

Edited by  
Flavia Stara and Rosita Deluigi

# **Trust and conflict in intercultural processes**

Experience, practice, reflections

**ni° eum**



# Trust and conflict in intercultural processes

Experience, practice, reflections

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Edited by Flavia Stara and Rosita Deluigi

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Michele Corsi\*

It is trust that makes society and globalization possible

We are referring to that society which is still a project (Corsi 1997) yet to come to fruition (or, to be kinder and more hopeful, yet to be completed). Its inter- and trans-cultural dimension still poses us with great challenges (Corsi, Stramaglia 2009), at and above the national level (as far as Italy and Europe are concerned), as well as internationally and world-wide. So much so that for some time now, although his voice is still ignored, Edgar Morin has been advocating the foundation or advent of a world-society and of a country-planet (Morin 2001). In other words: a “different” kind of globalization.

It is around this key word, *trust*, that all the contributions to this volume (and of the conference that made it possible) revolve. *Trust* is an authentically human sememe, a linchpin or pillar of those genuine, sound, successful interpersonal relationships which have to do with internationalisation.

*Trust* opposed to *conflict*: a second key word, this one, referring to “opposition” or contrast. *Conflict*, though not in Huizinga’s (1938) sense of being “healthy”, on a par with trust which, being intelligent, is always “critical” (Corsi 2003) in that it does not suspend judgement but rather relies on it. Conflict which stems from different positions which come together in a spirit of mutual respect, thus paving the way towards new, improved horizons. What is addressed in these pages, however, is *destructive conflict*, which makes trust impossible: it always gains the upper hand, precisely because trust is lacking.

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To make this kind of conversation possible; to provide it with content, to bring it to life and, in particular, to make it culturally, socially, and attitudinally tangible, Flavia Stara and Rosita Deluigi have gathered together a veritable concert of international voices within the “S.I.T. Project”, which all the contributors are part of. I refer in particular to our colleagues Aaliya Ahmed, Mohmad Saleem Jahangir and Aneesa Shafi of the University of Kashmir in India (where some of the Macerata staff went to carry out research and teaching work in early 2014), and equally to Ghulam M. Khawaja of the University of New Delhi; to Tatyana Grebenyuk, Svetlana Koniushenko and Alla Matuszak from the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in the Russian Federation (another teaching and research destination for Macerata staff). Finally, to Aneta Makowska, Elzbieta Perzycka and Maciej Sokolowski-Zgid of the University of Szczecin in Poland; not to mention our colleagues at Macerata University: Gabriella Aleandri, Isabella Crespi, Paolo Palchetti, Gill Philip and Raffaele Tumino, as well as Federico Zannoni of the University of Bologna. The international outlook of the project and of the contributions to this volume is the calling card of the present Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism at Macerata University (home to profs Stara and Deluigi) – and has been so since well before the 2010 university reforms, in the pre-reform Faculties and Departments which came together to form the new Department.

But let me go back to the two key words of this international seminar and the pages in the present volume inspired by it: *trust* versus *conflict*.

Absolutely! It is a lack of faith in ourselves that causes intrapsychic conflict, the consequence of which is to fall into a vicious circle caused by a sense of worthlessness (Berne 1961), rejection, powerlessness, and whatever other limiting or deteriorating factors there may be. Individuals may then build up a negative image of themselves, descending to the lowest common denominator, essentially *living in defiance of their own existence*. Because social conflict grows out of a lack of trust in the Other, so much so that in this case too, they feed off one another.

And yet it is out of trust that dialogue, exchange, and recip-

rocal responsibility emerge and are defined, each bolstering the other. Dialogue – *dia-logos*, a plurality of voices – lies at the heart of “harmony” (as in “positive peace”) between peoples and nations (Roveda 1990). Exchange – *con-division*, division between and among – is the strategic medium of all inter- and cross-cultural good practice. Whatever theoretical or disciplinary viewpoint one has within the human and social sciences, these “items of value” are totally interconnected, retroactively and systematically, in a continuous high-stakes game of stimulus-response-reinforcement. They are both the means and the ends for the sowing and cultivating of trust. Their shared features of “togetherness” link us all into uniting and wanting, at all costs, to be part of a “community”, to breathe life into that “human” society that is still to be created.

All this because if we are not still at the stage of development encapsulated by Hobbes as “*homo homini lupus*”, we are not very far from it, as our newspapers confirm on a daily basis. From crimes within the family (of various types, from parents who kill their children, and vice versa, to murder and suicide within dysfunctional relationships, and so on) to femicide (so many, too many, the women who are murdered by their current or ex-partners, or else by “banal” – as Arendt would put it “males”), to the deaths at sea of so many migrants who lose their lives and all hope before managing to reach the shores of those countries which they believe, rightly or wrongly, to be friendly, supportive.

Thus the list of *history's defeats* – of a history that yearns to be democratic at last – is, at present, virtually endless. A long and bitter list of grievances that bears witness to the fact that we are still a long way off from feeling or perceiving ourselves as being truly in *partnership* with one another. After all, *solidarity* is a term that is more frequently talked about than actually put into practice. In other words, we remain anthropologically illiterate in ethical matters such as these, and what awareness we have is limited to small portions of our planet. And it is our personal *culture* – our education and upbringing, both relational and social, and therefore in a sense *historical* (Nicolini, Pojaghi 2006), that nourishes and fosters trust.

On the other hand, *conflict stems from “separateness”*: a tenaciously-held, steadfast “distance”, promoted and fostered by many national policies and a not insignificant number of ideological groups, in Italy as elsewhere. A conflict/separateness that *lives its life behind closed doors* and *favours isolation*; the product of *prejudices* – many and varied, all motiveless – which trigger and sustain them. A conflict/separateness, therefore, nourished by an *ignorance* of the Self, of the Other, of history. One which consumes itself in the dark depths of reason and in the baleful, brooding greyness of the *sad passions* (Bensayag, Schmit 2003) and of *incomplete personalities*. One which rather than “opening up to the other”, closes even more tightly around itself. One which rather than growing and progressing, *improving* – precisely because it *lacks faith in itself and in others* – gets pleasure out of doing down the *outsider* and the *foreigner*; diminishing them and, if at all possible, bringing them to (near-) destruction. Because conflict and envy are often one and the same, even in the contorted effects of envy itself.

Envy: *in-vidia*. Its etymological sense is to see in the other something that is lacking in or not owned by the self. And rather than working towards achieving objectives or gaining possessions, all the effort is poured into eliminating the person perceived as being (erroneously) inimical, hostile, antagonistic, adversarial. The idea being that, having got rid of the “disturbance” (something like the “inside voices” in personality disorders – in which the destructive lack of trust in people is an obvious symptom), one “hopes” (in the worst possible sense of hoping – more accurately, in the wake of improvident jealousy) to be (or go back to being) “happy”. Better to cultivate the “illusion” of having been so, at some moment in the past; and therefore to rebuild a psychosocial dimension that is rewarding and satisfying.

But happiness cannot be build on a foundation of corpses, even if only imaginary! This the “never-ending recurrence”, reworked in another language and with a different approach from Freud to Berne, manifest in the evergreen fairytale of “Snow White”, specifically in the character of the wicked Queen. It sadly comes back time and time again, lurking in the

depths of the soul and of history where the light of reason and culture shed the least light. Just as we were saying earlier.

From here, the relational and pedagogical areas of study, as well as those that are legal and social in a broad sense, which the reader will find in this volume. Topics old and new – some very new indeed – which all naturally refer to the research carried within the “S.I.T. Project.” From hermeneutic textual paradigms to the scientific and epistemological foundation of “context” relating to the themes addressed in the project. From school, a particularly well-researched educational environment, to higher education institutions and universities, from social games to technology and IT in general. From a (yet-unfounded!) society in the era of globalization – which we hope will be, *at long last*, one of *people* and not merely, or no longer, of *markets*: the *globalization of ethics, not profit* – to multicultural families (still struggling), to the youth of today: our *heirs*. From religious conflicts such as those still present in Scotland to LGBT rights and their “right” to social and legal recognition, in conjunction with their full citizen’s rights, as dynamics and dimensions competing with their own existential stability.

By way of conclusion I should add that, to the extent that it is possible to do so within a single research project, international and indeed intercontinental as it is, the range of perspectives gathered together in this volume is truly remarkable. It covers virtually the entire spectrum of socio-educative contexts and educative environments which today affect our personal growth, up to and including what are currently the most emergent forms and manifestations – cultural, instrumental and relational, both individual and group. None of which are insignificant or marginal.

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Flavia Stara, Rosita Deluigi\*

## Dimensions and Practices of Trust<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** In contemporary society we have to deal with different dynamics of communication of trust structured between virtual and real bonds. This contribution analyzes confidence as social approach and as educative strategy, taking in account the transition from the sphere of interpersonal relations to the institutional-systemic one. The research mobility permanence experienced by the authors, in different European and non-European countries, is the background for the present theoretical reflection. The focus is on the capacity to promote and build trust both in social systems based on subjectivity and individualism as in contexts where a collective morality is extended to individual behavior.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture of trust, Virtual and real bonds, Communication, Intercultural mediation.

### *Foreword*

This paper focuses on the dynamics of communication of trust in the era of the spread of virtual reality and of differentiation between a first-level of physical relationships and a second-level of intangible interactions over the web. The intent is to reflect on how within the network society, which stresses on individuality, the risk is to produce bonds of inconsistent trust, indecipherable and discontinuous, merely liquid and evanescent. In contemporary society, one can move – with a single click – money, thoughts and words, personal emotions and political considerations, through an electronic intermittent dialogue. The

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of joint research of the authors. Flavia Stara edited the first part and Rosita Deluigi edited the second one.

action of trust innervating the reciprocal relational practice, *reciproca(C)tion*, in different manners and objectives, in interpersonal or systemic forms, is divided into a process: trust taking the risk; rely on expectations; confide in someone or something. Confidence is, therefore, a finite resource and at the same time renewable, the outcome of which depends on the strategies of action taken by the social agents. Confidence decays when its use is neglected, while it sediments by making use of networks of social relations.

Trust then changes its extent and characteristics in the transition from the sphere of interpersonal relations to the institutional-systemic one. Although trust has not within itself a moral connotation, it always contains an ethical stretch permeating social agreements as well as the sense of belonging to many collective cultural realities. This contribution investigates on both on how to build trust in systems that favor subjectivity and individualism, and on what kind of confidence spreads when structures and social systems are able to extend a collective morality to individual behavior.

The observation and verification, both at theoretical and empirical level, of the emergence of trust in social relations – made possible during the international experience of this research project – enabled the authors to reflect on the variations and the channels in which the dimensions of trust are organized, learned and internalized also through a symbolic control.

### *Phenomenology of trust and present society*

The term ‘trust’ is derived from Old Norse word meaning “trust, protection, firmness”. Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, of a person or thing; confidence. This deep meaning emerges within relationships. Trust actually means that a person places complete confidence in another person. Trust is a permanent concept, where a person that is trusted is usually trusted for life, until that person breaks that trust. If either party breaks the trust, it takes a long time to build it back.

In our western society, the decline in trust reflects a growing pessimism which is mostly linked to a growing economic

inequality. Individual level experiences may not shape interpersonal trust, but the collective well-being of a society does determine whether it is rational for people to trust each other. The wealth of a society is not as important in shaping trust as how equitably resources are distributed. Indeed, it's not desirable to trust in a society where economics expresses competition, where trust is defeated in every transaction (suspicious behaviors, caution, rational trust vs. blind trust). The world society, which from a global point of view appears to be healthier, more informed and more technologically efficient, has to assimilate a growing gap between rich and poor economies, consisting of complex issues and realities of hardship and vulnerability. Therefore, the contemporary notion of trust must be re-conceptualized as a pluralism of trust and distrust as a new sense of belonging and collective planning. Trust in people and trust in politics or economics have different roots. There is no general syndrome of trust. Trusting other people makes us barely more likely to accept what is expressed at the various levels of the social context.

Trust in government reflects whether people have favorable impressions of the people in power and the institutions of government, as well as whether they agree with the policies of their temporal dimensions. Confidence in government is based upon one's own experiences. Trust in other people is not. Trust in government and faith in other people are both essential to democratic life, but their dynamics are very different and often hostile to one another. Good government doesn't generate trust but trust could be improved through effective governmental institutions. Democracies have the structures to increase trust by establishing impartiality and protection at different levels. Efficient institutions may create trust, but prior and more important is confidence in these institutions. The belief that the legal system is fair may be the real guarantee that most people can be trusted.

The conventional wisdom holds that trust should be a general attitude: people who have faith in other people are also more likely to have confidence in social organization. So one could infer that trust links itself to faith since willy-nilly one



has to perform trust. As an example, we might think to the use of internet to book flights, hotels, to do bank transactions, to purchase goods. The dimension in which we operate – global and local at the same time – requires the overcoming of the mere competences and leads towards the need to promote citizens and consciences which are not short-sighted: it is necessary to refer to a polyhedric idea of trust. This idea could make it possible to overcome the contradiction between individual and State, since the citizen today is a cosmopolitan citizen and therefore is the person who defends his/her humanity by thinking beyond the State, but at the same time is a political subject by fighting for social urgencies across all State borders. Trust is more the cause than the effect of social actions, perhaps because trustful people are more likely to endorse strong standards of moral behavior.

In some public contexts where there is a good standard of commitment in the interaction among individuals there is often less corruption, better judicial systems, less red tape in bureaucracies, greater government spending (especially on education) as a percentage of gross domestic product, more redistribution of wealth, and more open economies. Therefore interpersonal trust, expressed through volunteering and resourcefulness, may bring people together to collectively solve problems and take action for the sustainability of society.

This kind of social efficiency recalls the type of increasing confidence that John Dewey termed «social control»<sup>2</sup>. According to Dewey, socialization could not be the result of independent, pre-social individuals coming together to form a covenant – whether it be among themselves or together in contract with a sovereign – in short, social efficiency is the result of expanded avenues of communication of reliance. Intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic horizons are expanded, and the connections and interrelations of individual and groups with one another become more comprehensive. Whenever social efficiency is defined or understood in ways that ignore these considerations, its practice becomes hard and metallic, coldly utilitarian, or

<sup>2</sup> In chapter seven of *Democracy and Education*, (Chapter 7, “The Democratic Conception in Education” – MW.9.88).

even totalitarian. When social efficiency is understood in terms of expansion of freedom of the mind, in terms of expanding the possibilities of social commitment, then this kind of freedom is seen both as a primary end and as a means of development. Therefore the principles of subsidiarity, equity and integration should consolidate a model of communication aiming at trust, stressing the fact that local planning and individuals' participation to manage the territory are the only tools which allow a sustainable development.

In contemporary social circumstances at times we may bemoan the loss of a "thick" moral stratus, nevertheless "thinner" layers of moral bonds may give the opportunity to better practice trust among different individuals. People willing to take the risk of dealing with a wide range of perspectives may be able to solve larger-scale collective problems. By welcoming *reciproAction*, people have a more inclusive confidence in their society and expand the opportunities of cooperation.

As societies become more complex, more differentiated, and more interdependent, individuals increasingly confront a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, these developments can, and often do, generate expanded life-choices: choices resulting from greater efficiencies, pluralization, and mobility. On the other hand, increasing interdependencies extend the vulnerabilities of individuals, while increasing complexities reduce the chances that individuals can monitor the vulnerabilities to which they are subjected. At present, this gap between the cognitive resources of individuals and their abilities to know and judge the contingencies that bear on their lives seems to be unbridgeable.

However, individuals do cope with the situation: they do so not by focusing on their vulnerabilities but by taking actions of trust.

As Luhmann (1979), Giddens (1990), and other authors emphasized, extensions of trust, especially to strangers enables coordination of actions over large domains of space and time, which in turn permits the benefits of more complex, differentiated, and diverse societies. At the same time, trust reduces complexity for individuals while providing them with a sense of security by allowing them to take for granted most of the relationships which they depend upon. These effects not only

contribute to the welfare itself, but also enable individuals to expand their horizons of action. This is so evident in the most basic ways. If we are unwilling to believe that the strangers we meet on the street will not mug us, we will be unable to leave the house. So the alternative to trust, particularly in complex societies, is not a transparent knowledge of risks and contingencies – which is impossible in any case – but a rather generalized distrust, which offers a sense of security although at the cost of an impoverished existence.

Addressing the matter from an educational perspective, it is necessary to recognize that it's possible to analyze the concept of sustainable trust in relation to cultivation, civilization and moralization of the individual, highlighting the ambiguities, limitations, conceptual alternatives, shared contents, and moreover, taking into account that the commitment to trust is the result of a continuous historicization of the individual and invests all possible contexts and stages of formal or non formal expressions. Since human beings are active creators of culture – formation of attitudes, definition of self – culture can provide the necessary and inescapable context to valorise the sharing as the opportunity to experiment the competences and the construction of confidence. If the action of sharing has its own origin and point of semantic departure in the expression taking part, it deals with an expression that represents, in the perspective of citizenship, a right to share and to contribute to the management of life in community, in the social structures in general as well as in the particularly constituted collectivity.

International research organizations have brought to world attention a new vision of global trust, driven by a strong correlation among environment problems, peace, economic growth, social equity and justice, along with alphabetization and health, calling on all countries to implement a global partnership for sustainable advancement, taking into account different assessments of the concrete possibilities of its application and therefore different needs assessments of goods or capitals.

### *Routes of building trust*

The trust that is built within the social interaction and educational relationships require reciprocity and languages that make people closer and to develop forms of knowledge and dialogue more in-depth. The construction of a culture of trust is closely related to the contexts in which it develops and, taking into account the complexity and differences that characterize our current environment, the trust becomes an ongoing process that needs to mediation, negotiation and comprehension.

In an intercultural perspective, we can address the issue as one of the major relational movements that characterize the educational act and bring into dialogue dialogic and flexible identity in time and space characterized by multiple belonging. We can take the risk of trusting someone, knowing to tread a precarious balance between uncertainty and the certainty of having made the right choice. Investing in a relationship and building trust actually means knowing how to be in the changes of this relationship, in its evolution, insecurities and conflicts.

The analysis of data collected during the project SIT in Italy points out that

it is clear that the family is the social structure to which one turns during difficult times and, within the family, the mother is the key figure, followed by fathers, friends, teachers, grandparents. Friends are a significant reference point particularly during adolescence, but, and this is an important element, more in order to share positive events rather than problematic ones. In fact, we turn to parents and friends in equal measure in respect of problems, whereas in relation to pleasant things and secrets, friends outweigh family by a long stretch (Rossi 2015).

Networks of trust are established primarily with networks of people that we consider important in our life, with which we create interactions and maintain over time; the emphasis is on the family as a place in which is important to trust and be trusted.

As regards the ICT we can say that

it is necessary to overcome views that put presence and distance in opposition and one must increasingly see presence and distance as two ways of relating which complement each other even though they operate in different places and times and with different methods. Distance does not erase presence, nor does presence nullify distance (*ibid.*).

The different technological tools, therefore, become objects of trust without canceling the relationship face to face and becoming elements of further connection, learning, knowledge and relationship. Sometimes, especially in the case of long-term migration, technologies become essential tools to maintain relations and contacts with the family and to try to reconstruct dimension of the everyday life (Mazzoli 2001).

It becomes essential to understand what are the mediators that make us take the risk of trust and to cross borders and the data of the teachers interviewed

shows that 91% of people believes that information credibility depends on the person/source which provides the information and on its expertise in the field; 86% believes that credibility depends on the possibility of verifying the information, and 49% on where it was drawn from (Czerepaniak-Walczak, Perzycka 2013; 2014). In the first case we can refer to credibility ascribed to the authority of the person/reference source, for example, due to scientific recognition. The ability to verify such information requires a reliable checking system, independent from the individual, on which to count on. For a person it might be the recognition/trust placed in it by other people; for a source it could be the possibility of finding data and information concerning it. The place where the information is published is verified more easily through technology (searching for references on line) and could generate a significant discrimination in the research (Deluigi 2015).

The above data show that the intertwining of value and reliability affect the confidence-building; these variables must be grown over time so that one can rely on something or someone or confide in someone or something.

We can speak of a “blended trust” that is spread over several floors: the intertwining of the presence and on line, the combination of social and relational models, the different emphasis on individual and collective level, the ability to decentralize from a single point of view and to be able to feel uncertainty.

In the educational and teaching field the interplay between

relations in presence and on line it characterizes the personal and professional lives of individuals and it is a factor to be taken into account to understand what tools and methodologies used by the individual and the community. Educators and teachers become mediators, facilitator and stimulator of the critical spirit for a construction of shared and cooperative knowledge (De Ambrogio 2009).

The role of context is not negligible and this also emerged in the mobility of the Marie Curie which allowed researchers to observe reality and its different structures and styles of trust. The contexts in which the educational act is developed are varied and the plots that are generated between the school, families and territories are not to be neglected to convey meaningful experiences in which adults and children can building systems and networks of values and relationships that can not regardless of the continuous dialogue between traditions, cultures, values and social innovations (Deluigi 2012).

Similarly, it becomes important social structure marked by individualism or collective dimension in which the role of the subject also changes depending on the level of participation encouraged or required. If, on the one hand, more individualistic society are likely to create selfish isolation to achieve their own interests, on the other, societies based on common morality, are likely to emphasize the size of the homogeneous group to the detriment of specificity and originality of the individual. Make sure that these different realities come into contact is a challenge to better understand which educational, cultural, social, political styles intervene in the construction of the image of oneself and others and, therefore, in the way to build relationships with others.

Finally, the ability to decentralize from a single point of view and to be able to stay in the uncertainty is one of the core competencies of the educator as well as a skill that track down in the approach of intercultural education (Catarci, Fiorucci 2015). This skill requires subjects to leave the cultural ethnocentrism to increase plural interpretations of ways of life and of the elements that guide the choices of local and global that also affect the quality of the vitality of citizenship.

*The plurality of trust and communication processes on line and face to face*

The culture of trust is an ongoing plural process, it follows several trajectories and it is an issue related to the individual subject, the group, the relationships that are built in public spaces and that intercept values, experiences, religions, and different lifestyles (De Giorgi *et al.* 2006).

The experience of staff mobility in the SIT project allowed us to observe and experiment different ways of building trust within formal and non-formal learning context in which education and training are developed. We observed that the methodologies adopted and technologies used can help strengthen feelings of trust and thus to strengthen ties and interpersonal cooperatives dynamics of work. Trust and cooperation are very closely linked (Cook, Hardin, Levi 2005; Gambetta 2000) and they interface with the development of the networks of the World Wide Web which undoubtedly affect the development of the models of human relationship.

The communication processes change, they become instant, leaving no room to reflexivity because they require a simultaneous and immediate response and this can make the relationships more superficial and change the levels of trust between sender and receiver. The search for human contact becomes more difficult, needs space and time more relaxed in which meet and know themselves and each other in the situation, including through conflict.

The communicative hypervelocity, the multitasking approach, the contemporary messages makes the relational exchanges more fragile because

takes time away from the negotiating time of openness and knowledge of each other's expectations and with it the understanding of misleading practices, shortening the time dimension of openings mutual communication [...] The trust needs time to onset, mature, evolve and be confirmed in the interaction, having to adapt to evolving knowledge of the expectations of the other (Conte 2014).

Trust in technology is also more instantaneous and mechanisms and the variables involved are different. Take, for example

iteration for which the continuous use of a particular tool makes us proficient in the necessary procedures; once it has established a certain habit of using technologies confidence grows for automatic (speed use), for effectiveness (success of the acts) and certainty (the procedure gained guarantees a certain stability over time).

Another essential element is the human mediation in the choice of channels and technological applications: tips and advice from experts in the use (peer educators, teachers); reviews online about the services that we are going to use (virtual certification); references services (by specialists). Only some of these elements occur in human interactions face to face and we need to remember that technology products are born from the human mind! The structure changes but the message between real and virtual is becoming more pronounced.

The complexity of human interactions and building a culture of trust requires dialogue between subjects and citizens, identity and differences, belonging and participation (Benhabib 2004) and makes us wonder about the physical space-time differences. So many conflicts can arise and in critical situations we have to search for points of similarity and important way of communication and cooperation.

An anonymous click is not sufficient; it is the look (of identity, values, cultural, social and individual) that allows us to build trust or distrust. It is in a relational experience, in concrete situations, in the vitality of the everyday that we can to interface and interconnect with others, looking for new approaches to mediation. These assumptions are born and grow from a motivation to the discovery of the other that becomes interest, knowledge, comprehension and co-operation.

In this sense, the intercultural view is an open and plural approach and creates critical and creative mind, ready to face the challenge of cooperation between identities and differences, taking into account the subjective heritage of each person with its values, culture and social structure. It is from this background that can arise hypothesis of shared experiences where proximity with others could increase the trust and vice versa. The process of activation and participation are never completely certain and



defined, but we believe it is essential to bet on new approaches for coexistence, beyond mere intentions and good will.

If the basis for the construction of social ties are fear, trust and cooperation (Alici 2012; 2014) as essential movements of the logic of community, we must add the element of reciprocity to build social interdependency. This becomes a common heritage if citizens implement measures aimed at improving the quality of life for everybody. Social capital is a complex relationship based on reciprocity, trust and the ability of people to cooperate in the preservation and promotion of the common good. By creating a benefit for people who work for that, we can promote a wealth that protect the common interests and that, therefore, covers all relationally (Donati 2007).

The relational dimension is strategic for the construction and regeneration of trust and opens the door to social planning (Donati 2011). Social capital is set up as a particularly relational good that appears beyond the individual and the community, made up of relationships built through interaction. In this sense, relational goods become an operational tool for designing social interventions, in which the construction of social capital is essential for the cohesion and the inclusion of citizenship (Donati, Solci 2011). So, trust is the basis for the development of capital – that is, the ability of people to trust one another in all aspects of life – starting with trust between individuals and ending on the trust of citizens (Lin 2001).

### *Cross the differences and promote mediation*

The SIT project has enabled us to widen the focus on trust, on its meaning, sense and declination, including through meetings and exchanges with colleagues, researchers, students, teachers and headmasters that have become available to the meeting with different modes. The bridge of practices that led from the design to its implementation has opened a new path of reflection on the strategies of research, teaching and education, expanding horizons and uncertainties (in a de-constructive sense) of the participants.

Only through the experiences of the differences we can understand how to build and promote confidence between the individual subject and the community, trying to understand and deconstruct the stereotypes that, creating a curtain of false security, generate detachment and distance. If I accept myself and others in times, spaces and relationships that can not predetermine but are carriers of welcome (Deluigi 2012), then the risk to create a general representation of “the other”, will decrease, giving way to more personal visions and not only based on the behaviours of “others” that are similar (Kumaravadivelu 2008).

As we have said in another contribution (Deluigi 2015b)

trust may be the method and/or the objective and in this process the educator play as ‘mediator’; it depends on the situation and the personal/social resources and limits in the context of intervention. Mediation is essential to trigger and facilitate relationships and the role of the educator is critical to initiate processes of dialogue between equals, in which there is democratic participation and active citizenship (Fiorucci 2011).

It is through the role of mediation that we can see the many nuances of blended trust; for example, during our experience we observed that the use of technology needs a facilitator. It was necessary, therefore, that a good relationship teacher/class was already established and it was helpful also the availability of the context to get involved and to cooperate. We can, therefore, emphasize the importance of the reciprocity between trust and mediation and the role of tutoring and caring of the subjects and of the learning environment.

So, the educative and social network can stimulate new relationship spaces and planning skills for everyone involved and it is crucial to take care of the ongoing situation (single subject & group).

In building relational goods, interdependence and social capital, the use of new technologies is an additional channel of connection between identity and differences, but you need to pay attention to the dynamics of communication, inevitably interconnected, between first-level of physical relationships and intangible interactions of the second-level on the web (Conte 2014).

In these median areas, we can promote and experiment connections between proximity and welcome, not fearing inter-

actions. Only through authentic relationships, we can build trust environments in which learning together, trying new experiences and testing social innovation in an encouraging atmosphere.

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Alla Matuszak\*

## Teacher-student culture of trust in educational process: prognostic aspect

**ABSTRACT:** The information society is completely altering the educational paradigm which leads to serious changes in education interaction roles distribution. Teacher-student roles are made reverse. The purpose of the research is to find out what are the teachers' and students' roles in today's educational process and how they are going to change in future. Consequently, the paper aims at making research of the prognostic aspect of teacher-student culture of trust. The tasks are: to find out the teachers' and students' opinion of the educational process participants' culture of trust ten years ago, now and in the next ten years; to compare the level of trust between students and teachers today; to compare their visions of future teacher-student roles and interactions in education. The research has been conducted in three Universities in South Urals (Russia), representing the culture of trust level typical of Russian Universities.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture of trust, Teacher-student interaction, Higher education, Prognostic aspect.

### *Introduction*

The information society is completely altering the educational paradigm. The teacher is no longer considered the only or the primary source of information, the more so that the information he/she can provide is not always the most up-to-date. «Knowledge is no longer transferred but created and constructed» (Kop 2007, 193). This leads to serious changes in education interaction roles distribution. «Individual's independence is important in shaping the extent to which they choose to take up the

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opportunities possible though their interactions» (Loughran 1997, 60). More and more independence and activity is attributed to students, in this respect it might be stated that the teacher-student roles are made reverse. M. Czerepaniak-Walczak and E. Perzycka state in their research: «We realize how difficult it is to reverse the traditional roles in educational interactions» (Czerepaniak-Walczak, Perzycka 2014, 95). It is true as in the competition for the quantity of knowledge the computer and Internet definitely win. In connection with it «[...] not only are the methods and techniques of the teaching-learning process experiencing deep changes, but also is the whole didactical process» (Refrigeri 2006, 1). The teacher, no matter whether it is a school or University teacher, seems somewhat “out-dated”.

*Problems in connection with culture of trust in education interactions*

In connection with this educators face certain problems. Below a brief characteristics of these is given.

*The problem of mutual trust and roles distribution in connection with ICT use in educational process.* Research made in Poland in connection with the culture of trust shows that teachers and students very differently assess their mutual trust in connection with ICT use. School teachers are as often as not afraid of ICT technologies and prefer their limited use, while students would prefer ICT-based education (Czerepaniak-Walczak, Perzycka 2014, 95). Besides the authors come to the conclusion that teachers should consult students in terms of ICT technologies, reversing the roles. Does it mean that the present education is to prepare for new roles distribution?

If so, the next problem arises.

*The problem of the information impact on a personality.* Since western world seems to favour non-authoritative educational systems (Śliwerski 2010), the issue of effecting a student and his/her inner world does not arise. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that Internet and media effect students greatly. Hence, is it fair to speak of non-interference into the learner's personality if the role of a teacher is attributed to Internet and ICT?

One can more or less predict the impact of an educator's influence on a student. At least it is meant to assist one's socialization, cultural level. *Can one predict the influence of Internet and media on a student? To what extent can the teacher delegate his/her role to the students in terms of influence?*

If it is agreed that the roles in educational process are anyway reversing, how do teachers and students consider culture of trust roles distribution in future?

*The problem of trust in future education interactions.* The change of traditional educational roles in education intercourse leads to the problem of mutual trust. As often as not the education process participants' expectations do not coincide with the real state of affairs. Teachers might think that they are trusted by the students, but in reality students do not trust them in many aspects, e.g. the aspect of ICT use. At the same time teachers tend to give very little trust to students, simultaneously expecting the latter to trust them. The research conducted in Kaliningrad region (Grebenuk, Koniushenko 2014) showed that none of the teachers surveyed could trust their students.

The majority of teachers (77%) considered family members trustworthy and only a small proportion of respondents trusted friends and colleagues. Practically the same result was noted in the students' survey. Educational process participants were not open to mutual relations of trust. 63% of respondents claimed that educational institutions did not have sufficient opportunities to change the situation. However, 30% of respondents agreed completely that the trust between the educational process subjects reflected the level of trust in the society. To change the level of trust in educational institutions one needed to influence the formation of trust in the society.

The comparative study of culture of trust in Russia and Poland (Grebenuk, Goncharova 2014, 44) also showed striking results. In Poland teachers were convinced of being trusted by students, while the majority of them did not give students any trust. Students' trust to teachers lessened while they grew older.

### *The purpose of the research*

Since teachers tend to think they are trusted, while in reality it might be argued, *what is the teacher's role in today's educa-*



*tional process and how is it going to be changed in the nearest future? What do teachers understand about it? How do they anticipate the educational process of the future and the relations with its other participants?* This is the primary question of the paper. Consequently, the paper aims at making research of the prognostic aspect of culture of trust. The tasks under study are:

- to find out the teachers' and students' opinion of the educational process participants' culture of trust ten years ago, now and in the next ten years;
- to compare the level of trust between students and teachers today;
- to compare their visions of future teacher-student roles and interactions in education.

### *Method and sample*

The research was conducted in educational institutions in South Urals (Russia). The results were obtained in three Universities. The research participants included students and teachers – 20 University teachers and 200 students. The methods use included *case study*, which envisaged the purposeful selection of Universities. These were meant to be big state educational institutions, so that the educational interactions participants could represent the culture of trust level typical to all Russian Universities. They were highly equipped with digital devices, education process participants had access to the equipment and multimedia tools, the Universities had free Wi-Fi in all the buildings. The quantitative data were obtained from the survey, the content of which is part of the questionnaire developed with the participation of all partners in the SIT project (*Project 7 Framework Programme Marie Curie, Action People-IRSES, no. SIT 315879, Stimulators and Inhibitors of Culture of Trust in Educational Interactions Assisted by Modern Information and Communication Technology*). The survey participants included University students and teachers. Elements of qualitative research envisaged observations made in SIT project partner teams from Poland, Russia, Norway, Italy, India.

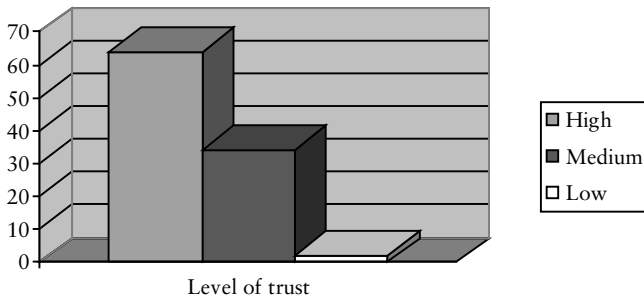


Fig. 1. The students' responses to the question "How can you assess your trust to your teachers ten years ago?"

Source: own study

*Teachers' and students' opinion of the educational process participants' culture of trust ten years ago, now and in the next ten years*

Students were supposed to answer the question "How can you assess your trust to your teachers ten years ago? Now?" The possible answers were: "high", "medium", "low". The following results about the level of their trust ten years ago were obtained from the students (Fig. 1). As seen from the diagram students in average tend to trust their teachers. 98% indicated their trust as high or medium.

Teachers were supposed to answer the question "How can you assess your trust to your students ten years ago? Now?" The possible answers were: "high", "medium", "low".

Teachers assessed their trust to students ten years ago in the following way (Fig. 2). Teachers assessed their trust to students high: 50% indicated the high level. 50% reported medium level, none thought their trust to be low. It is evident that the teachers' culture of trust ten years ago was connected with the previous way of distributing roles in education. So teachers undoubtedly voted for the "old-fashioned mode of teaching".

It is evident, that the level of teacher-student trust ten years ago was practically the same high.

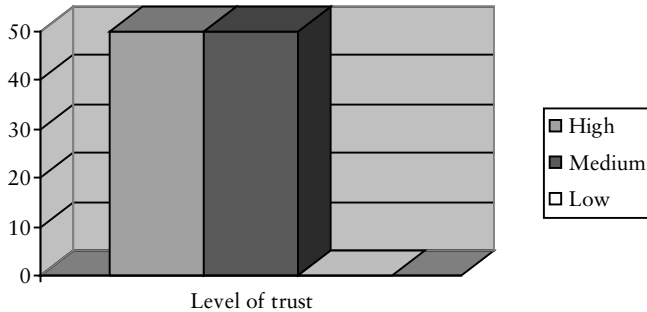


Fig. 2. The teachers' responses to the question "How can you assess your trust to your students ten years ago?"

Source: own study

The following results about the level of their trust now were obtained from the students (Fig. 3). It is evidently much lower than the level indicated ten years ago.

The results obtained from first-year students and sophomores were still different. First-year student showed more trust to teachers, while sophomores were more distrustful. These results in fact supported the conclusions made by T. Grebenyuk & I. Goncharova in Kaliningrad region (Grebenyuk, Goncharova 2014, 44).

When asked the question about their level of trust now, teachers were not as positive as they would be in the previous case. Teachers assessed their trust to students now in the following way (Fig. 4). Their attitude showed the following results: 15% high trust, 75% medium and 10% low trust. It might also be of interest that the teachers explained their answers by the fact that students had changed greatly within the past ten years.

Nevertheless, one can notice that there is no discrepancy between student-teacher level of trust now. One might call the relationships as those of equal mutual trust.

The next questions concerned the prognostic aspect of trust culture.

Then students were asked to do the task "Please predict, what your trust to your teachers will be in ten years?" The possible

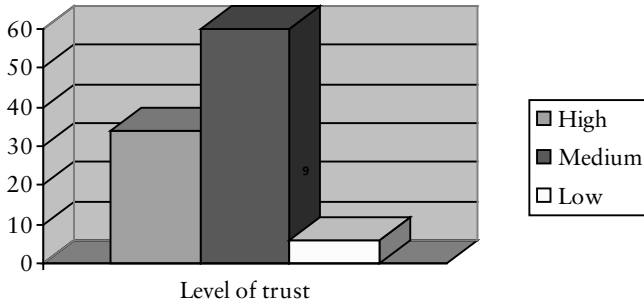


Fig. 3. The responses to the question “How can you assess your trust to your teachers now?”

Source: own study

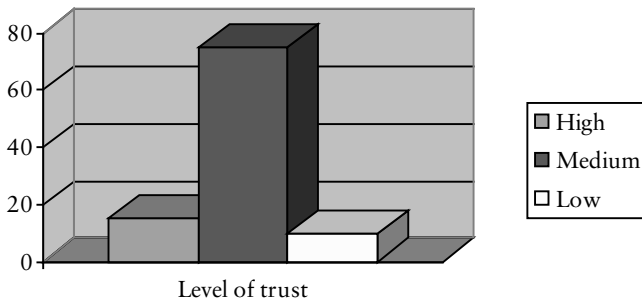


Fig. 4. The responses to the question “How can you assess your trust to your students now?”

Source: own study

answers were: “higher”, “the same as now”, “lower”.

The following results about the level of their trust in ten years were obtained from the students (Fig. 5).

As one may observe from the results students showed change of trust. The level of trust is going to become lower in students’ opinion.

Teachers were asked to do the same “Please predict, what your trust to your students will be in ten years?” The possible answers were: “higher”, “the same as now”, “lower”.

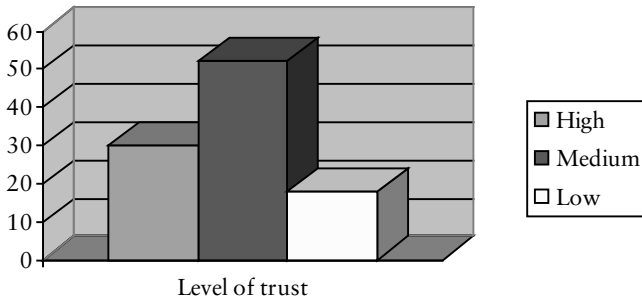


Fig. 5. The responses to the request to predict their trust to teachers in ten years by the students  
Source: own study

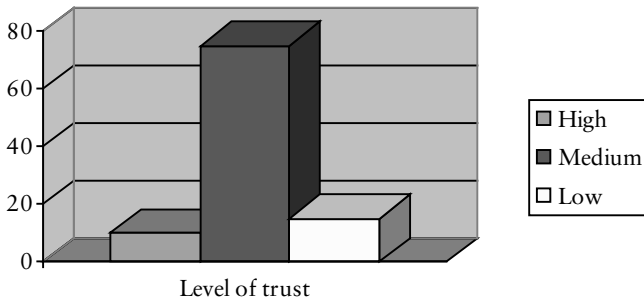


Fig. 6. The responses to the request to predict their trust to students in ten years by the teachers  
Source: own study

Teachers predicted their trust to students in ten years in the following way (Fig. 6). Their attitude is going to become worse, though teachers might seem to be rather conservative. The percentage was 10%-"higher attitude", 75%-"the same as now", 15%-"lower".

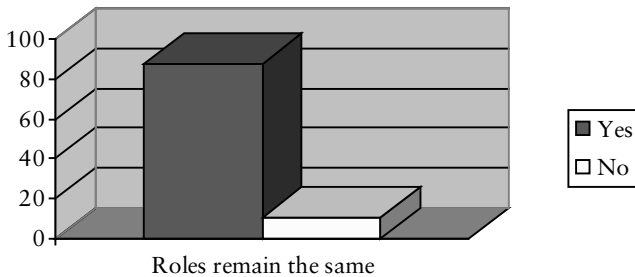


Fig. 7. The responses to the question “Will teacher-student roles remain the same?” by the students

Source: own study

### *Visions of future teacher-student roles and interactions in education*

In the second part of the research students and teachers were asked about the visions of future teacher-student roles and interactions in education. They received the questions: “Will teacher-student roles remain the same?” (Fig. 7, 8), “If no, what functions will the teacher have?” (Tables 1, 2), “What additional functions will a student perform?”.

In Figure 8 the students’ responses to the question “Will teacher-student roles remain the same?” are presented.

It is of interest that present-day students are not yet ready to do without the teacher in educational process. 88% of students not only agree that the role of the teacher will remain the same in future no matter what ICT tools enter the educational market. Some students even stressed that they hoped the roles would remain the same. 2% could not answer the question at all.

The teachers’ responses are shown in Figure 8. They evidently show that they clearly see their role and place in education process. Nevertheless, they understand the future roles change more distinctly: 55% of teachers agree that the roles will change.

Students and teachers were supposed to predict the change of their functions in future. The results are presented in Tables 1, 2.

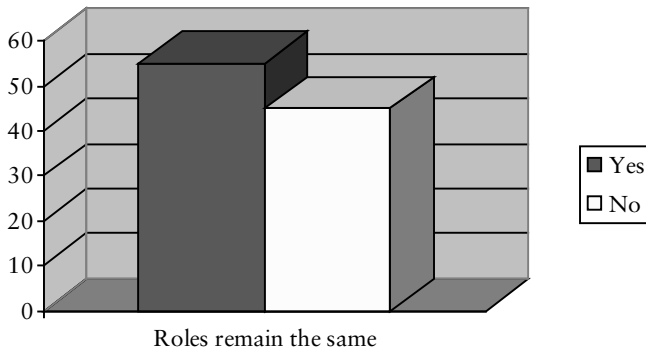


Fig. 8. The responses to the question “Will teacher-student roles remain the same?” by the teachers

Source: own study

The students’ answers (Table 1) to the question “What functions will the teacher have in future?” did not show more flexibility as we had anticipated before the research. Only 4% students wanted freedom in educational interactions.

12% of students are ready to monitor and assess the outcomes of their own activity. The rest 88% of them are certain that it should remain teachers’ function.

62% of students are prepared to train skills and habits independently, while the remaining 38% still consider it the teachers’ function to organize this training for them.

28% of students are ready to accept the function of conducting the research entirely independently without the supervisor’s assistance which is a more optimistic vision as compared to teachers’.

76% of students realize that the students’ self-preparation is their function. It is a surprise that 24% of them do not anticipate this function as their own.

It is remarkable that in spite of the fact that none of the Universities participating in the research offered e-learning programs to students 32% of students are ready to accept the responsibility of finding e-learning programs and organizing the activity without the teachers’ or University assistance.

Nr	Functions	It will become the function of a student	It will remain the function of a teacher
1.	Explaining the new material	10%	90%
2.	Monitoring and assessment	12%	88%
3.	Training skills and habits	62%	38%
4.	Conducting research independently	28%	72%
5.	Organizing students' self-education	76%	24%
6.	Preparing the literature and classroom materials for students to work independently	54%	46%
7.	Suggesting tasks to pass the credit	8%	92%
8.	Providing students with e-learning tools	32%	68%
9.	Examining competencies	8%	92%
10.	Consulting students in the subjects	6%	94%

Table 1. Functions of students to perform in future suggested by students  
Source: own study

An unexpected result was 8% of students being ready to be responsible for examining their competencies. The educational context suggests that it is a purely outer function which is understood by the teachers who assessed it as 100% teachers' function.

Consulting students in the subjects is seen as students' activity in future by 6% of students. 10% of teachers are ready to give this responsibility to students.

The teachers' answers (Table 2) to the question "What functions will the teacher have in future?" showed a little more flexibility and supposed a less degree of teachers' guidance of educational interactions: 10% of teacher are ready to trust students in finding the adequate information on the new material.

10% of academic teachers are ready to allow students monitoring and assessment of their activity outcomes. Though it is a little less than the percent in students' opinion, the figure is relatively small.

50% of teachers are going to trust students in training skills and habits. So in this respect students sound more optimistic.

85% of teachers are sure that students' research work is to be guided. 15% are ready to offer this entire function to students.



Preparing the literature and classroom materials for students to work independently is considered teachers' activity in future by 90% of teachers.

Suggesting tasks to pass the credit is considered teachers' function by both teachers (95%) and students (92%).

Answer no 8 shows that the teachers do not use e-learning in their work. That is why their answers supposed 35% of students responsibility in organizing the work. Though it is the function of the institution to equip the learning process with the programs.

The reversing of teacher-student roles in education also envisages that students are supposed to take up new functions. Hence, the last question was about students' new functions in educational interactions. The question was meant as an open one. Students' answers showed that students were not at all ready to take additional responsibilities upon them.

Additionally to the above mentioned functions of the student in future teachers suggested reciprocal assessment, self-assessment, searching for information in foreign literature. Students stressed that they already had so many functions that it was not reasonable to accept any additional ones. One of students even wrote that one should never trust any additional functions to students. Another respondent indicated that the desire to acquire new functions must grow in a student. It should be the student's initiative, not the teacher's.

Anyway, one student mentioned that checking information for its authenticity and reliability is to become a new students' function in future. Several of them suggested student-teacher cooperation in working out tasks for credits and examinations. They also reminded of extracurricular activities which are to become their function.

Some students stressed that the primary responsibility of students would always be their self-preparation after classes. In their opinion the number and content of the additional functions depended on student's motivation to learn. So the scope of functions for each student is different. Several students pointed out the functions of self-realization, self-development and self-up-bringing. One of the opinions was that students could cope with

Nr	Functions	It will remain the function of a teacher	It will become the function of a student
1.	Explaining the new material	90%	10%
2.	Monitoring and assessment	90%	10%
3.	Training skills and habits	50%	50%
4.	Assisting in research work	85%	15%
5.	Organizing students' self-education	25%	75%
6.	Preparing the literature and classroom materials for students to work independently	90%	10%
7.	Suggesting tasks to pass the credit	95%	5%
8.	Providing students with e-learning tools	65%	35%
9.	Examining competencies	100%	0%
10.	Consulting students in the subjects	90%	10%

Table 2. Functions of teachers to perform in future suggested by teachers  
Source: own study

many new functions only on condition of teachers' help (or the possibility to apply to teacher in case it is necessary). One of the respondents mentioned the function of assisting less successful students in their learning.

### *Conclusion*

1. Students showed a higher level of trust to teachers ten years ago, now and in future. But low and medium level taken together are pretty much the same. So we might conclude that the dynamics of trust culture in student-teacher relations is quite harmonious.

This might lead to partial change of the culture of trust definition. In the new definition it is important to estimate not only the level of trust in absolute numbers, but also consider the balance between student-teacher trust level.

2. Teachers are not skeptical or categorical about students' inability to take new responsibilities. In some cases they were ready to entrust more new functions on students.

3. Students in many cases proved to show more conservatism than their teachers. The absolute majority of students considered and even hoped that student-teacher roles would remain the same.

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Tatiana B. Grebenyuk\*

## Trust as pedagogical category in the context of the concept of individuality

**ABSTRACT:** The results of the theoretical research of trust at the conception of human individuality are shown. The author's understanding of the individuality as an interactive characteristic of human psyche is examined. The author considers there are components in each psychological sphere which play the role in trust or distrust demonstration. The analysis of characteristics of psyche spheres and trust as psychological notions allowed the author to underline actual components and to suggest a model of human individuality in the aspect of trust-distrust.

**KEYWORDS:** Trust, Culture of trust, Psychological investigations of trust, The concept of individuality.

### *Introduction*

According to the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Brokgauz and Efron, trust is «a psychological state making us trust somebody's seemingly competent opinion and refuse to study the problem independently [...]».

The phenomenon of trust represents a multi-aspect concept. It exists as a *feeling*, as a *policy* towards people and different aspects of life, as *personal characteristics* having their specific features and laws of manifestation at different age levels. Trust reveals itself in people's relationship; it exists as social phenomenon, as an atmosphere of trust in a society affecting the behavior of a person and social groups.

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*Psychological factors of trust-distrust in the educational environment*

In the process of an individual development of a person the formation of *psychological mechanisms supporting personality's trust or distrust* takes place. The formation of these mechanisms corresponds to the stages of the psychological development of a person.

In the educational environment trust/distrust can reveal itself in relation to teachers, students, educational and scientific information, different means of education, etc. Since the education process involves the constant creation of educational situations in which participants interact, trust/distrust always takes place. In this process one as a subject can trust him/herself, or another person, or both him/herself and another person.

There are different factors affecting the manifestation of trust in the pedagogical situations: competency, authority, the difficulty of the task, a person's interests, emotional response, one's own experience, abilities, level of intellectual development, etc. Trust, in its larger part, concerns the emotional, i.e. badly rationalized sphere of psychology. It can give rise to many other feelings (from love to hatred), states (from comfort to stress and frustration), social policies (from acceptance to abruption) (Zinchenko 2001).

As we see, the manifestation of trust/distrust by different subjects in one and the same situation depends in many ways on the development of psychological functions, features and qualities. Along with this, the scientists have brought to light personal characteristics relevant to the manifestation of trust in people's relationship. They include first of all: Decency, Competency, Justice, Honesty, Consistency, Loyalty, Openness (Milner 2006).

To get more accurate results in the investigation of trust among students we have compiled a test having two tasks. The students had to choose five answers to the questions: 1) What student are you inclined to trust during your studies? And 2) Which teacher can you trust? The answer options for *the first* question were the following: reliable, sincere, favorite, open, honest, polite, resourceful, helping you in your studies, organ-

ized, cheerful, non-aggressive, sharing your interests, having the same life goals, tolerant to other people's shortcomings, rational, independent, preferring compromises, restrained, competent.

The answer options for *the second* question were the following:

- ability to put clear and meaningful goals for the students;
- ability to implement the students' initiative with an optimum effect, to encourage creativity, to foster culture;
- responsibility for the achievement of the educational results;
- ability to assess the students' successes and failures adequately;
- consistency (when words and deeds are never at variance);
- openness (informing students of the issues important for them);
- ability to form a clear picture of the educational strategy and values and stick to them;
- honesty in providing students with true information (e.g. open information on one's aims and motives), in objective assessment of one's activity; fulfillment of one's promises;
- caring attitude (the use of the flexible educational forms, communication with the help of the Internet, etc.);
- development of the sense of team unity and mutual aid in the students' collective;
- showing trust in the students' abilities;
- development of friendly (partnership) relations.

130 students from different universities of Kaliningrad took part in the survey. The analysis of the results revealed that the students trust their classmates if they are reliable (78%), honest (61%), organized (57%), competent (44%), open (29%). The students' trust in their teachers was expressed with the help of the following characteristics:

- ability to put clear and meaningful goals for the students – 65%
- consistency – 60%
- honesty in providing students with true information – 50%
- showing trust in the students' abilities – 43%
- openness – 41%.

The outcomes testify that the students develop an idea of the trust criteria towards their classmates and teachers. But their choice of the offered criteria shows that the students assess them not yet adequately enough. This result points out the acuteness of the trust culture development among students during their higher education.

*Characteristics of trust-distrust through spheres of human individuality*

To solve the problem of trust in educational environment it is important to address the psychological aspect. In my research I've used the concept of a person's individuality projected onto a student – a future teacher.

The concept of individuality of a student trained to become a teacher, understood as a pedagogical category, enjoys an independent pedagogical status (O. Grebenyuk, T. Grebenyuk 2000). The model of individuality of a future teacher developed by us includes the characteristics of seven psychic spheres (intellectual, motivational, emotional, volitional, practical, existential and that of self-regulation). Each of these spheres contains a set of important professional qualities, which are newly formed in the course of students learning and practical training.

Key professional components of psychological spheres are:

*In the intellectual sphere* – it's a pedagogical mentality (it's an ability to analyze pedagogical facts, events, processes, systems; show creativity, flexibility, criticality, system, mobility, efficiency of mentality in pedagogical situations), pedagogical erudition, intuition, improvisation, vigilance and hearing, prevision, observation, imagination, prediction, creativity, special thinking (it's an ability to direct one's argumentation about professional activities, mistakes, errors to optimistic way);

*In the motivational sphere* – it's a motivation of professional activity (wish for acquirement of new technologies, wish for studying advanced experience, wish for realization of pedagogical mastery, motives in achievements of success in professional activity, desire to receive acknowledge among one's colleagues in pedagogical body and so on);

*In the will sphere* – it's a tolerance and self-control in pedagogical relations, perseverance in the realization of pedagogical activity and pedagogical wills, wills of self-actualization and self-development;

*In the emotional sphere* – it's an empathy, sympathy, joy, openness, tolerance, ability to control one's feelings and mood, ability to control emotional atmosphere in pedagogical sphere;

*In the practical sphere of a subject* – it's pedagogical talents and skills, professional ethic behavior;

*In the existential sphere* – it's possesses of reflection, purposeful attitude to oneself as an individuality and pedagogue, liberty in self-realization as an individuality in professional activity, aspiration for self-actualization, self-development, constant work on oneself, confidence in the right choice of a profession, one's professional position;

*In the sphere of self-regulation* – it's a pedagogical reflection, thinking, self-analysis and self-evaluation of professional activity and oneself reflection as a pedagogue, it's an ability to correlate a work, individual style of relations with social professional experience, ability to see merits and demerits both in the development of one's individuality and personality and in professional activity and behavior, ability to find a way of one's professional growth, ability to regulate one's pedagogical activity and thinking about it.

The above model of individuality possesses a number of functions. The descriptive function allows a common understanding of the individuality of a future teacher as a pedagogical phenomenon. The explanatory function of this new category discloses the genesis of individuality formation: from separate qualities and features belonging to different spheres of the psyche to the formation of a wholesome individuality. The prognostic function means that the model is reflecting an up-to-date image of a future teacher characterized by qualities and features rendering the student the status of both the trainee and the trainer. For students trained today to become teachers it is characteristic to acquire new qualities not only in the motivational, intellectual and practical spheres, but also in the existential sphere and that of self-regulation, which are responsible for the wholesomeness of individuality.



The individuality of a future teacher should be differentiated from the individualities of students of other specializations as well as from that of a full teacher. It cannot be considered as a mechanical combination of student's and teacher's individualities. The individuality of a future teacher is an integrative characteristic due to the inseparability of training and practical teaching in teacher education. Under these conditions, the individuality of a student has a more complex structure, different functions, different contents compared to the individuality of a person of the same age but with a different status. A developed individuality of a future teacher performs important functions: a) professionalization – confirming the correctness of the professional choice, defining the professional Self-concept; b) socialization – the student is capable to match his/her own interests and values with societal values.

The analysis of scientific information has made it possible to present the model of individuality in the aspect of trust (in relation to educational situations) in the following way (Table 1).

### *Conclusion*

Depending on an educational situation, the model of individuality in the presented context acquires different contents. Thus, from the standpoint of the interaction of the involved subjects in the pedagogical process, it is possible to observe the appearance of characteristics specific to communication and manifestation/failure in manifestation of trust herein. The application to the use of information and computer technology, to the internet in particular, of characteristics specific of manifestation of trust/distrust gives evidence to the model of individuality.

I believe that the formation of the specific models of individuality reflecting the peculiarities of manifestation or failure in manifestation of trust in different educational situations will make it possible to set up clear targets to educate students and develop the culture of trust.

Factors of trust manifestation	Sphere of individuality	Factors of distrust manifestation
<i>Ability</i> to analyze and assess one's own intellectual and other types of resources in resolving a definite problem. The lack of necessary knowledge and skills. Focusing on decision-making exempting a subject from independent action.	<i>the intellectual sphere</i>	<i>Ability</i> to analyze and assess one's own intellectual and other types of resources in resolving a definite problem. <i>Critical</i> attitude to information.
The feelings of confidence in other person's competency (trust somebody), pleasure or satisfaction due to the recognition of one's own competency (trust yourself). Low <i>self-esteem</i> . Anxiety, doubt, fear in relation to forthcoming educational activity.	<i>the emotional sphere</i>	High or adequate <i>self-esteem</i> . Suspicion as a reaction to the demands produced. <i>Doubts</i> in relation to the adequacy of one's knowledge and skills to the tasks offered. <i>Frustration</i> from one's own unreadiness for educational activity.
Focus on success by all means. The position of a participant but not a leader. Faith in one's own or other person's ability to ensure a success of a job.	<i>the existential sphere</i>	The leading <i>value</i> is a positive result of an education activity. <i>Ability</i> of a wary attitude to any offers, focus on testing one's own or others' abilities to fulfill the task.
Diffidence in one's own knowledge and skills (the same in relation to others). Awareness of inability to correct one's own educational activity, addressing the others for the help.	<i>the sphere of self-regulation</i>	<i>Ability</i> to reflect on a possible failure and find out its reasons. Work to improve one's skills to achieve the educational aim.
<i>Willingness</i> to get a positive assessment despite the lack of knowledge and skills. Therefore, the <i>desire</i> to confide in somebody in fulfilling the task appears.	<i>the motivational sphere</i>	<i>Striving</i> for critical assessment of both the task and the criteria, checking for accuracy and completeness. Wish to resist external attractiveness of the task.
One's own or other person's positive <i>experience</i> .	<i>the practical sphere of a subject</i>	Negative <i>experience</i> in education activity (the main factor of distrust).
<i>Weak will</i> , lack of willpower, thus "surrendering at discretion".	<i>the will sphere</i>	Manifestation of willpower to succeed by one's own means. Aiming at overcoming difficulties.

Table 1.

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Elżbieta Perzycka\*

## Contexts of developing information literacy in the digital learning environment – constructive-cognitive perspective

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper the author undertakes to describe selected contexts of developing literacy in the digital learning environment based on research experience embedded in the constructivist perspective. This literacy is treated as fundamental knowledge, skills and attitudes which student develops during school education. Considerations are situated between media pedagogy and didactics and their interpretation inspired by the works based on cognitive psychology and sociology of education. Shown issues are very interesting both in terms of research, as well as the social dimension in the face of globalization of media culture. The very existence of digital media has almost no value for people, who have no developed skills in the management of digital information, in particular, its evaluation and effective utilization.

**KEYWORDS:** Information literacy, Digital information resources, Learning.

### *Introduction*

In the era of significant progress of civilization, it seems to be necessary to use all available goods, which could help to improve a man's functioning in various areas of life, including education. In this aspect there is a constant emergence of new ideas for the development of technical means, in particular devices and digital programs that might significantly support the learning process. This progress is accompanied by questions about what conditions must be met for the students to acquire

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and develop competences that would be socially useful and valuable, and how to improve them through learning using digital information assets. Thus, there are two issues to discuss. First, what information skills are desirable? Second, what are the best ways to develop them? Universal access to education, which has been guaranteed both under international Community law as well as national regulations, is one of the fundamental determinants of human functioning, regardless of health or material status in different aspects of life. The possibility of education is valuable in society and its consequence is the acquisition and development of various types of competences and literacy. This paper is focused only on information literacy in the use of digital resources, which were discussed in detail in: *Struktura i dynamika kompetencji informacyjnych w społeczeństwie sieci* (Perzycka 2008). This article discusses only essential contexts of this topic. There are references to authors, who have contributed to the fact that this proposal could emerge and serve as a contribution to the research.

### *Contexts of understanding the information literacy in the digital environment*

Digital information in the network society may be specifically utilized for learning needs within each area of human daily life. However, it cannot be forgotten that education, which uses digital tools of information, can inspire both positive and negative emotions among students. Basics of tool utilization are only a starting point for actual education using digital techniques. The author does not agree with the generally accepted statement (because of which schools and centers of continuing education want to have more and more better technological equipment as part of e.g. Digital School programme) that the higher information literacy of digital media users, the greater the chance of being successful in operations on information from a variety of online resources and multimedia. Instrumental competences are not sufficient to assess the value of information. For the Internet user it is not important if that person will be able to use new smart phone, tablet or computer program. What is impor-

tant is the substantive and methodological competence, which has been named by the author as information literacy in the network society.

In this paper ‘Empowering 8’ is the basis for developing the information literacy of the digital media user and it is the reference point for further considerations. It is especially due to the fact that estimating success in terms of the social component of information literacy and cognitive and constructivist approach means to emphasize in this perspective conditions in terms of personal needs and the process of developing information literacy. Therefore, what is ‘Empowering 8’? These are the guidelines for learners using digital resources on how to solve problems using information. The procedure presented in eight steps, the mastery of which shall satisfy (respond to the needs) the user of information. Information literacy skills embedded in ‘Empowering 8’ are the ability to: 1) *Identify* a topic/subject, the intended audience, a relevant format, keywords, types of resources; 2) *Explore* resources and information; 3) *Select* and record relevant information, identify stages in the process, and collect appropriate citations; 4) *Organize*, evaluate and sequence information, and use visual organizers to compare and contrast information; 5) *Create* information using own words; 6) *Present*, share or display information; 7) *Assess* the output; 8) *Apply* the solutions based on the feedback and assessment and use new knowledge gained in a variety of situations (Report 2014).

Satisfying the user of digital information is understood as equipping that person with competences that will help him in the use of digital resources. They are treated as necessary conditions to create the habit of learning through own experience, and not as it is commonly assumed, as conditions of preparation for life-long learning. Global access to digital information through the Internet creates opportunities for developing one’s own image of learning and at the same time forming a number of contextual images. This is due to both a personal web activity, as well as the learning conditions, i.e. digital media. Such experiences have been observed for a number of years in many countries around the world. ‘Empowering 8’ was a by-product of two workshops: the first in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2004 and the second in Patiala, India in November 2005.

Ten countries participated in the workshops: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. 'Empowering 8' uses the problem-solving approach for resource-based learning (Wijetunge, Manatunge 2014). Despite of the success, these measures are not widely implemented. These experiments have usually local dimension. It is often due to the financial support received as part of innovative projects.

In contrast, it is worth to describe the observations made during the SIT project, in the 7th Framework Programme, Marie Curie (<[www.sitproject.eu](http://www.sitproject.eu)>). Students in schools in Srinagar, India learn by repeating out loud the content taught. They do it as a group, as the whole class. During the lessons learners are focused on the teacher. The same is with students who learn Sanskrit. The basis of the sacred language learning is to master the eight directions of the world. Students repeat them very often, inter alia, with daily prayer in the morning and in the evening. Children in many places in different contexts can show the right direction. Access to the computers is limited to a designated curriculum. Using Internet resources, as well as the content of education, is carried out under the strict supervision of a teacher or librarian. Limited access to computers was also observed in schools in Poland, Russia and Italy (Report 1, 2013; Reports 2.3, 2014; Report 5, 2015). In visited school, using smart phones and tablets by students during the breaks is prohibited. Access to the Internet is encrypted. Only in Norwegian schools in Nesna (Nilsen, Perzycka 2015) students have access to computers, which are located in school halls. Due to this approach to the use of digital resources, students learn to memorize the information communicated in accordance with the recommendation of the teacher conducting lessons. Students are able to recall information in accordance with a key that was adopted for their learning, but can they use this information to solve problems and problem situations, which they have to deal with in everyday life?

### *Information literacy and digital literacy*

Information literacy is crucial in societies where the role of public information resources is the most important. Because this is a global issue, an international organization UNESCO joined the efforts for their development. Together with universities it organizes scientific conferences devoted to the promotion of ICTs and information literacy around the world. In the UNESCO strategy (2002), information literacy is understood as a cognitive structure consisting of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to live and work in today's world. This is a prerequisite for effective access, use and creation of content to support economic development, education, health care and services, and all other aspects of modern societies. Information literacy is the foundation of learning, critical thinking and interpretative skills, regardless of affiliation to a particular environment. It is necessary regardless of age and social role, because it determines being active citizens in the information society and, increasingly, acting in all aspects of social life.

Information literacy is often confused with digital literacy (Horton 2007, 54). It must be emphasized that they are not identical, but they cannot be separated (Kędzińska 2004, 82). Information literacy helps with using information and digital literacy with using digital tools. UNESCO documents include efforts to combine these two types of literacy. The model of media and information literacy MIL is a bridge of cooperation between the media and media users for the creative and critical lifelong learning. This model illustrates the necessary elements to live and work in today's world. The model (Fig. 1) includes not only the necessary literacy and knowledge that a user of digital media has to develop, but also points out the sources of this development: libraries, archives, museums, etc.

The concept of using digital media illustrated in the MIL model may provide a starting point for thinking about online learning. From this perspective, the digital learning support becomes a highly individualized, intelligent educational system, because it provides many sources of information and its types. This might be a tool to assist the work of the teacher as well



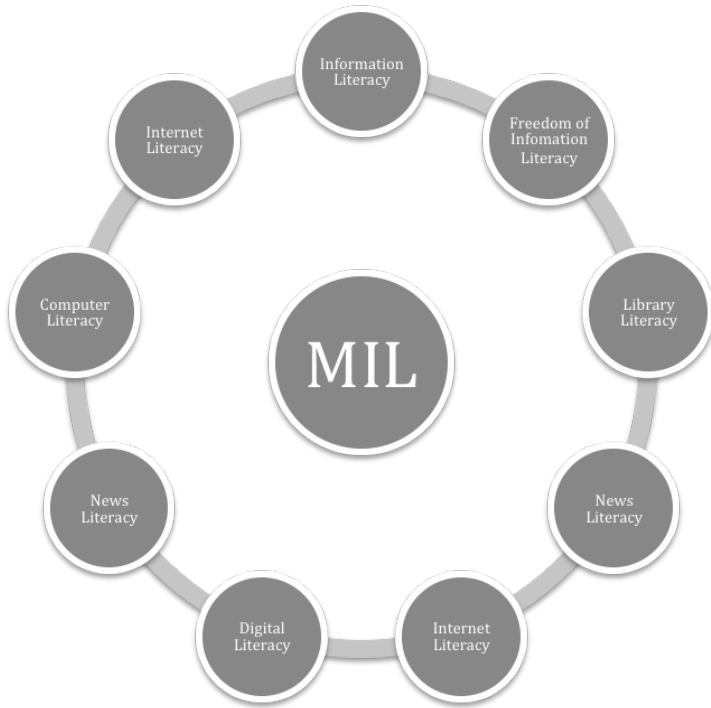


Fig. 1. Model of Media and Information Literacy – MIL

Source: Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers. UNESCO <[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/media\\_and\\_information\\_literacy\\_curriculum\\_for\\_teachers\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/media_and_information_literacy_curriculum_for_teachers_en.pdf)>

as a learning process of a student (Kaminska-Sołśnia 2009, 217-220). In turn, information literacy of teacher and student expected in that process sets the direction for the development of media education. In order to achieve that an adequate system of education should be designed. It should be noted that the network society does not provide its members with structured models of reality; it rather gives them only fragmentary material, from which the user of digital information can build the picture that he needs. Today school does not prepare its students enough for this difficult task, as pointed out by Kwiatkowska (2008) and observed during author's visits to many schools.

*The model information literacy in network society from the perspective of constructivism*

There are many theories in the social sciences on the basis of which this issue could be characterized. There is no right or wrong theory, nor the various methods of sharing knowledge derived from different schools. The theoretical framework for the research on learning in the online context must be able to study both social and cognitive components of learning. It must meet the requirements of defining the Internet as culturally valid cognitive instrument and on that basis determining the desirable literacy to be in/with digital information. In this context, particularly useful seems to be the constructivist-cognitive approach. It is not homogeneous, but in its holistic approach it becomes an integrated learning theory supported by the work of Bruner (2006), Dewey (1967), Piaget (2006), Vygotsky (2006) and others.

In the constructivist-cognitive concept approach to learning in the digital environment, knowledge is created by an individual. Human does not record information, but builds a structure of knowledge of available information. It is difficult to speak of a direct reflection of the mind of the analyzed reality or the faithful registration or copying incoming data. Any cognitive activity leads to a kind of incoming information transformation. Cognition is always more active than passive. Human knowledge is not only a reflection of reality, but an individual design. The formation of this structure cannot be combined only with personal experience of the individual. Knowledge is not only a personal human design, but it is also being constructed by the society. Human knowledge of the surrounding reality is built by using cultural tools. Cultural transmission, making mainly through symbols, is a leading determinant of human development.

For teachers and students there is nothing more precious than getting to know oneself, which means, inter alia, knowledge of one's own mind and potential (Hünter 2014). From the constructivist perspective, a student makes construction and reconstruction of his own vision of the world with regard to the virtual world. A world, which contains many places of available unauthorized sources of information. On this basis, the knowl-

edge of oneself and the world becomes dead, devoid of values. Through critical and reflective approach it becomes alive and fertile, giving a sense of security and fulfillment. From the cognitive perspective, mind of students who use digital resources allows them to collect, process and reproduce everything learned, as well as make operation on that material. Modern school managed to 'escape' very far away from «issues related to understanding oneself» (Spitzer 2013; Perzycka 2004, 31-39). It may illustrate the fact of not appropriate determination of all issues that are related to the psychic life. These include the biology, the construction of the nervous system, the senses and the brain, mathematical models of brain function and mental processes, philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, unconventional fields of psychology (such as psychoanalysis, different forms of psychotherapy and transpersonal psychology), linguistics, anthropology and even issues of introspection and spiritual life' (Duch 1998, 6-50). Learning based on cognitive science comes from the human. First, the question arises: what is the student like, and next, what methods should be used to stimulate development of this student. Pedagogical activities are directed first to explore the subject of pedagogical activities, the working of the brain and its potential, and only secondarily to work towards the preparation of appropriate educational field (Adler 1998; Lorayne 1999; Buzan 1999; Silva 2000; Brzeškiewicz 2000; Spitzer 2013; Hunter 2014).

The vastness of digital information faced by the user becomes a challenge in developing competence in learning these resources. Information itself is not sufficient. We need the knowledge and wisdom of how to understand, evaluate and use it valuably – how to manage this information and how to learn faster in less time. Sometimes preparation is time-consuming, but over time it turns into a habit. The state of the knowledge about oneself and one's own mind shows how much there is still to discover. But people make new attempts to find it. Figure 2 presents the original integrated model of learning in the network, which consists of: 1) learner-orientation, 2) problem-orientation and ways to resolve it, 3) activity-orientation by interacting with the resources of the digital environment.

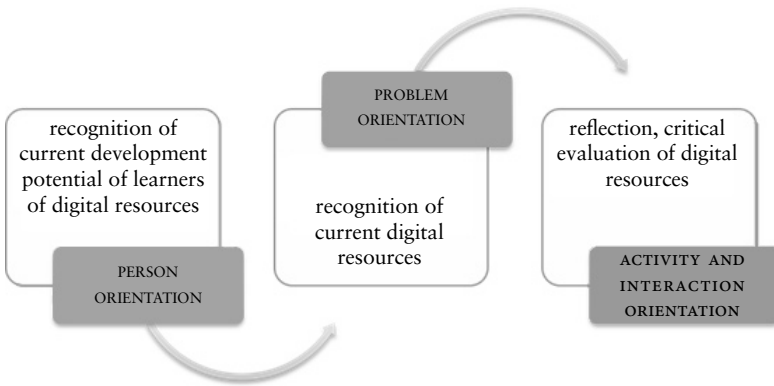


Fig. 2. Integrated learning theory from digital resources

Constructivist-cognitive education development strategy can be realized in critical enlightening of participants in the educational process, if it is able to go beyond the structural limits of the learning process. Referring to information literacy as a dynamic reflective category in a digital society (participation and collaboration of students in the learning process), the research on transformation of educational practices (implementation of constructivist solutions) should be supported by self-knowledge, reflection, activation of personal knowledge, creation of one's own personality, the experience of subjectivity and building of identity, autonomy and individualism, which has been highlighted for many years by Czerepaniak-Walczak (1995; 1997; 2014), and Perzycka (2008; 2012; 2014).

Tunnel knowledge of the learning processes may lead into the trap of recognizing constructivism and cognitive sciences as the only correct theoretical framework for teaching and learning. The author realizes that is one of the way of thinking on how knowledge is formed and understanding that this is not the only way. Similarly, different interpretations of constructivist-cognitive interpretations are not necessarily incompatible with each other.

## *Conclusion*

Rapidly changing living conditions and the volatility of knowledge contributes to the fact that good preparation of students for/to digital resources requires, first of all, to learn the ways to perceive, define and solve various educational issues. Information literacy is the dispositions of learners in the digital environment, which are variable and learnable. They occur in specific situations of school and extracurricular activities. They are improved by setting them in the integrated constructivist-cognitive theory consisting of the following fields of learning:

- learner-orientation – his potential for development, especially taking into account the natural capacity of the brain (Piaget 2006; Spitzer 2013),
- problem-orientation, including its intellectual analysis and consideration of possible solutions (Dawey 2010),
- orientation towards active discovery and categorization (Bruner),
- cooperation-orientation by interaction of learning participants in the dispersed learning environment (Slavin).

The author believes that integrated learning theory, including the orientation towards the person, the problem and learning conditions, allows to consider the specific characteristics of learners and conditions of the digital environment—a place of learning.

Problem-orientation enables to explore learning network in a broader context. Although particular orientations significantly overlap each other, each of them contributes unique rules, which – if integrated – form a solid basis of theoretical methods to be used in the context of digital learning. The most attractive in this theory is the suggestion that effective learning takes place when it is located within some genuine activity – or one that is part of common practice in the culture, and participants in the learning process are involved in it during normal interactions – ordinary people doing ordinary operations. The author wants to express a strong belief that education should avoid consideration of the fact that learners use digital content in a pre-determined way or have limited access only to the websites and features identi-

fied by the teacher. Instead, participants of the learning process should be encouraged to engage in digital resources in a similar manner as they do in everyday life.

At the same time, it must be noted that every theory, when considered separately, is not enough for a satisfactory explanation of how learning processes take place. An integrated theory of learning with digital resources allows for the development of information literacy oriented towards inquisitive and open attitude when solving everyday life problems. It is a conscious strategy of self-learning, working with others in achieving the aims of education. Interpretations of this approach are shaped by two main issues: education for individual development opposed to education for social transformation and social context affecting the individual's cognitive development.

In the prevention of thoughtlessness and conformist acceptance of digital information, it is worth to develop and reflect on the conditions of the development of information literacy by taking into account at least five areas: 1) tool – by mastering the skills of digital programs; 2) organizational – by identifying the criteria for assessing the content of webpages; 3) cognitive – by clarifying the issue, setting the strategy plan of looking for information, reflection on strategy and acquired information; 4) creative – by creating own digital information and sharing it online, 5) social – through the presentation of information obtained or created.

Information literacy of learners in the network is also closely linked to IT literacy (technical knowledge, as well as computer and Internet skills), teleological competence (for educational purposes), communication skills (rules of traditional communication are the same) and media competence. Therefore, it is advisable to consider them in coexisting contexts. An integral principle of learning in the digital world is the idea that tools and artifacts play a fundamental role in the transformation of the nature and functions of activity, from which emerges a competent action and therefore, these changes affect the idea of “what”, “how” and “why” one needs to know. Therefore, tools produced by the culture (such as digital media) may be considered as part of the learner and not as a separate, external aid.

In this paper, attention is drawn only to the aspect of information. It became a contribution to the discussion, which may be developed in the analysis of other coexisting types of literacy and areas of improvement. Without considering multiple components that make up the digital learning environment, it is impossible to understand the impact of digital information on learners, and this may – in certain sense – limits the understanding of the needs of modern and future generations. The author hopes that the approach to education in the field of digital learning and development of information literacy in this environment signaled in this paper will give an important insight into this is definitely unique and relatively new environment, both in situations of formal and informal learning.

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## Trust in times of crisis. Reflections and educational perspectives in an intercultural way

The words will find trust when the facts  
will give certainties.

(Socrates)

**ABSTRACT:** After a brief analysis about the contexts in which trust, considered as a social resource and basic value in educational processes, can be easily established, we will focus on aspects of the complexities, difficulties and conflicts that afflict the contemporary human being in his relationships in a social and economic arrangement that you would want from time globalized, internationalized, transnational and intercultural. The reflection will be developed further, taking into consideration also the contemporary communications systems, focusing on technologies that significantly affect educational and social dynamics, especially the younger generations. After reporting some data from a pilot survey conducted on university students, we will suggest some pedagogical proposals on possible effective responses for a culture of trust in intercultural contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture of trust, Complexity, Intercultural dialogue, Educative relation and technologies.

### *Preliminary Questions*

The first issue concerns whether it still have sense to still focus on and to reflect about trust, in a society, which is the current one, characterized by a widespread sensation, or condition, of loss of the core values characterizing a society and its members and by a relentless chase the ephemeral as well as unreliable. That is, indeed, particularly pervasive especially now, in times

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of globalized economic and financial crisis, while ineffective as unattainable ideal of profit and gain, almost exclusively personal and selfish, is overcoming other more unselfish values.

The second issue regards whether trust is still strategic and important in relationship, in educational contexts.

Then, the third issue will analyse and discuss whether and how we trust politics, institutions, justice, the media, and technologies.

At last, the fourth issue will deepen about how trust can be established and how it will be able to be keeping.

### *Trust: definitions and meanings*

In a sociological framework, trust have been significantly regarded as a generative resource and prerequisite of mutual social action, aimed at a cooperative exchange through which social bonds develop and consolidate.

Such concept of trust is also considered as part of a broader concept about social capital cultural theories by Putnam, Fukuyama and Elias. According to them, indeed, the society is relied on basic values such as reciprocity, solidarity, value-relations inspired on trust both in the self, in the other and in the rules, on friendship and solidarity. Therefore, trust is even more relevant as it is an essential component towards the creation of social capital.

According to Field, trust is a benefic element to facilitate people in establishing relationships in order to cooperate to achieve their goals (Field 2003).

Beem, on the other hand, argued that

trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust of a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole. Without this interaction, on the other hand, trust decays; at a certain point, this decay begins to manifest itself in serious social problems. [...] The concept of social capital contends that building or rebuilding community and trust requires face-to-face encounters (Beem 1999, 20).

Fukuyama argued that social capital is crucial for the well-being and prosperity creating and maintaining in a Country. Indeed, he defined social capital as «the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organiza-

tions» (Fukuyama 1995, 10). Later, Fukuyama also specified and added that social capital refers to «the existence of a certain set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation among them» (Id. 1999, 16).

Putnam (1993; 2000), furthermore, considers social capital an important element for democratic governance.

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that meaning, social capital has closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”. The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital (Putnam 2000, 19).

In conclusion, we can point out that trust and social capital are mutually enhancing, as social capital stimulates trusting relationships that conversely generate social capital.

Following Fukuyama’s point of view, defines trust as

the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community (Fukuyama 1995, 27).

That point of view differs from the social capital instrument concept by Bourdieu and Coleman, who said relationships are means to achieve benefits or economical goals.

According to Bourdieu, from a Marxist framework and perspective, capital can be distinguished in three forms:

economic capital that can be directly convertible, into money and institutionalized in the form of property rights; cultural capital that may be convertible into economic capital and institutionalized in the form of educational qualification; and social capital, made up of social obligation that can be convertible into economic capital and institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (Bourdieu 1986, 243).

And they also are inter-convertible. The last one, furthermore,

is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 249).

As Coleman stated, instead,

social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. [...] Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons (Coleman 1994, 302).

Moreover,

the structure of relations could help establish obligations between social actors, create a trustworthy social environment, open channels for information, and set norms and impose sanctions on forms of social behaviours (Coleman 1988, 102).

Trust can also be regarded as it has three characteristics:

- 1) It is a personal variable. When regarded as a characteristic of individuals, trust is a personality variable, thereby placing emphasis on individual characteristics like feelings, emotions, and values (Wolfe 1976).
- 2) A second perspective regards trust considered as a collective attribute that can be drawn upon to achieve organizational goals. It may therefore be applied to the institutional fabric of society (Misztal 1996).
- 3) The third treats trust as a valued public good, facilitated and sustained by a social system. Putnam (1993), for example, has argued that trust within the community is what has made democracy work in northern Italy.

These three different levels of trust are interconnected.

From a pedagogical framework, trust may be considered a

basic condition for the encounter of two persons, the educator and the student, during the progressive discovery of intellectual truth, moral and aesthetic values (Laeng 1989, 4800).

Although trust has been recognized as a basic element in pedagogical and educational perspective, it would seem that there is not a broad specific Italian pedagogical literature available. Trust seems rather to be considered as an implicit prerequisite.

Nevertheless, seeking for example in ERIC database, there are about 5500 articles focused on trust published along the last twenty years: more than 2000 concerning trust in psychology,

1350 about trust in Elementary and Secondary Education, the same concerning trust in Higher Education, 500 about trust and Educational Change, almost the same about trust and Teaching Methods, etc.

From a pedagogical point of view, then, trust becomes a category when it is considered an element of the character and personality of the people involved in the relationship.

In pedagogical analysis field, we might suggest a broader definition of trust as “a generating resource of educational and relational action aimed at a global and integral developing of actors/persons involved and their relational bonds”.

Thus, trust turns out key and strategic element for the success of any effective educational action.

### *Context analysis and reflections*

In which contexts is it easier that trust can be established and grow stronger?

Trust can be established more easily where both the level of knowledge and knowing of the other is higher and the social and interpersonal bonds are tighter, and as the other gave real evidences, through his/her actions or behavior, that s/he can be considered reliable and not to betray the trust put in him.

Therefore, as will also be confirmed by the pilot survey carried out, the environment in which trust establishes and consolidates more easily will be firstly family, then other contexts such as authentic and in-depth friends relationships, or affective or love relationships.

Thus, as the level of knowledge decreases so the availability and willingness to trust reduce, we will need more efforts: in school, in sports courses, in work organizations, in more formal social relations, until to intercultural social contexts or virtual ones.

### *Further reflections: uncertainty and risk*

Nevertheless, if we reflect further, among the essential conditions, trust has placed by the most in the «context of expecta-

tions with positive valence for the individual and formulated under conditions of uncertainty» (Giani 2010, 24).

In such framework, trust requires and involves risk taking.

Therefore, trust has more sense and meaning as it has based within contexts characterized by the impossibility of forecast future events and therefore making risky actions of individuals. It is in this sense that Luhmann (2000), explaining about trust as a possible strategy for managing complexity, refers to it as a kind of “antidote” against the widespread uncertainty in almost all areas of human and social life.

Then, trust involves risk taking too: according to Beck and Giddens, a risk society was widespread by globalization. Risk society leads to analysis of risks, causing prejudgment. Giddens, moreover, focused on the so-called “access points”, that are “connection points between individuals or collectivity of profanes and representatives of abstract systems”, and it is considered as a re-embedding process. Such access-point are spatial-temporal events that may affect systemic trust, or, on the opposite, they may facilitate its building (Giddens 1990). Access points, in this way, are places or situations where individuals actually meet or have relationships with the abstract systems, also called “expert systems”.

Simmel takes further the reflections to extreme while indicating that trust will be established especially at risky events, otherwise impossible to manage: «trust intervenes on uncertainty by replacing the missing information [...] with a form of inner certainty» (Simmel 1995, 299).

Luhmann begins his analyses about trust phenomenon from Simmel’s theory analysis that argued trust is a hypothesis about future behavior as mediation of knowledge and non-knowledge. According to them, trust function is also in its tension between present and future. Within this tension, uncertainty drama and non-knowledge risk are flashing in the present. In that perspective, trust is just a «mechanism for reducing the complexity» (Luhmann 1979, 20).

According to Luhmann, such daily knowing is the so-called familiarity supported by habits, by “recipes trustworthy” that save attention and reflection allowing to achieve desired aims

with a minimum effort. However, this is a world based on semi-certainties, as anytime it may occurs facts that call into a question their stability and make raised suspicion. Familiarity is, in other words, a pre-condition for granting of trust. It gives the basis of reliability and typicality required to any action and experience projecting in the future.

Luhmann defines the question of personal trust creating and consolidating as learning. Furthermore, Luhmann distinguishes a systemic trust, that he almost compares it to an act of faith. In organizational literature, attention is focusing on the so-called inter-organizational trust, considered as that «social phenomenon which makes work within organizations easier and collaboration among organizations possible» (Sydow 2001, 31).

### *Some related categories*

Basic elements to establish a climate or an attitude based on trust are knowledge (it provides elements to better understand), loyalty (considered as faithfulness to commitments or obligations), reliability (it is conceived as an attribute based on the ability to consistently perform its intended role function or mission so not expected to failure).

Then trust can also be related to cooperation understood as both reciprocity and helping together, even more so in intercultural contexts.

However, in such periods of deep, widespread and generalized crisis that not only brings into question fundamental values but that affects and afflicts even the survival, attitudes of openness, cooperation, solidarity and trust in others become ever more difficult to be established and consolidated. Distrust, on the opposite, is gaining increasing ground, especially against those who are not familiar with or those who are different.

We see it every day in our popular suburbs: I refer for example to the recent episodes of conflicting and hostile relationships between residents and stranger people living in Tor Sapienza and Infernetto in Rome. Indeed, events of difficult living together resulting in intolerance or violence have become too frequent. We can learn it from the services or articles in the



news disseminated by the mass media. However, those events are often the subject of attempts at manipulation and exploitation for propaganda purposes and pre-election by politicians, or rather petty politicians who are instead accused by the common people of not having fulfilled their primary role, that is to develop policies, and then implement them, aimed at solving real serious problems.

So that we can actually achieve trust, then, a state of freedom, and freedom of the persons involved in the mutual relationship must be guarantee. However, at the same time, the concept and value of freedom are firmly bound to the concept of responsibility.

We recall here again that is the level of perception and risk exposure of the Other, and not so much, or not only, the level of knowledge of the Other, that differentiates the actions trustfully founded by those that are not such (gain we refer to risk society by Beck and Giddens).

«Trust does not mean to put himself in the hands of others without criterion, but believe or not believe for good reasons» (O'Neil 2003, 31).

What trust means, otherwise, we refer to the hope.

Therefore, the bond of trust becomes deeper as the knowledge increases, so on the contrary it is a trustworthy much more difficult when the level of knowledge is reduced or no: we refer to the intercultural contexts as well as to the communication through the media and technologies.

Nevertheless, we all agree that technologies are widespread and involved in most aspects our everyday or professional or educational or even relational life and we all understand the every broader support in facilitating us, first of all in achieving information and knowledge and to share them.

Fragility and vulnerability are by now consolidated conditions and characteristics of postmodernism. We see, in this way, to the loss of the feeling of certainty and the man is getting ever more a stranger to himself. However, this process, which seems inevitable and unsolvable, is so sedimented that man is equipping himself to live with it because of its incessant and considerable capacity to adapt to the environment.

On the other hand, however, according to Buber (Milan 1994), trust itself is the sum of the following characteristics: it is responsible decision, and it is the choice of taking responsibility for the Other. Responsibility is a practical act, and this act is a practical decision, the effective response of the person to be accountable of something entrusted to a trusting being.

One more reflection concerns that in order to trust, especially in education, is to accept the complexity (of self, of other, of the relationship, of the context, of the variables, of dynamics, etc.).

Today we live in a global individualized world, in a world in which all people feel we no longer exist as we think (*cogito ergo sum* by Descartes), but mostly because we are connected to the network, “we sail into the network” as real explorers/discoverers. We live in a globalization asset where, however, the fragmentation is a risk arising from excessive use of the mass media. We can identify a possible solution in the stability and continuity made feasible through an authentic, effective and reliable educational relationship. In addition, through the “surfing the net”, we can easily get to, “discover”, or “visit” places, people and other cultures, thus managing to overcome enormous barriers, both “physical or material” and kind of immaterial to create a new and broader relationship context effectively based on trust.

Here then is that the trust could also occur if the bonds are not close or deep, where there are (many or no) chance of face-to-face relationships. It occurs, moreover, where technology offers always renewed or new possibilities to speed more and more dynamic, expanding spaces and times, to extend and enlarge the reality with / in the virtual, with the objectives of enabling information and knowledge through ICT. However, perhaps, also, to be able to build relationships, even educational, or social, like virtual one or in/through the world wide web, without running the risk of being for example, “betrayed or deceived by a fake”, or infected by a virus, or violated in the privacy by hackers.

Surely, then, it is also true that we need to call to responsibility and commitment firstly politics, institutions, those who have roles of greater responsibility, but also each of us. We can then return to the original meaning of the word communication: *communi agere*, that is to act in common, to go back then,

again, to the concept of working together, in order to cooperate, with trust.

### *The survey*

A pilot survey was fulfilled to an occasional sample of 70 university students attending Educational Sciences Degree at University of Macerata, Italy. The students were asked to answer a questionnaire based by 10 open items in order to detect their opinions and attitudes towards trust and whether it represents an important value for them nowadays.

The analysis was carried out through an originally arranged qualitative method based on the Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss.

We will now point out some first evidences resulted from data analyses, that are still processing.

Item 1. What is trust for you?

The most frequent responses in decreasing order were: reliance and to believe in someone (85%).

Item 2: Which are the most important elements which it is based on?

Sincerity (50%), loyalty (50%), respect (30%), esteem (25%), honesty (25%).

Item 3. How much important is for you to trust?

It is fundamental, always (90%), in the most significant transactions (60%), especially in times of difficulty (35%), to take important decisions (30%).

Item 4. Whose and what do you trust?

Family (98%), boyfriend/girlfriend (70%), close friends (40%), teacher (40%), who gave evidence that s/he did or performed what s/he had promised (30%).

Item 5. Whose and what do not you trust?

Almost all answered: who betrayed my trust (98%).

Items 7-8. Do you trust the technology? Which and which not?

Almost all answered they trust technology (90%), especially the network to get information or knowledge (70%), but not the social networks (50%) or other mass media such as television (20%).

Items 9-10. Do you trust a stranger? What would you suggest to establish trust in a multicultural/intercultural context?

Almost all answered the item 9: “yes”, but it is necessary knowledge (90%), knowing each other (70%), awareness (50%).

About item 10, finally, 95% of students suggested that it would be appropriate to create a flow of communication and dialogue between natives and foreigners to better establish a climate of trust between them; 5%, instead, wrote that s/he wasn't able to answer that question.

Initial thoughts about some of the key results by the survey reported above can focus on the recognition of the importance, even in present times, that bond of trust is essential to establish and then keep significant relationships.

Furthermore, most surveyed said technologies are essential nowadays and we can trust them, but we have to be careful when managing social networks.

Finally, in a multicultural/intercultural context, it is crucial to communicate each other to better know about people from other cultures, languages and habits. After that, trust could be better and deeper established among them.

### *Pedagogical perspectives*

We suggest therefore that it is important to enrich and empower trust with the prospect of a commitment taking to be honest, reliable, consistent, suitable, active agents, not to betray the expectations and not disappoint. In order to firstly and truly know and, above all, understand, we can consider trust in the double cognitive and inter-relational meanings, as keeping high skills of critical and active reflection aimed at the discovery and exploitation of the truth and the real.

Finally, this concept of trust can concern giving and conquering it through the risk, intended primarily as a commitment by everyone to get involved, to act and do in the completeness of meanings before explained.

Lifelong trustworthy knowledge acquiring process are crucial and fundamental.

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Rosita Deluigi\*

Trust and conflict: reach out or close the door?

**ABSTRACT:** The intercultural pedagogy, by promoting dialogic and welcoming strategies, directs educational interventions towards mutual and community dynamics. Building trust and conflict management are two key elements of this approach. The face to face dialogue, exchange, interaction and shared experience appear to be winning modality of an inclusive approach in which every person can share and learn skills and competences of active citizenship. Mutual trust and conflict management also allow the consolidation of an open and friendly community dimension, able to cope with the current complexity. Through reflection by a group of university students, it was possible to describe some of the features that characterize the intercultural approach towards the realization of spaces of trust and experimentation in mediating conflict. The contribution will propose insights that emerged with the students and raise the importance of investing in pedagogy in dialogue with the contexts of experience and change.

**KEYWORDS:** Intercultural pedagogy, Trust and conflict, Mediation, Inclusive context.

*Trust and conflict in intercultural education: traces of experience*

In the academic year 2014-2015 – in the degree program for social educators at the University of Macerata, Spinetoli section – there was an intercultural education course attended by 35-40 students, in which we discussed the fundamental issues of this approach and various strategies to be implemented in heterogeneous educational contexts. We have identified the knowledge, skills and tools of this perspective, through analysis of projects

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carried out in the social field, in which the promotion of active citizenship and the style of socio-educational animation have raised the profile of intercultural education.

The key concepts of intercultural education were addressed in this approach, taking into account its development over time and worldwide (Grant, Portera 2011; Portera 2013a). Afterwards, we outlined the role of intercultural pedagogy as a cross educational model, able to deal with the current complexity and to seek innovative ways of intervention. We focused on social educators' skills, in particular: communication, mediation and conflict management (Deardoff 2009; Portera 2013b; Reggio, Santerini 2014).

The intercultural lexicon made of exchange, reciprocity, attention to the other, decentralization, planning, common life, cooperation, mediation, and conflict management (Deluigi 2012; 2013; Zoletto 2012) laid the foundation for taking further reflections on some of the issues and the specific areas of intercultural education.

The reality of children of foreign origin (d'Aniello 2012) was one of the first subject that allowed the group to explore and investigate a segment of a broader issue, bringing to light problems, challenges, resources, interventions done to encourage a search for true citizenship, not always granted. The question of young people of second generation has been extensively treated, with references to experiences, to meetings, to life stories, to success and failure integration (Ambrosini, Molina 2004; Cologne 2009; Granata 2011).

To continue the cycle of theory-practice, we looked at how to build welcoming places where children and young people can find spaces for listening, meeting, have authentic interaction with peers, supported by educational figures that, in everyday life, connect pedagogic projects and educational planning. Practices implemented thus take on a strategic importance in fostering dialogue and community experiences (Deluigi 2012).

Another issue concerns the educational choices of adolescents without Italian citizenship, the opportunity offered by vocational training and the stereotypes inherent in these pathways (Santagati 2011). Through a survey conducted with the

trainers of this order of education (Deluigi 2013) it was possible to better understand the mechanisms that guide the choices of children and families. Furthermore, we have noted the difficulties and educational-training-teaching approaches implemented by the teachers, the connections between school and territory and how to develop strategies to promote more intercultural and inclusive classrooms.

After analyzing the management of leisure and schools for teenagers, we tried to comprehend how the migrant presence is placed in the working world and how we can understand the value of the resource and not only the critical elements. The focus concerned young people of foreign origin and their training and working integration (Luatti 2014) – considered to be more or less subordinate – and a particular type of migration regarding the provision of care and assistance by care workers for elderly people (Deluigi 2014).

*Learning by doing: how it is possible to experience the building of trust and conflict mediation*

The possibility to investigate, analyze and discuss together this wide ranging theme – through interactive lessons, exercises and small group sharing in plenary, thematic presentations by students, film forums regarding the topics covered and analysis of intercultural projects implemented throughout the country – has supported the educational process in the classroom, offering the chance to experience the intercultural approach between reciprocity and dialogue, mediation of divergent positions, listening and attention to the other and decentralization from stereotypes and prejudices.

In this training and relational climate, the binomial relationship of trust-conflict was a transversal element which involved the whole group for the entire course and, later, part of the group carried out a more detailed reflection on the subject proposal for the conference of November 26, 2014<sup>1</sup>. The core group has

<sup>1</sup> The working group consisted of twenty students enrolled in the third year of the degree course in social educator (Spinotoli section) whom we thank for their work:

been working since the meeting, identifying the key concepts related to trust and conflict, through a brainstorming of ideas. Subsequently, it worked to synthesize the questions raised, by means of connections of sense, building a first common text. The text, synthesized by the teacher, was repurposed in a second meeting with the students to highlight any additional information, ideas and suggestions.

Finally, each student has focused attention on one of the issues raised, found pictures to represent the concepts and built a PowerPoint presentation as a communication tool at the conference. This approach has allowed us to deepen trust and bonding in the group's work, to which each brought an original contribution, that found expression in a collective overview, shared with a wider and international audience. The use of images combined with short texts in English has allowed direct communication with the audience and has fostered a genuine decentralization by students who, dealing directly with the difficulties of expression in a language different from their own, have opened and tried a first channel of dialogue and sharing<sup>2</sup>.

### *Reflecting together towards intercultural shared strategies*

The proposal presented at the international seminar was titled: "*Trust and Conflict: reach out or close the door?*". The question wants to bring out the dynamics that we can intercept between the two terms, highlighting a welcoming manner to start intercultural dialogue (reach out) and a closure and indifference strategy (close the door). From these opposites, the working group has deepened reflection, pointing out many ideas, action

Manuela Durinzi, Barbara Marconi, Maurizio Taccia, Veronica Pagnotti, Martina Lo Faro, Valentina Gregori, Stefania Marcozzi, Diana Santoni, Veronica Andreucci, Sonia Cappelli, Silvia Caioni, Laura Vitali, Anna Saveria Capriotti, Fabiola Santoni, Valeria Cichetti, Antonino Carlo Manuguerra, Serena Serafini, Arianna Fazzini, Ambra Oddi, Piera Bonaventura.

<sup>2</sup> The group was conducted through the sociocultural animation style (Deluigi, 2010) and the logic of intercultural didactic, aimed at creating and opening meetings with otherness through direct dialogue, participation and mediation (Demetrio, Favaro 2004).

strategies, pedagogical perspectives and educational methods to build intercultural experiences.

The first issue concerns the meanings of the word trust. It was important to clarify what we mean by confidence, to understand, at a later time, how to build and how to promote it. “We can trust in the others, in the system, in culture, in ourself...”; this means that trust follows plural trajectories and is measured with issues related to the individual subject, the group, the relationships that are built in public spaces and that intercept values, experiences, religions, and different lifestyles (De Giorgi *et al.* 2006). This complexity requires dialogue between subjects and citizens, between identity and differences, between belonging and participation (Benhabib 2004; Premoli 2008).

Intercultural education assumes that “we can trust that what is unknown is not necessarily negative, but can be purposeful for a better understanding and improvement of themselves”. This creates an open mind, ready to perceive the shades and different affinities between people who become carriers of a personal and cultural history and can become protagonists in the construction of new ways of interaction and exchange. If not, it can result in multicultural environments, in which co-existence does not need or require relationships (Donati 2013), resulting in an impoverishment of the parties. Promoting the meeting and exchange between the differences can ensure greater social cohesion and free insecurities, leaving room for the possibility of inclusion, thanks to the direct interaction.

“If I trust I can move from differences (stereotypical) to ways of feeling”, redrawing different pictures in our head, not only those based on the behaviours of ‘others’ that are similar (Kumaravadivelu 2008). The risk, in fact, is to create a general representation of “the other”, as belonging to a cultural group, without knowing directly, without sharing time and space of common life. It is in the construction of the relationship that we experience the trust and conflict with each other and, if we go deeper, the interaction will be more authentic and we can “develop a sense of openness to the other, the difference”.

“Metaphorically, we could think this image: to reach out and not close the door”. If we build trust together, “we develop

a sense of responsibility, we shoot down the walls and we try to decentralize”. The sense of responsibility can support reciprocity and sense of community. Breaking down the barriers means making porous the relational boundaries and allowing everyone to cross them, learning about themselves and others. Decentralize means, finally, assume a friendly posture, put aside the absolute categories of right and true, to search for and discover plurality (Sirignano 2007). From the educational point of view, also, “if I trust you can try: you can do something for you and, in the logic of reciprocity, also you ‘give me something’ (in a relationship) in a continuous active dialogue”. In this sense, trust can increase the pedagogical hope and, therefore, personal and social projectivity. In the encounter with the other, exchange takes place between flexible and under construction identity, who can then share aspects of each individual culture and find ways to share common elements that can enhance living together.

“Trust is a tool and a resource to turn the conflict; it could also be an ultimate goal, the solution of the conflict”. The connection between trust and conflict is very narrow; through trust you can find a compromise that respects different orientations, without eliminating the specificity, seeking common points which interact together. This process can take a long time and give rise to conflicts and misunderstandings, but it is worth it to promote authentic and reciprocal relationships, experimenting with each other and inventing new virtuous circles of inclusion. “Trust may be the method and/or the objective and in this process the educator play as mediator”; it depends on the situation and the personal/social resources and limits in the context of intervention. Mediation is essential to trigger and facilitate relationships and the role of the educator is critical to initiate processes of dialogue between equals, in which there is democratic participation and active citizenship (Fiorucci 2011).

“It is important to continue to have trust even if something was wrong. Trust becomes a requirement of the person, and the environment plays a key role”. In education, this means to not give up in the face of unsuccessful experiences and to seek new forms of intercultural intervention. The attitude of doubt and

questioning does not allow us to arrive at solutions and definitive indications (Stara 2014). This requires you to be able to stay in the uncertainty and to check and recalibrate our mode of action, even taking into account the variables of context. “This type of trust emerges in the educational process in which the educator believes in a transformation”. In this sense, aim for the change means above all foster and promote attitudes of openness which give rise to dialogue.

“We can also interpret trust in the sense of promoting a continuous educability”. Continue to have trust in people, always, throughout development, means promote reflection and educational activities aimed at increasing awareness of resources and limitations and the ability to build common paths with others (Portera, Böhm, Secco 2007). “To improve this modality we need reciprocity and the contribution of everyone in a logic of collaboration”. The task of education is to support intercultural contexts, so that people can try new ways of living together. Then, at some point in the educational process, it is necessary give confidence to people, letting them fulfil their choices in a responsible and autonomous way. “Trust is not indifference, but gives the opportunity to observe from a distance without abandoning the subjects themselves, believe in the resources, reach out. The educator must also listen to the instinct, knowing that, from the moment you trust you have already made a choice, even in the moment of the resolution of the conflict, in which you can carry and express the creativity”.

“Trust and conflict can be as two opposite poles in an intercultural context”. It can be difficult to find alternative methods of communication and can generate distances that separate people, creating oppositions of meanings, focusing only on the differences, feeding stereotypical views that do not let you get out of rigid categories. “The conflict, in its various forms and degrees, born from the direct comparison, prejudice, but also by an authentic encounter and dialogue in depth on cultural differences”. Go deep, in fact, means to discover, reveal, become more vulnerable to the other, to trust. If the process of welcoming and confidence is not mutual, the risk is not building peer relationships. If one of the parties is perceived as lower or higher, it

will be difficult to find meaningful connections and mediations. “The conflict born from the ways to interpret and see reality, daily events, experience, traditions, compliance with the rules, if we do not understand the language... Thinking about the information and the conditioning of the media: what kind of ideas we receive? The difference between them and us, between right and wrong. But we are all different”.

“The ‘healthy’ conflict, through the expression of ideas, becomes dialogue”. This is a difficult process because it requires social agents to be mutually cosy, to be empathetic in the role of the other, to recognize their own prejudices, to have the desire to make common experiences and to test themselves in situations of uncertainty (Deluigi, in press). Continue to refer to the rigid categories of stereotypes and clichés means turn in on themselves, trying to recognize similarities, create subcultures and closed communities in which to feel safe. “The risk is to seek a takeover, a scapegoat, accentuated by the crisis which re-creates the bond between us vs. minorities – and in this way the majority wins”.

“The training for conflict management is missing and we need time. Thinking of the environment: how can we make the transition from a multicultural to an intercultural approach? To oppose the closures, ghettos and open to contamination, exceeding the vision of migration as guilt” it is necessary to build bridges between cultures and not boundaries. So “trust and conflict can also be elements of continuity in communication” and the search for balance is to find some positions of mediation.

A further aspect that emerged from the group also emphasized the importance of thinking of “hurt and betrayed trust, which stands as a wall between the parties that prevents the exchange and requires a laborious reconstruction of the open space”. In this case the reconstruction of the dialogue will be very challenging because ‘recreating trust is more difficult’ and requires reopening of closed spaces, to reinvest in experiences that did not go well, to get back into the game after a disappointment. These are all matters that do not concern individuals but often affect social systems, as “the conflict also arises from

the lack of adequate policies, so it generates a struggle between poverty and abandonment of the institutions that leave a void and create a conflict over resources”.

Finally, the group commonly pointed out that “the conflict can arise even for difference, the difference perceived/experienced with the other, so you try to promote an approach of independence and not assimilation”.

The pedagogical reflections on the binomial trust/conflict in an intercultural sense are numerous and, as for dialogue with the context and the challenge of being able to live the uncertainty and complexity, education can develop an approach in the field that is more and more dialogical and inclusive. Our article is the result of the reflections of future educators and educators already active in local services, and offers a glimpse of the ways of thinking and assumptions of intercultural actions that need competent and responsible teams, able to bring significant and innovative educational contributions (Milani 2013). Reflecting together on the pillars of the building of trust and conflict management was itself an experience of mediation that confirmed the need to get involved collectively and produce educational guidelines to cross-boost intercultural vision as a way of active participation.

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## Diffusion of Knowledge and the role of Languages: Understanding the Gap across cultures

**ABSTRACT:** Language, discourse and knowledge are affectively involved into the perception of human beings from the historical worldviews. As of the language, in order to share any values and outlook or cultural components, language is the tool and the way human beings are communicating through written or spoken words, in other words, “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a ordered and conventional way”. Considering its significance, language has been seen as an instrument of acquiring knowledge and then developed to skills in order to understand things and situations in proper ways. And once we consider the significance of language in acquiring knowledge, in the era of competitiveness, the production of knowledge vis-à-vis its dissemination has to be considered in the broader sphere of the gap which has emerged in its production and diffusion across time and space and further widening the gap across the globe. The present paper aims to understand the significance of language in acquiring the knowledge and the lag which has emerged and is ever increasing between its production and consumption at global level. It further impresses upon the role of technology in diffusing knowledge at global and inclusive level.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge, Language, Globalization, Post-Industrial society, Research and Development.

It has become an axiom to say that knowledge is the most important asset in today’s culture and economy. The key changes defining post-industrialism follow from the growing centrality of scientific knowledge and new intellectual technologies in the organization of production and distribution (Scott 2006). Codi-

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fied and systematic theoretical knowledge that can be applied in a deliberate and rational ways as natural and social science has become more central to economic planning and practice and now determines the technologies of production and the principles by which economic activities are managed. It is for this reason that «the post-industrial society is a knowledge society» (Bell 1973). Likewise it is generally accepted that people and organizations need to engage in an ongoing process of learning to be able to participate in such a knowledge based economy. The new growth theory suggests knowledge to be a decisive engine of economic growth. More precisely, it is not used solely to the benefit of its originator but generates positive side effects also for others, provided they have the capability to understand the transferred knowledge potential.

Even Jean-Francois Lyotard begins his analysis of contemporary post-World War II society from observations about the way the changing structure of economic production has transformed the position of knowledge, especially as a result of the rise of the computer. Here we have the idea of the information age, in which knowledge has become a productive force, perhaps the predominant productive force. There have been corresponding changes in the nature of science and technology, which have become particularly focussed upon problems of language and we note that the information industries involve technologies of communication (Cuff, Sharrock, Francis 2004). Consequently, the whole place of the productive and dissemination of knowledge within contemporary society is being reorganized.

Within this framework, production of knowledge has become a global enterprise. There has been an exponential growth in the amount of knowledge produced in scientific work and, therefore, in the resources that are needed to organize it as libraries and IT systems. Intellectual fields have proliferated and the development and application of knowledge has become more specialized (Bell 1973). Today there are over seven million researchers around the world, drawing on a combined international Research and Development spend of over US\$1000 billion (a 45 percent increase since 2002), and reading and publishing in around 25,000 separate scientific journals per year. These

researchers collaborate with each other, motivated by wishing to work with the very best people and facilities in the world, and by curiosity, seeking new knowledge to advance their field or to tackle specific problems (The Royal Society 2011).

In the contemporary world not only does knowledge become a productive force, it also increasingly becomes a commodity, i.e. something produced for the purpose of sale. Knowledge as something to be instilled in the human mind is being displaced by the idea that it is something to be sold (Cuff, Sharrock, Francis 2004). Economies, now, are increasingly globalized; economic activities are now beyond the directive control of individual nation states. At the same time, the production and control of knowledge have become an economic phenomenon. It is thus evident that while the knowledge producing commune is driven by globalization, it is, however, also influenced by its own dynamics. Scientists have been both stimulated and enabled to work across disciplinary and international borders by technological advances and shifts in geopolitics. However science has always pushed borders and limitations, be they technological or national and political although with some issues of time and space relevance.

As Louis Pasteur once put it, «Knowledge belongs to humanity, and thus science knows no country and is the torch that illuminates the world». Largely funded at a national level and conducted primarily in national institutions, knowledge is still more determined by place than Pasteur's declaration would suggest (The Royal Society 2011). And yet, it is a global enterprise. In 2008, 218 countries produced over 1.5 million research papers, from Tuvalu's one paper, to the UK's 98,000, China's 163,000, and the USA's 320,000 (Elsevier's Scopus 2011). In 2007, Sweden spent nearly 3.7 percent of its gross domestic product on research and development, Canada spent 2 percent, 'emerging' India spent 0.8 percent, and oil rich Saudi Arabia 0.04 percent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre). Research venture and output are far from evenly spread across the world, but there are places which are not in some way part of the scientific background. Researchers are increasingly movable, travelling beyond borders to work with the compe-

tent colleagues in their streams, to access resources and capital and share information, vision, ideas and facilities. And they are being supported globally through cross-border support from international agencies, bilateral programmes between governments and research organizations, multinational supporting bodies and shared scientific infrastructure.

The story of 21<sup>st</sup> century science so far is one of spectacular expansion and broadening horizons. There is increasing population conducting research, spending more wealth, publishing and accessing science than ever before. China's rise up the rankings has been especially striking. China has heavily increased its investment in research and development, with spending growing by 20 percent per year since 1999 to reach over US\$100 billion a year today (or 1.44 percent of GDP in 2007) (OECD, 2006), 20 in pursuit of its goal of spending 2.5 percent of GDP on research and development in 2020 (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2006). China is also turning out huge numbers of science and engineering graduates, with 1.5 million leaving its universities in 2006 (MSTPRC 2007). China, India, South Korea and Brazil are often cited as rising powers in science (Bound 2008). India produces roughly 2.5 million science and engineering graduates each year (*ibid.*). In 2008, India, the world's second most populous country and the new face of growing economy, accomplished in sending its first unmanned flight to the moon, becoming only the fourth nation to land a craft on the lunar surface. Brazil, in line with its aspiration to be a 'natural knowledge economy', building on its natural and environmental resources, is working to increase research spending to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2022 (Kugler 2011) (from just over 1.4 percent in 2007) (Petherick 2011). South Korea has pledged that research and development spending, (3.2 percent of GDP in 2007), reached 5 percent of GDP in 2012 (Stone 2008). These countries are not alone in rapidly growing their science bases. Over the last twenty years, each of the G20 countries has been increasing its research output and most have scaled up the percentage of their GDP spent on research and development. Augmented investment and improved publications have taken place in tandem. The growth of pledge to knowledge in a number of the non-G8 nations is particularly remarkable.

Lyotard has highlighted a transformation in scientific knowledge itself that can, he believes, be called 'postmodern'. He sees a development from industrialism to post-industrialism, and he recognizes that knowledge has become a commodity produced for its exchange value in the form of technologically useful information. This knowledge, produced in universities has become the principal productive force and so is the driving element in the development of post-industrialism. The dominant class in such a society comprises the 'experts' and technical decision makers in positions of corporate leadership, high-level administration and the top levels of major organizations. He sees the rise of this managerial class of experts as rooted in the dynamics of a capitalist economic process. The expansion of technology has been driven by the efforts of multinational enterprises to bring about a reopening of the world market (Lyotard 1979). This has transformed the world order and has meant that many key matters can no longer be controlled by nation states. Transnational capital flows have increased and are an important condition for the generation and application of knowledge, which, like money, now flows for more freely as it circulates from one nation to another (Cuff, Sharrock, Francis 2004).

However, the ability to diffuse knowledge and to access external knowledge has long been recognized as a crucial mechanism for knowledge accumulation and economic growth. Understanding the way in which knowledge is technically produced and transferred, and how its diffusion path can be characterized is of fundamental importance for the performance of any culture. Due to the public nature of knowledge, diffusion of ideas produces increasing returns that are at the root of growth dynamics. However, the cultural implications of the expansion of technical knowledge and educational systems have to be understood as occurring alongside the persisting material inequalities of a hegemonic class structure.

Almost all communication, whether spoken or written, constitutes the sharing of knowledge. Although much of this knowledge is personal and local, our civilization is based on the widespread use of general knowledge. One of the most



eloquent proponents of the diffusion of knowledge was Thomas Jefferson, who in 1786 said,

I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness (Rayner 2014).

We know that knowledge diffusion and adoption is not a homogeneous process over the entire distribution of potential adopters. In a simplistic homo economicus world, where everybody knows everything from the beginning, or in a world with a less strict assumption that everybody can learn anything with probability one, diffusion of knowledge can be associated with a picture of dropping colour in a glass of water and waiting until the colour is more or less uniformly distributed. In such a world, the question of what kind of knowledge diffuses easily and what kind diffuses with difficulty is obsolete (Torben 2009).

Results show that citations as well as patents are concentrated across space but that a process of slow but gradually progressive diffusion is ongoing. Clusters of innovative regions appear both at the national and the international level. Moreover it is clear that there is a lot of heterogeneity among regional flows and that such differences can be related both to diverse geographical, institutional and industrial settings.

Maurseth and Verspagen (2002) investigate the importance of national borders and language differences for the diffusion of knowledge across territories. They find the existence of a negative correlation between knowledge flows and geographical distance and show that knowledge spreads easily across countries that have the same language. Knowledge flows also cross industries in different way (Edward, Stefano 2009).

Assuming that the world is not perfect with respect to learning abilities and information potentials for instance, however, makes the question of what determines and fosters knowledge diffusion relevant and important. Polany takes this question seriously and separates implicit knowledge from explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be transferred without any limits, whereas implicit knowledge – labelled tacit – cannot. If knowledge is partly or completely tacit, its diffusion depends on the

specific characteristics of the individuals (Polany 1967). Thus, some people are more in touch with new developments than others. This is especially the case for two important groups of adopters that play an important role in the diffusion process: the innovators and imitators of new knowledge (Torben 2009).

As such it could be supposed that there are reasons to question how reachable this is for the vast majority of cross-border regions in Europe, America, China and other countries. Lundquist and Winther suggest that recent theoretical developments in economic geography on localized and learning courses may have fallen short in analyzing cross-border regions as many of them are not categorized by shared learning systems or by socio-cultural and institutional immediacy that is alleged to be an important requirement for successful localized innovation systems. This is related to how embedded cross-border areas are in different national and regional innovations systems or their position and roles in national, regional and urban systems (Lundquist, Winther 2006).

One of the many ways in which we come to own knowledge is through our possession and application of language. This raises the issue of why language is so imperative to our ability to know and of what restrictions or limitations language places upon our knowledge. Is our knowledge whacked by what can be said or can something be known in a non-linguistic form?

We assume that knowledge has emerged out of evolution both scientific and cultural. And interestingly the evolution in itself has not been inclusive. Few societies, few people and few cultures, as the data substantiates, have witnessed evolution while the rest has lagged behind. This kind of a gap has witnessed an ever increase after opening up of more and more avenues for its diffusion. In how many languages knowledge is produced, how many languages it is translated into, how many languages it is not translated into, how many people don't know the languages which produce such knowledge. Probably the answers would be alarming.

When people are asked how many languages they think there are in the world, the answers vary quite a bit but the most extensive catalogue of the world's languages, generally taken to be as

authoritative as any, is that of Ethnologue, whose detailed classified list as of 2009 included 6,909 distinct languages (Anderson 2010). Out of Ethnologue's 6,909, for instance, only 230 are spoken in Europe, while 2,197 are spoken in Asia. One area of particularly high linguistic diversity is Papua-New Guinea, where there are an estimated 832 languages spoken by a population of around 3.9 million (*ibid.*).

And as against this huge diversity, the largest patent registering countries are USA, Japan, Germany, France, South Korea, UK, Italy, Russia, Netherlands and Spain which are not even 10 percent representation of the languages which the people think and speak therein. India makes it at the bottom of the 25 countries in terms of intellectual property. Our point of contention is that when such is the small proportion of the knowledge producing countries, how far one presumes that such produced knowledge reaches to the common people speaking remote language. It may be possible that we translate such work but is not it time consuming? And it is possibly easy to realize that once the translated knowledge reaches such common and remote people, it by that time, turns obsolete.

This kind of a gap which persists between the knowledge producers and 'so to say', the knowledge consumers is with every passing time increasing and ever increasing. The expanding knowledge class is focus of the cultural contradiction of the post-industrial society (Bell 1973). Though the class is concerned with the production and application of technical knowledge, Bell argues that there has been no simple consolidation of technocratic consciousness. The 'cultural mass' within the knowledge class shows modernist and post-modernist models of expression alongside the expansion of scientific knowledge found among technocrats. There is a divide between C.P. Snow's 'two cultures' (Snow 1959), a separation of the knowledge class into technocratic and more artistic sections. The postmodern sensibility has its location within the artistic and humanistic section of the knowledge class.

While in Rome, we asked a Bangladeshi citizen that what prompted him to come to Italy just to be a waiter in a hostel. His replied 'Your country has the capacity to absorb you but

my country does not have'. Countries like Bangladesh, etc are quite dependent on the other nations to utilize the knowledge at the basic level but the issues like language keep on maintaining the disparity and as such inclusiveness remains a distant dream.

The platform of producing, diffusing and acquiring knowledge has to be inclusive and holistic but barriers like language do not let it happen. A system has to be produced which would allow the diffusion of knowledge across time and space, free of lingual barriers and in a democratic way. It has to be a right to seek knowledge beyond any kind of borders and barriers. It has to be timely because of late knowledge is much of the time of no use. An attempt has been initiated by *google* by introducing translate google.com. However it is just able to accommodate 80 languages and again more than 6800 languages are being over looked which intensifies the gap more and more. And with the result the developed are developing more and the underdeveloped remain far behind.

We are aware of the fact that technology has done wonders in the past and certainly it has the capability of transmitting the knowledge timely to all. What is needed is the conviction of all stake holders and a “Global Right – To Know” and that too timely.

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Meem H. Zaffar\*

## Language and Identity. Violence in the Literature of Kashmiri Language

**ABSTRACT:** The concept of identity is complex and problematic. There are various identities like geographic identity, social identity, political identity, religious identity, linguistic identity and national identity, and often times various identities are inextricably interwoven to form the dominant identity of an individual or a group of people. Language plays a major role in establishing the social and political identity of an individual, and groups of people. The paper explores the problem of the identity of the people of Kashmir, whose language has been marginalized by the vested interest political groups. When people get alienated from their mother tongue, they lose connection with their roots that nurture and sustain the growth and evolution of any cultural tradition. The exploration and analysis of the problem has been conducted with reference to two short stories entitled: "Enemy" and "The Stranger beside me" by two contemporary Kashmiri fiction writers belonging to two different religious identities.

**KEYWORDS:** Language, Identity, Cultural Minorities, Conflict.

The medium of literature is language. But language is first of all a vehicle of meaning. It is a common communicative tool of man. It is very difficult to give a satisfactory definition of meaning. Philosophers and linguists have not been able to resolve the issue of the relation between language and the world. One basic problem is how we apprehend reality and how we talk about it. It appears as if the articulation of one's universe determines how one arrives at what one calls reality, since we categorize our experience with the aid of language, the way we

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see the world is to some degree dependent on our language. Perhaps learning about the world and learning about language are the two sides of the same coin.

According to Saussure, the famous Swiss linguist, language is not a nomenclature, it is not a way of naming already existing objects, and on the other hand language precedes the existence of separate and independent objects. It is the language that slices reality, differentiates between concepts and makes the world intelligible. This implies that each language provides a set of categories by which we order and structure our universe. Language being a social fact; articulates reality, the way a particular society conceives it at a particular stage of history. This fact is bound to count as one of the important elements in one's interpretation of the world.

Kashmiri society has a long history spanning over five thousand years. But the contemporary literary history of the Kashmir language commences from 13th century A.D. and till recent times, the literature of the language consisted mainly of poetry, folk tales and folk songs. And hardly any violence is discernible in this literature, which is dominated by Rishi motifs and is mainly inward looking. Of course we have a bulk of mathnavis and jangnamas in which a vivid picture of different battles have been drawn; but that could not be called a literature of violence. The traces of violence are visible in the literature of the language, produced over the last 60 years. So we shall make an attempt to delineate the factors that have contributed to the inscription of violence in the literature of the language, and we shall also attempt to find out as to what are the various shades and levels of this violence.

The first fissures were created in the monolith of Kashmiri society by the events of 1947; Qabali attack and the consequent unnatural fragmentation of the state violated not only the physical space of Kashmiri society, but also its psychological space. Blood is still oozing from the wounds inflicted by these events. Here is an extract from the story entitled "Enemy" written in nineteen eighties, by one Ab.Gani Ather a contemporary young writer. It is the tale of a man who lives on the bank of River Neelam that falls within the domain of India, and his

brother who lives on the other bank of the same river, but it falls within Pakistan. The man receives a message to the effect that his brother is terminally ill, and is about to die. The man after succeeding in giving a slip to the Indian army crosses the border but is caught by two Pakistani army men. The story goes on:

They read the stamp on my brow and one of the two spoke. "Indian" the other pronounced. "Arrest him". "No, no sir. I am not an Indian. Neither am I a Pakistani. I am only Kashmiri. Do you see Sir, that log hut at Keran? That is my home. And you see that log hut on the other bank? That is where my brother lives. He is very ill and has no one but God to call his own over there. Please, Sir, give me just half an hour I need only to ask him how he is, get him some medicine, a drink of water, may be."

A rifle butt hit my neck and the earth shook under my feet. They dragged me to their bunker. More soldiers – they also read the telltale stamp and declared, "Indian. An enemy spy." and then began the torture. I was told that I must confess straightway that I was an Indian spy and an enemy of Pakistan.

What was I supposed to confess? That I was my brother's enemy? I was taken to the headquarters, adjacent to my brother's hut. Again I pleaded with them, "Please sir, my brother is in a hut next door. He is seriously ill, sir. Please let me go to him, handcuffed as I am- just to ask him how he is."

But they would not listen. They peeled off my nails, threw salt on the wounds and I fell unconscious. Next I found my brother lying alongside, gasping for breath, begging for water and I, manacled and bound in chains. No sign of water anywhere, the sharp point of a handcuff pierced my left arm and blood poured out. I cupped my right hand, collected the liquid and stretched it towards my brother to quench his thirst. The chains binding my hand did not let it reach his parched lips. At last, a desperate cry for water, hiccup, and then the death.....rattle. I screamed..... "it is all over, finished, the human mind, it is thinking which break God's kingdom into fragments and call a brother his own brothers enemy".

Since the independence, the fabric of Kashmiri society has been woven by violence. The greatest and the most intense act of violence perpetuated against the society was in 1953, when Kashmiri language was thrown out of the schools; wherein it had got its rightful entry only a couple of years earlier, after centuries of banishment. It is almost a universal fact that to deny the language of a people is to deny the power of a people. Thus the space for violence within Kashmiri language was created by a political decision, and all this was done in the name of the so called national interest. It is a shame that a race that is proud

of being a race of intellectuals and whose members were more or less educated and were opinion-builders in the socio-political environment of our society and whose responsibility it was to preserve the cultural heritage of Kashmir did nothing to prevent this catastrophe, made no protest and put in no efforts to rectify the wrong done. Instead they changed their loyalties to Hindi or Urdu and considered it a status symbol that their children spoke Hindi or Urdu and not their mother tongue. In the early fifties this class mainly consisted of old jagirdars, professors, teachers, doctors, engineers and other Govt. officials. The working class of our society at the time was living on the brink of starvation and the political elite provided them subsidized rice so that their bodies could survive although their souls had been already confounded. The comparatively well off class also considered the bargain worthwhile and sold their souls for a bowl of rice.

A former professor of history of the University of Jammu A.S Bose in his article "The impact of the events of 1953 on the politics of the state of J&K", writes:

Then, one gloomy morning, India was shocked to learn that the sheikh had been summarily dismissed and arrested, obviously, in the so-called, 'national interest'.

The symbol of India's secular nationalism was accused of harboring dangerous communal and anti-national propensities. Not only did his own image come down crashing, but along with it also came down the average Indian's hope that the Muslims of India could ever be truly Indian in their heart of hearts. Hindu communalism received an unprecedented boost and Indian approach to the Kashmir question changed and hardened forever.' and: 'for the Kashmiris it was the most defining movement in their history their relationship with India was never to be the same again. No further proof was required to support their exaggerated fear that having killed and evicted the thousands of Muslims from Jammu; the Hindu, with their skin-deep commitment to secularism and human rights, were now determined to impose on Kashmir their chosen variety of independent India.

In the same article, the learned professor of history writes:

In fact, there never was any move in the valley for accession to India. They opted for India as a last resort only when their cherished independence and identity were threatened by the raiders, and none but India could save them from total destruction. So, under duress, they had sacrificed only

a part of their independence over defense, communication, and foreign affairs-to save the rest. At no point of time were they prepared to merge themselves in the Indian ocean of crores and crores of unfamiliar peoples and cultures. As an uneasy peace descended on the state and the Kashmiris began feeling more secure and confident they naturally became more and more vocal about their identity and independence.

Delineating the causes of the event of 1953 the author writes:

Nehru as a mass leader always had his finger on the pulse of the people, and knew perfectly well which way the magnetic needles in Kashmiri hearts were pointing. So he secretly admitted to the sheikh, on 25th of august 1952, that public declarations notwithstanding he had rejected plebiscite as far back as 1948. So, he wanted the sheikh to declare that the state's accession to India was final and irrevocable.

What the Sheikh had steadfastly refused to do, his treacherous successor was only too eager to carry out at the behest of his patrons in Delhi. On the one hand, all protests against the treatment meted out to their adored leader were ruthlessly silenced. To face the challenge Bakshi used all the ploys of suppression and seduction, and thus set the pattern for the politics and administration in Jammu and Kashmir. Crude mafia-style authoritarianism and unprecedented loot of the public exchequer to line pockets and to purchase support. On the other hand, steps were taken by New Delhi, in conjunction with their puppets in Srinagar, to virtually consign the article 370 to the limbo by reducing this state to the position of all other states of Indian union.

Talking about the adoption of the constitution by the state constituent assembly in 1957 and a subsequent amendment in 1958 that brought the state under the purview of the central administrative services, the author quotes from the Samantra Bose's book *The challenge in Kashmir* (p. 34):

While Kashmir's political arena was monopolised by corrupt despised puppets installed at Delhi's behest, through the calculated destruction of representative democracy, its day-to-day administration too gradually came to be dominated by people with no roots among the people." they were known for their arrogance and total ignorance of spoken Kashmir.

No doubt there was an uprising against the toppling of one political regime by the other, but there was no uprising or even a political or social movement against the massacre of Kashmiri culture and language. Although scars are visible in the writings of some of the contemporary writers and poets, but their voices could not make much of an impact in the din of the

Kashmir festivals or Jashen-i-Kashmir, and Nights of Shalimar or Shabi-Shalimar that was yet another sedative provided by the new political regime.

As an analyst of politico-cultural events it is the considered opinion of the present author that the ruin of Kashmiri identity commenced from the day, Kashmiri language was thrown out of the schools. The seeds that were sown then are bringing fruit now, in the form of bloody events we have been witnessing in the recent past. My mother was an illiterate Kashmiri woman, but she remembered many a vakhas of Lal-Ded and many a shrukh of Nund Reshi, which she used to recite to me when I was a child. She used to tell me the story of Lal-Ded and how she made the newly born “Nund” to suck her apparently dried breast. This was the kind of education I got from my illiterate mother and this gave me my identity. I am a Kashmiri Muslim, but also an heir not only to Lal-Ded and Nund Reshi, but also to many other Rishis like Abhinavagupta, Somanand, Vasugapa and Kashuprishi. The very name Nund Reshi connects me with five thousand years of my history. But our present education system in which there is no place for our mother tongue has changed the situation altogether. The graduates, professional or otherwise we are producing year after year are totally rootless and know next to nothing about their linguistic, cultural and spiritual identity. They are strangers to their own mother tongue. So there is a crisis of identity. In a short story entitled “the stranger-beside-me” written by Hirday Koul Bharti this question of identity appears as a scorpion before us. Here the identity of a person and of a collectivity is conferred by an external authority, and on arbitrary grounds. But identity can be conferred only on those who either have no identity or else are not conscious of their identity, the story reads:

A proclamation was made: from now onwards any person having a mole on any part of his body or limb would not belong to our fraternity he could not be “us”. The absence of a mole alone would be our identification, the mark of our true breed, the stamp of our authenticity. Stealthily I covered the mole on my cheek with my palm. But the stranger-beside-me, as though to console me, said “don’t worry brother, come with me. There is a cure for every thing”.

The narrator is taken by the stranger-beside-him to a team of “Indescribably clever practitioners of miraculous cures” who examined the mole thoroughly and conducted various tests time and again and then:

Eventually the head of the team of specialists addressed me, “no, my friend, it cannot be done. The mole cannot be carved out.”

“But why?” I begged.

“Because its roots go very deep inside you. They are in your blood, in your inherent nature, your cultivated traits, your very genes, generation upon past generation.” he went on. “Any attempt to remove it will change your complexion, your whole being, the very imprint of your face will be lost. You will be reduced to a shadow, why, a mere phantom”.

After being disappointed with the ‘practitioners of miraculous cures,’ the stranger-beside-him takes the narrator to a Godman, “who lives beyond the bounds of our reason” and whose abode is said to be the cremation ground. The story goes on:

I was brought before this great man. He looked at me and then glanced at the stranger-beside-me. Lifting his eyes to the heavens and scrutinizing them for a while, he turned to me, “when the day comes for him to need my attention, don’t you let him down. You are the one who should bring him here,” saying this he put his hands inside his sack and drew out a dark, black as – death scorpion, immobile under his spell.

“This is the cure for your affliction”, he said, while the scorpion rested on his palm.

“But what kind of cure is this?”

“This is the only cure”. With these words he lifted the scorpion and placed its two poisonous pincers upon the mole on my cheek.. He broke the spell and the scorpion came alive. It began with tentatively probing the size of the mole, paused for a while and then swelled its poison sacs, drawing forth all the venom in its tail, steadied its fangs on the mole and shot it. It stung and stung, again and again. I don’t know how many times. I fainted. When consciousness returned, the mole was gone, but the poison, it ran through my veins, filled my blood, saturating the very root of my being.

My body was suffused with pure venom but I was happy in the knowledge that the pain, no matter how agonizing, was all hidden inside me, from my appearance no one could cast any doubt on my breed, identity or authenticity-I conformed perfectly.

After some time the authority to determine the identity is again invoked. And the story goes on:

As soon as he arrived he rejected the old method of determining true breed through descent into a cauldron of milk, just as he had on that earlier occasion. The only difference was that, this time the proclamation was: “from now onwards this is our identification: anyone who does not have a mole on his body will not belong to our fraternity. He will not be “us”. This alone will determine our identity, our authenticity, our true breed”.

This time it was the turn of the narrator to take the stranger-beside-him to the holy man as per the directions of the holy man himself. The story concludes:

Once again the holy man drew out the spell bound scorpion from the sack, broke the spell and placing it on his cheek, said to me, “I was afraid you would let him down. The cure for his affliction is the same”. Just as before, the scorpion stung the same spot on his cheek again and again. The stranger-beside-me fell unconscious just as I had. When he regained consciousness there was a round, black spot where the scorpion had stung him, exactly like a mole.

In his case too the poison had spread through his veins, suffusing his whole being, but like me he too was happy in the knowledge that the pain, no matter how agonizing, was well within him. From his appearance no one could doubt his breed or authenticity. Afterwards, he went his way and I mine. But he and I remain similar in one respect. There is venom in him and there is venom in me.

The question of identity is important in itself, but still more important is the criterion of identity, the standard by which the identity is determined. And the standards have not only changed but also keep on changing arbitrarily. The venom of these changing standards is spreading and the whole society has become poisoned. The exodus of Kashmir pandits and some other sections of the society from the Kashmir valley is an effect thereof. All values, social, moral and religious have been shattered. The space occupied by violence within the literature of the language has increased manifold. Very little space is left for the other human concerns, possibilities, and aspirations. There is hardly any fiction writer, whose writing does not bear the imprint of violence. Only two short stories by two different authors have been cited here but there are numerous short stories and plays by authors like – Akther Mohi-u-din, Harikrishna Koul, Ratan Lal shant, Hirday Koul Bharti, Nazir Jehangir, Syed Yaqoob, S.D. Shamim and M.L. Kemmu and others which depict the

level of violence inscribed within the literature of the Kashmiri language. But it is not possible to make a detailed survey within this short presentation.

In comparison to prose which is of recent origin in the language, poetry has a long history. The inscription of violence in Kashmiri poetry is much more prominent and pronounced. Right from Mehjoor and his contemporaries till the present time various Shades of violence are visible in the poetry of the language. Earlier the statements about violence were made in the background of a value structure. There was a structure of inherited concepts and reality was categorized accordingly. But now these concepts and values are in shambles and the consciousness of poets seems to be engulfed by the vicious circle of violence from which there seems to be no escape. And the hope is at the farthest end.

Here are some extracts.



I remember:  
The initial throes  
And the horror,  
changed into loathing.  
For them and the system  
That is talked of and never seen.  
And then for my flesh,  
that remained jerking  
With each stroke.  
One by one,  
Having kept aside his black terror,  
Hailed  
His vainglorious rigidity,  
And repeated the ritual,  
Till it was over done.  
Then I was strangled.  
And left,  
A dead abomination.  
And now,  
The bastards  
are dead,  
each bearing a volley of bullets  
In his hirsute chest.  
The loathing,  
Gradually changes  
Into love  
And compassion  
For these strewn lumps of flesh.  
In my 'wild lament' I weep  
For the brawny brothers,  
Nay my sons,  
Nay my husbands.

REMEMBERING THE SKIES, Shafi Shauq

The entire city is sleeping  
 Doors and windows bolted,  
 Wandering wind has turned mad,  
 And is roaming in the streets  
 And the market place.  
 And is pasting posters in red, bold letters,  
 On the walls, electric polls and wires  
 That warn,  
 No one should heave a long breath in my kingdom  
 No one should dream of smiles on the face of innocent children  
 No one should stealthily draw a star with a piece of coal.

POSTER, Mushhoor

Your question again!  
 Dear friend, how can you,  
 On whom fortune never frowned,  
 But always smiled, place me?  
 You want to know where I belong.  
 Well, in a way, everywhere.  
 I am Diaspora re-enacted,  
 Spread vast,  
 From Rwanda to Cambodia,  
 Bosnia to Korea-  
 Wherever uprooted beings throng,  
 I am there.  
 I have a million faces.  
 And my mark of identity,  
 Is not cast, creed, colour, costume,  
 but my homelessness.  
 In a way my home  
 'is every where-  
 The graveyard is mine,  
 So is the crematorium...  
 One day I was hounded out  
 with all my kith and kin  
 And left to the mercy of  
 Kites and vultures.  
 O! my friend of fortunate circumstance,  
 Stranger to these travails,  
 How shall I tell you  
       Where I belong?

THE REPLY, M.L. Saqi

I am rain water, on the earth.  
 Roaming about,  
 Sometimes I am flooded  
 Sometimes I become extinct,  
 I don't know my destination.  
 I am a mist.  
 I carry mist on my shoulders.  
 There is mist all around.  
 A thick blanket of mist.  
 I lost my vision in the huge crowd.  
 I am a high chinar  
 Some body tried his axe on me.  
 I am chiseled, trimmed and choked.  
 I wept nobody heard.  
 Is there anyone to light a candle for me, for you.

DID YOU HEAR ME, Iqbal Fahim

The cities a wasteland, villages a ruin  
 Crumbled and mangled, the shell remains,  
 Their breath suspended, the lark and the linnet,  
 The owl it is who inherits the land.  
 Afraid that a bird still might sing,  
 They scorched the earth and tangled the sky  
 In a web of deception-a glittering illusion.  
 But the voices they haunt me in the coils of the night,  
 Anybody out there? Is anyone there?  
 Eerie smoke over burning hills,  
 And fog thickens on the treacherous wastes.  
 The air suspended in its tracks,  
 The waters stunned- whence fell the curse?  
 Darkness abounds and light snuffed out,  
 If only you glanced this way I'd ask:  
 Do you know that the dawn is dead and done with?  
 But the voices- they haunt me in the coils of the night,  
 Anybody out there? Is anyone there?

CONSCIOUSNESS, M.H. Zaffar

Federico Zannoni\*

## The Scotland's Shame? Trust and conflict in sectarian neighborhoods

**ABSTRACT:** In popular understanding, the word “sectarianism” in Scotland describes the religious conflict and prejudice between Catholics and Protestants and it is directly connected with the events in Northern Ireland, but it doesn't involve the mainstream of Protestant and Catholic churches. The Scottish scholar Steve Bruce defines sectarianism a widespread and shared culture of improperly treating people in terms of their religion. Sectarianism has its origins in the wide fluxes of Irish people to Scotland in the middle of Nineteenth century and it caused big social conflicts in the past, but clashes and prejudices between the Catholic Irish and the Protestant Scots still happen in daily life, often connected with the rivalry between the football teams of Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers, and with the divides between Catholic schools and non denominational schools.

**KEYWORDS:** Sectarianism, Scotland, Conflict, Faith school, Multicultural society.

### *How to define sectarianism in Scotland?*

On 20 March 1996, Patrick Reilly wrote on the *Herald* that sectarianism claims in Scotland «do not really reflect the existing reality but are clichés based upon out-moded and obsolete facts which perhaps existed 50 years ago». Four years later, he wrote: «To ask if there is anti-Catholicism in Scotland is like asking if there are Frenchmen in Paris» (Reilly 2000, 29). His essay is included in a book edited by Thomas Martin Devine and titled: *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scot-*

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*land*. The focus is on the question mark. Are bigotry and sectarianism the Shame of Scotland nowadays? The debate hasn't yet approached to a clear conclusion and has crossed the borders of different disciplinary fields: history, sociology, religious studies, psychology, political studies, philosophy, anthropology, education. A synthesis between the many research approaches and results could facilitate a better understanding of the phenomenon, and a shared definition of the word *sectarianism* could be a necessary starting point.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *sectarianism* as

the sectarian spirit; adherence or excessive attachment to a particular sect or party, esp. in religion; in recent use often, adherence or excessive attachment to, or undue favouring of, a particular denomination.

Many realities and events, in many areas of the world, in the past and also in the present, have been characterized by sectarian manifestations and attitudes. We can mention the divisions between the Catholic Croats, the Orthodox Serbs and the Muslim Bosnians in the conflict that led to the collapse of Yugoslavia, or even the persecutions against Sunnis perpetuated by the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, or the vicissitudes of the Kurdish in Turkey, without forgetting the Pakistani and Lebanese situations, in which religion has been intertwined and still is intertwined with power struggles.

In Scotland, in popular understanding, the word *sectarianism* describes the religious conflict and prejudice between Catholics and Protestants and it is directly connected with the events in Northern Ireland, but it doesn't involve the mainstream of Protestant and Catholic churches. Steve Bruce defines sectarianism «a widespread and shared culture of improperly treating people in terms of their religion» (Bruce *et al.* 2004, 4). Further definitions and descriptions have been elaborated and applied to the contemporary Scottish context (Finn 1999; 2003; Leichty, Clegg 2001; Scottish Government 2012).

Drawing from them, Stephen McKinney (2015, 15) has developed his own working definition:

Sectarianism consists of intolerant beliefs and attitudes that may be translated into actions. These can be expressed in inter-personal, commu-

nal and possibly institutional ways. Sectarianism involves some exclusivist and intransigent understanding of religious beliefs and attitudes, and is typically a shared or group identity that fosters a sense of belonging. This religious identity, however, can sometimes be more of a quasi or nominal religious identity, with very loose connections to one of the main religions. Sectarian groups tend to claim that their identity is founded on authentic historical roots and shared memory, roots and memory that may, however, be selective, self-serving or semi-mythical. The group is configured such that other groups that hold contrasting beliefs and attitudes can be perceived to threaten the identity and history of the group and are stigmatized as the 'others'. In a sense it is a claim for belonging and communal identity that is partly defined by affirming an authentic identity but also partly defined by opposition to the threat of the inauthentic – the others. Sectarianism, thus, justifies the marginalization, alienation and possible demonization of the 'others'. This can lead to hostility, verbal abuse, intimidation, and even violence.

### *The historical roots*

The origins of sectarianism in Scotland must be traced in big flows of Irish immigrants to the Scottish west coast in the middle of the Nineteenth century, as consequence of the potato famine of 1849 and as answer to the working opportunities in the factories and in the mines around Glasgow. Most of the Protestant immigrants from Ulster were members of the Loyal Orange Order, a militant association founded in Armagh in 1795 to defend Protestants against the aggressive actions of the Catholic secret societies and quickly become a stronghold of the Unionist pride. They found a communal identity with Scottish people and in a few time the Order became hugely popular and many new lodges spread across Ulster and in Scotland, above all in the areas where the Irish Protestants were more numerous.

The Irish Catholic immigrants met a worst destiny. Because of their low industrial skills, their ill education and their poor conditions, they entered at the bottom of the Scottish labour market and were pointed as scapegoats for all the problems that the emerging industrialisation was causing to the public health and to the life of the citizens. In the early 1850s some anti-Catholic organisations such as the Scottish Reformation

Society and the Scottish Protestant Association were founded and some journals such as *The Scottish Protestant* and *The Bulwark* accused Irish Catholics to bring disease, crime and degradation (Devine 2000, 292). The Irish Catholic immigrants put themselves in closed communities that were located in some neighbourhoods, clearly demarcated by their shared religion and sustained by the Church and by an array of ancillary organisations that provided social welfare, church-approved social and sporting activities. According to Gallagher (1987, 19) «the Irish side of the ghetto frontier may even have been patrolled more vigorously from the inside than the outside».

Even though the clergy and civil elites didn't support anti-Catholicism, many stereotypes and prejudices increasingly developed in the following decades, presenting the Irish as treacherous, slothful, illiterate, alcoholic and priest-ridden. Due to the economic depression, the mass unemployment and the increase of Scottish emigration, the period between the First and the Second World War has been described as the most intense phase of sectarian bitterness in Scotland, during which the Irish Catholics became the easiest scapegoats for Scotland's calamities; on summer 1935, violence was so pervasive that Catholics organized «all night vigils» to protect chapels from vandalism (Devine 1999, 499). Meanwhile, immigration slowed and a new generation of Catholic born in Scotland grew steadily. Many Irish Catholics struggled the Second War side by side with the Scottish Protestants and showed brave loyalty to the British flag. It had been the beginning of the process of the decreasing of sectarian violence and of the rising of social mobility opportunities for the Irish Catholics. A new age of ecumenical activity began in the 1960 and some significant reconciliatory actions between the Church of Scotland and the Church of Rome marked the erosion of institutional sectarianism.

### *Sectarianism today*

Although its manifestations are less striking than in the past, sectarianism continues to be an issue on the Scottish agenda. In February 2001, the Glasgow municipal administrators formally

recognized its relevance and urgency and commissioned a first wide-ranging study to try to quantify the size, the nature and the impact of sectarianism. The results (NFO Social Research 2003) confirm that residents believe that sectarianism continues to be prevalent in the city and it is expressed mostly through sectarian jokes with friends, the use of sectarian terms to describe people, sectarian vandalism, violence, threats and intimidation or harassment. In contrast, institutional sectarianism – in the labour market, by the Police, or by the Council or other public services – is perceived to be much less common. There is a clear mismatch between the perceptions of prevalence and the level of individual reported experience of the different forms of sectarian behaviour: over two-thirds of respondents agree that sectarian discrimination still exists, but only 12% of them report to be personally affected.

A further research conducted by Ross Deuchar and Chris Holligan (2008) confirms the main findings and adds five important elements for a deeper analysis of sectarianism:

- 1) An alarming number of youngsters is involved in territorial gangs. Gang culture is considered a means of excitement and protection and a remedy for boredom, mostly in deprived neighborhoods. These gangs are not strictly sectarian and religious oriented, but they promote the same culture of prejudice and divide.

- 2) Most youngsters are extremely influenced by football culture and the rivalry between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers is culturally and historically linked with sectarian legacies.

- 3) Machismo, masculinity and tribalism are important elements in some working class neighborhoods. They are tightly bound with the football and the sectarian affiliation.

- 4) Young people are less interested in religion, but they are still conscious of issues related to religious divisions and of their links with football.

- 5) The participation in Orange Walks and the singing of sectarian songs appear popular among some youngsters. Sectarian language and humour may have become so deeply assimilated into these young people's social identity that it has become normalised.



We can summarise the research results pointing and focusing on the three main contexts/issues in which sectarianism is still present and pervasive:

- 1) The football: the rivalry between Rangers and Celtic.
- 2) The school: Catholic schools and non denominational schools.
- 3) Associations, marches and parades: Loyal Orange Order and James Connolly Society.

### *The football*

The rivalry between Rangers and Celtic represents more than a sporting rivalry. Football is central for many people and it often replaces religion as source of sectarian attitudes and behaviours. Once again, the reasons must be found in the history of the city of Glasgow. In the second half of the Nineteenth century football became very popular among the urban working class (Murray 1984, 41-60). It wasn't simply a sport, but also a important factor to strengthen social, cultural and territorial identities. Glasgow Celtic was founded on November 1887 in the East End as a charitable organisation to keep young Catholics together in their leisure time, free from the temptations of Protestants and Protestantism (Murray 1984, 60), while in other neighbourhoods many supporters recognised in Glasgow Rangers the champions of Scottish Protestant pride:

Celtic and Rangers were the standard-bearers of their two communities and their confrontations on the football field a noisy outlet for the bitter sectarian tensions of the west of Scotland (Devine 1999, 362).

After more than one century, fan violence and sectarian attitudes still persist and manifest themselves through songs, banners, slogans, graffiti, clashes, flags, t-shirts, pub atmospheres. During the derby it would be dangerous for a Celtic supporter to enter (probably dressing green) in a Rangers pub, and for a Rangers supporter (dressing blue) to enter in a Celtic pub. Entire areas of the city are prevalently *green* or prevalently *blue*: walking through the East End, for example, it is easy to meet green shops

and walls, Irish flags, anti-unionist slogans, and Gaelic signs; on the contrary, in the suburb of Larkhall the shops and the walls, and also the buses, the churches' doors and the public signals, are predominantly blue, the Unionist flags flutters on the windows, and the green circles in the traffic lights are protected with metal grills. The connection between history, religion, cultural backgrounds and football is clear in the texts of the sectarian chants that almost all the supporters knows. During the derby, it's common, even if forbidden in the pubs and at the stadium, to listen to Rangers supporters singing *No Pope of Rome*:

No, no Pope of Rome, no chapels to sadden my eyes, no nuns and no priests and no Rosary beads, every day is the 12th of July.

On the opposite side, many Celtic supporters enjoy to sing anti-British ballads such as *The Boys of the Old Brigade*:

Oh, father why are you so sad on this bright Easter morn', when Irish men are proud and glad of the land that they were born? Oh, son, I see in mem'ries few of far off distant days when being just a lad like you I joined the IRA. Where are the lads that stood with me when history was made? A Ghra Mo Chroi, I long to see the boys of the old brigade. From hills and farms a call to arms was heard by one and all. And from the glen came brave young men to answer Ireland's call.

### *The school*

The first Catholic schools, funded by churches and religious associations, opened in Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but their number considerably increased after the big immigration flows from Ireland (Paterson 2003).

Because of the poor financial resources, that couldn't guarantee persistence in the future, in 1918, through the Education Act, Catholic schools entered into the educational state system maintaining autonomy in teaching recruitment and in religious curricula. This kind of more competitive Catholic school became very important to the growth of a Catholic middle class. Nowadays the Education Act is still working and Scot-

land has 366 state-funded Catholic schools<sup>1</sup>, mainly frequented by students from Catholic families. According to Stephen McKinney (2008a, 261) and to other authors, religious education in Catholic schools, focused on Catholic values and topics, is not divisive, but aimed to community building:

The Catholic school aspires to be a community that has prayer and liturgical life at the heart of its daily operations. Religious education in Catholic schools is considered to be rooted in this vision of faith formation and an important part of the primary and secondary school curricula. This education in Christian faith is constructed as an invitation, and all documentation prohibits coercion or any suggestion of indoctrination.

On the opposite side, some scholars disapprove the presence of faith schools. Halstead and McLaughlin (2005) consider them divisive at least for three reasons:

- 1) they exacerbate existing social and territorial divisions;
- 2) they separate children on the basis of their unique religious affiliation;
- 3) they promote beliefs and attitudes that create separate and segregating identities.

Also Lynn Davies accuses faith schools to be divisive because:

- 1) they separate children and teenagers, but also parents, according to their family religion;
- 2) the students are subjected to a choice that is made by parents that will strongly influence their social attitudes;
- 3) faith schools strengthen the social divides because some religions are more common in the most disadvantage/or in the richest ethnic and social groups;
- 4) they don't promote dialogue between faiths, but religious elitism and identity closure;
- 5) they limit the aspirations to autonomy and the critical thinking;
- 6) it is dangerous to consider the religious belonging as the main part of identity;

<sup>1</sup> Data retrieved from the governmental website: <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/FAQs>>, January 2015.

7) faith schools are state-funded, but they can express contrasting values;

8) the risk of indoctrination is too high.

Besides the different academic approaches, Catholic schools are not generally considered sectarian in themselves but, in a context in which religious division is perceived to be common, they can represent a tangible evidence of the divide.

### *Associations, marches and parades*

Ian Wilson, Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland, proudly defines the aims of his institution:

The maintenance of the Protestant faith is the prime objective of the Institution. It is a fraternity of men and women who share a pride in their Protestant heritage and beliefs. (Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland 1998a, 3)

Rooted to the basics of religion and patriotism, the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland was instituted more than 200 years ago. Nowadays it continues its mission with more than 500 lodges and it is considered a “intrinsic part of Scottish life and culture” (Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland 1998b, 1) by a significant amount of people. It offers to its members the opportunity to be part of a big family, and to receive protection, sense of belonging, models of identity. The strong camaraderie and brotherhood push the members to participate to the traditional marches and parades, during which the loyalist, Scottish and Protestant pride is celebrated through flags, banners, hymns that are inspired by historical events and narrations. Although these ceremonies and all the activities of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland are considered sectarian and provocative by most of the citizens, and violent clashes sometimes happen, the leaders doesn't want to stop.

Orangeism, however, will go marching on with its drums beating and its colours held high. As the banners read over the entrance to many Orange fields, “Our cause is good and will prevail”! (Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland 1998a, 17)

On the other side, the Irish and Catholic pride is supported by several organisations, as *Cairde na hÉireann*<sup>2</sup> – whose slogans are “Don’t wish for a United Ireland, work for it!” and “the war is over. But the struggle continues!”<sup>3</sup> – and the James Connolly Society, whose aim is to preserve the memory of the James Connolly march, that used to be organised from 1986 to 2006 in Edinburgh and “was the largest independent, left and working class organised annual march to be held in Scotland, England or Wales”<sup>4</sup>.

### *Conclusions*

Sectarianism is a complex and not solved issue in Scottish society, that involves many different aspects and perspectives. It shows that in complex social realities the boundaries between religion and politics, culture and sport, historical roots and economic status can’t be clear. It shows the importance of the personal and collective belongings and the need to find groups, places and events to strengthen the identity. It shows the effective power of symbols and of the many existing languages: at the stadium, during the march and the parades, in the neighborhoods, at the pub, at school. It shows how a simple colour can contain additional message, how religion is not only a fact of praying and believing in God.

The Scottish reality and the strategies that are applied to face sectarianism constitute a positive model on how complex situations of conflict can be managed. As sectarianism manifests itself at different intertwined levels, a strong synergy between different actors has been displayed. At the religious level, many interfaith associations, such as *Action of Churches Together in Scotland*, *Glasgow Churches Together* and *Interfaith Scotland* are composed by the representative of the different faith commu-

<sup>2</sup> *Cairde na hÉireann* is the Gaelic expression for “Friends of Ireland”.

<sup>3</sup> Slogans and information about the association are available at the website: <<http://www.cairdenaheireann.info/about>>, January 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Slogans and information about the association are available at the website: <<http://jamesconnollysociety.com/jcs/>>, January 2015.

nities and organize events and produce documents to promote dialogue and tolerance: the book *Belief in Dialogue. Religion and Belief Relation in Scotland. Good Practice Guide* (2011), edited under the patronage of the Scottish government, collects their action guidelines. Referring to the national *Curriculum for Excellence* (2002), some Catholic and non denominational schools are cooperating in common anti-sectarian projects, most of them based on artistic or musical activities, considering art and music as effective social and cultural mediators: most of these best practices are collected in the book *Count Us In. Promoting Understanding and Combating Sectarianism* (2007). The police has very active prevention units and is often involved in educational projects, and also the main football clubs – Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers – invest a considerable amount of money and efforts in anti-sectarian programs for children and young people, often in partnerships with schools and non religious organizations such as *Nil By Mouth*<sup>5</sup>. In the city of Glasgow, the municipal office *Sense Over Sectarianism* is specifically aimed to plan and act social and educational projects to face sectarianism, coordinating, organizing and managing the synergies between the many involved agencies. As the name suggests, the Sense Over Sectarianism must be shared, and education plays a key role: at school, in the churches, in the coloured neighborhoods.

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<sup>5</sup> From the website (<<http://nilbymouth.org>>): «Nil by Mouth is a registered Scottish Charity (SCO 30375), existing for the sole purpose of achieving a society free from sectarianism where cultural and religious diversity is respected and celebrate by everyone. We believe that Scotland can succeed in this goal if we unite together to tackle the problem as a nation». Accessed on 9 January 2015.

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## Trust and conflict in the settlement of international disputes: the dispute between Germany and Italy on immunity for international crimes

ABSTRACT: The contribution comments upon a specific joint declaration adopted by Italy and Germany in which Italy publicly recognized that it respected Germany's decision «to apply to the International Court of Justice for a ruling on the principle of State immunity». After this manifestation of confidence and trust in the activity of the International Court of Justice one would have expected that Italy would have immediately complied with any judgment the Court might have rendered with regard to the dispute opposing Italy to Germany. Yet, a few years after that statement, the current scenario is that, with all probabilities, Italy will not conform to the Court's judgment.

KEYWORDS: International Law, Humanitarian Law, Trust.

### *Introduction*

On the occasion of an inter-governmental meeting held on 18 November 2008 in Trieste, Italy and Germany adopted a joint declaration by which, *inter alia*, Italy publicly recognized that it respected Germany's decision «to apply to the International Court of Justice for a ruling on the principle of State immunity» and expressed the view «that the ICJ's ruling on State immunity will help to clarify this complex issue»<sup>1</sup>. After this manifestation of confidence and trust in the activity of the International Court

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<sup>1</sup> See Joint Declaration, adopted on the occasion of German-Italian Governmental Consultations, held on 18 November 2008 in Trieste.

of Justice – the principal judicial organ of the United Nations whose primary function is to settle disputes between States – one would have expected that Italy would have immediately complied with any judgment the Court might have rendered with regard to the dispute opposing Italy to Germany. Yet, a few years after that statement, the current scenario is that, with all probabilities, Italy will not conform to the Court's judgment. On 23 October 2014, the Italian Constitutional Court ruled that the judgment of the World Court cannot be executed by Italy without breaching fundamental human rights enshrined in the Italian constitution. In particular, according to the Constitutional Court, the right to access to justice must prevail over the international obligation which imposes to grant immunity to Germany. The high costs of the judgment in terms of respect for the decision of the International Court of Justice – and in terms of preserving both trust in the relationship between Italy and Germany and the image of Italy as a law-abiding State – are evident. What went wrong? What are the reasons for the persistence of this delicate legal and political conflict?

### *The facts*

To fully understand the issue at the heart of this dispute, a brief historical account of the relevant facts is necessary.

It is well known that between September 1943 and May 1945 large portions of Italian territory came under the control and occupation of Nazi Germany. German armed forces disarmed and captured Italian soldiers. Those captured were offered the choice of either joining the German armed forces or becoming prisoners of war. The latter were detained in labour camps and used as forced labourers in German industry in violation of international humanitarian law. They were called 'Italian Military Internees' (IMIs). The internees had to carry out physically hard work without receiving adequate nutrition and many of them died as a consequence. At the same time, in the occupied territories of central and northern Italy, the civilians were the victims of unspeakable atrocities and, especially as the fight against the occupiers by partisans started, several massacres

occurred in towns and villages as measures of reprisals against the civilian population.

After the war the issue of the reparation owed to Italian victims of Nazi crimes was left aside for many decades. On 1961 Italy and Germany concluded two agreements over the reparations of damages of war. However, at least according to Italy, these agreements do not specifically address the issue of victims of serious violations of international humanitarian law. Over the last decades Germany adopted and implemented a number of measures in order to address the compensation claims of victims of war atrocities. In particular, in 1999 and 2000, the German Government conducted diplomatic negotiations with a number of States which were belligerent parties in the Second World War about financial compensation for individuals who had, during the war, been subjected to forced labour in German companies and in the public sector. On 2 August 2000 a German Federal Law was adopted setting up a Foundation 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future', whose purpose was to make funds available to individuals who had been subjected to forced labour<sup>2</sup>. Thousands of 'Italian Military Internees' lodged requests for compensation on the basis of the Law of 2 August 2000. However, due to a legal technicality of dubious validity, they were not considered to be entitled to reparation under that law. IMIs then sought to obtain justice before German courts. All their lawsuit were dismissed.

After this denial of effective reparation, IMIs decided to resort to Italian judges to obtain the protection of their rights. Here the main obstacle was represented by the fact that under international law States are entitled to immunity before the domestic courts of another States for all acts committed in the exercise of their public functions. Thus, in principle, Germany was entitled to immunity before Italian courts for acts of its army. Surprisingly, on 11 March 2004, the Italian *Corte di Cassazione* held that Italy had jurisdiction over the civil claim for reparation brought against Germany by Luigi Ferrini, an

<sup>2</sup> *Gesetz zur Errichtung einer Stiftung 'Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft'*, English translation: <[http://www.stiftung-evz.de/eng/about-us/foundation\\_law](http://www.stiftung-evz.de/eng/about-us/foundation_law)>.

Italian national who in August 1944 was arrested near Arezzo, Italy, by soldiers of the German army, and deported to Germany to perform forced labour<sup>3</sup>. The *Corte di Cassazione* based its decision on the consideration that the operation of the rule on State immunity from civil jurisdiction may in certain cases give rise to a conflict with fundamental rules of the international legal system that has to be resolved in favour of the latter. In particular, it found that Germany was not entitled to immunity from jurisdiction in respect of the civil claim brought by Ferrini, since this claim derived from the commission by Germany of international crimes. This view was later confirmed in subsequent decisions rendered by the same Court in different cases.

According to Germany the denial of immunity by Italian courts amounted to a breach of international law. A legal dispute therefore arose between the two States. This leads us to the 2008 Trieste Joint Declaration. After several attempts to obtain a change in the position of Italian judges, Germany decided to bring the case before the International Court of Justice. As we have seen, the Italian government did not dislike this solution, being confident that a decision of World Court would have helped to ‘clarify this complex issue’.

*The international judge and the attempt to create a climate of trust*

The International Court of Justice rendered its judgment on the case on 3 February 2012. It ruled in favour to Germany, finding that, by allowing civil claims to be brought against Germany, Italy had violated its obligation to respect the immunity which that State enjoyed under international law. It also ruled that «the Italian Republic must, by enacting appropriate legislation, or by resorting to other methods of its choosing, ensure that the decisions of its courts and those of other judicial authorities infringing the immunity which the Federal

<sup>3</sup> Corte di Cassazione, Judgment No. 5044/2004, Ferrini, 11 March 2004, «Rivista di diritto internazionale», 87, 2004, p. 539.

Republic of Germany enjoys under international law cease to have effect»<sup>4</sup>.

It must be noted that the World Court only addressed the issue of the immunity to which Germany was entitled before Italian courts. The Court did not address the issue of the reparation owed by Germany to the victims of Nazi crimes. Italy had attempted to widen the scope of the dispute to be decided by the Court by asking the Court to rule also upon the question of reparation. However, Germany had objected against such request and, in the absence of an agreement between the parties, the Court had refrained from exercising its jurisdiction over the question of reparation. Interestingly, the Court did not fail to mention that the question of the rights of the victims was still open between the parties. In a significant *obiter dictum* of its judgment it noted that, while granting immunity to Germany had the effect of precluding judicial redress for the Italian nationals concerned, their claims ‘could be the subject of further negotiation involving the two States concerned, with a view to resolving the issue’<sup>5</sup>. This statement has a twofold significance. From a political point of view it may be regarded as an invitation to the parties to take into account the claims of the victims. From a legal point of view, the basic thrust of this statement is that negotiation can be an alternative form of protection of the rights of the victims and that State action at the international level can substitute for individual access to justice. Thus, the Court appeared to be aware of the complexity of the case. The dispute between Germany and Italy could not be reduced to a dispute on the immunity enjoyed by Germany. Much more was at stake. Pretending to consider the entire question as definitely

<sup>4</sup> *Jurisdictional Immunities of the State (Germany v. Italy: Greece intervening)*, Judgment, ICJ Reports 2012, p. 155. Much has been written on this judgment. See, in particular, Gradoni and Tanzi, ‘Immunità dello Stato e crimini internazionali tra consuetudine e bilanciamento: note critiche a margine della sentenza della Corte internazionale di giustizia del 3 febbraio 2012’, *Comunità internazionale*, 2012, pp. 203 ss.; Salerno, ‘Gli effetti della sentenza internazionale nell’ordinamento italiano: il caso Germania c. Italia’, *Diritti umani e diritto internazionale*, 2012, pp. 368-370.

<sup>5</sup> *Jurisdictional Immunities of the State (Germany v. Italy, Greece intervening)*, ICJ Reports 2012, p. 144.

settled by simply relying on a judgment which deals with only one aspect of the problem is tantamount to denying the very existence of the problem.

*Failed expectations and persistence of the conflict*

After the International Court of Justice's judgment, Italian authorities took care to put to an end the dispute over the immunity enjoyed by Germany. Accordingly, a law was passed by the Italian Parliament by which national judges were obliged to comply with the judgment of the ICJ and thus to deny their jurisdiction in future cases concerning acts committed by Nazi Germany, as well as to allow the revision of final judgments that did not recognize the immunity<sup>6</sup>. This led many judges to put to an end the proceedings against Germany pending before them. Apparently, political organs did not give consideration to the interests of the victims when giving execution to the judgment of the International Court of Justice. It is not clear whether any negotiation was started with Germany over the question of reparation. This comes as a surprise. When interstate negotiation represents the only means of securing redress for the victims of grave breaches of human rights, a diplomatic initiative by the State of nationality of the victims is not simply desirable. It may be argued that the State of nationality has also some duties. The more so when individual access is prevented by a judgment of the World Court, a judgment which anyway refers to the possibility that the parties would settle their dispute over reparation by negotiation. Taking into account the situation created by the judgment of the International Court of Justice, the risk of reaching a breaking point, where the protection of the rights of the victims is given prevalence over compliance with international law, was a real one.

<sup>6</sup> See Article 3 of Law No. 5 of 14 January 2013 (Accession by the Italian Republic to the United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and their Property, signed in New York on 2 December 2004, as well as provisions for the amendment of the domestic legal order).

The judgment of the Italian Constitutional Court of 23 October 2014 reflects the incapacity to adequately address the complexity of the dispute opposing Germany and Italy. By this judgment the Court declared the unconstitutionality of Article 3 of the abovementioned Law as well as the unconstitutionality of the United Nations Charter to the extent that it obliges the Italian judge to comply with the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 3 February 2012<sup>7</sup>. The judgment has the merit of raising forcefully the question of the rights of the victims of grave breaches of human rights and of the way in which these rights are to be protected. Having said this, it is not exempt from criticism. It is submitted that, at least in its reasoning, the Constitutional Court, instead of targeting exclusively the way in which international law regulates State immunity, should have focused more on the role of Italian political organs in securing the protection of the rights of Italian victims.

At this point, the real issue is how to sort out this situation. A culture of trust would imply a step backward by both parties. Unfortunately, the incapacity to take into account the complexity of the situations and the variety of the interests at stake has rendered it more difficult to attain a satisfactory solution.

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<sup>7</sup> See Judgment of 23 October 2004 (<<http://www.cortecostituzionale.it/action-SchedaPronuncia.do>>). On this judgment see Kolb, 'The Relationship between the International Legal Order: Reflections on the Decision n. 238 of the Italian Constitutional Court', «QIL/Questions of International Law» (<<http://www.qil-qdi.org>>); Palchetti, *Judgment 238/2014 of the Italian Constitutional Court: In search of a way out*, *ibid.*



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## Living in multicultural families: Education, values and relationships in a globalized society

**ABSTRACT:** Living in a mixed family is a challenge that implies that the couple, the families of origin and the social context allow and facilitate the possibility of combining differences and negotiation in the best possible way. These families seem to be a micro example of what it means to live in a multicultural society nowadays at the macro level. Differences and similarities are played everyday in the life course of the couple and their families, requiring the entire family group (including previous generations) to redefine the overall arrangement of their cultural balance: it becomes necessary to rethink relational dynamics, but especially to reconsider the hierarchies of values, both at an individual and at a family level, due to the different cultural belonging of the partners. The aim of the paper is to show the results of a research which investigates 35 mixed families with at least one child (life stories collected for each partner) living in the centre of Italy.

**KEYWORDS:** Sociology, Family, Multiculturalism, Mixed couples, Life-histories.

### *Mixed couples as the encounter of different culture*

One of the main, socially significant, consequences of growing immigration and of the meeting of different cultures is the progressive increase in the number of ethnically and nationally mixed marriages; this is an increasing social phenomenon in Italy too (Crespi 2014; Canta 2014).

Mixed couples are referred to by many expressions and categorisations reflecting an equally vast spectrum of possible unions. A mixed couple is the combination of two people clashing each

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other by individual background or social status (Falicov 1995; Guyaux *et al.* 1992), where each partner is challenged to understand the other person's different culture of origin. In other words, a couple is defined as mixed when either or both partners belong to a culture (or cultures) other than the one of the social environment they live in, and where at least one partner or their family of origin has migrated (Gozzoli, Regalia 2005)<sup>1</sup>. When a mixed couple get together, both partners migrate from their countries of origin in order to enter a relationship with someone from another country and, most importantly, another culture. In most cases, one partner physically has left his/her country of origin while the other partner has not made a literal journey but has embarked on an «intimate migration» (Tognetti, Bordogna 1994; Meda 2012).

Based on these considerations, it can be assumed that culture, religion, race and ethnic group are the criteria used for gauging the differences between partners in a mixed couple, when these differences are perceived as socially relevant (Colombo 2007; Gozzoli, Regalia 2005). Thus, the personal qualities altering the relationship of a so-called 'mixed' couple should always be regarded as closely interrelated with the cultural construction of similarity and difference, which defines the degree of compatibility between different groups (Bertolani 2002).

The partners of a mixed couple meet within a space where differences should be reconciled: in this space, they can manage their personal differences and their different social circles by a constant process of symbolic construction and redefinition of their identity. In order to do this, each partner must *migrate* from their context of origin in order to establish ties with a person who, in turn, comes from a different cultural background. Mixed marriages could therefore be described as a phenomenon characterised by a «mutual migration status» (Fenaroli, Panari 2006), involving an individual who has actually moved

<sup>1</sup> The English term *intermarriage* covers different types of mixed unions: *binational marriages*, i.e. when partners come from different countries; *interfaith marriages*, when partners belong to different religions; *interethnic marriages*, when the couple come from different ethnic backgrounds; and *interracial marriage* when they are of different races (Fenaroli, Panari 2006).

from his/her country of origin and another who has embarked on an intimate journey, becoming increasingly distant from his/her original cultural position. This personal culture is also shaped by those principles and elements that both partners had internalised in their communities of origin; cultural belonging «is not a set of abstract rules but a set of principles embodied in practices. Our culture tells us what to do, how and why» (Mantovani 1998, 78).

Negotiating differences within intercultural couples appears to be the outcome of a strong, continuous commitment to finding new rules and definitions. Negotiation means compromise, awareness of the possibility of conflict and openness to dialogue. Cultural differences could be successfully negotiated by developing a mutual awareness of the deep meaning of each other's cultures, thus helping to achieve near-neutrality and overcome the underlying complexity that hinders problem-solving.

Engaging in an intimate intercultural relationship calls into question several factors. One of the most significant ones is undoubtedly *identity*. As stated earlier, each human being's identity is shaped by personal and social factors, and is linked to the delicate relationship between identity and acknowledgement (Melucci 2000a; 2000b; Leghissa 2005). Possessing an identity means acknowledging one's uniqueness, expressing one's own inimitability, and distinguishing oneself from others. However, it also means belonging to a social group, developing feelings of attachment to this group, inheriting the history of one's culture, its ideologies, traditions and beliefs. Any man or woman who engages in a relationship is required to engage with the other partner's identity too; in the case of mixed couples, however, this process carries a more complex meaning. Identity is thus perceived as a set of «experiences of recognition» (Della Porta *et al.* 2000), which allows each individual to recognise themselves over time and which no individual can disregard.

Being in a mixed couple means the awareness of being shot through and permeated with *difference*. Finding a common ground in difference means reaching a point of contact with the other partner, who comes from a different historical, ethnic and cultural background; it means keeping one's own cultural iden-

tity while acknowledging and respecting the others'; finally, it entails the possibility of incorporating different cultural models without eliminating differences but, on the contrary, respecting different identities.

Consequently, living in a multi-ethnic family is a challenge implying that the couple, the families of origin and the social context allow the possibility of combining differences and negotiation in the best possible way. These families seem to be a micro-example of life at a macro-level in a multicultural society today. Differences and similarities are played out every day in the life-course of the couple and their families, requiring the entire family group (including previous generations) to redefine their cultural balance: it becomes necessary to rethink relational dynamics, but especially to reconsider the hierarchies of values, both at an individual and at a family level, due to the partners' different cultural loyalties<sup>2</sup>.

### *Education, cultures and values: the challenge of childbirth*

Within a couple's relationship, the partners can still gloss over the importance of the difference between some particular cultural and ethnic aspects but when a child is born the situation changes. This causes the reshaping of the family's organisation and the definition of new dynamics concerning those differences that both partners had already mediated within their relationship, such as values and religion. The ability to deal with cultural differences can thus turn into a challenge for the couple. In order to make sense of their differences with their children, partners are required to bring their negotiation strategy back into play.

<sup>2</sup> The paper is based on a research conducted in 2011 with in-depth interviews to 70 people, corresponding to 35 couples living in the Marche region with at least one child and with one Italian partner and one foreign partner. All the interviews were registered. The initial question was: Would you like to speak me about your family's experience in a mixed couple? The interview guide style was very open in a biographical way. All the texts were analyzed with discourse analysis trying to understand the social and personal mechanisms used to construct identity, negotiation children's education and so on. In this paper main results are presented.

*Mediating religious differences: which faith for the children?*

Religious belonging can be a fundamental component of individual identity: it denotes a value system that guides people's behaviour and a set of rules that regulate the many-sided, concrete aspects of the life of their communities and families of origin. Therefore, when a marriage is interfaith as well as interethnic, there could be difficulties concerning the couple's respective religious beliefs, customs and practices – such as rituals, celebrations and behaviour in general, their relationship with their respective communities and families of origin and, above all, the upbringing of their offspring.

Belonging to different national backgrounds and coming together in the same household will inevitably produce confrontation between the partners. This becomes increasingly significant when it comes to religious difference, regarded as an essential value for a human being. It thus appears that the partners in a mixed couple need to manage and live their religious beliefs based on mutual tolerance and openness to dialogue, if they want to consider religion a valuable asset for the relationship rather perceiving it as a challenge.

As illustrated above, religion is perhaps the most important and most passionately felt difference in a mixed family. In order to mediate this aspect successfully *vis-à-vis* their children, the couple need to be able to depart from the strict observance of the rules of their religious belief and be ready to engage in an open exchange with one another.

No, we don't have religion-related issues in our couple; in fact, we've always said that *CHILD 1* will go to Koranic school and receive Catholic instruction. This is also because I believe that acquiring a culture is very enriching, I mean, acquiring a culture is enriching because I think that culture is the supreme richness there could ever be; therefore, having two cultures is even more enriching. I'm in a situation where I'm not preventing him from acquiring any culture at all but, on the contrary, I'm giving him two cultures, two traditions, two religions, two of everything. Then, he might as well become a Muslim Christian or a Christian Muslim; I don't think the two things are mutually exclusive. (F, Italy, 24, 1 child, university student)

Here, the two spouses decide to discuss and negotiate their respective religions: their son will receive Catholic instruction and go to Koranic school. In the future, it will be up to him to decide which faith he would like to embrace. The interviewee thinks that being familiar with two different religious beliefs will be a source of enrichment for her son. Allowing him to be free to choose his religion almost takes a value of its own and lays the groundwork for making some important decisions.

The expansion of the possible illustrated above takes a new meaning: the shift from couple to family poses a new challenge when it comes to comparing and selecting those cultural domains – such as religion, as in this case – which could be an asset for future generations.

Then, for example, there was the issue of circumcising my son... I don't know if you know, but all Muslims are circumcised and so, of course, he would have liked to have his son circumcised too. At first, I was... Oh my God, I was so afraid to have my son circumcised... he'd say "well, in my country, everybody has it done, it's the custom"... Well, I knew it was important to him... (F, Italy, 42, 1 child, optician)

We've decided not to have our son baptised for the moment. We will leave it up to him to decide when he's older. We have established an easy-going relationship, I mean, we don't... perhaps the one thing we don't argue about is religion. This is also because we both believe in the same things, thank God we both have the same... well, it's not like I believe in God while he believes in... I mean, we both believe in the same things so I suppose you could say we have the same principles. Therefore, we try to teach him the basics and then, when he grows up, he will decide what to do. (F, Italy, 40, 1 child)

The religious motive does not cause clashes and conflicts within the family. Both spouses agreed not to have their son baptised and leave this decision up to him. In spite of religious difference, the couple share the same principles and values, which they regard as the most important legacy to pass on to their son.

Well, then, most importantly, there's my lack of religious affiliation. I've turned away from religion; basically, I'm no longer a believer, let alone a practising believer. Of course, I don't object to the fact that *CHILD 1*... also because my wife, for example, does not consider herself as a non believer even though she is not a practising believer. We jointly agreed that neither of us should put any pressure on *CHILD 1* in this respect. On the

other hand, we definitely won't try to inculcate the value of extreme secularism in her, to the point that we don't object to the fact that *CHILD 1* receives Holy Communion... Well, to some extent, I guess her wish was prompted by my family, by my mother, for example or, I don't know, by her school environment, in a way. (M, Italy, 44, 1 child, upper secondary school teacher)

This statement shows the importance of negotiation within the household. In spite of the possible influence exerted by the respondent's family of origin and in spite of the educational element, both partners decide to leave their daughter free to make her own choices and decide on the questions that might arise according to what she deems more appropriate.

Therefore, it clearly appears that in a mixed family the relationship with children also depends on all those external variables, which, to a greater or lesser extent, can have an impact on family decisions and choices. Religion is not perceived as an issue and does not cause conflict between partners. On the contrary, what is regarded as fundamental in children's upbringing is the promotion of love and respect for others. Dialogue and negotiation are essential in order to make conscious and decisive choices for one's children. Therefore, mediation is not only used in the religious sphere but on the whole, in all matters concerning their upbringing.

We try to teach him the values we believe in: respect for others, loyalty and love. Because that's what Islam teaches, just like the Koran, the Torah and the Bible: it teaches love, because that's where the meaning of life can be found. (M, Senegal, 32, 1 child, factory worker)

I think it's important to make joint decisions, especially when it comes to important choices; the couple are in it together, starting from the choice of whether to have the baby baptised in a Catholic or a Protestant church, because you might not know that I'm a Protestant while she's a Catholic. (M, Germany, 34, 2 children, researcher)

My son has been baptised mainly because he lives in a society where... I mean, he lives in Italy, so there was no point in making him believe he was a Buddhist, as it were; we decided that when he's older he'll choose his own path anyway. He was baptised because all the other children he will meet would have been baptised anyway. He'll make his own choice. His father consented to it, it was no problem at all for him. He tolerates all religions, I mean, he respects them. What I'm saying is that he didn't force us not



to be Christian or follow his religion, you know. So, as far as religion is concerned, we didn't force our son to do things he didn't want to do [...] he could have chosen to be an atheist, a Christian or whatever else. I can only accept it, I mean, I've given him a direction then it'll be up to him to choose whether he wants to follow it or not. What's important is to be a good person anyway; religion is something separate, everybody should be able to choose theirs... (F, Italy, 51, 1 child, bar owner)

Parents sometimes decide to push their children towards the dominant religion of the country where the family live. The decision of whether to follow that path or change direction in the future is left entirely up to them. When measuring themselves with their religious differences, one partner might be influenced by their strong attachment to their spouse to the point of making hasty and rash decisions. Over time, however, that partner might come to regret the decision made in the past.

He's still young but I think he'll be a Muslim when he grows up. B, on the contrary, gets cross and says that he doesn't have to be a Muslim but it will be up to C, when he grows up, to choose what he deems right. I naturally think of him as one of us, one of my family... he's my son. (F, Morocco, 34, 1 child)

Such a strong sense of roots and religious belonging might lead a spouse to consider their children as belonging to their own culture and therefore to their religion. This might produce a conflict with the other spouse, who will tend to challenge the other partner's notion and re-establish a balance, leaving it up to their children to choose what they want to "be" when they grow up.

When it comes to religion, no... I don't... I mean, they are... they were baptised Catholic... it doesn't bother me because I live here and that's the religion of this country. That's fine by me; I don't think they should follow my tradition because I'm from that country and that's what they have to do, you know what I mean... no, I don't think that way. (F, Romania, 41, 2 children, elderly care worker)

Negotiating religious choices appears to be easier for a couple when the foreign spouse has integrated in the receiving culture to the point of putting their own faith aside and leaving their children free to adhere to the religion of the host country.

As far as his religious education is concerned, we teach him the same things. We believe in the same things; it isn't like he is telling him one thing and I tell him another... we both go in the same direction... then, he happens to kneel down to pray whereas I make the sign of the cross... however, in the end, what counts is that our foundations are the same, we both believe in the same things. (F, Italy, 39, 2 children, homemaker)

When partners share the same values and beliefs, religious difference is not perceived as a threat but as an opportunity for their children's personal enrichment.

When my daughter grows up, say, when she's eighteen or twenty, if she tells me that she wants to become a Muslim, she's free. "Do you want to become a Muslim? You're old enough to think independently and understand. Have you read about it? Did you get enough information?". Get information, read about it and then choose "because what the Koran says is not what many people do and practise here in Italy when they cut their wives' throats because they've become... I mean, I just can't tolerate those things. (F, Italy, 45, 1 child, employee)

If one of the two spouses feels less strongly about their faith, their child is likely to be oriented to discovering and following the other partner's religion. In this way, she will not be able to become familiar with both religions but she will only perceive and become interested in the religion of the stronger parent. In this situation, religious difference does not need to be mediated for the children, as they will tend to adhere to the dominant faith within the family. Consequently, they will not even be allowed to have that free choice that could help shape their identity. These interviews suggest that religion is a primary value for both spouses. For this reason, the couple need to adopt negotiation and mediation strategies in order to promote knowledge of both faiths in their children and leave them free to choose the religion they feel most closely.

### *Building a common culture as a resource for the family*

Building a common culture as a resource for the family and the children is a major starting point for a mixed family. It could be described as the ability to base family relationships on

dialogue, exchange, respect for the other and the negotiation of interethnic differences (Scabini, Rossi 2008).

The birth of a child, however, causes the reshaping of the family's organisation and the definition of new dynamics with regards to those differences that both partners had already mediated within their relationship, such as language and religion. The ability to deal with cultural differences can thus turn into a challenge for the couple, who need to bring their negotiation strategy back into play. In this way, they will grant the children access to their respective cultures and provide them with the support they need to build their own identity. The involvement of both spouses in the choice of their children's upbringing and the values to be transmitted to future generations largely depends on their respective family backgrounds.

We try to instil good manners in our children, then, of course, everybody tries to teach what they've been taught, I mean, the way it used to be for them. All in all, I received a rather ordinary upbringing, as it were; well, my father was a little stricter than my mother, that's about it... (M, Italy, 47, 2 children, employee)

Anyway, we taught our children to eat all types of food: there's no bad food and good food to start with, everything can be either good or bad. Then, everyone has their own thoughts, but I think that also depends on the fact that we are a mixed couple who are open to different cultures. (F, Germany, 47, 2 children, nurse)

Partners, thanks to their receptiveness and openness to each other, are able to raise their children with habits and principles from both backgrounds. This is corroborated by the words of the respondent who, in agreement with her husband, wanted to teach her children respect for cultural diversity starting from their eating habits. Children must not be raised to despise what they do not know but they should grow up to accept and appreciate diversity.

So, well, I have values coming from my family of origin, whereas his are totally different. He has different ways of thinking and living with regards to different situations and values: they're just different, so we started sharing each other's values, I mean, sharing everything and then, he and I together, started choosing and deciding for both of us, without distinction... You see, it was he and I who decided how to organise our family.

Well, with a bit of advice here and there of course, we finally found our way, so much so that we ended up creating our own thing, which doesn't look like anything either of us had experienced before: it's a mixture, really. (F, Italy, 24, 1 child, student)

Here again, building a common family culture calls for negotiation and a strategy for "expanding" the possible. Belonging to two different cultures and backgrounds means discussing each other's values, lifestyles and habits. It also means transposing the mediation between different points of view in a new life plan together.

When creating a common family culture, the couple might seek suggestions from their respective families, although the spouses will ultimately make their own choices, deciding how and in what form they will organise their family life. The construction of a shared family culture is based on the recognition of differences. Spouses must accept, re-work and re-incorporate them in their family domain so that these differences could become a source of personal enrichment and mutual exchange for the couple and future generations.

### *Conclusions*

The family dynamics of mixed couples are based on a continuous negotiation of the partners' historical and cultural differences. They also require the creation of a new family culture, able to turn differences into valuable assets, which helps promote an open mind and acceptance of the other.

The negotiation of differences in mixed families is the outcome of a continuous redefinition of the partners' respective roles, so that spouses can jointly work out new rules and specific paradigms for their family. For intercultural couples, building an identity of their own means being aware of the differences, finding strategies for dealing with them and being committed to a common goal. In this respect, negotiation requires both spouses to be able to be ready to depart from their own cultural standards in order to generate new-shared meanings within their family. Mixed unions should tend to create a shared culture:

to this end, it is important for each spouse to support their marriage by respecting their own cultural backgrounds while acknowledging the other partner's one.

Negotiation, therefore, is also about compromise, recognition and respect of differences, openness to dialogue and communication. Concerning identity, it has been shown that individuals feel very strongly about their national and cultural belonging and find them impossible to give up. Even when the foreign spouse has been living in the country of the other partner for several years, they will still want to keep on being what they are, without changing their way of thinking. They want to live according to the principles their family taught them, steering clear of fully adopting the habits and lifestyle of their Italian partner. Identity is thus perceived as a set of «experiences of recognition» (Della Porta *et al.* 2000), which allows each individual to recognise themselves over time and which no individual can disregard.

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If not now, when? From intercultural education to education for transculturality

**ABSTRACT:** What is the image of “culture” that supports an idea, a research, a project, a proposal defining interculturality? I always ask this question since the term intercultural was introduced thirty years ago (1986) and had influenced the educational culture, social and educational practice (teaching).

In this contribution, I will try: 1° to indicate the internal contradictions in this paradigm; 2° to propose transculturality as an alternative model, indicating its origin and its meaning, with its roots in studies of comparative literature; 3° to offer an educational model to transculturality through narrative thinking.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture of trust, Interculturality, Transculturality, Narrative thinking.

### *Introduction*

We wrote this contribution while the pictures of tortured and worn bodies flowed, crammed into rotten and foul shacks, rescued by human compassion and freed from captivity. Seventy years ago the horror of the death camps was revealed to the eyes of those who had contributed to the liberation of Europe from Nazism. From that day, as a white screen, memory has collected and fixed the grimmest images of Nazi-Fascist decades. It happened so that noble sentiments such as indignation and human compassion have given way to a critical conscious-

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ness solicited from memory, because what happened does not happen again. As Helvétius argued, *Education can do everything* (1772): it can lead to freedom or to authoritarianism. Two centuries later, in 1967, in his school in California, Ron Jones' (a teacher) experiment confirms the value of the philosopher's intuition. With his students Jones faces the theme of autocracy, although he had preferred anarchy, because closer to his ideals. The students did not believe it was possible that a new dictatorship could be established, since people had learned from past mistakes. The teacher then decided to organize an experiment, in order to demonstrate the students how the masses can be easily manipulated through education and discipline. He founded a movement (Third Wave) and the students were subjected to a severe discipline. They were excited because they felt part of a community and soon many classes joined to it. In order to stop the dynamics unleashed by the experiment (the emulation of the leader, the squads, the delation) the teacher decided to stop the experiment on the fifth day and showed young people a comparison between their movement and youth Nazi organizations (Strassel 1967).

The case of the teacher, which was made into a film directed by Dennis Gansel (*The Wave*, 2008), contains a valuable lesson: enhancing continuity of growth is the essential requirement so that an experience can be defined educational; experience is morally harmful if it negatively affects the subsequent experiences, by narrowing the range of possibilities, and discouraging further experiences. Here authoritarianism takes root. Or, as Dewey had sensed with unparalleled insight, education can encourage the growth of the individual and of democracy (Dewey 1916). Educating to learn the method of research, subjected to verification and denial, like all human affairs, involves opening, comparison, dialogue, risk. If every theory of education is a candidate or is proposed as a rule, this rule «must leap from life itself in a continuously shooting consciousness» (Banfi 1922).

### *Analysis of the intercultural model*

Thirty years have passed since intercultural education was introduced in training programs in European schools (EC 1977-1983; Rey 1986). But in the light of the increasingly dramatic social conflicts between «allocated» and «migrants» citizens (Perrichoud 1986, 699), the marginalization marking the fate of thousands of immigrants and their children, the disaffection towards school life host countries by the children of migrants, we have to ask: is it necessary to “take back” the theory of intercultural education, starting a deep reflection, revealing the ideological framework and the internal contradictions? *If not now, when?* This was written by Primo Levi, who was a witness of the victims of the insane European inhumanity, an “indefensible” civilization, as Aimé Césaire wrote in 1955. Such a question encourages us to the search of the meaning of a shared humanity.

The *transcultural* tradition that refers to Ferdinand Ortiz, George Devereux, Édouard Glissant, Michel Serres, Hugo Hannerz, Wolfgang Welsch, helps us to recognize the history of every culture and, at the same time, to hybridize, to be defiled, to blend with other cultures generating new “Creole” and unpredictable forms. In this direction of research, for the profound consonance with the transcultural approach, we will use extensively narrative thinking, both as a model of knowledge of reality and as an educational proposal.

The condition of “migrants” in the whole world, from America to Europe, continues to be thought of in terms of *reception, integration, assimilation*. All these concepts and practices that turn out to be unbalanced, ethnocentric, partial (Gallisot, Kilani, Rivera 2001, 35-39) because the emigrant-immigrant continues to be perceived as a doubly subversive figure: subversive compared to the host society, but also subversive towards the origin society. The “life stories” narrated (between autobiography and essay) by Hanif Kureishi, Abdelmalek Sayad, Abdelatif Kechiche and François Bégaudeau give us an eloquent witness of the migrants’ life marked by a common fate which involves: the defeat whenever the migrants try to empower

themselves economically and socially in London metropolis (Kureishi, *My beautiful laundrette*, 1986); the dual condition of emigrant and immigrant (Sayad, *La double absence*, 1999); the marginalization towards the cultural tradition and language of the host country, which takes place in the schools of the extreme outskirts of French cities (Kechiche, *The Esquive*, 2003; Bégaudeau, *Entre les murs*, 2008). The period of time of the significant (non-exhaustive) production we referred to was not made random. What did the social policies prepared in the reception and integration actually produce? What has actually intercultural education produced in schools? And above all, when does its purpose should be the construction of a democratic society, as documents and programs say?

Or should we instead assume that intercultural education is another ruse of capitalism, that (in its expansion and accumulation phase) is willing to tolerance, solidarity, cultural relativism, but less inclined to accept the concept of “equality of opportunity” and ensure each person to develop one’s talent (Sen 1999).

We can look at the documents and practices. It was written that «interculture and, interaction between different cultures that preserve their identity, are the pedagogical answer to the multiethnic society» (EC 1986, 17-51). The proposition “they preserve their identity” arouses more than a reasonable suspicion: it seems to imply a relative immobility of cultural differences and does not take into account the rapid changes that all the involved cultures undergo in their mutual impact, concerning the dynamics of contamination suffered by their guidelines and their lifestyles (M. Abdallah-Pretceille 1986, 23-25). In a multicultural context that involves the entire ecumene, loans, meetings, conflicts and contaminations between people, nations and cultures multiply and – today more than ever – the proposition “they preserve their identity” proves to be anachronistic.

In intercultural education, as it has emerged in recent decades, we can see the presence of two trends irreducible one another, that reveal their inner contradiction: the first one, «chauvinist descriptive» (Nussbaum 1997, 130-133) and intent to remove the differences in a universalist perspective, but broughtback to the Greek-Judeo-Christian tradition; the second one, intent

to recognize and emphasize the “differences” but in which a form of «romanticism descriptive» in present (Nussbaum 1997, 135-137). We can use three deep metaphors for understanding the meaning of the actions made by intercultural education: Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*; Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver*; Nat Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* written by Giacomo Puccini.

The inclusion of an immigrant in our continent, or of a foreign student in our schools is like the footprint that Robinson discovers on the beach: “A wild in my island.” We all remember how the meeting between Robinson and Friday happened: this last one was running away chased by two cannibals; Robinson killed them and saved the wild. Friday immediately recognized him as his savior: «He reached me and prostrated himself [...] on the ground with all the possible signs of a humble and grateful feeling [...] and made me realize that he would be my servant as long as I have lived» (Defoe 1719, 134). To grasp the whole ambivalence of an intercultural teacher like Robinson, these few lines are enough, with their blend of paternalism and exoticism.

On the contrary, *Gulliver* is the representation of the other attitude: the speculative one of West. It concerns the “others” and studies, knows, interprets them. Even when Gulliver reflects on the fact that everything is relative, his attitude towards the others keeps the rules of his mental habits of a well thinking man, who (even if he runs into the absurd) neither accepts it nor adopts it. He goes beyond Robinson’s tolerance, but only to stand on this side of solidarity, with all the forms of otherness he meets. He essentially recognizes its reasons, but without asserting a real equality for all beings and even less recognition entails respect; if something appears us as repugnant and unacceptable, we can accept its survival, but we are not required to share it.

Pinkerton is instead the expression of descriptive romanticism, that considers another culture too distant and alien, indeed incomparable with its own, emphasizing those elements that appear more mysterious and unusual even for the purpose of seeking alternatives to the mental family structures. The fact that Pinkerton sees Japanese culture as exotic and completely different from his own leads him to believe that a Japanese

woman does not need to be treated with the same moral scruples he reserves to his western wife.

The tragedy described in *Madame Butterfly* is the tragedy of descriptive romanticism: Pinkerton does not understand that the woman he desires is a human being with feelings similar to those of his wife and in need of respect. Even today, the style of behavior of many boys and men, girls and women in the presence of Western men and women of other distant cultures are steeped in this romance descriptive romanticism.

If we pay attention to the new behaviors required by adaptation to the “globalization” and that intercultural education was asked to acquire, you may have the impression that they are delineated according to those metaphors, which are dominated by the needs of the Western world, which, in itself, is foreign to the values underlying the originality of other world cultures.

Our impression is that nowadays an education with a weak intercultural connotation and a more explicit monocultural direction is widespread. It could not be otherwise. The scientific status of interculturalism is too weak also to a theoretical analysis. Even among the specialists of such a matter there are differences in their way to conceive and implement interculturality even in a single classroom. We must ask ourselves: *what is the image of “culture” that supports an idea, a research, a project, a proposal that can be defined as intercultural?* You always start from the culture of the host country that interacts with the original culture. But when the school or the various educational agencies teach a stranger child or a teenager or an adult our language, any intercultural operation does not take place, but we transfer them our linguistic history and our culture. This is certainly an important operation, because those people we call “non-EU” try to learn a culture (that one of the host country) enabling them to integrate into European society as soon as possible.

But this is not miscegenation or hybridity, it is not contamination; it is rather a process of assimilation that guarantees the migrants’ survival, by reducing their cultural history. Indeed, how many thousands and thousands of immigrants are in fact themselves unaware of traditions, art forms, philosophies of their native country as a national entity? How many times in

fact – for a teaching which is attentive to the intercultural declination of knowledge – have immigrants children, boys and girls learnt things referring their country of origin they would not have learned in their schools?

Perhaps it would be useful to foster genuine *relationships* between cultures, referring them back to the great themes of individual subjectivity: love, suffering, death, conflict, beauty, transcendent, beyond their placement and their local declination. It would be useful suspending our judgment, returning it to the core values represented by the desire of existing, of continuing to exist and making the world exist. So we would have a found subjectivity, that produces increase in the versatility of our thought, generosity in our attitude towards the otherness which is always an elective stimulus for a free, open, unprejudiced developing.

### *The transcultural option*

In order to indicate our transcultural landing we can use a beautiful linguistic figure proposed by Édouard Glissant: *we must think with the world* (Glissant 2004, 105). We have to try to experience a revision of knowledge, of training in the school, also through transdisciplinarity, realizing a shared creativity that can be generated by the narrative thinking. It is not a matter of mere nominalism, or ostentation of originality at any cost. In the direction of taking another step *without return*, matters relating to the transcultural proposal imply an effort of clarification.

Transculturality suggests many different ideas, yet complementary one another: transit, transfer, translation, transgression, transformation. However the concept is not entirely new: it was introduced in the forties by Ferdinand Ortiz within a study on Afro-Cuban culture to describe the process of selection and re-elaboration of a dominant culture by a subordinate or marginal group (Ortiz 1940). It included in this way the process of “creolization” which are studied in the context of comparative studies of contemporary literatures (Pratt 1992; Hannerz 1995). Especially in the social anthropological and psychological sciences, (Devereux 1972; Inghilleri 1994; Moro, De La Noe

2009), we hear more and more often speak of *transculturality* and *transculturalism*. These new concepts emphasize the dialectical nature of cultural influences, tend to a new model of interaction in which nothing is ever completely “other” (foreign and alien), and therefore need to understand the processes of plural identity formation throughout their complexity (Serres 1992).

The “cultures” can no more be considered as closed in themselves; just as they are expressions of identity formed through negotiations with the other, they are in constant transformation and hybridization. The prevailing paradigm seems to be more that one of the “flow of cultures”, of trading and negotiation. This implies a different synthesis between particularism and universalism, between local and global that, unlike the classical opposition, underlines their dynamism and transformation. Consequently, the ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ they express are so different, but they can communicate in many ways, often conflicting, or in distorting forms of mirroring, but always harbingers of change processes (Augé 2003, 234-237; Amselle 1990, 54-59; Hanerz 1997, 102).

*Transculturality* precisely answers such a need. Welsch puts the emphasis on cultural fertilization at multiple levels, from the macro level of societies to the micro level of individual experience, where the personal and cultural identity does not match almost ever or almost to the civic and national one and is instead – in an ever more evident way – marked by multiple cultural connections. So transculturality is to be understood not only as a model of analysis of modern reality, but also as an ideal of the daily practice of cultural interaction: «It is a matter of readjusting our inner compass: away from the concentration on the polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness for what might be common and connective wherever we encounter things foreign» (Welsh 1999, 201).

If transculturality becomes the analytical model for the reading of today cultural reality, transculturalism might be a more appropriate term to designate a willingness to interact starting from intersections rather than from differences and polarities, an awareness of the *transcultural* which is in us. This could be useful to better understand and accept what is outside

of us, a vision that emphasizes flexibility, movement and continuous exchange, the constant renegotiation of identity.

### *Transculturality and narration*

We have learned, then, from these acquisitions, that the term *transculture* is meant to refer to common cultural elements, as a research of cultural universals, that is to say feelings emotions, ideas, creativity, in a word, «all that we can put in middle of the table with regard to aspects of identity that know no borders and differences» (Demetrius 1997, 28). *Doing transculture* differs from doing *interculture*: while the latter is constituted as a militant action, ideologically oriented or marked by keeping the polarities between the hospitality culture and the native one, the transcultural action regards the identification of some guiding principles we can discover from time to time in terms of cohesion.

Both approaches, interculturality and transculturality, aim certainly at the beautiful colors and the polyphony of cultures, at their exploitation, by rejecting all the forms of uniformity, conformism and closing (Pinto Minerva 2002, 86). But the cultural perspective, precisely because it is placed on a single pole, *crosses* cultures facilitating interaction between individuals belonging to one or more cultures, an interaction harbinger of exchanges, meetings, contaminations, hybridisms. And the way of the narration, of the story, of the film can be certainly an elective privileged path to deal with the big issues of the individual's formation and of the community in a transcultural key.

Well, we are so arrived at the last point of our contribution: *transculturality and narration*. What other hybrid, mixed, contaminated, migrant subject, may be more indicative of narration? What does it mean, today, taking an educational look that focuses on the reason of narration?

It is useful to take a classic text: Jerome Bruner's *The search for the meaning*. In this text, Bruner argues that the psychologist's task and the educator's task, is not only to study the cognitive processes, as processes designed to facilitate the accumulation of knowledge, but deal especially with the the 'search f the meaning'. Our mind is a maze of meanings, as Bruner says; we



build our awareness and the environment and the context build our consciousness, on the base of narrative operations of the reality of life. This is done through structures of the thought, which are the result of meetings with the size of the stories. We learn stories, we do not learn through episodes, so we learn through sets: a story is a set, because it must have a background, an opening words, a plot, and an end (Bruner 1981, 24-37).

Bruner reminds us, therefore, the importance of rebuilding every look towards the others, through the experience of the narration, the listening of stories that we take and their returning. We learn through the narration, but we stop some of them, because they are in conflict with the models we have previously acquired, and this is a downside. So, the stories represent a vehicle of transformation.

Concerning a reflection that can deeply draw to new paradigms of growth and especially to that one of adult education, that refers to the Marie Christine Josso's «life stories» (Josso 2002) to Gustave Pineau's «autobiographical method» (Pineau 1983; 2003), to Pascal Galvani's «blazon» (Galvani 1997), we have the certainty, promoted by the reflection and the criticism of the already experienced, that “the art of narrating” fulfills a dual function. On the one hand, it can help us to find the common signs of a shared humanity, countering our tendency to deny the similarities; on the other hand, it shows the extreme complexity of our being persons, unique and unrepeatable, making us more aware of the qualitative differences that exist between the individuals.

The ability to imagine sympathetically, therefore, allows us to reduce the remoteness and strangeness, to understand the choices made by other people and the fact that they, despite their irreducible diversity, share the same problems and are equipped with the same potential. Narration stimulates our aptitude for understanding and fosters empathy and empathetic involvement to others' fate. These are inclinations which appear extremely important not only in terms of growth and personal gain, but also on a moral, civil and political one. Narration allows us to approach another person's life by activating our understanding and participation.

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Flavia Stara, Meem H. Zaffar<sup>1</sup>

## Afterword

Trust as a horizon of expectations.  
The rights of the person and the case of Hijras in India

Living in contemporaneity and understanding its phenomenology, implies a continuous dialogue with the complexity of ethical questions that culture poses to various areas of the universe of behaviors and social issues. The role of trust in our time is increasingly combined with social and political occurrences and then with the spaces of the regulatory processes and the exploitation of the subjectivity that has become the problem and the project. Hence the need of the individual to regain possession of his/her historical experience and his/her own narrative identity by establishing a responsible commitment with the present and future expectations. Responsibility and freedom invest the subject in his/her central role of moral actor and involve him/her within a dual perspective, individual and collective at once.

The categories of existence and not the ones of the essence are to rule the present image of the subject and his/her condition to project and emancipate. The postmodern subject appreciates

<sup>1</sup> These reflections are the result of joint observations and mutual discussions between the authors while they were in New Delhi in connection with the research international mobility. The authors have the conviction that respect for the person is the cornerstone of mutual trust and ethics. Mistrust whether it springs from racial or gender, or class or caste considerations can never be justified. To see the humans being treated as a commodity in whatever context and with whatever pretext, is a shocking experience. Indian hijras are just a specimen of a condition that is a fact of life for many persons all over the world.

the uniqueness and the problematic nature of the person, in a continuing openness to the future, which includes concerns and proposals that challenge him/her, and in respect to which he/she acts as legitimation, as regulator, as a possible completion.

Within such circuit of instances between being in relationship and being in evolution as a person, raises the cultural need for a new awareness of the gender dimensions that determine and require new relationships of trust and recognition. The genre encompasses a variety of needs, conflicts and differences. The most obvious of this vital interchange between interiority and exteriority, between the physical and the psychological/spiritual is obviously one's own body, already described by phenomenology as an ambiguous structure that is not reducible to pure objectivity or without interiority, nor to pure subjectivity without incarnation, but as an inseparable connection. This constitutive restlessness puts the person in a open and plural condition that ensures together with a profound gender identity – the conviction “of being a woman” or “being a man” – the recognition of a nature impregnated with other biological, anthropological and social predicates.

In order to understand the concept of gender identity, it is important to distinguish between the notions of sex and gender. While sex primarily refers to the biological difference between women and men, gender also includes the social aspect of the difference between genders in addition to the biological element. Gender identity is one of the most fundamental aspects of life. The sex of a person is usually assigned at birth and becomes a social and legal fact from there on. However, a relatively small number of people experience problems with being a member of the sex recorded at birth. This can also be so for intersex persons whose bodies incorporate both or certain aspects of both male and female physiology, and at times their genital anatomy. For others, problems arise because their innate perception of themselves is not in conformity with the sex assigned to them at birth. These persons are referred to as transgender or transsexual persons.

In India the human rights situation of transgender persons has long been ignored and neglected, although the problems

they face are serious and often specific to this group alone. Transgender people experience a high degree of discrimination, intolerance and outright violence. Their basic human rights are violated, including the right to life, the right to physical integrity and the right to health.

Laxminarayan Tripathi, a transgender from India, has recently published her courageous autobiography: “Me Hijra, Me Laxmi” (Tripathi 2015). The word *hijra* in India is a social and not a biological construct. One cannot be born a *hijra*, though one can be born a hermaphrodite. *Hijras* are born as male children biologically. Psychologically however they feel they are female. Sexually they are attracted not to the opposite sex but to their own sex. This conflict between their biological and psychological and sexual identities is borne out by their body language: their gestures, mannerisms, movements and expressions all belong to girls rather than boys. Their social behavior which includes dress, hairstyle, makeup, jewellery etc; is also that of women. Thus, there is a feeling of entrapment of being jailed in the wrong body.

Laxminarayan Tripathi (Laxmi) was born as a male but was effeminate and her sexual orientation was at odds with her male identity. In this book she tells about her childhood, her poor health and how she was exploited and violated at the age of seven, and how this exploitation continued for many more years.

As *hijras*, we live ordinary lives like everyone else. Like the underdog, we are respected by nobody... we are thus destitute. Estranged from family and ostracized by society, people couldn't care less about how we earn a livelihood, or where our next meal comes from. If *hijra* commits a crime the mob rushes to beat her up while the police are only too glad to press charges against us. This is not to justify crime, but to reiterate that all crimes have a social dimension and in the case of *hijras* this cannot be overlooked. Yet it is never taken into account (pp. 155-156).

Dancing was a ruling passion for Laxmi and in the depressing environment of sickness and exploitation the dancing proved to be a silver lining. Thus she got proper training in the art of dancing and taking a cue from her dance teacher, she started her own dance classes, which proved to be a success and she was



able to make a niche for herself in the socio-economic space. After going through an identity crises for a long time, Laxmi met a *hijra* in whom she discovered her alter-ego. She realized that she had been a victim of the wrongful assumptions of the world and she was convinced that she is a woman and the world must see her as such, while she was living as a man. Ultimately she takes the plunge and decides to become a *hijra* and in this way her dilemma of identity is resolved:

When I became a Hijra, a great burden was lifted off my head. I felt relaxed. I was now neither a man nor a woman. I was a hijra. I had my own identity. No longer did I feel like an alien (p. 43).

All her friends and acquaintances were shocked by her decision and most of them stopped talking to her, reflecting a deep rooted social perspective of denigrating certain identities:

Let alone my friends, even fellow hijras were surprised by my transformation. To their way of thinking only the wretched of the earth became hijras. A college educated boy who was an accomplished dancer and had the support of his parents had no need to (p. 45).

The constitution of India puts an obligation on the state to provide all the citizens their right to a happy childhood, health-care and equal opportunities in all the fields, including education. But despite that, it is a harsh reality that huge sections of marginalized classes of society are deprived of these opportunities and *hijras* or trans-genders are one of the worst marginalized groups. Till recently there were no provision for their head-count in the process of census that is conducted throughout the country after every 10 years. In India when a male's biological, psychological and sexual identities are at odds with each other, he becomes a freak in the eyes of society. Society ostracizes him. Overcome by feelings of isolation, such a person desperately seeks out others like him and bands with them. Together with them, he may decide to get rid of his male sexual organs, either through sex reassignment surgery or by having another *hijra* sever his private parts from the rest of his body without anesthesia. Together they may acquire breasts, either through hormone therapy or simply by supporting falsies.

The question that nags this person all through the text (her biography) is that of the transgender identity. It drives her even to commit suicide, but she survives, and decides to live and to live a meaningful life. Laxmi tried to drown her sorrow by absorbing herself in the welfare work for the hijra community. She also joined an NGO called DWS which worked for the welfare of the hijras and subsequently became its chairperson. It is an irony that while there is possibly no space for the transgenders in the conventional linguistic structures yet Laxmi a transgender has been renegotiating a neutral public space with possibilities for discussion, dialogue, education, deliberation and collaboration:

I wanted to be a member of the talking classes. The word ‘dialogue’ was my watchword. Whoever it was that I was dealing with, be it a DWS hijra or a company chairman or a project funder I wanted to have a dialogue with him (p. 64).

Laxmi’s story is a tale of a long inspiring struggle against the dark forces of prejudice, exploitation and oppression that are inbuilt in the inherited socio-political structures. There is an urgency to re-examine and deconstruct these structures which stifle and kill the human spirit. The book is not only a biography of a transgender but it also reflects the social reality of contemporary India. It gives us an insight about the transgender community in India and it also exhibits how the social space for trust is constricted and curved in relation to certain marginalized groups and identities. It is really an unfortunate state of affairs that the members of these groups, who are human beings, are treated as sub-human or maybe worse than that.

Can a *hijra* in India ever aspire to be a doctor, engineer, teacher, journalist or business manager? The answer is a resounding NO (p. 110).

The challenge of protecting the human rights of everyone is to apply a consistent human rights approach and not to exclude any group of people. It is clear that many transgender persons in India do not fully enjoy their fundamental rights both at the level of legal guarantees and that of everyday life. Therefore, there is a need to take a closer look at their situation. In a large scale international effort to promote international standards on

sexual orientation and gender identity, a group of distinguished experts in international human rights law published in 2007 the *Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*. While not adopted as an international standard, the principles are already cited by UN bodies, national courts, and many governments have made them a guiding tool for defining their policies in the matter. The Commissioner for Human Rights has endorsed the *Yogyakarta Principles* and considers them as an important tool for identifying the obligations of states to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all persons, regardless of their gender identity.

In this situation, the recurring and pressing question is how to express the best of oneself, how to live as a person with rights, dignity and talent in contexts that by suggesting distorted narratives confuse and blur the social trust. We shall have to admit that it is the categories of existence (and not that of the essence) that govern the image and the condition of the contemporary subject: they are open and mobile categories emerging from a principle of self-evidence that becomes itself quest, construction, claim for rights. This self-awareness should be confirmed in the consciousness of the community, otherwise the person will be constricted by new alienation, loneliness and discrimination. The new gender issues are not then limited only to the legal-political and economic spheres, as in many respects they already determine their specific configurations. Understanding the current state of gender relations, in democratic societies, and search how they ought to be improved upon is critical to identify new ways to increase the sustainable measures of trust in representative and participatory democracies.

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# Trust and conflict in intercultural processes

Experience, practice, reflections

This volume is the result of an international seminar held within the research project Marie Curie Actions on the theme: *Stimulators and Inhibitors of Culture of Trust in Educational Interactions assisted by Modern Information and Communication Technology*. Reflecting on the culture of trust requires to investigate the space and time of education, customs and communication. Within these contexts one can experience the complexity of the situations and conditions of the actions embedded in the achievement of trust. The awareness of the historical circumstances grounding the existential experience implies to rethink new processes of social cohesion for the construction of lasting synergies.

The authors participating in this volume address the diverse dynamics of trust and conflict in our contemporary societies. They discuss and analyze the subject matter with an interdisciplinary approach so to focus on specific practices of interactions. Special emphasis is given to explore intercultural paradigms in education, ethics, literature, politics and law.

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