece and Levy (2020, p.40) found that family cultural capital around literacy practices was often ignored by schools, meaning that the benefits of what "reading does for families" in relation to closeness, bonding and confidence to engage in active citizenship, was also missed. Many of the families that would most benefit from this type of recognition were often characterized by schools as 'hard to reach'.

Terms such as 'hard to reach', 'vulnerable', 'disadvantaged groups' and 'excluded groups' are used by researchers when referring to groups or individuals that do not readily engage with state institutions –including schools (Bonevski et al., 2014). Lambert and Wiebel, (1990) suggested these hidden groups made research unreliable, as they were not represented in research participants. Hannon et al., (2020) used the term 'disadvantaged families' in relation to participants in literacy research, whose families were usually from lower socio-economic groups and so experienced disadvantage in relation to income, health and housing. They

posited that their lower educational outcomes might occur because schools do not engage with these groups or recognize the "cultural strengths" they bring to reading. They also suggest that schools fail to understand that not all groups can be engaged in the same way and so an awareness of needing different approaches for different children is essential. Moll et al., (1992) saw this as a mismatch between the literacies of the home and community and the literacy of school. The research presented here focuses on the Somali community –one group often identified as 'hard to reach'.

Demie et al., (2007) and later Stokes et al., (2015) demonstrated how the Somali community often had high expectations for their children and so were engaged with the education system. Demie et al. (2007) also identified the many systemic disadvantages, including socio-economic, health and housing disadvantages, the community encountered. Following the introduction of the written form of Somali, UNICEF (2003) reported an increase in literacy in the country. This progress stopped in 1977, however, due to war. Little formal education took place during this period, although literacy practices continued in families and through religious networks. Somali families were dispersed to many countries, both in Europe and beyond, as refugees from this war. Abikar (2021) detailed the many challenges the Somali community faced in England, including racism, trauma, lack of information about English school systems, English schools' lack of knowledge of Somali culture, as well as the inherent challenges for parents who speak a different language to the one used in their schools. These challenges are not necessarily a deficit (Matthiesen, 2017) but indicators that schools need to find different approaches and make greater effort to engage with the many benefits of having more than one language and the cultural capital tied to Somali heritage. The present study explores ways to do just this, using community influencers as the bridge between the cultures of home and school.

The term 'influencer' is often associated with social media. Tafesse & Wood (2021, p.1) define the social media influencer as "prominent social media users who [accumulate] a dedicated following by crafting an authentic online persona". Notions of authenticity are important when considering the potential role of the influencer in education. Whilst there are prominent social media personalities in the United Kingdom who campaign and aim to 'influence', such as Marcus Rashford (England team footballer), this type of influencer was not considered in this study. The focus was the distinctive Somali community and the local, 'authentic' influencer. To this end, social influence theory identifies three key aspects of social influence: compliance, identification and internalization (Kelman, 2006). Each of these were relevant for this research: if the follower sees the influencer as someone they identify with, whom they therefore trust and who they see as credible within their specific locality and community, it is posited that the followers are more likely to accept and act on the ideas and suggestions of the influencer.

Health research has employed social influence theory for some time. It informs research that aims to engage traditionally 'hard to reach communities' and does so using the community it is aiming to reach to engage and recruit participants (Rockcliffe et al., 2018). This approach is also often used to deliver health messaging. It is understood that people who have a lived experience of the community, the issues they face in relation to the health issue and the current messaging in this area, are better able to connect with integrity with the community. This prompted the study reported in this article.

Families that had been identified as 'hard to reach' by schools were not 'hard to reach' by their wider community. Whilst not engaging with traditional school communications, these

families were engaging with key people (i.e., 'influencers') within their community. If these 'influencers' could be identified, then these individuals and groups would be most likely to have an impact when sharing messages about family engagement with book sharing and reading.

Methodology

The case study design used a 'team research' approach (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The team included the academic researcher as the project lead, a school leader, a community liaison member of staff and two community researchers: one a parent of children at the school and one a community leader. Both community researchers received training by the local authority, as part of an initiative to encourage women of Somali heritage into the workplace. The school identified families (n=30) that were not regularly engaging with reading in the school, either currently or at all. This study attempted to identify influential members of the community and so use their influence to affect this particular group of families. The school was a large (n=328 children) inner-city primary school. Children in the school came from a diverse range of heritage backgrounds, including those considered disadvantaged.

The research question guiding this study was, therefore:

Can the use of community 'influencers' enable families identified as 'hard to reach' to engage with and access books from the school library, alongside their children?

There were five phases to the research design:

1. The community researchers used their knowledge of community groups, religious organizations, parents in the school and community elders, to identify people they considered 'influencers'.
2. The community researchers conducted male (n=seven) and a female (n=six) 'influencer' focus groups. This gender oriented focus groups structure was the result of a request from the 'influencers'. The focus groups attempted to construct a real-world picture of how the 'influencers' framed reading and learning to read in their community. They also described the manner in which the 'influencers' explored their own reading experiences and their views on the barriers they identified as affecting their own reading journey, as well as that of their friends, colleagues and community. The female focus group took place in English, while the male focus group took place largely in Somali. Translation for the male focus group took place at the time of transcription. Both groups had expressed their preference for the language used. 'Influencers' were encouraged to both share and discuss, using a semi-structured approach.
3. Participants were given pseudonyms at the point of transcription. The six-step approach to thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyze the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2020). This approach to TA stresses reflexivity and values the "subjective skills the researcher brings to the process", with coding being "open and organic…with themes [as the] final outcome of coding and iterative theme development" (Braun & Clarke, 2020 p.7). Key observations were used in the initial analysis and these were then "drawn together" (p.13) in the themes that were developed.
4. The analysis was used to develop a number of short messages that were agreed upon and then shared by the 'influencers' two or three times a week over the following two

months. This coincided with the school opening its library afterschool for children and families. These messages were shared through WhatsApp groups, social media platforms and more traditional routes, such as newsletters and face-to-face contact in both Somali and English. Additional messages were shared using the school's usual communication systems (e.g., the school newsletter).

5. The school opened the school library twice a week, after-school, for all families with students in the school. Data was gathered of those who visited the library and borrowed books. The data was analyzed with a focus on which children and families came to the library and borrowed books. The data was then grouped to consider which of these families were from the 'hard to reach' group identified by the school. These families were then approached over the phone for an informal conversation. The conversation explored what prompted them to come to the library and how they had heard about the library opening, in order to identify if any families had been 'influenced' by the 'influencers' groups' messages.

The University Ethics Committee of the University of the West of England gave ethical approval for this study. The focus groups were conducted in line with the protocols approved by the ethics committee, including an opportunity before the start of the focus groups for informed consent to be sought and clarifying participants' right to withdraw at any point, during the focus group or after the analysis up until a specified date. School and study participants were anonymized for this presentation of the research.

Theoretical Framework
A socio-cognitive theoretical framework underpins this study. This approach views reading as a socially situated, "individual cognitive-linguistic accomplishment" (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011, p.3). This model identifies the reader as drawing on three domains when becoming a reader (Ellis & Smith, 2017): the cognitive domain, which includes elements such as phonic skills and knowledge and the cultural and social capital of the child, including home literacies, practices, values and beliefs. The third domain is the child's personal and social identity, including their aspirations, their views of themselves as a reader, and their perception of how others see them. These three domains informed the semi-structured focus group schedules, attempting to draw on community knowledge funds that might affect each domain in relation to children as readers.

Findings and Discussion (Phases 1, 2 and 3: The Influencer Groups)
A number of themes were identified in the initial phases of the research using TA. These included the complexity of identity; the oral tradition; difference rather than deficit and power, control and influence. Each theme is explored using the (anonymized) words of the 'influencer' participants (shown in italics) to illustrate the themes. The participant quotes are written as they were transcribed and so the use of Standard English is not always evident.

The Complexity of Identity
Both male and female influencer focus groups raised issues of identity. 'Influencers' outlined the myriad of identities that families held and with which they sometimes struggled. Their identity as a Somali was important to all of the influencers, whether this identity was of a first-

or second-generation heritage. 'Influencers' also discussed their identity as an English person, their feelings about their family roles and their religious identities. The first words of Allah in the Quran "*read, read, read*", were discussed as being a key driver for many families to support their children with reading but also as possibly useful leverage for those families that did not engage with school and reading. Whilst 'influencers' discussed this initially in relation to their own identities they also noted how this clearly affected their children. This range of identities was seen as positive and enriching for children. Some 'influencers' also discussed noticing that fewer young people were speaking their home language and that this was a potential problem for children's developing identities. Sada suggested that:

> Language forms your identity, that's part of who you are, so its important parents thinks about the language they are communicating with our children.

Intergenerational language differences affect the community in different ways with regard to education, communication and identity (Abdullahi & Wei, 2021). Abdullahi and Wei (2021) suggested that there were additional issues in the community when young people were surrounded by 'incorrect' versions of their own and second languages. This theme was also identified in one of the focus groups. Yusuuf said:

> If we look at the younger generation 90% can't speak fluently in Somali and only speak English, and then 90% of the elder generation would use English and Somali in their sentences. This is an issue.

Magan referenced a Somali poet who raised concerns about the, *state of Somali youths' education and how bad it was at that time*. Magan reinforced the poet's words, suggesting he was correct, stating:

> What do you expect when they're not rich in their mother tongue, they should be rich in their native language.

Barwell (2005) identifies this as the language generation gap between those in the Somali community born in England and those born in Somalia. The 'influencers' saw maintaining the home language as an important way to support children's language development. They recognised that this could in turn support reading development and, ultimately, their participation as citizens. They also raised the challenge of maintaining the home language. One participant suggested that parents were not always aware that maintaining a home language was supportive of learning in English. Degmo, specifically, pointed out that:

> With us Somali parents, it's when we don't speak the English language that well that we start speaking English to our children and not speak Somali and that's where the gaps start when they're young – where you don't have one language that you speak really well – this doesn't help with reading.

Little (2017) suggested that Somali youth are viewed as pulling in the opposite direction of their parents, the focus groups suggested that the 'difference' in families was a strength rather than a weakness. This difference was also highlighted in relation to families' experience of reading and learning to read themselves. 'Influencers' had different perspectives on reading, depending on whether they had grown up in Somalia or in England. Notions of reading for pleasure, an aspect of reading that now recognised in English policy and curricula, differed from their own experiences of reading. A typical comment came from Sada, one of the influencers:

> It is a completely different. When I was in my childhood I didn't have any choices because all you have to read is your lessons, if you don't read it, you fail the exam.

The 'influencers' recognised that Somali heritage families had to shift their view of reading from a functional view, linked to exam success, to one of leisure time and pleasure. The focus groups, however, also challenged and extended the traditional concept of a 'text'. Indeed, they explored the idea that the tradition of oral storytelling was as much about literacy as reading a traditional book.

The Oral Tradition

Andrzejewski, (1977, as cited in Abdullahi and Wei, 2021) clarifies that the oral tradition is a way of passing on traditional stories, moral and social messaging but also functions as a form of enjoyment. The 'influencer' focus groups also identified the importance of the oral tradition. Ceebla and Hira both make this clear in their comments:

> Songs and poems and traditional stories are really important, they form their identity, that's part of who they are so it's really important parents think about the language that they communicate this in.

> Because our tradition as Africans is oral. I remember my grandmother telling us stories about, you know, with moral endings and things and so they stayed with me.

Not only was this important to the community but a number of 'influencers' identified this as a key approach to bridging home and school, if both recognised the value of the oral traditions and shared 'book talk' in home languages. Sada's comment was typical of this:

> Parents may not know how the education system works but they all want the best of their children. They need to know that reading or discussing a picture book in their home language is valuable. Even a five-minute discussion with a picture book, it's valuable.

The 'influencers' shared common stories that had often been passed-down from grandparents. They mentioned a wide range of stories, traditional tales, rhymes and tongue twisters, religious sayings and stories with a moral purpose. According to the 'influencers', these were often told at bedtime, connecting parents reading their child a bedtime story with the promotion of schools. Magan said:

> I remember how our mothers would teach us rhymes and tongue twisters so our tongues would get used to words and help us with our pronunciation and vocabulary since there were no book.

What was particularly interesting was the discussion between participants regarding their own versions and favourite ways of telling the same story. Sugaal concluded that, "*[t]hey almost lose something if they are then written down".*

This highlighted how many of the 'influencers' felt, regarding how their traditions were perceived by the dominant culture: written traditions were favoured over oral traditions, even if they served similar purposes in relation to developing oral language, vocabulary and thus early literacies.

Exploring Difference and Avoiding a Deficit Model

The differences in traditions reported by the focus groups led to some schools viewing the Somali community through a lens of deficit. The status given to the 'schooled' version of literacy did not account for the value of all literacy practices. 'Influencers' reported that families were aware of this deficit view of their literacies. Consequentially, families who were unable to read to their child were also not confident in replacing reading with an approach

employing the oral tradition, which they now saw as 'lacking'. Research (Mol et al., 2008) has found evidence of the impact of oral story telling on vocabulary development, content knowledge, grammatical structures and knowledge of the home language. Despite this, the 'influencers' felt that the oral tradition was not promoted by schools and specifically not to Somali families. This led to a dissonance between what teachers were asking parents to do and parents' understanding of what was being asked of them. Suubban encapsulated this:

> You know when the teachers are saying to the parents you know this child needs to read for pleasure it's not something that they will get automatically because it is not something that they are used to.

What the 'influencers' identified was a knowledge gap between teachers-and-families and families-and-teachers. 'Influencers' mentioned the power of dual-language texts as a way of bridging the 'gap' but that these were often not available in the numbers needed, in schools.

Power, Control and Influence

A key theme in the data was the need for members of the community to have control over the messaging about reading. The 'influencers' felt that messages about the value of the home language was often lost in home-school communications. Degmo noted that:

> My one message to parents would be to just speak your home language, if you speak it well.

The 'influencers' suggested that messages about the multiple benefits of becoming a reader would be well-received, if they came from the community itself. They also recognized that reading was becoming more important, in an age where so much of social media, communication and the process of democracy occurs online, through the written language.

Some 'influencers' commented on instances where they had felt 'judged' by a school and so lacking in power and control. They suggested that this came from a lack of knowledge about a family's circumstances. Barre said:

> Some parents are not actually in a position to read with their children, not because they don't want it, maybe because they haven't had the opportunity themselves.

Magan's comment added to this:

> It is very easy to judge other people when you think they should know this or this parent has been in this country for X number of years here, they should know …there may have had trauma in life and you are just struggling, you know every single day…you've got other priorities. Let's try to understand.

Messages

The data presented above also informed Phase 4 of the research. The lead researcher designed messages about reading, based on the responses of the 'influencers' in the focus groups. The community researchers and 'influencers' then further developed these messages. Examples are presented below. 'Influencers' shared these messages using their usual networks (i.e., WhatsApp groups, word of mouth and community groups). Messages were also designed for the school to share, using newsletters and 'on the gate' conversations with parents.

Example of the Messages sent out by the Community 'Influencers' in the Half-Term Week before the Opening of the Library
During half term, tell your children some of the stories your parents told you when you were a child. Oral story telling is just as important as reading a book to your child. Perhaps you remember your parent or grandparent telling you the scary story of Dhegdheer! When you return to school remember that Sunny Primary is opening its Hub Library to families after school every Tuesday and Friday next term.

Example of the Messages sent out by the Community 'Influencers' During the Term the Library was Open for Families
The first words of the Quran tell us to "Read, read, read". Help your child to fulfil this message by supporting their reading and choosing a book from the Sunny Primary Library

Exploring and sharing your culture with your children is a great way to keep you and your children connected to their heritage but also help them grow in confidence. Can you remember the songs and rhymes you were taught when you were a child? Share them with your child and then perhaps see if you can find books in the Sunny Primary Hub Library that tell the stories of your childhood.

Have you noticed recently how much time we all spend on our phones? This week could you perhaps decide that there will be no phones on Tuesday after school? Or Friday after school? In this time you and your child could visit the Sunny Primary Hub Library 3.15 to 3.30 when it is open for families to look at books, talk about what is offered in the library and to borrow a book if you want.

Findings and Discussion (Phases 4 & 5)

The library opening saw 69 children (of 328 children in the school) borrowing a total of 144 books alongside a parent, guardian or family member. The opening period lasted six weeks, with the Hub Library opening twice weekly, after school. Of these children, 43 were with parents that did not usually come to after school activities with their child and so had been considered by the school to be from the 'hard to reach' grouping. 31 of the children (from 26 families) were of Somali heritage. The school's community development co-ordinator followed up with these families, through a phone call. Fourteen parents responded, providing information about how they heard about the library being open after school. Eight of fourteen families mentioned the phone text message from a community member (i.e., the 'influencer' group). Twelve families did not respond to the school's community development co-ordinators' calls. It remains, therefore, possible that more than eight families had been 'influenced' but felt apprehensive regarding a phone call from the school. As a result, it may be beneficial to have such follow-up enquiries conducted by members of the community in commensurate future research.

Conclusion and Implications for Practice

This research was by no means conclusive in relation to the role of 'influencers' in enabling 'hard to reach' families engage with and access books from school libraries alongside their children. It does, however, have some implications for practice. It found that the interest and

motivation of the 'influencers' themselves was evident (for similar findings in health-based research, see Campbell et al., 2007). Work with 'influencers' in the future could develop their role but also provide the 'influencers' with further training and substantive knowledge of reading, to support independence in messaging, rather than this being dependent on the researcher. This would also recognize the focus group theme regarding the need for community control and power. It would also enable the development a self-sustaining model. The study also demonstrates that schools should continue to seek ways to identify and hear the voices of their community, in relation to the real and perceived barriers to reading. It is evident that if schools explore the wider community's funds of knowledge (beyond the school) in relation to reading development, they may be in a position to begin to bridge the real or perceived gap between school and community literacies.

More research is needed to identify the potential benefits of sustaining and supporting 'influencers' to use their community networks to spread messages about the value of book sharing. In particular, a focus on exploring the 'hard to reach families' in specific cultural and social networks, could further develop and explore the area of family engagement with reading.

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Building Connections between Students through Practices to Deal with Racism in the School Environment[1]

Asimina Bouchagier[2]

Abstract

The rise of racism, in all aspects of social life, is reflected daily in many countries of the world, something which concerns the international community which is looking for solutions to the problem. Greek society, having evolved into a multicultural society after population movements, is also called upon daily to face inequalities of treatment, discrimination, prejudice, and racism. This conclusion requires, the teacher to adopt practices to prevent and combat racism by adopting a multicultural teaching approach. The present study examined the perspective of primary school teachers on the types of discrimination that may occur in the school environment and the practices they follow to deal with racist phenomena at school. The research was conducted, using a questionnaire as its research tool administrated to primary school teachers of the Region of Western Greece (n = 322). The statistical analysis showed that racist behaviors among students are indeed occurring in the school environment. The reasons for distinguishing students from their classmates are mainly due to appearance, color of the skin, origin, good and poor course performance in the courses and socioeconomic status. According to the teacher's opinion, the racist disposition of pupils is not accompanied by such an intention. Regarding the way racism is expressed, teachers in high percentages, argued that students express this mainly through the use verbal assault and isolation from groups. The majority of the teachers, who responded prefer group activities, role - playing games, racism-related films and set a good example with their attitude towards diversity, as ways to deal with racism. In this presentation, our findings will be presented and discussed with the hope that these can contribute to the academic discussion related to how to prevent and deal the racism in school.

Keywords: racism; stereotypes; prejudices; practices; school environment

Introduction

Racism is a social phenomenon that takes various forms. Racism generally consists of forms of discrimination by which people are marginalized, discriminated against, oppressed, humiliated or even persecuted. Members of society consciously or unconsciously participate in the rise of this phenomenon. The school environment is characterized by multiple forms of diversity, some better known to and understood by the public (e.g., nationality, appearance, community, gender) and others lesser-known (e.g., gender identity, disability), all of which seek recognition, respect and protection. (Pantazis, 2015; Papamichael, & Zempylas, 2015; Roman, & Eyre, 2013).

Greek schools have hosted a large number of foreign for many years. This has created a new educational paradigm, which is the subject of extensive discussion and, as a

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[2] M. Edu, Ph.D., University of Patras, Greece, abouchagier@windowslive.com

result of which, every Greek teacher must deal with the resulting issues (Nikolaou, 2005).

The issues stemming from the, in some respects, relatively novel diversity that characterizes Greek schools and many but the most important is arguably racism. Indeed, phenomena of racism and discrimination against groups described as "different" are on the rise (Triliva, et al., 2012). This raises questions regarding whether teachers perceive racist incidents at school as well as the ways in which racist phenomena are expressed among their students.

Findings stemming from recent research by the US Department of Education, dealing with educational inequality and racism in schools, are a matter of great concern. This research refuted teachers' beliefs that racism was not present in their schools. Indeed, racism not only existed in the classroom but was often subconsciously created by the teachers themselves, who were often influenced by their own prejudices. All of the relevant surveys concluded that teachers had to change their way of thinking and realize that their behavior can instigate inequalities in the classroom. They must have high expectations for all students regardless of color, race, and so forth, so that they are role models for all their students, providing equal opportunities to all (Moss Lee, 2012).

A survey conducted in eighty (80) primary schools in the Netherlands found multiple victims of racist violence in the school environment. Victims primarily belonged to different ethnic groups. The most common form of racist bullying was verbal violence, marginalization and isolation of specific groups at school (Verkuyten, & Thijs, 2002). Cremin, (2003) states that racist violence in European schools is believed to stem from the rise of racial inequality in schools. The same studies that indicate this find that racist violence in schools takes many forms. Generally, however, the perpetrator uses either their own body or other objects to frighten the victim. Victim isolation is the most common outcome, although verbal attacks and minor injuries are often observed (Cremin, 2003).

Freire believed that schools should become liberating institutions in which students are not passive containers just waiting for knowledge to be deposited by the teacher (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). There should be a two-way dialogue between teachers and students within the school. Indeed, in Freire pedagogy, students unfold themselves into members of a participatory education that supports ideas. In such circumstances, teachers are no longer conductors of ideologies that support the dominant class(es), which are, in turn, passed on to their students. With the above in mind, Smith-Maddox and Solorzano (2002) conducted a case-study, in which teachers were challenged daily to provide answers rather than making assumptions about what it means to be culturally and linguistically different. The research challenged traditional teaching models and promoted student participation processes in discussions, narratives about race, their own experiences and whether they have been discriminated against. Teachers challenged their own innate assumptions about race, changed tacit beliefs, perceptions and worldviews and created a fertile classroom environment for students to focus on their own concerns about racism and discrimination in society in general and the school environment in particular (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). From this, we understand that teachers need to create a

safe learning environment that will prevent racist tendencies by enabling the students' souls to liberate through group and participatory activities.

Teachers motivate their students by teaching them to tell their personal stories regarding racism and shape their teaching by taking ideas from the art of the theater (Epstein & Lipschultz, 2012). Students have the opportunity to better understand the issue they are dealing with and to put themselves in the place of the one who accepts racism or even the one who causes it, especially if they engage in role-play, which mimics reality. This allows students to perceive what Epstein and Lipschultz (2012) refer to as "wrong texts" and correct them. In particular, the use of dramatic art techniques, such as theatrical play, dramatization and role-plays can be a particularly useful tool for teachers to promote intercultural communication and exchange and address prejudices in the classroom. Through theater, students can use an in imaginary context to facilitate an initial approach to real situations of everyday life and think about them (Magos, 2019). Teachers must become more sensitive and dynamic in their role regarding the racist incidents they face at school. When they see a humiliating, racist incident, they must report and record it. They must develop their students' self-esteem in order to deal with whatever happens, to encourage students to both appreciate diversity and to embrace it (Griffin, 1991).

Successful teachers should not be afraid to teach the core values of a community based on freedom, equality and justice. These principles are very important in order to prevent racist tendencies. It is also particularly effective for older students to be able to reverse the arguments of a racist by creating their own views on the subject (Wormeli, 2016).

Methodology

The present study examines the means by which connections can be built between students through better practices, in order to deal with racism in the school environment through a quantitative lens. The present study examines the means by which connections can be built between students through better practices, in order to deal with racism in the school environment through a quantitative lens. Data was collected via questionnaire, which was formulated. The instrument primarily focused on creating a descriptive classification of teachers' tendencies regarding racism, using closed-ended questions.

The questionnaire was distributed to a cluster sample of teachers in the Western periphery of Greece. Cluster sampling was (and is) particularly suited to educational inquiries, since educational actors (i.e., teachers, students, etc.) are de facto clustered into a hierarchically clustered set of groups: schools, which are located in neighborhoods, in cities, which in turn are located in prefectures, in regions, and so forth. This study's population comprised all of the teachers of Western Greece. These teachers were then divided into clusters depending on the prefecture in which their schools are located (for more insight into cluster and stratified cluster sampling, see Ahmed, 2009; Hillson, et al, 2015).

The main purpose of the research is to explore the views of primary school teachers in the region of Western Greece on racist behavior at school and the means by which it can be dealt with. Bearing this in mind, we must first understand the current state

of racist phenomena in the school environment and then how teachers perceive and deal with them. These concerns led to the formation of the research questions:

1. *What are the teachers' perceptions of racist attitudes that occur at school*?
2. *Which anti-racism practices do teachers use to prevent and/or deal with racism in schools*?

Data collection took place from October 2019 to January 2020. The study's sample was informed by population data retrieved from the Periphery of Primary and Secondary Education of Western Greece. Thirty-seven (37) schools were selected by lot for inclusion in the study. Our sample was 322 teachers of primary education.

The study's instrument was comprised of three sections. The first section dealt with respondent demographics –placed at the beginning on the longstanding premise that respondent's first impression is usually positive. The second section contained items pertaining to respondents' perceptions of the phenomenon of racism in the school environment. The third and final section inquired after the practices that teachers use to deal with racism in the school environment.

Findings

The majority of teachers reported that racist behaviors are manifested in the school environment. Nearly two thirds (60.6%) of respondents considered racist behaviors occurred in the school environment "Sometimes". 27% considered that they occurred "Very Often". 53.7% of teachers also reported that the classroom "Sometimes" encourages racist behavior.

Table 1. Teachers' belief regarding the manifestation of racist behaviors in the school environment by area where the school they serve is located.

Teacher response	Urban school district (%)	Semi-urban area (%)	Rural school area (%)
Never	00.7	00.0	00.0
Rarely	07.2	02.7	27.4
Sometimes	52.6	68.0	67.4
Very often	39.5	29.3	05.3
Total	100	100	100

We examined the existence of differences in teachers' opinions on the manifestation of students' racist behavior, depending on the area in which the school they taught in was located. These opinions were measured using a 4-point Likert type item, resulting in ordinal level data (see Table 1), limiting our ability to test for such difference to non-parametric methods (such as the Kruskal-Wallis test employed below). Indeed, we found evidence of a statistically significant difference in the opinion of teachers about the manifestation of racist behavior at school depending on the area of the school they serve (see Table 2).

Teachers reported more frequent manifestations of racist behaviors in urban than rural schools. Although, in each case (urban, semi-urban, and rural locales), the majority of teachers reported racist behaviors occurring "Sometimes" (52.6%, 68%, and 67.4%, respectively), this may be due to the relatively noncommittal nature of the

term (which is mirrored in its Greek language counterpart). And, while there is some differentiation between the locales, even in this context, the more extreme responses of "Rarely" and "Very Often", show much more evident variation. Specifically, more than a quarter (27.4%) of teachers serving in Rural areas answered that racist behaviors are "Rare". The corresponding percentages of those serving in Urban and Semi-Urban areas are 7.2% and 2.7% respectively. Only one in twenty (5.3% of) teachers serving in rural areas reported racist behaviors occurring "Very Often", while the corresponding percentage among teachers serving in Semi-Urban and Urban areas was between nearly 6 and 8 times higher (29.3% and 39.5% respectively).

Table 2. Kruskal-Wallis Test - Question B1 with School Area

School Area	N	Mean Rank
Urban	152	184.29
Semi-urban	75	176.24
Rural	95	113.40
Total	322	
	p*: .000 (* Kruskal-Wallis Test)	
	p**: .000 (** Pearson Chi-Square)	

The motivations characterizing the racist incidents in schools were also varied. More than 4 out of 5 teachers reported that students "distinguish" their classmates primarily based on their appearance, origin (only 28% of teachers rarely) and performance (good or bad). They sometimes distinguish their classmates due to socioeconomic status and skin color but rarely or never based on sex and/or religion. Racist behavior is predominantly expressed through verbal attacks and exclusion from groups and friendships. Students frequently (40.1% "Sometimes" 36% and "Often") employ stereotypical expressions against their classmates with regard to their appearance. Nationality and/or place of origin was reported as a motivation for stereotypical expressions at similar rates. Academic performance and the socio-economic were frequently reported as "Sometimes" causes and, to a substantially lesser extent, "Often". Students were reported to complain to their teachers about racism they received from their classmates with regard to their appearance, nationality/origin and poor performance in school. 46.6% of teachers believe that the manifestation of racist behavior by students is "Sometimes" accompanied by a similar intent, as some students may behave or express themselves in a racist manner without realizing it –although nearly a quarter of respondents (22.4%) disagree with this idea. Educators report that racist behavior has multiple manifestations and takes various forms within school classrooms, which are, in and of themselves, a reflection of our society. The most commonly reported manifestation (43.1% of reported cases) is isolation, as a result of exclusion from social groups, collective games, and social activities. The second most prevalent form of racist behavior, evident in 37.6% of cases, involved frequent use of verbal attacks, swearing, insults, threats, slander, and so on.

The overwhelming majority of surveyed teachers (83.9%) reported that they have not undertaken a specific program in school related to combating discrimination and racism within the classroom. Moreover, the respondents reported that anti-racism programs and trips to schools in foreign countries for exchange of ideas, mores, and so forth, are rarely promoted. Approximately one third (31%) of surveyed teachers

believed that diversity discussions were promoted in the school where they taught. It is encouraging to say that most teachers reflect on their own views on diversity by attempting to provide all of their students with equal opportunities. Although answers ranged from "Rarely" to "Sometimes", teachers reported that activities related to racism *are* implemented in their classrooms. Moreover, when they are at school, teachers report their key actions in the face of racist incidents are to advise the victim, discuss with the students involved, and, as necessary, scold offending parties.

In ongoing attempts to address and discourage such incidents in the future, teachers reported they would "Often" (47.8%) try to find stimuli from cognitive objects (i.e., Language, Religion, History, etc.) in the classroom to prevent and deal with racism and to raise awareness among their students for diversity and discrimination. Teachers also reported that they would "Often" use literature (31.1%) on the subject of diversity, while they would only "Sometimes" (32.3%) seek and employ videos and/or movies with topics related to discrimination. A large proportion of respondents (40.2%) would "Sometimes" and, in a smaller proportion, "Often" (19.3%) employ role-playing games in the classroom.

Table 3. Actions to combat racism in the classroom

Response Actions to Racism in the Classroom	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
You find stimuli from cognitive objects	00.0	14.9	11.8	47.8	25.5
Make use of literature	06.2	12.4	31.1	32.3	18.0
Looking for Discrimination Videos/Movies	02.2	39.8	32.3	16.5	09.3
Use Role-playing games	07.5	28.3	40.2	19.3	04.7

Schools in Urban areas see anti-racist actions being promoted and taken more often than schools in rural areas. It is possible that this is causally related to the discrepancies in the frequency of reported racist incidents by locale discussed above (see Table 1).

Table 4. Average Ratings of Racism Prevention-Handling Methods in the School Environment as Ranked by Educators.

Ways to Address Racism	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
To punish students who behave in a racist manner.	3.53	0.688
To engage in group activities and awareness-raising actions.	1.50	0.608
To discuss with students who exhibit racist behavior.	3.12	0.721
To set a good example with their attitude towards diversity.	1.84	0.860

Respondents were asked to rate racism prevention methods, on a scale 1 (most preferred) to 4 (least preferred). Responses were polarized into two groups (see Table 4). They prioritized group activities and awareness-raising initiatives concerning diversity as their most preferred approach to preventing racism, scoring an average value of 1.5 (s.d.=0.608). It is worth noting that this option, apart from having the highest overall ranking, also had the smallest standard deviation or, in other words, it was the most consistently reported in this position. The second most popular

preventative measure reported was setting a good example in their attitude towards diversity (m=1.84, s.d.=0.86). This point marks a clearly visible shift in average preferences, as the respondents' third preference, involving discussion with students who exhibit racist behavior, ranked just 3.12 (s.d.=0.721). Educators least preferred option was punishment for students engaging in racist conduct, with an average ranking of 3.53 (s.d.=0.688).

These preferences for responses to racism in the classroom were related to teachers' age and years of service. This is particularly evident with regard to of the most important practices for preventing and tackling classroom racism. The two practices are to encourage students to talk about racist incidents they are experiencing or witnessing, as well as group activities about diversity and discrimination. As one might expect, based on teacher responses discussed above (see Table 4), teachers who agree that it helps to encourage students to report racist incidents are also stronger proponents for the implementation of group classroom activities. Both, however, appear to primarily be the purview of younger and/or newer teachers, as support for both propositions decreases with both age and years of service (see Table 5).

Table 5. Spearman Correlations. Age - Previous service, Encouragement for reporting racist incidents by students and Anti-racism practices related to the implementation of activities on issues of otherness.

		Age	Years of Service	Encourage students to report racist incidents	Group activities on the subject of otherness
Age	**Corr.**	1.000			
	rSpearman	.			
	N	322			
Years of Service	**Corr.**	.871	1.000		
	rSpearman	.000	.		
	N	322	322		
Encourage students to report racist incidents	**Corr.**	-.189	-.194	1.000	
	rSpearman	.001	.000	.	
	N	322	322	322	
Group activities on the subject of otherness	**Corr.**	-.172	-.233	.617	1.000
	rSpearman	.002	.000	.000	.
	N	322	322	322	322

Notably, teachers who emphasized the need for them to set a good example towards diversity, in order to prevent their students from behaving in a racist manner and those that supported simple recommendations to students who behave in a racist manner, do not agree that students should be punished (r=-.486, p=.000 and r=-.666, p=.000, respectively; see Table 6). As teachers increased in both Age and Years of Service, they also became (statistically significantly but only slightly substantively) less

likely to support simple recommendations (r=-.118, p=0.035) and, equivalently, slightly more likely to support student punishment (r=0.163, p=.003).

Table 6. Spearman correlations. Age- Previous service, Anti-racism practices related to punishment simple recommendations and setting a good example for teachers in matters of discrimination.

		Age	Years of Service	Student Punishment	Simple recommendations	A good example of teachers
Age	**Corr.**	1.000				
	rSpearman	.				
	N	322				
Years of Service	**Corr.**	.871	1.000			
	rSpearman	.000	.			
	N	322	322			
Student Punishment	**Corr.**	.163	.147	1.000		
	rSpearman	.003	.008	.		
	N	322	322	322		
Simple recommendations	**Corr.**	-.118	-.109	-.666	1.000	
	rSpearman	.035	.051	.000	.	
	N	322	322	322	322	
A good example of teachers	**Corr.**	-.108	-.107	322	.012	1.000
	rSpearman	.053	.056	-.486	.828	.
	N	322	322	.000	322	322

Conclusion

Greek teachers believe that racist behaviors do, in fact, manifest in the school environment. This is not always the case, as the majority of teachers often fails to both recognize the extent of racism in their classroom and reduce the racist incidents that occurred in the school (Moss Lee, 2012).

Racist incidents involving students were more frequently reported in urban schools. This is particularly interesting, especially given that the phenomenon does not appear to have been extensively examined in either Greek or foreign literature. The majority of surveyed teachers believe that their observed manifestations of racist student behavior is not intentionally racist, believing that some students may behave or express themselves in a racist manner, without realizing it. Indeed, according to teachers' perceptions, the most prevalent reasons for students distinguish against their classmates are, in descending order, appearance, good and bad academic performance, and then nationality - origin. While the first two may be exacerbated by the third, they are nevertheless (unfortunately) common reasons for discrimination against other students, regardless of racial or national background. When students did express racism, however, teachers most frequently reported its manifestation through the use verbal assault(s) and isolation from groups.

We argue, nevertheless, that the most remarkable results are those which stem from the examination of the means by which teachers attempt to both prevent and treat racism within the school. More than four out of five surveyed teachers (83.9%) have not undertaken a health or cultural environment program focused on combating discrimination against racism. Nearly one third (31.1%) reported "Often" using discussions and stories focusing on diversity to encourage their students to tell their own stories and experiences –a practice particularly useful in preventing discrimination. Indeed, teachers would do well to initiate discussions, narratives related to otherness in order to sensitize their students. Teachers in our survey said that they do not often organize informational events, discussions or exhibitions which could promote peaceful relationships and fight racism. It is left to each school to ensure the existence of a code of anti-racist violence and programs/group activities to prevent and deal with such cases.

Older teachers and those with more years of service were less in favor of group activities being implemented in the classroom to combat racism. They were also stronger proponents of disciplinary action for transgressors. These positions are not only concerning but clearly warrant more and more focused research.

All the above practices are implemented in the majority in schools in urban areas. They are less common in semi-urban areas and even less so in rural areas. This may be a result of the fewer (or at least fewer *perceived*) cases of discrimination and racism within the school space in rural schools.

Teachers often attempted to find stimuli from cognitive objects (Language, Religion, History, etc.) in the classroom to prevent and deal with racism and to raise awareness among their students for diversity and discrimination. Teachers also often used literature on the subject of diversity, while sometimes searching for videos and movies with topics related to discrimination and, often, use role-playing games. Role-playing is considered the most important technique in combating racism at school (Epstein & Lipschultz 2012). Although two in five teachers (40.2%) only use it occasionally and over a quarter of respondents (28%) no more than rarely. Educators prioritized group activities and awareness-raising initiatives concerning diversity as their first (1st) approach to prevent and deal racism. They consider setting a good example themselves in their attitude towards diversity to be the second most significant measure to combat racism. The third most crucial measure involves discussion with students who exhibit racist behavior. Conversely, teachers (on average) considered punishment for students engaging in racist conduct as the least preferred option.

Several of these findings have reinforced our existing understanding teachers' best practices when dealing with and preventing racism in the classroom. Some, however, were surprising, while others were, frankly, concerning. As globalization continues to characterize both Greek and international educational reality, the prevalence of and teachers' reactions to discrimination in general and racism in particular are questions of paramount importance. Understanding why teachers in the Western Periphery of Greece appear more sensitive to the existence of racist manifestations in their classrooms could provide insight into ongoing or future teacher training for educators in other countries/circumstances. Comprehending the differences in older and younger (or more and less experienced) teachers' approaches to racist phenomena in the classroom is also a point of keen interest. Are these differences the result of

differential training, different life experiences, or possibly the influence of increased practical experience? Deeper examination of these differences may provide the means to steer the better-established educators away from less desirable practices, but also safeguard future generations from adopting them. In short, this study made evident the need for more research, which is concurrently more expansive and more focused, in hopes of providing more evidence for the answers it provided and greater insight into the questions with which it left us. Both have the potential to impact educational policy and, thus, the lives and practices teachers and the experiences of students, who might otherwise (continue to) suffer the ignominy of racism in their daily lives.

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Citizenship Within Language in Times of Conflict: Teaching Strategies for English as a Foreign Language within the European Union[1]

Evangelina Papalexatou[2], Michael John Katsillis[3], & Epameinondas Panagopoulos[4]

Abstract

Common language is among the least disputed indicators of ethnic and cultural groups. Indeed, language can shape ideas, color perceptions, and identify groups or tribes. As a marker of multicultural competency, foreign languages are also considered an important factor for participation in society as a whole. Language can unite populations and groups, render the otherwise "other" accessible, and strengthen intercultural understanding. Common language –formal or otherwise– provides a foundation upon which community may be fostered.

This provides a basis for the acquisition of the skills and attributes needed to live and work in a diverse world. It enables individuals and groups to advance their understanding and appreciation of sociocultural differences, promoting appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication. Common language (implicitly or explicitly) promotes the values of multicultural competency and intercultural sensitivity across the Union.

Conflict, the action of forces in opposition, is to some extent the result communications failure. It promotes discrimination and results in exclusion. One extreme culmination of this exclusion is embodied in the transformation of native populations into refugee groups. These groups are necessarily, often forcibly, relocated into predominantly foreign sociocultural circumstances/locales.

We focus on the teaching of English as a second of foreign language (ESFL) as the most common linguistic framework within Europe. Whether by design or mistake, the reality of this underlying commonality has provided a persistent foundation upon which international relationships can be and often are built –a foundation whose importance only becomes more heightened as ongoing conflict foments an abrupt and increasing lack of sociocultural cohesion. In this light, we employ a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with Greek ESFL teachers to examine the role of ESFL in Greece in general and in light of ongoing national and international conflicts.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies; EFL; ESFL; Education; Citizenship; Conflict

Introduction

Language, the systematic "spoken or written communication used by a particular country, people, community, etc." ("Language", 2023), is among the core identifying factors of societal groups. It could be argued that this definition implies that it is the sociocultural group that defines the language, rather than the language characterizing the group. Indeed, languages develop as composites of words, mannerisms, patterns,

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[2] PhD, Corresponding Author: evelpap@gmail.com

[3] DPhil, Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, mijkat@gmail.com, **ORCiD**: 0000-0001-9771-7689

[4] MSc, University of Patras epameinondaspanagopoulos@gmail.com

and other means of communication, which are initially defined by sociocultural markers, mannerisms, and circumstances of specific groups. As they are more widely adopted, they begin to not only be defined *by* the group but also to *define* the group. Such adoption is not limited to the initial, formative, group. Indeed, adoption or at least comprehension of the particular language may be requisite for any form of comprehension between two otherwise disparate groups. Through learning and adopting new languages, however, disparate groups can gain insight into local, cultural, and spiritual beliefs and mannerisms. These insights can then act as a bridge between such groups making language or, more appropriately, *common* language, an identifying marker of the sociocultural group.

The relatively recent increase in the global exchange of populations and ideas has conspired to make the exchange of populations, ideas, and mores substantially easier and more commonplace than at any other time in human history. It has also served to make differences between otherwise disparate groups more apparent. Exchange, however, can only take place if it is possible for groups to communicate with one another. And, indeed, cooperation requires communication; dispute is, generally, the direct or indirect result of a failure to communicate. Common ground, *common language* –formal or otherwise– provides a foundation upon which community may be fostered.

Significance of the Study

Language can shape ideas, color perceptions, and identify groups or tribes. As such, it can be a unifying agent, fostering inclusivity, acceptance, and understanding. These characteristics are a prerequisite for the acquisition of skills and attributes necessary for integration into and thriving in a culturally and linguistically diverse (and increasingly diversifying) world. They enable individuals and groups to advance their understanding and appreciation of sociocultural differences, promoting appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication. Thus, common language implicitly or explicitly promotes the values of allophilia (Pittinsky & Montoya, 2009), multicultural competency and intercultural sensitivity (see Bennet, 1993; Chen & Starosta, 1998) across the European Union (EU).

In certain fundamental ways, conflict functions in opposition to common language. Conflict promotes discrimination and results in exclusion. Exclusion takes many forms, one extreme of which manifests in the displacement of people and groups into foreign sociocultural and linguistic circumstances. This disconnects these individuals and groups from the communal (native) language ties that bound them to the local community they lived in but also the greater global community. The impact of this disconnect is particularly evident in children, who rely on social mechanisms (including though not limited to education) for integration, training, and support.

Native language, however, is just one form of communal language and, thus, one means of connection to the societal whole. Indeed, it is worth noting that native languages are generally designed and maintained to only provide connections to local societies. The global community has largely agreed that there are a limited number of languages, which function on an international level and, as such, can connect communities between tribes, nations, and cultures. English, taught across the

European Union as a Second or Foreign Languages (ESFL)[5], provides a persistent foundation upon which to build (or rebuild) both local and international relationships. It is a means by which it is possible for individuals and the groups they comprise to re-establish the ability to integrate into and participate in societies. It is a means by which displaced and disenfranchised individuals may once again function as active citizens.

European Reality, Greek Reality, and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Student

For most contemporary EU citizens, protracted, persistent conflict is a relatively abstract notion. Wars are largely (though not universally) things that take place elsewhere. The indirect effects of ongoing conflict (e.g., supply chain disruptions, goods shortages, etc.) can be evident, provided the conflict is close enough and the good(s) affected fundamental enough. The direct effects of conflict, including the direct disruption of daily life, destruction of property and infrastructure, and loss of life are, however, largely removed from their reality. To the average EU citizen, the most familiar and tangible outcome of conflict is the transformation of a citizen into a refugee.

The refugee, however, must, by definition, seek refuge. To do this, they must first be displaced –which is to say they must be (forcibly) relocated somewhere other than their native locale. The foreign locales to which they are relocated, however, rarely if ever expect them and, historically, lack the social and sometimes (usually) physical infrastructure to accommodate them. As such, any sufficiently large number of refugees constitutes a crisis scenario for most countries.

From its inception as a modern state in 1821 and until 1990, Greece was perceived as, and indeed self-identified as, a monocultural, monolinguistic country. The early 1990s, however, saw the influx of substantial immigrant populations, primarily from bordering Northern countries. This marked a rather abrupt shift, which, over the course of the next several decades, saw Greek society begin the shift from mono- to multi-cultural. Although substantially more slowly, this also marked the beginning of the ongoing path toward Greek recognition of the existence of a more socially, culturally, and, salient to our study, linguistically diverse population.

Greece, due in no small part to its location, has also historically served as a gateway into Europe. As a result, it currently finds itself in the midst of a second refugee crisis in as many decades. It could even be argued that the original refugee crisis never truly ended[6]. If this is indeed the case, then the second wave has only compounded and expanded the problems initially caused by the first. Even if it is not, however, the country has still been the receptacle of culturally and linguistically diverse, displaced peoples for the better part of twenty years. The advent of international conflict still

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[5] We recognize that the terms "English as a Foreign Language" (EFL) and "English as a Second or Foreign Language" (ESFL) are not, strictly speaking, equivalent. For the purposes of this study, they are largely equivalent and will be used as such.

[6] Proving this claim is a difficult proposition. Rigorous arguments would necessitate the presentation of extensive data, more than a decade's worth of immigration figures, ongoing reports from refugee receptacle areas, and news reports, at a minimum. While we would argue this is a worthwhile endeavor, it strays far beyond the scope of this particular enquiry.

unfolding on the Eurasian continent, however, means that Greece is not currently alone in being a primary recipient of large groups of immigrants/refugees.

The influx of immigrant or refugee groups inevitably both introduces and increases diversity in receptacle countries. These countries and their component communities become host to groups that bring with them native languages, customs, beliefs, and ideals. Children regularly comprise large portions of such displaced populations. Sufficient or otherwise, host countries generally attempt to provide a social net for such populations including, though not limited, to continued education, allowing displaced youth to once again take up the mantle of students. These students, however, differ from the local student body. They bring with them more and/or different linguistic and cultural markers, if not outright languages and cultures. They are what is referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students (Allen et al., 2002).

Third Language Acquisition and the CLD Student

Relatively unavoidably, displaced students are in a singular position, regarding language courses. They have spent varying amounts of time learning their native language and (in most cases at best) one other language. English is and has been the most commonly studied second or foreign language within the EU by a wide margin, for quite some time (Eurostat, 2023).

Displaced students, however, are injected into educational systems structured to integrate children into their native, local societies. This has several ramifications; the most salient to this study is that their curricula are structured around and presented in the local students' native language(s). Displaced students are therefore placed in a position where their mother tongue is *de facto* sidelined. These students are required not only to learn but, depending on their age, have varying degrees of functional fluency in the local language. Established educational systems rarely if ever have mechanisms in place to treat *local* languages as though they were third or foreign – despite this being the reality for such displaced students. Local languages are treated as native, with all of the commensurate home, extended family, and community support that connotes. English, the default second or foreign language in most locales, now acts as a *de facto* foreign and, indeed, third language for these students.

CLD students, displaced or otherwise, are defined by the application of their diverse resources in communication with monol- and multilingual individuals (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Indeed, given ample opportunity, CLD students can exhibit superior cognitive abilities in certain fields, including autonomy, vocabulary, language system comprehension, cognitive flexibility, creativity and metalinguistic awareness (Aronin & Toubkin, 2002; Ó Laoire & Singleton, 2009; Jessner, 2008; Kemp, 2007; Thomas, 1988; Bialystok, 1991; Baker, 1996). With specific regard to Third Language (T3) learning, CLD are uniquely suited to benefit from the language input of bilingual children (Mieszkowska et al., 2017) and common cognate words and expressions between the various languages they speak and are called upon to learn (Schmitt, 1997).

The Role of the ESFL Teacher

Human displacement imposes potentially wide-scale social, cultural, and linguistic disparity. Foresight, sensitivity, and active, ongoing effort may make it feasible for that disparity to eventually transition into diversity. Regardless of what stage the societal whole is at, however, the introduction of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity into the classroom produces a special type of student and so a special type of learning and teaching experience. How ESFL Teachers deal with this particular phenomenon, and its agents, the CLD Students, is the focus of the present study.

There are a number of core considerations that teachers of third (foreign) languages should (arguably *must*) take into consideration, when formulating effective third language teaching strategies. These include Cross Linguistic Influence - transfer (CLI), code switching, metalinguistic awareness, and translanguaging. The Greek government has laid out guidelines for a Greek Primary School Intercultural Teaching Framework (see Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023), which specifically define the role of the foreign language teacher as being both *able* and *required* to self-reflect, be sensitive, and be aware. Listed as such, however, these remain relatively nebulous concepts.

In this context, self-reflection entails analyzing one's personal feelings toward culturally "other" individuals, discerning how that relates to the (local) dominant culture, and processing the perspective influencing these feelings (Ming & Dukes, 2006). Wright et al. (2002) note that the language teacher needs to understand more than just the workings of the language they teach but also to empathize with the learner, comprehending their difficulties, the causes of their errors as well as other interlanguage features. Banks et al. (2001) further posit that the teacher must actively employ and transform this knowledge and comprehension into effective teaching strategies and enriched curricula. Indeed, there are a number of things language teachers need to be aware of, including cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006), linguistic sensitivity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), strategy training (Oxford, 1990) and activation of the learners' metalinguistic awareness (De Angelis, 2011; Jessner, 2008).

ESFL Teaching Strategies

The traits necessary for teachers, as laid out above, manifest themselves in the various teaching strategies they employ in their classrooms. These can be predominantly divided into one of three categories: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), Differentiated Instruction (DI), and Adaptation Pedagogy (AP).

CRP entails "[u]sing the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more *relevant and effective for them"* (Gay, 2009, p. 29). DI refers to the modification of curricula in order to maximize learning opportunities for all students, while addressing their needs and taking into account their learning styles, attainment levels and personal interests (Sougari & Mavroudi, 2019). AP entails providing opportunities for enhanced educational achievement, by offering students information in comprehensible format(s) (Lalas & Bustos, 2012). All three of these strategies increase

student engagement, help them negotiate meaning, and retain a better tally of their learning and comprehension progress.

Teaching strategies assign innovative and varied roles to teachers; they are flexible, teachable, and extend beyond simple cognition. Strategies promote learning directly, as strategies access the special thoughts or behaviors individuals employ to enhance comprehension, learning, and retention of new information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Strategies promote teaching indirectly, by making learning more efficient and effective, vis-à-vis teachers helping students understand how to better help themselves learn (Rubin, 1990). Indeed, teaching strategies provide several key benefits for the student, including motivation, increased confidence, and enhanced educational achievement (Paris, 1988; Zimmerman, 1990). These then pay dividends in increased metacognition and/or metacognitive awareness, self-reflection and self-evaluation of personal performance, and an understanding of optimal personalized learning processes.

Purpose of the Study

These considerations are particularly important in Greece, where large portions of the active EFL teaching force may have been educated while Greece was considered monocultural and monolinguistic or recently enough thereafter that the relevant curricula had no consideration had been given to the new social and linguistic paradigm. Even outside of such contexts, English is predominantly viewed, treated, and taught as though it were, as the curriculum dictates, a *second* language. There is, thus, a great deal of uncertainty regarding a number of salient characteristics of the EFSL teacher, under such circumstances.

Although not as substantial as the difference between native language and first foreign language, there are, nevertheless, differences between the teaching of a given language as a second (i.e., first foreign) or third (or later) language. There is no rigorous data on teachers' mindset(s) and general understanding of third language teaching, learning, and acquisition. We know what teaching strategies they *should* be employing, based on the generally imposed criteria in their roles as ESFL teachers. We do not know which of these are most commonly employed or to what extent. And, in an ever-changing sociopolitical and linguistic reality, we do not know what, if any, relationship exists between teachers' beliefs and the prevailing contemporary findings in the field of EFSL.

Impediments faced by ESFL educators impede access to the communal framework, societal integration, and true, meaningful citizenship for some of society's most vulnerable individuals and groups. In this light, understanding the needs of, challenges faced by and further opportunities available to ESFL educators is central to ensuring that these displaced and disadvantaged youths reap the benefits of well-established social integrative mechanisms, and are allowed to reap the benefits of the social promise of education, integration, and, in the truest, most meaningful way, citizenship.

Thus, we hope to spotlight culturally relevant pedagogy, differential instruction, adaptation pedagogy, and indications of interculturalism in the foreign mainstream classroom. In doing so, we hope to identify ESFL teachers' needs, more clearly define

the challenges they face, and signpost further opportunities for them to actively and more efficiently adopt relevant teaching strategies, in practice.

Methodology

To examine the questions discussed above, we conducted a case study on a purposive sample of 6 EFSL teachers in Western Greece, during the Spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The teachers were active in the prefectures of Achaia, Ilia, and Aitoloakarnania. These prefectures are host to multi-lingual, multi-cultural classrooms, while also being largely comprised of smaller, more parochial settlements. Most of the immigration they have borne is primarily the result of seasonal worker movement or blue-collar (usually agrarian) worker movement. As a result, they offer a potentially exaggerated educational and social paradigm –one in which both the classroom and the society it is housed in are less-than-ideally prepared for the realities of an often rapidly and violently changing world. Although not a microcosm for the entirety of Greek social reality, it could be argued that they offer insight into a baseline perspective. They correspond to decreased impetus to accommodate social integration, which would, for example, be necessary in the tighter confines of a metropolitan setting. More suburban and agrarian locales also likely see the allotment of fewer resources per educational unit, if only due to the smaller size of their schools and classrooms. They also generally represent historically lower levels of interaction with the social, cultural, and linguistic "other".

We conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with each of member of the sample. Interviews are flexible and adaptable tools, which have the potential to provide rich material (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The core structure of each interview was comprised of 6 open-ended questions. This approach was selected in part due to the nature of our inquiries; while EFSL is a well-established subsection of education in general and language education specifically, our particular context left us in a position where, as is so often the case in such studies, we could not know what we did not know. Indeed, the particular interpretation of the set of knowledge each ESFL teacher possessed, in conjunction with their particular awareness of how complete (or incomplete) this knowledge was particularly salient. It also enabled us to gain deeper and more extensive insight, through real, 'face to face' interaction, elicit views on specific topics, and "stimulate verbal flights from the respondents who know what you do not" (Glesne, 2010, p. 102). In short, the open-ended interview provided the best opportunity to gain meaningful insight into the personal motivations of each teacher but also their comprehension and internalization of the core concepts of multicultural competency, intercultural sensitivity, and their application thereof to the adoption of optimal strategies for and in general the teaching of ESFL.

Interviews were recorded using audio taping, transcribed using intelligent verbatim transcription, and encoded (see Creswell, 2003) for later thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was selected since its fundamental purpose is to extract common patterns clustered around a core organizing concept, which recur across datasets (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Our approach to content analysis was deductive, employing interview topics and relevant theory were as guides in forming the main analytical categories.

Findings

The questions which probed the personal views of the six participants and their teaching strategies, with regard to L3 learners, facilitated the interpretation of how the ESFL teacher-interviewees made sense of their own teaching experiences. They provided a clear description of the general views teachers hold and the extent to which their personal viewpoints are related to or influenced by the strategies they are currently employing in the classroom. The six participants' responses were categorized under the following broad categories:

1. Teachers' Experience and Views on Intercultural Awareness

2. Teaching Strategies and/or Resources Adopted in Mixed Educational Settings for L3 Learners

3. The Potential of Multilingualism for Learners / Use of Available Languages to Maximum Effect

4. Classroom Management and Challenges, and

5. Teacher Development and Future Training

Key points from each are discussed and expanded upon below. Interviewees names have been redacted. Where they are referenced below, we refer to them as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6.

Teachers' Experience and Views on Intercultural Awareness

Teachers reported experience working in culturally and linguistically diverse environments –both at the time of the interview and in the past. They provided multiple definitions of intercultural education and what it may entail for L3 learners. Relevant excerpts from the interviews include:

> "…Intercultural education pertains to teaching students of various cultures and using elements of those varying cultures to create a new common setting and encourage cultural awareness and inclusion…" (T3)

> "…The notion of intercultural education is quite wide I suppose…it not only has to do with the country of origin…it has to do with different races…languages…lifestyles…religion…it is not something uniform and static I think…" (T5)

It became evident that the teacher-interviewees struggled to go beyond issues of unity, equity and mutual respect for all cultures within the mainstream classroom, with regard to intercultural education, thus seemingly equating integration of L3 learners with assimilation:

> "…it actually comes as…incorporation, as an issue of incorporating all these students into the Greek school context…try to integrate and assimilate them in…in the Greek reality…" (T6)

Notably, all but one of the teachers (T1) appear to have no formal education in the field. The exception (T1) reported that*:

> "…personally, I have attended a two-year postgraduate program offered by the Hellenic Open University entitled 'Language Education for Refugees and Migrants'…" (T1).

The balance of the teachers reported no relevant awareness citing a lack of training:

Other respondents reported seeking education in the field out of personal interest:

> "…I have never received official training on the field, yet I have read some basic information on my own initiative…" (T4)

or report that their knowledge can be attributed to various programs. Even in such scenarios, however, they did not indicate that such knowledge as they attained was useful or actionable:

> "…I have not received formal training on the subject, but I have been exposed to intercultural education through participation in Erasmus+ KA 2 mobilities and e-twinning projects" (T3)

Teaching Strategies and/or Resources Adopted in Mixed Educational Settings for L3 Learners

Teaching strategies and adopted resources are indicative of how teachers approach specific educational circumstances. Teachers appear to cater to the learners' developmental levels through what Rothenberg and Fischer (2017, p. 35) refer to as "scaffolding and explicit language instruction". They also employ shared learning experiences, which are key tenets in the notion of successful teaching according to constructivist theory and CRP.

Teachers try to facilitate the lesson, celebrate praise and respect and promote 'thinking about thinking' (i.e., meta-cognitive strategies), foster learning through visual support (i.e., memory strategies) and try to activate learners' prior linguistic knowledge (i.e., cognitive strategies). They also appear to develop an inclusive perspective among students, by assembling them into pairs or larger groups, employing socio-affective strategies. In conjunction with this, teachers seem to promote collaborative and interactive learning, making use of social and compensation strategies through cooperative learning and one-to-one or teacher-student interactions. This, in turn, can help learners bridge the gap to a higher level of learning within their zone of development (Price, 2008).

> "…I try to employ the help of other students who speak the same L1 as the diverse students and can act as an intermediary…" (T3)

> "…I mainly try to use ICT in my lessons and a lot of projects that promote cooperation, coordination and mutual respect among students… (T4)

> "…if there is a student from the same country, I usually have them help another student… I ask for help from students who are more proficient in Greek in the L2 or in the L3 in English… "(T5)

> "…make them think before we step into something new…with the help of a "stronger" student who is there to clear things in the topic of today's lesson and elaborate on that…" (T2)

> "…also brainstorming and discussion on various topics can oil the wheels and get them to understand the topic even better…" (T3)

Teachers identify the 'non-visible' diversity of students, favoring all types of adaptations, ranging from instructional presentation and classroom organization adaptation, to student response and motivation adaptations. Some indicative

adaptations refer to the use of authentic material that relates to students' personal lives:

> "…I also try to correlate each lesson to their own experiences…activate background knowledge and help them make associations or inferences…" (T4),

Some refer to the preview of information or the pre-teaching of vocabulary units:

> "…I also try to pre- teach unknown words…" (T1)

Some even note simplification of the curriculum and the provision of individualized or less complex material:

> "…I try to explain more…make things…information simpler…pre-teach basic notions to make them aware of what is coming…" (T5).

Some teachers also referred to the use of cues, flashcards and task variations through the choice of specific assignments, graphic organizers or tasks based on learners' multiple intelligences and individual, pair and flexible group work through teacher guiding or peer collaboration:

> "…with the use of images…or flashcards on the board, using body language…I also employ various gestures…" (T1),

There was no mention of classroom organization regarding suitable workspace(s), additional personalized time spent on specific tasks, or more elaborate, adapted equipment (e.g., dictionaries, computers, etc.).

The Potential of Multilingualism for Learners / Use of Available Languages to Maximum Effect

Teachers did not seem willing to make sustained use of the learners' home languages. This appears to have been due to a lack of functional knowledge (and the mastery thereof) such a strategy would require –to say nothing of the extra research and workload it would necessarily entail, on their part. This is partially supported by the lack of reference to the creation of glossaries or dual-books. Teachers overwhelmingly reported resorting to the read-aloud technique and the extensive use of cognates, in an attempt to value the learners' mother tongues and enable them to use them as 'guest' languages during the teaching process. There was exception to this, which reference code switching instances if students' native languages were European-based:

> "…I encourage them to give me examples of some words in their mother tongue…simple chunks…stuff like greetings…proverbs…collocations…just that…" (T3)

> "… I generally encourage them to share elements of their L1 and culture" (T1)

> "…no…no I don't make them speak in their own language because the point is to get them to understand English and to speak Greek well…that's the point of them coming to a Greek school…" (T2)

> "…Of course, I don't speak so many foreign languages…so…no…I don't make use of them while teaching…although I have some kids pop up to mention the equivalent word in their own language…" (T5)

Classroom Management and Challenges

The diverse population in the contemporary mainstream Greek classroom posed several problems to the teacher-interviewees. This appeared to be predominantly due to lack of knowledge of multilingual pedagogy. This, in turn, made it difficult for them to find appropriate instructional strategies for diverse students, that would not exclude them from the teaching process.

Other constraints dealt with cultural misunderstandings and prejudice towards diversified learners. These obliged teachers to resolve conflicts and establish an intercultural and cooperative ethos in the school community.

> "…the main challenge when teaching a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom is to manage to organize a course that addresses all learners' needs without disrupting the teaching pace and tiring the more advanced students…." (T1)

> "…the main problem in this specific thing is that we can't stick to the syllabus. We have to do other things where we can include them …" (T2)

> "…The main challenge is the frustration that accumulates from the continuous communication breakdowns, especially on behalf of students who easily give up on the learning process. Also, culturally specific misunderstandings may occur…" (T3)

> "…another thing that I have noticed and I find quite challenging is the negative behavior that such students demonstrate at times or…this might be the case for their classmates…" (T6)

Teacher Development and Future Training

Perhaps the most interesting result of this inquiry is the extent to which the teachers interviewed agree on the need for training in the field. With the exception of T2, who refuted any future training whatsoever, stating:

> "…As for my expectations to possible future workshops, I will not take part in any. No…I have taught myself depending on whatever kids I have throughout all these years…" (T2) / "…no…no…it's an unequivocal NO…" (T2)

All 5 teachers unanimously agreed on urgent strategy training in the form of both continuing education and in-service training:

> "…I expect future workshops to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to compensate for the shortcomings of lacking training and strategy development on teaching English as an L3… (T3)

> "…Yes…yes of course! Any training that can help me develop as a person and a teacher is more than welcome…" (T4)

> "…instruction and application of theory on practical issues would mostly be of interest to me…" (T4)

> "…of course I would benefit…but not on a theoretical level…what I need is guidance…actual practice…I need an expert to step into my classroom and show me step by step what really works for such children…" (T6)

In other words, teachers appear to aspire to eschew future theoretical training in favor of hands-on, practical experience. Their goal instead seems to be preparing themselves for real life situations, seeking out meaningfully selected strategies with realistic hopes of application.

Summary and Discussion

EFSL teachers employ varied strategies in their instruction. These include:

1. *Indirect Affective Strategies*, used to make positive statements and reward students,
2. *Indirect Meta-Cognitive Strategies*, referring to the arrangement of the learning, the identification of tasks, setting goals and lesson structuring,
3. *Cognitive* and *Memory Strategies*, which are used to practice analyze and create input and output task-based strategies (i.e., printed material, visual cues, transfer of cognates, (non) verbal signs/sounds),
4. *Communication* and *Accommodation Strategies*, which foster a sense of equity and empowerment in CLD students,
5. *Social Strategies*, which promote communication/cooperation of L3 learners with their classmates and teachers, cultural awareness in the school environment (i.e., teachers' understanding of their students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds), and which lead to positive, interactive, and inclusive learning environments, and
6. *Indirect Socio-affective Strategies*, which see extensive use smoothing relationships, controlling student anxiety, and ameliorating various other emotions and attitudes.

ESFL teachers' preferred strategies largely align with constructivist and learning-centered theories but also involved social and cultural perspectives. Social and Socio-affective strategies, foremost among the strategies employed by ESFL teachers, were perceived as being fundamental to social, linguistic and cultural integration. This seems reasonable, since such strategies, almost by definition, promote inclusivity and integration, while retaining and indeed, praising, the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the diverse student(s). Teachers seem, in other words, to be flexible regarding learners' cultures, using reflective processes to ensure a caring and equitable learning environment. They are facilitators and councilors, rather than traditional authoritative figures. They utilize and expand upon standard educational techniques by introducing differentiation, varying instruction, and helping learners interact and reflect more easily.

EFSL teachers employed strong examples of culturally sensitive approaches. They bore witness to a form of social injustice and responded with a humanitarian, acting as culturally sensitive instructors. Although ESFL teachers appear to lack the confidence and expertise to teach CLD students, ESFL teachers appear to strive to empower students explicitly. In this light, it seems that teacher preparation and professional development must evolve to include the implementation of practical instructional programs. Such supplementary content is a reasonable demand on their part and has the propensity to yield substantial insights regarding teaching diverse student populations.

Indeed, EFSL instructors actively participate in the process of ensuring that the CLD student, the displaced refugee, and the ethnically or socio-culturally "other" child have a functional, universal pathway to social (re)integration. Their role is critical and only made more so by the seemingly perpetual state of international unrest that has motivated or forced large numbers of people into immigrant or refugee statuses.

Facilitating the role of the EFSL teacher is, therefore, a fundamental requirement of any compassionate society. Understanding their methodological approaches, comprehending their requirements and, indeed, shortcomings, and deconstructing the challenges they face and translating them into actionable solutions for social and educational policy makers are objectives both worthwhile and necessary. Achieving these goals provides us with the ability to signpost at least one portion of the pathway toward an inclusive, integrated society of active citizens; one in which the existence of a common language provides a means, if not an assurance, of avoiding conflict; one in which, perhaps, we can eschew the concept of the "other" and embrace the ideal of coexisting as a functional "Union".

Limitations

Our research was, by necessity and its very nature, limited in scope. The examination of teaching strategies in general and in EFSL teachers in particular, however, offer valuable insight into one of the more obvious, and yet often taken for granted, mechanisms into ensuring that all members of society are provided with equal opportunities in education, and thus eventual social and occupational status attainment. These are core aspects of daily life and aspects of social integration and defining characteristics of practical, active citizenship. These strategies are shaped by the circumstances in which teachers find themselves, which should in turn inform educational and social policy makers to adjust not only early and ongoing education but also social programs, ensuring fair and equitable circumstances for all.

On the one hand, more extensive research, conducted on a broader scale, could offer a more comprehensive perspective on EFSL teachers' strategy selection. As more such research takes place and teachers' choices become better understood and more firmly defined, we do not preclude the potential for quantitatively oriented examinations of the phenomenon, which would, in turn, hold the potential for sweeping characterizations and population-wide inference.

On the other hand, we also recognize the need for even more specific and targeted research. Ongoing conflict on the Eurasian continent has necessarily displaced large groups of individuals within the region. A specific examination of these groups, both in the immediate future and over time could provide singular insight into not only the particular challenges the integration of this group presented to the Greek educational reality and its EFSL teachers in particular. It could also act as a practical and indisputable record of by what means and to what extent how the system and its actors (the EFSL teachers) rose to the occasion.

Conclusion

We find, in short, that the Greek EFSL teacher has, generally, actively supported and encouraged integration, and promoted equity among their diverse and increasingly diversifying students. They may lack formal training in the particular, targeted skillset, that would allow them to best navigate the reality of a diversifying classroom but they overwhelmingly seek to actively cover this gap in their knowledge, in the form of practical and actionable continued education. Indeed, they paint a compelling picture

of inclusivity, sensitivity, and sociocultural respect. It is undeniably necessary, however, to both expand our research, beyond the confines of convenience, time, and region, while concurrently targeting and adapting it, to conforms to the singular, if regrettable, realities of contemporary European society.

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'Students are left with a skewed view of the Holocaust': Can role-play and Simulation Help in Developing Holocaust Learning and Understanding?[1]

Paula Cowan[2] & Henry Maitles[3]

Abstract

Role play and simulation strategies can be tremendously powerful classroom teaching strategies, but need to be used with caution, forethought and reflection in all areas of the curriculum. There is much evidence now from around the world that learning about the Holocaust can have a valuable impact on young people's human rights and citizenship outlooks. But, also evidence that poor or badly thought through pedagogy in this area, whilst aimed at developing pupil empathy for victims of Holocaust experiences, can lead to both distressing students and a skewed view of the lived experiences.

This paper will examine the insights from the research literature experience and the personal research of the authors to examine whether this strategy can/should be used in the development of understanding about the Holocaust. Using classroom observations and interview methodology with students, it will be argued that teachers need to use extreme caution in using role play and simulation, indeed perhaps looking at other strategies to develop empathy.

Keywords: Holocaust; school students; role-play; simulation; learning

Introduction

Role-play and simulation strategies can be tremendously powerful classroom teaching strategies, but need to be used with caution, forethought and reflection in all areas of the curriculum. There is much evidence now from around the world that learning about the Holocaust can have a valuable impact on young people's human rights and citizenship outlooks. There is also evidence that poor or badly thought through pedagogy in this area, whilst aimed at developing pupil empathy for victims of Holocaust experiences, can lead to both distressing students and a skewed view of the lived experiences.

This paper will examine the insights from the research literature experience and the personal research of the authors to examine whether this strategy can and/or should be used in the development of understanding about the Holocaust. We use classroom observations and interview methodology with students to argue that teachers need to use extreme caution in using role-play and simulation, indeed perhaps looking at other strategies to develop empathy.

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[2] PhD, University of the West of Scotland Paula.Cowan@uws.ac.uk
[3] Professor, University of the West of Scotland Henry.Maitles@uws.ac.uk

Some Issues in Teaching the Holocaust

Unlike some other European countries, the Holocaust is not mandatory in Scottish schools. Nonetheless, it is common practice for schools to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. Primary schools may teach the Holocaust as part of a unit on World War 2 (often with either cross-curricular or interdisciplinary learning elements) while many secondary schools in Citizenship and/or History and/or Religious and Moral Education. The issue, though, is one of effective pedagogy. There are three key problems with choosing to teach lessons either about or from the Holocaust. The first problem is that it is something that happened in the past and is consigned exclusively to history. The second problem is a lack of understanding about the events, which can diminish the historical narrative of the Holocaust and make it primarily a moral event. The third problem is that it often leads to learning where antisemitism is either not mentioned, is minimized, or is taught within the framework of racism within Nazi ideology. It is our contention that it is vital that teachers use the actual word 'antisemitism' when describing events in the Holocaust. There is some evidence that teachers avoid using the word, preferring to describe the actions as racism or persecution. Maitles and Cowan (2006) found that after lessons about the Holocaust a large majority of their sample of primary school students in Scotland, aged 11–12, could define the Holocaust, Human Rights and racism, but only 5% could define antisemitism. In their discussions with teachers, it became clear that they were all committed to Holocaust Education, Human Rights Education and Citizenship or Civics Education, but did not use the word 'antisemitism'. On reflection, they said they would do so in the future. Foster et al. (2014), in their study of 80,000 teenagers who had studied the Holocaust in secondary History classes in England, found that only 37% could define antisemitism. Whilst it is true that Nazi policies and actions were clearly racist and full of persecution, we feel it important that young people are able to recognize what antisemitism means, if and when they hear it on the news or see the word on social media platforms.

Nonetheless, there is now much evidence from around the world that learning about the Holocaust has a positive effect on the values of young people (Short & Carrington, 1991; Carrington & Short, 1997; Short, 2015; Cowan & Maitles, 2007; 2015; 2017; Eckmann, 2015; Maitles, 2012; Davies, 2012; Claus-Christian et al., 2019) and therefore should help in combatting its recurrence.

Role-play and Simulation

Role-play and simulation strategies can be tremendously powerful classroom teaching strategies for deeper learning, but need to be used with caution, forethought and reflection. Whilst aimed at developing pupil empathy for victims of Holocaust experience, they can lead to distressing students. For example, in an attempt to show the dangers of prejudice, discrimination and isolation, one class teacher in Scotland reportedly told her p7 (11yo) students that she had received a letter from the Scottish Government saying that nine children were to be separated from their classmates, because they were born in January, February and March. As such, she told them, they had lower IQs, as a result of a lack of sunlight in their mother's womb. These students were told that they had to wear yellow hats and would need to go to the library (Mail Online, 2010). This lasted about 15 minutes, resulting in several students in tears,

while one boy demanded to speak to someone in charge (East Kilbride News, 2010). As well as the disruption, this caused in the classroom, one parent called for the teacher to be suspended and the local council issued an apology, advising parents that this activity would not be repeated in the school (The Telegraph Online, 2010). While one may applaud the efforts of this student to exert his rights, this example raises issues concerning the ethical use of classroom simulations in this context, teachers' skills in using this approach in the classroom, and parental communication.

In another case (Maitles, 2010) found that a simulation to explain 'othering' -this time with students aged 12- led to distress, with some students very upset and feeling that *'the school has turned against us'*. Interestingly, Maitles (2010) found that some students (15 of the 120 students involved) complained about the treatment of their peers, although most felt they could do nothing about it. Should teachers deliberately seek such an emotional response from students? Perhaps students would benefit from learning when removed from their comfort zone. Yet we would argue that it is inappropriate and/or unethical for teachers to be quite so deceptive. Quite apart from the hysterical responses it may yield from students, it can cause serious damage to teacher-student relationships and to school-parental partnership.

Teaching controversial areas such as the Holocaust, genocide and the abuse of children's rights, **is** upsetting for many students. It is, indeed, a matter of debate as to whether these areas can be effectively taught to students without some level of distress. Role-play can be used to develop empathy by, for example, giving students a choice of scenarios or allowing students to devise their own scenario where they can apply what they have learned about racist Nazi policy. One common example used in primary schools is when students role-play a scenario where an employer interviews an applicant with the required skills and experience but does not give him the job because he is Jewish. This example arouses emotions in the students and can develop their empathy for victims of prejudice in an appropriate way.

Teaching in this way about the Holocaust and genocide can thus be tremendously valuable but it is also tremendously difficult. Nowhere is this clearer than in using simulations. The most famous simulation is that of Jane Elliott (Peters, 1987). Known as *Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes*, the experiment was designed to show the impact of discrimination on both victims and bystanders. In response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. over forty years ago, Jane Elliott devised the controversial exercise. This, now famous, exercise labels participants as inferior or superior based solely upon the color of their eyes and exposes them to the experience of being a minority. It is still in use and has been the subject of much debate, discussed below. Similarly, the Gestapo Holocaust simulation, devised by Raymond Zwerin and Audrey Friedman Marcus in 1976, has been the subject of controversy (Fallace, 2007). And the controversy surrounding using simulations has continued since (Narvaez, 1998) and indeed is still a live issue (Short News, 2006; Elliott, 2009).

The critique is that simulation debases the memory of the Holocaust and does not reflect what really occurred. As one example, an 8th grade teacher in the US called upon his colleagues to be involved in the experiment on discrimination as '*a day of sheer pleasure for the staff being themselves as Nazi officers and becoming Adolfs…because staff need the stress relief and entertainment*' (Elliott, 2009). Critiques come from individuals and organizations heavily committed to Holocaust education.

Dawidowicz (1990) and Totten (2000) for example argue that simulations reflect poor pedagogy and oversimplify Holocaust history. Totten (2002, p.122) is particularly critical. He argues that:

> For students to walk away thinking that they have either experienced what a victim went through or have a greater understanding of what the victims suffered is shocking in its naivety. Even more galling is for teachers to think that they have provided their students with a true sense of what the victims lived through.

The Anti-Defamation League in the USA is one organization that claims that simulations can trivialize the experience, stereotype group behavior, distort historical reality, reinforce negative views, impede critical analysis and disconnect the Holocaust from its historical context. It cites one simulation (in Florida), where children were very distressed, crying and one child reported that *'The only thing I found out today is that I don't want to be Jewish'* (ADL, 2006). In other words, this approach can have exactly the opposite impact than teachers want. Further, there is a fear of psychological scarring shown by the blue eyes/brown eyes children experiencing stress and disengagement for a period afterwards (Smetana, 2006; Power et al., 2007). One parent in the primary school mentioned earlier in Scotland, thought the simulation activity was 'cruel' and 'traumatic' (Mail Online, 2010). Nonetheless, there are those who argue that using simulation is an issue of pedagogy and, if done well, can encourage students to consider the Holocaust from the perspectives of bystanders, victims and perpetrators (Ben-Peretz, 2004; Drake, 2008; Maitles, 2010; Narvaez, 1987; Pederson, 1995; Ruben, 1999; Schweber, 2003). Further, there is a case for their being a 'pedagogy of discomfort' and an active empathy in the classroom as these complex and unsettling issues are unpacked (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2015).

Jane Elliott, an advocate of such simulations, expresses caution. She argues that simulations need experienced teachers, extensive debriefing, experienced facilitators and a strong rapport between students and teachers for to work (Drake, 2008). Maitles (2010) also found the debriefing to be crucial. In this case, the students were much more empowered to speak out when it became clear that the adults in the room were both encouraging them to do so and were themselves reflecting on and sometimes disagreeing about some of the issues. The discussion, for example, on organizing to challenge the discrimination involved a large number of students, encouraged by the teachers themselves disagreeing on how to interpret the fact that 15 students had approached members of staff unhappy about the discrimination but had not had the confidence to go beyond the complaint. This was a confident, questioning debrief; it was what was required to draw some lessons from the day. However, a caveat must be made here: this pedagogy does not challenge the wider issues relating to institutional discrimination within a school. The parameters were set tightly in that discrimination was seen in a narrower focus with the emphasis on personal responsibility rather than challenging an overall ethos.

Whilst being critical of simulations, the United State Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC does point out that simulations and role-play can develop thinking around areas such as fear, scapegoating and conflict. However, the museum does raise problems with trying to simulate situations about the Holocaust in that complex events and actions are over-simplified and students are left with a skewed view of the Holocaust (USHMM, 2009). In addition, the simulation strategy can be

used without giving the students either the historical understanding of the rise to power of the Nazis or an understanding of antisemitism (Hammond, 2001). The Jews are seen solely as victims, leading to patronizing feelings of pity (Illingworth, 2000). Alternative strategies to simulation tend to involve survivor and eyewitness testimony, primary source material, reflective writing experiences, in class discussions and incorporating the Holocaust into a wider study of, for example the Second World War or contemporary world problems. (ADL, 2006; USHMM, 2009). To expand, teachers can, for example:

1. Provide ample opportunities for students to examine primary source materials, including photographs, artwork, diary entries, letters, government documents, and visual history testimony. Such exploration allows for a deeper level of interest and inquiry on a range of topics, from many perspectives and in proper historical context.

2. Assign reflective writing exercises or lead class discussions that explore various aspects of human behavior such as scapegoating or making difficult moral choices. These activities allow students to develop compassion and empathy, share how they feel about what they are learning and consider how it has meaning in their own lives.

3. Invite the voices (through a variety of strategies) of survivors and other eyewitnesses to share their stories with students.

Conclusion

It is our contention that Holocaust education can be of great importance in developing citizenship awareness amongst school students. Issues of pedagogy and strategies, however, are of key importance. The experiences in Scotland where the Holocaust is not compulsory are thus of some interest. Teaching and learning about the Holocaust is not mandatory for all students, but because the teachers are volunteers and cross curricular learning is an important strategy in Scottish schools, there is scope for deeper learning than in a single subject area, for a few periods. Role-play in schools can be valuable per se but it is not necessarily positive in Holocaust education. It can lead to young people having a distorted view of the Holocaust simply because their lessons *about* and *from* the Holocaust lacked the necessary, appropriate pedagogical considerations.

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Issues in Education of Ukrainian Refugees in Greece: The Case of a Primary School in Patras[1]

Asimina Bouchagier[2], Konstantinos Georgopoulos[3], & Julia – Athena Spinthourakis[4]

Abstract

After Russian troops invaded the Kyiv region of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, a large number of refugees arrived in Greece seeking asylum. A guaranteed right of all refugees, including children from Ukraine, is the provision of quality education in the Greek education system. Greek schools are primary where reception and learning of the Greek language takes place. Educators are called upon to include Ukrainian students in their classroom so that they receive all the cognitive and social stimulation they need, while fighting inequality, racism and prejudice. In this study, we have qualitatively analyzed a series of five (5) semi-structured interviews, collected in a primary school of Patras, in Achaia prefecture of Greece, which is as a reception area for refugees. The study's participants were five (5) teachers who taught and interacted with the Ukrainian students. Our analysis of the interviews attempts to identify the pedagogical approaches of the teachers, their views on issues of diversity, bilingualism, and the use of the refugee students' native tongue, as critical elements of citizenship education in times of conflict.

Keywords: Refugees; Ukraine; Primary School; Diversity; Education

Introduction

In recent years, Greece has experienced an influx of refugees who are seeking asylum. These individuals and groups are rightfully seeking international protection, as well as integration into our country. This presents a significant challenge for Greek society, as it must create a suitable, welcoming, and educational environment for refugees in order to ensure them a dignified standard of living in our country (Ministry of Immigration Policy, 2018).

The ongoing war in Ukraine, now in its second year on a full scale since 2022, has left many of the most vulnerable Ukrainian refugees in Europe struggling to secure decent housing, employment, and support, despite the warm welcome they have received in their host countries (UNCHR, 2023; see also Liminowicz, 2023). As a host country, Greece is called upon to assist all refugees and offer Ukrainian students quality education and language education, through various means, including digital and collaborative methods. Thus, educators' objective is to achieve bilingual empowerment through diverse methods (Szecsi, et al., 2021).

It is profoundly significant for educators to attune themselves to refugees' needs and gain a deeper understanding of their interests and experiences. By employing their native languages, educators can effectively establish a connection, enabling refugees to engage with the Greek language and commence communication (Szecsi, et al., 2021). The preservation and promotion of students' native languages, as their primary means of expression within the

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[2] M. Edu, Ph.D. University of Patras, Greece, abouchagier@windowslive.com
[3] M. Edu. Open University of Cyprus (OUC), kostas_teach@hotmail.com
[4] Professor Emeritus, Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work, University of Patras, Greece, jspin@upatras.gr

school environment, are both pivotal in securing academic achievement (Zaga, et al., 2015). Such endeavors can be facilitated through experiential methodologies, wherein the school assumes the role of a collaborator and a supportive entity for their families, offering invaluable psychological support (Szecsi, et al., 2021).

All contracting states of the United Nations, including Greece, have a duty to prepare all students for a responsible life in a free society, fostering understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship among all peoples regardless of color, nationality, religion, or origin, through their educational systems (United Nations - International Convention, 1989). Educators are therefore obligated to sensitize their students to matters of diversity, ensuring that Ukrainian refugees can more effectively integrate into the school environment, reducing the likelihood of their alienation within the school setting.

Placing significance on semantic aspects of different languages and cultural characteristics during language or other cognitive subjects' instruction can strengthen the supportive framework for the learning processes of bilingual populations. Refugee students' native language should be regularly activated through targeted activities, promoting personal expression in more than one language. It is essential that linguistic empowerment occur through students' interaction with diverse texts and digital resources that resonate with their everyday lives. Negotiation of personal experiences of bilingual students nurtures the cultivation of communicative and critical skills. It also promotes the emergence of prior literacy experiences within the context of experiential learning principles. The provision of bilingual dictionaries and aids is beneficial to facilitate channels of communication between the educational community and the families of bilingual students. Heightened educational needs make the adoption of differentiated teaching strategies imperative. These strategies can aid in addressing challenges arising from heterogeneity, particularly in initial phases. Educators are encouraged to bolster self-confidence and convey messages of high expectations and encouragement, as tendencies towards resignation or low self-esteem may understandably emerge in relation to adapting and progressing within a new educational environment (Oikonomakou, 2019).

Schools serve as resistance spaces against racism directed at any social group, promoting awareness and sensitivity among students towards diversity (Baez, 2000). The impetus to enact this resistance lays solely with the teacher; each educator has an obligation to contribute to this cause and must not deem themselves insignificant in the pursuit of such social justice. The teacher assumes the responsibility of creating a welcoming atmosphere for all students. The incorporation of diverse texts from various cultures and civilizations in the curriculum contributes to preventing the emergence of as well as addressing existing racist tendencies, and aiding in the integration of refugees and immigrants within a classroom setting (Baez, 2000).

Educators' primary objective is setting a good example and providing equal opportunities to all of their students. Indifference to racist and xenophobic behaviors on the part of school staff is unacceptable in our times. Appropriate measures must be applied promptly, once such incidents are identified. It is essential for students to comprehend what is right and what is not, and educators have a duty to challenge and reconsider their own stereotypes. Educator collaboration is crucial to ensuring that all educators are aware of any and all racist incidents that may take place. This allows educators to prevent their recurrence among the same or even different individuals. Of course, encouraging students to speak up about any relevant experiences is substantially beneficial to such endeavors (Croteau, 2020).

The classroom and the school as a whole must serve as a workshop for engaging activities, facilitating the smoother integration of refugees and fostering relationships with the native population. Schools must organize multiple activities to combat discrimination and promote equality (Coelho, 1998). The self-representation of the entire class, including the teacher, holds specific, substantive importance in allowing each individual to become acquainted with the identity, habits, knowledge, and perspectives of their peers (Coelho, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

Our goal was to explore the opinions of educators regarding educational methods for Ukrainian refugees. Specifically:

1. What teaching methods and resources do educators utilize for teaching the Greek language?

2. What actions do educators take to raise awareness about issues of diversity and discrimination among students?

3. What is the relationship between native students and refugees in the school environment?

Methodology

To examine these issues, we conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, taking care to avoid directing participants. This particular study had a pre-designed plan, but the process allowed for flexible execution. We opted for open-ended questions, as they facilitated a more profound and in-depth exploration of our subject matter. We formulated our questions using simple, specific, and understandable vocabulary. Each of our questions was unidimensional, pertained to a single subject, and, to the extent possible, phrased in such a way as to avoid prompting any particular answer (Creswell, 2016).

We attempted to categorize questions into two thematic groups, in alignment with the research objectives, to facilitate easier data analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). General inquiries pertaining to personal characteristics (e.g., age, education, years of service) were posed towards the end of the interview, after having created a conducive environment. The interviews were scheduled at mutually agreeable locations that were convenient for each educator, as determined through coordination with the researchers (Kyriazi, 1999).

Our research sample comprised five (5) primary school teachers (PE70), working at a central primary school in Patras, capital city of the prefecture of Achaia, Greece. Our sample was selected "purposively" from this school, as it served as a reception center for Ukrainian refugees. There were six (6) refugee pupils in the school, both male and female, attending the first and third grades. These six (6) refugee students participated in daily, two-hour long language classes, in the school's priority zone. Of the five (5) educators interviewed, four (4) were female, and one (1) was male. All five (5) educators had Ukrainian refugee students in their classes throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. Two (2) were substitute teachers; the remaining three (3) were permanent faculty members. The participants ranged from three (3) to twenty (20) years of service.

As noted above, we divided our interview into two (2) sections, not including gathering general information (demographic data). The first section focused on the educational

methods and resources used for teaching the Greek language to Ukrainian refugees. The second section explored the interactions between native students and Ukrainian refugees within the school environment, as well as the actions taken by educators to raise awareness among students about issues related to discrimination, racism, and diversity.

Following completion of the interviews, we processed them using content analysis. Content analysis is a method used for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the content found in written or spoken communication (Filias, 2001). In this analysis, we identified and recorded the general themes developed within sentences, paragraphs, or the entirety of the respondents' texts. We chose this unit of recording because our study focuses on exploring the values, attitudes, and opinions presented in the text. Therefore, our main interest was to capture the central ideas, whether they appeared in a portion of or throughout the entire text (Kyriazi, 1999).

Results

Several interesting findings emerged from the processing and analysis of the educators' interviews. We present these findings below, categorized based on the aforementioned predetermined thematic divisions.

Educational Methods and Resources for Learning the Greek Language

The educators in our sample showed great passion and willingness to teach Ukrainian refugee children. However, they highlighted encountering particular difficulties with regard to language and social integration. When questioned about the language they use to communicate with Ukrainian students, in order to establish a connection and initiate Greek language learning, four out of the five educators mentioned employing the Ukrainian language. They believed that using students' native language was extremely helpful, as it facilitated a more comfortable and open learning environment. They shared the methods they used to familiarize themselves with a number of basic Ukrainian words. They mentioned using online language translators, but they emphasized that they particularly struggled with pronunciation, resulting in less effective communication. The existence of a Ukrainian immigrant student at their school, who had been in Greece for many years and is proficient in both languages, proved especially encouraging. This student acted as an interpreter, between educators and Ukrainian students, facilitating communication and understanding.

They also noted that the Ukrainian student-assistant was great help in learning Ukrainian words. One of the five educators initially relied on the English language, considering it easier. He faced challenges, however, as the young Ukrainian refugees were not proficient in English, making communication more difficult. As a result, all educators highlighted transitioning to a combination of Greek language and body language, which yielded notably better results.

The educators mentioned the techniques and resources they use for teaching the Greek language to their refugee students. All educators utilize the book "Γεια Σας" ("Hello" in Greek) (Vassou, Georgiadou, Gleni, Rigopoulou, 2007) and small dictionaries specially designed for refugees in Greece. They emphasized that this approach is initially effective, enabling students to easily recognize and accurately pronounce all the letters of the alphabet. Thereafter, the educators relied on various visual aids, such as colorful images, to help the students learn words and phrases related to classroom activities and everyday life.

The majority of language activities were conducted in a playful manner, to foster better connection and a sense of security among the Ukrainian students. The educators noted that they observed substantial improvement in the language-learning process when the Ukrainian refugees listen to Greek songs, as they became familiar with the Greek language through musical and theatrical plays. They emphasized collaboration with music and theater teachers, employing interdisciplinary approaches in each school lesson, even if it was not language-related, in order to expose the Ukrainian refugees to the Greek language. Three (3) out of the five (5) educators highlighted that they frequently presented short stories in videos, aiding the refugees in listening to and pronouncing Greek words.

All of the educators utilized cooperative learning methods to form groups of students from both the same ethnic background and local students to provide better support and empowerment to the Ukrainian refugees. Whenever they employed frontal teaching methods, they did not achieve the expected results, as the Ukrainian refugees seemed reserved and did not express themselves as freely as desired, despite encouragement. They appeared more expressive when interacting with their fellow classmates, however. The educators frequently utilized differentiated teaching methods, adjusting the pace, level, and nature of activities to better accommodate the interests and learning preferences of the Ukrainian students. These approaches proved to be highly beneficial, as the Ukrainian students made notable progress and began using Greek words during the second trimester. In contrast, during the initial trimester they either refrained from speaking or communicated primarily in their native language with their fellow Ukrainian classmates.

Interactions between Local Students and Ukrainian Refugees - Promoting Awareness of Diversity and Combating Discrimination

Ukrainian refugees represent a vulnerable population that has undergone significant psychological adaptation due to the hardships they have faced, making it essential for us to explore interactions between them and their native/local classmates. The majority of educators mentioned that their Ukrainian refugee students were particularly polite, peaceful, and reserved. Educators with more than one Ukrainian refugee student in their class observed that they often stuck together, forming a close-knit group without much interest or willingness to connect with other students. One educator mentioned having a Ukrainian refugee student in their class who actively sought communication with their classmates, despite occasional language challenges. All five educators stressed that they actively encourage their students to participate in group games together during school hours, which foster increased socialization among the Ukrainian refugees. They revealed that these games significantly improved social interactions, resulting in the forging of exceptional relationships between the refugee students.

When asked if they had encountered incidents where Ukrainian refugee students faced discrimination or isolation, the interviewed educators responded negatively and emphasized that the opposite is true. According to their statements, all of their classes' native students warmly welcomed their Ukrainian peers from the very beginning, showing affection and sympathy, as they had learned a lot about the refugees' experiences from the media.

During the interviews, the educators discussed the actions they took to raise awareness among students about diversity and differences, aiming to facilitate a smoother inclusion of refugees in the school process. They noted the school's commitment to fostering an inclusive

environment that respects the needs of all students, given its multicultural composition. The school community actively collaborates with refugee parents, providing support and assistance, as needed. The school also offers the services of social workers and psychologists, who engage in regular communication with the parents of refugees, aiming to promote family well-being and facilitate their successful integration into Greek society. The educators emphasized that difficulties communicating arise often but are frequently resolved with the help of interpreters provided by the school to assist these vulnerable groups. The educators stressed that Ukrainian refugees have integrated smoothly into the school process, receiving support from their Greek peers, who willingly offer assistance, sometimes of their own volition (i.e., without prompting from the educators). In class, the educators fostered an environment where all students were encouraged to share stories and experiences that captivated their interest and left a lasting impact. This created a valuable opportunity for Ukrainian refugees to openly discuss their lives and emotions with their peers.

As part of the Erasmus program, the educators organized a celebration, to learn about the customs and traditions of other countries. Ukrainian students' participation was substantial. They actively engaged, expressing well wishes in their native language. The educators reported that the school was open to all parents that day, who all reportedly both participated and rejoiced in the progress of their children. On that day, all students had the opportunity to explore new cultures and civilizations and, according to the interviewed educators, the Ukrainian refugees particularly felt like they had found a new family.

The educators also often created projects involving all of their students in experiential activities centered on the eradicating discrimination. On March 21st, the International Day Against Racism, the educators and all of their students showcased videos and films promoting diversity awareness.

All the educators felt that, despite the challenges they face, collaboration within the school community and the training they received on intercultural/differentiated teaching methods helped them create a harmonious environment for all their students, making the school feel like a second home for their refugee students.

Summary and Conclusion

This study's main objective was to highlight the attitudes of primary education educators regarding linguistic education and efforts made to create a safe school environment for all, in an elementary school that serves as a reception space for Ukrainian refugees. From the analysis of interviews with five such educators, it became evident that they use the Ukrainian language to better approach and teach their students, helping them learn Greek. They also employ audiovisual material through experiential methods, including music and dance, to facilitate the learning process. Differentiated teaching methods with collaborative techniques were arguably more effective for Greek language learning and creating a pleasant classroom environment.

The active participation of Ukrainian refugees in festivities related to their homeland played a crucial role in raising awareness about diversity among all students. The educators believed that cooperation between the teachers' association, social workers, psychologists, and the parents of Ukrainian refugees is essential in assisting these families in integrating into Greek society. Moreover, they stress the significance of encouraging all students, refugee and local,

to share their stories and engage in discussions within the classroom, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation.

In short, playful learning and differentiated teaching methods have proven effective in improving Greek language learning in Ukrainian refugee students. Sensitizing students to issues of diversity and promoting their social participation have helped create positive and open relationships among them and with native students. The support of the parents of the refugees and their involvement in school life is a critical factor for their smooth integration into Greek society. Overall, school and educator efforts have created a supportive and friendly environment that encourages refugees to develop their language and social skills and enhance their self-confidence.

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Mind the Gap: Exploring Correlates of Populism in Youth[1]

Nikolina Kenig[2] & Ognen Spasovski[3]

Abstract

Lately, we are witnessing a continuously widening gap between youth and older generations on how they perceive, trust and value the functioning of democracy worldwide, especially so in the less developed countries.

This paper draws on previous body of research that analyses populism focusing on several characteristics of individuals with populist proclivities, such as economic and social deprivation, personal well-being, decreased trust in democratic institutions and specific social attitudes and values.

Despite the increased interest in studying the reasons for the ever-growing support for populist leaders and policies, 'populist attitudes' among the youth has been only scarcely addressed. To fill this research gap, we conducted an exploratory study with a sample of 552 participants from the Republic of North Macedonia (45% female) at the average age of M=19,3 years (SD=.75) who anonymously and voluntarily responded a set of several self-reported questionnaires: the Three-dimensional populist scale by Shultz et al. (2018), several relevant subscales from the World Values Survey- WAVE 7, and the Generic Conspiracist Beliefs scale.

In addition to descriptive data, regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis whether different values along with conspiracy thinking, subjective well-being and relevant demographic data could predict inclination towards populist attitudes in late adolescent years. The findings of this study advance the up-to-date understanding of the impact of psychological characteristics of the individual considered as factors that (de)stimulate the populist worldview among youth.

Authors propose specific recommendations on how civic education could help students in understanding the mechanisms through which populism operates thereby preventing its detrimental impact on the democratic development, especially in case of the less advanced societies.

Keywords: populism; youth; civic education; values; conspiracy beliefs

Introduction

Recent research on populism as ideology has demonstrated that populist beliefs are globally present in national populations (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2019). The current context of global inflation, energy and economic crisis caused by the attack on Ukraine and the many expected and unforeseen consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic, is further conducive to the rise of populist parties. More likely than not, populists will further strengthen their position in order to attract voters who are, on the one hand, less willing to participate in elections and more skeptical, aggrieved and hostile on the other.

[2] PhD, Faculty of Philosophy at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, nikolina@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

[3] PhD, Faculty of Philosophy at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, ognens@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

It is not a surprise that there is apparently an abundance of 'populist supply' on the political scene in the Western Balkan countries that traces its roots to the 1990s. The inclination of political actors in countries of this region toward populist rhetoric that supports ethnocentric narratives, implement authoritarian practices, and promote unsustainable public policy solutions is well documented (e.g., Bieber, 2021; Bosilkov, 2021; Džankić and Keil, 2017; Petkovski, 2016; Trošt and Brentin; 2016). The Republic of North Macedonia, burdened with persistent economic distress and prolonged political crisis, due to unsolved internal and external identity conflicts, is certainly no exception from this state of affairs (Bosilkov, 2021; Rechica et al., 2022; Petkovski, 2016).

Populism, being an inherently 'thin' ideology, can take different conceptual shapes. European populism in the 2010s is, in most cases, right wing oriented, and relies on mobilization of grievances over immigration, combining populism with radical nationalism and authoritarianism (Rydgren, 2007; Mudde, 2007). Opposite populist movements also exist, which include left oriented ideas, are shown to be inclusionary and based on liberalism. It is important that although both manifestations of populism have the same roots, they have very different appearances and recruit different parts of the population.

Populist politicians attract substantial portions of the population across both developed and developing countries. With the recent upsurge of populism in developed and transition democracies, researchers are increasingly interested in identifying and analyzing in detail the characteristics of individuals with populist proclivities, or so-called populist citizens. Thus, research studies identified numerous factors that are associated with the acceptance of populist ideology. So far, several correlates of populism on the individual level have been confirmed: susceptibility to conspiracy theories (Bergmann, 2018; van Prooijen et al., 2022), discontent, vulnerability and mistrust in institutions (Spruyt et al., 2016), as well as level of education (Rechica et al, 2022, Spruyt et al., 2016)

Definitional issues: Is it clear what populism is?

The term 'populism' is widely used in a variety of different contexts and meanings. Many academic and popular publications on populism still use ad hoc definitions, which generalize specific national or regional expressions of populism like clientelism or national-chauvinism as a definition of populism. Beyond the common meaning the populism as a kind of ideology, there are other understandings of this term. For instance, it was used to designate a style of political representation (e.g., Bossetta 2017), or political movement (e.g., Jansen, 2011) and lately it is quite commonly used to refer to a prominent and persistent personal attitude (Hawkins et al., 2020).

Despite the widespread acceptance that there is a certain ''conceptual slipperiness'' in the term (Taggart, 2000), a growing body of literature agrees that there are common elements in all different types of populism. It is a "thin" ideology, which can be allied to any other belief or value system, based on the assumption that, above all, society is divided into two conflicting, internally homogeneous groups (Mudde, 2004). The group of "common, pure people" is the one that is believed to be inherently good and morally superior. The opposing "corrupt elite" is considered to be self-centered, evil and oriented towards satisfying its own interests at the expense of the ordinary citizens.

The elites are accused of having deprived the people of the right to exercise direct democracy by "immediate expression of the general will of the people" (Abts & Rummens, 2007, p. 408). Following this argument, the populist view is based on the belief that that politics must be an expression of the general will of the common people because they are morally superior to elites and the state institutions that operate to provide benefits for the elites (Moffitt, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Stanley, 2008). In short, the three elements that, taken together, define populism as thin ideology are (1) anti-elitist attitudes (2) 'popular sovereignty', which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people, and (3) an understanding of the common people as being homogenous and virtuous (Wirth et al., 2016).

Youth and populism: Are young people less prone to populist views?

Although young people are considered to be less populist than the elderly, there are studies that indicate a substantial openness to populist views among youth (Bröning, 2022). A distressing example of this openness is that almost 70% of millennials do not think that it is essential to live in a country governed by democratic rule of law (Westheimer, 2019). A significant support for right-wing populist parties or candidates among young voters has also been observed in several European countries, particularly France and Italy (Bröning, 2022). A survey of youth in Germany revealed that 24% of 12–25 years olds embrace strong populist views (Shell Deutschland Holding, 2019). In their analysis of the political preferences of Croatian youth, researchers found that youths are prepared to consider significant changes at the expense of some dimensions of the representative, liberal democratic system (Derado et al., 2016).

Having said that, it is quite odd that so few studies have specifically focused on how young people and adolescents understand and acquire populist views. Similarly, there is no available research on the correlates of personality traits or relevant social attitudes with populism among youth. The field of education definitely needs further insights on this phenomenon and, in particular, studies focusing on youth and the role of schools, with their goals of educating students to become responsible citizens.

This study attempts to fill the gap between the need for empirical data on that matter and the existing body of research. To this end, we begin by identifying the potential links between populist attitudes and attitudes, values and characteristics that could be addressed within the formal education process.

Method
Sample
The convenient sample was comprised of 552 participants from the Republic of North Macedonia with an average age of M = 19.3 years (SD = .75). Only responses from the ethic Macedonians were taken into account, since the percentages of the other ethnic groups who participated in the research diverged substantially from those present in the population. Nearly half of the respondents (45%) were female and the larger proportion of respondents (80.5%) were studying in the country. 21.6% reported that they are currently employed, whereas only 8.2% of respondents are active members in some form of civic or political organization or party.

Instruments

We examined populist attitudes on the *three-dimensional populist scale* (Shultz et.al, 2018). As opposed to scales which define populist attitudes as unidimensional constructs, this scale is based on the presumption that populism is a latent, higher-order construct, with three distinct first-order dimensions: *anti-elitism*, *demand for popular sovereignty*, and *belief in the homogeneity and virtuousness of the 'ordinary' people*. It is a 5-point scale comprised of 12 items (4 in each sub-scale). A higher score designates higher acceptance of populist attitudes.

Conspiracy thinking was measured with the 15-item *Generic Conspiracist Beliefs (GCB) scale* introduced by Brotherton et al. (2013). It consists of five aspects of an overall conspiracy belief: *1. government malfeasance 2. malevolent global conspiracies 3. extraterrestrial cover-up 4. personal well-being* and *5. control of information*. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they consider that the statements are true, on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1='completely not true' to 5='completely true'.

Selected, relevant sub-scales of the *World Values Survey - WAVE 7* (Haerpfer et al., 2020), comprised of 38 items in total, were used to measure the following hypothesized associates with populist attitude endorsement: a) perceived importance of values b) perceived subjective well-being, and c) attitudes on relevant social phenomena.

In order to reduce the number of variables, we performed two exploratory factor analyses (FA)[4] – one with the WAVE 7 items related to attitudes and the other with the WAVE 7 items related to values. The FA analysis performed on the items on social attitudes extracted the following factors that were further employed in the analysis as variables: 'Acceptance of Sexism', 'Conservative Views', 'Importance of Work' and 'Political Radicalism'. The factor analysis of items related to importance of different values generated 4 dimensions: 'Orientation toward Own Goals' (where the values hard work, responsibility, good manners and independence were with high factor loadings), 'Orientation towards General Goals' (composed of tolerance, non-selfishness, obedience and frugality), 'Orientation towards Religion' (religious trust, religiousness) and 'Orientation towards Individual Freedom' (imagination, participation and free time).

Procedure

Participation was voluntary, anonymous and uncompensated. Prior to responding the questionnaire, all participants confirmed that they understood the information about the study and gave consent. Participant recruitment was facilitated by the students of the Institute of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje), who, after receiving specific training in how to administer the instruments, were also engaged in the face-to-face data gathering process.

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[4] Due to limited space, the results of the performed factor analyses are not presented in the text. Interested readers are welcome to contact the authors for the details regarding these results.

Results

Young people in our sample expressed relatively strong acceptance of populist attitudes, especially in the case of demand for popular sovereignty (Manicheism) and anti-elitism (see Table 1). These averages do not differ much from the averages of the general population of the country (Kenig, in press). On average, participants reported low levels of acceptance of sexist attitudes and moderate acceptance of conservativism, political radicalism and beliefs in the importance of work. Religious values are the least important for this group of late adolescents, whereas orientation towards individual goals is, comparatively, the most important. The proclivity towards conspiracy theories is not extremely emphasized in the sample (M = 3.40, SD = .78) but it is higher than the average for the comparable age reported in the validation study (M = 2.61, SD = .87) (Brotherton et al, 2013).

Table 1. Descriptive Data and Reliability of the Shultz et al. (2018) Three-dimensional Populist Scale, Generic Conspiracist Beliefs and Relevant WAVE 7 Dimensions

Populist attitudes dimensions	n	Min.	Max	M*	SD	K-S	p	α
Anti-elitist attitudes	4	1.5	5.0	4.17	.64	.12	.00	.65
Demand for popular sovereignty	4	1.5	5.0	4.35	.67	.08	.00	.71
*Belief in homogeneity of people**	4	1.0	5.0	3.21	.78	.09	.00	.67
Overall score for populism	12	1.7	5.0	3.91	.47	.07	.00	.69
WAVE 7 attitudes dimensions								
Acceptance of Sexism	6	1.0	5.0	1.91	.87	.16	.00	.79
Conservative Views	5	1.4	5.0	3.03	.59	.08	.00	.67
Importance of Work	3	1.5	5.0	3.02	.88	.11	.00	.62
Political Radicalism	5	1.0	5.0	3.71	.74	.12	.00	.64
WAVE 7 values dimensions								
Orientation towards Individual Goals	4	1.0	4.0	3.78	.35	.25	.00	.70
Orientation towards Collective Goals	4	1.0	4.0	3.60	.45	.20	.00	.67
Orientation towards Religion	2	1.0	4.0	2.81	1.00	.18	.00	.89
Orientation towards Individual Freedom	4	1.0	4.0	3.11	.75	.17	.00	.68
WAVE 7 well-being dimension								
Subjective Well-Being	5	1.5	9.5	7.00	1.41	.07	.00	.66
Generic Conspiracist Beliefs Scale								
Conspiracist Thinking	15	1.7	5	3.40	.78	.04	.68	.90

*M was computed by adding the scores of the items of each subscale and then by dividing the total with the number of items (1-5, 1-4, or 1-10 point scale).
** or Manicheism

Table 2 presents selected correlations among the study's variables and the different aspects of populism. Contrary to the expectations based on the previous relevant data, only a few correlations appeared to be statistically significant. Conspiracist thinking was correlated with all three dimensions of populism, conservative views and importance of work and the orientation towards collective goals with homogeneity of people, whereas political radicalism was related to anti-elitism and demand for sovereignty of the people. None of the other variables (i.e., the three value-factors (orientation towards religion, orientation towards individual freedom and orientation towards

individual goals), the subjective well-being, as well as sexism) were statistically significantly associated with any aspect of populism.

Table 2. Correlations among the Three Dimensions of Populist Attitudes with Conspiracist Beliefs, Relevant Attitudes, Values and Subjective Well-Being (N = 552)

	Anti-elitist attitudes	Demand for popular sovereignty	Belief in homogeneity of people	Overall score for populism
Conspiracist thinking	**.220**[**]	**.205**[**]	**.097**[*]	**.252**[**]
Conservative views	.034	.067	**.171**[**]	**.143**[**]
Political radicalism	**.322**[**]	**.278**[**]	.044	**.300**[**]
Acceptance of Sexism	-.019	-.071	.041	-.019
Importance of work	.016	.056	**.137**[**]	**.111**[**]
Subjective well-being	.001	.071	-.023	.022
Orientation towards own goals	-.011	.067	.015	**.086**[*]
Orientation towards general goals	-.002	.035	**.125**[**]	**.115**[**]
Orientation towards religion	.006	.029	.080	.061
Orientation towards individual	-.044	.061	.058	.036

* p < .05. **p < .01.

The variables significantly related with any aspect of the three-dimensional scale were included into the regression model as predictors. We also incorporated demographic variables that empirical research (e.g., Kaltwasser & Hauwaert, 2020; Rechica et al, 2022) and theories claim to be related to populist attitudes. These included level of education, socio-economic status (measured by proxy and operationalized as whether the participant is employed or not), and political participation (operationalized as whether the participant is currently an active member of some political party/organization or not). The model is presented below.

The overall score on populism as a criterion variable was not distributed in a way to meet the basic prerequisite for performing a multiple linear regression (see Table 1). Thus, we performed a binary logistic regression after the overall populism scores were dichotomized into lower populism (below *M*) and higher populism (above *M*).

The model has acceptable fit (Chi-square = 40.07, *p* < .01, with Hosmer and Lemeshow Test producing Chi-square = 4.67, (*df* = 8), p =.791). However, the model summary indicates that the relationship between the logistical model and the criterion variable is weak (Nagelkerke *R* Square <.200) (see Table 3) and overall percentage of 61.8 correct classifications when this model is used.

Table 3. Binary Logistic Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell *R* Square	Nagelkerke *R* Square
1	711.431[a]	.079	.106

Only three predictors were statistically significant –radicalistic attitudes, conspiracist thinking (higher scores predict higher populism) and level of education (higher education predicts lower populism) (see Table 4). Political radicalism showed the

highest predictive value (β = 1.719, p < .01), followed acceptance of conspiracy theories (β = 1.406, p < .01) and level of education (β = .613, p < 0.05).

Table 4. Variables in Binary Logistic Equation for Predicting Overall Populist attitude

Predictors	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Conspiracist thinking	.340	.125	7.386	1	.007	1.406
Conservative views	.248	.167	2.197	1	.138	1.282
Political radicalism	.542	.177	9.344	1	.002	1.719
Importance of work	.143	.115	1.546	1	.214	1.153
Orientation towards general goals	.278	.199	1.953	1	.162	1.320
Level of education	-.490	.242	4.104	1	.043	.613
Political participation	.371	.331	1.261	1	.261	1.450
Socio-economic status	-.113	.229	.245	1	.621	.893
Constant	-5.016	1.429	12.327	1	.000	.007

Criterion variable: Overall score for populism.

Discussion

What do these results indicate?

As discussed above, populism is a thin-centered political ideology, because it relies on a small number of core ideas and can appear in conjunction with various ideologies. The best explanation of the finding that values can hardly predict the prominence of the populist attitude in young people, in our understanding, relies on this principle. Values and value systems cannot be associated with higher acceptance of populism in a straightforward manner, when it is measured as 'generic' and non-specific such as, for example: right-oriented, left-oriented anti-feminist, national-chauvinistic or other types. Similar reasoning applies for the relevant tested social attitudes. None of the tested attitudes, which were hypothetically expected to be associated with the tendency to accept populist views, appeared to be linked to it as a criterion variable. This 'thin' form of populism, according to the results of this study, could only be predicted based on acceptance of radical ideas about how the world could be changed. Those who were prone to believe that the relations in the society could be transformed through revolution and radical changes as opposed to other forms of development are almost twice as likely to belong to the higher acceptance of populism category.

Less years spent in formal education predict higher acceptance of populist values. This may have several underlying reasons. For example, prolonged education may enable young people to develop their critical thinking skills, thereby reducing their proclivity to conspiracist thinking. Alternatively, prolonged education may contributes toward better differentiation between democracy and populism.

As in many other studies (e.g., Castanho et al., 2017; Oliver & Rahn, 2016; van Prooijen et.al, 2022), the link between acceptance of conspiracy theories and populism was once again found to be significant in this study. In the context of young people, this association requires careful examination, for it could be particularly damaging for the development of their civic identity. Both conspiracism and populism have been defined as a danger to democracy and seen as closely tied to extremism (van Prooijen, 2018). They play a central role central in anti-feminist movements (Sanders & Jenkins, 2022),

anti-immigrant movements (Bergmann & Butter, 2020) and many different variations of movements based on denial of validity of the scientific methods and science.

How to help young people in coping with populism through civic education?

It seems that tackling populism is not an easy task. The phenomenon resembles a chimera that has many faces in different political contexts and perhaps different meanings and manifestations at different age. The 'thin' centered nature of populism makes it elastic and adaptive to 'pragmatic' changes in themes, which suits the context best -from anti-COVID-19 vaccines actions to anti-feminism and national-chauvinism movements. Psychologists, sociologists and educators still have much work to do to understand how populist attitudes develop, how this ongoing huge populist demand (and sometimes supply) affect young people and what could be done to overcome the negative effects of accepting populist attitudes on youth's civic identity.

There are at least two relevant reasons why formal education should explicitly and specifically address the phenomenon of populism. The first reason is the populist platform view on how democracy should be practiced. The second reason is the attitude towards science and scientific knowledge embedded within several varieties of populism.

Prima fascia, populism appears to align with the democratic values because of its focus on the needs and the political views of the 'ordinary' citizens and the emphasis on the re-examination of the institutions' modus operandi from the perspective of 'ordinary' people. Populism, however, is intrinsically risky. It has disdain for representative democracy, undermining of the 'bureaucratic' elements of democracy (e.g., rule of law or human rights), especially by its core understanding that the common people are not only virtuous and unified but also able to make political decisions with no need to be specifically educated for that (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). One potential consequence of the populist vision of democracy, stemming from its notion of the common people as being homogeneous, may be that it will leave no room for minority voices. Another negative aspect to democracy linked with populism is its frequent connection to inclinations towards 'charismatic', authoritarian leaders (e.g., Bugaric, 2019; Taggart, 2000).

Some populist sub-dimensions, especially those within the anti-elitism narrative, are associated with science skepticism or, more precisely, with rejecting scientific knowledge and the scientific method in general. Science skepticism can take a general form of disbelief in the good intentions of the scientist, or an attitude that concrete, immediate and familiar everyday thinking –'common sense'- as a form of knowledge is equal to, if not better than, expert and scientific knowledge (Imhoff et al., 2018). Both manifestations of populist attitude were particularly strengthened during the Covid-19 crisis and are explained in terms of a discrepancy between the concrete experiences and more distant forms of knowledge that cannot be verified firsthand (Mede & Schäfer, 2020). Science skepticism may be associated with a lower sense of personal responsibility for crises like climate change, pandemics or economic collapses. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of populism sending a strong anti-science message to younger generations.

Education, particularly civic/citizenship education teachers, should take more responsibility in addressing the issue of populism. This is especially true with regard to highlighting the differences between populism and democracy, the importance of scientific methods, more realistic approach toward the simplistic Manichean dichotomies, and so forth. We note this in light of the traditionally slow rate of formal curricular changes in addressing burning societal issues.

Young people should have opportunities to acquire the basic skills necessary to identify the difference between democratic rule and the misuse of populism as a tool for mobilization against democracy, while their identities are still forming, and when they are more susceptible to influences on their political thinking than later on. While examining conspiracy beliefs, Jolley et al. (2021) found that youth were more susceptible to conspiracy beliefs in middle and late adolescence, than at younger and older ages. This opens a huge opportunity for formal education to be a key factor in helping young generations tackle the epidemic growth of questioning the efficacy of democratic institutions, human rights, the rejection of science and demand for restriction of liberties and strong, authoritarian leaders.

It is arguably unrealistic to claim that any improvements in the civic education would be the silver bullet for all these issues but it is reasonable to expect such improvements could contribute to alleviating them. Bearing these initial findings in mind, we propose strengthening the cognitive dimension, which is to say the critical thinking component of the civic education curricula. Supporting children in developing their media literacy, specifically in relation to evaluating content and even more specifically in recognizing 'fake news' can achieve this. Empirical findings suggest that group discussions and practical examples are far more useful in gaining these skills than lecturing (Kaufman, 2021). This should therefore be a general guideline in how these skills could be built through teaching. Accordingly, we must to strengthen the skills and relevant attitudes of teachers involved in delivering civic education.

Research (Hamilton et al., 2020) and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that teachers require additional, in-service training and instructional materials to promote the newly emerged civic skills that meet the needs of this 'new' post-pandemic world. Teachers must develop the competencies to teach students about the detrimental impact of populism-related conspiracy beliefs on personal and societal wellbeing. They must also teach students how to take a critical perspective in a contexts of concrete events, and build an opinions based on empirically proven facts. Teachers also need to understand the phenomenon of stratification of people in 'informational bubbles', including the possibility that they may be trapped in such bubbles themselves and, consequently, how their attitudes influence the way in which they teach.

Study limitations

Examining the potential predictors of the demand-side populism is a risky endeavor. People are more heterogeneous than most studies expect and populism manifests itself in several ways (Mudde, 2007). No less important is the question of whether different aspects of populism manifest in very dissimilar patterns at individual level, which would make predictions even more difficult. Thus, although disappointing, it was not very surprising that our regression model accounted for a very modest amount of

explained variance. Based the scarce available prior research on populism in youth and the theoretical conceptualizations, however, this indicates that a better choice of predictor variables could have led to a more functional model. Another potential limitation of this study is the choice to operationalize several of the variables through reduced data (factors). The instruments for measuring populist attitudes suffer for the absence of negatively worded items that could result in acquiescence bias. Moreover, nearly half of the scales are only modestly reliable. Finally, the study's participants responded online, which always introduces doubt regarding the adequacy of the circumstances in which they were responding.

Conclusions

The study yields several important findings. The results indicated that values could not straightforwardly be associated to the 'generic' form of populism. Populism can appear in combination with various ideologies in different societal circumstances. This suggests that the development of one-fits-all educational programs in combating populism may not be the best approach. Instead, we suggest the development of transversal competencies in youth, which could empower them to identify various '– isms' and their role in reinforcing or deteriorating democratic processes and institutions. It is clear that there is a strong need for additional research and data from applied work in order to understand how populist attitudes develop, the dynamics between populist demand and supply, and how these processes affect science skepticism in young people and their understanding how democracy should be practiced.

Concurrently, populism can be predicted by political radicalism and conspiracist beliefs. This further emphasizes the importance of adequate education of young people at formative ages. Taking into consideration the higher susceptibility of youth to conspiracy beliefs (and arguably populism) in middle and late adolescence, we conclude that educational stakeholders should undertake the responsibility and main role in developing students' competences for critical differentiating between populism and democracy, and for use of scientific methods in searching for truthful evidence. To fulfill this role, teachers must understand how social media and populistic messages operate and affect them and how their personal attitudes influence the way in which they teach the students.

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Youth Political Identity and Democratic Disaffection: Active Citizenship and Participation to Counteract Populism[1]

Miquel Àngel Essomba Gelabert[2], Maria Nadeu Puig-Pey[3], & Anna Tarrés Vallespí[4]

Abstract

Globally, youth satisfaction with democracy is declining – not only in absolute terms, but also relative to how older generations felt at the same stages in life. Growing discontent with living conditions is taken advantage of by populist leaders, who exacerbate polarization, cultivate a climate of animosity and dismantle democratic institutions (Boese et al., 2022). This populist rule— whether from the right or the left—has a highly negative effect on political identities (specially on youth) and leads to a significant risk of democratic erosion (Kyle & Mounk, 2018). Combining quantitative and qualitative research methods according to Creswell's mixed approach, this article aims to explore the significance of youth identification with democracy, and their participation approaches as an alternative to the decline of democratic quality in Spain.

Keywords: Youth; Democracy; Social Movements; Populism; Participation; Civic Engagement; Democratic Citizenship

Introduction

Democracy and youth is a challenging issue for contemporary political sciences, since youth democratic disaffection is increasing everywhere. Young people's political identity is lower than any other age group. Indeed, by their mid-thirties, 55% of global millennials already say they are dissatisfied with democracy (Foa et al., 2020).

A number of concrete factors that may contribute to the explanation of declining satisfaction with democracy. These range from the growth of youth unemployment to the persistence of corruption and poverty in new democracies (Foa et al., 2020) and the construction of new identities (Bauman, 2005). A close review of relevant literature shows that young people's participation patterns and behavior provide evidence of an alternative and more hopeful approach.

Considering this, our research aims to contribute to the issue of young people's democratic disaffection and the quality of their democratic participation, based on a sample located in Barcelona, Catalonia. In this article, we present preliminary results that give evidence of the significance of youth identification with democracy and their alternative participation approaches.

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[2] Associate Professor, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona miquelangel.essomba@uab.cat
[3] Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona maria.nadeu@uab.cat
[4] PhD, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona anna.tarres@uab.cat

Literature review
The Decline of Democracy, the Rise of Populism and Youth Today

The decline of youth satisfaction with democracy is not a phenomenon particular to youth, as adults also show low levels of engagement. Young people, however, seem to be particularly disengaged from the democratic institutional framework, leaving them at best apathetic or at worst alienated (Norris, 2003). This leads us to our first research question: *does this disaffection really corresponds to a lack of identification with democratic values, or does it indicate a strong criticism of the current political atmosphere?* There is ample evidence of the fact that young people are less involved in politics, with lower levels of political interest and negative political attitudes than the older population (Foa et al., 2020; Zukin et al., 2007). So much evidence exists, in fact, that we can characterize youngsters as pessimistic, disaffected citizens (Cammaerts et al., 2014; Henn et al., 2005; Kimberlee, 2002; Wattenberg, 2006). Indeed, young adults vote less today than they did in the past and are less likely to join political parties (Quaranta et al., 2021) but does this mean we can conclude that youth is not for democracy?

If we examine the factors that explain such attitudes -ranging from economic to political reasons- we immediately observe that youth unemployment (Janmaat, 2017) and political corruption (Maciel & De Sousa, 2018) underlie this democratic disaffection (Foa et al., 2020). We are exiting a pandemic, and are still suffering from a local war in Ukraine with deep global impact. Satisfaction with the functioning of political institutions drops in times of recession (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2011). These issues give rise to a second research question: *is this current disaffection exclusively related to these recent global crises?* What is sure is that the public expression of this disaffection involves a high risk for the democracy itself, as it appears to correspond to electoral support to populist parties that advocate for isolationism, scapegoating particular social or ethnic groups, and denouncing the mainstream parties (Janmaat, 2017). This may have a negative effect on political youth identities as well, while concurrently dramatically eroding democracy (Kyle, 2018). Political polarization, the cultivation of a climate of animosity and the desire to dismantle democratic institutions are a part of this democratic trouble (Boese et al., 2022). This social behavior reveals certain lack of ideology among youth, since the great appeal of these populist parties is based on their radical esthetics, simple reasoning and permanent counter-dependency (Ruiz-Diaz & Danet, 2022).

New Forms of Democratic Participation and Political Identity of Youth in Public Life

The literature already provides some answers the research questions presented above, but the idea of pessimistic, disaffected citizens should be confronted with other data that back an alternative view of the problem. The concepts of participation and politics have been undergoing a process of redefinition that gives place to more diverse ways of understanding democracy and action in the public sphere for quite some time. It is essential to make distinctions between institutionalized political participation and non-institutionalized participation (Martinez-Cousinou et al., 2022), between conventional ways of participation (e.g., voting, joining or campaigning for a political party) and unconventional ways (e.g., protest activities and participation in new social movements) (Van Deth, 2001).

According to this argument, there is evidence that that young people are disaffected with certain forms of participatory democracy, but not apathetic with the whole (Cammaerts et

al., 2014; Quaranta et al., 2021). Almost nine in ten (87%) respondents of the 2021 European Parliament Youth Survey had engaged in at least one political or civic activity (European Parliament, 2021). Almost half (46%) had voted in the last local, national or European election, and two-fifths (42%) had created or signed a petition; around a quarter had engaged in other, more direct forms of action, including boycotting or buying certain products on political, ethical or environmental grounds (25%); and taking part in street protests or demonstrations (24%) (European Parliament [EP], 2021). A similar proportion had engaged in online activities, including posting opinions on social media about a political or social issue (26%). In short, younger European citizens are not intrinsically distant from politics, but that they prefer to experience politics in a different (i.e., non-conventional) way (Dalton, 2009).

Some concrete examples of this are well known, both in Europe and elsewhere. We find examples of increasing youth participation in civil organizations and social movements, as shown in teenage support for the Black Lives Matter movement or Fridays for Future, a youth-led and organized global climate strike movement. Young people act through a wide variety of participatory practices and their civic and political engagement have extended to a "wider variety of channels" that may require "different listening skills among political and social analysts" (Zukin et al., 2006). Direct interactions with socializing agents can significantly influence youth involvement in politics and community projects (Warren & Wicks, 2011), and educated but unemployed young people often show the most willingness to volunteer: young people are not disconnected from the civic life of their communities (Cammaerts et al., 2014). Now, however, these forms break through the aggressive action of populism (with a particular use of social networks), and, thanks to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the local is connected to the global.

It could be argued that the current generation of young people is not more apathetic than their predecessors but rather they create diverse repertoires of political participation, and their preference is geared toward engaging in *issues* on a case-by-case basis rather than embedding themselves within *institutions* (Amnå & Ekman, 2014; Norris, 2002). Given the benefits that civic engagement provides to democracy, our challenge as democratic societies is to promote a committed and participatory citizenship (Martinez-Cousinou et al., 2022). This would act as a barrier to the rise of populist parties, since it promotes community practices and contact activities among groups, all of which seem to be good ways to tackle the prejudices that are the basis of intolerance (Juanatey, 2020). Civic organizations, including youth organizations, perform a number of necessary functions for promoting and safeguarding basic human rights, democracy and the rule of law. An open, civil society is one of the most important safeguards against tyranny, oppression, and other anti-democratic tendencies. A review of the literature reveals that young people are not indifferent or antithetical to democracy but against old-fashioned models that understand representative democracy in a globalized and complex world. With our research, we hope to contribute to and further understanding on this subject.

Democracy, participation and youth in Spain and Catalonia
Spain is not an exception to this global context. On the one hand, we observe a strong political disaffection, among Spanish citizens, and evidence shows that young people are even more critical than adults (Ferrer, 2010). This is the end-result of a long-term evolution. More than a decade prior, Frances-Garcia (2008, p.40) found that Spanish youngsters showed "an increase in abstention from voting, a decrease in the involvement in political parties and

traditional citizen organizations, a general distancing from the conventional participative activities, and a growing distrust in the performance of democratic political institutions".

Spanish youth also behaves in a manner similar to their European peers, however. In their study about university youth and political interest, Martinez-Cousinou et al. (2022) found that the impact of the current health and economic crises increased a sort of distrust towards institutions and dissatisfaction with the functioning of the political system in Spain. This should be understood as apathy, however, as the pandemic promoted a politicization of Spanish youth, in terms of greater interest and participation in politics, especially in non-institutionalized ways (Weiss, 2020). On a more localized level, the results of the 2020 Barcelona Youth Survey showed that a majority of young people are interested in politics (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2020). We must acknowledge, however, that these results differ slightly from those drawn by the 2022 Youth Status Report in Catalonia region, which shows that only 25% of young people are satisfied with democracy and less than 50% interested in participating in society (Observatori Catala de la Joventut [OCJ], 2022). All these data align with Frances-Garcia's (2008) findings, which indicated a contrast between youth's high appreciation of the democratic system as preferable to any other system (79.2%) and approximately half of those surveyed not being very satisfied with the way democracy works in Spain.

Spanish youth also takes this approach to democratic development. Their forms of participation are often 'non-electoral' and 'non-institutionalized', and are sometimes categorized as 'protest activities'. A fundamental aspect of the current youth condition is the result of experiences of social and political re-existence that include protest and resistance practices, as well as the creation of alternative projects in open dispute with hegemonic sectors, institutions and procedures of formal democracy (Amador-Baquiro & Muñoz-Gonzalez, 2020). Research also indicates an evolution from a generalist movement, to movements of a single subject, and finally to mobilization for discrete events (Alarcon, 2022). This contradicts previous findings, which indicated that structures of youth groups tend to abandon excessively rigid institutional frameworks in favor of horizontal networks that enable communication between different fields of action (Frances-Garcia, 2008). They also refute a previously observed rise in the mechanism of specific activations and deactivations, often multi-subject nature, in which young people constantly enter and exit participatory processes characterized by an increasing flexibility and transience in their action (Frances-Garcia, 2008).

In Catalonia, findings have long been in accord with these global trends. According to San Martin (2010 p.26), "young people are more active in those ways of participation -such as social associationism or protest participation- in which they can better defend their interests, work together and/or express their discomfort with the functioning of traditional political institutions". The 2017 Participation and Politics Survey in Catalonia highlighted youth distancing itself from involvement in institutional and party-based politics, accompanied by the emergence of an engagement more strongly linked to causes and everyday political experiences, as this cohort was clearly most in favor of a more participative democratic model (Soler-Marti, 2017).

Methods
In order to find answers to our two questions, the Barcelona Youth Council and the ERDISC Research Group, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, initiated a study in January

2023. The target population was the 247 community-based, youth-led organizations registered in the city of Barcelona. Our research was based on Creswell's mixed methodology. We designed it in three-phases; the results explored in this contribution are based on the first, descriptive phase. We also requested the collaboration of the whole census of young people participating in community-based youth-led organizations in the city of Barcelona, for our quantitative analyses.

We administered an online survey to collect quantitative data. We disseminated the survey among the target group by the Barcelona Youth Council's internal and external communication channels, and by sending it directly to most of the 247 community-based youth-led organizations of the city of Barcelona and asking them to distribute it to young participants, so they could answer it individually.

We designed the survey to provide a socio-demographic profile of the sample population and collect their attitudes, behaviors and participation patterns. It included 13 socio-demographic items (e.g., age, gender, education, and current occupational status of the respondents), a series of questions about their organizations and participation experience and 23 items related to specific attitudes and behaviors towards participation and democracy. We also included three (3) open-ended questions, to generate a more in-depth understanding of the subject.

The survey was peer-reviewed by experts before its administration. The answers to the 23 scale items were structured as 5-point Likert-type items, coded from 1: 'Totally disagree' to 5: 'Totally agree' -and were divided into 5 subscales. The survey was to examine youngsters' self-perception regarding their civic engagement in their organizations.

Results

127 young people responded to the survey in May 2023; their responses were collected on a census basis. All respondents were aged 16-29 and 100% of them participated in community-based, youth-led organizations in the city of Barcelona. Descriptive analysis revealed the following sample profile: 58.6% identify as women. 78% are less than 23 years old. 89.1% were born in the city of Barcelona (only 3.1% out of Spain). They are highly educated young people (only 3.1% of respondents had not finished post-compulsory studies and 40.9% had finished higher education studies). 79.7% were employed –albeit only 14.1% full-time. 82% lived in family residence, although only 0.8% declared they lived alone in an independent home. The results of the socio-demographic analysis show that both place of birth and educational level had a positive and significant effect on the propensity of young people to participate in community-based youth-led organizations in Catalonia. These results are consistent with other previous studies (Nadeu et al., 2023).

Young People's Participation Patterns

Analyzing the patterns of young people's participation, we asked them what kind of organization they participated in, choosing from a range of five (5) social, civic and political areas. 63.8% of respondents reported participating in educational entities. The rest were distributed between Youth centers/assemblies, Cultural organizations, Political organizations and Social and political advocacy groups. Young people are long-term members of their organizations –51.2% have been participating for 5 years or more, while only less than 8% have been participating for 1 year or less (see Table 1). The fact that 44.1% of the respondents

dedicate more than 7 hours per week to their organization's activities -only 3.1% participate 1 hour per week or less– is also characteristic of the quality of their participation. It is also important to note that 30.7% of respondents participated in more than one organization.

*Table 1. Engagement in youth organizations.*

Item	Range	% answer
How many years have you been participating in the organization?	Less than 1	7.87 %
	Between 1 and 3	22.83 %
	Between 3 and 5	18.11 %
	More than 5	51.18 %
	TOTAL	100 %
How many hours do you dedicate to your organization per week?	1 hour or less	3.15 %
	Between 1 and 3	10.24 %
	Between 3 and 5	23.62 %
	Between 5 and 7	18.90 %
	More than 7	44.09 %
	TOTAL	100 %

The divergence of these from previous findings (e.g., Kitanova, 2020) that suggest that there is an inverse relationship between age and organizational membership, indicate the need for deeper analysis and comparative research studies, on the subject.

Level of Engagement

Concerning their engagement in organizations, 63% of survey respondents found their participation very stimulating, 78.7% feel that it was a space for them to learn and 44.1% considered it very easy for them to get involved. Regarding their influence in the organization, more than half felt very involved in the organization's activities, and more than two-thirds participated in decision-making about the organization's management and activities. In addition, more than half felt that they had influence in the organization's regular decision-making areas (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Participation of young people in their organizations
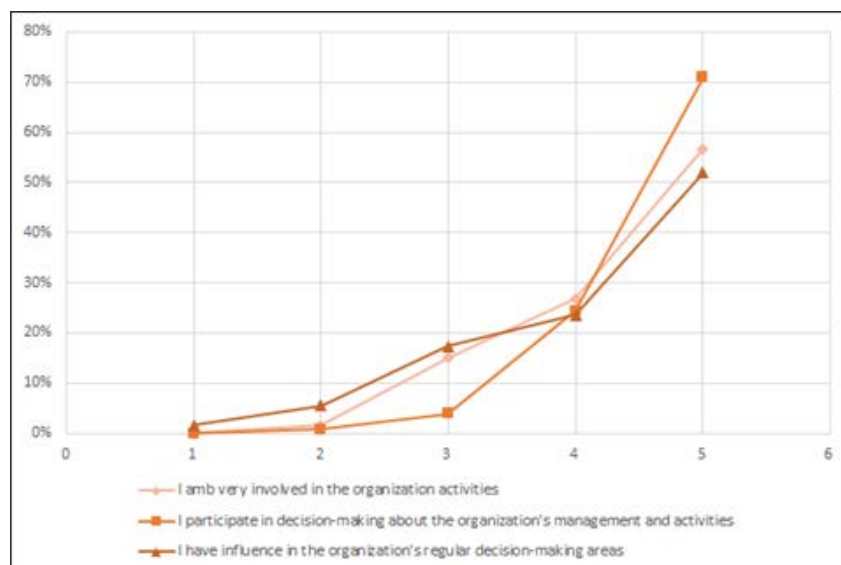
Young People's Views on Democracy and Political Parties

With respect to democratic attitudes and views, a substantial majority (>80%) of respondents identify with democratic values such as equality, social justice, inclusion and equity (see Figure 2). Their concern with the crisis of the democratic system shows more variation. 38.6% the respondents felt very concerned, while 5.5% were non-concerned at all. More alarming, however, is the fact that only 2.4% of the young people in the sample declared confidence in political parties, compared to 71.6% who reported no or almost no confidence at all.

Figure 2. Youth identity on democracy
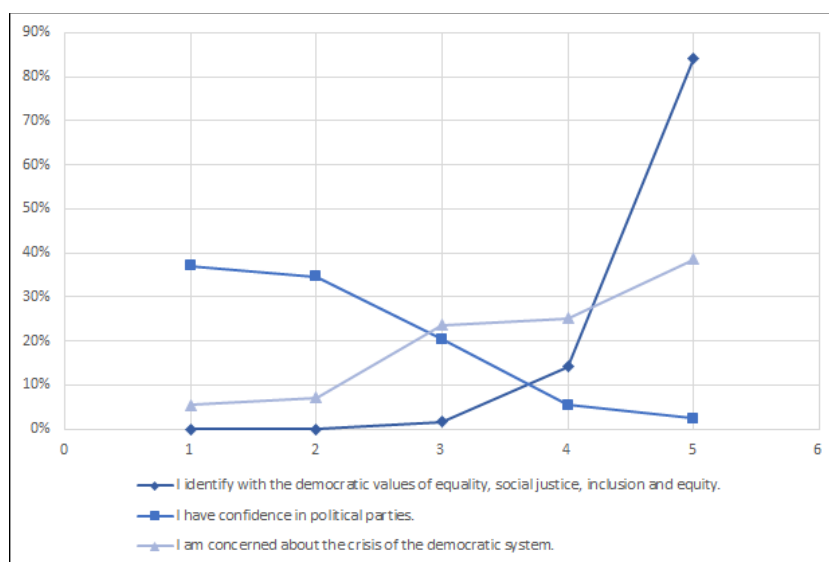
Discussion

Overall, the preliminary results of our research indicate that our respondents were long-term members of community-based, youth-led organizations, who believe in civic values and the democratic system, which they translate to their organization's decision-making processes and management. Concurrently, they show little trust in the performance of political parties.

These results may have been somewhat biased by the fact that people who have been participating for a longer term in their organization and have more responsibility in its performance could be more concerned about the importance of answering a survey. A wider range of respondents could produce more accurate results.

Civic engagement and volunteer participation in community-based organizations promotes high quality participation experiences, improves civic attitudes, enhances political behavior and provides a background for political activism. Such groups help people learn how to address problems collectively, and to self-organize to improve common life (Morales & Geurts, 2007). Social, civic and political youth-led organizations strengthen youths' social bonds and develop their sense of community. Thus, they both are and should be an active part of the structural associative framework in any healthy democracy.

Our analysis indicated that young people in the city of Barcelona who participated in community-based youth-led organizations were highly engaged in their organizations and communities, and that their membership included holding responsibilities and participating in decision-making processes and areas. These results align with previous studies, and are consistent with former conclusions -that young people are not disconnected at all from the

civic life of their communities (Cammaerts et al., 2014), and that they are turning to democratic horizontal organizations and community networks instead of engaging in traditional political formal institutions.

Our study confirms that our challenge as a democratic society, following Martinez-Cousinou et al. (2022), is to support and promote an engaged and participatory citizenship. Public administration has a major role in this support. Further research could attempt to describe and analyze in what ways youth-led organizations get support from the administration, and what measures should be taken to encourage and promote youth-led organizations' performance, their role in the city decision-making processes and their involvement in formal community networks.

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Institutional Trust and Conflict: Ramifications for Citizenship Education[1]

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

Abstract

Each year, the Eurobarometer report indicates decreased levels of trust among citizens of the European Union. This manifests in a lack of trust in institutions, their representatives, and even the division of respondents from their fellow citizens. Division, of course, has many sources –conflict not least among them. Unresolved conflict increasingly foments group segregation and, arguably, both the direct and indirect erosion of trust in national and international institutions. Direct erosion often occurs because of governmental inaction, intentional or otherwise. Perhaps the most noteworthy motivation of indirect erosion is humanitarian aid: accepting, sheltering, and incorporating refugee populations into the national whole. Education is one of the most concurrently overtly and subtly affected institutions. Education plays both a direct and indirect role in guiding its nascent citizens. Teachers (i.e., educators; the representatives of the educational institution) are the direct point of interaction between the nascent citizen and the institution of Education. Educators have historically held high occupational status in many European societies. We employ quantitative analysis of Eurobarometer data to examine whether, as trust in the institution of education erodes, as the result of ongoing crises and conflicts, future educators' social status remains unchanged. Does this affect their ability to teach the curriculum –hidden or otherwise– to their students? Does this questioning of not only themselves, but also of the institution they serve, act to temper the curriculum, as they openly intend to teach it, but also reshape the hidden curriculum, by altering their fundamental identity? The self-questioning imparted on future educators by the crisis of trust may, of course, have numerous negative consequences. We argue, however, that there may be at least one positive ramification: the reinforcement of youth identity, strengthening the values of citizenship to produce a more strongly unified, egalitarian community of citizens.

Keywords: Trust; Conflict; Identity; Permacrisis; Citizenship Education

Introduction

Economic and technological changes transform citizens' fundamental values and motivations in modern societies (Koniordos, 2018). Individual values and motivations *de facto* inform individual, and thus group, paradigms. Trust is, essentially a perception (or expectation) of how others behave (Sapienza et al., 2013; Lazzarini et al., 2004). This perception extends beyond the individual, to communities and even entire societies. It is arguably difficult to define a specific target for expectations relating to an entire group, be it a community or a society. We would argue that there exists, at either level, some form of guiding person or

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[2] MSc, University of Patras epameinondaspanagopoulos@gmail.com
[3] DPhil, Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, mijkat@gmail.com, **ORCiD**: 0000-0001-9771-7689
[4] PhD, University of Patras, evalpap@upatras.gr
[5] MSc, University of Patras, anadam@upatras.gr
[6] Professor, University of Patras, kamarian@upatras.gr

body, on which the impetus for guiding the group rests. In communities and smaller groups, this could be an authoritarian figure of some sort (e.g., an elder or community leader). Indeed, societal leaders (e.g., presidents and/or prime ministers) could be argued to play an equivalent role, in larger societies. Realistically, however, as group sizes increase, so too do the requirements and responsibilities of administration. From a certain point onward, these responsibilities necessarily surpass the abilities of any one individual. At this point, they are transferred from the individual to the institution level. These institutions can be both formal (e.g., regional and local public authorities, political parties, etc.) and informal (e.g., mass media). The role of both formal and informal institutions is largely consistent: they are considered to be strong social forces, given exceptional latitude by individuals and groups of social actors, in return for (the expectation of) institutional support and guidance.

Ongoing problems in the spheres of politics and governance combined to trigger a twelve-year economic crisis, in Greece (Fanaras, 2018). Indeed, the macroeconomic ramifications of this fiscal crisis alone have been argued to surpass those of the Great Depression of 1929 (Sklias et al., 2021). It is worth noting, however, that this fiscal crisis was just one in a long, seemingly unbroken, series of crises –albeit one which was abnormally long and intense. This series of crises, or crisis continuum, can be traced back several decades. For the sake of the arguments made in this paper, we limit ourselves to making a case for the existence of a crisis continuum as far back as 2008, beginning with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers global financial services firm. In 2010, Greece made an official request for help from the IMF (IMF, 2010) and entered a political and social maelstrom. Extremist organizations and movements rose directly thereafter, adopting a new and unconventional narrative and a polemic of broader contestation. 2016 bore witness to the debate and referendum on Britain's exit from the European Union –a decision implemented in 2020. Shortly thereafter, an unpredictable, socially divisive, and inflammatory former reality TV star was elected president of the United States. The following period was characterized, if not defined, by the spread of fake news. The now structural post-truth condition became an integral part of the greater social paradigm. Alongside these crises and within the sphere of the new post-truth reality, forced migration gave birth to a refugee crisis, starting in 2015 and intensifying over the following years. Greece arguably suffered disproportionately at the hands of this crisis. Its position made it a natural entry point into Europe, while the realities of international law and the reaction of other European governments resulted in the overwhelming majority of arrivals in Greece being forced to remain there (Amnesty International, 2016), placing an inconsistent but persistently increasing social and welfare burden on a country already plagued by unheard of fiscal difficulties. Indeed, it could be argued that not only has this humanitarian crisis not ended, but that the country currently finds itself in the midst of a second, distinct wave of refugee influx, in as many decades[7]. 2020 brought with it the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a fundamental realignment of national and international expectations –a global paradigm shift, one might argue. In 2022, Russia invaded (or recommenced its 2008 invasion of) Ukraine. This resulted in a war on the European Union's (EU) proverbial doorstep and a global energy crisis. The ramifications of the last two crises and, in a very real sense, their true culmination, is not necessarily clear yet. SARS-COV-2 has been downgraded from pandemic

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[7] We acknowledge that this statement could be subject to debate, including interpretations of political and media commentary, attempts to discern fake- from legitimate-news, and navigating the post-truth reality. We limit ourselves herein to noting that Greece saw a 49% increase in asylum seeker arrivals over a 5-month period in 2023, year-over-year (Hellenic Republic, 2023). This corresponded to 1970 additional asylum seekers over the course of less than half of a year, in a country already beleaguered by a refugee crisis.

status but persists in society at large, with regular developments of new variants. Both the economic and social upheaval resulting from the peak pandemic crisis and the energy crisis of the invasion of Ukraine have resulted in heretofore unheard-of profiteering on the part of major corporations, creating a new global fiscal reality. We do not and cannot know if, for example, this crisis of greed is the ultimate consequences of the pandemic and war/energy crises. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that they cannot be the final manifestation of the crisis continuum, if only due to its persistent nature.

This protracted, ongoing crisis continuum has taken on an almost permanent character, lending credence to its characterization as a "permacrisis" (Collins, 2022). It is worth noting that the term permacrisis does not imply that we are living through one perpetual homogeneous crisis scenario. Rather, the term connotes the protracted instability and insecurity accompanying the series of consecutive and/or overlapping crises. Indeed, the variations in the nature and ramifications of these crises arguably further contributes to the perpetuation or even amplification of instability and insecurity. In this light, we argue that the social, political, and economic upheavals accompanying the permacrisis triggered, coexisted with, and fed into, if not intensified, social changes –particularly with regard to institutional trust.

Significance of the Study

Recent studies have revealed a crisis of trust in key institutions, such as the government of the day focusing on the function of democracy (Anheier & Knudsen, 2023; OECD, 2023; Butzlaff & Messinger-Zimmer, 2020). Data from the 2022 Eurobarometer show low levels of trust in the government and parliament of the EU. Indeed, they indicate low levels of trust in the government of each European country, with trust levels hovering around 34%. According to the United Nations (2021), in 62 developed and developing countries around the world, just 36% of citizens trust their government, down from 46% in 2006.

Our interest lies not only in governments but also almost all other institutions and the trust individuals and groups place in them. Contemporary institutional trust can vary considerably from country to country, due to a number of factors. Not least among these is income. Thus, for example, citizens of high income countries tend to have higher levels of institutional trust than those in low income countries (United Nations, 2021). This is not unreasonable. In a simplified sense, income dictates purchasing power, which, all other things being constant, should, in turn, define quality of life. We therefore posit a logical relationship between economic upheaval, its almost universally detrimental influence on mean and median income in a given country, and institutional trust.

The persistent nature of permacrisis lends itself to increases in insecurity. Insecurity is, of course, an essential characteristic of the social subject. Foucault (2003), however, argued that responsibility is individualized, as social subjects are led to internalize regulatory policies dictated by external centers of legitimacy, in the biopolitics of everyday life. Indeed, the policies of deregulation implemented, and the disintegration of the welfare state observed over the course of the ongoing series of crises were (and arguably still are) a critical factor contributing to the inculcation of risk and danger in the identity of the social subject (Adamopoulou et al., 2021).

This is not a new concept. Beck (1992) argued that the notion of endangerment was attributable to failures of the nation-state to maintain economic, social, and military security,

in the decades following the Second World War, attributing this failure to the state promising too much over long period. This in turn raises a question of credibility or what Habermas (1976) referred to as a crisis of legitimacy. This uncertainty degrades nation-states' ability to provide security, protection, and safety to their citizens, thus stymying their ability to act effectively on a global scale (Rushton, 2013).

This concept is also not the sole purview of historical literature review, however. The retreat of the welfare state in the strategic sectors of health and education is directly linked and signified by the European (and Greek) debt crisis. This has resulted in disconnected narratives of the collapse of the social sphere and individual institutions. This retreat of the welfare state highlighted new organizational arrangements and individual pathways (Balias et al., 2016). This transition, from linearity to polysemy and fluidity, has brought about evident and significant changes in the conception of the social sphere (see Baumann, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

This study was motivated by changes observed in the perspectives of and ascription of meanings by young people entering universities, regarding social issues (Adamopoulou & Kamarianos, 2008; 2016). Since these youth represent a substantial portion of the future body politic of Greek society, we assume that these perspectives and ascribed meanings must affect the Greek social sphere in general and expressions of trust therein, in particular, in the long term. Our goal, therefore, was to focus on and highlight the conditions inciting and sustaining this process of change, within the context of the specific and persistent social, economic, and political crises that have characterized the past two decades.

More specifically, the purpose of the study was to examine:

1. How has students' institutional trust evolved over a decade of permacrisis?
2. How does students' institutional trust compare to the institutional trust of the Greek societal whole?
3. How does the institutional trust of Greek Students and Greek society (as a whole) compare to the EU, on average?

To this end, we focus on an examination of students' social characteristics and their relevant values framework(s). By comparing their perspectives to information collected via the Eurobarometer survey, we attempt to contribute to the determination of new critical identity characteristics.

Research Methodology

In an attempt to address the issues outlined above, we have undertaken ongoing data collection, since 2012. From 2012 to 2017, data was collected via traditional (paper) questionnaire. In 2018, the questionnaire was transcribed and adapted to the digital medium and has distributed online since then. Thus, our analyses draw upon a longitudinal sample of undergraduate students of the Department of Education and Social Work Sciences (DESWS) of the University of Patras (UoP). We conducted a comparative analysis of this student data with data available from the Eurobarometer survey. The longitudinal project on trust is implemented as a part of ongoing research within the Sociology Laboratory of the DESWS of the UoP.

The questionnaire distributed to students consisted of 53 questions. Fourteen (14) questions were demographic, and the remaining 39 dealt with trust issues. Questions regarding trust were initially taken from the Eurobarometer and the World Values Survey. They were then adapted to the Greek context and the student population, through an iterative process of adaptation and controls for the retention of original meaning (with regard to both content and wording). For the purposes of this study, institutional trust was operationalized as a binary item, with respondents asked if they trusted a given institution (with possible responses including "yes" or "no"). More than 50% of respondents answering in the affirmative was considered to indicate trust in a given institution.

We questioned students regarding their trust in a number of social institutions, including the Army, the Justice System, Regional and Local Government/Public Authorities, Political Parties, Mass Media, and the European Union. The longitudinal nature of our data collection provided us with the opportunity to specifically adapt a subsection of our instrument to an examination of institutional trust in a series of different crisis contexts. These include the economic crisis and the IMF Standby Agreement (IMF, 2010), examined in 2012-2013, the beginning of the refugee crisis, in 2015-2016, the post-truth crisis in 2018-2019, and the war/energy crisis in, in 2021-2022. In each case, the crisis was examined after it sufficient time had passed for some (arguably substantial) measure of its effects to be evident in Greek social consciousness. This distinction of localization is both significant and salient.

The keen observer will note that the refugee crisis, despite being the second longest lasting of the crises discussed above, was examined almost directly following its onset. This immediacy of the refugee crisis in Greece, however, is hard to overstate. It had nigh universal coverage in mass-media and tangible ramifications over a substantial portion of the country. The monetary crisis grew in magnitude, as did the entrenchment of fake-truth narratives and, although the initial hit of the war in Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis was intense, the true magnitude of the ramifications of both crises is still unfolding today. The effects of the refugee crisis were abrupt and sustained. Their representation in media waxed and waned but their drain on the economy and social services, inciting of humanitarian outcries, and, especially, impact on local communities at points of ingress did not waver. The shift in public opinion was abrupt and substantial.

There is, of course, one other point of note, regarding our methodology, which is a seeming omission of an explicit reference to the impact of the SARS-COV-2 pandemic on institutional trust. The unfortunate reality of the situation is that, examining the pandemic in the context of a crisis continuum, it is exceptionally difficult to meaningfully (and reliably) extricate its effects from the ramifications of the preceding post-truth crisis and the subsequent war/energy crisis. Many of the ramifications of the post-truth crisis only truly found international purchase with the advent of the pandemic. Many social and economic shifts, initially considered extraordinary emergency measures, justified by the exigencies of the unheard-of realities of the pandemic, became normative in the context of the war/energy crisis. Indeed, this particular series of events occurred in such rapid succession and with such interpolation of their effects that truly discerning all three would require, at the very least, specific instruments, geared toward this particular task, if not (unattainable) *a priori* knowledge of the sequence of crises. In this light, we have opted to take the safer path, of separately examining the preceding and following crises, which can more safely be discerned, while bearing in mind the potential influence of the pandemic crisis on specific of the latter, with which there was and arguably still is substantial overlap.

Findings

We begin our examination of institutional trust in the 2012-2013 academic year. At this point, Greece has already been in the throes of economic recession for 4 to 5 years, which has now evolved to introduce the intervention of the IMF, a foreign entity, into the regulation of daily life. In this context, Greek tertiary education students did not express trust *any* of the institutions denoted above. Indeed, according to their no institution was trusted by more than 50% of our sample (see Table 1). Notably, political parties, which were overwhelmingly blamed for the economic crash, were the recipients of the trust of just 0.6% of our sample.

Table 1: Institutional Trust in the Financial Crisis

Institution	Yes	No	(Yes-No)
Army	29.9%	70.1%	X
Justice	42.2%	57.8%	X
Regional/local public authorities	15.4%	84.6%	X
European Union	14.0%	86.0%	X
Political parties	00.6%	99.4%	X
Mass Media	09.7%	90.3%	X

The 2015-2016 period, a starting point for the migration crisis, shows little difference from the preceding IMF crisis, with students' institutional trust, again, failing to break 50% for any of the examined institutions. Trust in political parties, although higher than in the 2012-2013 period, remained at just 3.1% –again the lowest expressed trust of any institution. Indeed, despite the percentages of "yes" responses, indicating trust in a given institution, increasing substantially for almost every institution, none managed to break 50% reported trust. The exception to this trend was students' institutional trust in mass media, which decreased by almost half to 4.6%. Much like the pandemic period, discussed above, this particular time was also host to a series of overlapping crises. The effects of the monetary crises were still omnipresent in Greek society, with public discourse examining a rejection of ongoing austerity measures, and the influence of Euroscepticism entering the public debate regarding the United Kingdom's referendum on exiting the EU.

Table 2: Institutional Trust at the beginning of the Refugee Crisis

Institution	Yes	No	(Yes-No)
Army	35.4%	64.6%	X
Justice	49.2%	50.8%	X
Regional/local public authorities	23.4%	76.6%	X
European Union	20.0%	80.0%	X
Political parties	03.1%	96.9%	X
Mass Media	04.6%	95.4%	X

By 2018-2019, university students expressed trust in one institution (see Table 3): the justice system (68.9%). For the third consecutive crisis/period, the lowest percentage of institutional trust was allotted to political parties (3.1%). All of the other institutions, however, increased their percentage of institutional trust, compared to previous periods. This period also saw the first indications of the second refugee crisis, whose mismanagement was ultimately placed on the shoulders of the government, in public discourse. It is, however, also worth reinforcing the continuous nature of permacrisis; fake news was widespread and post-truth was a crucial component in the narratives that were exposed in the public sphere.

Table 3: Institutional Trust and the Post-Truth Condition

Institution	Yes	No	(Yes-No)
Army	40.1%	59.9%	X
Justice	68.9%	31.1%	✓
Regional/local public authorities	38.4%	61.6%	X
European Union	32.3%	67.7%	X
Political parties	03.1%	96.9%	X
Mass Media	27.5%	72.5%	X

The advent of the war/energy crisis, in 2021-2022, saw students once again express institutional trust in none of the institutions under examination. Institutional trust in political parties more than doubled from the previous period (to 6.9%) but was, again, the lowest percentage of "yes" answers. Indeed, all of the institutions show a decrease in their percentages of "yes" answers (indicating trust). It is worth remembering that measurements in the 2021-2022 academic year are likely to indicate the results of a combination of the ongoing pandemic crisis, the (at least from a certain perspective) new war which began within European borders, and the subsequent energy crisis. Indeed, it could be argued that this period, moreso than any of the others we have examined today, was subject to three crises which expressed themselves in such rapid succession that it was functionally impossible to disambiguate the ramifications of one from the other, allowing them to amplify one another, into an enhanced degradation of institutional confidence, across the board.

Table 4: Institutional Trust and the War / Energy Crisis

Institution	Yes	No	(Yes-No)
Army	29.9%	70.1%	X
Justice	24.3%	75.7%	X
Regional/local public authorities	13.1%	86.9%	X
European Union	23.7%	76.3%	X
Political parties	6.9%	93.1%	X
Mass Media	19.3%	80.7%	X

In almost all respects, however, the generally negative opinion regarding institutional trust expressed by Greek university students nevertheless corresponds to higher levels of trust than those expressed by the Greek populace, on average, as reported by the Eurobarometer survey (see Figure 1). The exceptions to this is the case of trust in the institution of the Army and the Justice system. This is not necessarily unexpected. Greece has compulsory military service, which can be temporarily circumvented for the purpose of studies and which, like all drafts (and non-negotiable compulsory obligations) is not universally loved by those for whom it still looms. This is arguably compounded by the fact that the Eurobarometer sample invariably skews older, which allows for older, more nationalistic conceptions of the necessity and importance of military service, much more prevalent prior to Greece's joining the EU. Insofar as justice is concerned, Greek universities represent (or at least represented, at the time) asylums from law enforcement and persecution by the Justice system, barring exceptional circumstances. Indeed, Greek university students are the beneficiaries of exceptional liberties, within the confines of their educational establishments. As one of the most frequent social groups to participate in social actions, including strikes, marches, and sit-ins, they have also frequently borne the brunt of overzealous retribution on the part of

representatives of the Justice system. As a result, their generally lower faith in the justice system is entirely expected and, indeed, the level of trust reported is arguably more interesting than the fact that it is less than the local population average. We digress, however; such examinations exceed the purview of this particular inquiry.

Figure 1: Institutional Trust: University Students vs Eurobarometer (GR) Average (2021)
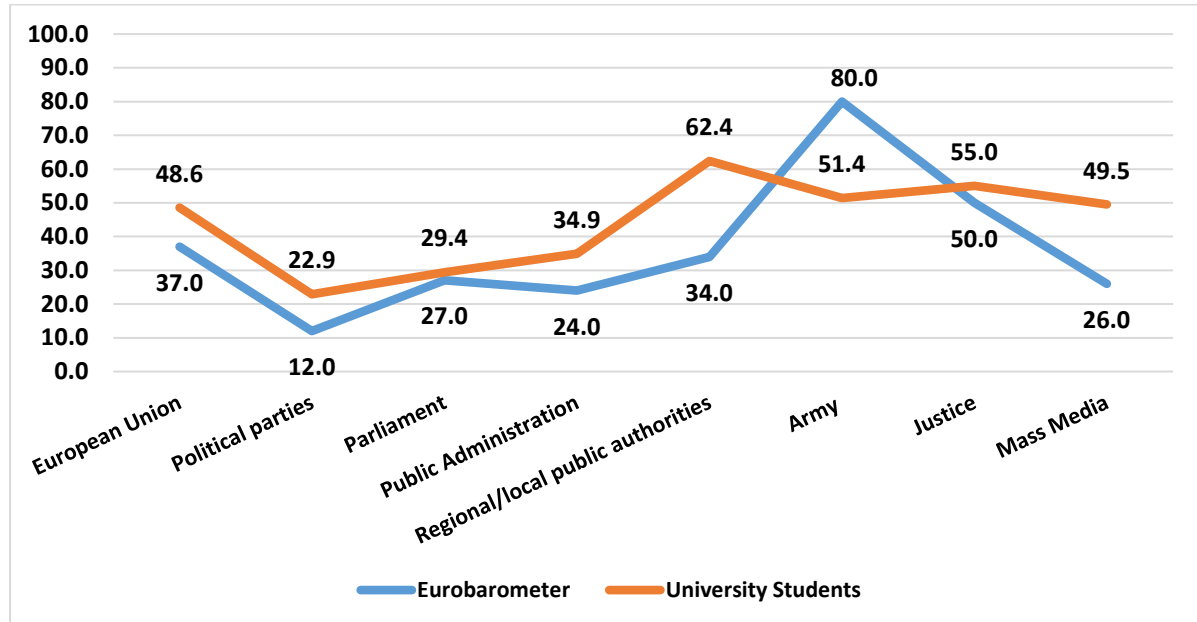
Other, notable differences between Greek university students and the population average included the degree of trust for regional/local public authorities. The percentage of students expressing trust in regional/local authorities (62.4%) was nearly double that in the general population (34%). A comparable declination was also evident in trust in the institution of Mass Media, where 49.5% of university students reported trusting the institution, compared to just 26% in the population, on average.

Figure 2: Institutional Trust: Eurobarometer (GR) vs University Students vs EU-27 Average
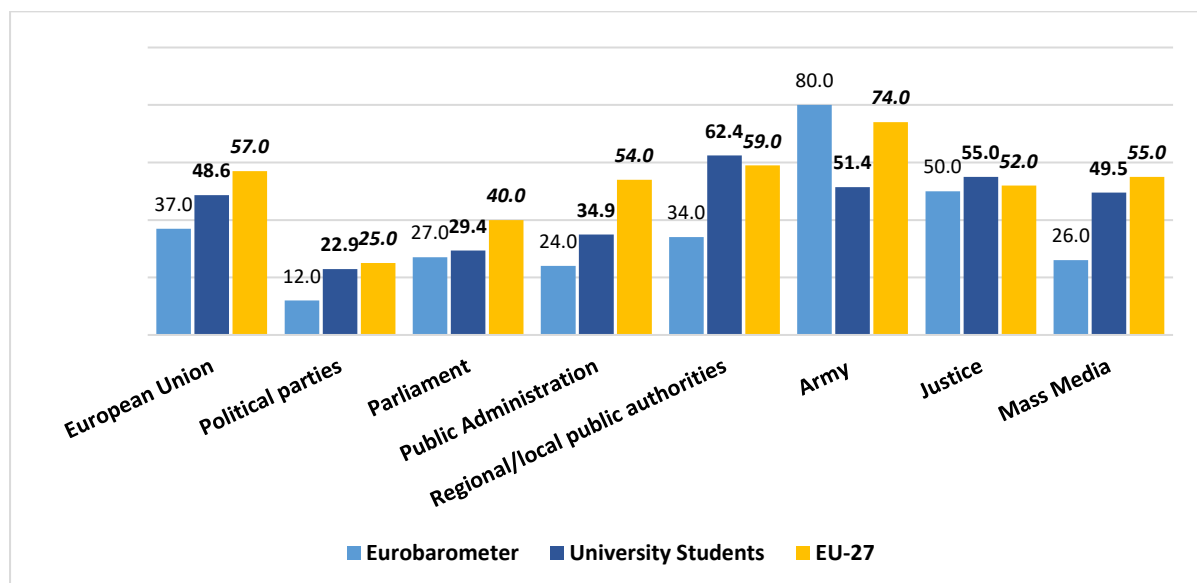
These measurements of institutional trust become even more interesting when expanded, to include a comparison to the average responses of citizens of the 27 EU member states (EU-27) (see Figure 2). Responses from the EU-27 are consistent with regard to political parties, parliament, public administration, and mass media. EU-27 citizens report trusting these institutions to a greater extent than Greek university students and Greek citizens, on average. Of course, the increased trust rates of the citizens of the European Union are interpreted as trust in the European Union, public administration, and mass media (more than 50% in all three institutions). As far as regional/local public authorities are concerned, the trust of university students is higher than that of citizens of the 27 EU Member States. Greek citizens again show the highest level of trust in the institution of the Army, followed by the EU-27, and then Greek university students.

Discussion

The continuum of crisis (or permacrisis) surrounding the social subject almost invariably contributes to the crisis of trust in institutions. Indeed, such is the nature of permacrisis itself. Social subjects have been conditioned to be robust to hardship and change, though generations of varyingly cohesive societies, which depend on the social subjects adapting to the needs of the whole. This robust elasticity, however, is often and largely supported by the promise of returns on investment. Individuals and, indeed, societies, invest time, effort, and capital (including though not limited to in the form of freedoms, earnings, and quality of life), with the promise that these investments (and these sacrifices) are exceptional contributions, to be repaid by the greater good of the societal whole and, by extension, their personal lives. Permacrisis, however, is characterized by an indistinguishable continuum of exceptional circumstances. The exceptional becomes commonplace and what was, until recently, necessarily treated as a limited period of relative suffering, has become a normative degradation of standards. Faith is placed in institutions on the premise that they will provide the best-case scenario to navigate circumstances both normal and exceptional. It is understood (if only subconsciously, in some cases) that not all of the solutions provided by said institutions will be ideal, or even desirable, in the short term. The long term, however, can only be abstract up to a certain point, before it loses functional meaning. If the institutions in question cannot provide the return to normalcy (the "return on investment" or "payoff for suffering"), they forfeit claim to faith and, by extension, to carte blanche regarding guiding and (purportedly) supporting the social subject and society in general.

The social subject examined in this study, the (Greek) university student, does not exhibit trust that any of the institution under examinations is "timeless". That is, trust in no institution "survives" successive crises. No institution acts as a reservoir of resilience for the crises that have come, nor shows indications that it could do so for those that will follow.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, students seem to indicate increased levels of trust, reporting trusting regional/local public authorities, the army, and the judiciary, which is to say 3 out of 8 institutions. Two of three of these expressions of trust, however, remain borderline and it remains to be seen if they endure until the next discernable and exceptional crisis tests them. Thus, even in light of this uptick in trust in the latest sampling, we argue that Greek university students have embedded risk and instability into their identity through their previous and ongoing experiences within the crisis continuum.

Institutional trust is even lower for Greek citizens. They, however, appear to perceive the Army, in which they express high levels of trust, and the Justice system, as safety nets. Even this, however, only corresponds to trust attributed to 2 out of the 8 institutions under examination. Citizens of the EU-27 report the highest levels of trust, showing faith in 6 out of the 8 institutions listed in the survey.

Conclusion

It is not a great stretch to say that, in the eight-year period from 2012 to 2020, Greek university students trusted no institution in times of Crisis. By 2021, however, their expression of institutional trust appears to have strayed substantially close to the EU-27 average, than that of the Greek population, overall. Given the prevalence of Higher Education in Greece, if they continue this trend into later life, it is possible that the next generation of Greek citizens may be much closer to the EU standard than the generations that came before it. Whether this is a statistical object remains to be seen. Indeed, the long term effects of the intensified embodiment and internalization of risk into the identity of the Greek university student also remain largely unknown. And, although we assume that this inculcation of risk is a global phenomenon attributable to, among other things, the ongoing permacrisis, we also lack sufficient information, currently, to draw educated conclusions regarding its influence of institutional trust in the Greek populace at large or, for that matter, the EU-27. Nonetheless, based on the data and logic laid out in this study, we argue that that the evolving beliefs of the Greek University student base could very well contribute to the next generation of EU citizens being more a closer Union than ever before.

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Digital Citizenship in the Digital Age: A Study of Individual Abilities and Perceptions across Diverse Populations and Ethnicities[1]

Ezel Türk[2]

Abstract

With the technological advancements, the concept of traditional citizenship has transformed into Internet creating digital citizens who use information and technology accurately and effectively in many areas such as official transactions, education, social relations, production, etc. The issues of digital citizenship are directly related with individual's abilities and efficacy about the Internet use. For this reason, Choi and his colleagues (2017) tried to analyze the interrelation between "individual's sense of digital citizenship and their Internet self-efficacy/anxiety". In their study, they measured individuals' abilities, perceptions, and levels of participation in the Internet environment and their measurement scale had significant implications to educate students in order to be active digital citizens. However, the issues of digital citizenship are becoming more complicated due to migrations across national boundaries, creating cultural diversities in nation states. Turkey, facing a diverse immigrant profile such as racially, culturally sometimes even religiously, is becoming increasingly multicultural and globalized, which means immigrants who are labeled as "marginalized" are included in the population of Turkey. Therefore; ethnically, culturally, and religiously marginalized people are also becoming digital citizens. For this reason, based on the digital citizenship scale (Choi, et.al, 2017), this study will help understand if there are any differences between individual's perceptions and abilities coming from different/ particular population and /or different ethnicity. Thus, university students in Turkey from different origins are asked to contribute to an online survey, and the results are discussed in terms of individual's sense of digital citizenship.

Keywords: Digital Citizenship; Digital Citizenship Scale; Marginalized; Immigrants; Turkey

Introduction

Technological advancements have substantially influenced and transposed traditional citizenship practices to the digital sphere. This has resulted in the emergence of the concept of digital citizenship. This, in turn, has produced individuals who adeptly employ information and technology with precision and effectiveness across various domains, including official transactions, education, social interactions, production, and so forth.

The effective utilization of these digital tools and platforms within the context of citizenship practices presupposes the acquisition of certain competencies. Indeed, abilities such as broadening information networks, connecting to new groups, participating in online civic activities, and exploring global issues have given rise to a new, digital, type of citizen, characterized by distinct perspectives and associated responsibilities (Choi et al., 2017). These digital citizens are individuals who use technology in the best way. They actively engage in

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[2] Associate Prof., Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising Department, Türkiye, ezel.kamcili@istanbul.edu.tr ORCID 0000-0002-4652-5035

digital social spheres, demonstrate awareness of virtual environment risks, and effectively establish their presence as citizens within these online realms.

Issues of digital citizenship are directly related with individuals' ability to and effectiveness in use of the Internet (Choi et al., 2017). Choi et al. (2017, p.101) attempted to analyze the interrelation between "individual's sense of digital citizenship and their Internet self-efficacy/anxiety" by measuring individuals' abilities, perceptions, and levels of participation in the Internet environment. The scale they employed has significant implications for future student education in the field of active digital citizenship.

Today, issues of digital citizenship are becoming more complicated due to increasing international migration, which creates (or increases) cultural diversity in nation states. Turkey, faced with a racially, culturally, and sometimes even religiously diverse immigrant profile, is becoming increasingly multicultural and globalized. As a result, immigrants who were or even still are labeled "marginalized" are included in the population of Turkey. Thus, ethnically, culturally, and religiously marginalized people are also becoming digital citizens. This study attempts to use Choi et al.'s (2017) digital citizenship scale and Erdem and Koçyiğit's (2019) Turkish adaptation thereof, as the first, pilot step, to examine the differences, if any exist, between individual's perceptions and abilities coming from different/ particular population and/or different ethnicity.

Literature Review and Significance of the Study

In this era of digitalization, where everything from business operations to entertainment practices has undergone a transformation, citizenship practices have also evolved into the digital sphere, giving rise to the notion of digital citizenship (Bennett et al., 2009; Choi, 2016; Choi et al., 2017; Coleman, 2006; Gleason & von Gillern, 2018; Cubukcu & Bayzan, 2013; Isman & Canan Gungoren, 2014). Digital citizenship, however, encompasses various theoretical perspectives; some focus on technology, while others explore the possibilities of digital media for redefining citizenship. Scholars from fields like education, communications, and political science have introduced diverse concepts of digital citizenship (Gleason, & von Gillern, 2018). Ribble (2015, p.15) provided one of the more commonly embraced definitions of digital citizenship as "the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use". Support for this interpretation seems reasonable, given its normative perspective, which highlights the importance of comprehending the rights and responsibilities associated with digital citizenship.

Ribble and Bailey (2007) proposed a framework for digital citizenship consisting of nine elements that provide a foundation for educating children about the challenges they will encounter in an increasingly technological world. According to this framework, the nine elements of digital citizenship are: digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health and wellness, and digital security. These nine elements not only guide users in using technology appropriately but also lay the groundwork for interactions in a global digital society (Ribble, 2008). From this perspective, digital citizenship establishes a framework for how people interact, share information and communicate in the Internet environment.

Online participation also helps conceptualize digital citizenship (Citron, & Norton, 2011; Mossberger et al., 2012). Emphasis is placed on the ability to use the Internet to participate in an online society or to interact with other people (Kim & Choi, 2018). There is a close

relationship between online participation and digital citizenship. To achieve full engagement in society necessitates a high level of proficiency in digital media (Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013). Indeed, the central focus lies in the ability to employ the Internet for active involvement and societal engagement for digital citizenship.

The concept of digital citizenship is closely linked to an individual's skills and confidence in using the Internet (Choi et al., 2017). Indeed, Choi et al. (2017) established three key theoretical frameworks for digital citizenship scale. The first framework, inspired by Feenberg's (1991) critical approach to technology, emphasized the idea that individuals have the power to influence the behavioral pathways offered by new technologies. The second framework drew from Castells' (1996) concept of a networked society, which highlighted how powerful entities can manipulate and control both physical and digital spaces through the continuous flow of information on the Internet. This framework emphasized that digital citizenship involves both possibilities and responsibilities, particularly in terms of power relationships between offline and online environments. The third framework, informed by the Open Source approach to educational processes, played a substantial role in shaping the entire scale, with a particular focus on issues related to user agency. These three foundational theories lay the groundwork for the development of the digital citizenship scale, which evaluates people's skills, perspectives, and degree(s) of involvement in purpose-driven online communities, with varying degrees of complexity.

The landscape of digital citizenship has grown increasingly complex in recent times –most notably due to increased cross-border migration, which has resulted in the emergence of diverse cultural backgrounds within nation-states. Turkey, with its evolving immigrant demographics encompassing a wide range of races, cultures, and even religious beliefs, is gradually transforming into a multicultural and globalized society. This transformation implies that individuals labeled as "marginalized" due to their ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds are now integral components of the Turkish population. Consequently, ethnically, culturally, and religiously marginalized individuals are becoming active participants in the realm of digital citizenship. This is a key component in the significance of this study, whose goal is to examine such differences within the realm of digital citizenship.

Purpose of the Study

Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019) adapted Choi et al.'s (2017) digital citizenship scale to assess the digital citizenship levels of undergraduate students within the Turkish paradigm. The current research employs the Turkish version of the digital citizenship scale, expanding on Erdem and Koçyiğit's (2019) previous work, to investigate potential disparities in perceptions and capabilities among individuals from different populations or ethnic backgrounds. The current study also specifically aims to explore whether there are differences in perceptions and abilities among individuals from various population groups and ethnic backgrounds, sometimes labelled as 'marginal.' Within this scope, this study attempts to specifically address the following questions:

1. *What are the levels of undergraduates' digital citizenship?*
2. *Are there any differences between the levels of undergraduates' digital citizenship in terms of gender?*
3. *Are there any differences between the individual perceptions and abilities in people from different population(s) and/or of different ethnicity?*

Methodology

The data used to assess the digital citizenship levels of undergraduate students were collected via online survey. Participants were selected through convenience sampling method, in which volunteering participants were employed. This study was structured as an initial inquiry/pilot for the initial examination of the questions outlined above. As such, the sample size was limited to 131 students from undergraduate programs, in five different faculties (communication, education, engineering, science and letters, and health sciences) of different universities in various cities of Turkey (Istanbul, Edirne, and Kırklareli). The data were collected between 28 April and 15 May, 2023 and were analyzed using SPSS (22.0). The study received ethical approval from the ethics committee of Istanbul University.

The original scale, developed by Choi et al. (2017), consists of 26 items, comprising five factors. The Turkish version, however, removed 8 items, based on modification suggestions, to substantially reduce the scale's chi-square value and avoid item redundancy. Thus, Erdem and Koçyiğit's (2019) final scale, post alterations and requisite testing, comprised just 18 items, which retained high levels of internal consistency ($\alpha_{Chronbach}$ = 0.87)[3].

Table1. The Digital Citizenship Scale Component Factors (Turkish Adaptation)

Factor 1: *Internet Political Activism*

1. I regularly post thoughts related to political or social issues online.
2. I express my options online to challenge dominant perspectives of the status quo with regard to political or social issues.
3. I belong to online groups that are involved in political or social issues.
4. I attend political meetings or public forums on local, town, or school affairs via online methods.
5. I work or volunteer for a political party or candidate via online methods.
6. I organize petitions about social, cultural, political or economic issues online.

Factor 2: *Technical Skills (TS)*

7. I can access the internet through digital technologies (e.g., mobile/smart phones, Tablet PCs, Laptops, PCs) whenever I want.
8. I am able to use digital technologies (e.g., mobile/smart phones, Tablet PCs, Laptops, PCs) to achieve the goals I pursue.
9. I can use the internet to find the information I need.
10. I can use the internet to find and download applications (apps) that are useful to me.

Factor 3: *Local/Global Awareness (LGA)*

11. I am more informed with regard to political or social issues through using the internet.
12. I am more aware of global issues through using the internet.

Factor 4: *Clinical Perspective (CP)*

13. I think online participation is an effective way to engage with political or social issues.
14. I think online participation promotes offline engagement.
15. I think online participation is an effective way to make a change to something I believe to be unfair or unjust.

Factor 5: *Networking Agency (NA)*

16. I enjoy collaborating with others online more than I do offline.
17. I post original messages, audio, pictures, or videos to express my feelings/ thoughts/ ideas/ opinions on the internet.
18. Where possible, I comment on the other people's writing in news websites, blogs, or SNSs I visit.

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[3] When interpreting alpha values, those ≥ 0.60 are considered acceptable in terms of reliability, while values ≥ 0.70 indicate high reliability, and values ≥ 0.90 signify very high reliability (Özdamar, 2011).

This 18-item version of the digital citizenship scale was administered to undergraduate students. Each item was structured as Likert-type, with potential answers arrayed on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). As discussed above, these items corresponded to five factors for digital citizenship: a) internet political activism, b) technical skills, c) local/global awareness, d) critical perspective, and e) networking agency (see Table 1).

A personal information form accompanied the items comprising the scale. The form included items related to respondents' age, gender, faculty, citizenship, and daily computer and smartphone use.
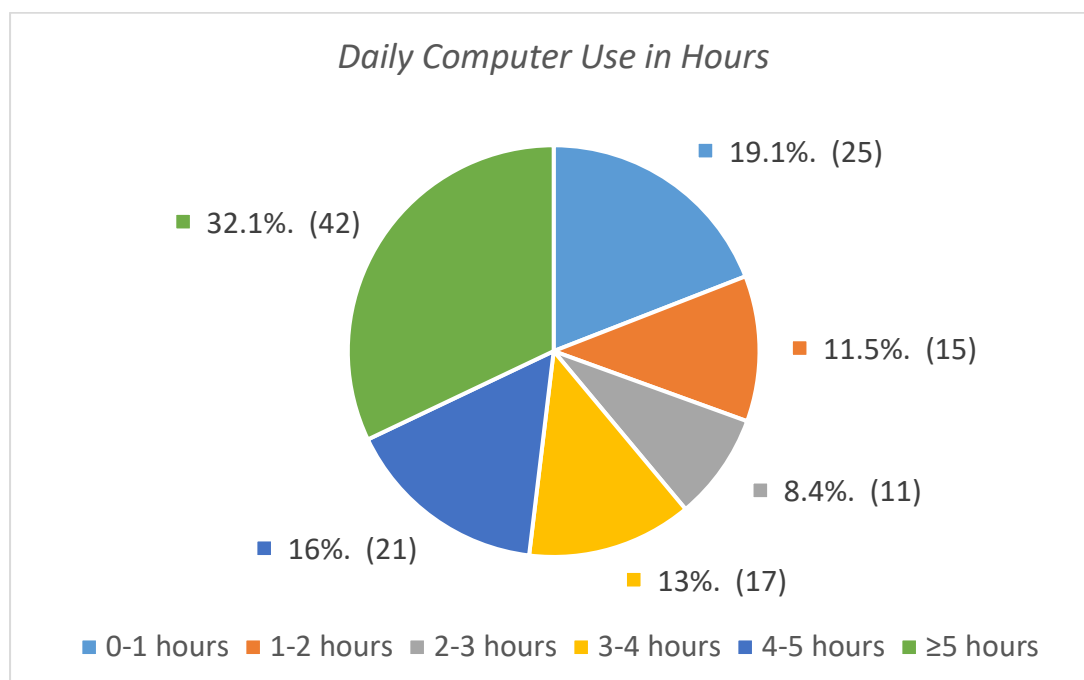
Results

Respondents were nearly equally divided among the two sexes, with 64 females (51.2%) and 67 males (48.8%). Ages ranged from 18 to over 26 years old. 28 (21.4%) respondents were between 18 and 19, 49 (37.4%) were between 20 and 21, 30 (23%) between 22 and 23, 4 (3%) between 24 and 25, and 20 (15.2%) were 26 or older.

107 (81.6%) respondents were Turkish citizens; 24 (18.4%) were non-Turkish citizens. The non-Turkish respondents represented a series of nationalities, including Azerbaijan (8), Bulgaria (5), Greece (4), along with individual respondents from Egypt, Bangladesh, the USA, Indonesia, and India. Although this variety posts interesting questions, the limited number of respondents from each nationality makes meaningful comparisons and comments regarding differences extremely difficult, at best. Consequently, all participants from these nationalities were collectively categorized as non-Turkish citizens and examined in a block.

Undergraduate students were surveyed about their daily computer usage hours. Among them, 25 students (19%) reported using the computer for 0-1 hour, 15 students (11.5%) for 1-2 hours, 11 students (8.4%) for 2-3 hours, 17 students (13%) for 3-4 hours, 21 students (16%) for 4-5 hours, 42 students (32.1%) for 5 hours or more (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Daily Computer Use (N=131)

Daily Computer Use in Hours

- 32.1%. (42)
- 19.1%. (25)
- 11.5%. (15)
- 8.4%. (11)
- 13%. (17)
- 16%. (21)

■ 0-1 hours ■ 1-2 hours ■ 2-3 hours ■ 3-4 hours ■ 4-5 hours ■ ≥5 hours

Undergraduate students were surveyed about their daily smartphone usage hours. Among them, 7 students (5.3%) reported using their smartphones for 0-1 hour, 19 students (14.5%) for 1-2 hours, 25 students (19.2%) for 2-3 hours, 21 students (16%) for 3-4 hours, 24 students (18.3%) for 4-5 hours, and 35 students (26.7%) for 5 hours or more (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Daily Mobile Internet Use via Smartphones (N=131)
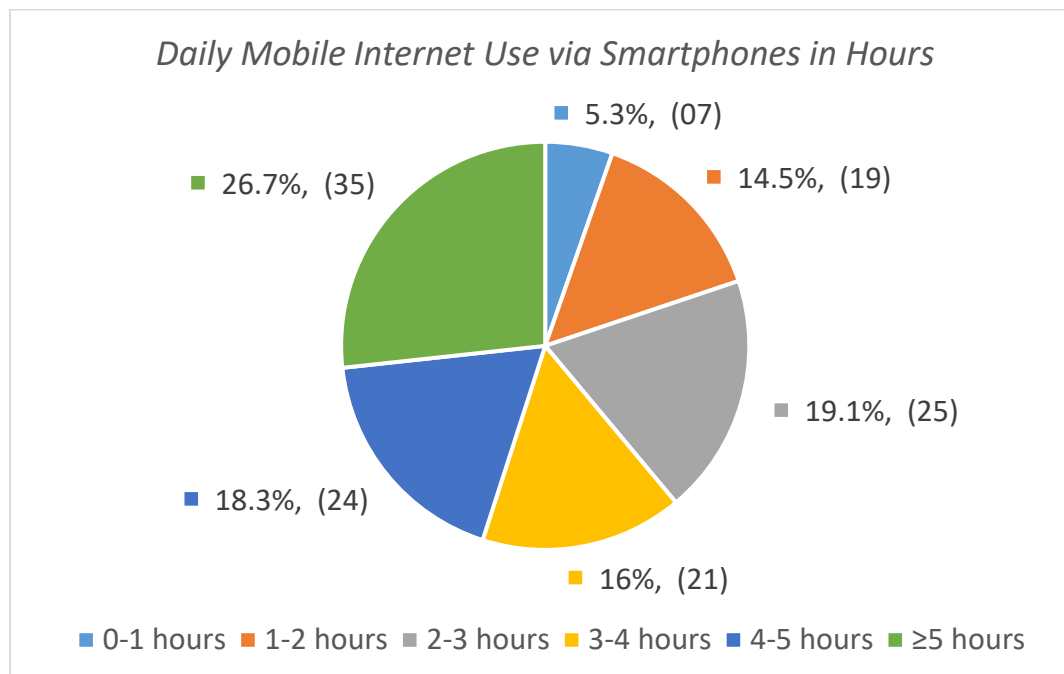
Undergraduates' Digital Citizenship Levels:
Table 2. Undergraduates' mean and standard deviation (s.d.) of digital citizenship

Digital Citizenship and its subdimensions	No. of Items	Mean	s.d.
Internet Political Activism	6	2.28	0.81
Technical Skills	4	4.41	0.83
Local/Global Awareness	2	4.20	0.88
Critical Perpsective	3	3.58	0.95
Networkign Agency	3	2.77	0.99

There are substantial variations across the average scores for each of the five Digital Citizenship components comprising the overall scale, among undergraduate respondents (see Table 2). *Digital Citizenship* (i.e., the average for the entire scale) was reported at 3.45, suggesting a moderate level of agreement, among respondents. *Internet Political Activism* had the lowest average score ($\bar{x}$=2.28) of the component factors, indicating that undergraduates, on average, have shown a relatively low level of agreement with items related to Internet political activism. *Networking Agency* was slightly higher ($\bar{x}$=2.77) than *Internet Political Activism*, but still, ostensibly, middling/indifferent. The rest of the factors were characterized by progressively stronger agreement. The average *Critical Perspective* score ($\bar{x}$=3.58) suggested moderate of agreement among respondents. *Local/Global Awareness* ($\bar{x}$=4.21) and *Technical Skills* ($\bar{x}$=4.41) were both substantially higher, on average,

indicating strong respondent agreement with items related to both awareness and technical skills.

Gender Differences in Digital Citizenship Levels

The two genders showed varying degrees of difference, with regard to each of the five factors comprising digital citizenship (see Table 3). Indeed, insofar as *Internet Political Activism* and *Networking Agency* were concerned, the two gender averages were nearly equal. The other three factors were more interesting, with average responses for male undergraduates exceeding those of females in each case. Even here, though, there is disparity in the magnitude of difference, with the two genders much closer with regard to *Critical Perspective*, which also had the least fervent support of the three.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation regarding gender

Factor	Mean		s.d.	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Internet Political Activism	2.26	2.30	0.87	0.75
Technical Skills	4.55	4.26	0.98	0.64
Local/Global Awareness	4.37	4.04	0.80	0.93
Critical Perpsective	3.60	3.55	0.94	0.97
Networkign Agency	2.76	2.77	0.99	1.01

Difference between the Perceptions and Abilities of Individuals from Different Population(s) and/or different Ethnicities:

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation regarding citizenship

Factor	Mean		s.d.	
	Turkish Citizen	*Non-Turkish Citizen*	*Turkish Citizen*	*Non-Turkish Citizen*
Internet Political Activism	2.28	2.26	0.83	0.76
Technical Skills	4.47	4.14	0.75	1.10
Local/Global Awareness	4.29	3.85	0.80	1.10
Critical Perpsective	3.66	3.20	0.92	1.05
Networking Agency	2.78	2.68	1.06	0.69

The results in Table 4 indicate substantive variations in the levels of digital citizenship among undergraduates, based on citizenship status. The average value of component factors of digital citizenship is substantially higher for Turkish citizens than non-Turkish citizens. Indeed, the most notable differences may arguably be the lack of difference with regard to *Internet Political Activism* whose values are almost equal across the two groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

Undergraduates had a medium level of digital citizenship overall, given the 3.45 average (on a 5-point Likert scale) since it falls approximately halfway between the midpoint (neutral) and the positive end of the scale. Indeed, this indicates (and in fact corresponded to) a moderate level of agreement across all factors. Both Choi et al. (2017) and Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019)

obtained similar results. Many other studies in the Turkish academic field have reported higher levels, however. Akduman and Karahan (2022) and Som Vural and Kurt (2018), who conducted research with Turkish undergraduates, Elçiçek, Erdemci, and Karal (2018), who studied Turkish graduate students, and Çolak and Öztürk (2022), who examined Turkish pre-service social studies teachers, all found that the concept of digital citizenship in their studies exceeded a medium level. As Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019) noted, however, the absence of *Internet Political Activism* in other scales could potentially have influenced the moderate mean observed in the current study.

Among the five factors of the digital citizenship scale, the factor with the lowest average score was Internet Political Activism for both Choi et al. (2017) and Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019). This is not entirely unexpected. Getting into action through digital technologies such as starting digital petitions and being a member of online political groups or participating in online meetings about local or political issues are action-oriented activities. This makes Internet activism difficult to sustain in web-based environments.

Networking Agency was below the medium range and *Critical Perspective* was within the medium level range. Both were consistent with Erdem and Koçyiğit's (2019) the findings. *Local/Global Awareness* was above the medium level range, while *Technical Skills* remained the highest factor, as observed in both of the studies of Choi et al. (2017) and Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019). Since technical skills are directly related to digital technology, undergraduates evaluated themselves as technically competent and were able to complete the tasks easily. As Erdem and Koçyiğit noted, however, this perception might be attributed to the relatively straightforward nature of the tasks included in this factor, especially for the digital natives of the 21st century.

In contrast to the Choi et al. (2017) and Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019) we found evidence of the existence of gender differences. The average scores for *Technical Skills* and *Local/Global Awareness* among male undergraduates were slightly higher than those of females. Male undergraduates demonstrated better technological proficiency and a greater ability to search, organize, and assess information, leading to improved Local and Global awareness. On the other hand, female undergraduates exhibited lower technological proficiency. They also had a limited ability to access diverse information sources, consume information, and stay informed about political and social issues. One possible reason for this gender disparity may be that female undergraduates have less interest in local and global issues or face limitations in providing critical responses and engaging in collaborative knowledge-building on the Internet, due to their technological inadequacies. As Choi et al. (2017) emphasized, the acquisition of technical skills is the foundational and essential element for effectively utilizing the Internet in more advanced and comprehensive aspects of digital citizenship. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that female undergraduates, upon acquiring technical skills, can enhance their awareness of the complex aspects of digital citizenship related to local and global issues.

Various factors can influence individuals' abilities and perceptions related to digital citizenship. These include ethnicity and background. Cultural differences can influence people's online behavior and views. Access to technology and digital literacy skills may vary among individuals from different populations.

We also observed a difference between groups from different populations/ethnicities. Turkish citizens scored higher in *Technical Skills, Local/Global Awareness,* and *Critical*

Perspective compared to non-Turkish citizens. *Technical Skills* are fundamental for effectively using the Internet in more complex aspects of digital citizenship. Indeed, Turkish undergraduates excel in *Local/Global Awareness* and *Critical Perspective*, largely due to their proficiency in *Technical Skills*, when compared to undergraduates from different populations and ethnic backgrounds. This may be because marginalized populations encounter difficulties when trying to access new information sources that are relevant to their daily concerns. Their limited access to a variety of information sources more than likely affects their awareness of political and social issues.

Marginalized populations may also be less inclined to incorporate critical thinking into their broader Internet perspectives. Internet use for greater understanding involves exploring, comparing, exchanging, and expanding ideas, rather than viewing it as an authoritative tool (Choi et al., 2017). The ethnicity gap may be attributable to several factors, such as reduced interest in local and global issues, difficulties in providing critical responses, and challenges in engaging in collaborative knowledge-building online, due to technological limitations. These "marginalized" populations may have a different approach to integrating their perspectives into their Internet usage. This disparity must be combatted, if we are to live in an equitable society (digital or otherwise). Doing so may require the offering of digital literacy education and/or enhancing technology access for marginalized communities. Recognizing these differences is crucial in ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in digital citizenship and utilize technology responsibly.

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Building Resilience against Political Violence and Marginalization: The Role of Education[1]

Maria Patsikouridi[2] & Dimitris Zachos[3]

Abstract

In this paper, we present how education can contribute in building resilience against marginalization and political violence. Political violence is the use of violent means to achieve political goals and belongs to the wider category of violent extremism. When a person engages in such activities, has usually undergone a radicalization processes. We will examine them in relation to the UN and EU guidelines. The reason why we chose this perspective is because since 2015 the UN and EU security agendas started to include education to prevent violent extremism (PVE) efficiently. The schools got identified as "key institutions" in this process. The main focus is on the schools' ability to strengthen resilience, and therefore prevent young people from being attracted to radical ideologies and organizations. In the PVE discourse, the words "empowerment" and "building resilience" are central. We will explore what these terms mean and how they are applied at the school level. Lastly, we identify five principles that teachers need to have in mind and intergrade into their teaching practice; Respect students' backgrounds, create a positive classroom climate, cultivate democratic dialogue, promote critical thinking, and stay close to the student's families.

Keywords: Violence; Marginalization; Radicalization; Prevention; Resilience

Understanding the Notions
How is Marginalization Linked to Political Violence and Violent Extremism?
Students who fail educationally are categorized, labelled and excluded from society, as educational success is linked to social inclusion and progress. School failure, social categorization, exclusion and marginalization can be associated with political violence. We employ UNESCO's (2017, p. 19) definition of the term "violent extremism", which refers to "the people who use violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals" and which identifies an enemy or enemies as the object(s) of violence. Marginalization results from social exclusion and discrimination (Duchak, 2014). The state frequently underserves marginalized populations, resulting in difficulties in accessing public services, due to inherent qualities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, ability status, geographic location, poverty, or primary language (Dari et al., 2021).

To explain marginalization, it is necessary to consider the concept of social exclusion. Which groups are socially excluded, why and how? Institutional prejudice, the predominant set of values, rituals and institutional procedures that operate systemically and consistently to the benefit of certain groups, results in social exclusion (Duchak, 2014). Muslims in western countries experience prejudice, racism and discrimination throughout their early lives, due to xenophobia and especially islamophobia (Abbas, 2007). They live in segregated areas, face educational underachievement and high unemployment (Abbas, 2007). These circumstances

limit their horizons, generate antagonism towards the state and create an acute sense of isolation (Abbas, 2007).

Exclusion and the subsequent social, cultural, economic and political marginalization, fuel the marginalized youngsters with feelings of deprivation and frustration and the need to address their grievances. Socioeconomic inequalities and ethnic political exclusion motivate people to challenge the status quo (Dyrstad & Hillesund, 2020). The interaction between grievance and opportunity structure suggests that support for violence is not driven by anger alone. Rather, it is conditional on instrumental considerations, like the perceived ability to succeed with nonviolent means. This underlines the importance of institutions in conflict prevention (Dyrstad & Hillesund, 2020). Notably, according to the Horizontal Inequalities theory, when people are convinced that their socioeconomic deprivation is the result of by deliberate discrimination by the state, then the risk of violent group mobilization is higher (Østby, 2013). Therefore, marginalization can lead to radicalization and possibly to violent extremism and political violence.

Defining Radicalization and Violent Extremism

There is no consensus on the definition of radicalization. Different scholars, governments, or organizations define it differently. Thus, they all agree that radicalization is a process that happens gradually, and lead to becoming extremist (Mandel, 2009: 111). Depending on the outcome, radicalization and extremism can be cognitive or behavioral. According to Scruton (2017), cognitive extremism refers to a set of political ideas, oppositional to mainstream social values (Scruton, 2017). Nonetheless, behavioral extremism is about the methods an extreme person can use to materialize political goals. What is important to keep in mind and is at the same time "a source of confusion", as Sedgwick (2010) has described, is that when talking about radicalization we have to think of the social normative context (Sedgwick, 2010: 105). Newman (2013) urges us to comprehend the importance of social norms, by the question "radical in relation to what?" (Newman, 2013: 876). In addition, Schmit (2013) describes that "both radicalism and extremism are relational concepts; that is, they need to be judged in relation to a benchmark", (Schmit, 2013: 11). This benchmark is the socially accepted norms and values. Therefore, the problem is not radicalism itself; but legitimizing the use of violence and using violence to achieve certain goals.

The European Union (EU) defines radicalization as "the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views, and ideas, which could lead to acts of terrorism" (European Commission, 2005, p. 2). In other words, the EU believes that cognitive radicalization is necessary for the behavioral to occur, although the first does not necessarily lead to the second. Alternatively, as Aerts (2019, p. 7) puts it; "violent extremism and terrorism are the results of an individual or collective radicalization process that leads to the moral legitimation of the use of violence for political goals". The United Nations (UN) use the term violent extremism instead of radicalization. While the organization accepts the confusion over its definition, it recognizes that violent extremism can potentially lead to terrorism (United Nations, 2015, p. 1).

The Root Causes of Radicalization/Drives of Violent Extremism

There is no single cause underlying an individual's legitimizing and exercising violence to achieve political ends. Explanations vary and may be structural, political, economic, ideological, cultural, or psychological. While different scholars argue about radicalization

drivers, both the UN and the EU accept that there is no single explanation –only a variety of reasons. The difference between the two is that the UN describes these explanations as "drivers of violent extremism" (United Nations, 2015, p. 7) and the EU as "root causes of radicalization" (RAN, 2019, p. 13). Their (relevant) policy documents begin by elaborating on push and pull factors. Push factors potentially associated with education include a lack of socioeconomic opportunities, and real or perceived marginalization and discrimination (United Nations, 2015; RAN, 2022). Pull factors refer to individuals' backgrounds and motivations, collective grievances, to beliefs, ideas, culture, and social networks (United Nations, 2015; RAN, 2022).

Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Preventing radicalization and violent extremism in education entails using soft power measures to prevent a radicalized person from commuting a violent act, or a vulnerable person from becoming radicalized, and to strengthen the individual and collective values to build individual and community resilience. Prevention can take place on 3 levels: micro-, meso-, and macro-. The micro-level refers to the individual and includes identity problems, the sense of belonging or marginalization, discrimination, stigmatization, and rejection. The meso-level refers to the social group a person lives in and belongs to, which can be supportive or ejective of radical ideas. The macro-level touches on the broader economic and political situation of a city, country, or abroad and influences the relationship between the individual and wider society. Preventative policies can be designed to target individuals (micro-level), communities (meso-level), and countries or even the entire globe (macro-level).

Building resilience through education
The need for education to be included in the security agenda

In the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015), the UN recognizes that classic security-based counterterrorism measures are "not sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism" (United Nations, 2015, p. 2) and urges the policymakers to focus on the drivers and create more culturally and economically inclusive societies (United Nations, 2015, p. 3). It also acknowledges that the youth population sector requiring the most attention and particularly empowerment (United Nations, 2015). Thus, education came to the center of attention to help prevent violent extremism. UNESCO (2015, p. 75) described its role as "catalytic" in "ensuring stability, sustainable peace, […] social justice, diversity, […] empowering learners to be responsible citizens". Since 2017, the UN's suggestions and policies focused on preventing schools from becoming "breeding grounds for violent extremism" and "ensuring education contents and teaching approaches develop learners' resilience" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 22).

At the same time the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) of the EU referred to schools as "key institutions" to "strengthen resilience and prevent youngsters from being attracted to radical ideologies and organization" (RAN, 2016, p. 1), and, in general, to "prevent radicalization" (RAN, 2016, p. 2). Education started gaining ground in EU counterterrorism efforts as well. From the premise that "the inclusive and rights-based foundations of the Union are the strongest protection against the threat of terrorism", the European Commission (2020, p. 25) stressed the "need to invest in social cohesion, education, and inclusive societies". This confirms Newman's (2013, p. 888) idea that "Europeans believe that counter-

radicalization is about promoting democracy and citizenship, […] a continuous political and civil effort, which needs to draw on the resources of different government departments—not just those charged with security-related matters—and, even more broadly, involve civil society at large".

More than a decade ago, Barakat and Urdal (2009) linked the youth swelling with the potentially false promises of education for a better future and the unemployment rates. Education is the place where values, expectations, abilities, and possibilities meet; where the social, economic, and political spheres become one. It is clear that both the UN and the EU are focusing on youth and education. This shift of interest in the new generation should not come as a surprise, nor should the omnipresence of lifelong learning, vocational training, and employment programmers in conversations surrounding education and prevention. The question at stake is whether the fields of education and radicalization will start to have a louder voice in shaping such strategies and policies.

Empowerment and Resilience

UNESCO is the main body of the UN responsible for suggesting how education should prevent violent extremism. It has released two core documents for this purpose. One is *Preventing Violent Extremism Through Education: A Guide for Policy-makers*, which aims to help policymakers in designing and implementing preventive plans of action (UNESCO, 2017). The second is *A Teacher's Guide on the Preventing Violent Extremism* (PVE), which provides guidelines for educators to spot early signs of radicalization, and to assist them in conducting a constructive dialogue on sensitive issues (UNESCO, 2016). It suggests that "we need inclusive, and equitable quality education" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 2). Education should facilitate intercultural dialogues and defend pluralism to build resilient global citizens –particularly through PVE-related and PVE-specific activities (UNESCO, 2018). Curriculum and educators are both central to the development of critical thinking, media literacy, and interpersonal skills to face extremist narratives (UNESCO, 2016).

In the EU, the RAN Youth & Education working group is responsible for researching and providing information on violent extremism. RAN publishes papers about its activities and the resulting lessons learned. It recognizes the importance of educating young people on citizenship, political, religious, and ethnic tolerance, non-prejudiced thinking, extremism, democratic values, and cultural diversity (RAN, 2019). The Manifesto for Education (RAN, 2015) consists of the core of the actions designed to curtail the rise of violent extremism in Europe (RAN, 2016). It provides general guidelines for teachers, schools, partners, and the government. It urges teachers to discuss sensitive topics in the classroom, offers alternative views, engages with online content, and facilitates the development of critical thinking (RAN, 2016).

For both the EU and RAN, "empowerment" is about the enabling environment, while "resilience" refers to personal abilities. Empowerment comes from creating pluralistic and inclusive environments. To facilitate empowerment in society, they suggest a greater connection between educational institutions and economic opportunities, the cooperation of the local community with the school, and a classroom that is an open space to express different perspectives and address critical issues. It addresses tackling push factors of violent extremism on the meso- and macro-level.

Resilience is about cultivating a critical perception in the students' minds and installing specific values in their hearts. It is actually about shaping a certain way of thinking and living; what Aristotle would call 'ethos'. This can only be achieved long-term. This word seems to be present in every document on PVE through education but without any explanation of what long-term actually means. Ethos is built through early exposure and repetition, which entails paying more attention to early childhood, the primary school level, and investing in incorporating such goals into the curricula in lieu of of ad-hock programs. Resilience refers to the micro-level and aims to address the pull factors.

Practical Recommendations for Teachers

What can educators do to empower students and support them in building resilience? How can teachers contribute in countering marginalization and preventing political violence/ violent extremism? We identify five 'principles' that, if integrated into teaching practice, can help facilitate these goals. We use the term principles because they are structured in such a way that each teacher can include as they think suits best for their case and because they can be adapted to the varying needs of different classes. These principles are:

1. Respect student's background(s). This is achievable through the incorporation of elements from the history and achievements of multiple social groups into the curriculum.

2. Create a positive classroom climate. Make the classroom an open, safe, and tolerant space for all students, regardless of their social and cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, language, ability and disability. All students should feel free to express their thoughts and emotions, without fear of bullying or mockery. This is attainable through 'difficult discussions'. In an open classroom, the teacher does not avoid addressing critical issues and expressing bold opinions. If a student expresses an extreme idea or an idea that supports extremist actions, teachers should respond and take an absolute position. Teachers should ask why the student believes so; what are their supporting arguments for this statement. This is closely related with the next principle:

3. Cultivate democratic dialogue. Cultivating democratic dialogue means encouraging students to use arguments and respect differing opinions. It also means helping them understand that disagreements and conflicts are part of life and can be creative. Knowing how to communicate and handle conflicts and disagreements is crucial for their civic participation as adults, and motivates them to become well-informed and active citizens.

4. Promote the critical thinking. In the modern, digital world, students have access to multiple sources of information, from a very young age. It is imperative that we teach them how to question the messages they receive on the internet and, even more importantly, the conspiracy theories and fake news. Critical thinking is necessary to avoid creating gullible and passive citizens.

5. Stay close with the students' families. Families are usually more engaged when their children are in primary school, than when they are in secondary school. We must seize the opportunity to cultivate bonds and strengthen cooperation. We need parents on our side and they need us on theirs to support students in building resilience against the emotionally attractive extremist ideas. We also need to support parents both

emotionally and cognitively. Creating a sense of community makes the cooperation between school and families much easier and efficient.

Conclusion

Despite the differences in terminology, both the UN and the EU accept that there is no single definition of radicalization or violent extremism. They recognize the gradual evolution of the phenomenon and understand the difference between cognitive and behavioral radicalization. They imply that behavioral radicalization entails cognitive radicalization but not vice-versa. Moreover, they stress the importance of addressing radicalization push and pull factors, emphasizing the need for structural and economic changes within the society, to give youth the necessary space to bloom and grow. These changes are part of the plan to exercise soft power through education, and all fall under the greater counterterrorism agenda. Both aspire to empower social, political, and economic surroundings to avoid grievances or frustration and build resilience in young minds and hearts, to oppose the arguments of extremist organizations. Preventive efforts in the field of education cannot be short-term. They must be designed to change an entire culture. The evaluation of such programs in the pedagogical practice must be the focus of further and more extensive research, combining quantitative and qualitative forms, to both gain better and more in-depth insight into the phenomena but also to allow us to construct solutions applicable on grander, one might argue societal, scales.

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Gender Stereotyping in Civic Education Textbooks in Turkey (1923-2023)[1]

Dr. Başak İnce[2]

Abstract

This paper examines gender stereotyping in civic education during the hundred-year history of the Republic of Turkey. In order to determine how accurately the civic education textbooks reflect the status of women and men a content analysis was conducted on civic education textbooks. Despite the recent developments that indicate an increasing level of sensitivity to gender issues the findings suggest that the ideal of a truly balanced treatment of women and men has yet to be achieved and traditional 'masculine' understandings of citizenship appear to permeate civic education textbooks in Turkey. The discussion shows there is an urgent need to employ gender and difference as categories of analysis in the creation of a more inclusive understanding of citizenship in Turkey.

Keywords: Civic Education; Citizenship; Gender Stereotyping; Turkey

Introduction

Citizenship can be defined as membership in a nation-state but such membership has different dimensions. At the individual level, a person's citizenship is composed of three main elements/dimensions (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). The first is citizenship as legal status, defined by civil, political and social rights. The second dimension refers to citizenship as membership in a political community that furnishes a distinct source of identity. The third dimension, civic virtue, considers citizens specifically as political agents, actively participating in a society's political institutions. These three ideas are conceptually and empirically linked in a variety of ways. Thus, citizenship is not only a legal status but also it is about identity and civic virtue.

Many classical liberals believed that a liberal democracy could function effectively, even in the absence of an especially virtuous citizenry, by creating checks and balances (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). It has become clear, however, that procedural-institutional mechanisms to balance self-interest are not enough and that some level of civic virtue and public-spiritedness is required (Macedo, 1990). Without citizens who possess political virtues, such as a capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, the ability to evaluate the performance of those in office, and willingness to engage in public discourse, democracies become difficult to govern. Macedo (1990), Galston (1991), and Callan (1997), among others, have all emphasized the importance of public reasonableness. This virtue is defined as the ability to listen to others and formulate one's own position in a way that is sensitive to, and respectful of, the different experiences and identities of fellow citizens, acknowledging that these differences may affect political views. But how and where does one develop this and related virtues? If a differentiated model of citizenship simply allows individuals and groups to retreat into their particular enclaves, how are they to develop either the motivation or the capacity to participate in a common forum? When one thinks of the answer to these questions, one

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[2] Bilkent University basakince@bilkent.edu.tr

can understand political philosophers' renewed interest in civic education since the end of 1980s.

This international interest in citizenship education stems from a number of political developments. First, there is the emergence of democratized states such as Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe where citizenship education is essential to enable the population to understand democracy and its basis as human rights. Second, governments in established democracies, concerned at an apparent crisis of confidence in the formal established political processes, including elections, see citizenship education as a means of restoring confidence in democracy. Third, where globalization has led to increased migration and consequent demographic changes, citizenship education is intended to enable young people from different backgrounds to live together.

We are not born citizens but are formed through education and experience (Gunsteren, 1998). Thus, one of the key elements in the creation of stable nation-states has been the states' ability to socialize their young generation into the role of citizen through a process of mass schooling (Astiz & Mendez, 2006). Education is seen as a means of conflict reduction, particularly in societies moving towards democracy, consolidating their democratic systems, or experiencing ethnic and religious strife (Kymlicka, 2003). Citizens have to be educated for democracy, because "democrats are made, not born" (White 1999, p. 59). In Turkey, education has been vital to the modernizing agenda (Fortna, 2002) and has played a crucial role in the creation of civilized citizens.

Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, citizenship issues have played a pivotal role in Turkish society and have permeated the related issues of national identity, democracy and political participation. While civic education programs have recently been introduced into the curricula of several European countries, they have been taught in Turkey since the early years of the Republic. Citizens in liberal democracies are expected to display certain civic virtues, such as ability to trust, willingness for participation and tolerance for difference. Without citizens who possess these virtues, liberal democracies cannot work effectively. Public education systems play a crucial role in creating citizens' virtues. Given Turkey's ethnic and religious plurality, education potentially plays a very important role in promoting citizens' virtues. Moreover, the educational system is the institutional tool that shapes the relationship between female and male citizens and these citizens' relations to the state (Arnot, 2006). Civic education plays an especially prominent role in ensuring gender equality in any society. School textbooks can be a tool to teach young generations how to approach and question gender related issues. In this respect, the study of textbooks and particularly civic education textbooks is a ground-breaking initiative, which can have tremendous impact in shifting perceptions of women and men, shaping patriarchal cultural heritage, and creating tolerant citizens in Turkey. In the discussion of citizenship education, however, gender stereotyping in school textbooks is scarcely mentioned.

Previous studies have addressed civic education in Turkey (Üstel, 1996; Kıncal, 2002; Gök, 2003; Üstel, 2005, Çayır & Gürkaynak 2008). There have also been studies focusing on gender stereotyping in school textbooks in Turkey (Saktanber 1991; Dökmen 1995; Helvacıoğlu 1996; Gürkan & Hazır, 1997; Esen & Bağlı, 2003; Esen, 2007; Oğuz, 2007; Asan, 2010). However, studies of gender representation in civic education textbooks are scant. The aim of this paper is to examine gender stereotyping in civic education textbooks in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic in 1923. To determine how accurately the civic education textbooks reflect the status of women and men in Turkey, content analysis was conducted on

civic education textbooks. The findings suggest that the ideal of a truly balanced treatment of women and men has yet to be achieved and traditional 'masculine' understandings of citizenship appear to permeate civic education textbooks in Turkey. The discussion shows that there is an urgent need to employ gender and difference as categories to create a more inclusive understanding of citizenship in Turkey.

Methodology

Data for this study comes from the curricula for Turkish primary and junior high schools. In 2000, citizenship education was incorporated into human rights education. Since the 2008-2009 academic year, Turkey's Ministry of National Education incorporated civic education into social studies textbooks for Grades 6 and 7. Currently, Grades 4, 5, 6, and 7 study civic education in their social studies curriculum.

Education in Turkey is predominantly under state responsibility. A board under the Ministry of National Education prepares the curricula for all subjects, and its approval is required for the adoption of textbooks. There is no great difference between textbooks, other than emphasis, because they must all follow the detailed guidelines of the board (Çayır, 2007). A copy of almost all published textbooks are kept in Turkey's national library in Ankara, from where the author selected the books for the given time period for analysis.

The data set for this study was constructed by sampling the civic textbooks in Turkey for two periods: 1923-1946 and 1980-2023. These periods reflect landmark developments in Turkish political history and are useful for an understanding of the notion of citizenship and the changes it underwent throughout the Republican period. Civic education is susceptible to political and social conditions. Changes of perspectives and ideals in the dominant political discourse affect the title of the school subject, its content and the pedagogical discourse used to justify its importance.

Simple questions initiated the analysis:

- *How are female and male characters depicted in civic education textbooks?*
- *How are female and male domestic roles defined by the authors?*
- *Are the principles of gender equality respected within the textbooks?*
- *Do stereotypes and negative judgments persist in recently developed textbooks?*

Results

Female and Male Depictions and Domestic Roles in Civic Education Textbooks in Turkey: 1923-1946

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 and, until 1946, the Republican People's Party (CHP) was the only ruling organization in Turkey. During the single-party period, one of its most important projects was to create civilized, modern citizens, who were obedient to the state. This mission was reflected in the educational policy of the CHP, especially through civic education courses.

The textbooks of the period contrasted the era of the Ottoman Empire with the Republican period. In the textbooks, there were illustrations, which gave the impression that a miracle occurred with the establishment of the Republic and citizens (especially women) had received everything they needed overnight. Sevinç (1931-32) compares the two periods in pictures.

One picture shows a veiled woman, a child wearing the fez, and a man wearing the traditional cloths (*şalvar*). In the other picture, a man wears a tuxedo, a woman wears modern clothes, and a boy wears shorts. In some of the textbooks, in unrelated parts, there are pictures of modern women. Such well-dressed women would be rare at the time. These textbooks were trying to create an image of the new woman under the Republic.

Almost all textbooks during the single-party period emphasized the importance of living in unity in a community. Textbooks warned students about the dangers of living alone. Under the heading: 'people cannot live alone' in one textbook, the author contrasts two pictures. One of the pictures shows a lone man who looks like a caveman and the caption reads 'man alone'. The other picture titled 'man in community' shows a very modern woman and a man walking side-by-side, wearing modern clothes (Abdülbaki, 1927-28). To strengthen the idea that 'man cannot live alone' textbooks emphasized the importance of marriage and children. They defined a most important duty towards the family, nation and humankind as having a family (Taşkıran, 1939). Essentially, pupils were told to get married and have children; otherwise, they would be unhappy and could not survive in the community.

Textbooks of the period also focused on the importance of work and division of labor in the community, citing the proverb, 'Idleness is the mother of all vice'. The division of labor in the family was gendered. Women are portrayed as mothers who are generally engaged in domestic and traditional roles, while men are almost always portrayed as fathers, authority figures who work outside of the home. In response to a question on what is needed to survive and how it is procured, students answer "food, drink, and clothes" and "father brings them, mother cooks, we eat all together" (Abdülbaki, 1929, p. 14). Another textbook also emphasizes that mothers give birth, whereas fathers work from morning to night to feed the family (Rona, 1945). These claims show that one has to be 'a man' to work in the public realm. Women and children are usually portrayed in the textbooks as being prime movers in consumption rather than production.

Almost all the textbooks separate city and village life. The division of labour within the family, however, does not differ between the village and the city. In the village "father works in the field and when his term comes goes to war to protect the country" (Ermat, 1943, p. 31); "the boys go to school; mum cooks, looks after the children, and help her husband in the field; girls look after their sisters and brothers, sew, and weave socks' (Abdülbaki, 1929, p. 70). Of the division of labor in the city the author says "fathers can do only one job…because they are working from morning till night". Mothers' major responsibility is defined in the textbooks as housework. One of the textbooks emphasizes that we depend on our fathers on every issue and he is the head of the family (Rona, 1945).

In the books published during this period, citizens' duties are emphasized more than their rights. One of the books defines the purpose of the civic education as "teaching the duties of citizenship" (Ermat, 1945, p. 13). To deserve rights "citizens should first fulfil their duties, because duties and rights are inseparable" (Abdülbaki, 1929, pp. 44-48). Chief among these duties is military service (then, as now, required only of males), presented as an educational institution enlightening the minds of the country's sons (İnan, 1931). This duty is justified by the large number of Turkey's enemies (Sevinç, 1931-32).

Voting is also underlined as a most important duty and holy right of citizens. Most textbooks published before 1930s state that 'every Turk can vote'. When they say 'every Turk', however, they mean 'every man.' In Turkey, women were given the right to vote in municipal elections

in March 1930 and women's suffrage was achieved for parliamentary elections in December 1934. Sevinç (1931-32) states that under the current conditions women cannot vote, although he does not criticize such political inequality.

The post-1930 textbooks do discuss voting rights for women. Describing voting rights of women in Western countries, İnan (1936, p. 126) notes that "[t]here is no logical explanation regarding women's political inability…Women-mothers are the first discipliners of men". The author then mentions women's heroism in the Turkish War of National Independence. The author says that the right to vote in the municipal elections was given to women in 1930, for these reasons.

Textbooks also talk about familial duties. Fathers' duties include looking after their spouses and earning money. Meanwhile, mothers have a long list of duties denoted in the textbooks. These include looking after children, cooking, cleaning, loving her husband and children and obeying her husband. Abdülbaki (1929, p. 46) states that only if she accomplishes her duties can a mother expect respect from her children and love and loyalty from her husband.

The textbooks emphasized the importance of being strong and healthy citizens. To achieve this, they stressed the importance of sports. One book shows pictures of a child involved in a sports activity in unrelated parts of the book, such as in a section stressing the importance of paying taxes (Sevinç, 1931-32). To illustrate the importance of being healthy and strong there are pictures of 'healthy' and 'strong' village men and boys. One textbook notes that "in the village big, strong, and patriotic villagers live"; the book has a picture of a young man who is shooting puts with the caption "Steel-Bodied Turkish Young Man" (Ermat & Ermat, 1943, p. 36). The textbook states "Our nation and homeland demand healthy young people" (Sevinç, 1931-32, p. 103).

Being healthy was an important aspect of being a civilized citizen. Most importantly, it was an important condition for having strong soldiers. Textbooks define one of the most important citizenship duties as performing military service. The books emphasize the importance of being born a Turk, living as a Turk, and dying as a Turk. Thus, the books quote Kemal Ataturk repeatedly throughout their pages, featuring such sayings as, "How happy is the one who says, I am a Turk", and state that emulating the expression "strong like a Turk" is the most important duty of Turkish youth (Sevinç, 1931-32, p. 10).

One important question stemming from this discussion is whether the same understanding of citizenship continued during the period of 1980-2023 or whether the multi-party period in 1946, the military interventions of 1960 and 1980, and the globalization and identity politics prominent since the 1990s brought about significant changes. These aspects of the discussion on citizenship are developed below.

Female and Male Depictions and Domestic Roles in Civic Education Textbooks in Turkey: 1980-2023

Textbooks were reorganized from the military's perspective, following the 1980 military coup. İnal (1996) argued that, after 1980, both in general and regarding textbooks in particular, education became a tool for ideological indoctrination.

During the 1980-2023 period there was an almost equal representation of women/men or girls/boys in the textbooks. Nevertheless, traditional gender roles also continued to be maintained during this period. For example, one of the textbooks contains a picture titled

"Sharing jobs in the family" (Ceylan, 1996, p. 19). In the picture, the mother, depicted in an apron, serves tea, while the father helps the son study. Men are generally portrayed as soldiers but also in diverse occupations such as doctors, engineers, and police officers. Yet, there are no pictures of male nurses. Women are generally pictured as teachers, nurses, tailors, or weaving carpets at a loom. There are also pictures of women carrying ammunition to the front, along with their babies, during the War of Independence. After 2000, however, some exceptional pictures of women appear. For example, a picture of female DJs (Ceylan, 2002), female lawyers (Bilgen, 2001), and female doctors (Çiftçi et al., 2003). There are also pictures of the first female *muhtar* (the elected village or a neighbourhood head), deputy mayor, Member of Parliament, minister, governor, and prime minister (*Sosyal Bilgiler 6*, 2008). In pictures titled "Turkish women serve in all lines of work", however, there are pictures of female secretaries (Ceylan, 2002, p. 34) or pictures of female teachers (Çiftçi et al., 2005, p. 28). In another picture titled "The level of education of women rose after the Republic" (Çiftçi et al., 2005, 26) there are pictures of female lawyers but also a picture of a woman weaving a carpet at the loom. Under the section on the place of Turkish women in working life, only a female teacher is depicted in the picture captioned "Turkish women serve in all lines of work" (Çiftçi et al., 2005, 27).

Like the previous periods, textbooks talk about the importance of family and division of labor in the family. Ceylan (2002) defines the family as founded by a union of two sexes. Textbooks point out the importance of marriage and engagement. People without families cannot put up with pain and suicide levels is higher such people (Dal et al., 1986, p. 41). Textbooks also state that the head of the family is the husband and he is supposed to see to business outside the home and meet his family's expenses. The father is responsible for domestic work, like repairs that require physical strength (Korkmaz, 1994). Mothers have several responsibilities, including helping and advising their husbands and taking care of the home. The mother bears her husband's surname and helps him with everything. Women's responsibilities are generally located within the home. These include taking care of the children, cleaning the house, cooking, washing, sewing, and so forth (Dal et al., 1986, p. 36). The expression "the she-bird builds the nest" (Ceylan, 2001, p. 19) implies that the mother takes care of the home. A woman's greatest duty is motherhood (Dal et al., 1986). The father working should be sufficient to meet the needs of the household budget; the mother may also have a job, in which case the woman works to contribute to the household budget while concurrently taking care of housework (Ceylan, 2001).

Textbooks published after 2000 talk about some of the international agreements that Turkey signed to protect women's rights in Turkey, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (United Nations (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), 2010). These textbooks point out that the state led feminism in Turkey, by saying that the recognition of women's rights in Turkey was not the outcome of currents of thought or social evolution as it was in some European countries. In Turkey, the rights of women are a result of Ataturk's revolutions. Ataturk tried to make everyone equal citizens by removing the distinction between women and men. This is followed by a quote from Ataturk: "A woman's most important duty is motherhood" (Çiftçi et al., 2005, p. 26).

Textbooks published after 2000 also talk about the changes in the Civil Code. According to the new Civil Code, which went into effect in January 2002, "Neither of the spouses has to seek the other's permission for picking a job or a profession. However, the peace and good of the marital union is considered when picking jobs or professions" (Öztürk, 2006, p. 35). Textbooks

also give some examples of civil society organizations that protect women's rights such as *Mor Çatı* (a women's shelter foundation also offering consultancy to women against domestic violence) and *KADER* (Association for the Support of Women Candidates), which encourages women to be active in politics and informs female voters (Ceylan, 2006).

As in the previous periods, one of the most important citizenship duties is military service. "[M]ilitary service is the right and duty of every Turk" (Ceylan, 2002, p. 47). Books talk about internal and external threats and state that the nations should be vigilant. "A Turk has no friend but a Turk" (Ceylan, 1996, p. 57). All books contain many illustrations of soldiers, tanks and military aircraft.

One textbook features a discussion on military service among male and female students. It presents two views. The view argued by female pupils is that women should do military service too, since women fought in the War of Independence and since the country needs constant vigilance. The other view, put forward by a male pupil, is that women do not need to do military service, since they are not as strong as men are. Readers are then asked which side of the argument they would take (*İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler 6* [Social Studies Textbook 6], 2008).

In 2000, the incorporation of citizenship education and human rights education began to emphasize the importance of human rights and international organizations. The content of the primary education program was revised in the context of the EU adjustment process. The most important objective of this new curriculum was to instill respect for human rights in the coming generations. Accordingly, the new curriculum was described as against any kind of discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, nationality, political view, social class and physical/mental health of individuals, and so forth. (Esen, 2007). However, gender discrimination persisted in the new textbooks. The changes to the curriculum were not carried out because of ethical concerns, but because it was thought to be a mark of a civilized country. Human rights were not an end, merely a means to promote Turkey's reputation and respectability on the international stage (Gök, 2003). This is evidenced in a decision made by the Turkish Ministry of Education in 2006, when they censored the *Vatandaşlık ve İnsan Hakları* (Citizenship and Human Rights) textbook for year seven students, as it contained a reproduction of the Delacroix's portrait *Liberty Leading the People*, because Liberty's breasts were bare[3].

In the 2008-2009 academic year, Turkey's Ministry of National Education incorporated civic education into social studies textbooks for grades 6 and 7. The social studies subject includes history, geography, general culture, and civic information. Many similarities remained between the civics textbooks published before and after 2008. The current social studies texts continue to emphasize duties more than rights (*Sosyal Bilgiler 4, 5, 6, 7* [Social Studies Textbooks 4, 5, 6 and 7], 2008; 2010; 2013; 2016; 2019; 2021). Although there have been certain improvements in the current social studies textbooks the understanding of citizenship is still gendered and sexualized.

A recent study examined visual elements in the 5, 6, and 7th grade social studies textbooks taught in secondary schools in the 2019-2020 academic year in terms of gender roles (Karaboğa, 2020). The findings reveal that the images of boys and girls and adult women and men in the secondary school social studies textbooks contain gender stereotypes. For

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[3] *Turkish Daily News*, October 21, 2006.

example, while the figures of girls are shown more with the children than the figures of boys, the rate of the boys shown alone is higher. In addition, the rate of girls shown with their families and the crowd is higher than that of boys. When we look at the proportion of adult female and male figures in the visual items examined are 19.59 % and 80.41%, respectively. In this sense, the proportion of male figures in the images in the books was significantly higher than that of female figures. When we compare both groups in terms of whom they are shown with, the representation of adult female figures portrayed alone is significantly lower than it is for adult male figures. Female figures were also more commonly depicted involved in home-directed and child-related actions than men. Men were more frequently depicted in leisure activities, cultural-artistic actions, work-oriented and social actions. The difference in the representation rate of male and female figures in terms of work-oriented actions is the highest. With regard to the inclusion of adult figures in particular professions, adult female figures were represented in the executive professions at a rate of 2.7%, while male figures at 23.31%. A similar result has emerged in the representation of women and men in professions. Although the difference is smaller in technical occupations and those related to the service and sales sector, adult male figures nevertheless have greater representation. In short, the study argues that textbooks contribute to reproduction of gender-based roles.

Indeed, discourse on gender discrimination increased in textbooks prepared according to the 2018 curriculum program compared to the previous period's textbooks (Çimen & Ayhan, 2018). In 2018, textbooks prepared according to the new program, women's visibility decreased and sections showing women in positions of power were removed from the textbooks (Çimen & Bayhan, 2018).

Discussion and Conclusion

The traditionally 'masculine' understanding of citizenship appears to permeate civic education textbooks in Turkey. The current curriculum in Turkey does not examine citizenship as a gendered construct. On the contrary, citizenship education in Turkey was predicated upon the ideal citizen as the public, obedient, militaristic and heterosexual male. This makes women and 'subordinated masculinities' second-class citizens.

Citizenship can be understood as a series of dichotomies, such as public/private, individual/community, male/female, and rights/responsibilities (Tupper, 2002). Such dichotomies lead to inequality as one component is always valued over the other (Tupper, 2002). In civic education textbooks in Turkey throughout the Republican period, emphasis has always been on public over private, community over individual, male over female, and responsibilities over rights.

Female and Male Illustrations

A comparison of female and male illustrations in the analyzed civic education textbooks reveals that men have been historically predominant. Most male figures are portrayed as soldiers. The authors want every man to be healthy, because Turkey needs healthy soldiers. Women are usually portrayed at home and in the domestic environment, while men are generally depicted in public while working. Illustrations of political activity are illustrations of men. In depictions of political participation, men overwhelmingly outnumber women. Women are usually shown as housewives, teachers and nurses. In contrast with these female

role models, high-level professionals are invariably male. Despite the fact that many women have entered the labor force in Turkey, there is still a dichotomy between masculine and feminine roles, with high-status occupations considered men's jobs.

Public/Private

Lister (1997, p. 6) pointed out that the "public-private divide is pivotal to women's longstanding exclusion from full citizenship in both theory and practice". Critical feminists have argued that women are often marginalized from the formal public realm and the project of citizenship because of the sexual contract (Arnot, 2006). The sexual contract leads to the isolation of women in the private realm. As wives and as mothers, women are not political subjects.

Civic education textbooks in Turkey conform to this relationship between public and private spheres. In the textbooks, a man's place is in public, especially in the workplace, whereas a woman's place is private, in the home. The degree of repetition about women's domesticity in the textbooks can only be described as ideological. The content explicitly or implicitly states that political activities belong to men. Turkish students learn at an early age that politics is a man's world. Politically active female citizens are not reflected in the curriculum. Female civic political action was only portrayed in one textbook and then with regard to daycare (Uygun, 2008, p. 128).

Despite historical and material changes in the sexual contract, the above discussion suggests that the sphere of politics and of economic life remains unambiguously masculine in Turkish civic education textbooks.

Individual/Community

The community is emphasized over the individual in Turkish civic education textbooks. Textbook authors constantly underline the importance of living in a community. They point out that marriage and engagement are very important and citizens cannot survive without them in the community. The model of nuclear family, which includes the father, mother and the children, is the only form of family recognized and discussed. This excludes families without children and single parent families. One textbook explicitly pointed out that "the family is founded by a union of two sexes" Ceylan (2002, p. 13). Homophobia can be easily instilled in young minds through such statements. Contemporary debates about sexuality and citizenship have no place in the curriculum. It could be argued that citizenship education courses perpetuate a conventional model of heterosexuality in Turkey. These textbooks also fail to address complex changes in gender relations in the private sphere. They do not cover single mothers, the increase in the divorce rate or gender based violence.

Rights/Responsibilities

Duties are emphasized over rights, in civic education textbooks. The most important duties are paying taxes, voting, and performing military service. All the textbooks emphasize or imply that in order to be a 'first class citizen' one has to accomplish all of these duties. Notably, women could not undertake most of these duties until the 1930s. For example, women did not have right to vote until the 1930s. Performing military service, which is chief among these duties was and is only required of men. Under these circumstances, women can only be

'second class citizens'. As Altınay (2004) pointed out, apart from its militaristic tone, the identification of a 'good citizen' with military service reduces women's citizenship to secondary status. Textbooks do not mention the increasingly large number of Turkish men who have evaded military service since the 1980s or conscientious objectors who have articulated challenges to militarized nationalism (Altınay, 2004).

Motherhood is defined as women's most important duty. Historically, citizenship has been understood in relation to the nation-state. For women, service to the nation was realized through reproduction, as they became "mothers of the nation" or "mothers of citizens" (Vogel, 1991, p. 63). Altınay (2004) pointed out that women were constructed as 'guests' of a male state in Turkey, which was mediated through motherhood, despite occasionally playing the role of the "warrior heroine" (Altınay, 2004, p. 34).

The militaristic approach dominating the textbooks also determines the way women received the right to vote in Turkey. The textbooks explain that, because of the sacrifices made by Turkish women during the War of Independence, Ataturk gave women the right to vote. However, these rights provided women with a "logistical citizenship" in the sense of bringing up new generations and contributing to war (Çayır & Gürkaynak, 2008, p. 55).

Textbooks reduce women's citizenship to the question of female suffrage. They create a rosy picture, as if the story of gender inequality in Turkey ended with universal suffrage and women are now free to take their place in the world alongside men in every sphere of life. There is no consideration of the problems or inequalities faced by women after universal suffrage.

There have been legal amendments for gender equality in Turkey in the early 2000s. The new Turkish Civil Code, which abolished the supremacy of men in marriage, was approved by parliament in November, 2001. The old civil code (1926) included several articles reducing women to a subordinate position in the family. The husband was, for example, originally defined as the head of the marriage union, granting him the final say over the choice of domicile and children. Despite these legal developments, civic education textbooks in Turkey are still gendered. Citizenship education in Turkey was predicated upon the ideal citizen as the public, obedient, militaristic and heterosexual male. The model of citizenship taught to children should be designed to challenge gender-dualistic thinking, the separation of public and private spheres, and homophobia.

Schools in Turkey should provide opportunities for all students to investigate gender related issues. Only with such preparation can we guarantee a more democratic and tolerant society and citizens. Thus, the Ministry of National Education must require textbook publishers to have an equal number of female and male textbook authors; to insist on the principle of gender equality both in photos/drawings and text; to ensure gender equality in the use of language; to incorporate the new legislation, especially those dealing with gender equality; to include examples of pluralism, tolerance and respect for LGBT individuals.

Despite the urgent need for policies and mechanisms for the inspection of education materials with a gender sensitive approach, the Turkish government has not yet produced new texts following the removal of sexist elements. Despite what progress has been made, this remains a troubling state of affairs since, as Tanrıöver (2009, para. 9) pointed out "[w]e wanted to see a picture of a father cooking in the Social Studies books. However, if a child goes home and asks her/his father to cook, s/he may experience violence".

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Young Italians' Discourse on the War in Ukraine and Perspectives of Peacebuilding[1][2]

Sandra Chistolini[3]

Abstract

In this contribution, we propose a critical reflection on young Italians' discourses on the war in Ukraine and the possibilities of peace in the future. The study is part of the research proposal launched by Alistair Ross concerning the investigation about young people's socio-political understanding and values. Through the method of deliberative discussion, several focus groups were conducted with secondary school students from central and northern Italy. The conversations were collected in autumn 2022. Deliberative discussion was used as a pedagogical practice (Jerome, Algarra, 2005; Mycock, Tonge, 2012, 2014; Ross 2019) to promote critical reflection among young people on the issue. Without giving predetermined opinions, however, we assumed that this topic was particularly present in discourse among young people. The high exposure to communications from the media, social networks, and the opportunity to follow social debates in school and family could be considered two important premises for understanding what young people think about the specific center of interest. In general, the introduction of the debate follows the problems affecting our societies today and reveals a differentiated centrality of the arguments on war and peace in Ukraine. Young people are experiencing the war in a very involved way by linking it to other countries in the world that are in conflict, they are not absent but fully participating. The causes of war are defined and possible guidelines for peace are outlined. The two geographical areas show interesting characterizations linked to the higher presence in the North of young people from families with a migratory past and Ukrainians newly arrived from war zones. The gender variable affects the analysis of the situation. Overall, the deliberative discussion shows the strong sense of reality in the young people with accentuated polarities between hope and pessimism.

Keywords: War and Peace; Deliberative Discussion; Secondary School; Education; Italy 2022

Introduction

The war in Ukraine raised many questions about how adolescents were processing the experience of the conflict and possible responses of restoring peace. Mature perspectives regarding the war come from direct and indirect knowledge of experiences in Ukraine. Young refugees who have come to Italy have had direct experience of the war. They discuss it with concrete examples, attempting to examine their own emotions and make interpretations about the continuation of the conflict.

Young people with direct experience are fully involved in the fate of their country. One specific case discussed below concerns young people whose families have a primarily Romanian background. These youth participate in the conflict with personal considerations

constructed by taking into their own migration background and the experience of having been lived through the invasion.

Recent surveys on young people's interest in the war indicate that Italian adolescents actively inform themselves and try to understand what is going on (Tucci, 2023). They read up on national news and major social issues. They are attracted to international news that affects them most closely. They are interested in the war in Ukraine and international political balances, because of their effects on their lives, study, and work. Young Italians have an indirect experience of the war, and their discourse reflects the situation, as it is experienced through information circulating on smartphones, social media, and the Internet. Instagram and Facebook are major sources of information. Newspapers and television are rarely referenced (Tucci, 2023).

Adolescent Harm as a Result of Conflict

Multiple studies document the psychological and mental damage in the personality development of adolescents at a crucial stage of their growth (e.g., Del Monte & Mentzelopoulou, 2022; Maftei, Dănilă, & Măirean, 2022; Osokina et al., 2023).

> During war, adolescents are exposed to atrocities, organized violence, disintegration of social networks, and resettlement during crucial phases of their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. These experiences could cause serious risks to their physical and psychological well-being and development. (Osokina et al., 2023, p. 335)

Maftei, Dănilă, and Măirean (2022) emphasize the role of media in producing the perception of threat in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. This perception particularly affects adolescents, who are poorly protected from false messages.

European Parliament reports record the damage to education.

> At the same time, education has been disrupted for more than 5.7 million children in Ukraine, as schools shut down at the start of the war. National online education platforms have been built to help children to follow their schooling programmes, yet the situation remains difficult. Security concerns accompanied by a lack of access to electricity and internet make access to education services a challenge. Some schools have reopened by means of distance-learning programmes. In addition, Ukraine's neighbouring countries and EU Member States are supporting the integration of Ukrainian children into their national education systems. (Del Monte & Mentzelopoulou, 2022, p.4)

There are adolescents who experience the war from within and adolescents who witness the war from the outside. For both groups, the war event creates a sense of uncertainty, resulting in a growing distrust in governments and in their political capacities to deal with the problem. It follows that there are two emergent means of intervening such youth with the goal of providing support. On the one hand, the treatment of trauma and, on the other, the search for credible solutions based in humanitarian solidarity.

Research Methodology

In this study, we present a preliminary form of exploratory research of a qualitative nature, which is still in progress. Truly comprehensive results will be only be available when input is collected from other countries participating in the initiative launched and coordinated by Alistair Ross. This initial consideration does not compromise the course of subsequent processing of the results collected in the deliberative discussions. The survey concerns the

recording of discourse by young Italians and non-Italians present in Italy on the topic of war and possible peace solutions.

Through deliberative discussion as a pedagogical practice (Jerome & Algarra, 2005; Mycock, & Tonge, 2012; 2014; Ross, 2019) we sought to understand the thoughts of a sample of 18 secondary school students, gathered into three focus groups with six students each, in October 2022. Two focus groups were conducted in a secondary school in central Italy from a small town with a population of 11,899 (2021), the Central Italy School Institute, and the third focus group was conducted in a secondary school in northern Italy in a mountain town with a population of 12,319 (2017), the Territorial Scope School Institute.

In both cases, the social makeup of the local population was predominantly working- and middle-class. Five students in the three focus groups had family migration experience from Albania, Romania, and Ukraine. The focus groups consisted of eight (8) female and ten (10) male students, between 15 and 19 years of age. Focus group conversations lasted one hour. We refer to student participants by pseudonym, while retaining the gender of their original name.

Sample of Schools

Descriptive data of the sample of schools are disclosed by the schools' websites and the Ministry of Education, National Assessment System. The Social Reporting 2019/2022 presents the results achieved with reference to the priorities and goals identified at the end of the self-assessment process (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2019).

The Central Italy School Institute is a Catholic private school, committed to building an educational community of supportive people with very strong ties. The Institute is a non-profit Social Cooperative Society that has been operating for 150. It accommodates approximately 300 pupils from various parts of the Castelli area of Rome, primarily from middle-class families. The boys and girls who enroll at the Institute have experiences of dropping out of school and learning difficulties, and the school offers a specific service to encourage study and school careers.

The Territorial Scope School Institute in Northern Italy is located in the Mountain Community Valtellina of Morbegno (496 km^2). It also includes the school population of the districts in the province of Sondrio, Chiavenna, Lecco and Como. The socio-economic makeup of the alpine valley has borne witness to a rapid transformation has from a predominantly agricultural-mountain economy (still 41 percent as recently as 1951), to a mixed economy, based on a significant industrial activity. The current crisis has challenged this, despite the presence of a strong artisan community and a growing development of the tertiary sector.

The cultural reality, slower to undergo transformation, still suffers from the past social structure, typical of an Alpine agricultural economy, and the partial geographical and political isolation of the area. Communication routes, the spread of transportation, access to media, university study are improving, however. The region seeks integration with the Lombard, national and European sociocultural reality. Despite this, limited economic resource availability, uncertainty regarding permanent access to what does exist, and distance from institutional and university centers prevents medium- to long-term planning on innovation and staff training. The school population shows indications of youth distress, addiction,

socioeconomic and cultural disadvantage, and increased enrollment of pupils with migration experience.

Descriptive Aspects

Focus groups conversations began with a discussion of the major interests of young people regarding national and international social reality. COVID-19 remains a strong topic of discussion, from the perspective of the consequences of isolation, alongside difficulties resuming daily rhythms. The war in Ukraine immediately emerged as a source of concern, fear, and uncertainty –sometimes taking the form of an argument whose discussion was avoided for political reasons.

The conversation, directed by the research team, was allowed to develop on students' interest in the war, their assessment of the events, consideration of possible upcoming actions (both at war sites and elsewhere), emotional involvement, and sense of participation in the ongoing debate. We encouraged the expression of different positions and invited them to try to put themselves in the shoes of those who were experiencing the conflict firsthand.

We can collect the first examination of the discussions into five thematic areas:

1. the general view of the war,
2. the consequences of the war,
3. the causes of the war,
4. the conditions for peace, and
5. the personalization of war.

The general view and consequences of the war collect ideas on the meaning of war in human affairs and examine the implications on one's present and future existence. The causes of war collect thoughts on the reasons for war, reasons near and far, experienced indirectly and directly. The conditions for peace include extrapolated discourses on the possibilities for peace in political, social, cultural, and strategic terms. The personalization of war includes the results of asking focus group participants "if you were in that war what would you do?". We discussed personalization as a cultural, anthropological attitude of putting yourself in the shoes of others and trying to feel in a time and place different from that of one's daily life.

The General view of the War (and Controversial Positions)

The students' discussion examined the war in Ukraine at different scales by relating it to conflicts in different regions of the world, including Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is not discussed with the same frequency, and the fallout for Italy is different with regard to military and political involvement. The phrase "wars have always been there" meets with general approval, as if to mitigate the trauma of the conflict in Ukraine. According to Antonio, however, conflicts could have been both predicted and avoided. As things stand, conflicts can no longer be avoided, because they are due to events that have occurred over time. Even if the relevant agreements existed, "they would just be pieces of paper, each nation does what it wants, what is most favorable economically, it is ugly to say, however, at this moment it is like that for every state" (Marino).

International treaties are not trusted because they are not respected –with both Russia and NATO mentioned as examples of a lack of respect. A portion of the students argue that Russia

is not to blame for the war "...Russia is not to blame for today's war. Italy sells weapons now, but the war was already there for years" (Leopoldo). Responsibility for the war is a controversial issue with respect to the two contending countries:

> Russia defies the other powers and takes advantage thinking that the other nations cannot do more regardless of the consequences...it is a wrong thing...the blame is not only on Russia but also on other States such as America that did not do certain things that Putin wanted, so it came to this time of war. (Franco)

Gianni argues that:

> Mainly it is a kind of American invasion. Biden established military bases along the territory and thus triggered the reactions of Russia, which is now trying to regain Ukrainian land that has declared itself independent in a completely illegitimate way, not to mention what they are doing in the Donbas where they are massacring the urban population without anyone talking about it.

For several of the female students, one of the most unacceptable aspects of the conflict in Ukraine is the presence of conscripted boys, who are at high risk of mortality, due to inexperience and lack of preparation.

Martina observes

> Kids our age are risking their lives every day when there should be people suited for that field, if I am in the military, it is because I am suited for what I am doing. I can't put a weapon in a kid's hand and expect him to try to save someone.

The students judge the war with a high degree of empathy. For the girls, considerations of boys their own age going into combat generate particularly contrary feelings. Boys in the focus groups are very clear regarding the legitimacy of defending one's home. The threat of nuclear action is felt as a real threat that subjects all States to the power of the most powerful weapons:

> Probably this war of Putin's could be a show of force in the sense that threats about nuclear and bombing could overthrow a nation in minutes with the weapons and technologies that the State possesses today; I think it's a hasty war, done unreasonably, it's more of a show of force and it makes people realize that today a State can start a war in a very short time without any particular reason. I don't think making an alliance against Russia and getting in Russia's crosshairs is the smartest move to make because it can be scary to go against a country with nuclear power. (Antonio)

The Consequences of War

Three clear positions emerge in this thematic area:

a. the assessment of the negative material consequences of war,
b. global involvement in the consequences, with a strong emphasis on the interdependence of all of the world's countries, and
c. the empathetic assessment of war.

There is a unanimous opinion that war negatively affects quality of life: taxes increase, there is no peace of mind, there is fear of it war spreading to each person's locality, and that risk induces fear. The damage and disruptive effects of war are blamed for increased pollution, economic crises, aggravation of environmental issues, and the fallout on incoming migration. Conversely, there is a strengthening of Russia's economy as it seeks alliances with other countries.

There is a state of anguish for students who view war as wrong but inevitable. The war serves no purpose, young people anticipate paying the consequences, and some note that "the elders say this war is not as bad as World War II" (Giovanni).

Lia talks about the need for compromise because:

> Nuclear possession indicates inequality. You can't make an agreement because now the situation has degenerated, the whole world is involved a little bit...even other countries can't influence this war however there are consequences, for example, on primary goods and so it's not just about the war, this is a problem that ultimately affects everyone.

Filippo is of the same opinion:

> War calls for war, there are people who direct entire populations even quite important not only politically but also economically, there are people in power who try to maneuver to bring everything to themselves, without thinking that there are millions of people at stake; unfortunately, power is something that brings war.

Franco states:

> the consequences are all negative...buildings destroyed...the integration of the Ukrainian people...Russia also spent a lot of money, lost a lot of men, at the end of it all there will be a negative balance sheet. And also, for other countries the balance sheet will not be positive because in some way we will also lose out.

Alberto argues that the consequences of war are a matter of choosing an appropriate technical strategy, which takes into consideration the many political, economic, and social contradictions that show division rather than union; one that exemplifies how each country eventually closes in on itself, despite the fact that the European Union tries to work for the integration of peoples:

> I simply think there is a need to change the methodology, because yes we have put sanctions on Russia, but at the same time we have not stopped buying from Russia; in fact in the last six months we have given enough supply, enough money from the European Union to cover a whole year from the time the sanctions started; so yes we have given sanctions but at the same time also enough money to Russia, so it is counterproductive; and also the fact of relying on the United States, yes we are buying from the United States but at the same time however the United States is thinking about itself; there was a few months ago where Italy asked for help from France but France is thinking about itself, it refused cooperation so it is a difficult situation.

The lessons learned from politicians' behavior lead young people to take positions of self-protective closure, support welcoming attitudes and humanitarian aid, while condemning the arms sales. Antonio argues:

> I think our concerns should be more about ourselves, our Italian State. You can't think about waging war when there is a State that is completely at a loss. Alberto spoke earlier about workers: this is one of the many flaws in the Italian system that before we think about external factors that, for now, would not have affected us directly if we had not gone to sell weapons in Ukraine. Rather than thinking about external factors that do not directly affect us we should think about fixing our country. Always hoping that with the current government soon to be in office, we will try to fix the country Italy before thinking about Ukraine, always welcoming those in need and lending a hand, however certainly not to the war industry.

On an empathetic level, Sara says:

> I think that also on the cultural level there are many problems. In Ukraine many people have lost their loved ones, they have been forced to leave their country not by their own choice and so they are in a situation of pain.

There is debate on the issue of big and small war, with well-articulated positions. "For me war serves no purpose, I have seen that there are some wars that are ultimately necessary...by making a small war, like now, you avoid one that could involve so many countries" (Gianni).

Sara assesses the group's opinion; she does not distance herself from the group but examines the people victimized by war with concern. She finds herself in an existential re-examination resulting in a contradiction between agreeing to 'rank' wars and observing the consequences of war:

> In my opinion it is right what my comrades said, however, there cannot be a war either small or big; even if they are few people, they are people who have always suffered, they are survivors, small children who have experienced trauma..., in my opinion it is not really right.

The Causes of War

The major causes of war indicated by the students are economic, military, political, ethnic, the assertion of power and force, and media influence.

According to Alfredo:

> This emergency situation is due to both poor contracts between Nations for gas supply and the senseless use of the resources a country has –for example, Italy has resources in the Adriatic Sea that it could use precisely for its own or Italian use; instead it wants to make contracts with Russia, after those with the U.S. have expired. I think the Italian State is not in this great crisis with the objective reserves of gas, but just makes its citizens pay for it. Certainly, in every war there is always an economic interest; I think economics is one of the fundamental reasons for war. Those who start the war almost always seek economic advantage and also put all other countries in the world in trouble not only the attacking country. In this situation Russia is economically stronger than the attacking country, Ukraine. The other countries in Europe and America suffer economically from the war; in fact, gas and food prices rise, you cannot buy more of the same kind of products.

Alberto, who is from Romania, had a broad view of the causes of the war:

> I think the causes of this war are more complex. Since before 2014 there have been tensions going back to medieval times, not only political but also ethnicity. We are talking about Russian imperialism, now we are talking more about propaganda, a part of the Russian population thought they had the right to take parts of what had been the Russian empire, or the Soviet bloc. The Soviet bloc was not a completely united entity, it was simply multiple countries cooperating Ukraine, Crimea. We experienced it too, to make a connection with Romania, with Moldova where there are clashes with Transnistria, they want to keep it as a puppet state. Fortunately, since the president is no longer pro-Russia, the union vote with Romania has gone up from 20 percent to more than 50 percent, so hopefully in the next few years we can take back our brothers; therefore, get back what was taken from us long ago.

Gianni says the causes of the war are military because "America tried to regain advantage with military bases and Russia reacted by attacking Ukraine" and the persuasive force of mass media.

The Conditions for Peace

The conditions for peace appear rather impractical. "As long as the two sides are at odds, nothing can change" (Matilde). Compromise and negotiation are not currently possible. Everyone holds to their own ideals. Fear of nuclear power and inequality between the two parties has led to the degeneration of relations. It could be argued that an agreement could

be made with Russia. It is believed that Italy occupies a secondary position in the international framework, with regard to the mediation of other countries.

The world powers with the ability to levy sanctions must decide. Some participants believed that peace depends on the will of people. According to Sara:

> Citizens should have an open revolt against the people with the most power, only if they have all this power, it's because the citizens gave it to them; so as much as they can do, they can't have a say, it would be kind of going against what they themselves decided.

Some help could come from psychological support, caring for social relationships. According to Concetta:

> From the psychological point of view Ukrainians could be supported by people who could help to overcome the traumas that this war has left; for example, people who have seen their loved ones die in front of their eyes; therefore, help them through a psychologist to overcome certain situations, to move on and avoid remembering, stand by people.

Karen lives in Italy and has relatives in Ukraine. She thinks it is necessary to give war aid and social aid to her country.

Alberto argues that:

> A near peace I think is not a very feasible request also because given the current conditions I don't think Ukraine will leave the land annexed by force by Russia, especially with the EU and NATO supplying it with armaments. At the same time Russia, after taking this beating that they didn't expect, such support from NATO towards Ukraine, nor the fact that more troops were needed, I think will continue to conquer Ukraine in full, will continue this expansion. A few months ago, there were secretly sent videos where one of Russia's generals was pointing out on a global map the smaller countries to be annexed, such as Moldova and Transnistria, in order to have more control over the Black Sea. I think it will become a war of attrition. If Russia wins it will be even worse economically than what happened after the fall of communism also from a social point of view compared to all the other countries. In case Ukraine wins, the outcome will be about the same, but with more dead civilians and a greater need for reconstruction; in any case it will not end well for either side.

The Personalization of War

We asked focus group participants the stimulus question "If you were in Ukraine what would you do". Their answers fell into three broad categories: those who would never leave the country, those who do not want to be further involved in the events of the war, and those who suspend judgment in the face of an experience too far removed from their everyday lives. Franco argues that, "there is little to do or help the country and fight to defend all ideals or emigrate and find refuge in a country that can take me in".

Gianni expressed opinions of drastic political change:

> If I were in such a situation and given the ability, I would start a popular uprising to remove Zelensky from power because he is the cause of the war, he keeps rejecting Russia's peace proposals, he rejects treaties also because of his enslavement to 'America; therefore, he is more of a problem for Ukraine than a sticking point.

Concetta argued the relevance of the war debate among young people attempting to form their own opinions, given the difficulty of discriminating between real news and news that may have been altered by mass media

> It is talked about a lot; in the news it is a very frequent topic. By talking about it we become aware of what is happening in the world, we can create our own idea. We are not there, everything is

Overall, the student population is split on the choice to stay (particularly prevalent in males), and to emigrate (particularly evident in females). Family protection conditions and perceptions of the continuation of war without peace solution also weigh into these considerations.

Students were asked what they would do if they had a billion euros at their disposal. The unanimous answer was to provide social facilities, hospitals, schools, and roads. They would provide no funding to wars and powerful actors. The word "genocide" emerged to describe the situation in Ukraine.

The future is uncertain and dense with fears. Hope runs low. There is a need to run for cover, to guarantee supplies that are lacking.

Conclusions

Young Italians express a sense of helplessness and concern for the future; the war challenges their values of justice and solidarity. Young people feel the negative repercussions on Italy, with a split between those who feel the Ukrainians are a burden, those who speak of plausible Russian motivations, and those who feel they cannot say anything.

With regard to military spending, there are those who complain that Italy is only now noticing the war in Ukraine, despite it having been there for years. "Italy sells weapons now but the war was already there for years" (Concetta). Alfredo argues:

> Italy found itself in a situation in which it had to sell arms to Ukraine and therefore have an economic incentive and I find it an injustice that they are only talking about it now, just as I find it an injustice that they do not talk about other conflicts. Probably Putin's war could be a show of strength, in the sense that the threats he makes on nuclear and bombing can overthrow a nation in minutes with the weapons and technologies that the state possesses today. I think it's a hasty war, done in an unreasonable way; it's more of a demonstration of strength and it makes us aware that today a State can start a war in a very short time without particular reasons.

Karen and Dina agree that their families in Ukraine are a constant cause of concern for them, which is why they are in favor of any kind of help.

The strong sense of relativization of war ("war is everywhere") balances Italy's sense of a reality of impotence and the action of delegating the problem to the great global powers. War awareness is high in all students. Young people from Eastern Europe experience the war as the age-old history of their family, while for other youth the international scenario has a decisive influence on the evolution of the conflict. In terms of European values, we note a low relevance of Europe as a custodian of a culture of peace and guarantor of human rights.

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Artificial Intelligence, Immortality and Marginalism[1]

Habibe Öngören[2], Ezel Türk[3], Damlasu Temizel[4], Nilüfer Pembecioğlu [5]

Abstract

Digital citizenship is based on the fundamental tenet that actions that are inappropriate in real life should not be taken online. Acquiring the competencies of digital citizenship, such as digital literacy, online security, and the ability to discern between private and public information is necessary. Recently, the media has frequently featured the subject of digital immortality. While informing the public is one of the media's responsibilities, adhering to ethical norms and maintaining equal distance from all viewpoints is crucial for journalism in the digital age. Reflections of real-world actions in digital contexts should be accessible to anyone practicing digital citizenship. From this vantage point, it is important to pay close attention to the cultural reflections of the issue while evaluating the phenomena of death turning into digital immortality, within the context of digital citizenship concepts.

Through artificial intelligence applications, which are regularly discussed in traditional and social media accounts, the study aims to ascertain how well known the phenomenon of death or immortality is, in Turkish society, and whether it sets a precedent that will disturb those who do not share a similar view. Two hundred sixty (260) individuals took part in the field study. The majority of participants reported not wanting to employ artificial intelligence to live in a virtual world after death and that these kinds of applications could lead to ethical, psychological, and security issues. They are unwilling to pay for this task. Approximately twenty percent of the participants indicated they were still unsure and apprehensive about digital immortality.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Death; Digital Immortality; Digital Citizenship; Marginality

Introduction

Severe conditions experienced in the last decade, including the rise of digital media, expanding AI applications and especially the pandemic lockdown in 2020 resulted in the emergence of new aspects to citizenship. Every individual has the right to a fair trial, an education, a good place to live, to participate in politics, and to vote, according to the traditional concept of citizenship rights. The new and digital citizenship rights that emerged because of the events of the past decade further both the right to pass away and protection from the unethical use of technology.

There is an expectation that mass must take responsibility for conducting the public message appropriately, taking into consideration moral and ethical rules, culture, religion, language and race and gender differences. They must do this while concurrently avoiding promoting

[2] Dr. Habibe Öngören, Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Radio Television Cinema Department, Türkiye, habibeo@istanbul.edu.tr, **ORCID** 0000-0002-5768-2634

[3] Associate Prof. Dr. Ezel Türk, Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising Department, Türkiye, ezel.kamcili@istanbul.edu.tr **ORCID** 0000-0002-4652-5035

[4] Dr. Damlasu Temizel, Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Radio Television Cinema Department, Türkiye, damlasu.temizel@hku.edu.tr **ORCID** 0000-0002-4135-4767

[5] Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu, Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Radio Television Cinema Department, Türkiye, corresponding author, niluferpembecioglu@gmail.com, **ORCID** 0000-0001-7510-6529

offensive concepts. The press, however, frequently covers stories dealing with the many perspectives on death in public discourse, the reformation of the law regulating the right to die, and the potential for communicating through virtual reality (VR) rather than lamenting the deaths of individuals (e.g., Akkaya, 2022; Ayaz & Ersöz, 2022; Demir, 2018; Şimşek, 2022; Ümmühan, 2021).

The concepts and scenarios portrayed as early as 2013, in *Black Mirror*'s (Jones, 2011-present) second season, made it evident that the development of this kind of technology was only a matter of time. The future, however, appears to have arrived sooner than expected. The protagonist of the South Korean documentary *Meeting You* (Jin-man, Jong-woo, & Yoon-mi, 2020) used virtual reality technology to "meet" her 7-year-old daughter, who passed away four years prior due to a rare blood disease. In December of 2020, Microsoft received patent US10853717B2 for "Creating an interactive (conversational) chatbot of a certain individual," (Abramson, D. I. & Johnson Jr., 2020), which made it possible for anybody to purchase their own "Ash" in the future (Zinchenko, et al., 2023).

Similar to the technology's portrayal in Black Mirror, the neural network must examine the individual's database, in order to build a digital replica of said individual. This process is feasible for any individual, dead or alive. Greater amounts of pictures, social media posts, and private messages are preferable. Preserving audio recordings will allow the avatar to speak and interact in addition to sending and receiving messages. Video is not as important; artificial intelligence (AI) already has the capacity to convincingly animate and colorize extremely old black and white photos.

The advancement of technology has allowed people, who can no longer sense the division of time and space, to give their lives significance in timeless settings. Psychoanalysts and anthropologists attach a great deal of importance to the ritual and sensory "grieving process", while elucidating the idea of denial of death (Castells, 2013). The media, however, has made death in the modern era worthless, because it only shows the deaths of other people, so when someone dies, it always comes as a shock because it is unanticipated. Indeed, Castells explains the process of creating this mentality by arguing that "[w]e build eternity throughout our lives by eliminating death from life and creating the technical system that will enable this idea to continue" (Castells, 2013, p.600). Accordingly, we become everlasting, save for that one moment blessed by the light.

Bauman (1992/2018), however, argues that discussing death is part of life, and conversely, discussing life is part of death. In this case, we can consider death a metaphor for life. Speaking about digital death is inevitable in the modern era, when life is becoming more and more digitalized. Digital death rights are an essential component of digital citizenship rights. Digital immortality, however, is replacing digital death and, in doing so, giving rise to a myriad of new considerations. The freedom of individuals to die digitally, legal protections for digital immortality, the social and psychological effects of this practice, and whether or not it will continue to be a fringe pastime favored only by affluent people, are just some of the issues that must and inevitably will be covered, in the near future.

The majority of the news on digital immortality frequently appearing in the media deals with celebrities and wealthy people who can afford to adopt this technology. According to Zinchenko et.al., (2023), in April 2012, rapper Tupac Shakur, who died in 1996, "performed" two songs from the stage of the Coachella Music Festival in California. The holographic representation of the rapper flashed brightly for a moment before vanishing into thin air,

before the eyes of the stunned spectators. Five years after the singer's passing, Michael Jackson made an equally sensational performance appearance, during the Billboard Music Awards in May of 2014. Since then, performers, artists, and other celebrities have frequently 'returned from the afterlife' to participate in large-scale events, release new music videos, or even feature in motion pictures.

Among the many congratulations given to American celebrity Kim Kardashian on her 40th birthday, in October 2020, on a small private island, the most noteworthy and prolifically discussed was that of her (late) father Robert. He said, "Happy birthday, Kimberly!" as he stepped out into the dark and onto the platform, just in time to have his face lit up by spotlights. "Take a look at yourself—you are forty years old already! She remains the same beautiful child even though she has fully matured. It appears that congratulations are in order if there were only one "but." –of course, the real father of the star could not attend the event, having passed away from esophageal cancer, in 2003 (Zinchenko et al., 2023, p.2).

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has set forth a number of expectations for digital citizens (ISTE, 2023). These include using technology to improve society, showing respect for people who hold different opinions when communicating online, using technology to make your voice heard by public administrators and shape public policy and being able to assess the credibility of online information sources.

According to Aydın, (2015), digitalization brings with it information pollution and garbage. Death is a right accompanied by the right to be forgotten. "Acting with awareness of all kinds of threats on the internet within the framework of ethical and universal principles" is one definition of "digital citizenship" (Aydin, 2015, p.142). The media only appears to be drawing attention to digital immortality research through its portrayal of their emotional disclosure. Such reporting usually eschews the work's technical, legal, economic, ethical, and religious foundations. Indeed, discussion topics should arguably also include the potential risks associated with digital security. Readers' reactions also tend to be more emotional and centered on personal experiences.

There are, to date, only a limited number of studies regarding marginal approaches in digital immortality studies that focus on ethical approaches and risk assessment. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the media to inform the public on these issues. Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that, despite the media's presentation of all these works as "digital immortality", they are actually revitalized digital recreations and reproductions of real people's existing voices, images, shares, and thoughts.

Indeed, even upon closer inspection, the relevant literature offers limited insight into digital immortality's ethical, cultural, religious, and economic facets. Even then, all of these aspects are couched within constrained, regional frameworks. As such, this study attempts to ascertain whether the constant discussion of death and immortality through artificial intelligence applications, both in traditional and social media contexts, establishes a precedent that may be disturbing to individuals who hold differing opinions.

Aiming to shape the study by making use of two focus groups, in order to reach about a two hundred people for interviews, this study specifically aims to examine how artificial intelligence technologies promising a form of immortality is perceived by Turkish citizens from religious, moral, ethical, and economic perspectives. It also examines how Turkish people evaluate the agenda of a promise of immortality –arguably humanity's greatest conundrum and source of impotence, throughout its history. Prior to undertaking field research, we

evaluated videos and articles about digital immortality from social media and online news sources, to construct a foundational appreciation of the state of affairs in the public space.

Death, Digital Immortality and Digital Citizenship

In addition to being a medical fact, death is also a social and cultural event. Since the beginning of time, people have attempted to understand death in a variety of ways. The uncertainty surrounding one's impending death has given rise to feelings of fear, worry, and curiosity. Prior to the modern era, societies accepted death as a normal part of existence. Societies' religious and cultural beliefs influence how they view death. Every civilization has its own interpretation of the meaning of death. This has not impeded the nearly universal prevalence of attempts to achieve immortality, reunions and salvation through death, and, in certain cases, attempts at preventative measures. Indeed, many societies have constructed the notion of immortality, building epics and stories to address and perpetuate the theme.

Religious and cultural explanations have facilitated people's acceptance of death. According to an old Turkish concept, it was crucial to share the suffering of the bereaved and send the deceased's soul on a tranquil journey (Alsan, 2022). The fact that different societies have assigned varying meanings to death, over time, indicates that while its most fundamental aspect is that of a biological truth, death also functions as a cultural construct. Variations in facets of death, including the meanings attached to death, the rituals performed after death, methods of grieving and remembering the deceased, and the ways in which we experience all of the above are ingrained in (and feed off of) our social and cultural environment (Erbuğ, 2021). Indeed, Durkheim (1912/2005) argued that rituals and ceremonies related to death are a tool that ensures the socialization of the group and strengthens social solidarity.

With the advancement of medicine and reasoning in the contemporary era, people have and continue to attempt to delay death on a regular basis. Modern individuals experience fear of death as a result of the ongoing attempts to delay death by medical interventions and the attempts to 'renew' or 'not age', which have made death "undesirable". The human pursuit of immortality has never stopped, even though it is feasible to view death as a second shot at life in the hereafter (i.e., a spiritual realm that exists after this life ends). This is, arguably, due in large part to the fact that there is no evidence -aside from faith or religious conviction- that any hereafter exists. Thus, the desire for immortality or the realization that death is inevitable fuels the idea that one can fight death and become immortal by enriching the lives of the living. This idea has contributed to driving humans to create culture and value to provide life meaning. Indeed, it is crucial to examine how people live their lives, in order to comprehend the phenomenon of dying. The only way that death has meaning is if life does, as well.

Bauman (1992/2018, p.10) argues that we all 'know' what death is; Or rather, until we are asked to briefly explain what we know – to describe death "as we understand it". The moment this is requested, the problem begins. A person can only form an intuitive knowledge of his own death through those who have died before them. Since they cannot experience their own death, however they are unable to define death in any precise manner. It is, perhaps, peculiar that "death" represents the ultimate emptiness: the non-existence that brings all beings into existence. Death is the antithesis of existence, an unimagined other wandering in a space where communication cannot be established. Whenever the being speaks of this other, they find they are speaking of themselves through a negative metaphor of themselves.

Culture and interpersonal relationships are the primary components that make a person human. By determining values, culture also draws the boundaries of being human. Within their culture, people make decisions about what and how they will live. Bauman argues that there is a cultural component, shielding people from death. Bauman (1992/2018, p.15) discusses two cultural activities at this point; the first deals with survival, in the sense of postponing death by extending life. In this regard, life is portrayed as the capacity to internalize contentment, which is to say a form of satisfaction. This inherently elevates the concept of death beyond the mundane, concurrently making its acceptance more difficult both directly and, to a much more substantial degree, indirectly (Bauman, 1992/2018:16).

The second cultural activity pertains to the concept of "immortality", an attribute unique to the gods, and thus a form of god-complex, as it is not inherent in human nature. To some extent, this lessens the menacing and terrifying significance of death. Consider, for example, phrases such as "he is dead, but his work lives on." Indeed, the phrase "we will remember them forever" are significant in this regard, emphasizing the duality of body, soul, and mind. To outlive death, in other words, is to refuse to give the moment of death the final say. Despite the physical destruction of the body, the soul-thought is more adept at achieving immortality. As a matter of fact, we can say that people's desire to 'leave a trace' and their efforts to achieve immortality by concretizing their soul and thought in this world is the single most effective 'elixir of life' ever found. These two cultural activities create relief in the individual, by bringing human life to a metaphysical-intellectual eternity. Only in this way can a person participate in the activity of living. Otherwise, it is conceivable that life could be seen as little more than waiting to die.

According to Kizilhan, (2018), the death of a human being, who is a social being and lives in interaction with their environment, has repercussions on their environment. As a result, people take actions such as commemorating their deceased relatives, mourning, and building monuments. Recent years have seen technology begin its incorporation into these rituals. This gave birth to myths of cyborgs, AI Technologies, and dreams of transferring human consciousness to cyberspace. People even started to freeze their bodies after they die, to come back to life when the necessary technologies emerge. Thanks to these new technological myths, capitalist companies began to sell a twisted/unusual/marginal version of immortality, through various services. They may not stop physical death, but by delaying death of people's digital-selves, they have created a new market. In this way, corporations increase their profits, individuals in power avoid the necessity of dealing with the grieving public, and the public has a fresh place to escape the painful memories of (their) loss. The newest iterations of these programs enable users to broadcast their last words on social media even after they have died and transform their accounts into digital memorials. These websites include such endeavors as *The Digital Beyond*, *ifidie*, *Deathman's Switch*, and *Death Social* (Kizilhan, 2018:564).

Savin-Baden, et al. (2017) have called attention to the security problems associated with digital immortality. They enumerated potential safety measures to guard against the following risks:

- Multiple copies and high levels of redundancy
- A modular, federated structure to minimize any damage
- Back-up copies
- High-level firewalls and anti-virus software. Monitoring and defenses
- High-levels user authentication for those with privileged access to the digital immortality
- High-level integrity/consistency-checking to ensure against code/data corruption.

The authors summarize their main concerns about digital immortality as follows:

Savin-Baden et al. (2017, p. 188) argue that

> [t]here are still questions that remain about the ideological underpinnings of digital immortality since the search for such immortality is grounded in a human desire for control over life as well as death. Such a situation could be said to support and reinforce global neoliberal values since it plays on the fears and hopes of humans whose lives have been about amassing personal resources they would wish to retain beyond death."

This illustrates that

> "a key concern for any form of digital immortality will be to maintain its own integrity. At the most basic level, this will be to ensure that it has the hosting environment (public or private) on which to operate. Almost the whole *raison d'être* of a digital immortal is to be 'immortal', so ensuring that its code and data are preserved and run will be a key concern" (Savin-Baden et al., 2017, p.191).

> "Again, there is a considerable difference in approach between the creation of a digital immortal, which is the hobby project of a programmer, and the digital immortality, which is the legacy project of a high-net-worth individual, business leader, or entrepreneur. In the latter case they have significant resources to call on, and as discussed earlier could set up a whole living human eco-system to ensure the preservation and continuing operation of the digital immortal. Perhaps much of what we are currently seeing is more of a ruse than a reality, and yet the only thing more chilling than digital immortality is in fact hacked digital immortality" (Savin-Baden et al., 2017, p.190).

Advancements in AI technology seem to indicate that digital immortality technologies will progress and permeate our daily lives. Keeping a careful eye on these technologies and being aware of the hazards is arguably be the best defense against any potential threats.

Of course, people who *fear* death are also more susceptible to emotional abuse via this fear. The authors argue that educational institutions have a social responsibility to educate the public about the moral, religious, political, and economic implications of a given subject. ISTE outlines digital citizenship education via the actions of the digital citizen in the making. Students behave and model digital citizenship in ways that are safe, legal, and ethical. They also understand the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities that come with living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital environment. It has become inevitable for digital immortality issues to be included in digital citizenship training (ISTE, 2023).

Aim and Methodology

This study aims to question how Turkish citizens perceive artificial intelligence technologies that promise a form of immortality from religious, moral, ethical and economic perspectives. Concurrently, it aims to reveal how Turkish people evaluate the agenda related to the promise of immortality, which has been the greatest enigma and source of helplessness of humanity throughout history. Therefore, we employed a three-stage research design, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data collection, utilizing a mixed methods approach for field research on the concept of immortality through artificial intelligence.

The first stage of the study employed a quantitative content analysis of social media comments related to a video depicting a mother communicating with her deceased daughter through artificial intelligence. We collected, coded and analyzed comments and viewpoints of Turkish individuals in response to this video on YouTube. Subsequently and in line with

these comments and views, we undertook a series of in-depth interviews. To this end, we interviewed fourteen participants, from various professional backgrounds, aged between 18 and 60, on the topic of immortality through artificial intelligence. We then created a survey instrument comprised of an 18 Likert-type items, based on interview data. Survey data was collected through an online survey.

Findings

The first stage of this inquiry consisted of a quantitative content analysis of social media comments related to a video was shown simultaneously across Turkey, which famously became the focus of national attention in the news (see Figure 1). *Show TV*, a prominent Turkish channel, reported this video on its main news bulletin on February 10, 2020 and shared it on YouTube.

Figure 1. Scenes from the video depicting the South Korean mother communicating with her deceased daughter via artificial intelligence

Source: https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/human-interest/south-korean-mother-reunites-with-dead-daughter-using-virtual-reality-technology-on-tv-show

Findings of the content Analysis

Between its release and undertaking this analysis, the video in question had received over 1.756 million views, nearly 26k likes and over 1100 comments since its release. 1121 comments in response to this video were categorized into six themes and coded based on relevant criteria (see Table 1.).

Table 1. The content analysis of the comments in response to the video on YouTube

Conversation about death, condolence		Not supporting digital immortality		Supporting digital immortality		Desire of having this technology for themselves		Unrelated conversations		Emojis, punctuations, exclamations		
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	Total
456	40.68%	98	8.74%	96	8.56%	47	4.2%	292	26.04%	132	11.78%	1121

The first thematic category involved comments about death (whether in general or related to this video, including condolences). This category comprised just over two-fifths (40.68%) of the comments, with many people either sharing their personal experiences of losing a loved one or general expressions about losing a child in relation to the video. The second thematic category included comments expressing opposition to the use of technology to communicate with the dead, with some commenters believing that it could cause additional pain and suffering. In this sense, approximately 1-in-11 (8.74%) respondents were against this technology. The third thematic category comprised comments expressing support for the use

of technology to communicate with the dead, and saw similar proliferation, at 8.56% of commenters. Approximately 1-in-20 (4.2%), having lost a family member, seem to wish to use this technology for themselves. The fifth category, representing just over a quarter (26.04%) of respondents represents unrelated conversations. The last category includes comments consisting exclusively of emojis and/or exclamations, and accounted for 11.78% of commenters.

These findings informed the initial conduct of in-depth interviews, which is to say the second stage of the study. We presented the video to 14 individuals (the interview subjects), who hailed from varied educational backgrounds, and were aged between 18 and 60. We asked participants the following questions:

- *Have you ever heard about "digital immortality through artificial intelligence"?*
- *Would you use such an application?*
- *What do you believe in terms of religion?*
- *Do you find it ethical / moral?*
- *Would you like to cover the cost or allocate budget to spend money for it?*

Findings of in-depth interviews

The in-depth interviews provided a wealth of information, excerpts of which are presented below:

Participant 1: Age: 45, Gender: male

"Yes, I know, I watched the video. No, I would not want to use this technology. Because I'd rather keep it the way I last saw it. Since they will reach me with artificial intelligence after I die, since I will not feel it, it may be emotional or happy for them, but in the end, I will not be able to feel it because maybe I will be in another universe. But their opinion of course…

I think it totally hypnotizes people. I don't see it as religious, but as people's turning their expectations completely into the virtual world. There is no religious situation. I find it unethical because it is very open to hypnosis. Suppose that if Jesus suddenly appeared in front of you right now, you would think that he was Jesus. Actually, it's just an artificial world.

No, I wouldn't spend money on this technology."

Participant 2: Age: 63, Gender: female

"No, I am not aware of this video. I don't want to meet like this. It hurts me more. I want to meet people I love very much, but I want to meet their true souls. I never want technology to interfere with my feelings. Because it's not real, it's virtual. I would never want to be seen like this after I die. I think it has nothing to do with religion. It's more of an emotional thing.

There is no problem ethically, it's just about the emotions people experience emotionally. Doing such a thing without thinking about where people's feelings will evolve… Personally, I wouldn't want it. I never want to allocate a budget."

Participant 3: Age: 58, Gender: female

"I would like to be with my father again. It is necessary to make sure of the security situation. I would like to meet the real profile of the person. I want to meet with my loved ones; I want children to see me. It would be good to record what's in my mom's mind with artificial intelligence. When it is recorded in mine, this information will be kept alive for generations. I would love to but……. It's okay because I'm not religious; it's okay with me as long as it's ethically guaranteed not to be abused."

Only two of the interviewees expressed a desire to use this application. Almost all of the participants stated that the issue was not related to religion. Indeed, one participant noted

that, if this application were to become widespread, there might be no need for religion. A significant number of the participants stated that they did not find the practice ethical and they would not be willing to spend money on the issue.

Some participants stated that they found this practice artificial and that this type of relationship might not satisfy them. Other participants argued that disconnecting from reality would disturb their psychology. Participants also noted concerns regarding security and legal process. Some, however, argued for the potential that such an application could help future generations better understand themselves.

Analysis of the full content of these interviews led to the creation of an instrument comprised of 18 Likert-type items, assessing the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with a series of statements (with potential responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)). Taken together, these items comprised a Likert-type scale.

The survey was administered online, via Google documents, and participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. Since the main target group of the study was Internet users from different age, occupation, sex and education groups, the questionnaire was shared across multiple social media platforms to provide diversity. The questionnaire also included the video depicting the South Korean mother and her deceased daughter's meeting. Data were collected between 5 May and 5 July, 2023, and were analyzed using SPSS (22.0). The scale exhibited a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha_{Chronbach}$=0.841).

Survey Findings

Our sample was comprised of 260 participants, of whom 59.2 % were females and 40.8 % were males (see Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of participants according to their identifying characteristics

	Introductory Feature	(n)	(%)
Gender	Female	154	59.2
	Male	106	40.8
Age Range	18-25	95	36.5
	26-35	33	12.7
	36-45	61	23.5
	46-65	66	25.4
	≥66	5	1.9
Level	Primary school	3	1.2
	Middle School	4	1.5
	High school	38	14.6
	Bachelor	158	60.8
	Graduate School	56	21.5
	Prefer not to say	1	0.4
Have you ever watched the video above	Yes	65	25
	No	195	75.0
Were you previously aware of AI capabilities on achieving digital immortality?	Yes	121	46,6
	No	139	53.4

Before beginning to respond to the items in the questionnaire, participants were instructed to watch the video. Three quarters (75%) of participants had not seen the video before, while the remaining 25% had (see Table 1). 53.4% of the respondents stated that they were not previously aware of AI's capabilities in achieving digital immortality while 46.6% were aware.

Table 3. Questionnaire Responses (Likert Type Items)

Questions		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	I wish I could chat with my deceased relatives or loved ones through artificial intelligence.	56 21.50%	54 20.80%	61 23.50%	46 17.70%	43 16.50%
Q2	To see a deceased loved one as if he/she is alive and chat with me through AI applications, would not have made my grieving process easier.	43 16.50%	39 15.00%	42 16.20%	60 23.10%	76 29.20%
Q3	I think that AI applications will keep the memories of the deceased alive.	46 17.70%	43 16.50%	35 13.50%	90 34.60%	46 17.70%
Q4	I have an idea to continue my existence in the virtual world with AI after I die.	110 42.30%	72 27.70%	48 18.50%	16 6.20%	14 5.40%
Q5	I wish I can exist virtually after I die.	109 41.90%	58 22.30%	44 16.90%	26 10.00%	23 8.80%
Q6	After I die, if I could continue to exist in the virtual world through AI my loved ones would feel better.	72 27.70%	58 22.30%	65 25.00%	42 16.20%	23 8.80%
Q7	The idea of existing in the virtual world through AI after death makes me feel good.	96 36.90%	67 25.80%	48 18.50%	29 11.20%	20 7.70%
Q8	I see AI applications as tools to connect with my loved ones after I die.	92 35.40%	67 25.80%	47 18.10%	37 14.20%	17 6.50%
Q9	I do not find it ethical to communicate with my loved ones after they die, through an AI application.	46 17.70%	51 19.60%	56 21.50%	46 17.70%	61 23.50%
Q10	Being in contact with a deceased relative through an AI application creates addiction (obsession).	40 15.40%	27 10.40%	44 16.90%	70 26.90%	79 30.40%
Q11	I do not find it religiously correct to communicate with my loved ones through an AI application after death.	83 31.90%	58 22.30%	57 21.90%	25 9.60%	37 14.20%
Q12	I think this AI application may create security problems.	43 16.50%	44 16.90%	57 21.90%	59 22.70%	57 21.90%
Q13	Using such an app may disconnect me from reality.	38 14.60%	40 15.40%	34 13.10%	79 30.40%	69 26.50%
Q14	I think that communicating with my deceased relatives by using an AI application may betray my memories.	70 26.90%	62 23.80%	58 22.30%	30 11.50%	40 15.40%
Q15	I would provide the necessary budget to use this application.	105 40.40%	68 26.20%	57 21.90%	22 8.50%	8 3.10%
Q16	I think the virtual identity created by the AI may manipulate and harm the identity of the real person who is dead.	47 18.10%	42 16.20%	59 22.70%	59 22.70%	53 20.40%
Q17	I think using this app will not cause any moral problems.	63 24.20%	47 18.10%	63 24.20%	55 21.20%	32 12.30%
Q18	Using this app may lead to psychological problems.	41 15.80%	21 8.10%	45 17.30%	67 25.80%	86 33.10%

The majority of respondents (42.3%: 21.5% Strongly Disagreed; 20.8% Disagreed) stated that (Q1) they do not want to chat with their deceased relatives through AI, and that (Q2) chatting with deceased relatives through AI would not facilitate the grieving process (52.3%: 23.1% Agreed; 29.2% Strongly Agreed) (see Table 2).

The majority of the participants (52.3%: 34.6% Agreed; 17.7% Strongly Agreed) also reported that (Q3) Artificial Intelligence applications would keep the memories of the deceased alive. Indeed, approximately half of respondents (50.7%: 26.9% Strongly Disagreed; 23.8% Disagreed) disagreed with the statement (Q14) "I think that communicating with my deceased relatives using and AI application could betray my memories", providing a measure of confirmation for the previous opinion.

In questions Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, and Q8, regarding the desire and wish to exist in the virtual world through artificial intelligence after their death, the participants reported no desire to exist in this state.

When asked about the ethics of using such technology, the majority of the participants (41.3%: 17.7% Agreed, 23.5% Strongly Agreed) did not find it ethical to communicate with loved ones after they die through an AI application (Q9). Having said that, most (42.3%: 24.2% Strongly Disagreed, 18.1% Disagreed) disagreed with the idea that using this app would not lead to any moral problems (Q17).

Participants believe that communicating through AI after death could result in psychological problems. Over half of the respondents (26.9% Agreed, 30.4% Strongly Agreed) stated that being in contact with a deceased relative through an AI application could lead to addiction or obsession (Q10). Moreover, a substantial portion of respondents (58.9%: 25.8% agreed, 33.1% strongly agreed) believed that using this app might lead to psychological problems (Q18). More than half of respondents (56.9%: 30.4% agreed, 26.5% strongly agreed) thought that using such an app could disconnect them from reality (Q13). The majority of the participants (43.1%: 22.7% Agreed, 20.4% Strongly Agreed) believed that the virtual identity created by the AI might manipulate and harm the identity of the deceased real person who is dead.

When questioned about the religious dimension, just over half of respondents (54.2%: 31.9% Strongly Disagreed, 22.3% Disagreed) disagreed with the idea that they did not perceive any religious drawbacks (Q11). In other words, the majority of respondents seem to agree that employing AI for such purposes has little to do with religion.

The majority of the participants (44.6%: 22.7% Agreed, 21.9% Strongly Agreed) believed that AI application might create security problems (Q12). Two thirds of respondents (66.6%: 40.4% Strongly Disagreed, 26.2% Disagreed) did not endorse the idea of allocating the necessary budget to use this application (Q15).

Discussion and Conclusion

Turkish people have varying opinions about using technology to communicate with the deceased loved ones. Similar numbers of individuals on social media expressed support and opposition to the idea of reuniting with dead relatives. It is important to remember, however, that the social media commentary in question represents a specific sample, comprised of individuals who are active social media users and thus may not be representative of the population's views overall. Having said that, our survey results largely aligned with the results of our in-depth interviews. Though the majority of the participants are interested in studies of digital immortality through artificial intelligence technology, they believe that this issue is currently insignificant and they do not want to take part in an application that would personally concern them.

The majority of the participants do not consider the idea of existing in a virtual environment after death through artificial intelligence, nor do they believe that such applications could raise concerns about security, ethics and psychological problems. Moreover, they are not inclined to spend money on such endeavors. They believe that technology companies market this technology, and thus perceive digital immortality as unrealistic –something akin to a video game. Approximately 20% of the participants reported remaining undecided on this

issue. A substantial number of people, however, want to communicate with their deceased loved ones using such applications and do not perceive any ethical concerns with it, from a religious standpoint.

Similarly to Kizilhan (2018), our respondents expressed their reluctance to maintain a virtual presence after death. However, while the rate of negative thoughts was higher in this study, the number of undecided participants appears to have increased in the current research. Conducting research in Brazil, Galvão et al. (2021) found evidence of significance in considering human values in the development of systems dealing with sensitive issues, such as death. Kawashima et al. (2023) found that Japanese people in mourning did not expect to be in contact with their deceased relatives through artificial intelligence applications. Indeed, only 20% of them expressed a desire to reunite with their deceased in the digital space.

In this period of rising visibility of digital immortality studies and media coverage, research related to the issue highlights a significant amount of uncertainty and anxiety surrounding digital immortality. It is essential to inform not only children and young people but also older individuals about this issue, given that digital technologies are rapidly integrating into every aspect of our lives. Both national and international laws, along with social policies, should closely monitor and adapt to this evolving development. The protection of universal values and privacy, alongside national values, will become increasingly important. Situations of death, mourning, and remembrance are some of the most sensitive moments for individuals. In such instances, people may become vulnerable to emotional manipulation. This vulnerability may hinder their ability to safeguard their personal and legal rights. The most effective approach to overcoming this uncertainty is by providing digital citizenship trainings for all individuals.

The public's running perception of the concept of digital immortality but also the ethics, mores, and concerns surrounding the issue must necessarily, inform the content and structure of digital citizenship training. Understanding these issues *de facto* necessitates continued and expanded examinations of these and, in time, increasingly specific aspects of digital immortality. Given the number of respondents, the method of reaching them and the method of sample selection, we argue that there is a strong case for viewing this study as a pilot for a more complex inquiry. We argue, in other words, that on the foundations of this study, there are grounds for more extensive research that can, in turn, inform public, social, and educational policies and, thus, better inform and educate the individual with regard to this expression of the latest evolution of the human condition.

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