2022

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SIETAR SWITZERLAND
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research

The Reach of Intercultural Education & Inclusion

THE SWISS JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

2022 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

SIETAR SWITZERLAND
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research

First published in 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland by SIETAR Switzerland
http://sietar.ch/

ISSN 2674-0370 (Online)

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research is a double-blind peer reviewed, scholarly journal.

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 2022

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HTTP://SIETAR.CH/JOURNAL/

Table of Contents

Editorial

The Swiss Journal of Intercultural Education, Training and Research highlights authentic responses from intercultural researchers and practitioners that discuss important intercultural matters in a meaningful and diverse way. Explorations of culture, inclusion, language, pedagogy, autoethnography, home, intercultural leadership, and physical and virtual space pave the way to a collective intellect and intercultural action. In this way we build our knowledge around the diverse aspects of intercultural competences spanning local and global contexts.

Contributors to this edition bring research data as well as rich experiences in their interpretation of intercultural education, training, and research now and in the future. Included are a diverse selection of very meaningful intercultural, global contributions ranging from exploring rigidly held concepts, intercultural competence of future teachers, intercultural encounters, learning pathways, a policy framework analysis for refugee children in Europe and their access to compulsory educational systems, a critical analysis of intercultural education for social justice, to maneuvering the challenges and opportunities of virtual global leadership.

Three articles were selected for publication here from the congress proceedings of the May 2022 SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research) Switzerland Congress on "Interculturality for a Sustainable Future Concepts, Tools and Initiatives for Living and Working Together Towards a Boundaryless World". These authors encourage us to challenge firmly established perceptions of concepts, consider tribalism in Switzerland, and use challenge-based learning as a tool for diversity & inclusion in higher education.

Cultural diversity has a profound effect on our social, professional, and private settings. Thus, the competence to communicate and collaborate effectively on an interpersonal level with the alleged super diversity (namely a myriad of attitudes, styles, values, beliefs, norms, customs, behaviors, and ways of life) is a key skill. This competence not only constitutes a key qualification required in professional/business/international fields, it is a critical personal attribute for one's wellbeing and for broader social cohesion. However, gaining intercultural competence is a lifelong process of increasing self-awareness, developing social skills and behaviors around diversity, and gaining the ability to advocate for others.

Overall, the papers in this edition come to terms with multimodal and reflexive practices from a broad spectrum of settings and national contexts, both in person and virtual.

Eugenia Arvanitis, Editor, University of Patras

Jillaine Farrar, Associate Editor, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts - Business

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Intercultural Encounters in the Primary EFL Classroom: Reflections on a Seminar for Teacher Education Students

Sarah Reader,[1] Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany

A new focal point in foreign language (FL) teaching has emerged in the last decades: intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This has led to a shift in the FL classroom from imparting facts about the countries and cultures in which target languages are embedded to encountering and exploring new cultures with openness, curiosity, and respect and engaging with people and their practices in order to learn more about them; to reflecting deeply upon one's own culture; and, ultimately, to communicating with people from different cultures in an appropriate manner. Foreign languages are compulsory in primary school in all of the German states, and ICC appears in each state's primary FL curriculum. Teacher education reflects this, and ICC is a part of teacher education programs. This article begins by providing a brief summary of ICC in primary FL curricula in Germany, and then offers details about the implementation and evaluation of a required seminar on intercultural encounters in primary EFL instruction for seventh semester teacher education students majoring in English at TU Chemnitz in Chemnitz, Germany.

Keywords: ICC, Teacher Education, Primary School, Foreign Language Teaching, EFL, Intercultural Encounters

Foreign Languages and ICC in Primary Schools in Germany

Foreign language (FL) lessons in primary school are compulsory in all sixteen of the German federal states (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2013). Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been coined as a central goal of foreign language teaching (Byram, 1997), and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany states that one of the goals of foreign language lessons in primary school is the initiation and development of ICC (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2013). Facts about countries where the target language is spoken have long had a fixed place in foreign language classrooms and curricula alongside language goals, but teaching about culture often falls short of providing opportunities for engagement with cultures different from one's own and reflection on the differences or similarities that can be observed. This kind of reflection not only provides for an improved understanding of the target cultures, but also allows for new insights into the learners' own culture (Böttger, 2020; Roche, 2020). Intercultural encounters that allow for comparison and reflection aim to enable a shift of perspective and to build learners' awareness, openness, acceptance and empathy for cultures different from their own (Böttger 2020). Furthermore, learners should develop the ability to appropriately navigate encounters with people from various cultures (Bildungsserver Berlin-Brandenburg, 2015; Böttger 2020). In short, intercultural encounters and learning experiences in the primary foreign language classroom have the potential to initiate the lifelong process of developing ICC.

[1] Sarah Reader, Technische Universität Chemnitz Center for Teacher Education, Straße der Nationen 12, 09111 Chemnitz, Germany. email: sarah.reader@zlb.tu-chemnitz.de

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

ICC in the Foreign Language Curricula

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany state that developing ICC is one of the main goals of English teaching and learning in primary school (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2013). Furthermore, the Council of Europe added scales and descriptors for pluricultural competence in 2015-2016 (Szabo, 2018), underscoring the importance of this area in language learning. Additionally, the primary school foreign language curricula of all sixteen of the German federal states have some mention of intercultural encounters, intercultural competence, or ICC. Considering the inclusion of intercultural and pluricultural competence in the goals and descriptors of those national and international bodies, as well as in all of the German states' curricula, promoting the development of ICC in primary foreign language classrooms should have a solid place in teacher education.

ICC in Foreign Language Teacher Education

While I was studying to become a German as a foreign language teacher in the early 2000s at Central Michigan University (CMU) in the United States, I do not recall any required courses in the teacher education program with a focus on intercultural encounters, learning, or competence in the FL classroom. This was at a time when communicative language teaching dominated, and intercultural language teaching was emerging. My own experiences then and now have led me to survey course requirements for current students of foreign language teacher education, both in my home state of Michigan and my current home, the state of Saxony in Germany.

In Michigan, it appears that all university students are required to attend general education courses with a focus on cultural studies or diversity. For example, the two universities with teacher education programs in my home region, CMU and Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) both require all students to earn credits in foreign language or cultural studies courses in their general education programs (Central Michigan University, 2022b; Saginaw Valley State University, 2022). In the course requirements for students of elementary education at CMU, however, I was unable to find any courses with a sole intercultural or multicultural focus (Central Michigan University, 2022a). In the course requirements for teacher education students at SVSU, there is a required course on Sociocultural Contexts of Learners and a social studies elective on Global Cultures, but I was unable to find any courses with a focus on ICC for future foreign language teachers (Saginaw Valley State University, 2022). Expanding the focus to other universities in Michigan, I found that all primary teacher education majors at the University of Michigan are required to complete a course entitled Educational Foundations in a Multicultural Society (University of Michigan, 2022) and Michigan State University requires an Internship in Teaching Diverse Learners (Michigan State University, 2022).

Turning to teacher education programs in the state of Saxony that address elementary English as a foreign language, we find that intercultural encounters and ICC are included in the requirements of many universities' teacher education programs, but in the examined study requirements, no other seminars at Saxon universities were found that appear to be dedicated entirely to ICC in the primary school English-as-a-foreign-language classroom. In the study requirements for English majors in TU Dresden's elementary teacher education program, the required modules on the practice of teaching English include the promotion of ICC in all of their goals and contents alongside a range of other skills and competences (TU Dresden, 2021). Leipzig

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

University requires primary-education students majoring in English to pass a seminar entitled Literature, Culture, and Media in the Primary English Classroom. According to the module description, ICC seems to be one topic covered in the seminar alongside principles for teaching EFL with literature and media (Universität Leipzig, 2021). As part of a study on teacher education students' intercultural competence development, 12 weeks of this 14-week seminar were dedicated to intercultural training for the future language teachers in the summer semesters of 2017 and 2018 (Wildenauer, 2021). I am unable to report whether that seminar continues to consist mainly of intercultural training.

This glimpse into other universities' FL teacher education requirements is by no means intended as a criticism of other programs and of course does not provide a full picture of the content of any given seminar. Culture, diversity, multiculturalism, and ICC are clearly a part of foreign language teacher education in both states' teacher education programs to varying degrees and in relation to the unique context of each state's location and population. The North American context is significantly different from the European context in terms of geography, history, and population, which makes such a comparison difficult, if not nearly impossible. In any case, it is encouraging to see the inclusion of culture, diversity, multiculturalism, and ICC in required courses for students pursuing certification as primary foreign language teachers.

The Seminar Intercultural Encounters in the Primary English Classroom

There is a large body of literature and research on intercultural communication in many different contexts and intercultural communicative competence in the context of language teaching and learning, but comparatively little literature directly related to ICC in foreign language classes at the primary level. This was my first challenge while preparing for the 15-week, 90-minute per week seminar called Intercultural Encounters in the Primary English Classroom, which I was assigned to teach in the winter semester 2021-2022 at TU Chemnitz in Chemnitz, Germany. (It was my first time teaching the seminar, but the seminar is not new.) A further challenge was finding exemplary teaching materials to analyze with the future English teachers. These challenges were overcome by using the students' own plethora of experiences and ideas alongside teacher education texts, textbooks, and current research. Together, we experienced an interactive and enlightening semester culminating in each student teaching a short intercultural English lesson developed for the 3rd or 4th grade to their fellow students.

I divided the seminar into three five-week sections. The first five weeks of the seminar were spent exploring terminology related to ICC, students' own intercultural encounters, and ICC in the curricula of the German states. The second five weeks moved on to a closer examination of ICC in the primary English classroom. Finally, in the last five weeks of the semester, students taught their own intercultural English lessons to the class. The following sections present an overview of the seminar content, results, and evaluation.

Part 1: ICC in General and in the Curricula

The first phase of the seminar provided a foundation for further work by establishing clear and differentiated definitions of terms related to intercultural competence, before searching for

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

mentions of ICC and related terms in the curricula of the sixteen German states. At times there were references to specific content related to ICC and at other times, more general global statements about outputs and outcomes were made. Some examples include developing the ability to describe and reflect on similarities and differences between cultures (Ministerium für Bildung des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, 2019), the ability to successfully navigate intercultural encounters (Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur des Landes Schleswig-Holstein, 2019), and developing curiosity, awareness, openness, tolerance, and respect for other cultures (Die Senatorin für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 2013; Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung, 2011; Ministerium für Schule und Bildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2021; Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium, 2018). Parallel to exploring mentions of ICC in the curricula, students were asked to describe their own intercultural encounters objectively and reflect on them in order to experience an activity similar to what they might have their future students do. They were encouraged to use the questions provided in the Council of Europe's *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Byram, M., Barrett, M., Ipgrave, J., Jackson, R. & del Carmen Méndez García, M., 2009).

Next, students were to describe ways in which they might include their own intercultural encounters in their future classrooms. A number of ideas were generated, ranging from teachers telling their students about their experiences during a related learning unit to trying out different cultural practices to asking learners about their opinions of cultural practices that the teachers have observed or experienced. The students responded very positively to this activity: they appreciated the variety of experiences shared and the ideas that were generated. One student commented in class that teachers sharing their own experiences brings lessons alive and provides learners with memorable moments, especially if something potentially embarrassing happened to the teacher. In short, the activities discussed hold the potential to engage and activate learners.

Part 2: Initiating and Fostering ICC in 3rd and 4th Grade English Lessons

The second five weeks of the seminar were spent engaging with teacher education texts and research (Böttger, 2020; Brunsmeier, 2016; Elsner, 2015; and Legutke, Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth, 2017) and primary English textbooks available on the German market such as *Discovery*, *Ginger*, *Playway*, and *Sally*. This phase of the seminar had multiple aims. The first aim was to explore and explain the shift from teaching about cultures and countries (*Landeskunde* in German) to engaging with and reflecting on cultures in foreign language teaching. The second aim was to describe what primary-school-aged children are capable of within the process of developing ICC. The third aim connected to the second one and explored the question of how teachers can facilitate learners' ICC development at an age-appropriate level in the foreign language classroom. Finally, the fourth aim was to describe, analyze, and discuss intercultural lesson ideas. Students worked individually or in pairs and selected an intercultural topic or lesson idea from one of the teacher education texts or a primary English textbook. They were to analyze the quality of the materials used based on criteria discussed in the teacher education texts that were assigned, describe opportunities and challenges that the lesson ideas presented, and consider how they would implement the lesson in their own classrooms. Students presented their ideas to the class for discussion. Again, lively discussions ensued, and students appreciated the opportunity to share their own ideas, get feedback, and hear other students'

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

approaches to a variety of topics, some of which they had not considered using in the classroom before.

Part 3: Teaching an Intercultural English Lesson

The final five weeks of class were the culmination of the seminar in which students could apply the theory from the first two parts to their own teaching practice. Each student was required to teach a 15-minute mini-lesson with an intercultural focus to their fellow students, with the option of working with a partner and teaching a 30-minute lesson. This teaching practice was assessed based on both the intercultural content of the lesson and on delivery.

Each student or pair was required to select a different topic and develop a short intercultural lesson based on that topic. The final presentation and practice teaching experience was to include an up-to-two-minute introduction that described the rationale for the lesson and provided basic details about the grade level, timing during the school year, connections to the curriculum, and any further information needed about a longer lesson or project in which the mini lesson would be embedded. After this short introduction placing the lesson in context, students were to teach the lesson as if they were teaching it to a primary-school class.

The mini-lessons developed by the students covered a variety of topics, ranging from holiday celebrations around the world to comparing school in the US or Great Britain and Germany, international foods, a city tour, sports, traditions, language awareness and an initial lesson to kick off a virtual exchange project. The future teachers did an excellent job of integrating intercultural topics into their language lessons, using a variety of methods and approaches to activate and engage their learners, build on what they already knew, and arouse curiosity about people and practices different from those they were familiar with. A reflective component was also present in most of the lessons, during which learners were usually given the opportunity to compare their own surroundings and experiences with those of the culture they were learning about, and at times to try a new game, food, or practice. This reflection gives learners an opportunity not only to think more deeply about the new culture they are encountering, but also to consider their own experiences and practices more closely.

Evaluation

The seminar Intercultural Encounters in the EFL Primary Classroom was evaluated by the university at the end of the winter semester 2021-2022 in January 2022. The university's regulations require yearly evaluations that are included in an annual report on instruction, and the Center for Teacher Education at the TU Chemnitz selected one course in each subject area for evaluation. The evaluation was implemented online using a standard survey about seminars and data about the seminar's structure, methods, and connections to practice and research, as well as the overall usefulness of the seminar. In the following paragraphs, I would like to present information about the evaluation itself and then present some of the results of the survey with relation to the quality, structure, and overall rating of this seminar.

Ten of the nineteen students who were registered for the course submitted their responses to the online survey and responded to a total of 41 statements about the seminar. Responses about the correctness of statements regarding the structure, content, and quality of the seminar could be given using a seven-point scale, with one point corresponding to *not correct at all* and six

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

corresponding to *completely correct*. The seventh option was *no answer*. At the end of the survey, students were to grade the seminar on a 6-point scale of *unsatisfactory* to *very good*. Overall, the seminar was graded by the students as *good* (40% of respondents) to *very good* (60% of respondents).

Next, I will present some of the individual evaluation statements, with a focus on the highest two ratings: *correct* and *completely correct*. 90% of respondents found the seminar well-structured and the goals of the seminar clear. 100% felt that they gained a deeper understanding of the material through the seminar. 100% of respondents deemed the content important and useful for their future careers and would recommend the seminar to other students. Personal conversations with individual students also underscored the survey results: students said that they appreciated the chance to describe and reflect on their own experiences and ideas about incorporating intercultural encounters into their lessons, as well as valuing the opportunity to teach a short intercultural lesson and receive detailed feedback on it. One student mentioned in a personal consultation that before attending this seminar, they had little to no awareness of ICC in primary English teaching. However, after attending the seminar, they judged the importance of ICC in EFL teaching as high and even decided to investigate ICC in foreign language teaching for their final thesis. Three other students who attended this seminar have also chosen topics focusing on ICC in primary English teaching for their final theses.

Conclusion and Outlook

With the evaluation results and personal conversations with students in mind, I believe this seminar can be considered a success. ICC seemed to be a relatively unknown aspect of language teaching for a number of the students, based on comments made in and outside of the seminar. The positive evaluation reflects students' benefitting from their opportunities to describe their own intercultural experiences and learn about the intercultural encounters of their fellow students. Students also valued the range of familiar and new ideas for exploiting these intercultural experiences, as well as other culture topics to incorporate ICC into their future classrooms. The fact that four of the students in the seminar have decided to write their final theses on topics connected to ICC in primary EFL teaching can also be considered a sign of success.

Of course, there is always room for improvement. For example, during the past semester, primary-school English textbooks from the university library were available to students for discussion in the second phase of the seminar, but these were not always the most recent editions of those textbooks. In the future, the most recent editions of textbooks should be available for analysis. Moreover, I attempted to encourage students to include the multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of their potential learners to make all learners feel seen and acknowledged in an open and accepting atmosphere, but this proved to be challenging. One of the mini-lessons in the final phase of the course did that, however. The lesson about international foods was prepared with learners with various first languages and cultural backgrounds in mind and allowed for a discussion of eating habits in many different countries, not just anglophone ones. In the future, I would like to expand on possibilities for using the unique situation in the EFL classroom to include learners' multilingual and multicultural backgrounds. In sum, the students' mini-lessons at the end of the semester demonstrated that they were able to apply the theories and concepts surrounding ICC that they had studied in the beginning phases of the

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

seminar. I look forward to working with the next group of students in the next winter semester and further developing this seminar's content and goals.

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ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Reader, M.A.: Research Assistant, Center for Teacher Education, Technische Universität Chemnitz, Germany

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Learning Pathways Through Which Vocational Counsellors Acquire Intercultural Competence

Charikleia Manavi[2], Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

This article focusses on the learning pathways through which vocational counsellors acquire intercultural competences. Discussion presented herein is part of broader doctoral research. The findings underscore that research participants set the next steps of their professional development based on how they perceive the problems and needs of the unemployed they get to assist, and on the requirements of their profession. From the presentation of milestones of their own process of socialization and the creation of social and professional identity, it emerged that the cultivation of their intercultural sensitivity and ability was achieved through formal, non-formal, and informal learning processes that gave them the opportunity to deal with identity issues.

Keywords: Continuing Training of Vocational Counsellors, Intercultural competence, Intercultural Vocational Counselling, Grounded theory, Constructivist research

According to Sue (1995), an informed counsellor makes a culturally competent counsellor: that is, a counsellor who values diversity, especially cultural diversity. One who has realized their own cultural behavior and is aware of the mechanisms through which their experiences, attitudes, principles, and prejudices affect their psychological background. One who recognizes the limits of their abilities and knowledge and functionally handles the differences between them and the respective counselee. Wrenn (1962), following the same line of reasoning, considers that the counsellor who is fully aware of their own cultural and/or national identity makes an effective counsellor. This is someone who recognizes their own culture, their own cultural encapsulation, and the prejudices that exist within this culture; who understands that there are similarities and differences between the group they belong to and other social groups and who is in a position to identify them (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993). Such a counsellor interprets the image and behavior of the other person in the context of intercultural awareness, having connected them with the context wherein they have developed. This counsellor considers the circumstances from the «other person's» point of view as well, distinguishes right from wrong in a cultural context differing from their own, shows interest in the social welfare of people with cultural peculiarities and in their emotional, social, spiritual progress, and is aware of and wants to be informed in relation to their myths, stereotypes, and non-verbal behavior (Hofstede et al. 2002; Sue,1998).

From the above attempts to determine the intercultural competence of the vocational counsellor, three axes of effectiveness emerge (Pedersen & Ivey 1993). The first is the axis of knowledge, where the intercultural vocational counsellor is expected (indicatively) to be able to understand the social role of minorities in their country, to be aware of various elements of the culture of the unemployed people they advise, to understand the difficulties and obstacles they come up against in their daily contact with the various social services, and so on. The second is the axis of awareness, where vocational counsellors are expected to reflect on which of their values and principles stem from their own cultural background, to feel comfortable with and

[2] Charikleia Manavi, PhD Candidate, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Macedonia, Greece. email: chmanavi@edlit.auth.gr

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

accept the cultural differences that arise between counsellors and the counselled etc. The third is the axis of skills, where vocational counsellors are expected to respect the worldview of their counselees, to communicate effectively in different cultural contexts, to receive and send accurate verbal and non-verbal messages to and from people from different cultures, and to be flexible in changing their working context for the benefit of culturally diverse counselees.

Updating vocational counsellors' skills in an intercultural direction does not therefore simply consist of acquiring new knowledge and gaining new skills (Sultana, 2011). The vocational counsellors themselves are the main tools in this process, and their improvement through self-assessment is an important aspect of their professional development. Aspects of themselves that the counsellors are called upon to explore are their motivation to help others; the ability to develop and manage emotions such as self-esteem, insecurity; moral values; the perception of their own particular culture; the perception of the culture of groups other than the one they belong to; their attitude towards other races; the attitude of «others» towards them; and so on (Mastorakis, 2009). In the same line of reasoning, Locke (1992), recommends that, in order to increase the degree of cultural awareness and learning, vocational counsellors should reflect upon their parents' culture, their own culture, their principles, values, and attitudes. It is also recommended that they reflect upon their profession and the reasons they chose it, the way their profession is influenced by their cultural standards etc. In addition, vocational counsellors often act beyond their traditional role in order to be effective with culturally diverse unemployed clients (Hansen, 2003). It becomes obvious that the complex range of skills required to respond adequately to the career counselling of migrants, refugees and the culturally diverse unemployed in general calls for specialized training and a dynamic Lifelong learning process (Piazza et al., 2017). For this reason, I found it interesting to investigate how vocational counsellors experienced in serving culturally diverse unemployed people had learned to respond to this responsibility.

In this research, through the vocational counsellors' reflective observations about their experience, individual changes, and counselling interventions, I tried to clarify how they managed to develop their intercultural competences, so as to be functional in counselling culturally diverse individuals. The material used is the point of view that thirty experienced intercultural counselling practitioners for the unemployed have expressed through their semi-structured interviews. The research material has been compiled and analyzed through the Grounded Theory method in its constructivist version. In this paper, I focus on what learning pathways shape the characteristics that help vocational counsellors to develop intercultural competence.

Based on the analysis of the empirical material, I theorize that research participants are aware of the pathway of their transformation into intercultural vocational counsellors as something highly individual and personal. All of them went through various stages, up to the point that they formed their own approach. The process of change, as they describe it in their narratives, takes a course that is neither linear nor predictable. On the contrary, it was and continues to be personal and unique to each counsellor who participated in the research. The research highlighted the belief that some characteristics assisting the study participants in counselling with people from different cultural backgrounds also constitute traits of their personality. They demonstrate a self-critical way of thinking, the ability to analyze daily experiences, and a life philosophy based on the principle of respect for human beings. This highlights the belief that intercultural competence should be taught in the long run, which means it requires elements of character, targeted, broad and long-term education, as it evolves Lifelong and beyond formal education, a position supported by the relevant literature (Elenes, 1997; Huber

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

& Reynolds, 2017; Kiselica, 1999; Sue & Sue, 1990). Research participants' willingness to learn from themselves is pervasive in all subject areas of the factual material. This view is also confirmed by Garman (1994), who correlates empathy levels with self-exploration and self-awareness, that is, with processes involving reflective dialogue and re-evaluation of beliefs, prejudices, and stereotypes in relation to culturally diverse individuals (Flores & Heppner, 2002). This practice, according to Reid (2016), concerns a higher level of professional performance, which presupposes a thinking professional, who uses to analyze their experience and tries out various alternatives.

Through their narratives, the research participants emphasize the contribution of targeted training by instructors experienced in the field; the contribution of their studies and practices such as writing assignments, participating in research programs etc. They consider the study of sociology and psychology, the study of foreign languages, has broaden their horizons and enabled them to consciously opt for appropriate methodologies and practices in the field. This has been proven empirically by Bimrose and Barnes (2006), who argue that the theoretical background of counsellors, the knowledge of modern models, and their being acquainted with their application determine the quality and outcome of the consulting. In Nganga's research (2006) on trainee vocational counsellors, learning foreign languages is presented as an indication of an interest in becoming familiar with other cultures and implies a possible increase in sensitivity and empathy for people from different cultures. Olson and Kroeger (2001), respectively, attempted to prove that the learning of languages increases intercultural sensitivity, as defined by Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale.

The participants in the study perceive their wider cultural environment and personal histories, from childhood to the present, to have been important sources of intercultural learning. They refer to socially acquired behaviors passed down to them through social learning processes. In intercultural learning, awareness of how the collectivity, wherein the individual belongs, along with their personal background, has influenced them, is considered the key to understanding other cultures (Bennett, 1995; Parsons, 1954). Participants in the study devalue the negative socially learned behaviors they encounter in their daily lives. This attitude, according to Hansen (2021), Sultana (2014) and Thompson (2005), marks the perception of moral responsibility regarding the mediating role between the unemployed and society and the defense of social justice. According to Goleman (1998), empathy is preceded by the confrontation of the counsellor with their cultural representations that create their stereotypical thoughts.

Research participants refer to the facilities provided by cities, such as access to relevant literature, workshops and collective activities (festivals, lectures, book launches, etc.) and the opportunities cities generally offer one to get acquainted with diversity, such as the networking with organizations and civil society and opportunities for volunteering and so on. In the relevant literature, Pedersen (1997) connects the management of diversity and cultural exchanges with locality and the degree of exposure to multiculturalism. Several participants in the study mentioned friendships and contacts they developed with foreigners and people of different cultural orientation which they still maintain. This echoes the findings of Pettigrew 1977, who believes that long-term contact and genuine friendships with people belonging to different groups can reduce prejudice. To the question «in what learning environments can an individual's intercultural capital be increased?» Pöllmann (2016) answers that the more experience one obtains in relation to the lifestyle of other cultures, the more they demystify one's own. The development of relevant collective awareness-raising activities, the smooth integration of

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

intercultural social groups, the design of open spaces and squares according to the Sitte model for the hosting of such activities, the familiarization of populations on-the-move with the culture prevailing in the host country: all these constitute strategies that institutions and civil society can use to contribute to the redefinition of the individual's, social and political identity; to the development of a sense of community, security and joy for all residents; and to the harmonious coexistence of natives and foreigners, always with respect for the law and customs of the place of reception (Harvey, 2007; Zarkia, in Petronoti, 1998).

The participants in the study consider that the experience they gained from other jobs they did from time to time, contributed to the development of intercultural understanding as they became familiar with culturally diverse individuals. They also point at random factors in life, such as living abroad for a while or friendships and collaborations with foreigners, as significantly contributing to their success at their jobs. For many, their occupational choices and the course of their professions were determined by how they internalized and processes many of these earlier experiences with foreign places and people. The role of life experiences in professional development was highlighted, among others, by Krumboltz (2009), in his Random Learning Theory. Specifically, given that a person's career is constantly shaped by many learning experiences and random factors, he considered the recognition, creation, and utilization of random situations to be the greatest skill. For this reason, he suggested gaining learning experiences through an active lifestyle (ibid.). Similarly, social construction theory perceives development as a dynamic process (Mahoney, 2003). An individual is thus perceived to develop through a process that focuses on giving a sense of purpose to the individual's experiences within a given space and timeframe and, on the development and use of concepts that are to be considered structural elements of reality. Through this sense of purpose and through the use of words in the context of various social processes, people not only represent but also build their reality and therefore their professional identity. Essentially, knowledge is produced by social action (traditions, interactions, negotiations between individuals or groups).

The research participants feel they have evolved as professionals through their work experience on the job and through the challenges they perceive to be part of working with culturally diverse unemployed people. The concept of challenge, as well as the potential for learning that it provides, is constantly encountered in narratives provided by participants in the study, in the way challenge is perceived in Piaget's (1970) approach. That is, following an effective response to a challenge, Piaget argues that new knowledge is produced. This knowledge is either assimilated into already existing schemes, or else it forces the adjustment of existing knowledge schemes in such a way that new challenges can be interpreted, thus building new mental schemes. In the field of therapeutic counselling, related research finds a strong correlation between work experience and intercultural competence (Granello & Wheaton, 1998; Whitney, 2006). Sue et al. (1992) recommend that intercultural counsellors seek educational and work experience to broaden their skills in relation to people from different cultural backgrounds.

On the job, research participants report that learn from the counselees themselves. They obtain information about their cultural context and monitor the way in which their cultural peculiarities, and not just these, influence their professional decisions and vocational counselling. They also learn from their colleagues through observation and mutual help, through participatory management techniques that enlists the help of employees in analyzing and solving work related problems. The participants take initiatives to network with the appropriate bodies (NGOs and support services for socially vulnerable groups) and learn from their executives with extensive

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

experience in the field. Moreover, in terms of learning at the workplace, supervision was mentioned as a source of learning, whether this is individual and focuses on one's own practices, or in a group, where counsellors have the opportunity to communicate fears and questions arising from their daily practice. Through supervision, it appears, emphasis is placed on critical reflection, which agrees with the view of Flores and Heppner (2002). The influence of significant others on learning, educational and professional choices and on the professional identity of individuals, as this manifests itself in professional behavior, and the perspective of the research participants, is confirmed by the relevant literature. In particular, the counsellors' view on developing critical thinking and effective learning through supervision, reflective discussions with colleagues, mentors, and potential role models is pointed out by Mezirow et al. (1990). Therefore, the responsibility for developing vocational counsellors' intercultural competence can be enhanced by the philosophy of their workplaces (Piazza et al., 2017).

Vocational counsellors who participated in the study, individually motivated and mainly on their own initiative, have gradually increased their self-efficacy, leading them to provide higher quality vocational counselling. They perceive every obstacle or inadequacy as a challenge and mobilize themselves to vigorously respond to the challenges. They constantly select, plan, review, reorganize their methodology, test, experiment, learn from experience, and devise functional ways to relate to those around them. Certain character traits emerged as significant causes and occasions for intercultural learning and for the development of intercultural skills in the practice of their profession, such as a strong sense of responsibility toward their clients. Other important character traits that have improved the research participants efficacy include: their drive to pursue knowledge and success, their foresight and the need for validation, their need to test their limits and to understand themselves in depth. They also mentioned the part played by team colleagues in motivating them to learn, as well as benefits to themselves and the organization employing them; to career counselling as a sector; and to society in general.

Factual material shows that the vocational counsellors who participated in the study are constantly alert and questioning their practices, with a steady disposition for change and learning, a condition that is indicative of their familiarity with reflection as a tool for developing their professional identity. They are, in addition, aware of their weaknesses. Spalding and Wilson (2002) consider this awareness an important indicator of reflective thinking. The research participants also undertake the responsibility to learn. On their own initiative, they dedicate personal free time to their profession. They «engage», as they themselves state, seek, seize every learning opportunity, update and broaden their scientific knowledge and skills, and evolve by learning. They follow the changes in the profession, but also in the economy and the existent labor market. They are interested in new professional skills, information about the respective reference group, themselves, labor rights legislation, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, sustainability, and so on.

Most of the vocational counsellors who participated in the study not only know exactly what they want to learn in the future, but also how they want to learn it. This, according to Brookfield (2013) and Tough (1971), highlight the role of self-directed learning in their professional development. In particular, they prefer methods that meet the requirements and activities of their professional development (through practice and with seasoned educators, people who possess, in addition to theoretical competence, field experience, individual and group supervision, peer learning, peer support processes). The research participants trust experiential learning and instructors with field experience. They learn from the elaboration of their

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

experiences, which they often characterize as «challenges» for further knowledge, action and changes, according to the view of Kolb (2014), who perceives experiential education as a clock gear, or, he says, as a process of reflection on the experiences from which knowledge is produced, that mobilizes comprehension, actions and changes, and the reshaping of reality. Participants in the study consider every seminar an opportunity to meet with experts but especially with colleagues, and to share experiences. According to Schön, learning in practice consists of knowledge in practice and reflection in practice. Knowledge in practice takes place spontaneously. Reflection in practice takes place as soon as the professional begins to explore ways to solve a particular problem and begins to create the right conditions to solve it. With reflection in practice, past experiences from similar situations are recalled. Interaction with others is considered important in this process, which makes reflection a social process. Feeling insecure about their intercultural competence as an attitude was confirmed by research in 1994, when a large percentage of psychologists treating people with unfamiliar cultural backgrounds felt insecure about their ability to meet the challenge (Flores & Heppner, 2002). Fiorucci (2011), recommends vocational counsellors who are faced with complexity and uncertainty to embrace constant reflection, critically confronting their own prejudices.

The research participants perceive their environment as a source of learning and are ready to learn even from a child, when they see one that know something useful about their work. As an important source of learning, the study participants also cite their family and wider social environment, volunteering, cinema, expert lectures, participation in or monitoring of related research and studies. They utilize the potential of volunteering to familiarize themselves with intercultural vocational guidance reference groups and learn from them, in order to improve the provision of counselling services. Through their participation in related activities (social events, workshops, conferences), they gradually increase their ability to provide high quality intercultural vocational counselling, along with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities. In essence, the data agree with Flores & Heppner (2002), who argued that these informal learning environments provide an opportunity for potential participants to deal with identity issues. Furthermore, the theory developed by the research comes to agree with the view that conferences that focus on issues of racial/cultural counselling and on processes of self-exploration and self-reflective inquiry constitute a source of substantial learning (Bimrose, 1998).

The vocational counsellors who participated in the study aim to acquire knowledge about all the vulnerable social groups they get to assist and actively work with, a condition that, for Pedersen et al. (1996), is the cornerstone of the profession. These scholars argue that it would be very difficult, for a counsellor to acquire a high level of empathy, without first being interested in the cultural context and background of their consultees. Regarding personal study as a source of learning, the main topics mentioned were travel literature, immigration literature, psychology, labor law and history. In one case, a participant stated that he / she studies the history of the city of Thessaloniki as a host place for refugees in the past. In relevant literature, it is argued that intercultural competence is acquired through personal study (monitoring research on the development of national/ethnic minority careers, reading literature, information on different cultures) (Flores & Heppner, 2002). Especially important is the knowledge of the history of other cultures; the assessment of culture shock caused by migration; the interpretation of others' rules,

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

customs and laws; and the understanding of the role of values, attitudes and behaviors in other cultures (Pedersen, 2002). [3]

The study participants' narratives agree with the view that intercultural competence is not acquired through formal and non-formal educational processes alone. The counsellor is required to utilize every resource and to practice lifelong professional and personal development (Flores et al., 2005). According to their narratives, the participants, reflect on what they did after the session is over. They try to analyze their performance and observe and discuss how they did in the meeting. In other words, they constantly examine old and new experiences, try to compare each session with previous ones, and reflect on theories, knowledge, test methods, and strategies based on the previous steps they can implement, with new clients. Through continuous introspection, self-assessment, and utilization of personal qualifications and experiences, vocational counsellors who participated in the research improve their ability to understand culture and turn barriers in the field into learning opportunities. And so it is that a comparison of (a) the empirical results generated by this study of vocational counsellors and (b) the scholarly publications on this subject shows strong parallels. The study participants' talk about self-awareness, continuous self-assessment, and exposure to new experiences is reinforced by the literature in the field that correlates the level of empathy counsellors feel for clients with their self-exploration and self-awareness skills. It is clear that the counselling, vocational and otherwise, of members of another cultural group is best accomplished by men and women who are capable of reflective dialogue and an ongoing assessment of their prejudices toward, and stereotypes of, culturally diverse individuals (Flores & Heppner, 2002).

Conclusion

Thirty (30) experienced intercultural counselling practitioners for the unemployed were called upon by the research to reflect upon their learning and work experiences. From answers they give learning processes were mapped through. They showed strong self-awareness in relation to existing problems: the ability to reflect, understand, and control learning; to deliberately and actively intervene to achieve goals and address work challenges; and to monitor, correct, and coordinate their cognitive functions. Research participants' metacognitive skills in an environment sparing of systematic education and training activities, ensures the best use of their experience and any source of intercultural learning.

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[3] According to Patterson (2004), the acquisition of culturally relevant knowledge is not mandatory in the practice of effective counselling, as it is possible to extract all the necessary information through the appropriate method of vocational counselling.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charikleia Manavi: PhD Candidate, Department of Education, School of Philosophy and Education, Faculty of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Macedonia, Greece

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Refugee children in Europe and their access to compulsory educational systems: A policy framework analysis

Panagiota Mamali,[4] Hellenic Open University, Greece
Eugenia Arvanitis, University of Patras, Greece

Abstract: The aim of this research is to analyse the discourse of a series of policy documents concerning refugee education. The unprecedented refugee flows that Europe has experienced after the critical year 2015 and onwards brought about considerable challenges in all European societies. Education has been a field of great concern as children constitute a large share of the refugee populations. This research paper attempts to examine official policy documents of both the European Union (EU) and its Member States. Two representative countries were chosen to be analysed, Germany and Greece. A critical discourse analysis was adopted to illuminate the way the education of refugee children is perceived throughout the documents' discourse. The qualitative analysis of the data resulted in four main categories which were divided in further sub-categories. The categories are as follows: a) Integration of refugee children b) Equitable/Quality Education c) Access and Educational Provisions and d) Models of Integration. The interpretation of the results highlighted a maximalist perspective for educating refugee children on behalf of the European Union and a deficient implementation by the Member States.

Keywords: European Union, refugee education, policy discourse, CDA, Germany, Greece.

Forced Migration

> "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark... no one leaves home unless home chases you, fire under feet, hot blood in your belly... you have to understand that, no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land...I want to go home but home is the mouth of a shark, home is the barrel of the gun...no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear saying: leave, run away from me now, I don't know what I've become but I know that anywhere is safer than here..." (Shire, "Home", 2016).

These powerful lyrics written at a deportation centre by a refugee create dreadful pictures of what refugee people and their children experience and articulate explicitly the reasons why the refugees must leave their homes and suffer humiliation, segregation, and disgrace. Some of those reasons are civil wars, persecution, poverty, racial and ethnic conflicts (Gunes, 2019).

According to Castles (2003), the causes of forced (or involuntary) migration fall into a number of categories, either legal or political, involving people who have been violently displaced from their home countries and must seek refuge elsewhere (Castles, 2003). These categories and their classified characteristics have helped to distinguish between migration and displacement using the dimensions of geography, cause, and time (Koser & Martin, 2011). People may be displaced by conflict or war and travel by land or sea across international borders, while others become migrant workers, or they are forced to move urgently owing to the effects of climate or natural disasters, development projects or other causes. Some factors may overlap (e.g. a natural

[4] Corresponding Author: Panagiota Mamali, Koromila 4, Thessaloniki, 54645, School of Humanities/Postgraduate Student, Hellenic Open University, Greece, mamaliyiola@gmail.com

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

hazard along with political instability), and affected populations are forced to migrate; thus, two further dimensions can be intensity and timing (Martin, 2018). Terms such as "refugees" (international migrants),"internally displaced people" (internal migrants), "undocumented, unauthorised, irregular or illegal migrants" and "asylum seekers" constitute these categories of displaced people. This classification helps policy makers and academic scholars to designate them as groups of concern and creates space for appropriate assistance and protection (Koser & Martin, 2011).

However, not all categories are entitled to international protection and assistance, since the reasons why some people flee are not recognised by the international and humanitarian law. More specifically, prior to the Second World War, refugee definitions featured inherent deficiencies with regard to categories. During the interwar and post-Second World War period, more precise criteria emerged, and the legal refugee status was officially established by the Geneva Convention in 1951. It was signed by 149 State Parties, and since then it has constituted the primary legal document defining the term. The Convention describes the rights of the refugees as well as the States' obligation to protect and respect them, making officially recognised refugees privileged over other forced migrants. According to Article 1A (2) of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who "due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (…)" (UNHCR, 2021)5. This Convention entered into force in April 1954, and it has been subjected to only one amendment, the 1967 Protocol, which gave general applicability to the definition. States also are obliged not to "refoule" (return) a refugee to a territory where he would suffer serious harm or his life would be threatened. This principle of non-refoulement is an essential element of international refugee law and a significant part of human rights protection6. The Convention also sets basic minimum standards for the refugees' treatment, including access to primary education, to the courts, and to work and provision for documentation7.

Within the context of the international refugee regime, a series of international organisations and intergovernmental institutions were established to protect refugees, ensure their security and promote human rights (Goodwin-Gill, 2014). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a key agent, though, and a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly, which gave it full responsibility for the implementation of the 1951 Convention's principles. Its headquarters are in Geneva, and it is the most important global organisation ensuring refugee status. At the same time, it is responsible for the refugees' physical, social, and political protection, along with the provision of humanitarian assistance and quality education (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). According to UNHCR statistics (UNHCR, 2020), by the end of 2019 the number of people forcibly displaced all over the world had reached 79.5 million people, which is the highest number since World War II. Around half of the refugee population are children under the age of 18, that is, children of school age. It can be inferred that the right to education for these children should be ensured, as education is a fundamental human right. Refugee children

[5]United Nations General Assembly resolution 429(V) of 14 December 1950, available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f08a27.html

[6] Non-discrimination and non-penalization are also fundamental principles under the Convention provisions.

[7] https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

are particularly vulnerable groups of people and their well-being depends considerably upon education.

Status of refugee children

Children with a refugee background flee their countries not necessarily for a better life but to save their own lives. Children who leave their countries have been subjected to diverse traumatic experiences such as war, genocide, starvation, hard labour, long and perilous hikes, death of family members, exploitation, personal abuse, or early marriage (Strekaleva & Hoot, 2008). Children may arrive in a country with their parents, with other relatives, or unaccompanied. Even if some of them live with their families, their parents may be incapable of responding to the children's needs or helping them, because they are victims of trauma themselves or have different cultural beliefs. Some others may live with relatives they barely know, while others live alone or are taken care of social services (Hek, 2005). A further barrier for refugee children that can have negative effects on cognitive functioning and performance is the acquisition of the language of the resettlement country. They are required to learn a language that they have never heard of prior to their arrival. Adjusting to a new language and culture may affect students so that they demonstrate lack of involvement, absenteeism, feelings of disempowerment, poor performance, or early exit from school (Block et. al., 2014). Moreover, some children may suffer emotional and psychological distress as they have seen family members being killed or tortured. It has been found that early traumatic experiences can influence neurobiological, cognitive, and emotional development of the child. These impairments and dysfunctions vary depending on the child's age, the length of traumatic experiences, and the presence of protective factors (Kaplan et al., 2016).

Education and its benefits can help children and their families face these adverse circumstances and settle in their new life. Emotional well-being, as well as physical and mental health, are linked to education and academic success, since schooling can meet the traumatised child's social and psychological needs. School attendance and the provision of quality education can promote the child's cognitive and emotional development as well as social inclusion and smooth integration. Clearly, then, refugee children have a wide range of emotional and psychological needs. Early educational responses can help restore a sense of normality and stability and help children's social adjustment. However, effective educational programs should respect the native cultures of the children by giving them adequate time to adjust and learn the host language (Mc Brien, 2005).

Yet, the implementation of the right to education among nation states is not always so effective, and despite the international nature of conventions and treaties, it may vary worldwide. The crux of refugee education lies in the ability to combine the universal right to education with the refugees' participation in nation-states. Schools are the key institutions to provide quality education constituting shared community spaces where refugee children socialise with other children, form and empower their identities in the new culture, and become socially integrated in the community (Thomas, 2016). The educational system and its approach are of major importance, and educational institutions ought to be equipped appropriately to face the unique and multifaceted challenges of refugee children. They should serve as places of social contact, knowledge, and support. Schools should create inclusive spaces for refugee children and help them integrate newly arrived children so as to develop their full potential (ibid, 2016).

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

European Context

The European humanitarian crisis intensified in 2015, reaching its maximum intensity in the second half of that year and the first half of 2016, when the number of refugees coming to Europe and to European borders increased significantly (UNHCR, 2018). Since then, the European countries have been facing new challenges, as they come under pressure to accommodate and smoothly integrate these large numbers of refugees. Sharing the responsibility for refugee issues among Member States on behalf of the EU has been a difficult task throughout the years 2015-2020. Educational laws and national systems have been trying to meet refugee students' educational needs and deal with diversity in classrooms.

From a legal perspective, all Member States must provide the same access to education for refugee children as for citizens up to the upper secondary level. Access to education in Europe is provided by the Article 14(2) of the Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU[8] of the European Parliament and Council, which replaced Directive 2003/9/CE. It declares that asylum-seeking children have the right to access the education system within no more than three months from the date when their asylum application was lodged. It can only be extended to one year if specific education should be provided. In addition, the article stipulates that Member States are obliged to provide preparatory classes, including language lessons, in order to facilitate access to education; however, it does not give any further guidance on how these classes should be organised. In agreement with the Qualifications Directive 2011/95/EU, Member States are obliged to provide alternative forms of education if access to the education system is not feasible for a child. Article 27 of the Directive states that children under international protection are entitled access to education under the same conditions as citizens (FRA, 2019). These standards go beyond the limited guarantees of the Geneva Convention, which only ensured equal access to elementary education.

When it comes to compulsory education, schooling and its duration varies depending on the Member State. Thus, significant gaps and omissions can be detected between policy and practice, particularly when it comes to quality and equity in the education offered (Brunar et al., 2018). There are salient differences in the educational systems with regard to the receptive standards in compulsory education. Education systems often prove slow to respond to the new needs, since not all countries are sufficiently prepared to deal with these large numbers of refugees within such a short period of time (Cerna, 2019). As classrooms in Europe have become extremely diverse, inclusive principles should be implemented into classroom practice. This requires not only an official discourse but also a practical implementation with the collaboration of educational authorities and policy makers (Pastoor, 2016).

Methodology

The main purpose of this article is to explore the issue of refugee education within Europe, especially after the year 2015 when there was an intensification of refugee flows towards the

[8] Article 14(2): Access to the education system shall not be postponed for more than three months from the date on which the application for international protection was lodged by or on behalf of the minor. Preparatory classes, including language classes, shall be provided to minors where it is necessary to facilitate their access to and participation in the education system http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/33/oj

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Member States of the European Union. Education systems have faced a great many challenges and responsibilities with regard to newly arrived pupils and their pedagogical and social needs. The European Union and its Member States have aspired to promote inclusive education for refugee children by undertaking initiatives in their official discourse.

The central research scope of this qualitative study concerns the European Union's constituted legislation regarding entrance and inclusion in compulsory education within the years 2015-2020 and examines whether these policies reflect the principles of quality and equity in the education of refugee children. This research aims to critically analyse EU's policies and at the same time locate gaps and discrepancies between the relevant European legislation and its implementation in national frameworks. It will further highlight these omissions or dysfunctions in local implementation in relation to the European Union's legislative agenda. The following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the EU's educational policies concerning access to and inclusion in compulsory education?
2. Do the EU's educational policies reflect universal principles of quality and equity for refugee students, as enshrined in international conventions?
3. To what extent are the national policies of Germany and Greece aligned with the EU policy and guidelines in terms of implementation?

The adopted method of this qualitative research is the procedure of document analysis (DA). It is a series of interdisciplinary approaches used in all areas of research to explore several social domains in several studies (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Document analysis is a way to obtain empirical data, because the profound analysis of texts can create a set of data materials or a collection of institutional archives. This research applies a document analysis method to the official policy documents of the European Union and of two Member States. They contain significant information, as they record principles, approaches, and beliefs towards refugee education and the way it should be provided. Social parameters such as quality education, inequality in education, empowerment of refugee students, alienation, and segregation are addressed through a transformative worldview and perspective.

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) technique was adopted for this study with the intent of thoroughly examining explicit or implicit relations of power as manifested in the rhetoric of specific documents. The discourse and rhetoric of all the relevant official European documentation and of specific national frameworks are scrutinized under a CDA process. The analysed documents contain a set of legislative acts such as laws, communications, ministerial decisions and agendas. With regard to the EU documents, they constitute secondary legislation, including principles and objectives set out in the treaties. Ministerial decisions (e.g. Greece) were issued regarding refugee education.

In the following table (Table 1), the titles of all documents are listed in chronological order.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Table 1. Overview of the analysed legal frameworks in chronological order.

European Union		
Issue Date	*Author*	*Document Title*
13/5//2015	European Commission	1. European Agenda on Migration
7/6/2016	European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs	2. ACTION PLAN on the Integration of third country nationals 3. COMMUNICATION from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The protection of children in migration
Germany/The Federal Government		
Issue Date	*Author*	*Document Title*
25/5/2016	Federal Government of Germany	4. MESEBERG Declaration on Integration/Integration Act
1/08/2017	Federal Government of Germany	5. Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz, AufenthG)
	Official Website of Bavaria	6. Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Bildung und Kultus, Wissenschaft und Kunst (Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Culture, Science and Arts)
Greece /The Federal Government		
Issue Date	*Author*	*Document Title*
6/9/2016	Greek Parliament	7. Law 4540/2018 "Transposition of Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection
29/8/16	Ministerial Decision/MD	8. EPZ - RFRE 13124/Δ1/2016 'Provisions for Education Priority Zones (EPZ) Establishing Reception Classes of EPZs - Supporting Tutorials of EPZs and Reception Facilities for Refugee Education of EPZ (EPZ RFREJ in primary education schools', OGG 2687/B/29.08.2016
23/9/2016	Ministerial Decision/MD	9. Κοινή Υπουργική Απόφαση αρ. 180647/ΓΔ4/31-10-2016 (ΦΕΚ 3502 τ Β') Ίδρυση, οργάνωση, λειτουργία, συντονισμός και πρόγραμμα εκπαίδευσης των Δομών Υποδοχής για την Εκπ/ση των Προσφύγων (ΔΥΕΠ), κριτήρια & διαδικασία στελέχωσης των εν λόγω δομών

A further critical link which directed the analysis of this research was also the use of codes between the data and the explanation of their meaning. The coding process took place throughout the previous stages and delved into the research questions and focused on them.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Codes in qualitative research are those words or short phrases (lexical units) which assign attributes to linguistic data. The coded data go through a two-cycle process (First Cycle-Second Cycle) so that same codes and their repetitive patterns are identified. Codification takes place, and the data are arranged and put into categories (Saldana, 2021).

Thus, the use of codes was adopted in this research in relation to the research questions. A process was followed so as to detect the codes concerning the policy documents' rhetoric on refugee education. More specifically, the First Cycle of the coding process was implemented to trace those lexical units that were relevant to EU policies reflecting equitable and quality education as stated in the first two research questions. This relevance was searched for throughout the EU documents. The next set of codes applied to the third research question and consisted of lexical units relevant to models of inclusion that the national frameworks of Germany and Greece promoted. The same codes that emerged from this initial process were repeatedly used, since they were frequently met throughout the texts. The codes are given in the table that follows (Table 2).

Table 2. Codes concerning the policy documents' rhetoric on refugee education.

European Union	
Integration	Social inclusion/cohesion
Access to education	Tailored needs
Language lessons/skills	Skilled teachers
Germany	
Intensive language learning	Preparatory courses
Support programs	Immersion
Greece	
Reception classes (Τάξεις Υποδοχής)	Inclusion (Ένταξη)
Intensive Greek lessons **(Εντατικό πρόγραμμα Ελληνικών)**	Support lessons (Ενισχυτικά φροντιστηριακά μαθήματα)

The Second Cycle coding process followed and more codes emerged: new codes, the same codes in longer sentences and a reconfiguration of all the codes themselves. The codes were arranged and put into categories according to their shared characteristics. The coding process generated 4 key categories, corresponding to the research questions. The codes of the Second Cycle process constituted sub-categories under the four main ones. More specifically, the rhetoric of the EU's legislative documents on refugee education reflecting the principles that permeate the policy documents are featured in two categories: 1) Integration of refugee children and 2) Equitable/Quality Education. Concerning the third research question and the implementation of these principles in national frameworks, two more categories emerged: 3) Access and Educational

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Provisions 4) Models of Integration. All categories and sub-categories that emerged from the analysis process can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Categories and sub-categories of legislative documents.

European Union	
Categories	*Sub-Categories*
Integration of Refugee Children	Integration Access Normality Stability Inclusive Education Funding Formal/non-formal education Social inclusion Social cohesion Linguistic Competence Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Best interests' determination
Equitable / Quality Education	Welcome Classes/Language lessons Equal Access for boys and girls Psychological support Combat racism/xenophobia/hate speech No lost generation Non-discriminatory education Prevent school failure No educational segregation Teachers' skills Recruitment of teachers with a migrant background Tailored needs
Germany-Greece	
Categories	*Sub-Categories*
Access And Educational Provisions	Reception classes(Τάξεις Υποδοχής) Reception Facilities (Δομές Υποδοχής) Welcome Classes Intensive host language lessons Preparatory courses Individual support Support lessons (Ενισχυτικά φροντιστηριακά μαθήματα)
Models Of Integration	Immersion Inclusion Integration Parallel teaching Afternoon lessons Lessons within or out of the school timetable German/Greek as a second language

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

In a final stage, supplementary to the aforementioned basic tools and techniques used throughout the analysis process, there was a further type of codification according to the categories and sub-categories. This codification was made with the use of a qualitative data analysis software (QDA Miner Lite) which is designed to help researchers in coding and analysing qualitative data. The purpose of this procedure was to locate the frequency rate of the chosen codes throughout the analysed documents. This way, more credibility and trustworthiness was given to the data analysis process. With analysis completed, a visualisation of the findings followed.

Findings

Integration of refugee children

The analysis of the EU discourse over the three policy documents demonstrates that the European Union is strongly committed to the integration of refugee children. It articulates that social cohesion is tightly connected to integration into education. Effective integration policies and measures can ensure participation and empowerment, since education is considered the most powerful tool to integration. The argumentation is clear and assertive, and a fully integrative model of education for newly arrived refugee is promoted. Therefore, access to compulsory education plays a pivotal role, and it should be implemented in terms of quality and inclusive education. The documents recommend a series of tailored support measures for all children, including unaccompanied minors, with a view to achieving effective integration; they stress the importance of early childhood education and the socialisation of children. The overall stance of the EU communicated by its official discourse is that integration of refugee children into the compulsory education is of primary importance.

The means to promote integration is linguistic competence, so the discourse emphasises the intense acquisition of language skills. EU's rhetoric shows an active agent who takes into account the students' needs and proposes tailored support initiatives through sufficient funding. Non-formal education is considered significant, as it complements integration through formal education in schools. The discourse also emphasises that the principle of the best interest of the child should be of utmost concern as far as decisions about children are concerned.

EU's discourse and its emphasis on integration is amplified by the qualitative analysis software that was used. As is shown in the chart below, certain codes such as integration, access, linguistic competence, and ECEC approach a frequency rate of 78.5% (Chart 1). It is evident that EU considers education a key issue, and it is more than willing to face the challenges of integrating refugees. Its policy discourse promotes early access to compulsory education, highlighting the importance of ECEC. Finally, the discourse regards linguistic competence as the appropriate measures to achieve integration

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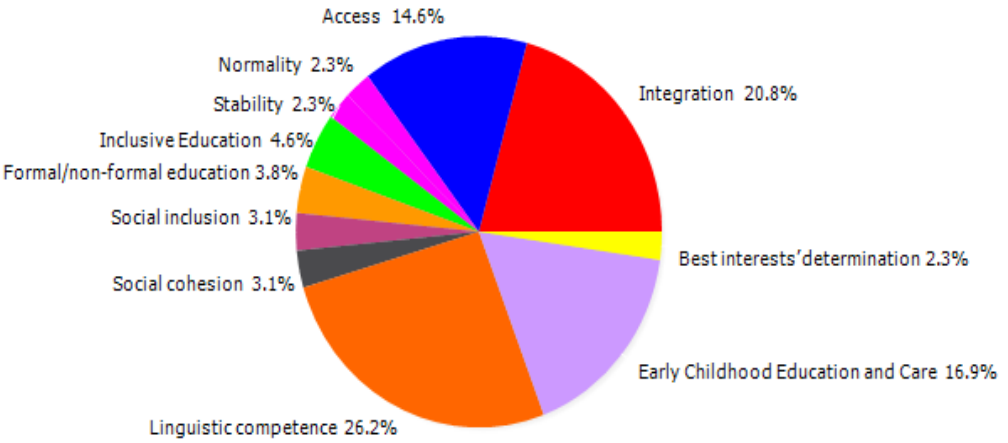

Chart 1. Frequency distribution of chosen codes.

Equitable/Quality education

Since integration is a strong requirement, the EU policy outlines emphatically the provision of coordinated and effective actions to achieve it. A further principle which derives from the EU discourse is demand for quality education with equal access for girls and boys and for every vulnerable group. The discourse of the text stresses the creation for welcome language classes, as language is considered essential for integration. Inclusive and non-discriminatory education should be provided to all refugee students. The role of the teacher is critical as they "need the necessary skills to help them prevent school failure and educational segregation" (European Commission, 2016, p.7). What is suggested is to hire teachers with a migrant background which renders them appropriately qualified to teach diverse children.

These tailored measures, if taken, can combat racism, xenophobia, and hate speech towards newly arrived children. The collocation "hate speech" is further emphasized, which implies that a change in people's attitudes is necessary. Therefore, the discourse recognises the special needs of refugee children and calls for psychosocial support and help. No lost generations will exist if all educational mechanisms operate effectively and fill the knowledge and linguistic gaps that refugee children have. Targeted initiatives should be taken to address instability and support children in crisis (e.g. Syria) who have limited literacy and academic skills. The discourse promotes initiatives which are tailored to the children's specific needs. Only high-standard and good-quality education can counteract the profound negative impacts of conflict crises and lead to stability and security (Deane, 2016).

Requirements for quality and equitable education is clearly depicted in Chart 2 below. Equal access for boys and girls is emphasized, as well as targeted measures and initiatives to meet the students' needs. Specific references to non-discriminatory education and action against racism

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

and xenophobia demonstrate the need for equitable education. No educational segregation along with prevention of school failure definitely acknowledge potential dysfunctions which should be taken into account.

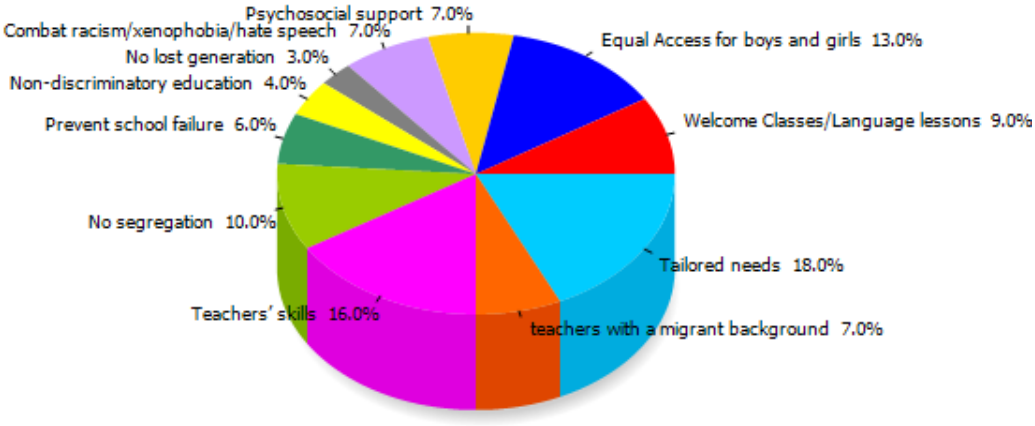

Chart 2. Frequency distribution of chosen codes.

The EU organization promotes a common rhetoric which identifies common challenges, pinpoints good practices, and calls for improvement of existing national policies and strategies. It also sets priorities and goals, with legislative proposals and funding opportunities aimed at supporting Member States facing the challenge of refugee education. It proposes cooperating with the EU Member States to help them develop and enhance school education systems. However, each Member State is responsible for its educational curricula, institutions, and systems. The EU issues recommendations and guidelines in order to strengthen the Member States' policies and further develop them. Therefore, it explicitly calls for the full cooperation of the Member States to support the integration policies. In fact, the principles of equity and quality should be effectively implemented in national education policies.

Nevertheless, the EU's political will is often contradicted by its Member States' policies, since these derive from national interests only. Undoubtedly, the large flow of refugees caused each member nation considerable challenges and changed the migratory educational landscape. The experience of educating migrant children differs substantially from educating refugee children; policy makers, educational authorities, schools, and teachers should leave behind traditional approaches, collaborate, and take into account refugee students' needs (Pastoor, 2016). These groups of officials ought to rethink refugee education, in order to ensure equitable and quality education for all children.

Access to education per se is not sufficient if it is not supported by targeted policies and good practices. Recommendations, agendas, and general guidelines don't necessarily provide a solid basis for long-term and successful outcomes. Educational integration of refugee students should be promoted under a holistic model that takes into account three main pillars: a) learning needs, such as early access to education, language support, and a smooth adjustment to the new school environment b) social needs, such as communication and involvement in social activities,

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

opportunities for identity construction, and a sense of belonging and c) emotional needs, such as a sense of safety and stability and tailored support for loss and traumas (Cerna, 2019). Policy discourse should follow a long-term framework composed of targeted educational activities and not limited to short-term provisions such as the language lessons.

Comparative Analysis: Germany and Greece

Access to education and models of integration

A comparative analysis of both the education systems of the two countries follows in this section, which aims to give important insights into the way education is perceived (policy discourse) and the way it is implemented. This research critically analysed and highlighted the educational structures and provisions of these two countries target at the refugee children who arrived in their territory after the year 2015. As both countries faced a tremendous increase in the number of school-aged refugee children, this research examined how their national frameworks reacted to this challenge and also to what extent their policies aligned with the European Union's discourse on this issue in terms of implementation.

A salient difference between the two countries is that Germany has a federal structure, and educational policies are formulated by each federal state (*Land*). There is the national government of Germany which coordinates educational issues through the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [Kultusministerkonferenz-KMK], but the states have constitutional power over schools. Greece has a centralised educational system, and the responsibility for refugee education lies exclusively in the Greek government and the Ministry of Education. The implemented policies of both Germany and Greece reveal the underlying political perspectives of the authorities and the visible attitudes with regard to students' inclusion in each society.

The unprecedented influx of refugees into both countries generated new policy discourses or amended older ones, since language and society are closely interlinked (Van Dijk, 1993). One way that state bureaucracies exercise their power is by the way they respond to legislative acts. Laws, ministerial decision,s and regulations define the type of the education offered. Apart from the aforementioned external structural dimensions, there are some further points which are found common in both countrie,s but they are implemented differently. These points concern a) school access b) types of integration (preparatory classes) c) host language lessons and language support d) absence of home language and e) models of integration.

Both countries provide *access* to education, as they are obliged to do according to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They place pupils in school according to certain requirements, and access varies. Students enter their respective school systems with a variation in waiting time lasting up to six months. Reception classes and facilities in Greece, as well as welcome and additional support classes in Germany, feature an educational landscape that is accessible to refugee students. The right to equitable and quality education is applied in the official rhetoric of the two countries.

In reality, these enshrined principles are not fully implemented as there are gaps and dysfunctions which "hurt" the provision of quality education in both countries. In many cases, children do not have immediate access to public schools due to administrative issues, and there are considerable delays. These barriers to participation or uncoordinated efforts can have

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

formidable consequences. This gap takes a toll on children's cognitive levels, since their education may have been interrupted or broken due to prolonged dislocation. Lack of access and dispersal repeats this experience, leaves gaps in their learning, and even intelligent students find it difficult to catch up. Children's well-being depends greatly on their school experience, because it promotes social development and gives them hope for the future (Hek, 2005). Otherwise, the child's social and psychological state is disrupted, and feelings of distress and loneliness are created.

In terms of *types of integration*, having access to early childhood education and primary school is compulsory. There is a fixed set of preparatory language classes offered, mainly in the host language. Learning the host language is a central but not the only requirement for smooth integration into education. "Welcome" classes in Germany include intensive teaching of the German language. In some states, students may be placed directly into mainstream classes with additional language support. In other states, students attend welcome classes separately from regular schooling lasting from three months to two years before entering mainstream classes. This way, children are not helped to make a smooth transition into regular schooling. On the contrary, these welcome classes foster segregation from native-born students that can lead to further marginalisation and even stigmatisation. This fragmented field of language acquisition can lead to a problematic transition into regular classes.

In the same vein, reception classes in Greece aim to promote inclusion in the school environment. They also separate pupils from their peers, though pupils attend intensive Greek lessons outside class and attend regular classes for the rest of their subjects. Children feel different and marginalised when they do not interact with other children, and, as a result, the process of integration is hindered. Mere regular attendance at school should not be considered inclusion: true inclusion consists of everyday interaction and social experiences among all pupils. A stable learning environment is required to create feelings of safety and inclusion. Participating fully in a shared community space, such as school, affirms students' identities and provides stability and a sense of safety and normality (Thomas, 2016).

The terms "*preparatory lessons, language skills, host language lessons, and language support*" were identified as another important element in the sub-categories of the analysis. Teaching of the national language is considered essential and constitutes another common feature between the two countries. This mere teaching of the language delays learning in other subjects, and transition is delayed due to insufficient language skills. Complex cultural linguistic circumstances require a re-evaluation of language teaching practices. The demands of a diverse class go beyond language as a structural system with grammatical and lexical rules. Language constitutes the means of communication in a child's everyday life in multicultural societies. Thus, students need to be competent both in their home language and in the national language of their host country (Gearon et. al., 2009).

The analysis of the policy documents conducted for this study unearthed a considerable drawback with relation to the native language of the students. *Absence of home language* provision is noticed in both countries with some local exceptions (e.g. Bandenburg). No specific curricula are organised for teaching the mother tongue of the children. They follow a monolingual pathway, emphasising the acquisition of the national language. This definitely impedes integration and creates confusion, as children become divided from their heritage culture, religion, or identity. The documents' rhetoric emphasises integration to a great extent, but the underlying concept is assimilation rather than integration. The main characteristic of assimilative

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

policies in education is discouraging students from maintaining their mother tongue in school (Cummins, 2001). In both countries, learning the national language is the only prerequisite to integration, since the respective discourse emphasises the provision of intensive lessons in the language of instruction.

According to Cummins (2001), children feel welcome when they communicate in their home language and are not rejected. Mother tongue creates a sense of belonging for children, and therefore schools should stand as mirrors showing students who they are and at the same time who they can become in their new community (ibid, 2001). Linguistic and cultural diversity should be taken into account by educational policies, since it is essential for a child's both personal and educational development. In many cases though, policy makers adopt oversimplified approaches, because they are more convenient and avoid confusion on behalf of the educators on how to teach linguistically diverse students (Gearon et. al., 2009).

The *models of integration* these two countries follow towards refugee education seem to have a common ground. Under the umbrella of the term "integration," Germany and Greece adopt legislations which promote integration of refugee children into compulsory schooling. Integration rhetoric is present in both countries' policies; the term "integration" was detected frequently throughout the analysis of the documents as an overarching element in all categories. A common approach which derives from the two countries' policy documents is a combination of attending mainstream and separate classes. Integration, partial integration, and separation principles are mixed in a combination that can prove detrimental to refugee children. More specifically, in Greece a partly integrative model is followed. Afternoon classes foster segregation as pupils' interaction is not promoted. Refugee children become alienated from their native peers, and when they meet these peers, they face discrimination or marginalisation. Germany features some differentiations compared to Greece, as it follows several models of inclusion, from full immersion to parallel teaching. This is due to the decentralised system as a result of which the entrance time to regular classes may take up to two years. Welcome classes may also create problems of discrimination, and additional language support is not enough in some cases.

Overall, both countries call for integration, and to this extent they are aligned with the European Union's guidelines when it comes to the implementation of its principles. The dominant rhetoric revolves around integration and intensive acquisition of the national language. This is evident in the charts below where the data analyses are shown in frequency rates (Charts 3 & 4). Overarching issues are integration, inclusion, and teaching of the host language. Germany's policy discourse, for example, demonstrates a cumulative rate of 62% with regard to the terms of integration, inclusion, and teaching of the German language (Chart 3).

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

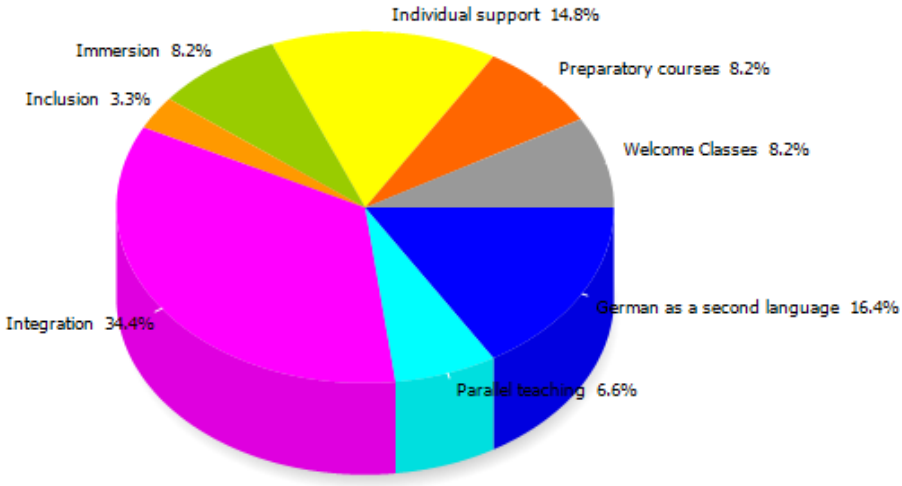

Chart 3. Germany.

Almost the same rates are found in the case of Greece for the respective frequency distribution over the same terms as it approaches a rate of 54.1% (Chart 4). The remaining part of the policy discourse refers to how these terms are applied in both societies, and it involves provision of language lessons (welcome/reception classes), individual support lessons, and parallel teaching. These are the main educational provisions which Germany and Greece feature in their implementation process of educating refugee children.

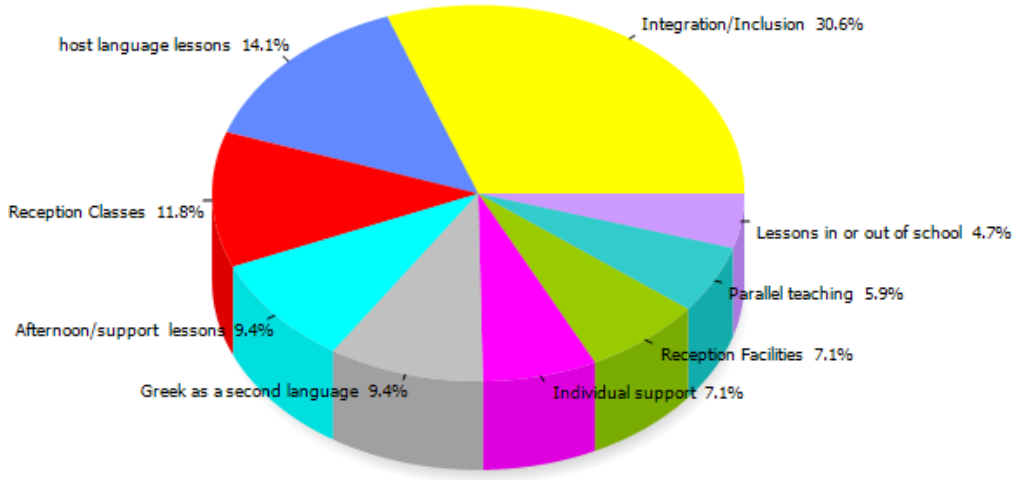

Chart 4. Greece.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Final remarks

This research shows that several models of integration are followed in both countries, and implementation of the policy rhetoric constitutes a type of assimilation and not actual integration. What is considered assimilation or integration by the each diverse country plays a significant role in its policy making. The notions of integration or assimilation are built upon a nation's beliefs, ideologies, and attitudes. The formulative discourse derives from this normative, even implicit, approach and defines the educational policies (Crul & Schneider, 2010). What both educational policies lack, though, is the use of terms such as multiculturalism and multilingualism. No further reference is made to the above mentioned broader terms. Societies have been changing, and individual states should adjust their policies accordingly. Integrative and inclusive policies ought to be adopted so as to deal with cultural diversity effectively both at a national and a local level. Besides, diversity can be beneficial in the long-run for a society, and education is the only means to light this trajectory towards actual and not false integration.

Conclusion

The unexpected high numbers of refugee populations over the years 2015-2020 has caused an education emergency for both the European Union and its Member States. The EU responded immediately to this urgent situation, articulated an official rhetoric with regard to the education of newly arrived refugee children, and legislated a series of relevant agendas, communications, and directives, as well as recommended guidelines. This research shows that the EU wishes to establish a common approach towards the integration of refugee children through education, fully aligned with the general principles of human rights, treaties, and international conventions. Thus, its guidelines and recommendations are based on the principles of quality and equity; they call for effective integration, quality education for all children, inclusion, and tailored support measures. At the same time, they reject segregation practices, and they condemn racism discrimination and xenophobia. It is clear that the EU adopts an integration approach towards refugee education. It aims to build on the other three principles applied to the education of refugee children; "the humanitarian approach, which emphasises protection in a crisis through education; the human rights approach, emphasizing the children's right to education; and finally the developmental approach, which regards refugee education as a long-term investment in society" (Dryden-Peterson, 2011, p.9). The EU embraces these principles and calls for cooperation and engagement of all the Member States.

Despite the unifying calls of the EU for a common policy in refugee-related issues over the recent decades, all EU countries retain considerable autonomy when it comes to the field of education (Faas et. al., 2014). Response to the official EU policies at a national level often show divergences and discrepancies during implementation, but, nevertheless, there can be convergences and a covering of similar ground when it comes to the principles of equity, inclusion, and quality education. European countries and their education systems experienced a shock while trying to adapt to the new conditions and adopt new policies and strategies. All European countries have met great challenges in their attempt to integrate a substantial number of newly arrived refugee children since 2015. Educational systems have featured differentiated responses to this situation, either helping or hindering the educational success of the children.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

The responses of two different European educational systems to refugee children have been analysed here, in order to see how well they translated the principles of access to education and provision of quality education into reality. It has been shown that both countries have taken measures to help integrate refugee children into their educational systems, but a lot of differences and variations are apparent. However, if we delve into the ideologies and attitudes behind these specific common or differentiated features, we can infer a certain pattern. In general, both countries offer a complex and fragmented type of education, and their provisions are often inadequate and insufficient. Compulsory schooling is offered to refugee children but in such a way that students are either separated from their peers or enter regular classes unprepared. The principles of integration or partial integration are interchangeable with the principle of segregation. The variation between the two countries' approach to assimilation through education is the extent to which these contradictory principles are applied.

This study shows that the main categories which determine refugee education and its implementation in both countries are school access, types of educational provisions, and models of integration. Reception classes in Greece, held in Reception and Education facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE), and Welcome classes in Germany constitute the main pillars of educational provisions to refugee children. However, effective integration is not always feasible; access to compulsory education may only exists on paper. Educational practices applied in both countries may not be compatible with the principles of equity and quality education. Practical barriers such as multiple transfers of accommodation, waiting time for school allocation, and several other issues do not facilitate access to education (FRA, 2019). There are a number of challenges which hinder integration, with gaps and barriers blocking this process. It can be acknowledged, though, that considerable attempts have been made by both countries but in most cases they lack coordination, a solid educational framework, and a long-term approach.

Elements such as flawed teaching of the host language and an absence of home language teaching are distinct and clear. Teaching of the host language is the main requirement involved in both policy discourses. It takes place, though, at the expense of home language teaching. Children fall behind academically while in preparatory classes and have great difficulty catching up to their peers when placed in regular classes. Quality of the preparatory classes is not always adequate and along with delays in enrolment can lead to high drop-out rates and low attendance.

This attitude implies that the main educational provisions are only short-term solutions to an emerging problem. Previous laws were amended, new recommendations were issued, but all as part of facing a challenge or a problem. No vision or long-term inclusion is hidden under local implementation of the EU's guidelines. There is a range of relevant official documents from both countries, but they lack a solid framework with long-term objectives and well-designed planning. It cannot be denied, however, that both countries faced a great challenge and have responded according to the degree of their preparedness to this emergency situation. Refugee children should not be treated as other migrant children, because they have different needs, but these should be met within a solid framework of inclusion and provision of quality education. In fact, both countries are two sides of the same coin. Both promote integration through their policy discourse, but in practice it is false integration, since to a great extent it is not actually implemented. Instead, methods of implementation feature variations which can hinder integration and in the end promote assimilation.

Refugee education is and should be an issue of great concern. A common route has to be taken in order to produce effective integration and provide quality education to every refugee

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

child in a host country in Europe. Authorities, practitioners, and policy makers of all countries should cooperate tightly under the umbrella of the EU and legislate an educational framework after careful planning and design. A strategic integration approach ought to be undertaken that takes into account refugee children's rights, needs and necessities. This can only be achieved through a long-term vision adopted by authorities, stakeholders, scientists, and educators and not a fragmented one implemented in local projects. Schools are the places where integration can take place effectively, so educators must ensure that they can accommodate diversity and operate in the children's best interests. It is imperative that there be a place in schools for newly arrived children, as it is their fundamental human right, and values of justice, freedom and equality should be applied in democratic societies. Only within schools and through proper education will refugee children recover and prosper in their future life.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my postgraduate academic tutor, Dr Eugenia Arvanitis, whose help, feedback, and guidance were really invaluable. I am particularly grateful for the significant assistance I was given throughout this process. She was always there and willing to share with me important knowledge and expertise as well as provide patience and moral support.

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ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Panagiota Mamali: Postgraduate student, Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece

Dr Eugenia Arvanitis: Associate Professor, University of Patras, Greece

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

A Critical Analysis of an Intercultural Education for Social Justice

Dimitris T. Zachos,[9] Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki - Greece

Abstract: Over the last twenty years, the theory and practices of multiculturalism/interculturalism and multicultural/intercultural education have been further developed. In the present paper, we try to critically analyze the current and controversial issues of this scientific area. More specifically, our interest is focused on the identification of the basic elements of an Intercultural Education which will support social justice. Such an approach is not limited to teaching issues related to the educational integration of students from refugee, immigrant, ethnically or culturally diverse family backgrounds. Its goals include the acute issues of racism, nationalism, and sexism, as well as discrimination against women and people of different sexual orientations. Intercultural education for social justice makes it easier for students to challenge economic inequalities and social hierarchies and reject racism, as well as all forms of discrimination and prejudice. It is a valuable tool for critical thinking, empowerment, emancipation, and democracy in schools and society.

Keywords: Intercultural education, social justice

Introduction

Over the last fifteen years, the management of the prolonged economic crisis, both by international organizations and by national governments, has led to the deregulation of the welfare state across the globe. Evidently, this has resulted in an increase in the wealth of a very small portion of the world's population[10]. In fact, even in economically developed countries, the number of poor, homeless, and marginalized people is increasing, while others are experiencing a deterioration in their living conditions and share common fears of an acute worsening of their descendants' levels of comfort.

This situation was exploited by political parties and movements that support various forms of populism, ethnic and religious nationalism, and authoritarianism. A key feature of these parties is their anti-immigrant stance. Their leaders idealize their own national or religious community and argue that it is threatened by universal values, human rights, and culturally different people. By creating scapegoats, they argue that the financial condition of both the workers and the "nouveaux pauvres" is not caused by the overall structural conditions per se, but by refugees, migrants, and immigrants who appropriate jobs, hospital beds, and places in kindergarten for their own use.

It should be noted that the leaders of those parties and movements have made use of favorably disposed mass media, as well as social media, to spread rumors and fake news. They have succeeded in demonizing diversity, challenging science, imposing intolerance, bigotry, irrationality, and anti-intellectualism. As a result, populist authoritarian leaders have managed to channel voters' frustration primarily against those who could instead have been their allies (the

[9] Corresponding Author: Dimitris Zachos, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Faculty of Education- School of Primary Education- Department of Pedagogy & Social Exclusion, Box 26. 54124 Thessaloniki Greece. dimzachos@eled.auth.gr

[10] According to Oxfam (Hope, 2018), in 2018 one percent (1%) of the world's population reaped eighty two percent (82%) of the world's wealth!

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

poor, immigrants, culturally different people) and made voters delude themselves into thinking that they are members of a privileged group (nation, "race", religion, etc). Within this context, during the last decade or so, it seems that the political and social climate in a number of countries has become highly polarized and that differences on several issues are unbridgeable.

In these critical times, we believe that education has a crucial role to play. People active in the field of education are aware that social inequalities and differences (social class, "race", nationality, ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, language, and religion) are very likely to lead to unequal educational opportunities. That is why a number of scholars and educators have challenged and continue to challenge the traditional, monocultural school and strive to fight social injustices through their work. Schools can contribute to social justice by ensuring at least that the same quality of education is given to all students and that they are treated equally, without exceptions (Lupton, 2005; Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, 2021). Other scholars and educators challenge traditional, monocultural education because they reckon that a school that ignores social differences does not help reduce tensions and maintain social cohesion (Akkari, 2012, 163; Grimminger-Seidensticker & Möhwald, 2020). Despite the variation in goals and methods, we believe there is a notion that is widely accepted: the notion that the current conditions—as these emerge from a globalized, multicultural, and technologically advanced society—necessitate many adjustments in pedagogical discourse and teachers' practices (Livingston & Hutchinson, 2017). In this regard, we think that the roles that both an Intercultural Approach and Intercultural Education can play are actually essential.

Intercultural and Multicultural Education

The use of the term Intercultural Education (hereinafter referred to as ICE) began in various European countries during the 1980s (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009), and the relevant theoretical and practical issues of interculturalism were developed especially after the fall of the Soviet Union and its allies. At the beginning of the new millennium, the term intercultural education would appear quite often in academic journals, conferences, and seminars, in courses and study programs of institutions of higher education, in school programs, and in daily discussions of educational topics (Gotovos, 2002, 55).

In ICE-related theoretical production, we often encounter a discrepancy between the terms multiculturalism and interculturalism, as well as an even clearer distinction between multicultural and intercultural education. Interculturalism is promoted by a number of scholars, who argue that intercultural discourse is less static and more active than multiculturalism. In fact, the former promotes the dynamic relationship between different cultural and social groups and is not limited to simply mentioning and recording their existence (Mikander, Zilliacus, & Holm, 2018; Portera, 2020). Multiculturalism is the opposite of monoculturalism, while interculturalism does not seem to have an opposing term (Coulby, 2006, 255).

The use of the concept of interculturalism has also been supported by the European Union, in whose documents, as in those of the European Council, the word describes the cooperation between culturally diverse individuals and groups (Mpereris, 2001; Woodrow, Verma, Rocha-Trindade, Campani, & Bagley, 2019). We emphasize that the distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism mainly concerns scholars, media pundits, and politicians in Europe. The term multiculturalism is more commonly used in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Asia (Hill, 2007; Torres, & Tarozzi, 2020).

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

This distinction reinforces the looseness that characterizes discourse in favor of multi/intercultural education and results in different people attributing different qualities and content to the concept (Banks, 1993b; Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008; Elias & Mansouri, 2020). In other words, there is no single perception of multi/interculturalism and multi/intercultural education.

This scientific area and its practice in schools encompass a wide range of approaches, from teaching phrases in various languages and celebrating foreign students' heroes and holidays to focusing on economic inequalities, oppression, and forms of resistance and a call for a better society. We should like to underline that the lack of unanimity and universal consensus about the content of concepts is quite common in social sciences. This is because different interests and different perspectives influence the interpretations, as well as the suggestions of scientists, which add to this "fluidity".

Our position argues in favor of those who maintain that there are no major differences between the two approaches and that with interculturalism we simply place emphasis on some key elements of multiculturalism (Meer & Modood, 2012; Mansouri & Modood, 2021) or on one of its directions. In this paper, we use the terms interculturalism and multiculturalism and multicultural and intercultural education interchangeably. We only exclude those cases where we refer to the work of writers who make a distinction between these two concepts. In any other case, when using these terms, we refer: first, to the policies of nations states or supranational organizations related to social variations (Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, 1992) and more specifically to the promotion of measures that foster a culturally pluralistic society (Tip, Zagefka, Gonzalez, Brown, Cinnirella & Na, 2012; Chen, 2021). Second, we refer to an ideology that opposes structural inequalities and promotes actions and practices in favor of social justice. Interculturality as an ideology marks the efforts of those who support it to establish a level of equity and social justice in the relationships among all social groups (Nye, 2007; Sohrabi, 2019) and individuals. At this point, we must emphasize that there is no single ideological, nor political and educational, approach to multi/intercultural education. Without prejudice to any generalization or categorization, we are able to distinguish between conservative, liberal, and radical intercultural education.

Third, we refer to a scientific area that focuses on social variations and helps to ensure that pluralism and diversity are not treated negatively. Multi/intercultural education is closely related to efforts to shift the "educational paradigm" that have taken place in the United States and other economically advanced countries (Great Britain, Canada, Australia). By paradigm shift, we refer to the questioning of the traditional school, i.e. the school that with its curriculum and its daily practices promotes an image of homogeneity and harmony, while discriminating in favor of the upper social classes and the dominant ideology of the groups in power. In other words, the traditional school promoted and still promotes competitiveness and national identity (Reimers, 2006, 288) and makes a decisive contribution to the consolidation of the bourgeois ideology, the spread of national narratives and myths, the forging of national identities, and the prevalence of nationalism. This has led the people of each nation to distinguish other nations and other cultures as superior or inferior and hostile or friendly.

Since the end of the Second World War, the dominant monocultural character of education has been challenged in various countries, and the demands of nondominant and oppressed groups have been promoted. According to Banks (2001), multicultural education (hereinafter referred to as MCE) was born and developed within the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the women's

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

rights movement of the 1970s, and the political efforts of all oppressed groups. MCE was developed to challenge deficit theories that concerned the schooling of children of color, the family dynamics of racially diverse families, and the structured learning environments and curricular content for all students (Chapman & Grant, 2010, 41). The contemporary academic, as well as public, debate on multiculturalism and multi/intercultural education covers a range of issues related to economic inequalities, immigration, refugee crises, human rights, working-class culture, equality of gender, the social status of ethnically and culturally different groups, people with disabilities, different sexual orientation, culture and cultural wars, identities and the sense of belonging, all of which are at the center of acute political and ideological confrontations.

As an academic subject, MCE provides an opportunity to reshape pedagogy, of which it is a separate (distinct) scientific area (Hus & Hegediš, 2018). It draws on data and utilizes analyses and interpretations from political science, history, anthropology, cultural studies, economics, psychology, philosophy, and ethics. It is a response to all the policies that schools need to implement and a proposal for all the issues that schools must address in order to improve the educational outcomes for all students regardless of social class, ethnic origin, cultural (language, religion) background, and gender or sexual orientation.

Intercultural Education for Social Justice

Social justice in education is generally associated with the educational opportunities and experiences provided to students with different backgrounds in terms of social class, ethnicity, culture, gender, wealth, family structure, sexual orientation, disability, etc. (Gumus & Beycioglu, 2020, 233). In attempting to delimit an intercultural education aimed at promoting social justice (hereinafter referred to as ICESJ), we will start from the field of practice and the first question we will try to address is:

What is the meaning of ICESJ for everyday school life?

MCE/ICE is not a separate, isolated, once-a-year activity (Ladson-Billings, 1994), nor a program or supplementary lesson for minority students (Banks & Banks, 2007). MCE/ICE is also not a separate course for all students, which concerns other cultures (Nikolaou, 2011), nor is it a limited number of modules or projects on religion, clothing, and eating habits of different students. MCE/ICE is a dimension of general education that should be provided to all students by the school and is connected with life of local and national communities (Reich, cited in Govaris, 2004, 79; Janakiraman, Watson, Watson, & Bawa, 2019). It is a stance towards people, social relations, and social phenomena which (should) permeate the entire curriculum, as well as all the educational practices and relationships in the contemporary school.

Who and what is Intercultural Education about?

In a number of academic works (books, articles, dissertations, conference presentations), MCE/ICE seems to focus exclusively on nationally/ethnically/culturally different students. In an even more restrictive approach, a milestone in the emergence, development, and existence of MCE/ICE is the increase in refugees, immigrants, and migrants, and migrant workers, especially in the economically developed countries of the West. In this approach, MCE/ICE is seen as a tool

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

to help newly arrived people adapt to their new reality (Rego & Nieto, 2000, 421; Batanero, Hernández & Colmenero, 2021). We agree that one of the goals of MCE/ICE is to make it possible for schools to help their different students meet their requirements. But it should by no means be the only one. MCE/ICE is more than education for immigrants, Roma, and other minority groups; it concerns all students. MCE/ICE values cultural differences, fosters intercultural dialogue, seeks to remove misunderstandings between different groups, challenges and rejects racism, classism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination in school and society, opposes hierarchical power relations, and promotes the democratic principles of social justice (Onestini, 1996; Miller-Lane, Howard, & Espiritu Halagao, 2007; R'boul, 2021).

A possible consequence of an MCE/ICE that limits its goals and actions to members of ethnically diverse groups is that it can contribute to the further spread of the perception that the culture of these people is incompatible with the cultures of the host societies. This is especially true when:

First, MCE/ICE focuses on any differences between the "majority" and "minority"[11] groups of the population and ignores or oversees their common attributes. A typical example of such a practice is the case of Roma groups. A large part of the theoretical and research work Romani Studies has traditionally presented Roma as exclusively nomads and confirmed negators of a sedentary way of living (Zachos, 2011). We emphasize again that when we focus upon the differences, we can – probably unwittingly – reinforce the perception that different cultures are a danger to our own. When we concentrate on the gaps between "civilizations", then we discourage people from working together and solving their common and often important problems (poverty, unemployment, deterioration of living standards and living conditions). In this way, we undermine social solidarity, as well as the goal of a just society. For example, the notion that a common element of multiculturalism with interculturalism should be the emphasis on the need to reconcile the beliefs and practices of minority groups (Barrett, 2013, 38) can create a few misunderstandings and problems. This is because in the above statement there is no reference to beliefs or practices that should be brought into harmony, nor to the groups that should do it. As a result, all the beliefs and practices of all minority groups can be targeted by some fanatical, lunatic, or gullible people and create problems for the members of these groups.

At this point, we should emphasize that when our analyses estimate that there is a cultural gap between Us (citizens and/or the state's official language speakers) and Them (immigrants or refugees or minorities, including black, Asian, or Latino people), we do not help any members of the "majority" groups to overcome the fear of their different fellow human beings. On the contrary, our findings then rather reinforce stereotypes and prejudices, which are cultivated by the phobic and aggressive rhetoric of some politicians and the media. When we use Us and Them dichotomy, we leave room for unsupported and dangerous generalizations that present members of different groups and their cultures as a problem.

As in the above, when we use general references to the protection of our (i.e. our country's, Europe's, or the Western world's) culture or values, we indicate that these elements are now in danger. This danger comes from newcomers, refugees, and immigrants, as well as from those who have not been integrated and do not adopt our (allegedly common) culture. One implication of this analysis concerns education, where teachers erroneously expect that "different" students

11. The quotation marks indicate our opposition to the use of such terms, which group people who belong to different social classes, ethnic groups, etc.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

will create problems and will be an obstacle in their work (Holm & Londen, 2010; Makarova, 't Gilde, & Birman, 2019).

Policies that favor even temporary segregation (separate schools, dormitories, social services) can also contribute to the further widening of the gap between Us and Them. In such cases we should expect that members of the "majority"[12] societies will rally around their common interests and what they consider to be common elements of their identity. These individuals will probably develop phobias, as well as a favorable attitude towards populist parties. In other words, a number of people will perceive the segregation of the people from different ethnic backgrounds as an action that confirms their prejudices and will become even more suspicious of, if not hostile to, any kind of difference.

Second, ICE that focuses on the differences between Us and Them overlooks the historical differences in the ethnic composition of the members of the majority groups in the host countries, i.e., differences in language, religion, values, traditions, and customs that existed or still exist among their citizens. However, consciously or not, when we overlook historical differences, we contribute to the creation of an image of national homogeneity within modern states that does not correspond to reality (Zachos, 2009; Castro-Gómez, 2019). We also contribute to the invisibility of the cultural pluralism that exists within the "majority" groups, as well as to the strengthening of the perception according to which our national/ethnic/cultural identity is unified, unchangeable, and impenetrable.

Third, an ICE limited to emphasizing ethnic differences is dangerously refusing to acknowledge those cultural differences resulting not only from ethnicity but also from economic inequalities, social class, gender, and sexual orientation. We emphasize that when we focus our analysis on "identity politics" and "cultural wars", we contribute to marginalizing the debate on the structural problems of the dominant economic system, as well as on unequal power relations. Social class affects the shaping of people's culture, as it affects the way they shape their relationships with both the material elements of culture (e.g. houses, home facilities, transport) and the basic meta-material elements, such as language, religion, values, and rules. Economic conditions may have a decisive influence on the way differences caused by ethnic origins, nationality, gender, and sexual-orientation are expressed and experienced, on the extent to which one develops nationalistic feelings, and to one's relation to nationalist symbols. They may also impact upon the way one speaks (the words and concepts of one's mother tongue, the foreign languages one knows), and on the religious dogma and worship practices one adopts. Economic inequalities still determine one's codes of ethics and commitment to them, as well as whether and to what extent one adopts or challenges social rules and conventions. Therefore, our objective living conditions, which to a large extent are shaped by the economic ones, influence and shape the cultural elements that each one of us adopts.

Fourth, when we focus on one of the social differences, such as ethnically different people, and ignore the systemic factors, i.e., the causes that give rise to the phenomena of refugee migration and immigration, then every solution we are able to suggest will be incomplete and dead-ended. We believe that any one-sided effort in favor of the rights of excluded and underprivileged groups has its value, and any victory, ideological and/or legislative, is important. But such one-sidedness does not help to tackle economic inequality, racism, prejudice, and

[12] We use quotation marks to show that we do not consider that such a generalization is accurate, having in mind that these societies are splintered off into different social classes, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

discrimination as well as the goal of a better society. After all, the rights and freedoms of some groups (e.g., women, homosexuals, lesbians) have been used as tools to deepen discrimination against other groups. In this way, economically and politically privileged elites exploit members of groups that have in the past been victims of discrimination, racism, and oppression. These former victims now voluntarily become perpetrators who contribute to the mistreatment and exclusion of other groups (e.g., second- and third-generation immigrants who are strongly opposed to newly arrived refugees and immigrants). In other words, monothematic multi/interculturalism may contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of one specific group, but it does not solve the problems of social inequalities and divisions. ICE for social justice holistically approaches social differences and seeks to understand the root causes of problems. It also attempts to contribute to their solution, to the emancipation of the weak and excluded, and ultimately to a society of equality and law.

What social relations and which society does intercultural education for social justice promote?

An important issue for ICE for social justice is the type of relations between the various social groups. A—possibly large—number of theoretical and research works in the field of ICE adopt an approach that emphasizes the tolerance of difference, mutual respect, and protection of the culture of different groups (Morrell, 2008). But what does tolerance mean and to what extent should cultural features and customs that violate human rights be respected? At this point, we must emphasize that respect for culture is one thing, and indifference to a blatantly inhuman cultural practice is another. All cultures deserve our respect and perhaps admiration. This is not the case for some cultural elements, though. We oppose the arbitrary proclamation of any one group's values as superior, but we are also against the approach according to which all values are equally valid. Furthermore, tolerating other cultures and cultural differences does not require that cultural differences be understood, recognized, appreciated, or validated. Tolerance, when accompanied by indifference and social sluggishness, does not help in communication, in the development of relationships, in joint actions, in solidarity, and in a cohesive society.

When promoting tolerance and difference, some schools and teachers ask from their students to tolerate “others” and their cultural differences. At the same time, they do not demand students and teachers to probe into their own stereotypes or prejudices. Intercultural education for social justice in schools aims to raise these issues which it considers important for the future society. In other words, ICESJ is in favor of exploring and reviewing cultural elements and practices that run counter to human rights and violate human dignity. ICESJ is rooted in an ethic of human rights and strongly supports human rights, as agreed to and formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). We emphasize again, however, that in no case should this exploration of cultural practices concern only elements belonging to the cultures of nationally and ethnically "different" groups. Nor should not be aimed at the stereotypes and prejudices of the children of the "dominant" group, which concern the culture of the "different". A comprehensive exploration of all prejudices is needed, as well as the causes that perpetuate social inequalities and differences.

MCE/ICE focusing on “difference” and “otherness” may reinscribe the conditions meant to be overcome. That is why we argue that ICESJ should avoid simplistic categorizations. It should also avoid an essentialist definition, according to which people who identify themselves, or whom others identify, as members of a specific social group have the same characteristics, attributes,

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

and behaviors; react in a uniform way; have similar goals and ambitions; and so on. Scholars who support ICESJ try to focus their research and analysis on the unequal distribution of economic resources and power and not on the particular characteristics of a group or individual (e.g., skin color, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). Scholars who support ICESJ do not make elitist self-affirmative declarations, invoke the moral superiority of their positions to stop or avoid a discussion, nor do they make personal (ad hominem) attacks against those who do not embrace their views. Instead, they work hard to understand other perspectives and opposing viewpoints and to deal with them meticulously and diligently. Finally, those who support ICESJ justify their views using arguments that are grounded on facts and logic, with intensity and passion, not with malevolence and bitterness.

Concluding Remarks

Multi/interculturalism, one of the key concepts in the modern fields of education and intercultural dialogue, also plays an essential role in EU Education Policy (Trujillo Saez, 2002; Lähdesmäki, Koistinen, & Ylönen, 2020). Multi/interculturalism is to a large extent dependent on democracy, public participation, and the protection of human rights (Nestian Sandu, 2015, 2), while its application in education promotes equality and justice (Rego & Nieto, 2000; Dameron, Camp, Friedmann, & Parikh-Foxx, 2020). However, it seems that MCE/ICE as a field and movement remains, for the most part, under the control of people and organizations who lack the conviction to address society's grave injustices (Gorski, 2009, 88). With regards to its theoretical perspectives, it seems that multi/intercultural education is characterized by different approaches, and only to a small extent is there a consensus among its theorists regarding its perspective and objectives (Banks, 1993; Cherng & Davis, 2019). Nonetheless, MCE/ICE has established itself as a scientific area and academic discipline. In addition, its basic principles are accepted by educational systems in various countries, and many schools try to adopt it (see for example Garreta-Bochaca, Macia-Bordalba, & Llevot-Calvet, 2020; Osler, 2020). So, as a subset of this scientific area, intercultural education for social justice encompasses contributions from neighboring theoretical and research traditions, such as antiracist, anti-oppressive, and anticolonial education; critical multicultural education; black studies; feminist pedagogy; and critical race theory. ICESJ recognizes that society is stratified along social-group lines that include class, "race", national/ethnic origin, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability.

In conclusion, ICESJ has done more than provide a basic education for (im)migrants and refugees, introduce a "celebrating difference" curriculum, and use innovative teaching approaches. It sets the scene for students to challenge economic inequalities and social hierarchies and reject racism, as well as any form of discrimination and prejudice. ICESJ is a valuable tool for critical thinking, empowerment, emancipation, and democracy in schools and society. At a time when reactionary political parties and movements seem to be gaining ground in a number of countries around the world, education can be a bulwark. That's why, although we recognize that education alone cannot lead to a society of equality and justice, we consider it important to continue to use MCE & ICE in theory, policy, and educational praxis to achieve social-justice goals. Teachers, scholars, and researchers who uphold its principles are possessed by a

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

pedagogical optimism and should continue their efforts with greater momentum, while doing their utmost to contribute to the creation and consolidation of a better society.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dimitris T. Zachos: Associate Professor of Pedagogy – Intercultural Education, School of Pedagogy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Intercultural Competence of Future Teachers: The Case of Two Pedagogical Departments in a Greek University

Ellie Ioanna Georgouli[13], University of Ioannina, Greece
Lida Stergiou University of Ioannina, Greece

Intercultural competence is a major asset in interpersonal contact and communication in modern multicultural societies. In the field of education, the cultivation of intercultural competence is an integral part of an effective educational practice. In this article, we present the research we conducted regarding the degree of intercultural competence of future primary education teachers in Greece. We tried to draw useful conclusions about the perceptions of students in the pedagogical departments of the University of Ioannina regarding diversity, their intercultural skills and their attitudes towards intercultural situations of everyday life.

Our research effort highlighted an intermediate degree of intercultural competence of the participants, who showed interest in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds, but without particularly developed intercultural communication skills. Reduced multilingual capacity and previous intercultural experience also contributed to this intermediate result. The participants' year of study was not a factor of significant differences in the degree of their intercultural competence, which raises questions about the way university institutions serve the principles and practices of intercultural education in Greece. Our research leads to the conclusion that there is a need for review of future teachers' education in Greece, as well as modifications to the entire educational system of the country, so that students are properly prepared and equipped for the modern multicultural reality.

Keywords: intercultural competence, intercultural education, future teachers, teachers' education

Intercultural Competence

The multicultural conditions that characterize modern societies, highlight the need for appropriate education and continuous information, to prepare communities not only for the coexistence, but also for the interaction, with people from different cultural backgrounds. The main goal of this effort is to calculate and further cultivate the intercultural ability of individuals. This is a multifaceted concept, highlighting the way in which we tend to deal with otherness (Ruiz & Spinola, 2019. Fantini, 2020).

Studying the previous literature and research, we distinguish four major components that seem to reappear in researchers' theories and views, in their attempt to define intercultural competence: attitudes, knowledge, skills and actions. According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence is inextricably linked to one's communication skills, consists of three basic components - knowledge, skills, and attitudes - and is complemented by five values: (1) intercultural attitudes, (2) knowledge, (3) interpretation and correlation skills, (4) discovery and interaction skills, and (5) critical cultural awareness. According to Deardorff (2006), fundamental elements of intercultural competence are "openness", respect, curiosity and discovery. Her model also emphasizes the importance of attitudes and understanding of knowledge. Fantini divided

[13] Corresponding Author: Ellie Ioanna Georgouli, University of Ioannina, Ioannina 451 10, Greece. elliegeorgouli@gmail.com

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

intercultural competence into four dimensions: intercultural knowledge, intercultural attitude, intercultural skill, and intercultural awareness.

Ruben recognizes the following seven elements of intercultural competence: respect for other people, a positive attitude towards interaction, understanding the existence of different views and attitudes, empathy, communicative flexibility, effective management of interaction and tolerance for uncertainty (Günçavdı & Polat, 2016). Bennett, creating the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), explores intercultural competence in communication, reviewing the ability to transition from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, to transition from communication skills in one's culture, to communication skills between cultures. He divides this process into six stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Each stage along this continuum highlights the ways in which the individual's perception of cultural difference is organized. The individual is predominantly at one stage, although his perceptual strategies may extend to different stages (Bennett, 2017).

We, therefore, understand that intercultural competence is the set of certain skills which, if cultivated, allow the individual to wonder about otherness, to be interested in knowing it, to interact with it and to, finally, accept it. Enhanced intercultural competence facilitates relationships between culturally different people and is an ally in the fight against stereotypes, prejudices and social exclusion (Salazar & Agüero, 2016). It highlights the multiplicity of identity, reminding us that we should not be trapped in generalizations and judge individuals simply as representatives of a particular group, but as separate entities, with personal and unique traits, interests and values (Ochs, 2012).

Intercultural Competence, Education and Teaching Staff

Within the educational context, a system that seeks to effectively promote intercultural competence must utilize communicative, participatory and interdisciplinary approaches. In the intercultural guide of the European Council, *The intercultural city step by step* (2019), the section on the effective promotion of intercultural competence in the field of education provides us with a plethora of suggestions and tips. The guide recommends lessons in immigrant students' mother tongues, strong cooperation between schools and students' families with active participation of the latter in school policies and school life, national diversity of teachers, schools' interaction with the local community, intercultural activities and events, interdisciplinarity in the educational process, encouragement for participation of immigrant students in democratic school processes and, finally, intercultural education of the teaching staff.

This last directive highlights that, in order to build an intercultural environment within the classroom, it must be supported by interculturally competent teachers. The teaching staff needs appropriate professional training and development practices, so that they can cope with the demands of today's rapidly evolving and ever-changing social reality (Nazarenko, 2015). A teacher training program in intercultural competence must, first, be based on an appropriate, thorough and complete theoretical framework. Second, teacher training must be practiced by a qualified and experienced staff who are able to present, analyze and transmit the principles of intercultural competence (Niculescu & Percec, 2015). Having such a solid foundation, it is then important to aim at the development of the intercultural consciousness of the teacher, which is related to the investigation and questioning of their existing attitudes and perceptions. Through reflection and self-criticism, the teacher navigates future situations within the school environment

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

more effectively, observes any failures in his educational planning and manages to communicate better with his students. Finally, it is important that the newly acquired knowledge and skills offered to the teacher from their training, will be combined with a series of appropriate pedagogical practices and strategies, so that they can be successfully implemented in school reality (Maniatis, 2007).

Multiculturalism and Education in Greece

During the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of immigrants and repatriates entered Greece and in 1990 expatriates from the Soviet Union and refugees and immigrants from Albania and other countries followed. Some of the first reforms in the field of education were related to the facilitation of young students, such as reduced grade requirements in the entrance and promotion exams. In 1996 a Law was passed, defining the purpose, content, organization and operation of Intercultural Education schools (Law 2413/96). With the same Law, The Institute for Expatriate Education and Intercultural Education was also established, functioning as an advisory institution for the Ministry of Education until 2011, when the Institute for Educational Policy was created. At the same time, initiatives were undertaken outside the school system, such as fast-paced Greek language classes, production of intercultural material for teachers and training seminars for pupils, students and teachers (Milesi & Paschaliori, 2003; Nikolaou, 2011). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provided medical care, legal and psychosocial support, food and residence resources, education, repatriation, advocacy and tracing of family members (Poulios et al., 2015). In 2004, the Network for Children's Rights and the Culture Lab were created, supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, aiming at the smoother integration of students in the Greek school, the fight against discrimination and the development of intercultural education.

In 2016, with a Joint Ministerial Decision, Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFREs) were established, aiming to cover any learning "gaps" and to normalize the integration of refugee children in Greek schools. These are part of formal education and operate within the school units of the relevant Regional Directorates of primary and secondary education of the country, within the borders of which refugee reception centers exist (J.M.D. 180647/ΓΔ4/2016). In the same year, experimental intercultural schools were established, that would cooperate with the country's higher educational institutions, experimentally implementing various research programs related to intercultural education (Law 4415/2016, article 22). In 2019, 138 school units are chosen to house reception facilities (M.D. 147357/Δ1/2019). Various programs of intercultural interest are gradually being implemented in the country, with the contribution of the European Union, while textbooks with educational material are being written for the Reception Facilities and the Tutoring Departments (F.T.), by institutions such as the Pedagogical Institute and the University of Ioannina (Milesi & Paschaliori, 2003). In 2020, there is a total of 26 intercultural schools in Greece - 13 in primary and 13 in secondary education.

Despite the efforts, Greece failed to be institutionally prepared for that new, multicultural reality. The lack of long-term planning led to problems in the operation of all those newly established institutions, such as ambiguities and contradictions in the relevant circulars and lack of administrative and pedagogical cooperation between RFREs and schools. Also, the pedagogues hired, didn't have relevant training and special qualifications, a fact that made a proper and thorough education for the students extremely improbable (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019).

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

The lack of readiness and the limited skills of the teaching staff are also reflected in the field of research. A 2009 survey in Athens, on whether and to what extent teachers who teach Greek as a second language have developed intercultural communication skills, concluded that only four of the twenty participating teachers saw the experiences and cultural background of their students as an actual advantage and systematically included them in their teaching. At least 10 out of 20 participants expressed that the Greek culture was superior to the immigrant students' cultures, while many stated that immigrant students could not learn Greek due to lack of effort. The students, for their part, commented on the lack of interest from their teachers, the sense of inferiority cultivated at their expense, the reduction of their cultural backgrounds and the lack of understanding of the conditions and problems they face (Magos & Simopoulos, 2009).

In a more recent study by Mogli, Kalbeni and Stergiou (2020), regarding the intercultural education and training of teachers working in Reception Facilities in Greece, it was found that the former studies of the participants - both at an undergraduate and a postgraduate level - were not related to intercultural education. Apart from the incompatible educational background, these individuals did not receive any substantial and systematic training from the competent bodies before being placed in those specific positions. Only the refugee education coordinators had some relevant training, as their employment requires a Master's or Doctorate in intercultural education, as well as experience in Reception Facilities. The research highlighted the multiple problems arising from the lack of necessary training of teachers in RFREs and the immediate need for modifications and more educational opportunities on issues of intercultural character.

The research in relation to future teachers in Greece is equally interesting. A comparative study by Arvanitis and Sakellariou (2014), regarding the level of intercultural awareness of future teachers, involved 68 senior students of the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education of the University of Patras and 136 senior students of the Department of Early Childhood Education of the University of Ioannina. Although the research showcased a satisfactory degree of intercultural awareness of the participants, with high levels of respect for cultural differences and a positive predisposition, decreased comfort, confidence and pleasure were observed during intercultural encounters. In addition, the students of the University of Patras responded less positively regarding the respect for the value of other cultures and the sense of satisfaction during intercultural interaction. The researchers emphasize the need for a more methodical and systematic intercultural education, which effectively combines its practical and theoretical aspects, actively involves students in learning processes and strengthens their communication skills during intercultural contact.

In a survey of 139 students at the department of Education Sciences in Early Childhood of the Democritus University of Thrace, the attitudes of freshman and senior students regarding intercultural education were studied, while at the same time an attempt was made to calculate the levels of modern and traditional racism in said groups. Senior students showcased greater intercultural concerns than freshmen. However, while greater involvement with intercultural issues showed a decline in levels of traditional racism, levels of modern racism were relatively close for the two groups (freshmen and seniors). The research highlights the need for continuous vigilance regarding the more effective organization of curricula and the educational policies of pedagogical departments in Greek universities (Sapountzis, Mavrommatis, Dobriden, & Karousou, 2015).

In a study regarding the intercultural dimensions in the curricula of the Pedagogical Departments involved with Primary Education in Greece, a significant differentiation in the

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

approaches of intercultural education per department emerged. Differences were observed in the variety of intercultural modules offered, both in terms of their mandatory or optional nature, and in terms of their interdisciplinary nature. Differences were highlighted in the practical application of intercultural education (presentation of relevant teaching materials, books, programs and projects, school visits to local multicultural schools, etc.), as well as in the offered seminars and conferences on intercultural matters. The research therefore highlights the lack of a unified intercultural teaching model that governs all the university departments concerned. The researchers express their concerns about the differences in most curricula, point out the practical difficulties in reaching out to those in charge and stress the need to enrich the curricula of the Pedagogical Departments of Greek Universities (Palaiologou & Dimitriadou, 2013).

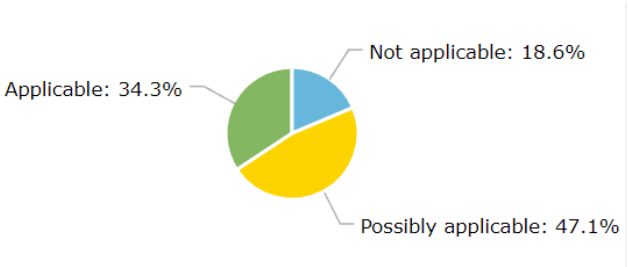
Research Methodology

Taking the need for interculturally capable teaching staff into consideration, we attempted to study the level of intercultural competence of current university students, studying to become future teachers. We wished to review their views and attitudes towards culturally different individuals in their lives so far, based on the stimuli they have received, before they are even called to work as professionals in the field of education. We lead with the hypothesis that people of a quite young age group probably translate into reduced previous intercultural experience, thus it would be very interesting to explore the intercultural abilities of such a population. We were also interested in whether studies in pedagogical departments affect the intercultural competence of said population, something that can offer useful conclusions about the dynamic between university studies and intercultural education.

Our research was conducted during the spring of 2021, with a sample of 102 undergraduate students from the two pedagogical departments of the School of Education Sciences of the University of Ioannina. The research data was collected through a questionnaire based on the diagnostic tool of the European Commission INCA (INCA, 2004). This tool measures the level of intercultural competence of the individual through targeting in six components: tolerance of ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness and empathy. INCA includes two types of questionnaires. The first collects biographical - demographic information and the second collects information about one's intercultural awareness level. It also includes scenarios in text and video form, which participants are asked to study and then answer a series of close-ended and open-ended questions. The process results in a ranking of intercultural competence, deeming it as *basic competence, intermediate competence,* or *full competence*.

The questionnaire for our research contained close-ended and open-ended questions, regarding intercultural encounters and everyday situations and scenarios, regarding both the intercultural coexistence and communication of the individual in their country, as well as their intercultural coexistence and communication in another country. For close-ended questions, there were three available answer options: "Not applicable", "Possibly applicable" and "Applicable". During the quantitative analysis of the data, all answers were counted and coded, followed by graphs that highlighted the tendencies in the participants' answers. Graph 1 is an indicative example.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)



Graph 1. "When the behavior of people from other countries alienates me, I avoid contact with them."
Source: Georgouli

For open-ended questions, we used the method of thematic analysis, considering our research questions, the relevant literature and the components and levels of intercultural competence according to the INCA tool. Through the initial stage of data coding, after the necessary corrections and the collapse of similar codes, fourteen codes emerged regarding issues of intercultural competence and readiness of the participants. In the phase of compiling the different codes into common themes, we ended up with three basic themes, each with three sub-themes (Table 1). Thus, a thematic map was created, highlighting the tendencies in the responses within our sample (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 1. Result themes as they emerge from the thematic analysis.

THEME	SUB-THEME
A.Communicative competence	A1. Positive approach to communication / socialization A2. Willingness to solve problems A3. Difficulty in communication / socialization
B.Interest in knowledge	B1. Theoretical cognitive search B2. Practical-empirical approach (individually) B3. Practical-empirical approach (collaboratively)
C.Diversity management	C1. Empathy C2. Attempt to find common cultural elements C3. Cautiousness and uncertainty

Source: Georgouli

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Results

Communicative competence

Initially, issues of communicative difficulty in intercultural contact emerged from the research. The participants' reference to the issue of adaptability was strong. The majority stressed the security of transactions within their own cultural background against transactions with people from other cultural backgrounds, with words such as "security", "comfort", "intimacy", "certainty" dominating their answers. On the other hand, the theoretical interest in getting to know and being in touch with different people in new environments (e.g., while living in another country), with an interest in interacting with young people from different cultural backgrounds, emerged equally strongly from the responses.

Great emphasis was placed by the participants on communication problems and practical difficulties during intercultural contact. Regarding the feelings and reactions of the participants when realizing a communication problem, words and phrases such as "embarrassment", "uncomfortable", "strange", "at a disadvantage", "marginalized" were predominant amongst the answers.

> If I couldn't communicate, I would be uncomfortable and feel isolated... It is difficult to communicate with someone who speaks another language, especially when there are no mutual compromises, e.g., them to speak a little slower and with basic vocabulary in front of me and me to learn the basics of their language.

Amongst the proposed solutions to communication problems, the use of the English language in intercultural conversations stood out, with the arbitrary conclusion, however, that each interlocutor will know this specific language satisfactorily. Interestingly, in questions about intercultural communication of the participants in another country, many suggested learning the language of the host country. In questions, however, regarding their communication with foreigners in Greece, the attempt to learn the mother tongue of either side was never suggested as a solution, but the choice of using English prevailed. Other suggestions, mostly providing instantaneous rather than long-term solutions to communication problems, included the use of dictionaries, mobile translation applications, humor and body language.

Interest in knowledge

Concerning this topic, three different approaches were observed within our sample. The first concerns the search for knowledge of cultural interest in mainly theoretical and informational ways, such as, for example, searching for information on the internet, in libraries, travel guides, watching movies and documentaries, listening to music, etc. The second is based on a more empirical approach of knowledge, with choices such as travel, visits to sites of historical and cultural interest and culinary experiences, as, for example, one participant mentioned in the following excerpt:

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

> I would like to visit many different points of interest. I would visit places that showcase the country's history, culture and tradition. I would also try the local food and make an effort in learning the country's language.

The third trend that emerges is the empirical approach of knowledge combined with intercultural contact, collaboration and / or teamwork. In this category, we have ideas such as joining groups and associations of cultural interest, contact with people from different cultural backgrounds, development of interpersonal relationships during a stay abroad, etc. In cases where the mobilization of communication and / or collectivity was the main strategy of the participants, not only for the acquisition, but also for the transfer of cultural knowledge, the type of knowledge became less informative and more personal. In other words, it was not mainly encyclopedic knowledge that one finds in a book or a museum, but it was more about everyday life in a different cultural environment, ways of living and thinking. There was also a strong interest of the participants in informing people from other cultural backgrounds about the way of life in modern Greece.

Diversity management

Regarding the ways in which individuals manage diversity, no extreme views emerged and the majority showed a greater or lesser interest in getting to know people from different cultural backgrounds. The element of caution was strong in the responses, acting as a factor of decreased self-confidence during intercultural contact. Talking similarities and differences between cultures and collectively participating in recreational activities (cinema, games, sports, etc.) were the main suggestions of the participants to "break the ice" between culturally different people.

While answering the questionnaire's scenarios regarding intercultural contact in and out of Greece, a 7.8% of our sample referred to real intercultural encounters while studying abroad, while 5.8% referred to personal acquaintances with people from other countries in Greece. In these cases, tangible experience was reflected in the responses and individuals displayed a higher degree of intercultural competence. Furthermore, given that people with references to pre-existing intercultural experiences make up only a total of 13.6% of the sample, we return to one of the original ideas of our research, that is, the reduced prior experience of most young people - both because of their young age and because of the possible reduced search and / or opportunities for intercultural communication - makes it very interesting to explore the intercultural abilities of this population.

When asked about the integration of culturally different people in pre-existing groups of peers, there were distinct differences amongst the participants' answers. In some cases, individuals referred to the need for a first stage of discussion and briefing of the two sides separately, to prepare the ground for the new addition to the group. In other cases, direct contact and the attempt to find common interests were considered more appropriate tactics. Several responses suggested the use of English, the reduced use of difficult vocabulary, as well as the avoidance of discussing personal topics of the group, with preference to more generic topics that the new member can respond to. In rare cases, there was a negative predisposition to integrating culturally different individuals into pre-existing groups of friends, with references to the difficulty of joining a pre-existing, solid group and the communication issues that may arise.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

> I do not think I would try to meet someone from another country to my friends, precisely because I have my own, close circle and I would not want to make the new person feel uncomfortable when we speak in an unknown language and with codes he does not know. I would prefer to help him meet other people, or to meet some of my acquaintances, with whom I get along, but I am not as close as I am with my friends.

Conclusions

Intermediate intercultural competence

Both based on the results of our research and the literature and research review, an intermediate degree of intercultural competence of our sample emerged on the scale of measurement of intercultural competence of the INCA tool. The participants showed interest in getting chances to know culturally different people, but they did not stop reproducing the social contract of "us" and "the others". They proved to be not yet familiar with the concept of internal diversity of cultural groups and often identified cultural identity with nationality.

In terms of how they rank differences, our research did not reveal any evidence of vertical ranking, with stereotypical criteria and racial discrimination tendencies, but mainly horizontal, based on geographical and cultural variances. The participants were positive towards acquaintance with value systems of other cultures, but their desire to communicate with different cultural backgrounds was characterized by neutrality in terms of cultural exchange. Intercultural encounters seemed to be treated in a "one-off" way, without being used in a broader mental system for future use.

No tendencies of assimilation of cultural minority groups were recorded, a very positive element for coexistence in modern societies of diversity and pluralism. Let us not forget that we are referring to future teachers, who must not ignore the difference between integration and assimilation. It is necessary, in modern society, to break away from traditional teaching methods, which considered assimilation as a requirement for better performance of students in a new cultural environment (Haenni et al., 2019).

The cases of students in our sample, who have studied or worked abroad, showcase how much personal experience affects the way we deal with diversity. People studying or working abroad, usually become a cultural minority in this new context. So, they better understand the importance of respecting and accepting multiculturality, they have more opportunities to broaden their horizons and work on their communication skills, while, at the same time, they realize how fluid the concept of "otherness" is. At the same time, this proves how fluid the concept of intercultural competence is. It is not an immutable state, a capacity that one either possesses or not, but an ongoing mental process. Therefore, calculating it at a given time does not arbitrarily anticipate the degree of intercultural competence over long periods of time, but possible future fluctuations must be seriously taken into consideration (Prechtl & Davidson-Lund, 2007).

Need for modifications

On a personal level, the biggest obstacle that participants seem to have to overcome is their limited intercultural experience, as well as several social assumptions and conventions caused by the influence of previous generations, the lack of information, the often-distorted presentation of

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

diversity from the media, as well as the gaps in the educational system. Given the importance of multilingual skills as an element of intercultural competence (Barrett, 2013; Günçavdı & Polat, 2016), it is crucial that they begin to expand their language repertoire, to avoid feelings of stress and embarrassment, leading to diminished self-confidence during intercultural contact. But also, to reduce the practical difficulties posed by multilingual weakness in intercultural communication.

In the field of education, the fact that the year of study did not seem to significantly affect the degree of intercultural competence of the participants is a very important finding to consider. One would expect university education and general academic experience to be main factors influencing the intercultural ability of individuals. Nevertheless, the differences in intercultural competence depending on the year of study were minimal. There is, therefore, a need for revision and substantial modifications, so that students in Greece can enjoy a multifaceted and up-to-date intercultural education, based on the demands of the modern world. Especially in the case of teaching future teachers, there is a risk of creating a vicious circle of semi-learning, which is why it is important to find substantial and long-term solutions.

Of course, the need for modifications concerns the whole educational system. It is important that pedagogical institutions be able to focus on students' criticism, communication, social and intercultural skills, from an early age. Schools should provide students with a representative picture of today's world, explain the value of cultural exchange and dispel the fear of losing personal and social identity due to contact with culturally diverse others. Interdisciplinary learning and transformational pedagogy should be allies in this reform effort. Interdisciplinarity is a practice that serves the universality of intercultural education that we demand from a modern educational system. Transformational pedagogy, in turn, is equally useful, as it is a pedagogical model that presupposes the challenge of conventional models and the exploration of new perspectives (Mezirow, 2007).

Finally, it is important to raise awareness of our entire society. There is a need for direct and valid information from the media, organization of events of cultural interest on both national and regional levels and an education that grows beyond the school context. In terms of research, the interest in the intercultural competence of both future and current teachers, as well as the effective or ineffective implementation of intercultural education, are issues that require even more attention. With coherence, order and collectivity, the results in our intercultural ability and general view of the modern world, can take a very positive turn and benefit the harmonious coexistence of people, no longer in simply multicultural, but intercultural environments.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Georgouli Ellie Ioanna: MA in Early Childhood Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Ioannina, Greece

Stergiou Lida: Associate Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Ioannina, Greece

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Maneuvering virtual global leadership: What new technological trends can teach for leadership practices

Vivian Marlies Decker[14], Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland
Ingo Stolz, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland

Abstract: The ability to successfully lead organizations and international, global, virtual teams is of ever higher significance today. For efficient, productive work in a diverse, global, virtual team, trust and communication are needed in the virtual space. The following article focuses on how new trends in technology can be used to implement modern leadership in the workplace.

Keywords: International, Leadership, Virtual, Intercultural, Communication and Information Technology

The Future is now

The ability to lead an organization and its international, sometimes only virtually collaborating teams to success is of ever higher significance, given that global trade has "increased dramatically" (United Nations – UNCTAD, 2021a, United Nations – UNCTAD, 2021b, p. 6). This ability to lead teams through the opportunities and challenges of internationalization is not only relevant in multinational corporations, but ever more for leaders of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or start-ups (Baldegger, Merkle, & Wild, 2019).

However, despite the current and past prevalence of international leadership discourse, the concrete meanings and desired outcomes of international leadership often remain difficult to determine. This is due to the concept being multifaceted and challenging to theoretically describe, and because rapidly evolving mega-trends such as globalization, digitalization, and sustainability transform and shape the practice of international leadership. In these post pandemic days, digitalization is probably one of the most pressing issues when it comes to leading virtual, global, intercultural teams. Fortunately, virtual meeting spaces are currently facing significant upgrade possibilities. Instead of pressing the "Enter-Zoom-Meeting" button on the screen, in a very near future one could enter with the help of virtual reality headsets, glasses and handles.

The future of virtual teamwork could at some point look like this or something very similar if one is following current trends in the field of Extended Reality (XR), Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR). The path that companies such as collaboration pioneer Spatial or Oculus VR (a subsidiary of Facebook parent company Meta) are treading promises entirely new possibilities. Even if the current equipment still strongly relates to technology- and design-savvy areas such as the software industry or architecture, the direction of the development is abundantly clear.

[14]Vivian Marlies Decker, Frankenstrasse 9, Competence Center Business Development, Leadership & HR, Institute of Business and Regional Economics IBR, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, 6002 Lucerne, Switzerland. email: vivian.decker@hslu.ch

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

> "There is a huge need and opportunity in connecting everyone in the world, giving everyone a voice and changing society for the future. The scale of the technology and infrastructure that needs to be built is unprecedented, and we believe this is the most important problem we can focus on." (Mark Zuckerberg, 2012)

It was in 2012 when Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg made this statement about his vision of a "connected world" through the virtual space. Today, post-pandemic, in 2022, this future is no longer a glimpse into a crystal ball. It is now and today, and technology reflects this all too clearly.

VR team trainings are already in place

Hospitals such as the Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) are already using virtual reality to train their emergency room units for special situations (Oculus VR, 2018). Their occurrence is often too rare for staff to gain the first-hand experience they desperately need in an emergency. VR training enables doctors to practice in a resource-friendly, risk-free way to become used to the emotional stress that can arise, for example, when a child's airway is blocked. Every second counts and nothing can go wrong. After initial experience with the VR training, the CHLA even made the training compulsory for all new employees (Oculus VR, 2018). The program was subsequently adopted by, among others, Johns Hopkins and Stanford University.

The fact that communication and information technologies are now part of the management toolbox is already common practice in many places outside hospitals and software companies. However, this increasing commonality of virtual leadership practices also requires the involvement of leadership experts and organizational psychologists who understand how people interact with each other and how people interact with technology. Ultimately, it is about nothing less than what leadership skills and behaviors prove effective and efficient when interacting with technology.

Touchdown in the SME sector

Following a study which the US researchers Fadi Batarseh, John Usher and Joshua Daspit conducted with 375 companies, for functioning, productive work in a diverse, global, virtual team, trust and communication are needed in the virtual space (Batarseh et al., 2017). Additionally, they find a link between the exploitation of technological opportunities and diversity represented in the team. Dr. Moana Monnier, expert in work and organizational psychology at the Lucerne School of Business, adds though that trust building and VR are two opposites that do not automatically attract each other (Personal Communication, M. Monnier, June 2022).

For this reason, it takes a special effort on behalf of the team lead to establish trust in a purely virtual interaction over a geographical distance. All the more so, the more diverse the locations of the team members are. In a virtual setting, important sources of interpretation such as body language, facial expressions and intonation are partially omitted, although these are essential for establishing trust. Time differences and intercultural barriers only increase the importance of this aspect of communication.

Additional compensation strategies are therefore needed if the technology is not up to the task. For the team leader, this generally means a stronger presence and more frequent enquiries

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

despite time asynchrony – even if it is only in the joint team chat. In the light of how one dimensional, simple email contact can be, companies such as sportswear seller Gymshark have already abandoned classic emailing systems and rely on communication via instant messaging service Slack instead (Gymshark says goodbye to emails and relies completely on Slack, n.d.). News giant British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has also decided to take new steps for team collaboration (Improving collaboration with Slack, n.d.). The use of real-time collaboration tools has been an important part of the culture of online teams for over 20 years in the BBC, but these tools were originally developed for the technically more advanced staff, making them unsuitable for less technical staff or multidisciplinary teams. Since different teams were already using Slack as a tool for efficient and trust promoting communication, they then bottom up proposed an organization-wide introduction.

Mario Burger, CEO of the Swiss software company Simpit, also ventures to link digital possibilities and trust. He and his team support companies on their journey into the digital future through digital consulting. Exploiting the technical possibilities is not enough though. It takes trust in the team, in the team leader, so that virtual cooperation can function at a distance. Mario Burger faces the challenges of this kind of cooperation every day. The high demand for his services in the field of digital consulting also shows that the trend has reached all professional and corporate groups, even in the SME sector.

...Finnish innovation and beyond

Finland's national Opera House has also jumped on the VR train. Together with Finnish VR studio Zoan and XR headset provider Varjo, the Opera House is working to improve its workflow through extended reality (Varjo, 2020).

> "For opera to prosper in the modern era we need to respect its traditions while showing a willingness to evolve – reflecting the interests and expectations of new audiences. Today, that also means keeping up with the fast development of technology," (Annastina Haapasaari, project manager of Opera Beyond, the opera house's associated project)

With the help of the provided XR platform, the teams can give free rein to their imagination in the development of the stage sets and go beyond the pure 2D representation. The 3D Space allows them to have a reality-like experience of a new stage design concept that can be shared with other team members. The whole concept not only saves a considerable amount of time, but also promotes artistic quality, as Timo Tuovila, production and technical director of the Finnish Opera House, points out.

While the idea of progress isn't naturally associated with the work mode of Opera Houses, this example does give an important hint at how far virtual team collaboration has already gone. For everyone whose organization is currently planning to move into a new office or design a new room concept, this is promising news. Whoever then develops the idea of implementing not only room concepts but also the next virtual, creative team meeting in this way is already a good deal closer to the future.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Democratizing through technology

Siemens' in-house R&D unit "Corporate Technology" has also chosen the Finnish innovative collaboration path: With technical support from the Finnish company Varjo, they use an internal VR collaboration tool. In the associated case study Varjo emphasizes that the use of its VR headsets is not about the technology experts, but about making work processes accessible to technical outsiders as well, which is why they call it "democratizing".

The head is already buzzing with XR, VR and AR?

Then let's take one more step into the technological horizon: With the launch of its Reality Cloud platform, Varjo has recently been touting real-time teleportation and reality sharing (Varjo, 2022). Since the concrete question remains of how team leads can use technology to effectively and efficiently build their own (virtual) nests, the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts is dedicating its own research project to the topic and is investigating "virtual leadership across international distance".

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Vivian Marlies Decker: Research Assistant, Competence Center Business Development, Leadership & HR, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland

Prof. Dr. Ingo Stolz: Professor for International Management and Leadership, Human Resource Development, Organization Development, Change Management and Corporate Social Responsibility, Co-Head Competence Center Business Development, Leadership & HR, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Reversing the Gaze: On the Intercultural Translation of Concepts, SIETAR Special Interest Group (SIG) on Africa Workshop at the SIETAR Switzerland Congress

Matthias Maurer Rueda[15], PhD Candidate, Institute for Sociology, University of Basel, Switzerland

Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin, Triple T trainingthetrainers, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract: Introducing the "SIG on Africa" and looking back at the workshop hosted by the SIG on Africa, represented by Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin,and the two presenters Winnie Kanyimba (see her article in this journal) and Matthias Maurer Rueda. Can tribes-a term linked to Africa-be used to explain Swiss politics? The workshop was an opportunity for reflection on the hierarchical relations embedded in our knowledge: Africa as tribes, Europe as nations, and the intercultural translation of concepts.

Keywords: Translation of Concepts, Tribes, Nations, Nation States, Africa, Europe, Switzerland, SIG Africa

The SIG (Special Interest Group) on Africa…

Sietarians and SIETAR groups are to be found in many places all over the world – except in Africa! Still, there are numerous Sietarians interested and invested in the continent, many also work there. Intercultural Communication as a field hardly ever deals with African topics, and there is very little research readily accessible on intercultural relations between African regions or between the continent and the rest of the world. The SIG on Africa was founded "out of a love of and passionate interest in Africa" (See https://sietareusigafrica.wordpress.com) and to raise awareness of the complexity of African cultures among Sietarians.

…. *and "Reversing the Gaze" come together*

"Reversing the Gaze", is a research project involving several universities all over the world. "The project uses a "conceptual laboratory" to take a critical theoretical approach we call "reversing the gaze" – i.e. deploying concepts developed in the Global South to the North. It tests the analytic purchase of three mid-level concepts – "re-tribalisation", "political society" and "the cunning state" – on political crisis phenomena in Europe against the background of a careful inquiry into the methodological scope of comparison". (www.europa.unibas.ch)

When the SIG on Africa was looking for a topic to present at the SIETAR Switzerland Congress in Yverdon in May 2022, a mutually beneficial collaboration came about with the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland, also a corporate member of the SIG and SIETAR Switzerland. As questions of ***identity, belonging and identification*** are core

[15]Matthias Maurer Rueda, 4051 Basel, Institute for Sociology, University of Basel, Switzerland. email: m.maurerrueda@unibas.ch

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

issues for interculturalists as well as sociologists and social anthropologists, the "Reversing the Gaze"- project with its questions on the intercultural translation of concepts and ideas was a perfect match. The SIG on Africa proudly presented its first session at a SIETAR congress. This was thanks to our excellent presenters and PhD candidates, Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba and Matthias Maurer Rueda.

The key questions of the workshop were:

-Can tribes- a term linked to Africa- be used to explain Swiss politics?
-Should tribal politics in Africa be framed as nation-building?
-How can similarities and differences between the two concepts be elaborated?
-Why are Africans portrayed as having dual identities (national and tribal ones), whereas Europeans have one identity (the national one)?

Here's what Matthias Maurer Rueda wrote about the workshop (for Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba's contribution, see the separate article in this journal edition):

SIETAR Workshop Recap – Maurer Rueda

The second half of the workshop *(after the sequence on tribalisation)* had the participants question and problematize some deep-seated assumptions about social reality. Colloquially, we have grown so used to the existence of nation states, so familiar to understanding ourselves as citizens, that we rarely give those concepts a second thought. It is precisely this apparent familiarity, this inability to see our immediate surroundings, that this workshop challenged.

Under the title "*Compulsory Nationalism?"* nationality and citizenship were closely examined from a decolonial perspective. By tracing its origins, the concept of the nation state ceases to be ubiquitous. Nation states become visible as man-made and malleable – as variables rather than constants. In a brief presentation, workshop participants were introduced to some of the core ideas of decolonial theory – primarily Aníbal Quijano's *Colonial Matrix of Power*.

Re-configuring the nation state to be changeable and adaptable is particularly relevant within the contemporary political context. In many ways, the nation state has seen its capacity to shape our lives dwindle: A global economy cannot be controlled within a nation state. Migration and population dynamics are becoming increasingly difficult to govern for the administrative state. Modern media challenge the monopoly on knowledge and culture that nation states had for a long time, and that played a key role in the production of loyal subjects.

Thinking beyond the nation state

In many ways, then, the pervasiveness of the nation state in our lives prevents us from truly thinking about alternatives and ways of dealing with the shortcomings of nations in the 21st century. To show just *how* tricky it is to think beyond the nation state, workshop participants were put onto a hands-on task. In small groups, participants were asked to jot down functions and practices of the nation state that seem most relevant to them. In a second step, the groups had to design and create an alternative to the nation state. What might its institutions look like? How do borders work? How does welfare work?

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

In a very lively session, we then debriefed and discussed our results, as well as the difficulties we encountered in thinking up such alternatives. The group – consisting of interculturalists, NGO-employees, specialists in the development field, as well as vocational educators, was stunned by the sheer impossibility of thinking outside the nation state. Luckily, success in the exercise did not consist of developing an actual working alternative – that is far too big a challenge – but in realizing that we indeed can try and shape the world we live in, though it is very hard to do.

Figure 1: Protesters Against Covid19 Measures in "Trychler" Outfits. Source: Photo Andreas Haas Imago Images. Published in "Der Bund", article by David Sarasin, 30.04.2021. Photo used with permission.

Figure 1 depicts protesters demonstrating against Covid19 measures and rules during a demonstration. They were dressed in traditional rural outfits and carried "Treichle" or "Trychle", large cow bells attached to a yolk. The custom/tradition of "trychle" (the noun and verb being the same expression) is still very alive in rural Switzerland, the "Trychler" have processions and parades usually on New Year's Eve and on 1 August, the Swiss national day. This powerful and instantly recognizable image was used as a symbol to state that Covid measures were "un-Swiss" and perceived as limiting civil rights and freedom. A tribe unto themselves, the "Trychler".

Matthias Maurer Rueda used this picture to illustrate the following points:

- ❖ Nationalist populism: Reconfigures community within the language of the existing nation
- ❖ Defend 'Switzerland' against… Switzerland?
- ❖ Differentiation between 'real' and 'fake' Citizens

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

❖ The difference lies in who and what is defined as Switzerland

The questions of and discussions on how we define ourselves and the frameworks that are used for the functioning of states and societies were most interesting and insightful. Pertinent to interculturalists were also the "3 levels of identification of a Swiss person": the municipal, the cantonal and the national. Maurer Rueda stated that they "make a lot of sense to me, and as a Swiss national, I do find myself thinking in those categories".

Acknowledgement

Our thanks go to the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel (namely Veit Arlt and Pascal Schmid) who established contacts to their PhD candidates Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba and Matthias Maurer Rueda; to Sietar Switzerland, namely Jillaine Farrar for their support in enabling this workshop, and to the first leadership team of the SIG on Africa, Joe Kearns (who is responsible for the website and the hosting of the SIG under the roof of Sietar Europa), Anne-Claude Lambelet (for the francophone parts of Africa), and Inge Baaijens in Addis Ababa for their support valuable and inputs.

First and foremost, of course, a huge thank you to Winnie and Matthias for bringing their research and ideas to us, and for engaging in this "alien territory" that is SIETAR!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Matthias Maurer Rueda: Doctoral Candidate at the Institute for Sociology, University of Basel, Switzerland

Sibylle Ganz-Koechlin: Founder, owner at Triple T trainingthetrainers; linguist and interculturalist specializing in intercultural education and trainings for administrations; MEd, MPhil, Berne, Switzerland

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Tribalism in Switzerland: Challenging Firmly Established Perceptions of Concepts

Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba,[16] University of Basel, Switzerland

Abstract: This article seeks to challenge the perception that the concept of tribalism can only be applied to African contexts by applying it to a European one. On the one hand, the article highlights examples of tribalism from the social contexts of Zambia and Switzerland, based on so-called tribal characteristics including social interaction, categorization, maintenance of social distance, as well as cultural expression. On the other hand, the article proposes a conceptual comparison of tribalism and nationalism, with the aim of establishing equality between different knowledge systems. The ideas presented in this article are inspired by research on intercultural translation.

Keywords: Tribalism, Nationalism, Zambia, Switzerland, Concepts, Comparison, Intercultural Translation

Intercultural Translation: Learning from non-Western cultures

The concept of tribalism, strongly associated with Africa, has been attributed to as a main source of social and political ills, as well as economic failures on the continent. In contrast, Europe is viewed as a continent consisting of prosperous nations that have achieved social and economic progress. Therefore, this article seeks to challenge the perception that the concept of tribalism can only be applied to African contexts, by applying it to a European one, namely Switzerland. On the one hand, the article highlights examples of tribalism from the social contexts of Zambia and Switzerland, based on so-called tribal characteristics including social interaction, categorization, maintenance of social distance, as well as cultural expression. On the other hand, the article proposes a conceptual comparison of tribalism and nationalism, with the aim of establishing equality between different knowledge systems. The ideas presented in this article are inspired by research on intercultural translation.

Intercultural translation can be useful in detecting firm assumptions among cultures, as well as looking for similarities and differences (Santos, 2016). Intercultural translation, therefore, challenges the widespread belief that non-Western cultures have to adopt Western methods in order to advance. It also challenges the idea that Western and non-Western cultures are so far apart that they cannot be judged according to the same standards. Intercultural translation can be viewed as a way to develop new hybrid forms of understanding, promote non-hierarchical forms of communication, and to promote shared cultural meanings. It provides us an opportunity to regard the perspectives of non-Western cultures, and consider what they can teach us about Western cultures (Santos, 2016).

[16] Corresponding Author: Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba, Rheinsprung 21, 4051 Basel, Centre for African Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland. email: winnie.kanyimba@unibas.ch

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

The Development of Tribalism in Africa

The concept of tribalism was developed in the 1950s and 1960s, a period of colonial rule in Africa. As such, African societies came to be more and more regarded as tribal societies. Western anthropologists conducted research in African societies, with the aim to find out whether, with rising urbanization in Africa, African labourers who migrated to the urban areas would enter a process of 'detribalization', that is, to let go of their so-called tribal identities and cultures and embrace more urban or Western identities. The term tribal was therefore also synonymous with being primitive, uncivilized, and non-Western. The anthropologists reached the conclusion that African migrants actually maintained these identities in the urban areas. As such, anthropologists placed more emphasis on studying the different ways in which African societies could be viewed as tribal. Expressions of language, culture, social behaviour etc., of the societies that they researched came to be viewed as tribalism. The next section will lay out a few examples of this.

Tribalism came to be known as a process of social interaction based on feelings of belonging (Mitchell, 1956, p. 18). What this meant was that each African was considered to be a member of a tribe, which involved a complex set of relations involving chiefs, hereditary councillors, village headmen, elders and so on. Mutual expectations of behaviour among migrants in a social setting were prescribed by the customs of their tribes. In addition, tribalism was viewed as a sub-division of people according to certain categories, these categories being based on ethnic criteria. This distinguished people according to certain criteria including shared language, culture and religion.

Case Study: Migrant Workers on the Copperbelt

One of the main areas of the study on tribalism was the Copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia, today known as Zambia. The Copperbelt is a mining region in Zambia which consists of a few towns, to which many men from the diverse groups within and outside the country migrated in search of work. Due to this diversity, the Copperbelt was viewed as a region that allowed for tribalism, for example through the creation of prejudices and stereotypes among workers based on tribal lines. It has been argued that the workers were divided along tribal lines, and therefore based their social interaction on tribal affiliations (Epstein, 1958).

A well-known case study on tribalism is the Kalela Dance, which is based on research carried out in the 1950s. The dance was performed by groups of migrant workers on the Copperbelt, and was described as a 'tribal' dance. Ultimately, the dance was viewed as an explicit form of tribalism, as the dancers were from one main ethnic group, the Bisa, and the songs were sung in their language, which is Bemba. The Kalela was also referred to as a dance of pride and an emphasis of the unity of the Bisa against other groups on the Copperbelt (Mitchell, 1956). Additionally, a selection of some of the songs of the Kalela were directed against certain customs and characteristics of other groups.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Figure 1: Migrant workers performing the Kalela Dance, 1951. Source: www.era.anthropology.ac.uk

Another way that tribalism was studied was through the existence of so-called tribal elders on the Copperbelt. The system of Tribal Elders was formed in 1931, for the purpose of communication between workers and the mine management (Epstein, 1958). Tribal elders were also regarded as the official representatives of their tribes, their roles supposedly including the prevention of conflict and ensuring that members of their tribes maintained close ties to their cultures and identities. Tribal elders were also involved in the formation of tribal associations, which provided services to members of their groups, such as burial services.

Lastly, anthropologists argued that migrants maintained a social distance from members of other groups based on geographical difference and cultural similarity (Mitchell, 1956). A survey was conducted in order to find out how migrants viewed social interaction with members of other groups. Participants were questioned on a selection of themes, such as their willingness to marry a member of another group, and their willingness to allow members of other groups to live or settle in their rural areas. The survey showed that groups that were closer to each other geographically, regarded each other as socially nearer to each other. The same was concluded for groups that were similar in culture.

Comparing Tribalism to Nationalism

As mentioned above, tribalism refers to a sub-division of people in terms of their sense of belonging to certain categories, these categories being defined in terms of ethnic criteria. A tribe, has been referred to as a group of people linked in one particular social system. Nationalism, on the other hand, is referred to as an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to promote its well-being (Smith, 2010, p. 9). This entails a requirement to maintain a sense of national autonomy, national unity and national identity. A nation has been referred to as an

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

In my reading of the characteristics of nationalism, I pose the question: Can we make use of the same characteristics to describe tribalism? Seemingly, the migrants that were the source of research on the Copperbelt sought to maintain a sense of autonomy, unity and identity through social interaction in their languages and expressions of culture. Another question I pose is: Can we view national societies as tribal societies? Are national societies also not categorized according to ethnic criteria, such as language, culture and religion?

As I mentioned at the beginning of the paper, tribalism is a concept that has been heavily associated with Africa, while on the other hand, Europe has been referred to as a set of prosperous national societies. I, therefore, challenge the reader to view European societies as tribal societies. In so doing, I propose the argument that tribalism and nationalism share common features, such as; the central idea of the 'tribe' or 'nation', a sense of belonging based on certain categories such as language, culture, values and beliefs, and a maintenance of 'tribal' or 'national' norms/values.

Applying Tribalism to Switzerland

One of the main sources of national pride in Switzerland is linguistic diversity (Eugster & Strijbis, 2011). The country has four official languages, which in many cases form the basis of social interaction among Swiss people. Additionally, Switzerland is politically divided on three levels; the municipal, cantonal and federal level. Therefore, a Swiss person is not only a citizen of the Swiss Federation, but also a citizen of a canton and municipality (Helbling, 2010, p. 795). Certain criteria of integration, such as speaking an official Swiss language and familiarity with Swiss customs, are placed on individuals who wish to be naturalized in the country. In my view, this is similar to the description of tribalism as a sub-division of people according to certain categories.

A maintenance of social distance from other groups according to geographical distance and cultural similarity was viewed as a form of tribalism. In Switzerland, this can also be observed through the political relations that are held with foreigners in the country. Migrants from countries that are members of the European Union are given priority on free movement to and within Switzerland, while migrants from non-EU countries face stricter movement policies. Since the 1990s, migrants from countries within the EU have been regarded as culturally closest to Swiss people, therefore having higher possibilities of integrating into the country (Riaño & Wastl-Walter, 2006). As such, they also have higher chances of permanently settling in the country.

Cultural expression has also been viewed as a form of tribalism, as it entails shared norms and values among participants, indicating how they should order their behaviour (Mitchell, 1970, p. 85). In 2016, Coop, one of Switzerland's retail companies, introduced a campaign for the promotion of cheese fondue and raclette. The word fondue has its origins in French, from the word 'fondre', which means to melt. Cheese fondue has its origins in the 18th century Switzerland as a means for farm families to stretch their limited resources during the winter months, and is common in German and French speaking parts of Switzerland. Enjoying a dish of cheese fondue comes with a set of norms, including in which direction to stir using the long-stemmed fork, and which alcoholic beverage to consume. Furthermore, cheese fondue is recognized as a symbol of Swiss unity and Swiss identity. The sets of relations that make up eating cheese fondue account for both social interaction and forms of categorization. In my view, this demonstrates a clear form of tribalism.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Figure 2: An image from the 2016 "Chli Stinke Muess Es - i de ganze Schwiiz" [It has to stink a bit - all over Switzerland] campaign. Source: werbewoche.ch

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tebuho Winnie Kanyimba: PhD Candidate, Centre for African Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Challenge-Based Learning as a tool for Diversity & Inclusion in Higher Education

Vincent Merk[17], Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands

Abstract: Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) has been a recurrent topic for years now in many organizations that want to create a more equal, open and safe work environment. We will argue that one way to develop it in institutions of higher education is to implement Challenge-Based Learning (CBL). It is an innovative pedagogical approach based on the diversity of the group of students involved in solving a real-life challenge proposed by academia, the industry or other stakeholders. Using an interdisciplinary and creative approach, they gain a broad theoretical knowledge, but also develop both technical and professional skills. This article intends to demonstrate the convergence of D&I policies and CBL as a strong process and instrument to create more inclusion in an academic setting, for example in the International Classroom, within student teams, during a summer school or in an innovation space.

Keywords: Diversity & Inclusion, Challenge-Based Learning, International Classroom, Innovation Space

Setting the Context

For many years now, many organizations in the world have developed Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) policies. The idea is to create a more equal, open and safe environment for their employees working in the office or in remote or hybrid modes. These policies are characterized by inclusive on-boarding procedures that are meant to create an open atmosphere with a strong sense of belonging and an overall feeling of well-being among employees.

Narrowing our scope and looking in particular at Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), we have observed the same evolution in the past years. Within these IHE, D&I policies often take place in the so-called International Classroom (IC). So how does one develop a D&I approach in the IC? One pedagogical method is to apply Challenge-Based Education (CBE) and in particular Challenge-Based Learning (CBL).

After explaining what all these concepts mean, I will argue that CBE, if appropriately implemented, is a vector and a tool to create a true D&I environment within the IC or other places. There is indeed a clear convergence between CBE and D&I processes, which invariably leads towards a better integration of both local and international students.

First, what does Diversity and Inclusion mean in an Institution of Higher Education?

What is diversity?

Generally speaking, diversity refers to ethnic and cultural backgrounds/nationalities, genders, generations, multi-disciplinarity, life-styles, various (sexual) orientations, (dis)ability, etc. Diversity can be visible or hidden. Visible differences between individuals or groups are in general gender, age, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, physical (dis)ability. Hidden aspects are

[17] Corresponding Author: Vincent Merk, Eindhoven University of Technology, PO Box 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven, the Netherlands. email: v.merk@tue.nl

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

personal or group values, beliefs, visions, attitudes, convictions, sexual orientation, knowledge, competencies, talent, lifestyles and past experiences, etc.

Sometimes diversity can be created because of a lack of it. This is done by using positive action measures or positive discrimination regulations, especially that of the gender issue. One known example is the Irène Curie Fellowship set up at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), to boost the recruitment of female scientists.

Another form of diversity is a situation you inherit, like a teacher in the International Classroom, which is more of a passive nature. What I mean by passive nature can be best understood with this simple metaphor: You have just bought a puzzle and have put all pieces on a table. They show diversity in shape, size and color. However, there is also a (hidden) common ground: They somehow will all fit in.

What is inclusion?

In contrast to the passive situation of diversity, inclusion is choices you make and actions you take; it is an attitude you adopt or a goal you pursue to eventually include everyone in the group. Coming back to the puzzle metaphor: Put all pieces into one big, inclusive whole. This is the D&I process we are talking about in IHE: Diversity is a fact, inclusion is an act!

For Fons Trompenaars: "Inclusion is about what you share, diversity is what you don't share"; think of the pieces of the puzzle mentioned above. For Verna Myers: "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance". It is the result of a process, a new situation in which you feel self-confident, physically free, emotionally recognized and appreciated, mentally accepted and psychologically safe, where you can openly speak, question, and even make mistakes.

Second, what is an International Classroom?

According to a common definition issued by the University of Groningen, an International Classroom is a diverse, multicultural and multilingual educational environment with the following characteristics:

- a group of students from diverse backgrounds (in culture, education, experience, etc.)
- an open mind toward internationalization
- working effectively with student and staff diversity through purposeful interaction
- accepting the overall learning environment (formal, informal, and hidden curriculum)
- appropriate support for staff and students

So, an International Classroom is the space where a full D&I process can be implemented. Clearly, during the past pandemic we needed to compensate the lack of personal social interaction with distant socializing. The lack of real face-to-face contact led to the erosion of the existing inclusion.

To summarize: to have a good mastery of the D&I process in an academic environment, we need to co-create practices for new blended-learning applications, deploy a systematic approach in developing personal resilience and collectively re-engineer the new digital and physical class setting.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Third, what is Challenge-Based Education and Challenge-Based Learning?

A general definition of Challenge-Based Education is a pedagogical approach that actively engages students in a situation that is real, relevant and related to their environment. It is the response to evolving and dynamic environments and societies in transition, in which the learner (and not the teacher anymore) has become the central figure.

Consequently, it involves students working together with stakeholders to define a challenge and develop solutions that are environmentally, technically, socially, and economically sustainable. Challenge-Based Education is at the core of the education strategy of TU/e, where the goal is to work step-by-step towards creating a new curriculum, one that will prepare the students even better for their future responsibilities and roles in society. This is why this special type of education has been implemented to become the main focus of its on-campus education by 2030.

Supplementing this, Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) is the comprehensive learning process that stems from this new educational approach. It can be seen as a tool for integrating all kinds of professional and social skills by means of the framework engage, investigate and act (more on this framework later). During this process, one balances mental and emotional states, so that the actors are open to experiment, value progress and learn from each other. Ideally, this form of learning produces a shift from a pure engineering perspective in a traditional teacher-centered education to a user perspective, embedded in a learner-centered process. It takes place in a self-regulated learning and systems thinking format, focusing on both process and product and driven by challenging, open-ended projects. It ultimately generates multiple technical and social solutions. To express it differently, Challenge-Based Learning develops in an interactive and dialectic movement by using feedback and new information to repeatedly refine and improve a solution.

Concrete assignments and projects are proposed by industry, public authorities, academia, student bodies or other stakeholders. What is important to note is that nobody has the answers yet. This is in contrast to the more traditional education, in which the teachers typically know the answers to the assignments they give to their students.

Diversity in the group is ideally as large as possible and embraces not only different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, or external actors, but more importantly the students' multi-disciplinary experiences. They cooperate in diverse teams, learn to productively deal with differences (also intercultural ones), interact with each other and with the clients. They subsequently learn and pull all their diverse forces and talents together to become enterprising, testing themselves to think at the system level. They experiment, apply and enrich their multi-disciplinary knowledge to finally solve the societal challenges that match both their interests and motivation.

In doing so, they develop important engineering skills: Problem identification and analysis, design of prototype solutions. Furthermore, they learn and cultivate inclusive communication and cooperation skills and competences. This implies time management and planning & organizing, reflection and peer coaching, multi-disciplinary teamwork, presentation skills and pitching. This learning process often happens in a flipped or reversed classroom format. What this means is the traditional learning experience is inverted, i.e. the theory and contents are learned in online lectures or tutorials, whereby practice and exercises are being held onsite in the classroom in an interactive and innovative format.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Fourth, the convergence of CBL and D&I processes leads towards a better integration of local and international students.

Consequently, I see this approach as a strong instrument and a collective process towards creating more inclusion in a group or in the International Classroom. Ideally, the multidisciplinary character present at the start will become an inclusive interdisciplinary state of mind at the end of this learning process!

The three steps of the Challenge-Based Learning framework engage, investigate and act engender a strong inclusion process. At each stage, dialectic reasoning is needed between teachers and students; it is like shifting panels that sometime overlap and separate or are opposites in tension, but will ultimately be reconciled. Diving deeper, let me define the three parts of the this framework.

Engage: Learners use essential questioning to develop a personal or collective real-life challenge. Like in the D&I process, actors are confronted to a puzzle in front of them and they will need to put all the pieces together. In this first step, diversity in all its forms (including that of cognitive diversity) play an important role. Important here is intrinsic motivation at this stage. There are various methods to develop engagement within the International Classroom (see below Toolbox Internationalisation at 4TU/CEE for suggestions).

Investigate: This means you have input from various angles. This is clearly experienced when the multi-disciplinary character of the classroom actors becomes the key to proposing a large variety of solutions. Teachers must design relevant tasks for students, in which all can contribute based on their disciplines, knowledge, competences, talents and experiences. Here again, cognitive diversity will play an important role in developing an inclusive mental process. For example, during brain storming sessions, the right atmosphere of respect, trust, empathy, patience and tolerance for each other needs to be created. Indeed, in some cultures brainstorming does not work or is not as common as in Western societies, so the group members need to become interculturally sensitive to this discrepancy.

Act: The ongoing inclusive mental process moves over to action. Solutions proposed at an earlier stage will be implemented in an interactive, cooperative and coordinated way. At this stage, a sense of belonging to the team, of being part of the ongoing process, needs to be created**.** This place of action can have various forms. I have mentioned so far the International Classroom as the standard unit in academia, but action can also take the form of ad-hoc student teams, set up for special innovative projects or summer schools.

The Innovation Space: Another aspect is the physical space for optimal performance, known as the Innovation Space or Innospace at TU/e. It is a multi-functional room designed as a learning hub for education, innovation and an open community, where students, researchers, industry, and societal organizations can exchange knowledge and develop responsible solutions to real- world challenges.

The Innospace has hence become the center of expertise for student entrepreneurship and is now a well-recognized high-tech playground for talented students and young professionals. After winning the Dutch Higher Education Award last year, TU/e Innovation Space won The Triple E Awards for 'Innovation and Collaboration Space of the Year' (June 2022) as a global recognition of efforts toward the quest for entrepreneurship and engagement in higher education. A just reward for many years of investments in both staff and equipment and also expressing concretely the right vision at the start, which is developing an innovative, collaborative and inclusive type

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

of education. And it is here where the students' many talents can thrive. This is also the recognition that Challenge-Based Learning and InnoSpace are tightly bound to each other. And finally, this success may also be the result of a typical Dutch attitude in business being pragmatic and no non-sense.

An example of this InnoSpace cooperation are the so-called Student Teams: They are various accredited groups of students who "address challenges in the fields of sustainability, artificial intelligence, health and mobility". They work on future-oriented projects like a solar-powered family car, a car made of bio composite, a drone assistant, future living, and renewable energy resources. Within these interdisciplinary teams, students get the opportunity to put their technical knowledge into practice and develop their personal and professional skills. While doing so, they will experience how Challenge-Based Learning generates a strong inclusive process, not only among students, but also between lecturers and their students. Indeed, lecturers are called in to "improve the process of training their students towards entrepreneurial behavior in a CBL context, to stimulate learning to deal with uncertainty, being proactive in teamwork, spotting opportunities and learn to create value in general; all in all, highly relevant skills in this world of constant innovation".

In other words, this InnoSpace is the ideal place to create a physical safe environment, where technical tools are being used properly by all students, but it is also the right space for creating psychological security and a true sense of belonging among all stakeholder and co-creators.

A sense of belonging: What do I mean here with a sense of belonging? It is not only "being invited to the party (diversity), and also being asked to dance (inclusion), but also feeling safe and (self)-confident to ask the DJ to play your favorite song, knowing it will also please the other dancers" (Vincent Merk). This is the sense of belonging both to the team and the International Classroom, or to express it in another way, the InnoSpace. This D&I process of creating the proper sense of belonging will ultimately produce individual, physical and mental well-being, but also collectively among members of the community at large.

In a formula format, I would argue that Challenge-Based learning (CBL) is about IQ (general intelligence, cognitive and intellectual abilities) and EQ (emotional intelligence, personal and social competences) and when adding CQ (cultural intelligence, cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence), it leads to Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) and ultimately to Well-Being (WB). So CBL (IQ + EQ) + CQ = D&I → WB.

There are obviously aspects that still need more proper attention in the realm of Challenge-Based Learning. Take, for example, the impact on the relation between CBL and research as showcased in the MSc Summer School in Energy Technology at TU/e, where MSc students work in collaboration with PhD students in the domain of sustainable energy technology. Most projects require a quick digest of the latest research developments in a multi-disciplinary and intercultural context. The question here is whether these are feasible and adequate to prepare both groups of students for their future roles. No doubt this educational project includes all the aspects related to CBL and D&I, but careful analysis still needs to be placed on the design and detailed execution to insure the development of the necessary skills for the students involved.

Finally, to broaden the scope, let me suggest a few other inclusive learning processes: Design Thinking, Diversity Competent Teaching and Value and Knowledge Education (VaKE). See references below.

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

Conclusion

In these post-Covid times along with many geopolitical, ecological and social crises, we are now at the start of a new era. In Institutions of Higher Education we need more inclusion in our diversity. Challenge-Based Learning can contribute to greater inclusion and at the same time help solve real-life challenges, so let's all go for it!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vincent Merk: Senior lecturer in Intercultural Management and Community advisor, Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, the Netherlands

ISSN: 2674-0370 (Online)

THE SWISS JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

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