The EWC Statement Series

Fourth Issue

2014

The 4th issue of the EWC Statement Series

Highlighting current trends, research and scholarly debates

Authors: Vitor Tomé, Andrea Petõ, Monique Eckmann, Audrey Osler, Jan Šerek

Contents

Editorial

Welcome to the 4th issue of the EWC Statement Series.

We are very happy to publish a collection of five statements that in different ways are related to the Council of Europe's vision of "Living together" in diverse societies in Europe and which highlight both challenges and possible strategies for educators.

In her programmatic statement **"Democracy and diversity in schools: recognizing political realities and re-imagining the nation"** Audrey Osler argues that the threat of right wing extremist and nationalist ideologies growing strong in the context of the ongoing economical crisis needs to be counteracted through education. Osler highlights the principles of inclusive and democratic education, which makes space for multiple identifications and changing images of the nation. The recognition of diverse identities, she argues, is one of the back bones of pluralist societies and in that way an essential ingredient of democratic cultures.

Osler also touches upon the competences teachers need to have in order to develop democratic and intercultural competence in students:

"[A] school curriculum which seeks both to include diverse cultures and religions and to promote solidarity and equality requires teachers who feel confident and prepared to enable multi-perspectivity. (..) Teachers need knowledge to introduce non-mainstream perspectives and skills to enable discussion of injustice, discrimination and exclusion."

All other statements of this issue discuss different societal conflicts and challenges that can undermine and endanger the vision of "living together", while at the same time offering concrete suggestions as to how educators can meet these challenges:

In her statement **"Education in the Context of 'Divided' Memories – How can a 'Pedagogy of Conflict elaboration' contribute?**, Monique Eckmann focuses on traumatic historical experiences that result in conflicting and contested narratives and uses of the past. She makes it very clear that neglecting the conflict and harmonization is a very short sighted strategy, which neither change the narratives about "us and them" nor the deeply rooted polarizing patterns of interpretation. Instead, she suggests an educational methodology that "works through" and deconstructs the hostile interpretations. Among other, she suggests, to create awareness regarding existing dissent and conflicts in the "we" group, since these can be a field where strategies of dialog and conflict resolution can be developed and experienced.

Based on the findings of a recent European research project "Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation" (PIDOP) Jan Šerek discusses the need to understand the contexts and forms of civic engagement of young Roma in order to avoid "self-fulfilling prophecies" placing Roma people outside the "civic" sphere of shared rights and responsibilities. In his statement "**Three myths on civic engagement among Roma youth"** he presents concrete suggestions as to how teachers can recognize and support the engagement of marginalized youngsters. Šerek is very clear that

encouraging Rome to get engaged in civic issues may result in negative experiences with stereotypization and discrimination. So, fostering participation of minority youngsters requires a parallel work towards the majority:

"[E]ducating the majority and encouraging inter-ethnic tolerance would be effective as an indirect means of supporting civic engagement among Roma."

Andrea Peto turns our attention towards those who are a threat against democracy and peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. In the debate about Right Wing Extremism the focus tends to be directed towards violent and radicalized men. In her statement "**Far Right Mobilization and Gender",** Peto corrects this "gender blindness" by outlining how and for which reasons women are attracted by Far Right Movements and she argues why educators, in their work to prevent racism and right wing extremism, should be aware of this. Peto ends her statement with a range of strategies to use, and to avoid, while encountering women who are supporting far right radical actions.

In connection with the ongoing Council of Europe "Campaign against hate Speech online", that addresses young people as agents of a human rights culture at the internet, Vitor Tomè argues that educators need to know and understand how students and teachers make use of social networking sites, and to be aware of the opportunities and risks related to their habits and use of social media. In his statement **"Preventing on-line hate speech through social media and democratic participation"** Tomè presents an example, in which educators developed strategies to prevent and counter hate speech online.

Since the Statement Series is a popular format at the EWC website, but people only can read, not comment, we introduced a new related feature in 2013: In the Share&Connect Exchanges, readers can directly send comments or questions about the Statement to the authors at our educational platform Share&Connect. In some cases, some interesting conversations have emerged and we have decided to keep the Exchanges also in 2014.

We are looking forward to the contributions and conversations to come in 2014. As always, we invite scholars, educators and other experts to come up with suggestions for further statement topics, potential authors – or right away: to offer us a statement of your own!

In case you have further questions, please contact: c.lenz@theewc.org

Best regards, on behalf of the EWC team,

Claudia Lenz

Head of Research & Development

The European Wergeland Centre

Preventing on-line hate speech through social media and democratic participation

By Vitor Tomé

The Council of Europe has just launched (March 2013) the campaign No Hate Speech Movement (http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/), which is neither designed to limit freedom of expression n or to make everyone be nice to each other online. The campaign is against hate speech online in all its forms, including those that most affect young people, such as cyber bullying and cyber-hate.

Based upon human rights education, youth participation and media literacy, the campaign has been shaped through several consultations with young people and youth representatives, ensuring it is a campaign by and with young people (aged between 13 and 30). The campaign will run through to April 2014. National campaigns may start earlier and continue to run after April 2014.

Hate speech online can be understood as "...antisocial oratory that is intended to encourage persecution against people because of their race, color, religion, ethnic group, or nationality, and has a substantial likelihood of causing . . . harm" (Tesis, 2002, p.211). It has several dimensions: content of speech, tone of speech, context of speech, targets of speech or potential implications (consequences) of speech (Titley, 2012).

This campaign gains a progressive importance due to the exponential increase in the use of social media by young people. In Europe, a study was carried out in 25 countries with more than 25 000 children aged between 9 and 16 years being interviewed. It was found that 59% of children from 9 to 16 years have a profile on a social network – 26% of the children aged 9 or 10, 49% aged 11 or 12 years, 73% aged 13 or 14 years and 82% aged 15 or 16 years. Among social networks users, 26% have public profiles (Livingstone *et al*, 2011).

Social media are changing the nature of groups, the social formations and power relations. They are also changing the way of attributing meaning to media content; in that way they transform the society and the popular culture, in particular (Gee, 2010). Users have fewer barriers to artistic expression, benefiting from strong support for creating and sharing creations with others, quickly gain access to information of professionals and amateurs, they feel that their contributions are valuable to others and feel some degree of social connection with other users (Jenkins, 2009).

Children and youngsters have opportunities for more public writing today than ever. They develop new forms of speech that adults slightly perceive and are subject to little monitoring and supervision. Therefore, it matters to realize the impacts of involvement in online social networks. More than statistics, which are important, it matters to understand what young people actually do on social networks, how they interact, how they communicate, how they learn with peers online and which skills they develop and need to develop (Ito, 2009).

It is also important to know their fears using social media, as Livingstone *et al* (2013) states: "Violence receives less public attention than sexual material, but many children are concerned about violent, aggressive or gory online content. They reveal shock and disgust on seeing cruelty, killings, abuse of animals and even the news – since much is real rather than fictional violence, this adds to the depth of children's reactions".

According to this research project, "video-sharing websites are often associated with violent and pornographic content, along with a range of other content-related risks. Among the children who linked risks to specific internet platforms, 32% mentioned video-sharing sites such as YouTube, followed by websites (29%), social networking sites (13%) and games (10%)" (*idem*).

This kind of information is crucial to schools and to educators. On the one hand, schools are present in online social networks, with institutional pages open to teachers, students and other stakeholders. On the other hand, teachers, students and other stakeholders have profiles in other social networks and interact on these platforms. That participation changes the way of communicating, thinking and learning (De Abreu, 2011). Consequently, the school needs to know how to act in social networks platforms as an institution. But above all, educators need to know how students and teachers make use of social media. There is, in other words, a need for professional development of educators with regard to media literacy.

Research and teacher training

The Pestalozzi Programme has met this need for professional development of educators in the Module series "The use of social media for democratic participation", that started in September 2012. The Pestalozzi Programme puts media literacy in the context of Human Rights and describes it as the critical, responsible and beneficial use of the media environment. As such it is one of the key competences for sustainable democratic societies, part of a set of basic "transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge of a democratic citizen" as central elements of formal, non-formal and informal education.

The module series focuses on the use of social media for social interaction and democratic participation. How can education prepare the learners for a critical and responsible use of the media environment for their participation in public-life? How can education professionals be able to develop the capacity of learners' ability to use social media to express their opinion, to initiate debate and discussion as well as democratic action aimed at improving the conditions which surround us, whatever topic they choose to focus on: sustainable environment and production, living together in diversity, responsible consumerism, or any other form of appropriate social and political action.

In the framework of the module series, a training course for in-service teachers was organized, focusing on three key areas: social media, democratic participation and how to fight hate speech (the training unit and the piloting report will be available soon in a Pestalozzi publication). The fourteen participating in-service teachers involved a total of 264 students in their activities, such as:

- Organizing surveys

- Arranging discussions with students, reflecting about the benefits and risks of social media
- Tackling situations in which students may have been the target of risks such as cyber bullying or hate speech

The great asset of this training was the opportunity teachers had to discuss the use of social networking with students, to understand their attitudes, benefits and fears towards social media. But they could also learn more about the reality of the digital divide, which is higher in rural than in urban areas.

Teachers learned how their students use social networks. The findings of the surveys which had been conducted show the following:

a) About 10 percent of the students (28 of 264) had no Internet access and even less to social networks, this was mainly in rural areas. However, students with no access have a clear perception of what their friends do on the network (mainly Facebook) and report that they would like to do the same (communicate, play ...).

b) Students report situations where they have witnessed hate speech, namely bullying through social media (conduct risks): "I've already been hurt by what has been written and I was really bad. It was someone I liked". They also refer to content risks: "They sent me ridiculous pictures. These are people who do not think"; "Instead of sharing images of children dying of starvation, we should help those people. Sharing is a form of discrimination".

c) Among children's fears, contact risks clearly stands out, such as: "to be kidnapped", "to reveal confidential information", "being deceived with fake pages/profiles", "friend requests from unknown people", "the presence of people who are not trustworthy", "face jacking" and "home invasions originating from information shared on the network".

d) Students have a clear understanding that they cannot publish whatever they want on the Internet and even argue that there are limits. Some of them even mention the possibility of being punished by the authorities if they publish inappropriate content;

e) For children, the advantages of the network are to communicate with family (some in other countries) and friends (especially the closest in real life), games and publishing information;

f) The discussion on the subject of online social networking was something that interested students, regardless their academic success and internet access;

Conclusions

Social media are increasingly important in students' daily lives and their democratic participation in society. But very few teachers discuss with students about their participation. Teacher training about the use of social media can encourage teachers to do so in order to form critical consumers and reflexive producers of media - aware of the benefits and risks related to them. Moreover, training

teachers to use social media as a pedagogical resource and as a subject of study is important and urgent.

We are working on educational tools for schools of all countries of the Council of Europe (included in the campaign No Hate Speech Movement). They will be available online during 2013[1] and we hope these tools could help students and teachers to be critical and reflexive social media users, to exercise democratic participation and combat hate speech online and offline.

References

De Abreu, B. (2011). Media Literacy, Social Networking and the Web 2.0 Environment for the K-12 Educator. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Gee, J. (2010). New Digital Media and Learning as an Emerging Area and "worked examples" as One Way Forward. New York: MIT Press.

Ito, M. (2009). Living and Learning with new media: summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project. New York: MIT Press.

Jenkins, H. (2009). Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century. New York: MIT Press.

Livingstone, S., Kirwil, L., Ponte, C. and Staksrud, E. (2013). In their own words: what bothers children online? with the EU Kids Online Network. LSE London: EU Kids On-line.

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. e Oláfsson, K. (2011). Risks and safety on the Internet: the perspective of European children. LSE London: Eu Kids On-line.

Titley, G. (2012). Realities And Threats Of Hate Speech Online For Young People Today. Oral presentation during the European Online Youth Campaign Against Hate Speech Preparatory Seminar (Eycs), Strasbourg, 10 October 2012

Tsesis, A (2002) Destructive Messages: How Hate Speech Paves the Way for Harmful Social Movements NYU Press, p. 211

---

[1] Remark by the editor: the educational pack called «Bookmarks» has been published in early 2014 and is availabe at: http://nohate.ext.coe.int/Campaign-Tools-and-Materials/Bookmarks

Far right mobilization and gender

By Andrea Petõ

Far right political activists are not all men, there are also women among them. This very simple statement has not received enough attention from activists and educators who are combating against far right politics. Far right politics also uses its own gender politics as a mobilizing force. This statement is summarizing the research on far right and gender, giving reasons why educators and teachers should pay attention to this phenomenon, and listing strategies to use, and to avoid, while encountering women who are supporting far right radical actions. The statement also gives suggestions to educators to consider in their work, as well as references and links for further readings.

The state of art of the research

Researchers of the far right movements are usually focusing on men as actors and rarely considering women as actors in the "unholy" civil society. This has been changing in recent research which recognizes women as participants, and also in research on masculinities and femininities constructed by the far rights movements as factors of mobilization. The increasing popularity of far right movements make research which identifies who are attracted to the far right agenda and who are those who are setting this agenda very timely. Paradigm shift in the research from analyzing institutional structures and political programs to motivations and actions opens up space for a more subtle analysis which moves away from historical analogical argumentation to analysis of discourses and emotions. Surveys show that twice as many men as women are being mobilized to the far right, still women's presence, motivation and trajectories of joining to this movement have not received enough attention. Recent studies also underline that "far right" is also a very complex category including different forms of participation and support of movements, organizations, and it also means complex matrix of sometimes self-contradicting identifications.

Rationale

In the past decade a new group of women have been mobilized to the far right who are not losers of the economic situation, but well educated women with jobs, who are looking at far right as an antimodernist option to the present emancipation policy and rhetoric. Far right ideas are spreading among young women in the secondary schools and higher education.

The far right is avoiding addressing women as "women". They are labeled as "mothers" (or as future mothers) and are integrated into a family policy that advocates heterosexual nuclear families. Furthermore, the discourse of the far right relates to family and motherhood, not to individuals. The

framework of normative motherhood and the "patriarchal bargain" opens up space for women's agency without critically questioning values of the ingroup. Therefore the concept of "family" also regulates dominant masculinity and secures the position of women in marriage, "protecting" them against the extramarital affairs of their husbands. Normative definition of motherhood is a useful strategy, one that secures the financial and moral support of men in a society where women earn on average 20% less than men working in the same positions. This way of thinking permits women to distance themselves from the openly criticized gender politics i.e. of the EU. It also exempts them from the dilemma that defining their identity as women can be potentially described as a "problem identity". Far right gender politics offers a clear, firm, normative and binary view about how "women" and "men" should work and live together.

The present economic crises is not only an economic crisis but a structural one which might present far right ideas as a viable alternative in insecure times. In longer term, it concerns a linguistic monopoly of far right over family and motherhood, which falls into a specific conservative interpretation concerning demographic crises. The backdrop of an economic crisis and eroding welfare systems are posing an additional challenge in formulating a counter-argument to far right arguments.

Identification of the target group

Women in far right movements are often portrayed in a simplistic and stereotypical way which prevents not only to understand this phenomenon better, but also to articulate educational strategies. The stereotypical woman in the far right movement is either a young, inexperienced, misled teenager with difficult family background or a partner of a male member. The understanding of complexities of mobilization contributes to a better understanding.

- Far right ideas are finding their place among very different men and women as far as institutional membership (political party/civil organisation), regionality (local/urban), education (higher/middle), use of internet (active/consumer only), position in the community (respected professional: doctor, lawyer, etc. or marginal), age.

- In the case of women, far right ideas form an opposition to the mainstream emancipation narrative and emphasize spiritualism and essentially "feminine" characteristics.

- Conservative and far right groups might find common ground in working together in issues like combating trafficking and prostitution, issues traditionally defined by progressive political forces. In spite of these common agendas, the differences regarding strategies and trajectories should be emphasized.

- The different forms and organizations of far right mobilization might mean different reasons for women to join. Developing far right sentiments and action needs space, so identifying and understanding what these spaces mean for women, is an important step.

The present wave of far right movements requires new strategies and reviewing the old ones. The old reflexes such as using authoritarian arguments or ask for legalist based intervention can offer only short term solutions. Educators need to be conscious about what kind of strategies to use and what to avoid when encountering far right extremism. The next session lists strategies to use and strategies not to use.

Strategies not to use

- Far right movements are constructing a meta-culture with special symbols, narratives and heroes to celebrate, dress code to show off. Mocking and labeling these ideas will deepen the divide as the reference group is usually more attractive. Do not demonize!

- Far right mobilization can take complex and different organizational forms therefore essentializing them would push the participants for further radicalization.

- Do not put different groups, individuals under one umbrella-term such as far right, but try to spot differences. Collapsing complexities for the sake of the understanding is firing back.

- Women attracted by far right are understanding their choice to support this group as a form of agency, questioning if the choice was right will easily be rejected therefore another model should be presented which is an alternative to their present lifestyle. Do not use complicated and heavily loaded language when communicating about simple issues.

- Far right mobilization is based on anti-establishment attitudes: speaking from the position of the establishment can be very counterproductive as any pedagogical situation which can be interpreted as victimization.

- Confrontation should be based on moral arguments, do not use legal terminology. Do not use authoritarian argument as claiming more state intervention into affaires.

- The organization of far right movements are subverting what we have known about social movements. Heritage organizations, mothers' clubs, students' clubs can be sites for far right mobilization. Declaring tolerance in itself will not prevent those recruiting women, active counter action is required.

Strategies to use

- Joining far right is a form of protest and a resistance to a form of modernity. Understanding some parts of that criticism: „treadmill" of consumption, environmental catastrophes, exploitation of women might help to move towards a more nuanced analysis.

- Create small projects where you can involve people with different views: researching life stories of forgotten women who contributed to the local history can be very attractive.

Rediscovering life stories of forgotten women can be also used in a parallel life story project when members of the class are comparing turning points of their lives and values they are following in their lives to women of the past.

- Read the literature women of far right are referring to, try to read their "mind", familiarize with concepts they are using.

- The line for tolerance should be clearly visible during communication: what is acceptable and what is not (for example harming people).

- The young generation is "digital native", use internet to spread your ideas.

- Try to follow the media (including social media) coverage regarding issues important for young women and bring in examples in the class/meetings to discuss

- Direct action promoting an agenda is always more effective than indirect media campaign

- Concrete information and facts on issues influencing their lives: such as pension system are more effective that general lecture on democratic values

Suggestions for educators

In different educational situations different strategies can be used, and the simplest encounter can be defined as an educational situation. Gender should be integrated not only when speaking about women but also when essentializing and homogenizing concepts are being used about other social groups such as migrants or homosexuals.

- Europe is facing the "lost decade" and the "lost generation", therefore critical thinking is crucial as a skill learned in education. Introduction of critical thinking is not automatic, but essential.

- Change can only happen from within therefore strategies for fighting far right extremism should focus on enhancing change in the individual

- Debate itself is a product: you have to carefully prepare it and make sure the moderation of the debate is effective

- Never consider teaching as finished: this is a continuous process of paying attention to each other

- Prevention is better than intervention: if you see changes in dress code, tattoos, or readings you might want to discuss the reasons. Positioning yourself as a learner who wants to know more is more productive that stepping in as an authority.

- Map and use possible support structures, women NGOs etc.in your neighborhood, as for advice from crisis centers

- Identity is considered as a capital which makes life easier to live, abrupt change might lead to crisis and sometimes personal tragedy so be careful.

- More and more young women are growing up in families with far right ideas. One cannot expect these women to simply turn against their socialization and fight against their families. However, asking them to write their own life stories and compare them with other life stories written in class might lead to reflective and meaningful discussions.

Conclusions

Far right beliefs are products and constitutive parts of the European modernization, they represent the dark legacy of the European project. The task for today is to develop a new narrative of Europe, where teaching has a crucial role to play. In this new narrative, gender should promote equality and freedom for all as gender is also a constitutive part of far right mobilization. Women, young and old who are supporting far right politics are doing so because they choose so. This decision should be understood and may be changed. Not by portraying these women as victims, and not with demanding state intervention and repression, but with constructing viable and livable alternatives.

Further readings

Bacchetta, P. & Margaret Power, M. (eds.), (2002) Right-Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World, New York: Routledge.

Petõ, A. (2010) "Anti-Modernist Political Thoughts on Motherhood in Europe in a Historical Perspective" in Reframing Demographic Change in Europe. Perspectives on Gender and Welfare State Transformations. Heike Kahlert, Waltraud Ernst (Eds.) Focus Gender. Band 11. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 189-201.

http://www.frauen-und-rechtsextremismus.de/cms/

http://genderandfarright.wordpress.com/

http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/eng/we-are-active/topics/gender-and-the-prevention-of-right-wing-extremism/

Education in the Context of "Divided" Memories – How can a "Pedagogy of Conflict elaboration" contribute?

By Monique Eckmann

1. Hurtful Past, Intergroup Conflicts and Divided Memories

Introduction

Learning about a hurtful history can be an identity challenge or even a threat for learners, reviving the desire of being seen as valued people, and provoking sometimes strong negative emotions.

This might be an obstacle for the creation of an educative climate of trust and reconciliation. This statement will investigate how this challenge can be met and it will be suggested that conflict and destabilization should not be avoided but be turned into a source for learning and dialogue.

In this statement, a hurtful or difficult past is understood as a transmitted collective historical experience, which is dealt with in a pedagogical more protected context. The statement does not address individual traumatic experiences, which need to be dealt with in a psychological approach in a completely secured space.

The difficulty of facing one's own history

The history of violations of human rights or crimes against humanity involves the memory of the traumatic past and might be meaningful for one's own identity, in particular when it is related to on-going or even intractable inter group conflicts. The memory of a common past shapes the identity of a group, and emphasizes the difference between "us" and "them", and historical consciousness - i.e. how people look at the past and how they interpret this past, and how they produce a self-image - is an important part of social identity, in particular ethnic or national identity.

As social psychology shows, there is a universal need for a positive identity, and this has not only a cognitive, but also a strong emotional component, which implies that historical learning can be seen as a threat for one's social, ethnic or national identity. It can indeed be hurtful to discover one's own people as victims of crimes against humanity, but it can be even more difficult to discover them as collaborators or perpetrators of crimes, or also as bystanders.

Societies in conflict have in general also divided memories; each group holds its own narrative of the past and its own representation of memory in public or privates paces. Memorials are drawn to underline the victimization of some or the "heroization" of the others. Thus, in the same society, especially in the context of past violations of human rights or crimes against humanity, different groups carry different memories and conflicting narratives of the past. The liberation for some means the occupation for others, the victory for some is the defeat for others.

From Divided to Shared Memories

In intergroup conflicts, the memory of atrocities endured in the past is transmitted from generation to generation as proof of the ongoing victimization of the group. Even more, the experience of victimization is supposed to demonstrate the moral superiority of the group over "the others" (Bar-Tal 2007), whereas the confrontation with your own group's historical responsibility creates a feeling of inferiority and of shame, a threat for one's identity, unless active commitment for this responsibility is overtaken.

Thus, to overcome *divided* memories, they have to become *shared* memories (Margalit 2002). To share memories does not necessarily mean to have the same vision of the past. Before being able to sharing the same vision, it is necessary to share the differences of the various narratives. So, shared memories require communication between different groups, or communities of memory, about their respective narratives. Even if they don't agree, they can at least register and acknowledge their diversity and discuss it. Acknowledgement of the Other's memory is a basis for any dialogue between conflicting groups.

A similar approach is suggested in Peace education. According to Gavriel Salomon, Peace education aims at a change in the perception of the Other's collective narrative, and includes four dimensions (2002: 9):

➢ Legitimization of *Their* Collective Narrative
➢ Critical examination of *Our Contribution* to the Conflict
➢ Empathy for *Their* suffering
➢ Engagement in Nonviolent Activities

Thus, to listen to, and to recognize the Others' narrative, constitutes a crucial element in changing representations and contributes to lowering the levels of hostility and violence, or even to start the path towards reconciliation.

But does peace education mean to aim for mere harmony and the avoidance or denial of conflict?

2. **Conflict and dialogue as elements of change**

Conflict is a constitutive element of life in society, it can be violent and destructive, but it might also be an element of change–let me be precise that conflict does *not* equate violence. In that sense, social psychology considers conflicts as a positive element for learning, especially when inserted in social interaction; however, when this social interaction forms a threat for the learner's competences or for his/her identity, the positive impact of conflict is not given any more (Darnon, Butera, Mugny 2008).

Therefore, a *pedagogy of conflict elaboration* (Eckmann 2004) means creating a space where contradictions and conflicts are allowed to be raised, where dissonances can come up, such as between your own representation of the past and the representation of the others, as we have seen before, the experience of victory for some means an experience of defeat for others, or the

dissonance between the values of human rights and the perception of past or present needs and rights (turned for example into national or ethnic privileges over migrants' rights).

Intergroup encounters and In-group encounters

In intergroup conflicts, with associated conflicting narratives, the encounter with the other group represents often a hurtful challenge for the own narrative, and hence for the own identity. This is a necessary step in order to move forward, as the encounter with the narrative of the others is a factor of destabilizing the own representations of the past, and questions the position of the groups: Each of the groups has a specific dilemma: the majority, or the powerful group, has the dilemma of power, whereas the minority, or the oppressed group, experiences the dilemma of powerlessness (Rommelspacher 1995), so each of them has to face specific contradictions and answer specific challenges.

Two levels are important in an encounter between groups in conflict: the intergroup level, where the encounter allows the conflict to arise, where the different narratives of the past or the different experiences of the present are told to each other. But the specific experiences, dilemmas and questions need also to be addressed at another level: it is important that the confrontational experience is followed by a setting where the "us" and "them" can be openly questioned in an in-group exchange (among persons sharing **a similar** historical experience and sense of belonging). This leads from *inter*-group to *intra*-group dialogue and conflict. This movement brakes up the imagined homogeneity of the others, as well as the representation of a monolithical self. This approach is well known and practiced by many models of peace education or encounters (Bar & Bargal 1995; Halabi & Philipp-Hecks 2001), especially in clearly divided societies.

From external conflicts to internal dilemmas

Following the model of education to democracy "Together" (Maroshek Klarman 1997), raising conflicts and then turning these "external" conflicts (which might be experienced as threatening for identity), into "internal" conflicts or dilemmas (inside the person, between contradicting values, or between one's personal beliefs and the beliefs of the group), will challenge the learners ability to seek him-or herself for a solution.

In fact this approach towards a constructive use of conflicts has become a basic element of historical learning and human rights and peace education. When encountering the others, the own narrative of history is destabilized, questions and dilemmas arise about the transmission in the own family or/ and in the own national or ethnic group.

3. Methodological Requirements for these Educational approaches

Historical knowledge

Conflicting memories are a challenge not only for the society as a whole, but also for educators in the classroom. How to address the various narratives, how to deal with them? In the classroom, peace education models used in clearly divided societies are mostly difficult to implement, because they are based on divisions which usually do not apply in a classroom; nevertheless, conflicting narratives also do sometimes coexist in the same group of students, and it is important to be aware of these differences and of their real historical background.

Learning about hurtful history and about traumatic experiences needs of course acquiring a basis of historical knowledge on the event and on its aftermath, such as the knowledge on trials or on measures of transitional justice or reconciliation processes. But as we have seen, dealing with hurtful past has not only a cognitive dimension. It might involve the learner's family history and identity, which echoes in various forms, what he has been told before and outside the classroom, and as well might involve an imagined division of "us" and "them" relating to these events.

Safe space

Thus, the mentioned approaches need a safe space, where the reality can be questioned, but always with respect and without aggressiveness and without denial of the experience and rights of others. To create this safe space requires several dimensions, such as giving time and space to the expression of the various narratives and the way historical events have been experienced; disposition to listen to them and to try to find out, what can be learned by listening; then, narratives need also to be challenged, but without threatening identities or accusing groups; and finally leave time for questioning, self-reflection, and doubts, give space to reflect on the own emotional needs and rights.

Dissonance

A common core element of the approaches described above is the creation of situations which raise dissonance, dilemmas, or create irritation. This can be considered as pedagogy of "destabilization" (Verunsicherung, Thimm, Kössler & Ulrich 2010); the authors suggest that next to gaining knowledge about the history of a historical site and the history of the memory of a place, there is a need for an open group process which creates dissonance and takes into account group dynamics and identity needs. But this requires also an ongoing questioning by the educators themselves concerning their relationship to the history, to the history of the own family and to the historical site or institution.

The educators' own involvement and possible biases

Besides the various identities or groups in the classroom, there is also a need for being aware of the educators own "position as speaker" (Sprecherposition, Eckmann 2010), i.e. his or her own or family

experiences, belongings and beliefs, to be clear about "where do I speak from". This might include with whom do I identify and from which group(s) do I distance myself, or how do I deal with my own family background. Critical self-reflection on the relationship to the educators' own memorial contexts should in fact be included in the educators basic trainings, or be offered as a possibility to share with colleagues in intervision-groups. Indeed sharing with colleagues critical incidents of misunderstandings or conflicts, or also sharing of success stories involving multiple memories and narratives could be really useful. Such as the experience of the competition of victims and memories amongst students unwilling to listen to others, but on the other side, also moments when deep understanding and empathy is shared amongst groups of past victimization.

4. Conclusion and Ongoing Challenges

There is a tension between the necessity to build safe spaces for learning and trust on the one hand and the need to de-stabilize habitual notions of the self and the other. These safe spaces must allow doubts and questions, and the dealing with dissonance. And it is crucial to create and maintain a learning climate which avoids threat of identities, humiliation and the rise of resentments.

These spaces also require giving recognition to each singular experience, especially in the context of competing victimization. Experiences of victimhood cannot be ranked or put into hierarchies. However, each singular experience has also to be put into a larger historical picture, and linked to its context.

Dealing with hurtful past always involves to reflect critically on one's own society, its institutions and on their involvement in history and memory and to reflect on the responsibility of individuals and of the state towards Human rights requirements, in the past and in the present. This can bring up difficult dissonances and modify deeply the picture learners had before of the own people. It also requires dealing with ambivalence, because the confrontation with the own history or with new findings of historical research can bring hurtful insights.

Here the principle of multiperspectivity is very helpful: admitting the co-existence of several views and narratives. The recognition of the "Others" narrative is a crucial moment in a dialogue and helps mutual understanding.

However, there appear also to be limits to dialogue which will form a major challenge and need to be discussed in the future: we also have to face - rare but existing - that dialogue is instrumentalized for denial or trivialization of crimes against humanity. This is a limit difficult to deal with, which requires from educators to bring in historical facts and insights from transitional justice. Denial is not an opinion or an experience, when it is falsifying history. The challenge ahead of us is to create tools for dealing with these situations.

In this context it makes a difference, whether dealing with settled or with ongoing conflicts. In settled conflicts, educators can refer to trials, fact finding missions, peace agreements etc., whereas in the context of ongoing violent conflicts, dialogue and the recognition of the Other's narrative can form a peace-building tool for future settlements.

But let's be clear, and that is also my own personal experience: the dialogue with others can be very difficult; however, in fact the dialogue with one's "own people" is often much more hurtful and conflicting than the dialogue with the "Others".

References

Bar-Tal, Daniel (2007). "Sociopsychological Foundations of Intractable Conflicts." *American Behavioral Scientist* 50 (11): 1430–1453

Bar, Haviva & David Bargal (1995). Living with the Conflict: Encounters Between Jewish and Palestinian Israeli Youth. Jerusalem: Institute for Israeli Studies.

Darnon, Butera, Mugny (2008)

Eckmann, Monique (2013): «History and Memory of the Other: An Experimental Encounter-Program with Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel». In G. Jikeli, J. Allouche-Benayoun (eds*.), Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities. Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges*. Dordrecht; New York: Springer.P. 133-152

Eckmann M. (2010). „Identitäten, Zugehörigkeiten, Erinnerungsgemeinschaften. Der Dialog zwischen »Vermittlungsposition« und »Empfangsposition«". In: *Verunsichernde Orte*. Thimm, Barbara, Gottfried Kößler, Susanne Ulrich (Hrsg.), Frankfurt am Main: Brandes und Apsel Verlag, S 64-69.

Eckmann, M. (2004*) Identités en conflit, dialogue des mémoires. Enjeux identitaires desrencontres intergroupes [Conflicting identities, a dialogue of memories. Identity issues in intergroup meetings*]. éd. ies, Genève)

Halabi, Rabah &Ulla Philipps-Heck (2001). *Identitaten im Dialog: Konfliktintervention in der Friedensschule von Neve Schalom Wahat al-Salam in Israel*. Schriftenreihe Des Deutsch-Israelischen Arbeitskreises Fur Frieden im Nahen Osten e.V. 36. Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau.

Thimm, Barbara, Gottfried Kößler, Susanne Ulrich (Hrsg.) (2010). *Verunsichernde Orte. Selbstverständnis und Weiterbildung in der Gedenkstättenpädagogik*. Frankfurt amMain: Brandes und Apsel Verlag.

Margalit, Avishai (2002). *The Ethics of Memory*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Maroshek-Klarman, Uki (1997). *Erziehung zur Demokratie. Die Methode des Adam Institutes.* Jerusalem, Adam Institute

Rommelspacher, Birgit (1995), *Dominanzkultur. Texte zu Fremdheit und Macht*. Berlin, Orlanda Frauenverlag.

Salomon, Gavriel (2002). "The Nature of Peace Education: Not All Programs Are Created Equal." In *Peace Education: The Concept, Principles, and Practices Around the World*, ed. Baruch Nevo and Gavriel Salomon, 3–14. Mahwah N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Democracy and diversity in schools: recognising political realities and re-imagining the nation

By Audrey Osler

A political party can and should be dissolved if it poses a fundamental threat to a country's constitutional commitment to democracy and human rights. So says Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks, following a visit to Greece in January 2013. Muižnieks was responding to an increase in racist and other hate crimes and to strong evidence that the neo-Nazi political party "Golden Dawn" and its leaders are advocating and practising racial hatred and violence[1]. He is pointing out that politicians and political parties do not have absolute freedom of expression. A neo-Nazi party which denies the equal rights of minorities and does not respect the nation-state's commitments to democracy and human rights should not be allowed to continue until it is in a position to take office. The Commissioner called on the Greek authorities to develop and implement initiatives aimed at combatting and preventing racism and extremism, giving priority to those which raise "awareness of the dangers of intolerance and racism and enhance human rights education in schools" (Muižnieks, 2013, para.41).

Diversity and the nation-state

How then should we teach for sustainable citizenship, at a time when there are real threats to democracy and when we see attacks not just on minorities but also on policies designed to enable equality and inclusion? While Europe now has a Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) (Council of Europe, 2010), designed to guide educational policy-making, European education systems continue to be shaped within and by nation-states. This may seem natural, but as Kymlicka (2003) points out, there is nothing "natural" about the nation-state, which privileges a specific national identity, language, history, culture, literature, myths and religion.

The nation has been shaped by a series of public policies which have promoted a common national language[2], national history, national myths, national symbols, a national literature, a national media, a national military, a national education and, sometimes, a national religion. The education system is pivotal to these other policy developments. Dewey ([1916] 2002) reminds us that European mass education systems were developed in the late nineteenth century, when nationalism was at its zenith. Before then, education providers focused on a broader cosmopolitan ideal, emphasising a shared human heritage. Dewey highlights how "cosmopolitanism gave way to nationalism",

[1] The Greek authorities since arrested Golden Dawn leaders. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24391656 accessed 12 October 2013
[2] The language model varies in practice and many states (e.g. South Africa, Canada, India, Switzerland) have more than one official language.

emphasising loyalty to the state rather than to humanity. Today, across national curricula, the same principles relating to democracy, justice, tolerance, openness and so on are regularly named "national values". In reality, these are the values of the international community, expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is sometimes asserted that growing cultural and religious diversity threatens to undermine democratic practices. We live in an age characterised as one of "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007). Changing demographics and social patterns mean Europe's migrant communities are increasingly diverse, and no longer linked solely to countries with which there are colonial or other long-standing historical ties. Nevertheless, equating diversity with migrants may be misleading. It masks other long-standing forms of diversity, such as those related to gender, sexuality, religion, and language. In the minds of many Europeans, diversity is linked with people of colour, and whiteness is seen as the norm. White populations are homogenised and we fail to recognise diversity within them.

Diversity is in fact essential to the successful application of democratic practices (Parker, 2003). If we were all to agree we would have little need for democratic structures. Human rights do not provide us with a rule book to resolve differences of opinion, but they do offer a set of principles within which we can develop a constructive democratic dialogue about identity and diversity in different social and cultural contexts. Culture is not fixed but constantly evolving.

As societies become increasingly diverse, one policy response is to focus on "shared values". So, in Norwegian policy documents, for example, we encounter a repeated emphasis on "Christian and humanist values", tempered by the assertion that these are values shared by other religions. This serves to define who is seen as mainstream and who is marginal, within the imagined community of the nation.

The story of Ruth Maier (2010), a young refugee who fled to Norway from Vienna in 1939, resonates with the migrant experience today, highlighting complexity. Ruth does all she can to integrate, learning the language and successfully graduating from school. But what is striking about her story is the way others define her, highlighting and accentuating differences. Her feelings of exclusion lead her to reassess aspects of her identity, including her Jewishness, to which she previously gave scant attention.

The human rights project is a cosmopolitan one, based on our shared humanity. The teacher's task is not to enable the newcomer to be more like "us", but build upon and extend students' range of identities, working to educate for human rights and human solidarity at all scales, from the local to the global. An alternative way of conceptualising education for democracy and diversity is as "education for cosmopolitan citizenship" (Osler and Starkey, 2005). Education for cosmopolitan citizenship does not need to be in tension with education for national citizenship. But it does require that we re-imagine the nation as cosmopolitan.

Making space for multiple identities

An independent group invited by the Council of Europe to report on challenges arising from the resurgence of intolerance and discrimination in Europe makes proposals for "living together"

(Council of Europe's Group of Eminent Persons, 2011). The group asserts that identities are a voluntary, personal matter; no one should be forced to choose one primary identity to the exclusion of others. This is in keeping with the perspectives of educational researchers who nevertheless note that, in practice, individuals can be denied full citizenship rights because of others' perceptions of their characteristics or identities, related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and so on (Banks, 2004; Osler and Starkey, 2005). The Council of Europe report argues that European societies need to embrace diversity, and accept that one can be a "hyphenated European" – for instance, a Congolese-German, a North African-Frenchwoman or a Kurdish-Norwegian. But this can work only if all long-term residents are accepted as citizens and given a say in decision-making and if all, whatever their faith, culture or ethnicity, are treated equally by the law.

Expressions of extremism (hate-speech, physical violence) curb democratic participation, by undermining the psychological and physical security of those under attack. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has noted that in several member states "extremist parties and movements are propagating and defending ideologies that are incompatible with democracy and human rights" and that "no member state is immune to the intrinsic threats that extremism poses to democracy" (PACE, 2003, my emphasis).

Extending democracy in education

In Norway, following Anders Behring Breivik's 2011 attack in which seventy seven people died, then Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg called for "more democracy, more openness, and more humanity" in response to the massacre. Given the evidence of anti-democratic forces in society and popular expressions of racism, expressed in complaints about "too many foreigners" or "too many Arabs", it is important to consider what Stoltenberg's call for more democracy might mean for educators' practices. I would suggest that it does not necessarily mean more of the same, since efforts to promote democratic practices in schools which are not mindful of today's multicultural realities risk creating learning contexts which purport to be democratic, but which may fail to guarantee the equal rights and entitlements of minority learners.

The call for more democracy in education requires an extension of democratic practices to encompass diversity, recognising not just visible minorities, but other overlooked identities and histories. Turning a blind eye to intolerance and racism in society does not make it go away. Denying its significance is to misjudge its impact on learners who are subject to discriminatory language, undermining their well-being, sense of belonging and learning. If we under-play barriers to participation, we also mis-educate mainstream students. The message is that minority rights and identities are less important, and students do not need to work to strengthen democracy. Concern for human rights is reserved for those living in distant places. Learners may fail to recognise that human rights and democracy need to be renewed, refreshed and guaranteed for all at home.

Genuine democratic learning environments – and democratic decision-making at school – need to ensure that curricula, organisational issues, school structures and policies guarantee the rights and interests of minoritised students. Furthermore, education for democracy requires the development of skills and attitudes in all students, both mainstream and minoritised, which equip them to defend

democratic principles and to struggle for justice with those who encounter discrimination or exclusion. Solidarity is a key concept in education for human rights and democracy. But solidarity with people in distant places means little, if we are not ready also to defend others' rights in the school, community and nation.

Rights, recognition and participation

A primary question in educational policymaking is not what kind of economy we want, but what kind of society we want. Our democratic societies are imperfect. Even when we have laws to protect vulnerable individuals and groups, such laws are only effective when majority populations understand how structures may operate to exclude minorities, denying equal access in decision-making and other key processes.

Since individuals have different needs, treating everyone the same does not achieve equitable outcomes. We recognise the importance of providing interpreters in criminal trials, for accused persons who do not fully understand the language of the court. To neglect to do so would deny the right to a fair trial. Architects design buildings which can be accessed by wheelchair users and we provide ramps in older buildings. Without such provisions, many would be denied access to a range of political, cultural, social and economic rights. They would not be able to visit museums, attend theatres, travel, vote, or even work.

The same principle applies in education. Not all learners have the same needs or experiences. There is a danger of unwittingly excluding minorities by treating everyone the same. Children's stories need to reflect the range of cultures and experiences of children in the class (and the nation). Bilingual picture books enable parents to read with their children and support children's language development. They help monolingual children to understand and appreciate linguistic diversity, recognising it as commonplace. When snacks are provided in a college or university, food needs to be labelled so that those who have particular dietary needs, according to religious custom, health or lifestyle, can participate fully in the social occasion.

We should avoid the assumption that all learners from a specific cultural or religious background have the same needs, or that newcomers suffer a democratic deficit and need extra support in learning democracy. Learners who are themselves refugees or whose families are fleeing persecution may have a strong practical understanding of human rights and democracy in everyday life. A trade unionist imprisoned for leading a strike, or a journalist who lost her job because of her political beliefs may have a deeper understanding of human rights than someone who has never needed to struggle for their rights.

The effective realisation of a culture of human rights depends on people knowing their rights. This is where schools have a critical role. This human rights culture is guaranteed by people first knowing their rights, and then being prepared to struggle for them. Human rights education (HRE) is not simply learning about denials of rights and struggles for rights in distant places. At best this may inspire actions of solidarity. At worst it may encourage a sense of moral superiority (Vesterdal, 2013), with learners failing to reflect critically on their own society's record.

HRE involves examining rights in the local community, and understanding the everyday places which symbolise how rights are enjoyed: for example, the railway station (freedom of movement); the hospital (right to health); schools (right to education); the newspaper office (freedom of expression) and so on. It involves looking critically at our own society and examining past and current struggles for rights, encouraging a sense of solidarity with those living in our own communities who lack full access to social provisions or who may encounter harassment or discrimination because of their (perceived) religious or cultural backgrounds. Expressions of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, for example, impact on people's freedom of movement and hinder social and political integration. Newspaper articles and postings on social media sites stereotyping Roma have a similar impact. A successful democracy is open to critique and continuously responds to struggles for justice. It is one in which cultural minorities can claim full citizenship rights without abandoning other identities.

On a practical level, a school curriculum which seeks both to include diverse cultures and religions and to promote solidarity and equality requires teachers who feel confident and prepared to enable multi-perspectivity. Intercultural and human rights education initiatives require a political dimension. Teachers need knowledge to introduce non-mainstream perspectives and skills to enable discussion of injustice, discrimination and exclusion. The Council of Europe Charter on HRE and EDC (2010) appears to demand a review of teacher education and an evaluation of the degree to which student teachers are equipped to tackle anti-democratic forces.

References

Banks, J.A. (2004) Teaching for social justice, diversity, and citizenship in a global world, The Educational Forum 68, 289-298.

Council of Europe (2010) Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and explanatory memorandum. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 May at the 120th Session. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe's Group of Eminent Persons (2011) Living together: combining diversity and freedom in 21st century Europe. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Dewey, J. ([1916] 2002) Democracy and education: an introduction to the philosophy of education, in S. J. Maxcy (ed.) John Dewey and American education. Volume 3. Bristol: Thoemmes.

Kymlicka, W. (2003) Multicultural states and intercultural citizens. Theory and Research in Education 1 (2): 147-169.

Maier, R. (2010) Ruth Maier's diary: a Jewish girl's life in Nazi Europe. Edited by Jan Erik Vold. London: Vintage.

Muižnieks, N. (2013) Report of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Greece, 28 January-1 February 2013. CommDH (2013)6. 16 April. Council of Europe: Strasbourg.

Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (2005) Changing Citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education. Maidenhead: Open University Press. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) (2003) Resolution 1344. Threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe. Adopted 29 September.

Parker, W. C. (2003). Teaching Democracy: unity and diversity in public life. New York: Teachers College Press.

Vertovec, S. (2007) Super-diversity and its implications. Ethnic and Racial Studies 30 (6): 1024-1054.

Vesterdal, K. (2013) The role of human rights education in Norway: teachers' perspectives. Paper presented to International Conference on Democracy and Diversity in Education. Buskerud University College, Drammen, 12-13 March.

Three myths on civic engagement among Roma youth

Jan Šerek

Introduction

By being civically engaged, young people can have a say in the governance of their local communities as well as broader society. Civic engagement is particularly important in the case of young people from ethnic minorities who face discrimination and/or socioeconomic disadvantages, because these people are often the most seriously affected by insensitive governance. Consequently, if the voices of young people from underrepresented ethnic minorities are not heard in the civic arena, there is a danger that their position in society will worsen over time.

This concern, among others, was addressed in the interdisciplinary research project Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation, carried out from 2009 to 2012 in eight European countries (for more information see http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop). Using various methodologies, the researchers examined psychological and social factors that contribute to or hinder civic engagement on the part of young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

One of the project's target groups was young Roma (aged 15 - 28 years) living in the Czech Republic. This group constantly struggles with intolerance from the majority in society and faces considerable problems regarding education, unemployment, and housing (FRA /UNDP, 2012; Vecerník, 2009). Due to the difficult situation of the Roma community, many previous studies have conceptualized Roma merely as passive recipients of help from outside. Instead, by focusing on civic engagement, we tried to approach young Roma as active members of the society who can (and often do) speak for themselves and further their interests. Thanks to this approach, we came up with findings that challenge some of the prevailing myths about civic engagement among Roma.

Myth 1: Roma are characterized by their general civic disengagement

According to a widespread view, the vast majority of Roma are not interested in public affairs or politics, which results in low civic engagement. However, the problem with this view is that it fails to draw a distinction between political and civic engagement. While political engagement refers to "activity aimed at influencing government policy or affecting the selection of public officials," e.g. voting, civic engagement is defined as a much broader scope of activities "aimed at achieving a public good, but usually through direct hands-on work in cooperation with others [...] The most obvious example of this kind of participation is volunteer work in one's community" (Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006, p. 51).

If we focus only on their political engagement, young Roma appear to be relatively disengaged. The motivation to be politically active is often dependent upon one's trust in political institutions, which is usually low in people who come from disadvantaged social groups and who regularly face discrimination. Nevertheless, a very different picture emerges if we focus on civic activities such as

volunteering. According to our findings, civic activism among young Roma is often oriented toward their community and takes the form of direct help on a day-to-day basis and efforts to overcome the effects of social exclusion. For instance, although the young Roma in our study had lower voting turnout, they showed higher rates of participation in volunteer work than people from the majority in the same age range.

Thus, we can obtain an accurate view of civic engagement among Roma only by going beyond traditional measures of political activity (such as voter turnout) and considering direct, hands-on work in the community as another valid form of civic activism. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that direct work for the community can easily turn in to further engagement in the broader society.

Myth 2: Roma are civically disengaged because of their culture

Lower rates of civic engagement among people from some ethnic minorities are sometimes attributed to the minority's specific cultural values and behavioral norms. This conclusion would be correct if members of the minority and the majority were comparable to each other in terms of their mean socioeconomic status or educational attainment. However, members of some ethnic minorities, such as Roma in the Czech Republic, generally have a lower chance of reaching high socioeconomic status or gaining access to a good education than do members of the majority. Therefore, it is possible that the differences in civic engagement between the Roma community and the majority do not stem primarily from differences in cultural values and norms, but rather from socioeconomic and educational inequalities (see also Lopez & Marcelo, 2008; Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004).

For example, our results showed that young members of the majority had higher rates of online civic participation (e.g. participation in online based protest/boycotting or discussing societal/political questions on the net) than young members of the Roma group, which could possibly suggest certain cultural differences between these two groups. However, further analyses showed that the different levels of online civic engagement between Roma and the majority were completely attributable to the fact that young Roma typically had a lower level of education than members of the majority. Accordingly, it may be premature in many cases to attempt to explain differences in civic engagement using cultural differences, at least unless socioeconomic and educational factors are also considered.

Myth 3: Civic engagement always results in positive experiences for young Roma

Furthermore, it might be tempting to assume that civic engagement has a self-reinforcing nature: experiences with civic engagement boost one's sense of civic commitment, which in turn facilitates further civic engagement. Although this expectation can be correct in many cases, it does not apply generally. Civic engagement does not bring only positive experiences, particularly if a person comes from a group facing negative stereotypes and prejudice.

Civically engaged young Roma who participated in our research, often described their negative feelings associated with civic engagement. For example, some of them felt rejected by many members of their own community, who considered civically engaged Roma to be too much involved with the majority society. Other civically engaged Roma met with negative reactions based on stereotypes and prejudice. Moreover, although some Roma were recognized as non-stereotypical Roma by majority members, they were bothered by the expectation they faced from the majority that as civically active Roma, they represented the entire Roma community and were responsible for all its members.

In other words, it should be acknowledged that "being civically engaged" necessarily implies "being visible to other people." This visibility can result in experiences that are far from positive for young Roma.

Implications for civic educators

Several recommendations for civic educators who aim to assist young Roma to develop their civic engagement can be drawn from previous research:

1) Young people in today's society can choose from among countless forms of civic engagement, none of which is necessarily superior to the others. Therefore, it should be recognized that young Roma prefer the forms and patterns of civic engagement that suit their own needs and wishes.

2) Many of these forms of civic engagement are quite distinct from traditional political engagement, often consisting of direct, hands-on work for the community. Consequently, we might sometimes regard people as civically disengaged only because we have defined civic engagement too narrowly.

3) Civic disengagement among young Roma does not necessarily stem from their culture, but from their difficult socioeconomic situation and lack of education. Special attention should be paid to young Roma with these types of disadvantages, because they face the strongest barriers to civic engagement.

4) It is useful to advise young Roma on how to cope with negative experiences that might result from civic engagement. For instance, these young people can benefit from mastering strategies of effective behavior in situations where they find themselves facing prejudice and negative stereotypes.

5) The motivation of many young Roma to be civically engaged is negatively impacted by the perception of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory practices on the part of the majority. Therefore, educating the majority and encouraging inter-ethnic tolerance would be effective as an indirect means of supporting civic engagement among Roma.

References:

FRA/UNDP (2012). The situation of Roma in 11 EU member states. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf

Lopez, M. H., & Marcelo, K .B. (2008).The civic engagement of immigrant youth: New evidence from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey. Applied Developmental Science, 12(2), 66-73.

Ramakrishnan, S. K., & Baldassare, M. (2004). The ties that bind: Demographics and civic engagement in California. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California. Retrieved from http://web.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_404KRR.pdf

Vecerník, J. (2009). Czech society in the 2000s: A report on socio-economic policies and structures. Prague: Academia.

Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., Delli Carpini, M. X. (2006). A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

About the Contributors

Vitor Tomé, invited teacher at the New University of Lisbon (where he teaches Media Education), has a degree in Education and a PhD in Media Education. Nowadays he is developing a post-PhD research project at the University of Algarve (Portugal), Catholic University of Milan (Italy) and Centre de Liaison de l'Enseignement et les Médias d'Information (Clemi – Paris). He is working with the Pestalozzi Programme (Social media and democratic participation) and on the campaign No Hate Speech Movement, both from the Council of Europe.

Professional journalist since 1993 he's the editor of Ensino Magazine, he worked in several research projects in Portugal and abroad: Children and Youth in the News; Media Education in Castelo Branco; Media Against Racism in Sport. He is also a well-known pre-service and in-service teacher trainer in media education (social media, democratic participation and hate speech) in Portugal.

e-mail: vitor@rvj.pt

Andrea Petõ is an Associate Professor at the Department of Gender Studies at the Central European University in Budapest. She edited thirteen volumes in English, six volumes in Hungarian, two in Russian. Her works appeared in different languages, including Bulgarian, Croatian, English, French, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Italian, Russian and Serbian. She has also been a guest professor at the universities of Toronto, Buenos Aires, Stockholm and Frankfurt.

Her books include: Women in Hungarian Politics 1945-1951 (Columbia University Press/East European Monographs New York, 2003), Geschlecht, Politik und Stalinismus in Ungarn. Eine Biographie von Júlia Rajk. Studien zur Geschichte Ungarns, Bd. 12. (Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2007) and together with Ildikó Barna, Political Justice in Budapest after WWII (forthcoming by CEU Press). Presently she is working on gendered memory of WWII and political extremisms. She was awarded by President of the Hungarian Republic with the Officer's Cross Order of Merit of The Republic of Hungary in 2005 and Bolyai Prize by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2006.

e-mail: petoa@ceu.hu

Monique Eckmann, sociologist, is Professor emeritus from the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, School of Social Work, in Geneva, where she has been active in teaching and research from 1977 to 2013.

Her research, teaching and publications focus on inter-group relations and inter-group conflicts, the role of belonging, identity and memory, and on dialogue between groups in conflicts. She has developed concepts and interventions in the fields of Education against racism, Antisemitism and right wing extremism/ Human rights education/ Citizenship education/ Peace building/ history and memory of the Holocaust and other genocides.

e-mail: monique.eckmann@hesge.ch

Audrey Osler, is Professor of Education at Buskerud and Vestfold University College, Norway and Emeritus Professor at the University of Leeds, UK, where she was founding director of the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

She has a PhD in Education (Birmingham). Prof Osler has taught at a number of universities in the UK, US and East Asia and holds honorary positions at universities across the globe, including Birkbeck, University of London; Simon Fraser University, Vancouver; and Hong Kong Institute of Education, China. Her research addresses both education policy and practice with a specific focus on social justice.

She has worked in a number of post-conflict settings, including Northern Ireland; Ethiopia; Aceh, Indonesia; and most recently Cyprus and Kurdistan, Iraq. She is widely published, including 18 books, the most recent of which are Teachers and Human Rights Education (2010, with H. Starkey) and Students' Perspectives on Schooling (2010, Open University Press). In 2013 she was a Whiteley Scholar at the University of Washington and is preparing a manuscript Human Rights and Schooling: cosmopolitan ideals and everyday realities for Teachers College Press in the Multicultural Education Series (Ed. James A. Banks).

e-mail: A.H.Osler@leeds.ac.uk

Jan Šerek is postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. He received his PhD in Social Psychology from the same university. His publications focus on adolescents' and young adults' civic/political socialization. Recently, he participated in the extensive longitudinal study of Czech adolescents, funded by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, and was a member of Czech research team in the multi-national EU 7FP project Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation.

e-mail: serek@fss.muni.cz