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Motivation in psychology learning education

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Abstract

Objectives. This study aims to identify the main motivation characteristics in the process of learning education in psychology students.

Material and methods. For this objective, a pre-experimental design based on a one-shot case study type was conducted. Data were collected from 41 psychology undergraduates enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology of Autonomous University of Baja California. The pre-experiment was conducted in two parts: treatment and measuring. The treatment condition consisted in a twelve-hours classroom course with the subject matter *introduction to educational theories*. After the treatment was applied, motivational characteristics were recorded using the 31 items from the motivation section of the *Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire*. For determining the results, the mean, mode, standard deviation, and relative standard deviation were analyzed.

Results. Findings suggest influence of intrinsic goal motivation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, and self-efficacy for learning and performance in the learning process, while anxiety seems to be a non-negative element in the motivational process for the students.

Conclusions. Psychology's students showed motivational influence in different topics, mainly in motivation aspects related to intrinsic and self-motivation. Meanwhile, if well there exists differences by gender in specific items, these differences were not significant.

Keywords: psychology, motivation, and learning.

Introduction

Motivation study incorporates the expectation about student's learning and the role of teachers for inducting their students to engage in classroom activities (Brophy, 2004). Both views consider "learn to experience satisfaction in setting and working toward goals, acquiring new knowledge, developing their skills, satisfying their curiosity – in a word, learning" (Brophy, 2004, p.2).

Motivation in learning processes is one of the main factors for efficient education (Kim & W. Frick, 2011). Motivation in learning processes reveals that students need to take part in, and learn from a training activity (Garavan, Carbery, Grace, and David, 2010). These are valid affirmations for health care education, which includes physical and psychological education.

This study considers important to analyze the motivational factor in higher education because researches have demonstrated the importance of this factor in educational environments (Lemos, & Veríssimo, 2014; Artino Jr, & Stephens, 2009; Pintrich, 2003; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Furthermore, motivation has demonstrated to be an important element for academic

achievement and important to increase the productivity in psychology students (Chraif, Anitei, & Andreea, 2012).

Due the little evidence about the impact of motivation in psychology learning education, this study aims to identify motivational elements in psychology students from the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology at the Autonomous University of Baja California, in México.

For this purpose, this study presents a pre-experimental design, *one-shot case study* type. Results support previous findings for motivation in educational environments for the majority scales measured by the *Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (MSLQ) created by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1991).

Results may be used by the Autonomous University of Baja California to develop better strategies to universities in classroom courses. Besides, this research may provide basic information to further investigation about motivation in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

First, it is necessary to define the concept of motivation. Broussard and Garrison (2004, p. 106) defined motivation as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something”. This applies for motivation in higher education, achieving academic goals successfully. Furthermore, motivation involves a complex interaction between beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions that are closely related (Lai, 2011).

The social-cognitive theory has supported several researches of motivational factors in learning environments (Artino Jr, & Stephens, 2009; Pintrich, 2003). Motivation in students allows developing abilities of self-regulation, which permits learning engagement by students in learning processes (Artino Jr., 2005).

Following the social-cognitive tradition, this research is based on the cognitive factors of motivation; consequently, motivation is considered as a process that involves students’ goals and their beliefs about the importance and interest of the tasks over academic courses (Pintrich, & Groot, 1990).

Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1991) proposed the integration of six components in the motivational process: intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self-efficacy for learning & performance, and anxiety during the application of test. This study considered these elements, which are to be explained hereafter.

The positive impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been demonstrated by several studies (Lemos, & Veríssimo, 2014; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006; Deci, & Ryan, 1985).

According to Chyun, Moll, and Berg (2010, p.25) *Intrinsic goal orientation* refers to “motivation that stems from primarily internal reasons (e.g. being curious, wanting to challenge, wanting to master the control)”. This intrinsic goal orientation is closed linked to promoting short and long-term persistence (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006).

Other important element in the motivational processes is the *extrinsic goal orientation*. This element is caused “by primarily external reasons (e.g., getting good grades, competing with others, and seeking approval or rewards)” (Chyun, Moll, & Berg, 2010, p.25), and reinforced by contingences (Lai, 2011).

Task value plays an important role in motivation from the cognitive perspective. It refers to student perception of interest, usefulness, cost, and importance of a task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). The task value also can influence the learning processes “value attached to different tasks also will influence activity choice; individuals may have positive efficacy expectations about certain tasks yet not engage in them because the task has little value for them” (Wigfield, & Eccles, 1992, p.9).

The *control of learning beliefs* has demonstrated to have an important impact in learning processes (Artino Jr., 2005). Control beliefs “are the expectations individuals have that they can produce desired events” (Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002, p.112). For instance, there exist two kinds of beliefs: *epistemological* and *pedagogical beliefs*. Epistemic beliefs refers to personal beliefs about knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge, which have the function to manage and to control actions (e.g. academic learning) (Dimov, et al., 2015; Hofer, & Pintrich, 1997), while pedagogical beliefs are related in passive and active knowledge acquisition (knowledge transmission and constructivism view respectively) (Dimov, et al., 2015). Both kinds of beliefs are important to improve classroom activities (Brunning, et al., 2004). Meanwhile, Pintrich (1999, p.462) suggests three types of belief in academic environments: “(a) self-efficacy beliefs (that is, judgments of one’s capabilities to do the academic task), (b) task value beliefs (that is, beliefs about the importance of, interest in, and value of the task), and (c) goal orientations (that is, whether the focus is on mastery and learning of the task, grades or extrinsic reasons for doing the task, or relative ability in relation to social comparisons with other students)”.

From the perspective of the self-perception, Bandura (1994, p.2) conceptualized self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives”. The importance of studying self-efficacy lies in that “self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave” (Bandura 1994, p.2). This study is particularly interested about the motivational effects of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1994), most human motivation is cognitively generated through three forms of cognitive motivators: *causal attributions* in which “people regard themselves as highly efficacious attribute their failures to insufficient effort, those who regard themselves as inefficacious attribute their failures to low ability” (Bandura 1994, p.5), *outcome expectancies* (outcomes produced by a given course of action), and *cognized goals* (comparing goals and adopting goals and then create incentives to persist in the effort for achieve them).

Last, *anxiety* is an affective component in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994); thereby it has a strong impact on the motivational process (Artino, 2005). “Perceived self-efficacy to exercise control over stressors plays a central role in anxiety arousal” (Bandura, 1994, p. 5). Furthermore, “people who believe they can exercise control over threats do not conjure up disturbing thought patterns. But those who believe they cannot manage threats experience high anxiety arousal. They dwell on their coping deficiencies. They view many aspects of their environment as fraught with danger” (Bandura, 1994, p. 5). Finally, the importance to consider the anxiety as affective factor in the motivational process of learning is because “anxiety arousal is affected not only by perceived coping efficacy but by perceived efficacy to control disturbing thoughts” (Bandura, 1994, p.5).

Material and methods

Subjects

The sample included 41 fourth grade students between 18-31 ages (15 males; age $M = 21.12$ years; and 26 females; $M = 20.74$) from the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology of the Autonomous University of Baja California, who were enrolled in the Psychology bachelor on the month of August 2015. The participants who took part in the study were rewarded with an extra point in a specific course in their current semester.

Procedure

This research represented a pre-experimental design, *one-shot case study* type. Therefore, the group of students participated in a treatment, which consisted in a twelve-hours course with the subject matter *introduction to educational theories*. The subject matter of the course is a general

topic in the psychology undergraduate level and it was not represented a particular importance for the study purposes, then, when the last session of the course finished, the outcome measure was answered for all participants, which consisted of the *motivation category* from the *Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (MSLQ) (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991).

Instrument

The full version of the MSLQ consists of 81 self-report items classified in two categories: 1) motivation section (31 items), and 2) learning strategies section (31 items to measure cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies, and 19 items to measure student management resources). The motivation section measures: intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self-efficacy for learning and performance, and anxiety perceived when students fulfill tests in a course. Following the main objective of this research, the motivation section was applied for a better understanding of the motivation in psychology learning education. For all items participants chose a number between 1 and 7 (1 = Not at all true for me, 7 = Very true for me).

Table 1. Scales, number of items, and sentences

Scale	Item number	Item
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	1	In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.
	16	In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.
	22	The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.
	24	When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	7	Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.
	11	The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade.
	13	If I can, I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students.
	30	I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.
Task Value	4	I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.
	10	It is important for me to learn the course material in this class.
	17	I am very interested in the content area of this course.
	23	I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.
	26	I like the subject matter of this course.
	27	Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.

Control of Learning Beliefs	2	If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course.
	9	It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course
	18	If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material.
	25	If I don't understand the course material, it is because I didn't try hard enough.
Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance	5	I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.
	6	I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.
	12	I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course.
	15	I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course.
	20	I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course
	21	I expect to do well in this class.
	29	I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.
Test Anxiety	3	When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.
	8	When I take a test I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer.
	14	When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.
	19	I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.
	28	I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam.

Results

Results have been inferring through the analysis of the motivation section from the MSLQ. Cronbach's alfa was calculated to determine reliability of each scale of the questionnaire. Further, in this study was considered the higher and lower modes to identify significant values. For interpreting results, the mode (Mo) of each item was supported by means (M), and standard deviation (SD), which allowed to measure how spread out the values were respecting the means in each item.

A second stage of the analysis consisted in comparing genre (masculine vs. feminine) differences through analysis of means and relative standard deviations (RSD).

The findings showed high levels of reliability (above $\alpha = .75$) for *Intrinsic Goal Orientation*, *Extrinsic Goal Orientation*, and *Task Value scales*, while lower levels of reliability were showed for *Control of Learning Beliefs*, *Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance*, and *Test anxiety* (below $\alpha = .70$).

Respecting *Intrinsic Goal Orientation* scale, items 16 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.37$) and 22 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.35$) appear as the highest modes. The meaningful modes for the *Extrinsic Goal Orientation* were for items 7 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.71$) and 11 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.66$), item 30 was considered due its standard deviation ($Mo = 6, SD = 2.22$). For the *Task Value* scale the mode 7 was showed for all items: 4 ($SD = 1.26$), 10 ($SD = 1.26$), 17 ($SD = 1.45$), 23 ($SD = 1.10$), 26 ($SD = 1.40$), and 27 ($SD = 1.38$). Regarding *Control of Learning Beliefs* scale, the representative modes were for items 2 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.42$), 9 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.48$), and 18 ($Mo = 7, SD = 1.75$). For the *Self-Efficacy for Learning Performance* scale the main items for analysis were 12 ($Mo = 1, SD = 1.93$), 21 ($Mo = 7, SD = .99$),

and 29 ($Mo = 7$, $SD = 1.30$). Last, for *Test Anxiety* scale, items 3 ($Mo = 1$, $SD = 1.98$), 8 ($Mo = 1$, $SD = 1.81$), and 28 ($Mo = 1$, $SD = 2.23$) were considered.

Analysis of the RSD by genre showed differences between items 16, 24 for *Intrinsic Goal Orientation* scale, 7, 11 for *Extrinsic Goal Orientation*, 4, 10, 17, 23, 23, 26, 27 for *Task Value*, 2, 18 for *Control Learning Beliefs*, 5, 12, 21, 31 for *Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance*, and 14, 19, 28 for *Test Anxiety* scale. Nevertheless, all means showed low significance (lower than $m = 1.5$).

Table 2. Modes, Mean, and Standard Deviation for each items. Cronbach's Alpha for each scale

Scale	Item	Mode	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	1	5	5.40	1.24	0.80
	16	7	5.64	1.37	
	22	7	5.97	1.35	
	24	5	4.92	1.56	
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	7	7	5.32	1.72	0.76
	11	7	5.83	1.66	
	13	5	5.18	1.78	
	30	6	4.51	2.22	
Task Value	4	7	6.10	1.26	0.94
	10	7	6.45	1.08	
	17	7	5.59	1.45	
	23	7	6.28	1.10	
	26	7	5.79	1.40	
	27	7	5.92	1.38	
Control of Learning Beliefs	2	7	6.32	1.42	0.68
	9	7	5.82	1.48	
	18	7	5.82	1.75	
	25	6	5.10	1.35	
Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance	5	6	5.43	1.20	0.69
	6	5	4.93	1.25	
	12	1	3.50	1.93	
	15	4	4.75	1.50	
	20	6	5.82	1.14	
	21	7	6.74	0.99	
	29	7	5.82	1.30	
31	6	5.97	1.26		
Test Anxiety	3	1	3.13	1.98	0.70
	8	1	2.85	1.81	
	14	7	4.82	2.20	
	19	6	4.79	1.74	
	28	1	4.15	2.23	

Table 3. RSD by gender

Scale	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	RSD	Mean	Std. Deviation	RSD
		Men			Woman		
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	1	5.33	1.18	0.22	5.44	1.29	0.24
	16	5.13	1.64	0.32	5.96	1.08	0.18
	22	5.53	1.64	0.30	6.26	1.05	0.17
	24	4.60	2.10	0.46	5.13	1.12	0.22
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	7	4.40	1.92	0.44	5.88	1.33	0.23
	11	5.33	1.95	0.37	6.12	1.42	0.23
	13	5.47	1.85	0.34	5.00	1.76	0.35
	30	4.00	2.45	0.61	4.83	2.06	0.43
Task Value	4	5.33	1.59	0.30	6.56	0.71	0.11
	10	6.00	1.41	0.24	6.72	0.74	0.11
	17	5.00	1.89	0.38	5.96	0.95	0.16
	23	5.80	1.47	0.25	6.58	0.65	0.10
	26	5.20	1.93	0.37	6.17	0.76	0.12
	27	5.00	1.56	0.31	6.50	0.88	0.14
Control of Learning Beliefs	2	5.67	2.09	0.37	6.72	0.54	0.08
	9	5.87	1.55	0.26	5.79	1.47	0.25
	18	5.40	2.26	0.42	6.08	1.32	0.22
	25	5.67	1.23	0.22	4.75	1.33	0.28
Self-Efficacy for Learning & Performance	5	5.00	1.51	0.30	5.68	0.90	0.16
	6	5.00	1.41	0.28	4.88	1.17	0.24
	12	4.27	1.87	0.44	3.04	1.86	0.61
	15	5.13	1.88	0.37	4.52	1.19	0.26
	20	5.67	1.50	0.26	5.92	0.88	0.15
	21	6.40	1.55	0.24	6.96	0.20	0.03
	29	5.27	1.53	0.29	6.17	1.01	0.16
	31	5.64	1.69	0.30	6.17	0.92	0.16
Test Anxiety	3	2.60	1.84	0.71	3.44	2.02	0.59
	8	2.80	1.66	0.59	2.88	1.92	0.67
	14	4.60	2.56	0.56	4.96	1.99	0.40
	19	4.07	1.90	0.47	5.21	1.53	0.29
	28	3.53	2.13	0.60	4.54	2.25	0.49

Discussion

Motivation in psychology students at the Autonomous University of Baja California seems to support previous research concerning to intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, and self-efficacy for learning and performance.

In line with Lemos, and Veríssimo (2014), Deci, and Ryan (1985), *intrinsic goal orientation* in students concerns to material that challenges student to learning new things, and understanding of content as thoroughly as possible by students.

To get a good grade in the course, to improve overall grade point average, and to show off their academic ability to their family, friends, employer, etc., were *extrinsic goal orientation* items indicated by mostly of the students, in line with Chyun, Moll, and Berg's findings (2010).

Respecting *task value* scale, the results showed hard consistency with Wigfield and Eccles (1992), in such a way as student's motivation is related to: student's thinking about the learning of the course to be used in other courses, learning of (here I do not know what you want to put a substantive or a verb) course material, interest in the content of the course, utility of the course material for learning, interest on the subject matter, and the importance of understanding the subject matter of the course for the students.

Results about *control of learning beliefs* were in line with Artino Jr. (2005), Wigfield, and Eccles (1992), principally for the self beliefs about understanding the course material when they try enough; thinking if the students don't learn the material in the course is because of their own fault; and if the students understand the course material is because they tried hard enough.

On the other hand, *self-efficacy for learning and performance* scale is valid for students because they expected to do well and master the skills being taught in the course. However, the results don't support the suggestions made by Bandura (1994), because the majority of students referred disagree respecting their capability to learn only the basic concepts taught in this course.

Nevertheless, results showed contradictory findings for suggestions made by Artino Jr. (2005). Items related to think about how poorly they were doing compared with other students, thinking about items on other parts of the test they can't answer, and feeling heart beating fast when they take an exam, were not at all true for students.

Finally, gender differences were showed for certain items, but mean differences were below 1.5, this indicates a low significance for all items. This means that genre is not representative in motivation characteristics in classroom courses.

Conclusions

The findings of the present research show a positively impact of intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs and self-efficacy for learning & performance, and task value in psychology students from the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology at Autonomous University of Baja California, in México. Nonetheless, anxiety has not a significant impact in psychology students when they respond to tests.

This study found higher levels of reliability for *intrinsic goal orientation*, *extrinsic goal orientation*, and *task value* scales and lower levels of reliability for *control of learning beliefs*, *self-efficacy for learning & performance*. For its part, *task anxiety* might be tested under different conditions to delimitate better reliability values.

Finally, the present findings seek to stimulate future studies about motivation in healthcare education, providing methodological cues to create useful information to improve the learning process in psychology learning education and to improve the learning process in other health learning careers.

Recommendations

For stimulating future directions about motivation in psychology learning education, this study recommends future analysis using quasi-experimental and experimental designs. Furthermore, future studies might improve the methodology of this research on a larger population. Finally, future studies might consider qualitative methods for a deeper understanding of the motivational factor in higher education learning.

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Building bridges or bonds: the case of Ghanaian second generation migrants in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam

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Abstract

Objectives. Scholars of immigrant integration generally agree that the success or failure of the integration of immigrants in the host society is determined by the course followed by the second-generation migrants. This research investigates if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the mainstream Dutch society. The study of the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches has on the process of assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam is relevant because of the recent arrival and rapid increase in Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam.

Material and methods. This work is carried out through ethnographic research methodology of life history interviews, participant observation, informal conversation and in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Results and conclusions. The findings show that bonding social capital within some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam breeds intergenerational intra-marriage rather than intermarriage. Moreover, the research reveals that the religious-cultural identity formed by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants contests the politico-legal understanding of citizenship bound to the nation-state and they call for citizenship of participation in everyday life which is marked by equality of rights. The notion of immigrant integration as defined in this research is contested by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants that result from their experience of discrimination in the mainstream Dutch society. The enforcement of social control mechanisms on the choice of spouse in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is gendered, as the pressure weighs more on the female respondents than the male ones.

Keywords: second-generation migrants, immigrant churches, immigrant integration, Ghana, bridging and bonding social capital.

Introduction

Scholars of immigrant integration generally agree that the success or failure of immigrant integration in the host society is determined by the course followed by second-generation migrants (Aparicio, 2007; Bolzman, Fibbi and Vial, 2003; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Unsuccessful integration of second-generation migrants has negative impact on immigrants themselves as well as on the host society as a whole. This research investigates if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the mainstream Dutch society. The effect of Christian religion in the socio-cultural and socioeconomic life of first generation immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa abound in the literature (Adogame, 2003; Tonah, 2007; Vernooij, 2004) but very little is known about their children. Most

studies on the religiosity of second-generation migrants in Europe and especially in the Netherlands have focused mainly on Muslim immigrant children (Diehl and Koenig 2009; Nielsen 1995; van Tubergen 2007). This ethnographic research is path breaking into the effect that Christian religion of Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Europe has on their second-generation migrants with the case of Ghanaians in Amsterdam.

The study of the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches have on the process of assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam is relevant because of the recent arrival and rapid increase in Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), 2015; Ter Haar, 1998; Van den Bos, 2013). In 1996 there were only 6859 Ghanaians in Amsterdam, but as at the beginning of 2015, Ghanaians formed the fifth largest ethnic minority group in Amsterdam with a total population of about 11,745 excluding those without residence permits (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2015). In 1996, there were only 1635 Ghanaian second migrants in Amsterdam, but the number has more than doubled to 4151 in 2014 (CBS, 2015).

The paper addresses the following research questions: Do Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam facilitate intermarriage or intra-marriage among Ghanaian second-generation migrants? In which ways do Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam impact the friendship pattern of Ghanaian second-generation migrants? This work is carried out through ethnographic research methodology of life history interviews, participant observation, informal conversation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The paper begins by defining the research problem. It proceeds with the presentation of the data and methods. Consequently it discusses the findings, which are followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Data and Methods

The term second-generation is used in migration studies as an umbrella term to classify different categories of immigrant children (Aparicio, 2007) and there is no consensus as to who qualifies to be called second-generation (Aparicio, 2007; Favaro and Napoli, 2004; Gang and Zimmermann 2000; Timmerman and Crul, 2003). This paper conceptualises Ghanaian second-generation migrant as any child born in the Netherlands or who entered the Netherlands at/before the age of six (6) with at least one parent as Ghanaian and is now eighteen (18) years and above as at the time of the data collection (see: Crul, 2005:5). The process of ensuring that immigrants and autochthones live together in the host nation has been conceptualised as immigrant integration or assimilation by immigrant scholars (Park, 1930; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). In this research assimilation and immigrant integration are used interchangeably to describe the process of enhancing socio-cultural interaction between immigrants, their children and autochthones.

The study adopts ethnographic research methodology of in-depth interviews, participant observation and informal interviews. The ethnographic study took place in Amsterdam from January 2014 till January 2015 and during this period, life history interviews were done with fifty Ghanaian second generation migrants and in depth semi-structured interviews were also conducted with nine Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Other sources of data were drawn from minutes of church meetings, constitution of the churches, church websites, videos and website of the Dutch statistical office.

Snowball and purposive sampling technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p.141) were used to recruit Ghanaian second generation migrants in Amsterdam and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam respectively. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The information were organised into themes and subthemes (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, p.171). The

interpretations were based on the state of the art and personal interpretations. The voluntary nature of the research participation and the possibility of withdrawing as a participant at any moment were clearly specified in the informed consent.

We present briefly the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Seventeen of the respondents were males and thirty-three were females and this ratio is not surprising because all the churches interviewed have about sixty per cent of their members as women. Thirty-nine of the Ghanaian second-generation migrants interviewed were born in Amsterdam and, interestingly, thirty-seven of the respondents were born in the Municipality of Amsterdam South East which hosts majority of Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014).

All the Ghanaian churches interviewed in Amsterdam were established from the early 1990s till the beginning of the new millennium, which coincides with the period of mass entry of Ghanaian immigrants into the Netherlands. All the nine Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam that were interviewed are located in the Municipality of Amsterdam South East. Membership in the interviewed Ghanaian churches varies from 100 to 500. Five of the interviewed churches are Pentecostal/Charismatic, while four are mainstream Protestants.

Discussion

The data show that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam serve as a social field that provides extra-familial primary socialisation for the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam. Social field is defined here as “a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are...exchanged, organised and transformed” (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1009). Bourdieu’s concept of social capital guides the discussion of the empirical findings to investigate if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the Dutch society. Bourdieu (1985, p. 284) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition”. Bridging social capital is defined here as the religious resources that enable members of immigrant churches to succeed in non-religious settings as it helps to improve their relationship in daily life (Bramadat, 2005). Bonding social capital is defined here as the religious resources that provide close relationships between members of the same religious group (Hopkins, 2011) with little effect on the mainstream host society. Inter-marriage and friendship (Gordon, 1964; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) are the two main indicators of immigrant integration analysed in this paper.

Intermarriage

Inter-marriage is one of the most classical indicators of immigrant integration (Gordon, 1964; Lieberson and Waters, 1998). Inter-marriage is defined here as the choice of spouse or partner outside one’s own ethnic group. Intra-marriage is defined in this work as the choice of spouse or partner within one’s own ethnic group. According to immigrant integration scholars (Bosswick and Heckman, 2006; Mullins, 1987), high rate of inter-marriage within immigrant churches eventually reduces the sense of ethnic distinctiveness with time and has the tendency of fading ethnic boundaries and decreasing ethnic prejudices (Hartung, Vandezande, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2011). Studies (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2007; Lieberson and Waters, 1998) have shown that successive immigrant generations tend to marry people with different ethnic background compared to first

generation immigrants. A similar study on immigrant children of the four major immigrant groups in the Netherlands by Gijsberts (2004) concluded, however, that intra-marriage persists.

During the life history interviews, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants were asked about the country of origin of their spouses or partners and the research probed further for the factors that influence the choice of spouse or partner. Seda, 34, a female Ghanaian second-generation migrant in Amsterdam, recounted that:

I was born in the Netherlands and I have been a member of Alleluia church since childhood. As a child I attended Sunday school and later moved to the youth group as a teenager. I got married to a man I worked with in church as youth leaders. We had to meet on several occasions during the week in church so we got to know each other better and that actually led to our coming together as husband and wife (interview on 19-10-2014).

Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam provide primary form of socialisation to the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants from early childhood. They also serve as a marriage market for potential spouses, as they provide the social space for people to interact. The research shows that with time the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants develop interest in each other because of similar Christian values and worldview (Kalmijn, 1998, p.399; Lieberson & Waters, 1988). Seda engaged in church activities for building religious human capital but the church also provided her the opportunity to interact with potential marriage candidates who share similar objective social characteristics that influenced the choice of spouse (Kalmijn, 1998, p.402). The social networks developed by Seda and some Ghanaian second-generation migrants analysed in this research produce bonding social capital that leads to intra-marriage which according to classical assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) does not favour marital assimilation into the Dutch society.

Hema, 25, a female Ghanaian second generation migrant, also recounted that:

I am going through marriage counselling with my boyfriend who is also a Ghanaian. I introduced my fiancée to the church. The church has pre-marriage course, which has to be fulfilled before the wedding could be celebrated. During this pre-marriage course the church counsels us on the Christian teachings about marriage and they are related with the Ghanaian traditional customary marriage. The church and its members highly recommend that we marry Ghanaians so that certain peculiarities could easily be understood. It is assumed that, if one of the spouses is not a Christian and not a Ghanaian, he or she might not be prepared to preserve the tradition and culture (interview on 02-10-2014).

Third parties or the social group of marriage candidates exert social force in the choice of spouse or partner (Kalmijn, 1998, p.400). The narration of Hema shows that her church as a social field with multifaceted interactions directs the choice of spouses of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in this study perpetuate intra-marriage for fear of facing disapproval from their churches, which does not facilitate the process of immigrant integration into the host country. Bonding social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam ensures the implementation of effective norms that constrain the search for potential marriage candidates of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam enforce intergenerational Christian identity through formal and informal sanctions meted out to the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants who do not participate in their church's marriage market. The head pastor of one of the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam narrated that:

As a church we do not believe in boyfriend or girlfriend, as it is understood in the Dutch culture. Sex before marriage is not accepted in the church and it is punishable by suspension. We encourage the youth to find life partners within the Christendom.

The effectiveness of the social sanctions depends on the size of the immigrant churches and the quantity in a given geographical area (Blau, 1977; Stevens and Swicegood, 1987). The data show that all the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are located in the Municipality of Amsterdam Southeast and more than two-thirds of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants also live in this Municipality. Due to overrepresentation of the respondents in only one Municipality out of the six Municipalities in Amsterdam District, there is what we call *religious segregation*. Due to religious segregation, the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are able to effectively exert pressure on the choice of spouses or partners of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The incidence of intermarriage is therefore low among the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants, which does not accelerate the pace of immigrant integration into the Dutch society.

Eno, female, 25 narrated her experience on intermarriage that:

Even though I am colour blind I have to be honest if I am serious about a relationship it is easier if the person is a Ghanaian and a Christian because we understand our culture and religious moral values. The non-Ghanaian does not understand my culture and why certain things are done. The church continuously encourages us the youth to be selective in the choice of a spouse and pray over it so that we could have one that share the Christian principles (interview on 10-10-2014).

The Netherlands is described as a secularised country and the fear of having a non-religious as a spouse deters Eno from considering non-Ghanaian as a potential partner or spouse. Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam provide the marriage market, which permits Eno to associate with like-minded people who share similar faith and moral values. Eno's religious behaviour does not permit her to sacrifice her religious preference for marital assimilation. Eno's recount demonstrates the importance of cultural resources embedded in religious practices that shape the construction of identity.

Sala's experience confirms the worries and anxieties of Eno in entering into a relationship with a person who is non-Ghanaian and non-Christian. Sala recounted that:

I prefer to marry a Christian and Ghanaian because with similar belief system and culture it is less difficult to understand each other. I once had a white Dutch guy as my boyfriend and I had difficulties attending church activities because he did not understand my religious attitude and he preferred that we ignored church activities, which were impossible for me. Attempts to explain things to him did not yield fruit so we broke up (female, 24, interview on 07-07-2014).

Sala and her fiancée could not manage to negotiate and compromise their religious and ethnic worldviews. Sala's personal and intimate interaction with a white Dutch should have created the opportunity to realise and appreciate the varieties among different groups. Intermarriage often connects the social networks of the man and woman, which normally extend beyond the immediate group to the out-group members. In so doing prejudice and stereotypes are weakened. Unfortunately, the differences in cultural resources between Sala and her boyfriend were not appreciated, which led to the break up in relationship. This study shows that diversity in religious perception and belief creates tension, which retards the pace of marital assimilation of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Data from the fieldwork also show that pressure exerted on the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants by Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is gendered. These churches enforce much pressure on the female respondents compared to the male respondents in the choice of spouse within the religious marriage market.

Contrary to the above life stories of intra-marriage, some of the respondents do intermarry. Interestingly, the underlying factor that sustains intermarriage as this research shows is similarity in religious belief rather than diversity in ethnic origin. Filipa recounted her engagement with a Surinamese guy that:

I have a fiancée and he is not a Ghanaian but Surinamese from my church. In my search for a life partner the bottom line was that the person should be of Christian background because it is important to share my life with someone with the same faith. I am of the conviction that similar religious background eliminates a lot of difficulties in marriage. My church directly and indirectly encourages us to marry persons with Christian background so that our children could be brought up in the Christian faith (female, interview on 18-09-2014).

Similar Christian belief is an important cultural resource that attracted Filipa to her partner and determines the sustenance of intermarriage. The similar religious beliefs of the two couples overrule their diverse ethnic background. The religious social field serves as the marriage market for potential spouses or partners to interact and form social network that eventually lead to marriage or partnership. Christian religious identity may serve as a bridge that draws together second-generation migrants from different ethnic groups within the Dutch society. As this study shows, religiosity does not always deter marital assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The level of incidence seems to be however low, due to the predominance of Ghanaians within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Filipa reiterates the churches' role as third parties that engage in the choice of spouse of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants through social control mechanisms.

Joe, 27, male, also recounted his engagement with a Surinamese lady. He affirmed that the core of their relationship is their similar Christian faith, not their diverse ethnic background. Joe recounted that:

As a child, I attended Sunday school and at the age of 12 I joined the youth ministry. I had very strong relation with the other children. Apart from the Ghanaians, we had some few people from other ethnic minority groups ...I am going through marriage counselling with my fiancée from the church who is Antillean. Church participation has provided me with the occasion to strengthen my relation with people from other cultures. It has also helped me to overcome certain prejudices I had against different cultures (interview on 15-11-2014).

As Joe noted in his story, institutionalised religious participation provided him the occasion to interact with diverse cultures. Consequently, Joe's taste and preference in the search for potential spouse or partner extended to non-Ghanaians, which resulted in his engagement with an Antillean second-generation migrant. The Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam therefore provide the marriage market for second-generation migrants from diverse immigrant groups who are united by their religious belief and values. The presence of non-Ghanaians in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam has reduced prejudice in the life of Joe, which contributes positively to the building of the sense of peoplehood (Gordon, 1964) in the Dutch society.

Friendship

The study of Gijsbert (2004) on the four major Dutch ethnic minorities shows that more than half of second-generation migrants have contacts with people from their own immigrant group. Now the paper examines the impact the social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam have on the friendship of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. This paper categorises friendship members into: white Dutch, Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian immigrants.

When the question was asked: how is the composition of your friends and what influences your choice of friends? Ebel, 19, male, narrated that:

All my friends are Ghanaians and they are also Christians either from my church or from other churches in Amsterdam. I used to have Dutch friends when I was in the primary school, but since I completed my primary education I lost contact with them. I do not have friends from other immigrant groups...My social life is centred around church related activities, as I attend church

every Sunday and I sometimes go for prayer meetings on Wednesday and on Saturday. I am in constant touch with Ghanaians as my church is predominantly Ghanaian, so it has affected my choice of friends inadvertently (interview on 20-02-2014).

One of the prerequisite that ensures the production of social capital according to Coleman (1990) is closure, which refers to the frequency with which the social actors in the social field communicate. As the social actors in the social group meet regularly, a closed system is likely to be created, which provides favourable environment of trust and trustworthiness among its members, allowing the formation of friendship. It is not surprising that Ebel's friends are of Ghanaian descent, due of his active church participation in a church that is frequented mainly by Ghanaians. Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam therefore facilitate the building of bonding social capital through closed friendship. This research shows that institutionalised religiosity in some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam restrict the friendship composition of some of the analysed Ghanaian second generation migrants to Ghanaians rather than extending them to non-Ghanaians or white Dutch.

Ella, 29, female, also narrated that:

I was born in the Netherlands and I have been a member of my church since childhood. Most of my friends are Ghanaians and they are in my church or in other Ghanaian churches. I also have friends from other immigrant groups, but I do not have white Dutch as friends. The composition of my friends has been influenced by my membership in a Ghanaian church, which is situated in the black community of Amsterdam Southeast. I have friends both in church and at school, but I have built long lasting relationships with those friends I have in the church. They are childhood friends (interview on 10-10-2014).

Zeta, 25, female, also recounted that:

My parents were both Christians when I was born, so they introduced me to the church from infancy. My best friends are in the church and I have some Ghanaian friends who are not in the church as well as some few Dutch friends from school and other friends who are immigrants from other countries. My choice of friends is guided by several factors, but prominent among them are the negative experience of discrimination and social hardships that my parents and the church went through and continue to suffer in the Netherlands. I learnt from my parents and from the church that I should be serious in school and that I should learn hard so that I could have a bright future. Even though I am almost done with my first degree, I keep my ethnic identity and culture acquired from the church. Although I was born here, I do not consider myself as a Dutch...I am not white (interview on 06-04-2014).

The second prerequisite for the creation and maintenance of social capital is the stability of the social field (Coleman, 1990). From the data, all the Ghanaian churches interviewed were established over a decade ago and most of the second-generation migrants interviewed have stayed in the churches since infancy. Apart from the frequency of church participation that enables the establishment of social capital, the maintenance of social capital is made possible only through long lasting relationship in the church. Zeta, like most of the other respondents, is able to have her best friends in the church because of frequency of encounter with other second-generation migrants in the Ghanaian churches, as well as the trust that have been built over a period of time through membership in the church. However, Zeta and Ella's bonding friendship do not hinder them from building non-Ghanaian friendship bridges.

The research shows that there is intergenerational identity formation in some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Most of the churches in this research function as places of refuge, where Ghanaian second-generation migrants feel respected and accepted (Hirschman, 2004). The discrimination experienced in the mainstream Dutch society enhances the formation of Christian identity and consequently strengthens the bonding social capital within Ghanaian churches in

Amsterdam. Although she was born in Amsterdam and holds the Dutch citizenship, she is selective in her belongingness to the Dutch society, which influences her friendship choice. Zeta challenges the traditional legal-political notion of citizenship (Turner, 1990) and directs the argument towards the practice of citizenship in everyday life as proposed by feminist scholars (Lister, 2001; Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006).

The head pastor of one of the Ghanaian churches interviewed in Amsterdam recounted that: *The church consciously organizes socio-cultural programmes in addition to the spiritual activities that bring the youth in the church together to interact and build interpersonal friendships. Through social media like Facebook and WhatsApp, the youth create platforms where they share ideas and plan outings that strengthen their sense of belongingness and oneness as members of the church (interview on 20-09-2014).*

Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are actively involved in ensuring that the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants strengthen their friendship among members of the church, including the use of modern communication technologies. Interestingly, members of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are mainly Ghanaians as such these initiatives of the churches are likely to generate bonding social capital rather than bridging social capital.

Conversely, the findings from the fieldwork show that some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants have few friends in their churches due to the closed nature of the Ghanaian churches and the gossip that circulate within the churches and even beyond into the broader society. Dina, 25, female, recounted that

As a child and a teenager, I had a lot of my friends in the church. I remember opening my home to friends from the church and I also went to their homes. Our friendship transcended church gatherings because we went out to cinemas and shopping malls, library and other recreational centres together. Currently, however, I have most of my friends outside the church because the church is a closed institution that has more or less the same persons circulating over a period of time whereas in school I meet different people in the various courses that I do. My church does not prohibit making friends from outside the church rather it encourages us to bring our new friends into the church. The church is my pseudo-family where I have my childhood friends and closest friends but most of my friends are from school (interview on 30-07-2014).

For Dina the church takes a new dimension which she refers to as *pseudo-family* and as a family, the members are closed and do not easily circulate. This study shows that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam like the family have slow pace of circulation of members so some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants extend most of their friendship outside the closed setting of these churches.

Adwoa, 32, female, narrated that:

Definitely the church is like my second home, but I am cautious because of the gossip that informally perpetuate among members of the church. I have very few best friends in the church, because I am very selective in discussing my private issues in an environment where everybody knows everybody. I have witnessed how rumours have damaged the reputation and life of some people in the church, so I try to avoid being a victim. I have noticed that the youth in my church have formed small groups and there are those groups I could be very close with and there are those groups that I just meet on Sunday and those are Sunday friends (interview on 08-08-2014).

Gossip is a social control mechanism that ensures the enforcement of norms within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam as it “flourishes in close-knit, highly connected social networks (Merry, 1984, p.277).” The fear of formal and informal sanctions as a result of the spread of gossip deters Adwoa and some other respondents in this research from making a lot of friends in the

church. Gossip drives Adwoa to extend her friendship to people outside the closed setting of her church, and in so doing may enhance the process of assimilation into mainstream Dutch society.

Akyea, 29, female, recounted that:

A lot of people in Ghanaian churches have interest in people's life and I do feel that they are not with genuine interest and I do not like that. Rumours start and spread very quickly in the church. I do not really have friends in the church, even though some of the members do check up on me, but I do not meet them aside church activities. I am not afraid of the church, but I am afraid of the people in the church. My friends are outside the church (interview on 18-08-2014).

Akyea buttresses Adwoa's perplexity about gossip in the church and further explains that the rumours in the church are just for the personal consumption of those members of the church who are only interested in building their information bank. As Merry (1984) explains, in close connected social settings like Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam, gossip is a positive tool in ensuring that members live according to the norms in the social field. Gossip brings shame unto the object and it serves as a corrective and preventive mechanism that strengthens the norms in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants rather perceive gossip and rumours as driving force to move beyond their church in the search for friends.

Conclusion

This ethnographic research work investigated the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam had on the process of integration of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam. Friendship and intermarriage are the two main indicators of immigrant integration analysed in this research. The paper finds that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are important social field that have rippling effect in the friendship and marriage pattern of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the authors do not seek to generalise the results to other settings and recommends for further investigation into the following conclusions.

The research concludes that the effective social control mechanisms that occur in the form of sanctions and gossip in some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam facilitate the growth of both bridging and bonding forms of social capital among the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The findings show that the effective social control mechanisms within some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam result from religious segregation. The enforcement of social control mechanisms on the choice of spouse in the analysed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is, however, gendered, as the pressure weighs more on female rather than male respondents.

Through institutionalised religiosity, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants blend the formation of Christian identity and Ghanaian cultural identity. The religious-cultural identity constructed within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam enforces the building of bonding social capital within Ghanaian churches excluding non-Ghanaians and non-Christians from their choice of potential spouses. The findings show that bonding social capital within some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam breeds intergenerational intra-marriage rather than intermarriage. Moreover, the research reveals that the religious-cultural identity formed by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants contests the politico-legal understanding of citizenship bound to the nation-state, while they call for citizenship of participation in everyday life that is marked by equality of rights.

Some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam retard the pace of immigrant integration into the Dutch society through their influence in the choice of friends and spouses of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. This practice does not enhance the process of entering into the

social clique (Gordon, 1964) of the autochthones in the mainstream Dutch society. However, the notion of immigrant integration as defined in this research is contested by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants, which results from their experience of discrimination in the mainstream Dutch society. The research shows that through bonding social capital, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants build leadership skills and self-esteem, which enhance upward mobility in the mainstream Dutch society.

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Attitudes towards homosexuality in a sample of Novi Sad (Serbia) population

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Abstract

Objectives. Serbia is generally considered to be socially conservative with regard to the rights of homosexual individuals. The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes towards homosexuality in a sample population of the city of Novi Sad.

Material and methods. The survey was conducted in 2014, and included high schools and institutions chosen as a combining random sample. The total number of respondents was 242 and their age ranged from 14 to 59 years. The instrument was an anonymous questionnaire (Homophobia Scale – HS) (Wright, Adams, and Bernat, 1999) that consisted of 25 statements. Respondents answer on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

Results. Analysis of the survey points to a moderate degree of homophobia in respondents. Males express higher homophobia (38.69 ± 22.56) than females (24.79 ± 17.37). In both males and females, inter-factor percentage of homonegativism is highest in Factor 3 – Cognitive Negativism, and lowest regarding Factor 2 – Behavioral Aggression. Higher means of total homophobia are detected in both male and female respondents with secondary education. Homophobia is most noticeable in youngest age category and least observable in the category 40-59 years of age.

Conclusion. The study contributes to enlarging the database on the attitudes of Serbian population toward homosexual individuals. The results indicate that negative attitudes are still present in the population. Similar studies in the future can contribute to widening public consciousness and reducing ignorance, prejudice and stereotypes regarding homosexuality.

Keywords: homosexuality, homophobia, index, homonegativism, and sexual orientation.

Introduction

Societal attitudes toward homosexuality vary greatly in different cultures and different historical periods (Murray, 2000). Many societies and cultures have their own values regarding appropriate and inappropriate sexuality. In modern society, heterosexuality represents a behavioral norm and still in many parts of the world, minority groups, such as homosexual individuals, are exposed to stereotypes. Generalizing negative experience to a whole group, stereotypes, prejudices, lack of knowledge can lead to unreal social distances and even unjustified discrimination (Rada, 2011). Although in some countries support for LGBT rights has been rising, such as legal recognition of same-sex marriage, anti-discrimination laws and others, in many parts of the world there is still disapproval and discrimination against LGBT people. A new Pew Research Center's 2013 Global Attitudes survey finds huge variance by region on the broader question of whether homosexuality should be accepted or rejected by society. The survey of public opinion in 39 countries finds a broad acceptance of homosexuality in richest countries, where religion is a less central issue, like North America, the European Union, most of Latin America and parts of Asia. On

the contrary, in Muslim nations and Africa, as well as in some parts of Asia, a noticeable disapproval and rejection of homosexuality is still present. A longitudinal research has demonstrated that legal rights for LGB people have been accompanied by a decrease in negative attitudes towards homosexuality among younger age groups (Andersen, Fetner, 2008). Some investigations (Lottes, Alkula, 2011) show that most of the post-communist countries differ from the rest of Europe in respect to low justifications of homosexuality.

Serbia is generally considered to be socially conservative with regard to the rights of homosexual individuals. (http://www.yucom.org.rs/upload/vestgalerija_61_18/1210849633_GS0_EWSSPECIAL-english-05142008-HomophobiaSurvey.pdf). A study conducted in 2009 (Radoman, 2011) on a sample of 2500 high school students from six Serbian cities has shown that 60% of the examinees approve of the violence over LGBT population. Homophobia was recorded in 28.7% of individuals, 29.1% of them showed moderate degree of homophobia; while in 27.9% of cases non-homophobic attitude was recorded. Males represented the majority of homophobic subjects, while females dominated in the non-homophobic group. A comparison with the study conducted in 2011 suggests that the number of more liberal attitudes has risen, while the number of extreme responses has remained the same (Radoman, 2011).

The studies conducted in Serbia on the attitudes towards homosexuality have been scarce. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to examine the attitudes towards homosexuality and to assess the cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of homophobia in the population of the city of Novi Sad.

Material and methods

The survey was conducted in 2014 in the city of Novi Sad and included high schools and institutions chosen as a combining random sample. The total number of respondents was 242 and their age ranged from 14 to 59 years. The study was conducted in direct contact with the examinees. Prior to completing the survey, the respondents were informed with the aim and purpose of the investigation and in general it took them 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey.

The study implied nonexperimental research method and the data were obtained by means of a survey. The instrument was an anonymous questionnaire (Homophobia Scale – HS) (Wright, Adams, and Bernat, 1999) that consisted of 25 statements and demographic data such as sex, age and level of education. The respondents' answers included a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The main characteristic of the scale is that it measures the attitudes towards homosexual individuals referring to homonegativism and excluding the entire construct of homophobia. The scale differs from other homophobia measuring instruments as it includes issues such as social avoidance and aggressive behaviour, apart from psychological statements. There are three factors in the scale: Behaviour/Negative Affect, Affect /Behavioral Aggression and Cognitive Negativism. For each of the three factors, inter-factor percentage of homonegativism was assessed. It is calculated by dividing a factor value with the highest number in the scale and the obtained result is multiplied by 100.

Microsoft Office Excel was used for data processing and the data was processed both qualitatively and quantitatively (percentages).

The formal consent for conducting the survey was obtained by the Scientific Board of Department of Biology and Ecology, University of Novi Sad, as well as by the principles of schools in which the questionnaires were distributed.

Results

There were 242 respondents, including more females (N = 151; 62.39%) than males (N = 91; 37.60%). The average age of the sample was 26.73 ± 9.36 years, with no great difference between the female and male respondents (females 26.54 ± 9.83 ; males 27.05 ± 8.89 years). The largest percentage of respondents (57.02%) is represented by adults between the ages 20 and 39, while the smallest percentage of them could be found in the age category 40-59 years (9.5%).

As for the level of education, 52.07% of respondents had secondary education, while the rest of the sample had higher education. There were no respondents with only primary education.

Table 1 shows the degree of homophobia in relation to the respondents' gender. There are results of total degree of homophobia, and in relation to one of the three factors: Behaviour/Negative Affect, Affect/Behavioral Aggression and Cognitive Negativism. The total degree of homophobia is assessed using the results of all three factors with final value representing the combined result distributed on the scale 0-100. It can be observed that the degree of homophobia in general equals 30.31 ± 20.57 , with males showing higher level of homophobia (38.69 ± 22.56) than females (24.79 ± 17.37). The male respondents also show higher values of individual factors, when compared to females. In both males and females, inter-factor percentage of homonegativism is highest in Factor 3, Cognitive Negativism, and lowest regarding Factor 2, Behavioral Aggression.

Table 1. Degree of homophobia in relation to the respondents' gender

Degree of homophobia	Females		Males		Total	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Total degree of homophobia 0 - 100	24.79	17.37	38.69	22.56	30.31	20.57
Factor 1	9.30 23.25*	7.79	15.93 39.83*	10.30	11.79 29.47*	9.37
Factor 2	7.81 19.53*	6.85	12.55 31.37*	8.63	9.59 23.97*	7.90
Factor 3	7.68 38.40*	4.60	10.21 51.05*	6.00	8.63 43.15*	5.30

* *Inter-factor percentage of homonegativism*

Table 2 presents the results of the degree of homophobia in relation to the respondents' education. Higher means of total homophobia are detected in both male and female respondents with secondary education (in females 30.72 ± 18.73 , in males 45.31 ± 25.00). The means of each of the three factors are also higher in respondents with secondary education, implying the presence of higher level of homonegativism in this population. In both groups of respondents the highest level of homonegativism is observed in Factor 3, i.e. the largest number of negative statements is related to cognitive negativism. Inter-factor percentage of homonegativism in female and male respondents equals 45.90% and 57.53%, respectively.

Table 2. Degree of homophobia in relation to the respondents' education

Degree of homophobia	Secondary education				Higher education			
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Sex	F		M		F		M	
Total degree of homophobia <i>0 - 100</i>	X=36.38 SD=22.45				X=23.10 SD=15.69			
	30.72	18.73	45.31	25.00	18.63	13.38	30.98	16.50
Factor 1	11.51 28.77*	8.75	18.65 46.63*	11.04	7.00 17.50*	5.88	12.76 31.90*	8.44
Factor 2	10.03 25.07*	7.69	15.18 37.95*	9.66	5.51 13.77*	4.96	9.48 23.70*	6.05
Factor 3	9.18 45.90*	4.41	11.47 57.53*	6.59	6.12 30.60*	4.31	8.74 43.70*	4.91

* *Inter-factor percentage of homonegativism*

Table 3 shows degree of homophobia in relation to the age categories. As the results indicate, homophobia is most noticeable in the youngest age category (38.95±23.22), and least observable in the category 40-59 years of age (24.22±13.77). Similar results refer to each of the three factors. Male and female respondents aged 14-19 years show the highest means in all three factors. Older groups of respondents express similar degree of homophobia in relation to each of the factors and in that way show that their attitudes toward homosexuality are identical. The total results suggest that homonegativism is most noticeable in the youngest respondents.

Table 3. Degree of homophobia in relation to the age categories

Age category	14 – 19 years		20 – 39 years		40 – 59 years	
Sex	F	M	F	M	F	M
Total degree of homophobia <i>0 – 100</i>	X=38.95 SD=23.22		X=25.75 SD=18.12		X=24.22 SD=13.77	
X	32.46	50.58	20.82	32.95	20.46	34.83
SD	19.90	24.52	15.21	19.70	10.20	17.85
Factor 1	12.25 30.63*	20.45 51.13*	7.85 19.63*	13.73 34.33*	7.23 18.07*	14.67 35.93*
SD	9.39	10.93	6.70	9.43	4.21	9.60
Factor 2	11.15 27.87*	18.03 45.07*	6.01 15.03*	9.95 24.87*	6.29 15.73*	10.33 25.83*
SD	8.18	9.40	5.48	7.16	4.57	5.28
Factor 3	9.06 45.30*	12.10 60.05*	6.96 34.80*	9.27 46.35*	6.94 34.70*	9.83 49.15*
SD	4.53	7.10	4.75	5.32	3.19	5.04

* *Inter-factor percentage of homonegativism*

Discussion

The paper presents the level of homophobia expressed in a sample of Novi Sad population. The results point to a moderate degree of homophobia in respondents. Males express higher homophobia (38.69 ± 22.56) than females (24.79 ± 17.37). In comparison with the study conducted with American students of average age 22.38 ± 4.12 years (Wright, Adams, and Bernat, 1999), where the average degree of homophobia equaled 32.04 ± 19.76 , the sample of Novi Sad population expresses a slightly lower level of homophobia.

The respondents showed lowest level of negativism in relation to behavior aggression, i.e. aggressive behavior toward homosexuals. In males, this factor is present in 31.37%, while in females it is lower, 19.53 %. Negative behavior (Factor 1), however, appears to be more present among the respondents. This factor is also less observable in females, 23.25 %, than in males, 39.83%. The largest number of respondents in this survey expresses cognitive negativism (Factor 3), probably due to the social context and cultural norms of the Republic of Serbia. This means that homophobia is mostly expressed verbally by thoughts and ideas that reflect traditional values, the concept of family, religion etc. The results of the survey also show that behavior aggression and negative behaviour, although expressed in smaller percentage, are still present in the population of the city of Novi Sad. This implies that the concept of socially acceptable behaviour regarding the restriction of violence and discrimination of LGBT population is one of the frequent topics in public discourse.

Stigma against homosexuality has reduced in the last 30 years (Smith and Mathews, 2007). European Parliament has recently passed a resolution on condemning homophobia in European Union (Cavanagh, 2006). In some countries of Central and Eastern Europe, however, there is still a severe political and public disapproval on the rights of homosexuals (Sheeter, 2006). The reason for expressing homonegativism in these countries lies in socio-cultural norms and normative dimensions of collective history (Brajdić-Vuković and Štulhofer, 2012). Some studies (Štulhofer and Rimac, 2008) have confirmed that economically stronger countries (such as Scandinavian countries) show less prejudice toward homosexuality. Prior studies conducted in Europe (Štulhofer and Rimac, 2008, Gerhards, 2010), focusing on the influence of macro determinants on the attitudes toward homosexuality, report that countries with economic stability, higher level of modernization and urbanization and lower religious influence show more acceptable attitudes toward homosexuality.

In Serbia, as well as in other Eastern European countries, the issue of homosexuality has been marginalized. After decriminalization of homosexuality in Serbia in 1994, it took 15 years to pass the law against discrimination based on sexual orientation. The first verdict for hate speech against LGBT population has recently been pronounced (Dunjić-Kostić et al., 2012).

The present study has confirmed that females express more liberal attitudes and lower level of homophobia than males. Other studies report (Steffens and Wagner, 2004, Verweij et al., 2008) that in almost all other cultures males express more negative attitudes toward homosexuality and are more likely to condemn male homosexuals than female ones. They also appear to possess less knowledge regarding homosexuality and this fact can be explained by their negative attitude in general (Arnold et al., 2004, Dunjić-Kostić et al., 2012). The reason for these differences lies in the fact that the concept of homosexuality is more associated with male homosexuality and therefore there is more chance that a homosexual individual may become attracted to a man who does not express homonegativism (Brajdić-Vuković and Štulhofer, 2012). In their study among student population, Grabovac et al. (2014) report on differences in attitudes between males and females, pointing to less negative attitudes expressed by females. They also report that senior students show

more positive attitudes and greater knowledge concerning homosexuality in contrast to younger students.

The present results suggest that males express higher level of homonegativism than females and that this attitude has the highest prevalence among teenagers. The reason for this may be found in socialization and strong influence of school, media and idols on this population. On the other hand, middle-aged respondents express lowest level of homonegativism, as they leave the period of prolonged adolescence when their self-sensibility reduces. A study conducted in some countries of Southeast Europe (Brajdić-Vuković and Štulhofer, 2012) has shown that the age represents the most reliable predictor of homonegativism. Age is one of the most influential factors in the context of stigmatization. Dunjić-Kostić et al. (2012) found no correlation between age and stigmatization. However, some other studies (Herek&Gonzalkez-Rivera, 2006) report that older participants show increased tendency to condemn homosexual and bisexual individuals than younger generation. In Belgium (Hooghe, 2011), homophobia is widely spread among adolescents, particularly boys. In Italian high schools (Prati, Prietrantoni, D'Augelli, 2011) homonegativism is widely spread in forms of verbal abuse, written insults, social exclusion and physical harassment, particularly towards male students.

This study has shown that education is a factor that considerably influences the attitudes toward homosexuality. Higher level of homophobia, in both males and females, is detected in respondents with secondary education. The results suggest that homonegativism lowers with higher level of education. Other studies (Brajdić-Vuković and Štulhofer, 2012) also suggest that education eliminates homonegativism, as it has been observed in Croatia, Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. The study conducted with medical students in Belgrade (Dunjić-Kostić et al., 2012) shows that substantial knowledge on homosexuality reduces stigmatization.

Conclusion

The results of the study represent a small segment of investigations conducted on this research question. In spite of including a small number of participants, the study contributes to enlargening the database on the attitudes of Serbian population toward homosexual individuals. One of the limitations of the study is the fact that people with primary education did not take part in the survey. The obtained results point to moderate level of homophobia among the respondents. At the same time, they indicate that negative attitudes are still present in the population. The results point to the necessity of conducting similar studies in the future, as they can contribute to widening public consciousness and reducing ignorance, prejudice and stereotypes regarding homosexuality. Gaining better knowledge on this issue enables better understanding and acceptance of this sort of sexual orientation and builds healthy social relations that have effect on mental health.

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Polish Funerals: History and Contemporary Changes

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Abstract

Objectives. The aim of the article is to present history and recent changes in Polish funerals. Contemporary changes are introduced by new actors of this social drama: undertakers, owners of crematoria and masters of ceremonies.

Methods. In the research conducted in 2010-2012 I employed qualitative methods in the form of semi-structured interviews.

Results. The modern funeral rite in Poland is influenced by the burial rituals of the Slavs and the Christian cultural traditions. The Second World War was followed by a period of modest funerals organized by the municipal authorities. Then, the standard ritual with theatrical rules and *decorum* was launched by modern undertakers in the 90s. Funerals – being the most traditional of Polish customs – nevertheless undergo the processes of professionalization and institutionalisation. As the funeral parlour takes control over the body of the dead it shapes a certain standard of the Catholic traditional funeral. This leads on one hand, to the unification of the Catholic burials along with the fading of regional differences. On the other hand, the parlours have rich offerings, which affect the diversification of funerals depending on financial resources and social hierarchy. The dead acquires a social-economic status. The mourners lost their influence on the ritual forms and assumed the role of customers expecting the performance of all services. The burial rite was transferred into the public space, the institutions professionally controlling the ritual. Instead of regional diversification of folk traditions, there are differences between the funeral in the country (and in small towns) and in the city.

Conclusions. A characteristic of the Polish funeral culture is the clash of modernity and premodern persisting customs and beliefs.

Keywords: funeral, tradition, ritual, and corpse.

Introduction

This article was developed based on a two-year empirical study under the project financed by the Ministry of Science and High Education, no. 116081739, ‘Transformations of attitudes and customs of Poles in the culture of burial: Perspectives of representatives of the funeral sphere’. The main goal of the study was to capture the transformations occurring in the culture of burial, in funeral infrastructure, in attitudes and celebrations by Polish Catholics and non-believers from the perspective of funeral representatives. I limited my study to Catholic and lay funerals. Funerals of other denominations and ethnic groups require a separate study and communication with these groups. The collected materials on burials describe how a funeral is organised by a funeral parlour. I assumed that an insight into the secrets of the profession of funeral experts would allow for better

understanding of the modern *post mortem* rituals, and for assessing how the burials developed in the twentieth and twenty-first-century. ‘The knowledge of the professional role of the funeral director – the key player in the drama and body guardian – is crucial for deep understanding of the modern funeral customs’ (Howarth, 1993, p.221).

Methods

In the study I used qualitative methods. These were mainly semi-structured scenario-based interviews (Lofland et al, 2009) with undertakers. This means that I prepared the main topics of conversations but their development depended on how it worked with particular informant. This method is of course limited because the gathered materials are filtered by ‘the facade’ of the roles played by undertakers. They cultivate ‘the micropolitics’ which means strategies by which individuals and groups use their sources of power (Hoyle, 1982). As the ethnographer has always critically to assess gathered materials, I confronted interviewees with other sources. I also tried to understand the way of building the facade in the informants’ discourses following the advice of Jack Douglas (1971).

Favoured by me is the approach of Jean-Claude Kaufmann (2010, p.11), who proposes the method of ‘understanding interview’. I also employed the following methods: questionnaire interviews, observation (semantic analysis) of photos, brochures and advertisements. The collected material covers the transcription of 46 interviews, records of responses to 27 surveys, records of 168 responses to the phone survey, records of observations and field notes, photo documentation of funeral fairs and parlours and one lay funeral, magazines, brochures, leaflets, books by the masters of ceremony, audio-visual materials and funeral gadgets.

Slavic roots

The formula for the modern funeral rite in Poland is influenced by the burial rituals of the Slavs and the Christian cultural traditions. Juliusz Chróścicki (1974) reconstructs the main elements of the Slavic funeral. After the death of a member, the whole family watched him over. Then, he was taken to the pagan graveyard. The grief procession was attended by the hired criers who lamented, tore their clothes and harmed themselves to bloody wounds. The persons who demised with a sudden, rapid death were buried at the crossroads or in the forest. In the northwestern regions of the country the bodies of the dead were burnt. This rite was related to the Łużyce culture, and for the Slavic it was connected with the cult of sun and fire. With the dead, all his objects of daily use were burnt as well. The burnt human bones were washed and placed in special vessels called ash trays. In the Medieval Age, the Church fought against this custom of burying at the crossroads and in the forests. However, just as in other family and annual ceremonies, the Church adopted some of these customs. After the burial, there was a funeral meal. Also, this Slavic element of burial culture has survived until today. Forty days after the funeral, the commemoration ceremonies were conducted.

Pompa funebris – the characteristic feature of Polish funerals

The most intensive ritualisation of the funeral in Europe took place in the seventeenth-century. In Poland, *pompa funebris*, also called *apparatus funebris*, were held at that time (Chróścicki, 1974, p.8). These were the royal, baron and gentry funerals. It needs to be noted that not everyone could afford such a funeral. In the burial culture – as in life – we deal with classes as

well as the differences in lay and clerical funerals, and the differences in terms of sex and age. The procession moved from the church to the graveyard, under the triumphal gates specially constructed for this purpose, or a procession moved around the Church to the place where a grave was prepared. Sometimes, a grave had a mourning flag hung over it. The coffin portraits removed from the coffin were hung in the churches. The churches have been changed into family mausoleums decorated with the images of 'ancestors' (Chróścicki, 1974, p.76). Then, a funeral meal was held as a 'happy meal accompanied by, for example, fireworks and a music band' (Chróścicki, 1974, p.52) as well as brawls and a drunken party. The consumptive extravagance during the funeral meals, the said excessive food consumption reminding of *potlatch* in the archaic cultures is according to Nola (2006, pp.182–190) a part of *contraria face re* – a reversal of normal behaviour, which is characteristic for the liminal time, the time of chaos. The period from death to the funeral often lasted for several months. Despite the fact that by that time there already existed the convergences in liturgy, analogies in customs, funeral 'models', and guidelines that the funeral preparations should take no more than one month (Chróścicki, 1974, p.43), the ostentation of Sarmatia funerals was known throughout Europe.

The evolution of burials in the post-war Poland

Tony Walter (2005) characterises models of 'funeral organisation' by which he means: "management of the corpse until its final disposition, once medical practices at the hospital or other place of death have been completed" (Walter, 2005, p.173). There are three patterns: the commercial where control of the dead is granted to the businessman, the municipal where the public officials in state administration departments handle the funeral, and religious where the church takes the power over a body. In the Polish People's Republic there were few private funeral parlours and the monopolist – the municipal departments of state bureaucracy - didn't have traditions how to dispose of the dead. This institutional control interacted with national cultural history (Walter, 2005, p.187) where the position of the Catholic Church as the bearer of national identity played the main role. Folk customs and beliefs were integrated with Catholic practices. Catholic priests, being predominantly from villages, were rooted in archaic rituals. After the Second World War was a period of modest, ritually impoverished funerals organised in the towns by the municipal funeral parlours and in the villages with the traditional neighbouring assistance. Because of the war's devastation, closed borders with the West and difficulties made by municipal parlours and state to several private companies which survived the war, the period of the Polish People's Republic saw a shortage of materials for producing coffins and artefacts. The undertakers who worked there insisted on laic funerals, but, because the Catholic Church played a big role even during the communist regime, mainly only official funerals of public and military people were not religious. As mentioned by an owner of a funeral business, in the past the modest coffin was transported to the church with a modest car like Tarpan or Żuk, and then, four male members of the family or neighbours took the coffin and carried it to the church and the graveyard.

In the 1990s, the commercial model of disposing the dead is developing. During this period of the emergence of private funeral parlours, the burial assumes splendour, a rich decorum is added: musical settings, diversification of wreaths, changes in the appearance of coffins, assistance of elegant employees of the parlour (instead of drunken gravediggers in felt boots) and many other requisites. The municipal funeral parlours started to be privatised which is a long process lasting in XXI century. Older people assume that the municipal funeral parlour is cheaper, so they often choose it. Although its services are not always cheaper, it rather offers more modest expenditure for lower prices. Its presence regulates the prices on the funeral market.

In the twenty-first-century, some traditional elements of the village funeral related to the control of the corpse start to disappear, taken over by the funeral parlour. These include: keeping the corpse at home, 'empty nights' (watching over the dead), taking the coffin from the mourning house, foot processions with the coffin on the shoulders, and funeral meals in houses. With the year 2000, elements of the multimedia were added (videos and photos of the dead), the memorials in a digital version. 'Smolensk funerals' – funerals organized by the state after the crash of the aeroplane in Smolensk with the president and other Polish officials – strengthen even more the aspirations to splendid funerals and modern caravans. The fashion for rectangular plates with the dead data has developed. It is a period of the greatest ritualisation of post-war funerals. From 1 March 2011, funeral benefit has been reduced. This affects the giving up from some of the elements of the funeral (less flowers and candles, less caravans), which has become slightly more modest.

Contemporary funerals

Still, current funerals are splendid when compared to, for example, funerals in Germany, the Czech Republic or Great Britain. An expensive coffin made of solid wood is purchased, and often three funeral vehicles are ordered: for the coffin, flowers and guests. A diversified decorum of the funeral parlour is chosen. This is influenced by the role of social prestige. A funeral in Poland is an important family event, integrating the family, professionals, neighbours and friends or relations. The inhumation – in addition to other family rituals, such as the wedding – is an opportunity to meet in a wider family group. Burial plays an important social function: it is a manifestation of the social status of the dead and the financial status of the family, and also its religious denomination. Therefore, it is often the case that even if the dead is a non-believer or non-practising Catholic, his family chooses the religious ceremony. In Poland, 95% of funerals still follow the Catholic ceremony and 5% are secular. The standard for Catholic funerals in Poland was established only after it had been introduced by the modern funeral parlours. The main actors have changed: the parlour assistance group in addition to the priest and even more masters of ceremony who substitute or accompany the priest. The number of cremations in Poland is increasing with multiple possible funeral scenarios. New fashions are emerging, such as photos at the coffin giving the funeral a more individual character. Therefore, the ritual of transition during the funeral changes constantly depending on the cultural, social and economic factors. As in the case of 'Smolensk funerals' the impact of the media on the rituals of the burial can be noticed as well as the influence of public funerals of important individuals. The new digital technologies also enter the sphere of family rituals. While in many countries of Western Europe (e.g. Great Britain, Germany) the funeral is simplified and compressed, in Poland there is an expansion of ceremony and its decorum is more similar to 'euphoric' American funerals. Following the establishment of this standard, the funeral parlours and institutions play a conservative role and cultivate the established standard.

A funeral in Poland is still a very religious ceremony. However, a major role in this ceremony is played by the consumptive culture. An even wider availability of parlours finds acknowledgement among the customers. A worthy burial in the understanding of the Poles is a splendid and public funeral. Despite the promotion of lay funerals in the media and the Internet, these account for only about 5% of all funerals. In comparison to the West, there are only few elements of the individualistic culture, but their emergence needs to be noted. Already, the wide choice of funeral accessories changes the position of mourners, to become consumers forced to make choices. There is a small proportion of thematic funerals (e.g. motorcyclists, fire-fighters, sports fans funerals) very popular especially in the U.S. There is also a small proportion of alternative burials popular in the West.

Poland has very much in common with USA in regard to the process of viewing the body during funerals. But there is the difference in the attitude towards preparing the dead. Embalming in Poland is not popular, due to a different attitude than in the U.S. to the corpse of the dead and death itself. As Christie Davies (1996, p.61) proves, Americans choose to deny death through the disguise of embalming. The dead are supposed to look alive, which involves turning away from the processes of decay. The commercial model in America is fetishising the body beautiful (Walter, 2005, p.178). Also Protestant Christians “tend to separate body from soul; the dead body holds little or no spiritual significance, so viewing the body holds no spiritual significance” (Walter, 2005, p.181). In Poland, there is the acceptance of death although mainly in the sense of martyrology and religious sense (Kubiak, 2014). The corpse is sacred and regarded as the temple of the soul. Undertakers opposing embalming said that embalming takes away the dignity of the dead body and that by embalming the dead looks like a doll. In Poland, viewing the body is regarded as religious obligation, whereas in America it is a social requirement. The funeral meals, being an important element of the rituals and family integration distinguish Poland from the customs of many European countries (e.g. Germany, Czech Republic). Care for graves, frequent visits to the cemeteries along with multiple flowers, candles and other elements of decorum distinguish Poland from the habits of the Western European countries and the U.S, particularly from Protestant countries.

The privatisation of the funeral market and its consequences

With the emergence in Poland in the 1990s of the infrastructure of private funeral parlours and businesses producing coffins and the whole range of accessories, the modernisation of funeral rituals and habits commenced. As the funeral parlour takes control over the body of the dead, the directors of the parlours come to shape funeral culture and even determine a certain standard of the Catholic traditional funeral. This leads on one hand, to the unification of the Catholic burials along with the fading of regional differences. On the other hand, the parlours have rich offerings, which affect the diversification of funerals depending on financial resources and social hierarchy. The dead acquire a social-economic status (Sanders, 2009) through the selection of clothes, type of coffin, decorum in the form of artefacts such as the quantity and splendour of wreaths, plates with a photo, the whole multimedia presentation devoted to his life, hired trumpeter, violinist or a whole orchestra, elegant hearse, a meal for his honour, and the grave. There is a diversification in the splendour and costs of the funeral. The ritual is closely connected with the economy. ‘Death and its properties appear to be antithetical to the work of doing capitalism. (...) Yet we know it is a social (if not wholly physical) fact that the two do indeed coexist and often look as if they do so quite amicably. There is no shortage of means for profiting from the death of human beings’ (Sanders, 2009, p.447). The burials can be organised within the limits of a funeral benefit but can also cost several tens of thousands zlotys and more. The processes of professionalization and institutionalisation (Howarth, 1993; Davies, 2006) empower the parlours to control both the corpse and the whole ritual process, replacing the folk customs that survived through the Polish People’s Republic.

At first, in the 1990s, the owners of parlours had to negotiate with the hosts, persuading them into entrusting the corpse of the dead to the professional service of funeral experts. Gradually, by introducing more and more services, the funeral parlour took on the complete organisation of the ritual of transition. Watching over the dead, which in the country and in small towns is traditionally accompanied by saying a rosary and sprinkling the body in the coffin by the priest, takes place in the farewell room of the parlour, cemetery chapel or hospital chapel. In the city, the guests gathered in a chapel are silent and listen to the mourning music or watch the pictures of the dead that are

displayed on the screen. The transposition of the last farewell from a house to the space of institutions has caused this ritual to be compressed and limited to about two hours before the funeral, whereas the 'empty nights' are forgotten. Transport of the coffin and guests in cars and buses replaced the foot processions. Prepared and properly clothed funeral assistants literally relieved the relatives and neighbours from the burden of carrying the coffin and the wreaths.

The musical setting introduced by the businesses in the form of professional musicians (trumpeters and fiddlers) or sound gear for playing the tracks from discs caused the disappearance of the local singers and criers. It is one of these elements of former customs whose disappearance is regretted. It stood for an active participation by the local community in the last farewell, as well as the celebration of the folk work. It was believed in the country that 'the one who sings prays two times stronger' (Kupisiński, 2007, p.232). The funeral meal in the house has been replaced by the modern catering provided at local depots and recreation rooms or a meeting of the guests at a restaurant specialising in funeral banquets. The mourners lost their influence on the ritual forms and assumed the role of customers expecting the performance of all services. The burial rite was transferred into the public space, the institutions professionally controlling the ritual. The disappearance of folk customs has also been affected by the Christianisation of the Polish rituals. As a result, a close bond with the dead fades away along with the home beliefs and customs.

The ritual of transition controlled from the beginning to the end by a funeral parlour undergoes aestheticisation and even more makes the death itself unreal. The dramatic character of the ritual of transition—formerly dynamic by contact with the decomposing body, a mournful lament and singing of the local choirs—developed by the funeral parlours, becomes quiet and sublime. Even the last dramatic accord like throwing lumps of earth on the coffin has been replaced by a subtle placing of a grid on the grave and padding it with the wreaths. Only when the family leaves, this 'dirty' part of the ritual, with its meaning of final disposal of the corpse, is done by the diggers. This custom has been taken over from the funeral tradition of the U.S. Some parlours introduce innovations that even better hide a threat of life ending and reduce the traumatic character of the mourning. They propose new services and accessories every time, which are a new 'commodity' without foundation in the symbolic and become one more element of *teatrum* where the mourners are only spectators. For example, the Lower-Silesian businesses introduced a custom of wearing white gloves by the funeral assistants, which are then thrown into the grave before it is buried. A parlour in the Kujawy-Pomerania region proposes a custom of letting out the pigeons while the coffin is being lowered into the grave. There are new technologies offered by undertakers, like: embalming, 'diamonds' created from the hair and ashes, and the transmission of funerals on-line. Services for funeral planning are being promoted but Poles, despite buying the grave before one's death, have the confidence that a family will arrange the ceremony according to the relatives' wishes.

Surviving customs and beliefs

During my study, the directors of funeral parlours noted the disappearing customs, especially those related to the house rituals. These survived in the villages and small towns distanced from the modern cooling rooms, parlours and hospitals. Also, in the situation of death at home, the older hosts continued the traditions of home rituals. My interlocutors met with the archaic procedures continued in the country. These are related to the beliefs that the soul will not leave the body after death, but stays there or close to it until the whole ritual of transition is completed. All the activities, from cleaning and wearing, to the funeral meal, are devoted to cleaning, liberating and forgiving the sins of the soul (requests for forgiveness made on behalf of the dead, Biegeleisen

(1930, p.204) and preventing any damage that the soul could make against his relatives and neighbours. A belief in a harmful impact of the dead affects the family members who remember multiple magical rules in the presence of the corpse. A family watches over the dead after washing him and dressing with formal clothes, in the companionship of coming neighbours, although it rarely lasts for the whole night. They say a rosary together, which is sometimes led by those who specialise in it. Every mourner says farewell to the dead by kissing him on the hand or forehead and sometimes speaking to him. The deceased's household becomes a place where the forces of the afterlife enter.

There is the time governed by other rules, dangerous for the surrounding. At this time, the rules of death's time should be followed, and precautions facilitating the transition of the soul to the other side and protecting the hosts against 'an aggressive dead' should be taken. Household members cover the mirrors and TVs, so that the soul of the dead is not able to see itself in them – 'as it will not be able to leave the body' (Zadrożyńska, 1988, p.141). As stated by Fischer (1921, p.137), the basis of magical procedures related to the mirrors is 'an idea that the shadow, the picture reflected in the mirror or water should be identified with a human soul', which makes the departure more difficult and attaches to the place. If the mirror would reflect the corpse 'there would be two dead in this house' (Fischer, 1921, p.137), which would soon cause the death of a relative. The hosts stop all the clocks that register the ordinary time of the human life. For the dead the time has ended and for the mourners it is being stopped in this liminal phase of the ritual of transition.

While taking the coffin with the dead out from the house – always with his legs in front – the coffin should hit the threshold three times. These magic rules protect against a return of the soul of the dead, which would otherwise haunt the relatives (Kupisiński, 2007, p.205). The threshold, as a boundary point, plays a significant role in all family rituals. Further, the stools and tables are overturned, especially those where the coffin was laid so that the soul of the dead would not stay on them (Kupisiński, 2007, p.205). The noise caused by these forces the soul to follow the body. The doors of all household rooms are opened so that the dead can say goodbye to all his property. Also, the animals are instructed on the death of the master so that they do not follow the coffin (Kupisiński, 2007, pp.196–197). The bees are instructed by attaching a black rag to every hive (Biegeleisen, 1930, p.200). Then, the foot procession goes to the nearest figure, chapel or cross, where the people pray. From there, usually the guests move to their cars. All these folk beliefs and customs are associated with the ambiguous attitude toward corpse and fantasies, which are connected with a dead body. Cadaver fascinates people and at the same time makes them fearful. The idea of aggressive dead is very common in many cultures (Thomas, 1991). Archaic forms of mourning and practices around corpse tend to survive in rural cultures in contrast to modern urbanized communities (Nola, 2006, p.10).

Cremation

Cremation is growing and in 2012 reached 15%, with 30 crematoriums in 2014. The percent of cremations in 2011 for Poland was about 15%. The factors affecting the increase of cremations are the reduced funeral costs (the price of a cremation funeral is generally lower, although many factors are included, such as transport to crematoriums), a higher number of crematoriums, the promotion of cremations by some business owners, a higher number of exhumations in order to bury the dead in one grave, multiplication of the dead – cremations of dead-born children and infants, possible addition of the urn to the family grave, decreasing space in the cemeteries and its price. The prices for cremation service are from PLN 600 to 760, although the whole ceremony depends on the price of the urn, cremation coffin, and space availability in the

cemetery, priest charges and transport. The urn may cost from PLN 150 to 2,000. The crews for urn transport are smaller as one or two persons rather than four are sufficient. It is also cheaper to store the urn in the parlour, instead of storing the body in the refrigeration room, and the brickwork costs are lower as well. The factors contributing to continuously low numbers of cremations in Poland compared to Western Europe or just the Czech Republic are: the association – especially for the post-war generation – with the extermination camps, lists of bishops concerning cremation, the list concerning the Mass with the coffin, the influence of some representatives of the clergy against cremation, social pressure in smaller towns and in the country as well as the domination of the traditional burial model. Religion plays an important role, as in Catholic and Orthodox countries there is a smaller percentage of cremations in contrast with Protestant countries. People aged 20 to 30 years, as well as individuals with higher education opt more often for cremation instead of the traditional burial. In 2001, in a study concerning the attitude of Poles to death, CBOS (Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej) also included a study of the attitudes towards cremation. Of Poles, 44% were for cremation, whereas in 1994, the supporters accounted for 37%. The persons who accepted cremation had a higher education, better financial status and resided in the cities. The biggest support for cremation is among persons in managerial positions, among office staff, students and pupils. Women more often accept cremation. The support for it drops with age. It is rarely accepted by farmers, pensioners and senior citizens.

Local diversity

The local diversification existing in Poland should be noted. Funeral rituals have clear differences between the city and the country, and the local ones where the customs are introduced by the funeral parlor (and the cemetery administrator) and the parish priest. The family of the dead is ‘between the mayor and the parson’, where the mayor represents the funeral parlor. The parish priest decides whether to agree to the Mass with the urn, mournful watching-over of the coffin in the church, or to the foot procession. The custom of procession is also decided by the mayor of the town. In many parishes, the priests are not against introducing the urn to the mourning Mass. Burial in Poland is an opportunity to integrate the scattered family, and the priests often understand the difficulties that would arise from arranging the funeral for a few days. There are also parish priests, such as in Gdansk and Gdynia, who disagree with the introduction of the coffin in the church, citing hygiene and comfort. For the reasons of convenience, some priests also are against the foot processions, which were an important element of traditional funerals. In Wrocław, in turn, there is a custom of conducting the mournful Mass with an open coffin.

There are clear differences between the funeral in the country (and in small towns) and in the city. In the country, death is a social phenomenon where the ritual of transition is attended not only by the family, but also by a large group of neighbors. They are invited to the funeral meal, which assumes a type of a large feast (from 60 to 100 people). Although it was formerly organized in the family house, it is currently held in the country recreation rooms, depots, where the catering is ordered. As the heads of parlors in small towns say: ‘the funeral meal should be held, as it is a common custom. Funeral meals in the country need to be affordable. Lavish hospitality beyond your means’; ‘They bargain for the coffin, but a meal for 70 people is necessary to bury the dead with pride’. In the city, the funeral meal is held among a strict group of the closest family, in a restaurant. In the country, the oak coffin is ordered with decorative fittings and a lace laid to the outside. In the city, it is not matter of which wood the coffin is made, but how it looks, and the pine coffins are most commonly chosen. In the village, it is rare to order lay and cremation funerals, whereas in the

city the number of cremations is increasing and a lay funeral is no longer something ordinary. The thing that distinguishes the country funeral rituals is maintaining certain archaic beliefs and customs.

Conclusions

A characteristic of Polish funeral culture is the clash of modernity and persisting pre-modern customs and beliefs. The funeral parlour assumes control over the corpse. Breaking the tradition of the war period, municipal funeral parlours and the state ideology of lay burials give the emerging parlours a fresh origin to see a need to reapprove the ritual. The ritual also proves itself in a long-term perspective. The business owners derive from both the Sarmatia and folk traditions as well as declare the traditionalism of the proposed rites and artefacts. The most archaic forms that have survived until today are: the custom of displaying the corpse (practised in a funeral parlour instead of watching over the dead in his house), placing personal objects of the dead into the coffin, a ceremonial procession, and in the country, the custom of taking the coffin out from the house (accompanied by home customs), burning a fire in the form of candles in the cemetery, and the funeral meal. From the primary acts of the Indo-European burial, almost all criers have disappeared and it is rare to meet any groups of funeral singers.

When it comes to globalisation, the funeral market in Europe has a major impact on the funeral accessories, stylistics of coffins, urns and hearses. What is more, expansive American businesses and funeral corporations entered the European funeral market (Laderman, 2003; Habenstein, 2007). At the same time, in pointing to both globalisation and local variations, researchers emphasise the need to study the whole context of the cultural phenomena. The Polish burial culture due to the religious connections shows many similarities to Italy. The Italian market—just as Poland – favours tradition and resists extravagance (appearing, for example, at the French fair). Therefore, the stylistics of funeral accessories at the fair in Bologna and in Poland is very similar and balanced. At the same time, thematic, individualistic, secularist elements are adopted in the cremation rites, such as urns in the shape of a football for fans or books with a pen for writers. Since the reduction of the funeral benefit, the mourners often bargain for the prices. Not only among the attendants of funerals, but also based on my experience with people from various spheres, the consumers talk about the level of service, standard or quality of products. Still the funeral - despite multiple novelties from the West – is the most traditional of Polish customs.

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Where is the prevention? Incomplete public campaigns about hepatitis in Romania

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Abstract

Objectives. The aim of the present paper was to analyze the impact of Romanian public campaigns about the incidence of hepatitis B and C.

Material and methods. The analysis used the triangulation of three methods of research: the content analysis of the Romanian NGO's websites about preventing and fighting against hepatitis, an online survey carried on 155 respondents and a set of interviews made with eight executives (NGO's and public institutions 'representatives) who are involved in such public campaigns and, at the same time, are also infected with hepatitis B and C.

Results. The findings can be summarised as follows: 1) 46% of the Romanian respondents to the online survey did not know anything about a public campaign on hepatitis, and one quarter of them did not intend to know more in the future. 2) The NGO's websites on fighting against and raising awareness about hepatitis B and C in Romania were full of medical languages and neologisms and, as such, they addressed only to a targeted public. 3) The set of interviews made with hepatitis infected respondents showed that in case that someone gets ill he or she understood the importance of public campaigns about health and became involved in this type of social action.

Conclusions. The basic conclusion of the study is that the success of public health campaigns in Romania depends in a high degree on a network of factors (funds for financing it, involvement of state's institutions and media and public awareness of the topic among Romanians).

Keywords: health communication; public campaigns; hepatitis; public awareness of health and illness.

Introduction

Relevant communication in health is a constant topic of analysis and debate within academic research community over recent decades. It is widely acknowledged that the free access to information allows people to be more efficiently informed about health issues. As Schiavo showed (2007, p. XII), the fact that people know about a certain disease and what can be done related to its prevention result in an improvement of the entire medical system and contributes to the internal balance of its elements. According to Schiavo (2007, p. XIII) there is a general consensus that health communication is based on various fields such as mass communication, social marketing, anthropology and sociology, and this eclectic character is, in fact, its strength.

Some anthropologists, specialized in the sociology of health and illness, have shown that patients with chronic conditions require special care of their disease (Adam and Herzlich, 1994). At the same time, the sociologists have emphasized the important role of social and cultural representations of health and disease for the individual and collective behavior when individuals faced chronic and emerging diseases. Thus, according to Canguilhem (1988) the individual behavior of a person in society varies according to what he thinks of his health. Health then expresses a certain relation of the human being to his experience, a report that goes well beyond the remit of the

care system (Canguilhem, 1988) and social inequalities translate into inequalities in health and disease.

Romania occupies one of the first positions in the European ranking due to high rates of hepatitis infection among population (World Health Organisation, 2015). Nevertheless, the Romanian state's initiatives for preventing and fighting against this disease were and remain scarce, almost invisible, and very little is done to inform the population and prevent the disease. Due to the fact that almost 20% of the Romanians are under the risk of contracting hepatitis it is obvious that the prevention measures are more stringent than in the case of other diseases (**Populația României ACUM, 2013). A key-element for preventing and fighting against the spread of a disease is the planning and implementation of health communication campaigns, and this is also the case with hepatitis.

As Schiavo (2007, pp.57-69) and MacStravic (1986, pp.1-15) showed, any health-related communication campaign has to overcome some obstacles, among which the most important are: health-related inequalities (at social level and that of the medical system); patients' empowerment in order to change and improve his or her style of living; the limits of health prevention; the development of e-health through the Internet; high levels of health illiteracy; emergence of old diseases (such as cholera or tuberculosis); lack of medical infrastructure.

At a theoretical level, one can speak about three types of health communication campaigns: information campaigns (e.g. prevention campaigns and campaigns related to treatment of diseases); campaigns that aim to change the life-style and campaigns intended to strengthen and promote healthy behaviour. At first glance, it seems that the vast majority of Romanian health campaigns could be circumscribed to the first type of campaign, they are mainly information campaigns related to health and diseases, and only a small proportion of them could be enclosed in the second type (the campaigns that aim to change the health-related behaviour of people).

The present article will try to analyze the ways in which communication about health issues took place in Romania in the last years, on a specific case: the public campaigns of awareness about the incidence of hepatitis B and C discussing the specific case of public campaigns aiming to raise awareness about hepatitis B and C incidence.

Materials and methods

My analysis is focused on some communication campaigns regarding hepatitis, which were promoted in Romania in the last years. The main assumption of the study was that any health-related communication campaign should have an important influence on people's behaviour related to health and illness. The following are the general research hypotheses:

1. Health-related advertising in Romania is only informative and does not refer to disease prevention.
2. Health-related communication campaigns in Romania target only patients and not healthy people (who are at risk).

From a methodological point of view, the analysis is based on the triangulation of three methods of research: a content analysis of the Romanian websites about preventing and fighting against hepatitis, a survey of the opinions, attitudes and information about health-related behaviour and a set of interviews with eight experts in the field of hepatitis.

The research hypotheses for the survey were:

1. People's interest in obtaining information about hepatitis as disease will increase if they are somehow exposed to a campaign centred on health and illness.

2. The exposure to media content related to hepatitis as disease can result in a possible tendency of people to change their health-related behaviours.

As the research hypotheses for the content analysis I have:

1. The Romanian websites about hepatitis disseminate only information about the disease, and not messages about prevention of the disease.
2. The Romanian websites about hepatitis disseminate information using medical terminology, which make them less accessible to the general public.

For the set of interviews I have the following research hypotheses:

1. The Romanian experts on hepatitis assess that health-related campaigns are important for the prevention of this disease.
2. The Romanian experts on hepatitis assessed that more information about the treatment and prevention of hepatitis should be available to the general public.

The triangulation of methods was, also, repeated at the level of the analysed samples, and three different samples are used in the study. The content analysis was made on five websites that approached the general themes of “hepatitis” as disease: www.afladec.net; www.tustiidece.wordpress.com; www.hepato.ro; www.abch.ro; www.hep.ro. The analysed websites are owned either by medical organisations or by NGOs representing patients with hepatitis. The second sample analysed had a volume of 155 survey respondents, aged 18-40 years, who graduated high-school or University and who lived in Bucharest. The third sample was represented by eight individuals who were executives (NGOs’ and public institutions’ representatives) involved in such public communication campaigns and infected, at the same time, with hepatitis B and C. The rationale for the third sample was based on the assumption that they not only have an in-depth knowledge of the issue, but also possess a better understanding of the disease and its prevention.

The period of time in which all data were collected was February-July 2014.

Results

When asked about the main problems affecting the health system in Romania, only 6% of the respondents assessed that lack of information is an important problem, while lack of funds (20%), lack of hygiene (18%) and bribe (17%) were assessed as the main issues of the Romanian medical system.

Table 1. In your opinion, what are the main two issues the Romanian medical system faces at present?

	N	%
Bribe	54	17
Lack of hygiene in hospitals	57	18
Lack of funds	63	20
Lack of professionalism	28	9
Corruption	31	10
Citizens’ lack of interest in medical system	8	3
Low involvement of state’s authorities in the medical system	53	17
Lack of relevant and credible source of information	3	1
Scarce information about the system	1	0
Lack of communication between medical staff and patients	13	4
Other	3	1

When asked to advocate their position on the issues above-mentioned, the respondents declared that Romanian medical system is under-financed from the state's budget and full of acts of corruption and frauds:

Due to small salaries and lack of funds, when you go to the hospital you have to give bribes in order to have access to some medical services. There is a lack of hygiene in the hospitals as a result of the bad management of funds, of wrong expenses and of organised thefts.

I think that lack of funds is the main problem at stake here. From that results the lack of funds for salaries and for hygiene. If someone goes to a private hospital, he or she can overcome these problems, but the vast majority of population is going to public hospitals where these problems are paramount.

Another problem presented by the respondents was the lack of professionalism among medical staff and the low interest of population toward the difficulties faced by the Romanian medical system. Many respondents argued that, if they were really interested in solving those problems, people would organise protests and grassroots movements:

The lack of professionalism of medical staff leads not only to the impersonal ways in which doctors and nurses treat patients, but also, and mainly to their demands of extra-payments for treatments.

Although they are complaining about bad treatment in hospitals and clinics, the citizens take no measures against that. So it is their fault that they do not take actions against that situation by organizing protests or other forms of public disobediences.

Table 2. In general, what do you know about hepatitis?

	N	%
I do not know very much	25	11
It can be treated	78	33
It is contagious	67	28
It is a deadly disease	68	29

As the results showed in the above table, only 11% of the total sample of respondents does not know anything about hepatitis as a disease. Given that 89% of the respondents claimed that hepatitis "can be treated", "it is contagious" and "it is a deadly disease", one could conclude that, related to hepatitis as a disease, people do not know very much and more specific information is needed. At the same time, 43% of the respondents had declared that their knowledge about hepatitis is low or/and that they have no knowledge at all about this disease.

As the survey showed, although 56% of the respondents declared that they knew relatively enough about hepatitis, only 17% of them discussed about this topic or/and underwent the tests. From the total number of persons who declared that they were aware of the health-related risks associated with hepatitis, only 6% had previously asked to be checked for it.

Table 3. How do you assess the health-related communication campaigns in Romania?

	N	%
I know nothing on this topic	19	12
They do not seem efficient at all	29	19
They are very weak	32	21

They are fine	2	1
They are attractive	15	10
They can be improved	56	36
Other	3	2

A great percentage of respondents (36%) supported a pro-active attitude toward hepatitis B and C, since they agreed that the existing health-related campaigns could be improved. On the second place, the respondents placed the lack of efficiency of those communication campaigns and their lack of attractiveness.

Table 4. Which are the communication campaigns related to hepatitis that you remember?

	N	%
Tu stii de C? (<i>“Do you know about C”</i>)	23	15
50.000 free tests campaign ”Afla de C” (<i>“Find about C”</i>)	24	15
”Testeaza-te pentru Hepatita C” (<i>“Test yourself for Hepatitis C”</i>) – free testing, Accept Foundation	16	10
”Impreuna pentru viata. Sanatate prin cunoastere” (<i>“Together for life. Health through knowledge”</i>)	9	6
Cum ”arata” sangele tau? (<i>“How does your blood look?”</i>)	6	4
Ziua mamei cu hepatita (<i>Day of mother with hepatitis</i>)	1	1
Sunt numarul 12? (<i>Am I number 12?</i>)	1	1
”Afla de C”, ”Afla de B” Informeaza-te! Testeaza-te! (<i>“Find about C”, “Find about B” Inform yourself! Test yourself!</i>)	0	0
Call-center for hepatitis patients organised by APAH-RO	1	1
A campaign in a medical institution	10	6
A campaign in an educational institution	7	5
Other	57	37

Although the “Află de C” (*“Find about C”*) campaign had been organised in public spaces within different location in Bucharest (metro stations, out-door advertising etc.), only 15% of respondents mentioned it. The same percentage of respondents remembered (and, as such, noticed) the campaign of free testing for hepatitis ”Afla de C” (*“Find about C”*), while the Accept Foundation’s campaign “Testeaza-te pentru Hepatita C” (*“Test yourselves for hepatitis C”*) was mentioned in the third place. As the results showed, 54% of the respondents could identify one or more of the existing communication campaigns related to hepatitis, while 46% of the sample knew nothing about these campaigns.

Table 5. If you noticed a communication campaign related to hepatitis, what did you do after you saw it?

	N	%
It did not present any further interest for me	51	52
I have searched for more information on the internet	30	31
I have discussed this topic with my family/my friends/my colleagues	11	11
I got tested for hepatitis and/or I convinced other people to get tested for hepatitis	6	6

Only 11% of respondents who noticed the campaign (54% of the total sample) had declared that they discussed on this topic with others, while only 6% (from the same 54%) underwent a test to see if they were infected with hepatitis B or C.

Two images from the communication campaigns about hepatitis were showed to the respondents (see Figure 1 in this respect) and their opinions about these campaigns were recorded afterwards:

Figure 1. – Photos inserted in the questionnaire



Source:
<http://tustiidec.wordpress.com/category/campania-tu-stii-de-c/> (accessed 6 March 2014)



Source: <http://aliantapacientilor.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/vizual-campanie.jpg> (accessed 6 March 2014)

A high percentage of respondents – 85% of the analysed sample – declared that it was the first time when they saw the campaigns and posters for hepatitis shown to them. 17% of them declared that they “probably saw” the poster, while only 1% of the sample declared that they knew the poster and the campaign(s). This means that around 20% of the total sample of respondents were not even once exposed to these campaigns and knew nothing about them.

When asked what they would do after they saw the images and posters, around 40% of the respondents mentioned that “they remembered some ideas from the poster” and 25% that they were interested in the topic and would perhaps search on the internet in the future to find more information. At the same time, 14% of the respondents had declared that they would do nothing in the future related to this topic.

When asked what other sources of information they will access after exposure to both images, 44% of the respondents who saw the image for “Tu stii de C” campaign and 48% of the respondents who saw the image for “Afla de C” (“Find about C”) campaign declared that they would search for more information on the Internet.

Table 6. What other sources of information would you access after seeing the image for “Tu stii de C?” (“Do you know about C?”) campaign?

	N	%
The printed press	9	5
Television	3	2
Discussion with my friends	10	5
Internet	83	44
Discussion with my personal doctor	13	7
Books	8	4
I am not interested to find more information	61	32
Other	2	1

Table 7. What other sources of information would you access after seeing the image for “Afla de C?” (“Find about C”) campaign?

	N	%
The printed press	5	3
Television	3	2
Discussion with my friends	7	4
Internet	86	48
Discussion with my personal doctor	12	7
Books	3	2
I am not interested to find more information	62	34
Other	2	1

Given that the Internet has been nominated as the main source for future and possible hepatitis-related information by 44% and, respectively, 48% of the analysed sample, I tried to see what kind of information are available on the Romanian websites related to this disease. The content analysis of the websites revealed that 29% of the published articles directly approached the social aspects of hepatitis as disease, 15% of the articles covered the ways in which people get infected with this disease and only 1.5% clarified the way in which hepatitis is not transmitted through certain channels and ways.

From the total number of articles published on those websites, 51% were focused on the topic of treatment and 54% reported cases of disease remission. As regards the vocabulary, 88% of the articles contained medical terms and 89% of them contained neologisms.

Table 8. The website contains articles which

	Refer to at least one of the seven types of hepatitis	Use foreign terms (mostly English terminology)	Contain links towards other sites	Contain links towards the website of Romanian Ministry of Public Health	Contain links towards other medical sites	Contain links towards other generalists sites	Contain links towards the sites of Romanian and foreign NGOs
afldec.net	6						
tustiidec.wordpress.com	34	34	9		2		
hepato.ro	145	40	80	3	21	44	14
abch.ro	12		10	2	2		6
hep.ro	35	9	11	1	9		3
	68.2%	24.4%	32.4%	1.8%	10%	12.9%	6.8%

According to the general data, 68% of the articles published on the analysed websites referred to one type of hepatitis and 24% contained foreign terms (mostly English words). Only 32% of the articles had links to other websites – 13% to generalist websites and around 9% to Governmental websites and Romanian NGOs websites. At first glance, one can notice the fact that state’s institutions were rarely mentioned in the articles published on the analysed websites – 1.8% of the total sample mentioned them in connection to the donation of 2% of the personal annual taxes to institutions and NGOs according to Romanian legislation.

Table 9. The website contains articles which

	Use medical terminology	Cover the symptomatology of hepatitis as disease	Refer to the treatments of different types of hepatitis	Use neologisms	Approach social aspects of the disease
afldec.net	6	1		6	
tustiidec.wordpress.com	45	3	33	45	46
hepato.ro	190	37	115	190	50
abch.ro	25	2	3	26	4
hep.ro	34	10	22	37	
	88.2%	15.6%	50.9%	89.4%	29.4%

My analysis showed the fact that a great percentage of the total number of articles published by these websites used a technical vocabulary – 88% of them used medical terms, which are not accessible to the general public. Around a half of the articles (51%) covered the topic of treatments and only 15% provided information on hepatitis symptoms. The social aspects involved in this disease are covered only by 30% of the articles and there are two websites (hep.ro and afldec.net) that did not cover those aspects.

Table 10. The website contains articles which

	Are accompanied by simple images and photos	Contained logos related to hepatitis as disease	Are accompanied by medical images, drawings and diagrams	Are accompanied by images of healthy persons	Are accompanied by images of a campaign's poster	Make references to the campaigns of information about hepatitis
afldec.net	4		3		6	6
tustiidec.wordpress.com						3
hepato.ro	170	160	20	10	50	50
abch.ro	12				3	4
hep.ro						1
	54.7%	47.1%	6.8%	2.9%	17.4%	18.8%

According to the analysis, more than a half of the articles were accompanied by photos and images, and only 18% of them made references to the campaigns of information about hepatitis. The majority of images published on those websites referred to the events and activities organised by the NGOs that owned the websites and make little or no reference to any general campaign of information about the disease.

The use of term “hepatitis” was widespread and only 8.8% of the articles did not use this term (all articles used this term in the case of the “hepato.ro” website).

Table 11. The website contains articles which

	Are interviews with or original contributions of medical staff	Make references to death of the people infected with the virus	Refer to the disease remission	Promote a healthy life-style	Speak about specific dietary requirements for people infected with the virus
afldec.net					
tustiidec.wordpress.com	5	4	40	5	4
hepato.ro	35	20	125	20	25
abch.ro		6	8	7	3
hep.ro		5	11	4	3
	11.8%	10.3%	54.1%	10.6%	10.3%

Only 10% of the total analysed sample referred to the healthy life-style and a similar percentage (10%) indicated the dietary requirements for patients infected with the virus. Those data could lead someone to the conclusion that the main target audience for the analysed websites was made of people that are already infected with hepatitis. The websites seemed not to consider the healthy people at risk of infection in Romania, whose percentage is rather high. This assumption is enforced by the high percentage of articles that covered the issue of disease remission: 54%.

Table 11. The website contains

	Articles that present the ways in which the disease is transmitted	Articles that present the ways in which the disease is not transmitted	A section of RSS or/and newsletter	Links to the SNS pages	Discussion forums
afldec.net	1	1			
tustiidec.wordpress.com	1	1	1	2	
hepato.ro	30	3		2	
abch.ro	5		1	2	
hep.ro	15		2		1
	15.3%	1,5%	1.2%	1.5%	0.3%

As could be noticed, there were few – around 15% – articles that presented the ways in which people could contact hepatitis and only 1.5% of the analysed articles offered also information on the ways in which this disease could not be transmitted (two websites did not published any information on this aspect). In addition, the websites rarely advertised other channels for disseminating the information requested, such as Facebook pages or Discussion forums, even if they used SNS and alternative channels of communication.

Table 11. The website contains articles which used

	The personal pronoun for the singular second person	The personal pronoun for the singular first person	The personal pronoun for the plural first person	The personal pronoun for the plural second person
afldec.net				
tustiidec.wordpress.com	2	31	9	3
hepato.ro	3	5	6	
abch.ro			10	6
hep.ro				
	1.5%	10.6%	7.4%	2.6%

The higher incidence of personal pronouns for the singular first person (“I”) within the articles published by these websites showed the personal tone in which they addressed to their audience. With under 8% of the articles using the singular and plural second person pronouns (“You”) and the plural first person pronoun (“We”), the websites are much more similar to blogs and personal pages than to scientific presentations on the Internet.

Table 12. The website contains articles which

	Approach the issue of testing for hepatitis	Approach-the issues of other diseases connected with hepatitis	Stress the negative aspects of state’s health policies	Cover issues of legislation related to hepatitis	Make references to contact details for the NGOs’	Refer to certain drugs and pills
afldec.net	3				1	
tustiidec.wordpress.com	5	13	7		3	21
hepato.ro	33	15	20	20	8	40
abch.ro	9		4	2	2	5
hep.ro	4			1	2	15
	15.9%	8.2%	9.1%	6.8%	4.7%	23.8%

The analysis showed that only 16% of the articles from the total sample made any reference to the issue of testing for hepatitis, while the number of articles that referred to certain drugs and pills for this disease was higher – 24% of the total sample. The number of articles that made references to Romanian legislation related to the National Programme for hepatitis was very small – only 6.8% – and the same situation appeared on the case of articles that covered those diseases that are frequently associated with hepatitis.

The analysis showed the fact that the vast majority of articles considered was, in fact, only information about the disease and press materials targeted towards persons already infected with hepatitis. Information about the disease prevention and social aspects related to that illness were scarcely covered by the articles published by the websites.

Taking into account this peculiarity of the websites presenting hepatitis in Romania I was interested to see what were the opinions of experts on the purposes of a health communication campaign meant to prevent and provide information on hepatitis.

All respondents interviewed agreed that their involvement in an NGO’s activity related to the issue of health and illness changed their lives. Many of them were also founding members of the NGOs in which they were actively involved at the moment of the interviews. The idea of establishing a health-related association was a “natural” result of their illness, that being the moment when they understood that all patients needed support and information when they confronted the disease and felt alone and without any guidance in life.

Claudia T: We made this group, supported by a website, in order to help people who find that they are infected with hepatitis. I already knew from my own experience how difficult could be when you found that you are infected with hepatitis, how difficult is to obtain information from doctors and how much is the need for information at the level of each individual facing that issue.

Irimia C: We have founded those groups as a necessity to protect the patients’ rights and to represent a link between patients and stakeholders.

All respondents had recognised the fact that, before they have received the diagnosis, they were unaware of this disease:

Viorel C: My previous attitude was one of total indifference. After I found that I have hepatitis my attitude changed, it became a proactive one. As a result of getting infected with hepatitis, I searched to collaborate with doctors and I tried to inform other people about this disease.

When asked about the public health campaigns about hepatitis, all the respondents stressed the need for more funds for them and for a greater involvement of mass media and state's institutions in this type of public campaigns:

Claudia T: I think things could be improved through a vast movement at the national level about the risks involved in the pathology of that disease. As in each day television stations broadcast messages about avoiding the excessive consumption of salt, they [n.n. television stations] could also broadcast a simple spot with the text "Don't let hepatitis to destroy your life, make a test!"

The respondents also offered some clues related the ways in which the present campaigns could be improved as regards their social content:

Irimia C: I think that people with high visibility could be involved in the making of those materials, and I refer here not only to specialists but also to stars, well-known intellectuals etc.

Discussion

The results of the online survey could validate only the first research hypothesis. If the people were somehow exposed to a public campaign related to hepatitis, then a high percentage of them (between 50% and 70%) declared that they wanted to know more about this disease. At the same time, according to their reports, only a small percent of respondents (between 2% and 6%) tended to change the health-related behaviour after exposure to a campaign related to hepatitis or a poster/image of such public health campaign.

The current content analysis lead led to the validation of both research hypotheses about media content. Thus, on the one hand, the Romanian websites about hepatitis disseminate only information about the disease and not messages about preventing the disease. On the other hand, they disseminate information using medical terminology, which make them less accessible to the general public.

In the same vein, both hypotheses related to experts' opinions from NGOs were validated. The Romanian experts considered that health-related campaigns are important for the prevention of this disease and they insisted that more information about the treatment and prevention of the disease should be available to the general public.

Conclusions

The media is extremely powerful in promoting health beliefs and creating role models for contemporary people.

As pointed out in a number of studies (Johnson, Hendrika, 1993; Nelkin, 1995), these health-related messages are effective devices of “social learning”, the people being able to learn what it means to be healthy with the help of the media (Johnson, Hendirka, 1993; Nelkin, 1995). Moreover, health public policies can be modified sometimes by the transmission of messages related to health (Cho, 2006). Incorrect or unrealistic information from medical reports may mislead the people that are working in public health policy and may contribute to the enactment of unfair laws and regulations (Hotz, 2002; Wells, Marshall, Crawley, Dickersin, 2001), the latter being regarded by scientists as real threats to public health (Voss, 2002).

My analysis does not intend to offer solutions regarding the present situation of health communication campaigns in Romania. Instead, it shows that the success of such a campaign depends on a network of factors, among which the most relevant are the state’s financial investments in health domain and grass-roots activism of citizens in the field of health and illness.

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Characteristics and functions of Self-injury in a sample of adolescents attending Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Clinic in Tirana

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Abstract

Self-injury in the 12 to 18 years old age group is of public concern and the majority of self-injurious behaviors do not reach professional attention. The frequency of nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) among adolescents is increasing and it often presents as a long history of self-injury, in absence of physical pain and associated with a higher rate of lifetime suicide attempts compared to the general population. Admission to a psychiatric ward often occurs to prevent further self-injury or attempted suicide.

Objectives. The purposes of this study were to examine the socio demographic/clinical characteristics, to evaluate the functions and the trend of self-injury among adolescents aged 10-20 years, attending the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Clinic (CAPC) in Tirana, Albania.

Material and methods. The period of the study was from March to June 2014. All adolescents admitted to CAPC were interviewed by a psychiatrist and completed the Ottawa Self-Injury Inventory. Descriptive data are reported, using different tables and graphics. SPSS v17 was used for statistical analysis.

Results. The mean age of the study participants was 16.5 years old ($SD = \pm 1.571$), 83 % of them being female. The most common method of self-injury was cutting / scratching of the skin, in 84.2% of all cases. The most frequently reported function of NSSI was external emotional regulation.

Conclusions. This is a first attempt to study NSSI as a new phenomenon among Albanian adolescents. Further research is needed to examine outpatient and community samples of adolescents.

Key words: nonsuicidal self-injury, suicidal behavior, adolescents, and NSSI functions.

Introduction

Self-injury as a direct, intentional harm of body tissue with no intention of suicide is a behavior that has become the focus of a lot of studies during the last few decades. The frequency of such behavior has been increasing, and, unlike in the past, it is no longer considered a sign of serious mental disability. Self-injurious behavior typically begins during the second decade of life, and this is a noticeably increasing trend in adolescents. In order to better understand the nature of self-

injurious behavior and the reasons of such increasing tendency, and in order to identify and to better help these individuals, elaborate efforts and studies are required. This mini survey, which aims to identify the characteristics of self-harm, as well as the reasons for engagement in such behavior, in adolescents who sought care in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Service (CAP) in Tirana, is simply a modest beginning contribution to this issue.

Definitions and Terminology Self-injury is defined as intentional, direct injury of body tissue without suicidal intent, for purposes not socially sanctioned (Favazza, 1998; Nock & Kessler, 2006). In the American literature, defined as stated above, it is commonly referred to as non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). Previously, authors differed widely in terminology, naming the behavior as wrist-cutting syndrome, (Rosenthal et al., 1972), parasuicide (Schmidtke, Bille-Brahe, DeLeo et al., 1996), self-mutilation (Favazza, 1998), self-harm, regardless of intent, (Hawton et al., 2003). However, the more they study this behavior, the less scientists tend to adopt an intimidating terminology. There has not yet been a consensus about the right definition and approach on self-injury. Based on studies on this phenomenon, there seems to be a tendency to define self-harm separately from suicide attempts, preferring for this reason the term of "self-injury"; on the other hand, there is also a tendency to include in the term "self-harm" every violent act on the body, whether it is suicidal or not (Hawton et al., 2003). The latter use the term "self-harm" to mean all self-harming attempts. NSSI is included in DSM-V (APA, 2013), in the category of conditions that need further research.

The subject of self-injury has only recently become the focus of the scientific community attention. Most researchers think that the occurrence of such behavior in adolescents has been increasing only in the last few decades. The causes seem to be very different. "Specific adolescent subpopulations such as ethnic or sexual minorities, and more controversially, those who identify as 'Alternative' (Goth, Emo) have been proposed as being more likely to self-harm, while other groups such as 'Jocks' are linked with protective coping behaviours (for example exercise)" (Young, et al., 2014). key finding in their article is the confirmation of the 'Alternative-identity' effect, with around half of Alternative adolescents engaging in self-injury (NSSI) and around a 1 in 5 attempting suicide. They found a moderate sized correlation between (Alternative) identity and self-harm, with Alternative teenagers between four to eight times more likely to engage in some form of self-harm than their peers. Nixon and Cloutier (2008) have found a prevalence of about 17% of self-injury among adolescents in the community. In a clinical population, however, this prevalence is reported to be higher, at about 40% (Klonsky et al., 2013). According Hawton et al., (2002), approximately only one in eight adolescents who inflict self-harm (no matter what their intention) actually seek professional help. After reassessing the studies on the prevalence of self-injury in adolescents made during 2005-2006 period, the researchers have found an average of lifetime prevalence of NSSI in adolescents of about 18%, although rates differ substantially depending on the types of assessments used and population (Muehlenkamp et al., 2012). In Albania, the issue of self-injury in children and adolescents has not yet been studied. There is only one study on suicidal attempts in children and adolescents (Kola et al., 2013), who have sought help at the emergency department of the "Mother Teresa" University Hospital Center (UHC) in Tirana. This study revealed a significant dominance of suicide attempts among adolescents between fifteen to nineteen years of age. However, considering that 97% of these adolescents had actually used overdosing as a method of suicidal attempts, these cases cannot indeed be related to self-injury behavior. There are data that suggest that NSSI can serve as a pathway to suicide (Whitlock et al., 2013).

Every person that seeks help to a specialist is unique. In order to accurately evaluate and treat the patient clinically, it is crucial to study the functions of self-injury in each individual. In a review of the literature on self-injury, Klonsky (2007) identifies seven functions of self-injury:

affect-regulation, anti-dissociation, anti-suicide, interpersonal boundaries, interpersonal-influence, self-punishment and sensation-seeking. Nock (2010), proposes a model with two categories of the functions of self-injury, *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* functions. Both categories are composed of motives of positive and negative reinforcement, a phenomenon through which this behavior is conserved.

Objectives

This is the first study on this issue in our country. It aims to provide some demographic data of a clinical sample of adolescents presented at the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Service (CAPS), UHC “Mother Teresa” with self-injury and to evaluate the reasons of this behavior. The study was done during the time period March 1st – June 31st of 2014.

Material and methods

In this study we focused on the types of self-injurious behaviors in children and adolescents who sought help at the CAP in Tirana. All the participants underwent a clinical interview with an experienced clinical psychiatrist and they were required to fill out the Ottawa Self-Injury Inventory (OSI; Cloutier & Nixon, 2003). During the study period, 194 patients aged 10 to 20 years sought care at CAP. From the total group of 194 patients, only seventy of them were presented with self-injury behavior. Based on the inclusion criteria for the study, only twenty-one of them fulfilled the criteria to participate. The final study sample was comprised from 19 patients, because two patients didn't agree to participate. The mean age of the group was 16.37 ($M = 16.37$, $SD = \pm 1.571$). The statistical analysis of the data was done using the SPSS for windows 7. The study was approved by the ethical committee of UHC “Mother Teresa” and the Department of Neuroscience, Faculty of Medicine in Tirana, Albania.

Results

As the data show, more than half (62%) of the patients were 15, 16, and 17 years old. Age data were presented in table 1, divided in three categories to facilitate statistical analysis. The value of standard deviation shows that we had a compact group, and it make it easy to compare the cases.

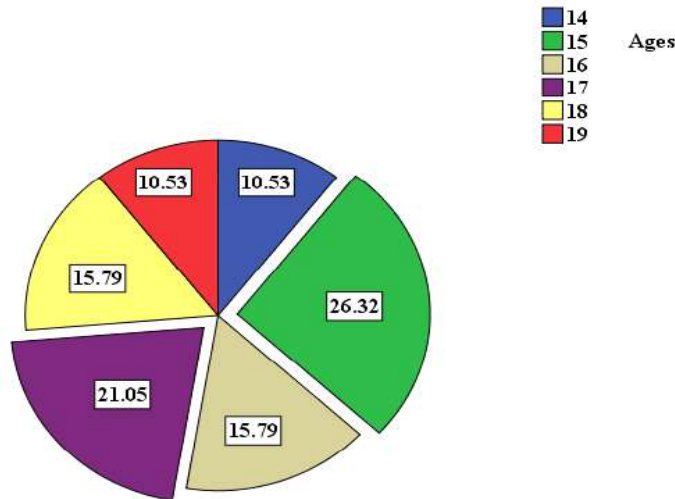
Table 1. Distribution according to age group

Variable	N	Percentage
Age group years old/ (mean \pm SD)	16,37 \pm 1,571	
14 - 15	7	36.8
16 - 17	7	36.8
18 - 19	5	26.3
Total	19	100.0

**Absolute number and percentage in columns*

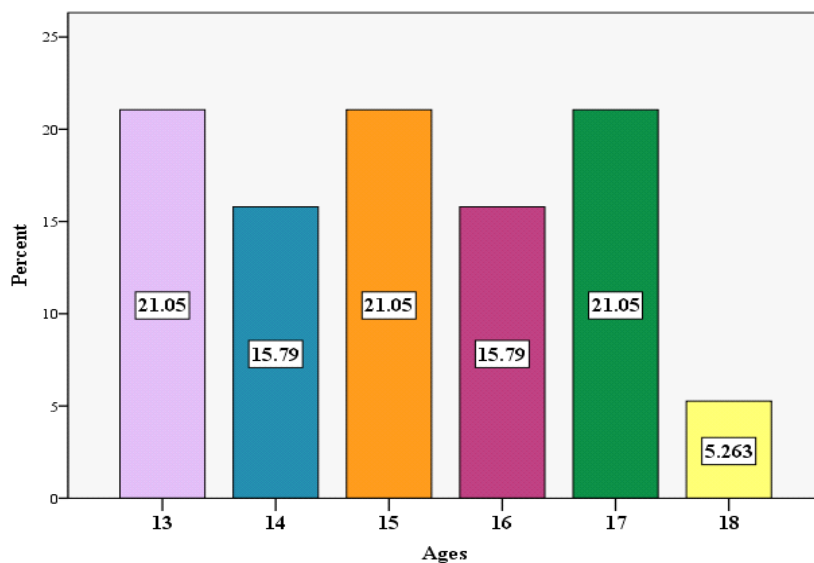
The youngest patients included in the study are fourteen years old, and the oldest are nineteen years old. More than 4/5 of the study group (83%) were females and only 17% of them were male, with a ratio of male to female population 1 to 6 (figure 1).

Figure 1. Study subjects distributed by age (%)



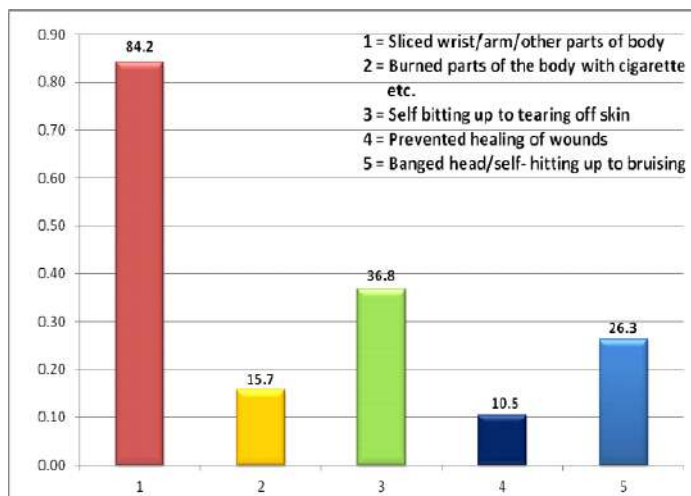
13 years old was referred to be as the youngest age when the patients started the self-injury behavior and the oldest was referred to be 18 years old. Forty-three percent of the patients in the study reported to have started self-injuring less than a year ago, whereas more than half of them (57%) have been inflicting self-injury for more than a year.

Figure 2. When did you started self-injury behavior?



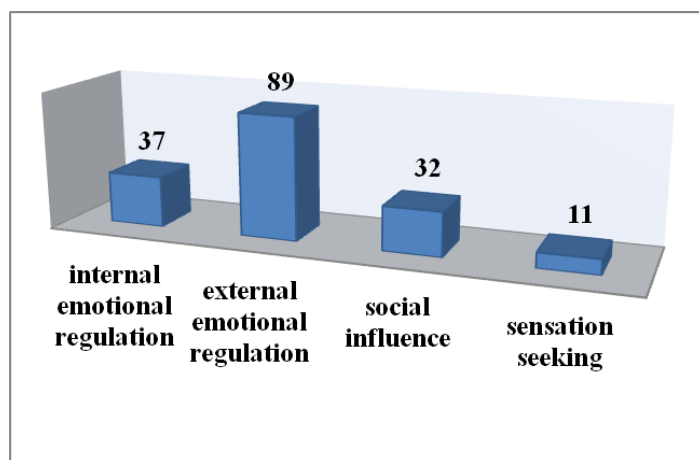
About the whole group (94%) of the patients shared that they communicate to ‘others’ the idea of inflicting self-injury. 63% out of them referred that their communication about self-injury idea was only confident to the doctor. About 20% of them communicate it to their family members, and 16% of them share it with their friends.

Figure 3. Methods used for self-injury (%)



Based on the categorization of methods proposed by Rodav et al., (2014), there were five different methods used in self-injury reported by our patients: sliced wrist, arm or other party of body, burned parts of the body with cigarette, self biting up to tearing off skin, prevented healing of wounds and banged head/self-hitting up to bruising (Figure 3).

Figure 4. Functions of self-injury behavior (%)



In the figure above (fig. 4) are presented the functions of self-injury behavior for our sample study, as proposed by Nock model (Nock, 2010). The graphic indicates the most frequent reason, intrapersonal or interpersonal, which obliged the patients committing self-injuring. According to our results, the subjects report an average of 1.57 reasons for inflicting self-injury (SD = 0.96). The figure clearly shows that major part (≈ 90%) of the subjects self-injure themselves in order to regulate their external feelings. It is clearly demonstrated that this is the most recurrent reason for self-injury in our study population.

Discussion

Our unique study on the issue of self-injury in adolescents is the first one to be implemented in Albania. The subjects involved seem to inflict self-injury after the age of twelve years old. The average age of the self-injuring subjects was 16.5 years of age. This data is close to the age of 15.2 years old, referred by sources of such literature (Whitlock et al., 2011). The self-injuring behavior in the clinical adolescent population is higher than that of the regular community. This is supported by the fact that 17% of adolescents in the community (Nixon and Cloutier, 2008) and 40% of adolescents in psychiatric clinical population have been involved in NSSI (Klonsky et al. 2013). In the meantime, other authors refer to an increasing prevalence of NSSI both in clinical populations (38%-67%) and in the regular community (4%-44%) of adolescents (Heath, et al., 2009). Considering the behaviors related to the development of mental health, these high prevalence rates of NSSI in adolescents are quite alarming. Compared to the referred studies, the percentage of such self-injuring adolescents in our study is quite low. Based on their reports, our study determined that about half of the subjects had previously attempted to commit suicide. This ratio seems to be lower than the findings of other studies. These sources report that about 70% of those with a history of non-suicidal self-injury claim to have experienced at least one suicide attempt. The studies report that NSSI is a warning sign of suicidal behavior (Whitlock et al., 2013; Hamza et al., 2012). In the meantime, a retrospective analysis of suicide attempts by children and adolescents, made by the Statistics Department in "Mother Teresa" University Hospital Center in Tirana for the 2006-2012 periods, shows a seemingly growing tendency of suicide attempts by adolescents (Kola, et al., 2013). This increasing tendency of suicide attempts among children and adolescents necessitates further studies in order to identify the reasons of such risky behavior and to effectively put in place preventive programs and to ensure the right treatment. Our study group consisted almost entirely of females supporting the data of different researches, as well as the data of the study on suicide attempts in Albania (cited above).

About 43% of our patients reported to have started exhibiting self-injurious behavior less than a year ago, whereas more than 57% of the subjects have inflicted self-injury for more than a year. These figures support the idea that this is a chronic behavior, and it also shows that there is a general tendency not to seek professional help right away, but rather delay it. The subjects of our study group are an obvious concern because when it comes to the behavior (reason and attempt), feelings and interpersonal relationships, they are definitely affected. Another aspect affecting them negatively is the social factor, such as 'stopping parents being angry with them', or 'to show others how hurt or damaged is he/she'. These factors correlate pretty highly in international studies as well (Klonsky, 2007; Nock, et al., 2006; Whitlock, et al., 2006). Adolescents in our study shared that, for the most part, their main reason for inflicting self-injury was "to regulate their external feelings", which is related to externalizing symptoms such as anger and irritation. They were characterized by impulsive behavior and low self-esteem. The fact that the trends of the cases that come to the clinic actually exhibit this type of externalizing symptoms is interesting, and presents us with the necessity of exploring other internalizing factors of self-injury in groups who do not actually seek clinical help through our services.

The right treatment of mental development disabilities begins with early detection, which in itself requires screening programs and other identifying tools. Such tools are not yet provided in Albania, and this should be the first in the list of priorities (Tomori et al., 2013). Many epidemiological studies should be carried out in order to obtain reliable data regarding the prevalence, incidence, and clinical characteristics of NSSI in various sociodemographic groups of adolescents. Our findings support the necessity for improvement in the development of educational

programs in our schools, where the promotion of children and adolescents mental health must better emphasized. Schools need to develop programs where they provide assistance lines and make use of counseling and support service for adolescents in order to prevent self-injury.

Conclusions

Self-injury is a common and increasing behavior among adolescents. Most self-injuring cases were female. Most cases reported were exposed to self-injury before beginning to self-injure. The main function of self-injury in our cases was external emotional regulation.

Many epidemiological studies should be done in order to get reliable data regarding the prevalence, incidence, and clinical characteristics of NSSI in various sociodemographic groups of adolescents.

Our findings support the necessity for improvement in the development of educational programs in our schools, where the promotion of children and adolescents mental health must better emphasized.

Limitations of the study

The small number of participants in our study group presents a challenge. We needed more participants in order to better make the connection between the different variables and in order to draw conclusions. This is the reason why a more comprehensive study with a bigger group of participants must be aimed for.

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Socio - cultural changes in the lifestyles of the contemporary Bulgarian family

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Abstract

Objectives. The objectives of the present paper are to analyze the changes in economic and cultural conditions of Bulgarian family and the way they influence the whole life framework, well-being as well as intergenerational family support and relations.

Material and methods. The analysis is based on several national representative surveys carried out in 2006, 2009, and 2012 with respondents living in urban and rural regions, aged 18-65 years, relatively homogenously distributed in the variables of environment, sex, educational level and age group. Data refer to different aspects of people's lives and their families. Follow the living conditions, economic and cultural capital, social support, cohesion and family solidarity.

Results. Based on the findings of the three rounds of ESS, the present study revealed changes in Bulgarian family life in the following areas:

- 1) Economic issues: unemployment, low income, deteriorated living standards, place many Bulgarian families in difficult conditions.
- 2) Family support and solidarity: difficulties in economic terms affect family relationships and cohesion. 2/3 of the respondents indicate that they feel comfortable at home. Displayed variables: time spent with family, sense of concern for the closest people, forms of mutual assistance.
- 3) Cultural capital in the family: educational status of parents, intergenerational education mobility, motivation for education and achievements in school.

Conclusions. The basic conclusion of the study is that the economic and cultural conditions of Bulgarian family have important and vital impact in the lives of individuals.

Keywords: family life stile; solidarity; generations; intergenerational education mobility.

Introduction

The Economic crisis in the years of transition (1990 until today) put a heavy mark on contemporary Bulgarian family, damaging its value system and worsening its internal climate. Family values, such as good will, support, thinking about others, respect, are minimized and they have been changed to egocentrism, distrust and concerns on survival. Thus, members of the Bulgarian family little by little alienate each other, immersed in dynamics of postmodern world.

However, exactly in this situation of uncertainty and anxiety, family remains a basis for lots of individuals and even though destabilized, it still takes an important place within the value system of contemporary Bulgarians, which has preserved quite a few of patriarchal traits of its personality.

„Despite the crisis of marital institute, family continues to be an unconditional value to Bulgarians” (Pamporov, 2009, p.167) as 98.5% of Bulgarians agree that in order one to be happy it is necessary to be married or to have a longstanding relation”. In addition, this empirical result may be interpreted in a wider context of the necessity of “loving” (Delhey, 2004, p.11). Because “to live in good relations with a partner” is one of the conditions for satisfaction with life as a whole and for happiness. That is why it is not by chance that even nowadays one can discover love, sympathy, support, carefulness, tolerance, concern within the Bulgarian family. Family exists because human beings cannot live on their own. Every human needs a family as a place of shelter, of survival, peace and security, of spiritual balance.

In the context of Bulgarian family the basic issues of the present article are:

- To analyze the changes in economic and social conditions of Bulgarian family.
- To present the way these changes influence the whole life framework and well-being.
- To reveal aspects of intergenerational family support and relations.

The article is based on results obtained by European Social Survey in three rounds - 2006, 2009, and 2012/3, mainly with Bulgarian respondents living in urban and rural regions, aged 18-65 years. Data refer to different aspects of people's lives and their families: living conditions, economic and cultural capital, social support, cohesion and solidarity, family well-being.

Economic situation of Bulgarian family

Bulgaria is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Unemployment, low income, poor living standard place many families in difficult conditions. The bad economic situation is one of the basic factors for social exclusion. According to European Social Survey (ESS), only 1% of Bulgarian citizens live comfortably on their income versus: 35% in Slovenia, 13% in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, 8% in Poland at the beginning of 2013.

At the beginning of 2013, a new slide down towards major social distress was observed in Bulgaria. In only two years (2011 – 2013) the number of destitute Bulgarians increased by 7%, and 43% of the population were in the situation to barely manage to overcome material difficulties.

The reasons for the poor living standards of Bulgarians are rooted not only in the low incomes, but also in the basic sources of income: low share of personal work activity income and high share of pensions. The rate: work income – pensions is 2:1. Almost one third of the Bulgarian households (32%) rely on pensions as a basic source of income.

Family cohesion

The family has a strong impact on dispositions towards life, future, self-image, and work. It creates a specific environment and the total set of conditions related to understanding and care; it is a specific social capital that is inherited in the course of interaction between actors (Coleman, 1988). *Social capital* in the family is represented by the relations between children and parents. When the *human capital* (comprising education, skills, and knowledge) possessed by the parents is not complemented by the social capital embodied in parent-child relations, the full family socialization is damaged. That is why the parents' physical absence from home may be considered a kind of structural insufficiency of family capital; this insufficiency may be evident even in cases when the adults are present, but do not have strong relations with the children (Coleman, 1988).

The family and the parental style of upbringing children have a decisive impact on the relationships that are built within the family and on the child's self-esteem; the latter depends on the degree of autonomy given to the child and the support it receives from the parents. Conversely, the

more this style is marked by control, restrictions, poor communication, lack of encouragement for adaptation, the lower self-esteem will be. Upbringing is not a levelling but a differentiating process and a child from a well-to-do family has better chances for development and mobility than its poorer coevals (Sherman, 1996, p.12). In the family, the child assimilates those assessments, definitions, and dispositions towards the world, those forms and styles of thought, that define the central orientations and statuses. In this way are legitimated the ways of connecting to the world, the knowledge, and the ways of speaking (Bernstein, 1958; Bernstein, 1975).

Family capital is connected with creating traditions and a life style, linguistic maturity and predispositions, complemented by the dimensions of family cohesion (a style of upbringing and family relationships); family support becomes an important *prerequisite for the formation of a positive attitude towards social relations and of the self-esteem, for building confidence and establishing communications*. That is why children with a damaged family socialization – including violence in the home, lack of supportive environment and relationships – display greater liability.

Family strength defines power of society, its vitality and sufficiency of every person. In answer to the question “How does your family solve its problems”, 47.6% have indicated that “only the parents make the decisions” and 52.4% have reported that “only the father decides” (Milenkova, 2004). The measures undertaken in such families usually tend to be punitive: more than 1/3 of the respondents stated they were punished for misbehaving by their parents. Also, among those children who stated that “they felt more uncertain than last year” the percentage of those who were punished at home was 44.4; this shows that home violence and family rigidity tend to weaken self-confidence of children.

Currently, many families in the country are chiefly concentrated on surviving, and they delegated the main part of the tasks of upbringing children to other institutions, chiefly the school. Relations between spouses, stress factors in the home, create additional emotional tension and anxiety in children, and become a prerequisite for children’s lack of interest in schooling, creating unfavourable conditions for education.

Consequences for children

Low income and poor living standard of Bulgarian families impact the children attendance of school, which is one of crucial consequences of socialization in the family.

Empirical data clearly show a strong correlation between poverty risk of the household and the education level of the household head: families with a low-educated head risk poverty twice as much as families whose head has completed secondary education; while the risk for this second category is, in turn, twice greater than for families whose head has a higher education diploma. (Nicaise, 2010, p.2). The first odds ratio is significantly larger in Bulgaria – 39% versus 11%, compared to 24% versus 13% on average for EU 27 (see Figure 1).

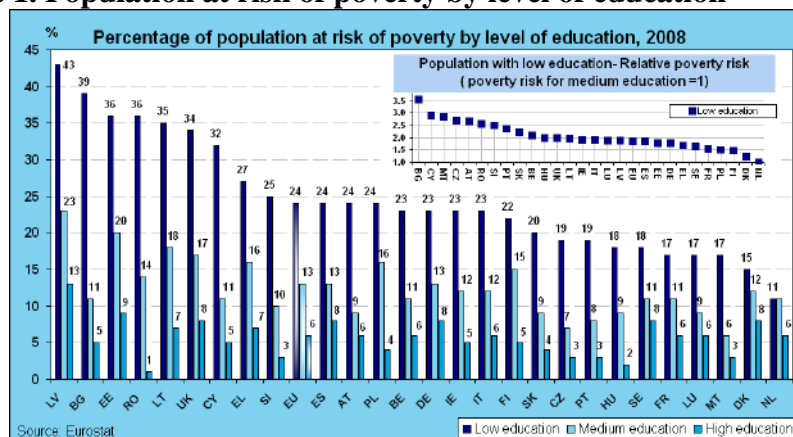
This picture is made more concrete in a study conducted by the World Bank, which “shows that the share of children included in the education system that come from the 20% poorest households is considerably lower than the average share for the country” (Nonchev, 2006, p.27).

Due to unemployment, low income and increasing poverty, parents are unable to cover the education costs of their children. Despite the operating programmes (free textbooks in primary school, free transport, and the programme “a glass of warm milk”), which should contribute to reducing the family’s education expenses, many of the vulnerable children are embarrassed to go to school. They feel poor, isolated from the world of their coevals. Researchers have found that the leading precondition for non-attendance of school is poverty (61.1%), the value system of the parents (16.4%), and the lack of parental control (13.2%) (Jeleva, Kirov, Markova, 2006). Children

who have dropped out of school indicate “lack of funds” as the cause for discontinuing their education (Nonchev, 2006, p.27-8):

- 24% confessed “we did not have money for textbooks and notebooks”. Lack of resources for schoolbooks is mentioned by: 26.2% of the Roma; 26.3% of the Turks; 16.1% of the Bulgarians;
- 19% indicated the lack of “appropriate clothes and shoes”; by ethnicity, the children who gave this answer were 21.7% Roma; 16.9% Turks; 10.2 % Bulgarians.
- “I had to help at home, to work on the family farm” is among the reasons for dropout from school provided by 12% of the children aged 12-16.
- “Care for the family” was reported by 23.4% of Bulgarians, 15.3% of Turks, 59.1% of the Roma.

Figure 1. Population at risk of poverty by level of education



Source: Boyadjieva, 2012

Dropout for economic reasons is also connected with various forms of:

- migration of parents: 1) from village to city; 2) from one city to another; 3) to a foreign country.
- and with various forms of child labour.

Some of the children who do not go to school are idle, visit friends or stay at home. In some cases, the answers indicate other occupations: care for someone in the family (indicated by 30% of dropouts); collecting and selling scraps (24%); collecting herbs, helping on the family farm, construction work (Nonchev, 2006, p.30-1).

One or both parents' unemployment, and/or the family’s low standard of living places children in a difficult material situation, and the care for earning a livelihood and surviving becomes their responsibility too. In focus group discussions the children stated (Milenkova, 2004) that they helped their parents and earned a livelihood; the concrete way they did that depended on the place of residence, traditions, crafts and size of the family.

The *education* of parents is a decisive factor of school attendance (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of the population by education and ethnicity by 01.02.2011

Ethnic group	Total	Higher	Secondary	Basic	Primary	No education
Total	6680980	1263688	2743181	1434960	761393	69093
Bulgarians	5664624	1222511	2552240	1084290	483961	21830
Turks	588318	22326	141359	234851	127042	19623
Roma	325343	948	18948	97544	131337	26154

Source: Tilkidjiev, 2011, p.506

Often the parents of school dropouts have themselves experienced serious disappointments in their careers, have undergone problems like divorce, unemployment, etc.

Family and its coherence

In contemporary Bulgarian family, the basic common activity is watching TV. Leisure outside the home is brought to a minimum. Nevertheless, young people continue to value family basically. From the data taken from 2009 ESS, 71 % of young people see their future as part of a family according to their living plans.

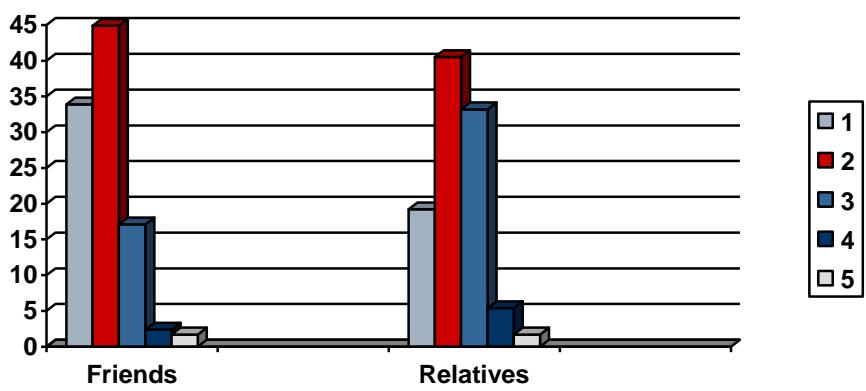
Almost 2/3 of the respondents indicate that they feel comfortable at home. To evaluate this aspect the following variables were considered:

- time spent with family
- a sense of concern for the closest people
- forms of mutual assistance.

It can be witnessed that time spend by young people with friends or relatives is highly esteemed (Figure 2).

Figure 2. How often do you meet with friends and relatives?

1 – Every day; 2 – Several times a week; 3 – Several times a month; 4 – Once a month; 5 – Less



Also in support of the importance of family community and its acceptance as crucial for the entire life of the individuals are the results obtained through some other questions (Table 2):

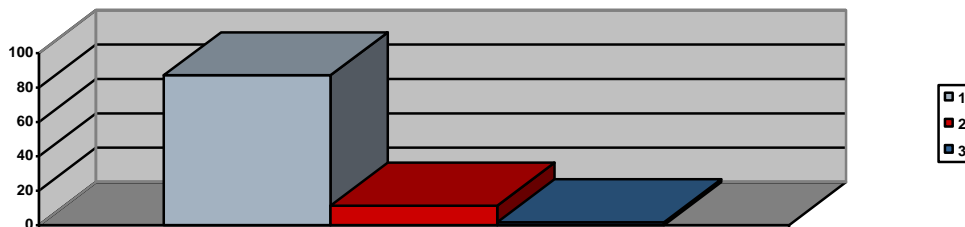
Table 2. How do you estimate the time you spend on contacts with relatives/ friends?
01- "completely dissatisfied"; 10- "completely satisfied"

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Doesn't know
Friends	4.5	4.0	5.9	6.8	11.0	15.7	9.3	11.8	14.2	17.8	0.0
Family	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.9	10.6	16.0	16.3	16.6	14.8	16.6	0.0

Family is important because it is a source of support and positive energy. It creates a feeling of belonging and having an identity The obtained results are clear enough (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Do you have anyone in your family, with whom you can discuss very personal issues:

1 – Yes (87%); 2 – No (11.3%); 3 – No answer (1.7%)



It is impressive that the respondents are conscious of the necessity of contacts with friends and relatives. They stick to that regime of proximity and communication, they support social relations' rhythm and they consider it important. As a whole, contacts with family and friends increase community spirit and contribute to development of free speech, strengthening democratic relationships. Interpersonal confidence is very tangible, creating a fundament to human coherence.

Family and Education dimensions

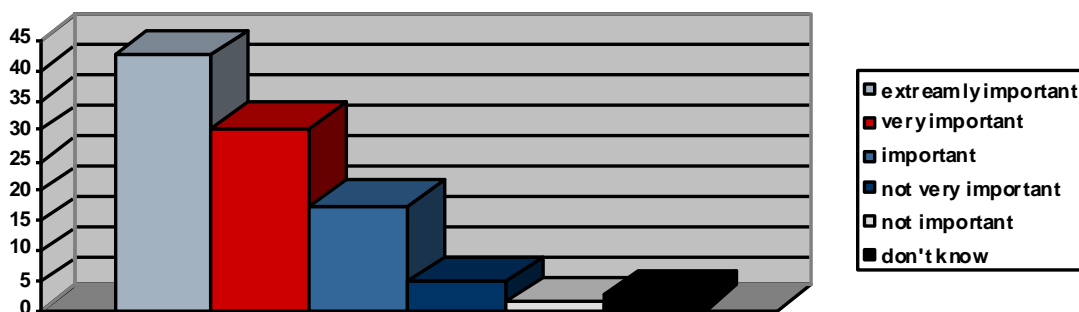
Education has a key role for increasing personal chances; it is a necessary and important condition for taking a professional position and middle class statute, as education is a form of investment in better qualification and level of knowledge. The role of education as a mobility stimulus reveals itself most clearly when it is observed for a longer period of time on the basis of a cohort analysis, allowing for a following up of transitions in the framework of the cohort itself (inter-generation perspective) and in relation to parents, i. e. in inter-generation section (Shavit, 1993). The effect of educational expansion depends on the initial position and class affiliation of individuals, as well as on preferences and the level of "saturation" of the very educational institutes. In that sense one can state that the dimensions of individual and social mobility are not identical.

Education as a mobility factor in Bulgarian society was also presented in other surveys (***)"Town and Village – 86"; Mihailov, 1988).

The theoretical works are based on the optimistic view regarding the potential role of education to improve life chances of individuals from different social strata. However, the formulation of such conceptions cannot be separated from the dominating political ideas of the second half of the 20th century. In the most Western European societies, beliefs in individuals' rights connected with the "new" place of man in social life are wide spread. The ideas of freedom and rights unambiguously define the theses for equality in the access to goods, to educational achievements and to well being. In relation to education, concepts proclaiming it as a condition for the so-called "contest mobility" (Turner, 1971, p.171-89), presuming to guarantee to individuals a possibility for a sufficiently long training which is not predetermined by social origin, and selection to be realized at a relatively later stage, are becoming popular. Education obtains a predominant role for individual success and his/her social position. Birth status ceases to be of leading importance in relation to the future and it is transformed in merit status, including education level as one of the important indicator (even the most important one).

According to Bulgarian respondents (ESS - 2006) education is important for success in life nowadays in this country (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Importance of education for the success in life today.



90.5% (Bulgarian respondents) have indicated education as an important condition (“extremely important”, ”very important”, ”important”)

In addition, the fact that education is estimated as a significant existential circumstance shows up in the educational profile of the respondents and their environment (Table 3).

Table 3. Educational profile of respondents, ESS

	respondent	father	mother
Lower than elementary	2.1	9.2	12.8
Elementary	3.7	10.4	11.9
Basic	22.3	37.1	35.3
Secondary	48.7	28.8	27.7
College	4.1	1.7	3.3
Higher	18.7	8.1	6.7
Postgraduate qualification/academic degree	0.4	0.1	0.1

	respondent	father	mother
Lower than elementary	2.4	6.2	8.2
Elementary	5.1	12.3	13.7
Basic	22.1	33.1	32.3
Secondary	49.4	34.1	32.1
College	4.6	1.9	3.8
Higher	15.2	8.5	6.6
Postgraduate qualification/academic degree	1.1	0.1	0.2

	respondent	father	mother
Lower than elementary	2.4	7.6	9.8
Elementary	6.4	13.1	15.0
Basic	24.3	35.5	34.9
Secondary	45.6	26.9	25.1
College	6.1	2.0	4.4
Higher	15.1	7.9	5.3
Don't know	0.2	6.9	5.6

Compared data about educational profile of respondents and their parents show a change in direction of increase of educational status in absolute expression, which is indicative for: 1) presence of inter-generation mobility; 2) the fact that education is considered and estimated as an important

factor for success and individual development; 3) the fact that both secondary and higher education of respondents and their parents have grown up in 2009 compared to 2006. 4) Increasing the share of respondents with higher education in 2013 compared with 2009. All these results come to support the thesis that education is not only a value; it is actually mapped on educational strategies of Bulgarians (although as a matter of fact educational aspirations and realized strategies of Bulgarians are marked with certain modesty, related to a European scale).

At the same time, educational achievements are not only a function of efforts and ambitions, but also of family involvement, which means that educational attainments and well-being are connected with family environment and its importance for individuals (Milenkova, 2014). That is so because high parental status creates conditions for children to attain also high educational achievements and positions. In that sense, even when there is no interest even for partial achievements on students standpoints, education's social character is preserved due to social definiteness of educational attainments (Grusky, 2008; DiMaggio, 1982), supporting the thesis of cultural capital and reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Cultural capital as a system of implicit and deeply internalized values and resources transferred to generations is influenced by social class, race (ethnos) and parents' education (Lareau and Weininger, 2003). Cultural capital examined as particular cultural practices, activities, resources, concerns school results, educational attainments and future social individual choices (Ganzeboom et al., 1990; Kalmijn and Kraaykaamp, 1996; Dumais, 2002). Educational values, embodied into mechanisms of educational system urge parents and students to compete for places at high quality elite status – they choose to take part in that competition and so they become part of the reproduction of the dominant culture (Milenkova, Molhov, 2011).

Conclusion

Family as a value is under serious danger and the marriage and family institutes are in crisis. Demographic situation in this country shows a negative demographic growth since 1990, hindering transfer of values and experience from parents to children. Along with that, migration processes (especially youth emigration), social status and the economic conditions of Bulgarians exert unfavourable influence on the preservation of family values too.

In conclusion, the following basic issues connected with the significance of education to middle class can be brought out:

- The family was placed in a difficult situation under Bulgarian severe social conditions.
- Economic conditions and living standard are low and this reflects on the feelings of insecurity and instability.
- At the same time, a high degree of concern and support, mutual aid and emotional attachment occur within family members.
- Cultural capital (Di Maggio, 1982; Dumais, 2002) of Bulgarian families is correlated to their social status (Milenkova, Molhov, 2011).
- Family and its resources influence the educational achievement of pupils.
- In the country there is a real process of increasing of educational level (secondary and higher education), which represents an indicator of intergenerational mobility.
- Educational attainments are stimulus for well-being because they involve investment in social contacts and a qualitative competition on job market.

This study shows that the family was placed in a difficult situation under Bulgarian conditions. Economic conditions and living standards are low and this reflects on the feeling of

insecurity and instability of family. At the same time the family occurs a high degree of support, concern of members, mutual aid and emotional attachment.

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Civil and/or laic religions

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Objective. In postmodern culture, individuals explore ways to orient their worlds by a certain "invisible" religiosity, which penetrates throughout the so-called secular societies. The existence of societies is impossible without religions, neither the authentic ones, nor the so-called "earthly", civil or laic religions. This is the transition from institutional religions to something that can be defined as "personal religion", a type of religiosity in which individuals construct their own conceptual systems.

Methods. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in an attempt to obtain the necessary authentic and thorough information. This means that data from a representative survey have been combined with an additional analysis of discussions within focus groups and with the results of participant observation and interviews for the purposes of the final analysis.

Results. Bulgarians have a healthy dose of scepticism. This is due to their high level of education and not least to their alertness and inquisitive nature in real life, including faith. Many people are influenced by popular culture. Originally, the main elements of human culture, including religion, are phenomena with great momentum. They change slower and more difficult than other phenomena. Most people say that the path to the temple can be found in a different way. Unfortunately, young people turn to religion only when something bad happens to them, if they suffer, or if they have a dilemma that excites them.

Conclusions. If "traditional" and "modern" are two ideal-typical poles, the present day Bulgarian society is situated somewhere in the middle between both of them. In all cases, it is a mixture that combines the pole of traditionalism, defined through continuity with the past, and the pole of modernity, defined by change, novelty and innovation.

Keywords: ecology, family, religions, sacred, profane

Introduction

Probably one of the greatest ironies of our postmodern world is that we have more capacity for communication than at any other time in the history of humanity and yet, there is a widespread feeling of disconnection. We are preoccupied with distractions while at the same time we are being bound to a stark feeling of loneliness. In postmodern culture, individuals explore ways to orient their worlds. They find themselves amidst a sea of chaotic relativity and have a greater need to bring meaning to their lives. In such a situation, an ascertainment like *God is dead* unexpectedly turn out to be accompanied by a certain "invisible" religiosity, which penetrates throughout the so-called secular societies. That is why the existence of societies is impossible without religions – neither the authentic ones, nor the so-called "earthly", civil or laic religions.

Culture

Society is a product of various human activities and is characterized by cultural originality. Any time, any age, any stage of social development has the features and characteristics of their culture and cultural developments. This essential characteristic is inevitably associated with conscious human individuals and groups that have a particular historically determined humanistic coefficient, which allows the researchers to distinguish natural from cultural reality. At the same time, researchers get into the specifics of cultural reality, remaining in the position of objective observers. The development of each culture is associated with the creation of new values, which are the benchmark of people's social activities. Culture enhances personal autonomy rights and covers knowledge, art, morality, and faith. The essence of culture is related to goal setting and action, regardless of the nature. Culture consists in emphasizing the social value of humans. As if, the difference between cultures seldom revealed for what it is – a natural phenomenon, people generally accept it as something monstrous or outrageous.

One of the main characteristics of the world is cultural diversity. People from different cultures live, work, learn together and constantly look for ways to accept and understand each other.

Problem areas of difference exist in every society, in every community, but should not be construed static, nor as a static object. Accordingly, the concept of diversity of human culture is not static. No doubt, people have created different cultures due to geographic distances, the specific characteristics of the environment and the ignorance of the rest of mankind. Furthermore, the differences are due to the isolation and the proximity.

Culture fits inside created by generations, store experiences and decisions of past eras. It is a human expression and affirmation, but also provides opportunities for the future.

Civilization

Civilization is an important matter in a category that over the past three centuries gradually accumulated and painted colourful and dramatic pictures of a diverse cultural and historical process of mankind. At the end of 18th century, it appeared that the idea of civilization contained mainly a new image for the human being and society. Civilization is an academic concept, which combines approaches of sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and their interpenetrations from the middle of 20th century until present.

Civilization is related to education and politeness, but it includes a general overall improvement of the material and intellectual level of a group or community. It became the tradition of connecting with more countries, civilization of human life, and society. This tradition started from Immanuel Kant and reached Nikolai Berdyaev, connected the material civilization, technical and external aspects of human life activity. In their view, the advance of modern Western culture has left vast numbers of people in a state of spiritual and psychological alienation.

The rapid pace of technological change, the dominance of huge, impersonal institutions, and the bewildering complexity of modern society has left many individuals feeling adrift, isolated, and lacking a sense of meaning or purpose of their lives.

Society as a reality *sui generis* it has its own peculiar characteristics, which are not found elsewhere and which cannot be met again in the same form in the rest of the whole universe. The representations that express it have an absolutely different content from purely individual ones and we may rest assured in advance that the first adds something to the second.

Collective representations are the result of an immense cooperation, which stretches out not only into space but into time as well; to make them, a multitude of minds have associated, united and combined their ideas and sentiments; for them, long generations have accumulated their experience and their knowledge.

Religion

The sociology of religion is primarily the study of practices, social structures, historical backgrounds, development, universal themes, and roles of religion in society. There is a particular emphasis on the recurring role of religion in nearly all societies today and throughout recorded history. Sociologists of religion attempt to explain the effects of society on religion and the effects of religion on society.

In my opinion, there can be no substantive definition of religion. If the notion of religion is de-substantialized, what remains of it is, as far as possible, a way of believing which is compatible with the idea of tradition. Its contents are not defined *a priori* and they refer to the way of validating a given collective memory. The object of religion is alive, reborn, spreads, and dissipates, moved to the "critical times". The task of sociologists is to track and analyse these transformations.

The specific features of every religion can be read and interpreted sociologically. Sociologists of religion study religious facts, both past and present. These objective phenomena must also be treated as social facts, which can be explained by other social facts. In other words – to construct them, classify them, compare them, treat them within the relationship and conflicts in a society, recessed community in certain groups. In the study of religion, sociologists are interested in social context, social impact, social significance, role, nature and functions of a religion in society, the interaction of religion with other spheres of social life. Religion may be broadly defined as, the human quest for *the Holy* or *Sacred*, the experience of it, and the response to it. This universal human activity expresses itself in at least three ways: in thought (the intellectual expression), in action (the practical expression), and in fellowship (the communal expression). These complex religious expressions comprise the subject-matter of the academic study of religion.

The sacred and the profane

Sacred places function as some fixed reference points in the secular world. They offer a potential avenue for bridging the gap between the secular and the spiritual. The labyrinth of human relations with the sacred is incredibly complex and impassable. Sacred places connect very different and important realities.

According to Emile Durkheim, the human conscience regards the sacred and the profane as two different kinds, two worlds that have nothing in common.

Durkheim defines society by its symbolic boundaries: it is the sharing of a common definition of the sacred and the profane, of similar rules of conducts and a common compliance to rituals and interdictions that defines the internal bonds within a community. He posits that the boundaries of the group coincide with those delimitating the sacred from the profane.

In *The Sacred and Profane*, Mircea Eliade begins his discussion of sacred place as it relates to the idea of the "holy" in Rudolph Otto's work *The Holy*. He agrees with Otto that the sacred is not some abstraction that has very little to do with our everyday lives.

Eliade presents the three building blocks of every sacred place: disruption, orientation, and communication. These categories are important not only for understanding the sacred place. Sacred place then, in Eliade's thinking, "breaks upon" a profane world – a world in which there is no

difference. As opposed to so much of modern or new age thinking, a sacred place is a place of disruption and difference.

Profane space or chaotic space would be a world where there are no differences, where place is the same in that one place and is no more significant than another. Creation without difference would be a creation without sacred place. The whole world then would be a profane space, which, of course, is a world of chaos, confusion, and relativity.

Another way of saying this is that in our postmodern culture individuals' look at themselves in order to orient their worlds. Yet we need more than ourselves to bring meaning to our worlds. Nevertheless, the sacred in its' classical form seems to be losing ground. *What are your sacred places?* One can say everything – from being alone in a car, to spending time in the desert, a barn, or a field, to a particular table in a coffee shop.

No doubt, sacred space exists for the primary purpose of placing us in communion with the sacred world. Because we live in a secular world, because we no longer live in the garden, we experience great alienation, and it is here that sacred place offers the potential avenue to bridge the gap between the secular and the sacred. Eliade reminds us that we yearn for sacred place so we can find a fixed point in an otherwise relative world.

All of the religious answers constitute the sacred universe of traditional societies, but it could be included in the creation of a modern sacred. In a condition, that “sacred” doesn't mean only “religious”, religion could help to legitimate the purposes and actions of society, to strengthen the determination of people, to help build up a sense of identity. Religion could help to legitimate the purposes and actions of society, to strengthen the determination of the people, to help build up the sense of identity.

This is the transition from institutional religions to something that can be defined as *personal religion*, a type of religiosity, in which individuals construct their own conceptual system. People construct their meaningful dispositive for themselves and are free to choose any religion or religious group to belong.

Deep ecology

In traditional societies, the individual exists only as far as taking its place in a group, a place that is often destined from birth in a social hierarchy. It is governed by the collective beliefs, rules and norms shared by all present that are not in dispute - transcendence based on social connections and "pre"-mythical past and valuable. The past is no longer an idyllic world, which stands as reference. It is an imperfect world and a subject of dispute.

The modern man of the 21st century chooses his preferred beliefs and values in a pluralistic world, where conflicting values co-exist and are subject to the critique of reason. He is surrounded with satellite television, radio, e-mail, computer networking, fax machines, and of course the Internet. There is a profusion of *data*, but very little *knowledge* that connects people. There is a deluge of *information*, but very little *wisdom* that helps him live skilfully. The religious man is more like a nomad, that hardly defines his time travelling and because he changes the places where he lives more often. Everyone is free to adopt and abandon the symbolic content of religious systems that they like.

The dialogue between religions and ecology promises to be one of the most effective, because in practice the belief, religious values can oppose the inexorable forces of aggression, destruction and poor spirits.

Ecology reminds of itself. It is becoming more and more evident how vast its field of study is. Ecological motives and considerations should become a major factor when governmental

decisions are taken. The norms and recommendations of ecologists are ignored all too often, and this is caused mostly by objective reasons but also by subjective ones.

In societies that are connected with nature, not against its face to make it obey, and found it both its extension and its impact, certainly have kinship between the sacred and the political. Both categories can be defined simultaneously as the principles and the relationships that they suggest "match" each other. In the present situation of changes and transformations "things" obtain another different meaning. This creates a sense of doubt, confusion and transience.

Putting it differently, more and more people realize that we must "*live simply so that others may simply live*". (Mahatma Gandhi)

The new environmentalism, which has been termed *deep ecology or ecosophy, earth wisdom*, gives rise to potent *eco-theology and eco-psychology movements*.

The term *deep ecology* was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1972, based on the earlier work and inspiration of persons such as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Robinson Jeffers, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, David Brower, et al. *Deep ecology* has been elaborated in numerous books and articles since then by Naess and many other voices. Naess and George Sessions articulated a deep ecology platform in 1984.

Here are the 8 points of this deep ecology platform, as posited by Naess and Sessions:

“1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population.

5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between being big and being great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.” (Naess., 1995, p.68)

Environmental culture is not an independent and isolated phenomenon. It exists in certain socio-cultural context and there is a bilateral interdependence. The inherited culture is influenced by the environment – geographical, material, institutional, organizational and cultural components and at the same time it affects this background. On a personal level, environmental culture is in relation to age, education, social background, value systems, and individual life strategies.

Unfortunately, anyone who sees our horrific and pressing environmental woes and who joins with others in the great work of educating friends, colleagues and the general public is going to have a hard time saying anything without sounding like one of those “grieving greenies” or “spoil-sports.”

Within the empirical survey, carried out in the course of the project *Transformation of the national value system and its synchronization with European patterns: the development of environmental culture as an indicator of transition of European values in the Bulgarian Society* (Head Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Mantarova and funding from National Science Fund of the Bulgarian

Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth, 2010), environmental culture was described as a complex social phenomenon, alternating historical unity of consciousness and behaviour related to the interaction society - nature in all its forms.

Furthermore, based on information gathered during the survey conducted in the Blagoevgrad region in March 2010, we will present and analyse the basic parameters of the environmental culture of the population aged 18 and more, in the area and its main dependencies.

The sociological surveys show that state of the environment is assessed as a very serious problem by 28.6 % of respondents and as a serious one - by 39.4%. A more detailed look at the information indicates the presence of inter-group differences in the assessment of the situation. Negative evaluations were given more frequently by young people - between 18 and 29 years (72.9% and in the sample – 67.4%), by highly educated people - 79.3 %. Instead, for the respondents between 50 and 59 years, a much more serious problem is unemployment (which they are much affected, and their prospects for returning to active working life are rather limited). The problem is described as less important by the low-educated groups.

Conclusions

Young people have a natural predisposition to build environmentally adapted worldview. This is the beginning of what should be followed to achieve the new thinking, new methodology, new approach, and new behaviour in today's global environmental situation.

For the average Bulgarian, faith has little importance for the general development of the country. The roles of faith and religion in Bulgaria are so very secondary, even within Eastern Europe. They can influence neither the models for public conduct, nor the personal morality of citizens.

The effect of modern mass culture in all of its forms serves as an addition to the traditionally neglectful attitude of Bulgarians towards faith before 1989. The invading secularism of the West mingles itself with the atheistic heritage from the Communist era. This process concerns the young generation most deeply. Popular culture, pseudo-folkloric music and all the new tendencies of modern day life have a dominant role in a young person's view of life. Things like morality, faith or knowing the Bible seem like a secondary problem. Many among the young are more susceptible to ideas of occultism and exorcism than to those coming from the Churches or the Word of God.

In conclusion, the atheistic period in the history of Bulgarian society is an important factor for the spiritual vacuum in Bulgarian society, but a more serious reason for it - is the period of transition leading to total carelessness - economic and spiritual carelessness.

Young people need spiritual direction and they're not the only ones, because in modern society and its dynamic rhythm, the material side of things prevails. We are witnessing not only a material crisis, but also a profound spiritual one. The spiritual is inverted to the point that kept the material and where available, can be said that there is some form of native flashes that are not organized in any process. Regardless of the logic of profanation and secularization of the modern world, there seems to be a process of reversion to the sacred – to the modern sacred. In their efforts to note at the same time the loss of influence that the institutional religions suffer, and the dispersions of the religious symbols in modern societies, a lot of researchers use the term *sacred*. Sacred things with their immunity offer the ultimate meaning of everyday life, because within the limits of the profane it is impossible to find such meaning. Because of this the existence of societies is impossible without religions – neither authentic, nor the so-called “earthly”, civil or laic religions.

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