THE EFFECT OF AGE IN THE WAY ADOLESCENTS REPORT AND EXPERIENCE INTERETHNIC VIOLENCE IN FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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SUMMARY

The aim of the article is to examine the effects of age in the way adolescents experience and report interethnic relations with emphasis on interethnic violence in the school environment. The methodology followed a two-stage sequential mode combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. This mixed method mode started with a survey which was contacted using a common questionnaire in England, Slovenia, Italy, Austria and Cyprus followed by group interviews with students aged 11-12 and 17-18. The survey data were analyzed with the help of statistical tests in order to reveal differences between the way the two age groups have responded to the survey questionnaire. More in-depth comparative analysis was carried out with the interview transcripts of the two age groups. There were differences in the way the two age groups have responded in the survey on interethnic violence but these were frequently small and do not signify major shifts in the way younger and older adolescents deal with issues of interethnic violence. More visible differences could be observed in the way the two age groups articulated their positions during the interviews.

Keywords: interethnic violence, adolescence, European integration, multiculturalism

L'INFLUENZA DELL'ETÀ SUGLI ADOLESCENTI CHE ESPERISCONO EPISODI DI VIOLENZA INTERETNICA: L'ESPERIENZA DEI CINQUE PAESI DI CHIDREN'S VOICES

SINTESI

Lo scopo di questo paper è quello di analizzare come l'età influisce sul comportamento degli adolescenti che esperiscono episodi di violenza interetnica, con particolare riferimento a quanto accade nei contesti scolastici.

Lo studio è stato condotto attraverso l'uso combinato di una metodologia quantitativa e qualitativa. Sono stati analizzati i risultati di un questionario quantitativo somministrato in Austria, Italia, Inghilterra, Slovenia e Cipro a due gruppi di studenti dell'età di 11-12 anni e 17-18 anni. L'analisi statistica dei dati quantitativi ha consentito di approfondire le differenze che intercorrono tra i singoli gruppi intervistati. Tali risultati sono stati approfonditi grazie al materiale raccolto dall'esplorazione qualitativa che ha previsto una serie di interviste e focus groups con i ragazzi interessati dalla ricerca. Sono state evidenziate delle differenze nelle risposte date dai due gruppi di intervistati. Non vengono tuttavia riscontrate notevoli discrepanze tra i bambini e i ragazzi più adulti rispetto al tema della violenza interetnica. Maggiori differenze, al contrario, vengono evidenziate nel modo in cui i bambini e i ragazzi hanno espresso le loro posizioni durante le interviste.

Parole chiave: violenza interetnica, adolescenza, integrazione europea, multiculturalismo

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INTRODUCTION

The way adolescents experience and report a variety of issues relating to their everyday life is usually the product of the social contexts within which they are socialized and to the developmental stage they are in the formation of their identities. Consequently, this affects the way they develop ideas about themselves and others. Through the process of transition from childhood to adolescence and to adulthood individuals internalize values and norms which become an integral part of their personalities and social identities. Two key moments in this process is the beginning of adolescence when children experience rapid cognitive and identity development and the end of adolescence when this process more or less come to an end. This was in fact the rationale behind the strategy that was adopted in a EU funded project titled: "Children's voices: Exploring Interethnic violence in the school environment" which investigated issues of interethnic relations in the school environment at the two aforementioned key transition points in the lives of young individuals; namely at the age of 11-12 (primary schools) and at the age of 17-18 (secondary schools). This investigation was carried out in five quite diverse European contexts (Slovenia, England, Cyprus, Italy and Austria). Thus this paper investigates differences and similarities that may be observed in the way primary and secondary school students responded to various issues relating to interethnic relations in schools and particularly to violence. Importantly, the investigation, as will be examined in detail below, adopted a mixed method mode combining a quantitative and qualitative approach in order to get both a macro and a micro-level perspective of the issue of interethnic violence so as to have a multi-faceted understanding of the relevant factors involved. Even though the study was conducted in five different European contexts where the issue of interethnic violence takes distinct perspectives in this paper we often treat the sample as a unified sum. This is because social context differences are examined in other publications (i.e. Medarić & Sedmak, 2012). On a number of variables, however, country data are also presented.

The paper starts with a brief overview about the issue of interethnic relations in multicultural school environments which can potentially create grounds and conditions for interethnic violence. Importantly, however, we shall examine the socio-psychological process of individuals transition from childhood to adulthood and we will examine how this process may affect the way young individuals perceive and report relations with Others possibly as a way with which they try establish their own social and ethnicity identity. In this process a major issue will be whether the contemporary multicultural structures and rhetoric adopted in most European societies has been internalized by the youth in all societies. Next, the paper will present the rationale for adopting a mixed method approach in a research project that set out to investigate interethnic violence in schools at different levels. We will focus on the findings that relate to a survey and focus group interviews with students in all five countries that participated in this project[1]. The paper will conclude with a discussion on what these findings tell us about the prospects of ethnic co-existence in a social and cultural environment that while it keeps changing in a post-modern reality its multicultural character will be its most unique facet in the next few decades.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Multiculturalism and interethnic relations in education in Europe

In recent times, Europe witnesses wide sociopolitical and demographic changes as a result of increasing migration and transnationalism which have also an impact on interethnic relations and social cohesion. One of the consequences of these demographic changes has been the creation of the notion of multicultural societies and the need of education to respond to this new reality. While this was particularly true for many European societies for much of the past two or three decades, recently, and possibly as an indirect consequence of the global economic crisis, the political goal of cultivating multicultural policies has suffered significant blows by an emerging changing attitude towards multiculturalism exemplified by the realization of many European leaders (such as German Chancellor Merkel) that the multiculturalism project has in fact been unsuccessful in Europe[2]. This realization could likely point in the near future to shifts in national policies and specifically in changes in the direction of educational policies away from the goal of multiculturalism. The way multiculturalism changed the face of European societies had inevitable effects on the way education systems operate. Below we make a brief reference to several studies that looked into this issue.

In a book edited nearly a decade ago, Smith (2003) brings together a collection of studies that point to the fact that the increase in the number of students from immigrant groups in schools could potentially lead to racial tensions in some countries. When migrant groups are targeted due to unrelated to education reasons (i.e. economic crisis, unemployment or crime) this may produce adverse effects on the well-being of young indi-

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1   It has to be noted that the qualitative phase of the project included a number of other groups that were investigated such as teachers, head teachers, administrators, experts etc.

2   Merkel says German multicultural society has failed, 17 October 2010 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451

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viduals from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds. Ethnic minority and immigrant children can experience racial harassment as young people themselves may bring different expectations and experiences of deprivation and frustration into the school.

The problem of inter-ethnic relations in schools was the focus of a 2004 project led by the Italian Centre for Research in Social Affairs with partners in Spain, Germany and Latvia (cited in Smith 2004). The partners aimed to identify and analyse examples of good practice in dealing with inter-ethnic conflict labeled as 'inter-cultural' in secondary schools. They found that when young people of migrant background are involved in school violence, it is often assumed that cultural identity is the cause of the conflict. Because the young people concerned have often experienced exclusion and discrimination, they expect and so emphasise cultural differences and attribute the conflict to them. In reality, the analysis found that the reasons for conflict among adolescents in school do not markedly differ when the protagonists include migrant children.

Interethnic relations in schools could be the product of wider social conditions in a country. Danesh (2008) reports the experiences of a program in post-civil war Bosnia and Herzegovina (from 1992-1995). She describes how the concept of the culture of healing has developed and implemented in 112 primary and secondary schools. The participants in this large undertaking were tens of thousands of students, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians from all three main ethnic populations—Bosniak (Muslims), Croat (Catholic), and Serb (Orthodox Christianity)—who experienced tragic events from 1992–1995. During an Education for Peace program, the process of creating a culture of healing within and among the participating schools involved a period of intense questioning and listening whereby students, teachers, school administrators, support staff, and some parents asked questions that revealed their actual state of mind and heart. Within the Balkan context inter-ethnic violence appears to be the result of inter-ethic antagonisms and historic bitterness between ethnic groups after the dissolution of the Federal State of Yugoslavia. In this case language appears to play a major part as to whether it could become a divisive or connecting issue. In the case of FYR of Macedonia for example, the recognition of the Albanian minority language in higher education appeared to sooth tensions according to Czaplinski (2008). Similarly in an equally divided society and slightly at the margins of the European context but interesting in this framework nonetheless, Israel, interethnic relations present many challenges especially in education. Among other highly sensitive issues, the product of a long history of war, the issue of language and of alternative historic narratives of similar events, keeps the two historically conflicting communities (Jews and Palestinians) in a state of protracted conflict (Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004).

In Greece as Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides (2010) reports that despite the fact that Albanian migrants have for at least two decades been part of the Greek society and the majority of them have integrated well in the society there is still a lot of political resistance and animosity towards them. This hostility which has grown recently as a consequence of the economic crisis in Greece is frequently carried within schools. This attitude as an expression of symbolic violence towards Albanian youth is evident when many Greeks refuse to accept high achieving Albanian youth in Greek schools to act as flag bearers during national days. This symbolic violence has serious negative effects in the schooling of Albanian youth and acts as a negative example for other ethnic and migrant groups.

Lastly, an issue that currently is a source of difficult interethnic relations in schools is one which related to religious background and refers to Islamophobia. According to a survey carried out in 2006 in the UK by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) across four different age groups, almost all pupils of minority ethnic background had been verbally abused because of their ethnicity (DfES 2006). The same report made reference to Islamophobia as a form of bullying. The increased Islamophobia in schools was a direct consequence of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York (Crozier and Davies, 2008; Shain, 2011). Likewise, Smith and Shu (2000) found only 14 per cent of the sample of primary and secondary school pupils in England responded that they had experienced racial name-calling. Institutional racism towards Muslims in education has been found to be a problem in several other studies (Weller et al., 2001; Shah, 2006; Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Meer, 2009). Crozier and Davies (2008) in particular in a study in schools in the Northeast of England found that, for the majority of South Asian young people from a Muslim background, racially motivated abuse, harassment and subsequent violence was a central feature of their school experience.

Promoting policies of multiculturalism

It is a fact that many European countries appear not well prepared to actually meet the needs of long-established or recently-arrived ethnic communities. In spite of the multitude of measures available to address inequality, such as curricula intended to foster cultural diversity, the instruction of the native language as well as second language courses, and anti-discrimination legislation, what is evident from the literature is that the end result of such attempts is not integration. Rather, it is segregation and social exclusion. In developing a successful recipe to support the integration of European societies education plays a central role. Yet, Paul Connolly (1994), Gill Crozier (1989), Ghassan Hage (1998) and Herne Varenne and Ray McDermott (1998) accept that intercultural education has not only failed to fulfill its predetermined

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goals but has paradoxically achieved to reproduce racist stereotypes. Rather than eliminating racial discrimination and strengthening diversity, or at least help educate pupils, intercultural education policies and practices have actually reinforced segregation. Hage (1998) suggests that the kind of multiculturalism countries endorse today only contributes to perpetuating society's current power relationships. Defined to serve the dominant ethnic group, intercultural education appears to perform a political function in that it masks intolerance while maintaining resistance to all things foreign. The sheer categorization of pupils based on their nationality or citizenship status, their subdivision into non-nationals and aliens, as well as the likely distinction between refugees and asylum seekers, for example, essentially render education susceptible to discrimination. When pupils from a distinct background are all together placed into special, minority classes, the racialization of these groups is inevitable, thus ensuring the dominance of the host culture. Limiting their achievement and advancement in such an environment, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are condemned to lower educational attainments. Furthermore, the placement of pupils in such classes also has a severe demoralizing effect when considering that local culture may become as dominant as to suppress the customs and traditions of ethnic communities.

So, while the majority of European countries employ policies of multiculturalism as far as education is concerned interethnic and intercultural violence in the school environment, as a direct consequence of the above, are visible in schools. The conditions of interethnic and interracial relations among children and youth across European Union (EU) states are highly heterogeneous due to the diverse conditions that exist in each country. On the whole, school violence especially in subtle forms of violence (verbal harassment, rudeness) has been recognized as an important problem that is increasing (Kane, 2008). Despite a general recognition of the importance of school violence, there is presently no EU legal or policy framework regarding violence in schools. There were, however, at EU level, various recommendations and resolutions concerning interethnic school violence such as Recommendation no. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, issued by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance General Policy. The overall lack of such focus prompted an investigation by five partners in order to highlight the ways with which violence may occur at two key stages of adolescence. The issue of transition in adolescence was thought to be very important and merits further elaboration.

The transition to adolescence

The rationale behind examining two distinct age groups in the project presented in this paper stems from the fact that through this examination we could mark the transition process whereby young teenagers go through certain stages in life where several physiological and psychosocial changes take place which prepare them to become young adults. Many theorists, psychologists, biologists, sociologists and anthropologists have provided a plethora of studies regarding the transitional phase through adolescence. These studies suggest that the process relates to sociological factors (i.e. changing of attitudes, role and responsibilities) and psychological factors (i.e. cognitive development) that play a vital role on how children become young adults. Explicitly, social entities, such as family, school, and society can direct the child to cultivate his/her character and personality. During the transitional period of childhood to adolescence, social interactions between individuals and social entities (family, friends, school and society) are considered by some sociologists as the stepping stones for someone to develop and establish his/her identity. During this phase children's understanding of various societal concepts, such as ethnicity and race, is formed and evolved over time.

Quintana (1998) presents various studies that examined and explained the "developmental transformation" on ethnic understanding. According to the author, to explain how children's understanding of ethnicity differs with the passage of time, one must understand how children comprehend their social environment. Influenced by Selman's theory (1980), Quintana argues that there are four developmental stages that explain the development of children's attitudes regarding the concept of ethnicity. Selman's (1980) theory of social perspective-taking ability, models children's understanding of their social environment in the context of human individuality, parent-child relations, friendship formation, and peer-group dynamics. According to Quintana (1998) even though Selman's model was developed entirely independent of the ethnic domain, there were salient parallels in the rhythm of development in the social and the ethnic domains reflected in four levels, namely 1) Integration of affective and perceptual understanding of ethnicity, 2) Literal understanding of ethnicity, 3) Social perspective of ethnicity and 4) Ethnic-group consciousness and ethnic identity. Related to our own research are what he describes as Level 2 which is named "Social and Nonliteral Perspective of Ethnicity" (Approximately 10-14 years) and Level 3 which includes "Ethnic Group Consciousness and Ethnic Identity (Adolescence).

The above are very important conceptual tools to help us investigate the way adolescents understand and experience interethnic relations in schools.

Research question

The main research question that we explore below is:

What is the effect of age in the way adolescents experience interethnic social relations and report violence in all shapes and forms in the school environment?

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METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed in the project followed a two-stage sequential mode combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. This mixed method mode started with a survey which was contacted using a common questionnaire slightly modified to meet the specific characteristics of each national setting in the England, Slovenia, Italy, Austria and Cyprus. The questionnaire consisted of around 40 questions covering demographic data, normative statements on equality and multi-ethnic background, experiences of violence, perceptions on violence, etc. and addressed two age groups (11-12 year olds and 17-18 year olds) separately. All countries translated the questionnaire in their national languages and carried out pilot studies in order to test its appropriateness in their national contexts. In a second phase a qualitative research followed group interviews with students aiming to provide in-depth understandings about the way young people perceived, experienced and felt about the issue of interethnic violence.

The Survey

The sample that was selected in each country was not representative of the student population of the participating countries. It was rather a purposive sample that met certain theoretical prerequisites that were specified by the project and agreed upon between the partners. Thus, the schools were selected according to specific criteria in the project description which were:

'The survey will be conducted in four ethnically mixed regions in each country. In accordance with the literature, the following criteria will be used for identifying these areas:

- closeness of the border (border region),
- the urbanity of the area (highly urban areas), and
- the "attractiveness" of the region for migrants (region with high level of migration – economic migrants' (University of Primorska, 2010)

The implication of this mode of sampling is that any direct comparisons between country data from the five participating countries should be done with extreme caution. Even in cases when such comparisons are made results need to be treated as indicative of trends that exist in each national setting. Regarding the questionnaire it sought information that would be used as data for descriptive rather than correlational or inductive analysis.

The focus groups interviews

The qualitative stage of the research with the two age groups in all participating countries was conducted with focus group interviews. All participating partners carried out eight focus group discussions with children (four in with primary school children and four with secondary school children). The researchers followed interview schedules translated in the national languages from a common version that was prepared in English. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed word for

Table1: Normative statements on equality
Tabela 1: Normativne izjave o enakosti

	Age	N	Mean	T	Sig
All people are equal, regardless of the language that they speak, their religion or culture.	Primary	1752	1,70	,983	,325
	Second.	1754	1,67		
People who come to (country) from other countries should have the right to follow the customs of their countries, e.g. food, clothing, language.	Primary	1755	1,83	-15,333	,000
	Second.	1754	2,39		
I like the fact that there are people of different ethnic backgrounds (who speak another language, have a different religion, culture, etc.) in the country where I live.	Primary	1752	1,93	-11,446	,000
	Second.	1753	2,32		
Children that come to (country) from other countries should give up their language and culture	Primary	1748	4,23	5,454	,000
	Second.	1753	4,04		
I like the fact that there are pupils of other nationalities/ethnic backgrounds (who speak another language, have a different religion, culture, etc.) in our class/at our school.	Primary	1748	1,94	-10,941	,000
	Second.	1749	2,30		
I think that children that come to (country) from other countries should follow (country) language and (country) culture.	Primary	1751	3,24	14,711	,000
	Second.	1749	2,62		

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word (verbatim) and translated in English. The transcripts were then coded and analysed in categories that were determined in advance by the research partners and were believed that they would best describe the full range of views and experiences related to the issue of interethnic violence in schools.

Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data will be presented in an integrated manner in order to provide a multi-level perspective of the issues under investigation. In essence, for both modes of analysis age is regarded as the main "independent variable" and we try to identify similarities and differences in the way they have responded. The survey data were analyzed with the help of statistical tests in order to reveal differences between the way the two age groups have responded in the various parts of the questionnaire.

Attitudes toward equality

In order to examine the way students responded to the normative statements of equality, independent samples t-test were carried out. As can be seen in Table 1 in the general equality statements both age groups responded in a similar fashion whereby basically both agreed with the view that all people are equal, regardless of the language that they speak, their religion or culture. For statements 2, 3 and 5 (Table 1) primary school children adopted more positive attitudes than secondary school children whereas in statement 6 the trend was reversed.

Table 2 presents the mean scores for the normative statements by country. As may be seen in all countries primary school pupils on the whole adopt a more positive attitude towards multi-ethnic differences. The variation between countries appears to be small.

In the focus groups with children, almost in all countries students of both age groups more or less reported similar views on issues relating to equality. The trend was that younger children tended to speak more in terms

of interethnic relations within the school environments whereas older teenagers could draw references to wider social conditions i.e. the role that politics played into the issue of multiculturalism. The following was characteristic in the way younger children have responded

There are different cultures in our school but this is no issue or problem. (Austria, male,11)
Yeah its good this school because it has a mixture, it's not like there's ...like...if you're the only black person in a school you'd feel uncomfortable but it's like we've got lots of black people, lots of white people, we've got different religions and no one will feel oh I'm the only one with this' (England, primary school student)

whereas in the case of an older female student she was able to draw current economic hardships in the economy in Cyprus with the presence of migrants regardless of the fact that they though that in schools things were different

We have 20% unemployment rate in Cyprus. Why does a foreigner have certain benefits and that he could easily find a job...to show that Cyprus defend our foreigners? Who is going to help the Cypriots (Cyprus, female, 17-18)

Or even to old ethnicity divisions such as the case of Slovenia.

I, personally am,... My nationality does not matter. Anyway, relatives, caretaker, and all those people I know in the block of flats... everyone who is Slovenian does not like »those from below«, namely Bosnians, Croats and so on. I do not know why. You grow with it, and it seem others would like I would have the same opinion. But I do not [soft laughter of others]. I do not know why, and I ask: »Why you do not like this person or that person?« and they do not know how to

Table 2: Normative statements on equality by country
Tabela 2: Normativne izjave o enakosti po državah

Country	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cyprus	Primary	1,59	2,14	2,27	4,23	2,20	3,15
	Secondary	1,47	2,19	2,63	4,13	2,46	3,07
England	Primary	1,73	1,81	1,84	4,29	1,86	3,61
	Secondary	1,30	1,82	1,60	4,30	1,69	3,16
Italy	Primary	1,54	1,85	1,89	4,46	1,79	3,41
	Secondary	2,01	2,99	2,64	3,93	2,55	2,52
Slovenia	Primary	1,71	1,77	1,84	4,15	2,06	3,14
	Secondary	1,62	2,48	2,48	3,80	2,47	2,41
Austria	Primary	1,88	1,71	1,94	4,01	1,88	2,77
	Secondary	1,88	2,39	2,15	4,10	2,22	2,04

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answer. And it probably comes with the family. /…/ But here in Jesenice others like Bosnians, Croats, Serbs prevail…./…/ Probably also because of that Slovenians feel endangered or so, I do not know…. Are so intolerant because of that. (Sovenia, Female, 17)

Predispositions towards the Other

Students were asked in the survey to indicate whether they would be happy to sit in class next to students with various kinds of differences and then to respond to the question whether they would be friends with such students.

The analysis of the way the two age groups have responded in the countries that participated shows a similar pattern of responses. More than half of the primary and secondary school students responded in a similar fashion that that they would be happy to sit next to a pupil who was unable to speak (well) his or her mother tongue (Table 3). Regarding the same question referring to pupils who have different religion, secondary school children had a more positive position compared with younger children. The pattern of responses was similar in all participating countries in the survey. What is a noticeable difference is the fact that secondary school

Table 3: Predispositions to difference
Tabela 3: Odnos do različnosti

	I would be happy to sit next to a pupil who is unable to speak (well) my mother tongue	
	Yes	No
Primary	55,1%	15,5%
Secondary	57,6%	14,3%
	I would be happy to sit next to a pupil who has a different religion from me	
Primary	66,9%	8,6%
Secondary	72,1%	5,7%
	I would be happy to sit next to a pupil whose skin colour is different from mine	
Primary	68,3%	9,4%
Secondary	73,9%	7,3%

students had slightly but statistically significant more positive attitude towards the position that they would be happy to sit next to a pupil whose skin colour was different from theirs. The following are responses from secondary school children from England

I think we do mix well as a college. We, there's like, there is no point where there's you know, there's just black people for instance, or just Asian people or just white people, we really do mix well. There's a group where there's Asian people, black people, white people, mixed together. Everyone just gets along'
….
'Everyone mixes well because I don't think anyone in this college is racist. … everybody mixes well because our school promotes, multicultural ethnicities to work together, to strive together to play together.

Overall, however, language appears to be the characteristic that may make students less open to difference compared with religion and skin colour. This was in fact a re-occurring theme during the interviews which revealed that students who commanded the language fluently could not just integrate easier in the school environment but there were cases when this integration was becoming assimilation. In one visit to the schools during the interview face in Cyprus the researchers in a focus group were unable to make out the ethnic origin of the participants. Another similar example from a Slovenian secondary school female student is

Mainly they [students in school] are Slovenians, you can find someone of other nationality, but

Table 4: Building friendships
Tabela 4: Sklepanje prijateljstev

	I would be friends with a pupil who has a different religion from me	
	Yes	No
Primary	75,3%	6,0%
Secondary	79,3%	4,2%
	I would be friends with a pupil whose skin colour is different from mine	
Primary	79,8%	5,1%
Secondary	85,5%	3,4%

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Table 5: Feelings of safety
Tabela 5: Občutek varnosti

	Age	N	Mean	t	Sig
Safe in the classroom	Primary	1743	1,56	1,802	,072
	Secondary	1754	1,51		
Safe in the toilet	Primary	1731	2,29	12,834	,000
	Secondary	1750	1,83		
Safe in the school playground	Primary	1710	2,07	10,620	,000
	Secondary	1722	1,73		
Safe at the school canteen	Primary	1698	1,75	3,499	,000
	Secondary	1570	1,65		
Safe in the school corridors	Primary	1732	2,04	11,333	,000
	Secondary	1749	1,68		
Safe in the gym	Primary	1626	1,64	-,404	,686
	Secondary	1701	1,65		
Safe in bus stop	Primary	200	3,04	7,930	,000
	Secondary	332	2,20		
Safe in the locker area	Primary	1293	2,06	8,327	,000
	Secondary	1719	1,75		

mainly they all speak Slovenian. Recently, we got one student from Bosnia, but as I notice she gets used to it. So in fact they all accepted our language, so you do not even notice, if they are of different nationality by chance (Slovenia, Female, 16)

Similar analysis of the survey data relating to friendship reveals a similar pattern of responses whereby older children on the whole had more positive attitudes compared with primary school children (Table 4). During the interviews with teenagers it was clear that older students were in a better position to identify political correctness when it came to external characteristics of difference.

Feeling safe in the school environment

Regarding feelings of safety within the school environment there were noticeable and statistically significant differences in the way students of the two age groups have responded in the survey. On the whole younger students indicated that they felt less safe in certain areas in the school environment compared with older students. Interestingly, the areas that all students felt less secure where the ones that school staff and teachers exercised less control and surveillance. This notion of schools as "protected spaces" when such control is present was a frequent reference in the focus group discussion with students of both age groups. As can be seen in table 8 which was also confirmed by the focus group interviews these areas were toilets, playgrounds and school corridors.

The reason why some spaces are safer that others is very vividly articulated by the following primary school student from Italy.

… because there are teachers and janitors who watch them … and then because they know they must behave in a different way.

Table 6: Feelings of safety by country
Tabela 6: Obč utek varnosti po državah

Country	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cyprus	Primary	1,56	2,47	1,95	2,07	2,15	2,01	-	2,31
	Secondary	1,70	2,18	1,80	1,90	1,88	1,97	-	2,15
England	Primary	1,44	2,27	2,05	1,73	1,93	1,78	-	2,21
	Secondary	1,33	1,71	1,61	1,47	1,50	1,50	-	1,56
Italy	Primary	1,62	2,26	2,19	1,61	2,13	1,60	3,04	2,07
	Secondary	1,62	1,77	1,83	1,65	1,74	1,71	2,20	1,72
Slovenia	Primary	1,56	2,17	2,14	1,63	2,15	1,54	-	2,03
	Secondary	1,49	1,81	1,78	1,63	1,68	1,60	-	1,71
Austria	Primary	1,64	2,33	1,95	1,84	1,87	1,49	-	1,91
	Secondary	1,40	1,68	1,61	1,55	1,57	1,51	-	1,60

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Table 7: Observing violence
Tabela 7: Opazovanje nasilja

	Age	N	Mean	t	Sig
Other pupils tease them, call them names, or insult them because of their ethnic background?	Primary	1747	1,77	,929	,353
	Secondary	1745	1,74		
Other pupils talk behind, say untruthful things behind their backs because of their ethnic background?	Primary	1730	1,81	2,783	,005
	Secondary	1745	1,73		
Other pupils send insulting SMS (text messages on their mobile phones) or e-mails, post insulting comments on Facebook, Twitter, and similar because of their ethnic background ?	Primary	1683	1,41	1,006	,315
	Secondary	1732	1,39		
Other pupils ignore them, avoid contacts with them because of their ethnic background ?	Primary	1734	1,75	,660	,509
	Secondary	1739	1,73		
Other pupils hit them, spit at them, or express other forms of rude physical behaviour because of their ethnic background ?	Primary	1735	1,52	9,848	,000
	Secondary	1744	1,28		
Other pupils hide, destroy their things, property (notebooks, mobile phones, clothes …) because of their ethnic background ?	Primary	1715	1,39	6,017	,000
	Secondary	1740	1,25		

Observing interethnic violence

When asked in the survey about their experiences of observing interethnic violence in the school environment there were no major differences observed in the way younger and older students responded (Table 7). Minor but statistically significant differences were observed in behaviours that related to forms of rude physical behaviour and distraction of private things, and property (notebooks, mobile phones, clothes …) with younger children indicating more frequent instances. On the whole, however, such observations were not particularly frequent occurrences something that was also verified during the qualitative interviews. Indeed what was a common narrative in the way secondary schools in all countries talked about these behaviours was the fact that on the whole violence was often connected with a number of youth culture issues and not necessarily with ethnicity background. The following is an extract from a focus group with primary school students from England.

Res: Does it [bullying] happen a lot or not very often?
Pupil: Not very often
Res: Not very often you say?
Pupil: Yeah not very often but some children erm,...think of it as, taking a joke and some people think well no it's not a joke.
Res: Okay. Yeah what does everyone else think does it happen a lot, or not very often?
ALL Not very often.

While secondary school female students from Cyprus and Slovenia commented for the same issue that:

Table 8: Observing violence by country
Tabela 8: Opazovanje nasilja po državah

Country	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cyprus	Primary	2,09	2,33	1,58	2,08	1,81	1,47
	Secondary	2,06	2,14	1,58	2,27	1,61	1,38
England	Primary	1,86	1,93	1,55	1,75	1,66	1,47
	Secondary	1,72	1,66	1,42	1,52	1,23	1,25
Italy	Primary	1,67	1,60	1,22	1,65	1,29	1,20
	Secondary	1,78	1,68	1,39	1,81	1,22	1,21
Slovenia	Primary	1,84	1,83	1,42	1,98	1,61	1,57
	Secondary	1,72	1,69	1,41	1,65	1,25	1,34
Austria	Primary	1,45	1,52	1,31	1,35	1,29	1,23
	Secondary	1,43	1,49	1,14	1,38	1,06	1,09

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Table 9: Personal experience of violence
Tabela 9: Osebna izkušnja nasilja

	Age	N	Mean	T	Sig
Other pupils tease me, call me names, or insult me because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1748	1,29	7,890	,000
	Secondary	1734	1,15		
Other pupils talk behind, say untruthful things behind my back because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1732	1,35	8,854	,000
	Secondary	1728	1,17		
Other pupils send me insulting SMS, e-mails, comments on Facebook, Twitter, and similar because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1725	1,13	5,419	,000
	Secondary	1734	1,05		
Other pupils ignore me, avoid contacts with me because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1740	1,23	8,323	,000
	Secondary	1731	1,09		
Other pupils hit me, kick me, spit at me, or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to me because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1740	1,18	8,514	,000
	Secondary	1735	1,05		
Other pupils hide or destroy my things (notebook, mobile phone, clothes ...) because of my ethnic background ?	Primary	1732	1,15	7,558	,000
	Secondary	1732	1,05		

"Nowadays is not common in public schools to observe incidents of interethnic violence but as far as I know it happens outside of the school" (Cyprus)
I personally haven't noticed any problems of this kind, or that someone would say he is not feeling good among us because of nationality or religion. /…/ (Slovenia)

Minor but statistically significant differences were also observed when students were asked about personal experiences of violence. Slightly more frequently younger students experienced violence against them compared with older students. The fact that violence in schools takes more frequently non-physical forms but tends to be associated with psychological violence was verified during the discussions that all research teams had with students in the focus groups. The following extract from a focus group with a secondary school student from England is very interesting.

Res: Were you going to say something? You said you experienced racism yourself, no?
M   Yes once.
Res In this school?
M   Yeah.
Res Is that recently?
M   No about a year, two years ago.
Res And can you tell us what happened, if you don't want to tell us we understand but do you want to tell us about it?
M   People make fun out of our religion and saying stuff about turban and saying different, unkind things about my beliefs and my religions.

From Cyprus:

… I experienced discrimination once … and I felt anger and became aggressive [...] I would get into fights for minor issues… and I saw that this was the result of the feelings that are produced

Table 10: Personal experience of violence by country
Tabela 10: Osebna izkušnja nasilja po državah

Country	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cyprus	Primary	1,41	1,61	1,21	1,29	1,19	1,20
	Secondary	1,15	1,29	1,07	1,13	1,09	1,07
England	Primary	1,42	1,55	1,23	1,36	1,38	1,24
	Secondary	1,26	1,20	1,09	1,15	1,08	1,05
Italy	Primary	1,19	1,19	1,05	1,12	1,07	1,07
	Secondary	1,12	1,14	1,01	1,07	1,01	1,01
Slovenia	Primary	1,29	1,25	1,10	1,25	1,13	1,15
	Secondary	1,15	1,15	1,09	1,09	1,06	1,09
Austria	Primary	1,18	1,21	1,05	1,13	1,08	1,08
	Secondary	1,08	1,08	1,01	1,02	1,00	1,01

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Table 11: How do you feel when you see that a pupil is treated badly because of his or her ethnic background (cultures, languages, religions)?
Tabela 11: Kako se počutiš, ko z nekom slabo ravnajo zaradi njegove/njene etnične pripadnosti (culture, jezika, vere)?

	I feel angry and upset	I feel uneasy	I am not sure	I don't care	I feel ok with it	I feel pleased	Other	That has never happened to me
Primary	501	530	186	72	9	11	47	15
	36,5%	38,7%	13,6%	5,3%	0,7%	0,8%	3,4%	1,1%
Secondary	417	490	131	99	4	19	18	9
	35,1%	41,3%	11,0%	8,3%	0,3%	1,6%	1,5%	0,8%

out of this. When I hear such incidences I get really mad because I think of myself. If someone I knew was experiencing racism I might get out of control. (Secondary school student, female)

Again it has to be pointed out that during the interviews especially with older students such behaviours were often linked to other issues of youth life such as rivalries about peer group power relationships, sports etc. Hence, one might suggest that ethnicity background could act as an additive factor in the overall violence rather than being the source of tensions.

Feelings and reactions to interethnic violence

When asked in the survey about how students felt about these events when they occurred there were minor differences between older and younger students (Table 12). There were, however, noticeable differences in what students indicated that they do when they observe such incidents. As can be seen in Table 7 secondary school students tend to adopt more passive behaviors (one fourth of them would do nothing about it) whereas younger students would most often resort to their teachers to report it (35,7%). When personally being the victims of violence primary school students would more frequently ask for help (Table 13). During the qualitative interviews primary school children indicated that their primary response to dealing with such incidences was to report it to the teachers and to their parents and this could be the product of the more dependent stage in their development phase,

Some pupils are laughing; others might say that this is not right or fair…
and

Table 12: What do you usually do when you see that a pupil is treated badly because of his or her nationality/ ethnic background (cultures, languages, religions)?
Tabela 12: Kaj ponavadi storiš, ko z nekom slabo ravnajo zaradi njegove/njene etnične pripadnosti (kulture, jezika, vere)?

	I help him or her	I tell a teacher or another staff member what is happening	I tell another adult what is happening	I tell them that this is not right	Nothing but I think I should help him or her	Nothing but I stay and watch	Nothing and walk away because this is none of my business	I join the ones who treat him or her badly
Primary	470	490	72	141	68	48	58	7
	34,2%	35,7%	5,2%	10,3%	5,0%	3,5%	4,2%	0,5%
Secondary	263	98	60	252	268	58	119	15
	22,8%	8,5%	5,2%	21,9%	23,3%	5,0%	10,3%	1,3%

Table 13: How do you react when you have been treated badly?
Tabela 13: Kako si odreagiral, ko so s teboj grdo ravnali?

	I fight back	I put up with it	I do the same to the bully	I cry	I ask for help	I run away	I don't react	No answer
Primary	244	125	121	29	147	43	82	126
	25,6%	13,1%	12,7%	3,0%	15,4%	4,5%	8,6%	13,2%
Secondary	180	69	93	24	9	6	73	131
	29,9%	11,5%	15,4%	4,0%	1,5%	1,0%	12,1%	21,8%

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I disapprove. I feel bad about it.(Primary school, Slovenia 10)

compared with adolescence who often try to be more self-reliant or resort to the help of peers.

they may have been insulted about their appearance, color, religion (and therefore, they react in the same way (Secondary school student, female, Cyprus)

One other issue where very noticeable differences were observed between primary and secondary school students in the survey relates to the question whether teachers step in when someone gets bullied by his/her schoolmates. It appears that more often primary school teachers intervene in such events compared with secondary school teachers. Indeed during the interviews there were references about the challenges teachers face with older children and the fact that interventions are sometimes very difficult.

Teachers interfering

Clearly there are differences in the way the two age groups perceive the power of teachers to intervene when instances of interethnic violence occur. It younger ages it is easier for teachers to control situations as their assertive power is more unchallenged. In older age, however, things become more complicated. As one teenager put very elegantly

I believe that most teachers would intervene but if they over-react this might turn against them. There are limits to what teachers can actually achieve (Cypriot, male, 17)

But for primary school students teachers is the obvious adult to turn to.

The reason I turn to my class teacher is because she's the one who can understand me the most. She knows how I feel, she's like...she's like the person I can talk to. And she'll believe me. (Primary school student, England)

Table 14: Do teachers step in when someone gets bullied by his/her schoolmates?
Tabela 14: Ali učitelji odreagirajo, ko se izvaja nasilje nad sošolcem/ko?

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Primary	764	570	75
	54,2%	40,5%	5,3%
Secondary	296	728	143
	25,4%	62,4%	12,3%

How do schools deal with interethnic violence

There were also noticeable differences between primary and secondary school students on how they have responded to normative statements about how their school deals with interethnic violence. It appears that secondary schools deal with this issue more organized than primary schools though in some primary schools there were initiatives such as the following in England

Res: If you saw somebody being treated badly because they were being bullied for any reason? If it was race or religion or anything, what would you do?
PupilErm, in our school we have erm, some anti--bullying ambassadors. So like if you see somebody being bullied and you're not sure what to do, you just go up to them and tell them and they'll act for you. Or you could just go and tell an adult.
Res: So the anti-bullying ambassadors they're the children are they?
PupilI'm one.
Res: Oh right okay. Can you tell me a bit more about that? How did you get to do that?
Pupil Well erm, you get chosen to be one, and you go to different workshops so there's like training so you know what to do if you see someone being bullied and how to act, and you get a little badge.

This was pretty much verified during the interview phase of the project where secondary school children made references to a number of school strategies involving for example organizing discussions on multiculturalism and co-existence in class and helping students integrate in the school environment. The way secondary school students articulated such issues during the interviews in fact revealed a picture of them being more conscious about ethnicity issues compared with younger children whose responses reveal more "innocent" approaches to issues of ethnic differences. Again from England

… our bullying policy is very open, and we've got religion in there as well. Erm, and we've got... you know steps that if it happens… if its racist or erm, or religious or nationality or homophobia, different categories, if its serious then it's to go to [the Head] and it's to be documented. Erm, and if [the Head] deems it to be serious then the parents are to be involved and then there's to be, where possible and where it will benefit the students, there is to be some, conflict resolution between the two of them.

To sup up we could contend that the survey findings relating to observed differences in the way the two age

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Table 15: Normative statements about schools dealing with interethnic violence
Tabela 15: Normativne izjave o šolah glede soočanja z medetničnim nasiljem

	Kind of school	N	Mean	t	sig
Teachers treat pupils the same way regardless of their nationalities/ethnic background (cultures, languages, religions)	Primary	1733	4,08	15,839	,000
	Secondary	1729	3,42		
My school is a place where everybody can be themselves whatever their ethnic background is	Primary	1735	4,19	11,854	,000
	Secondary	1728	3,76		
In the classroom we learn about different cultures and religions	Primary	1726	4,10	15,268	,000
	Secondary	1725	3,57		
In the school we have special activities that encourage us to be equal and understand our differences.	Primary	1734	4,04	26,039	,000
	Secondary	1725	3,01		

groups have responded were in most cases confirmed by the interview data. This served as an excellent way of data triangulation and increased the validity of the findings enormously. There were cases of clear and distinctive differences in the way primary and secondary students responded in the survey and during the focus groups in all the participating countries and this could be the product of cognitive and personality development. Specifically, one might argue that the developmental stage of teenagers relating to their ethnic identity formation allows certain ambivalences and uncertainties to be resolved and thus are more conscientious about their observations and experiences compared with younger children.

DISCUSSION

There were noticeable differences in the way the two age groups have responded in the survey on interethnic violence albeit these were frequently small and do not signify major shifts in the way younger and older teenagers deal with issues of interethnic violence. Whereas no major trends were visible in the way they responded to the questionnaire what was more visible was the way with which the two age groups articulated their positions during the interviews. It appeared that older

teenagers were in a better position to a) understand the social contexts and issues of political correctness of educational and social policies towards multiculturalism. On the other hand, younger children's answers were more spontaneous but at the same time less conscientious of complicated issues of multi-ethnic co-existence. This of course has implications and connects with the way identities are shaped. Older teenagers' identities are more installed, assertive and conscious of the social contexts within which they are embedded.

The policy implications for the age perspective in the analysis of the data on issues of multiculturalism and specifically on issues of interethnic violence points to the direction of early interventions during the very early stages of schooling. It was very interesting that in the case of England when students were asked to proposed solutions to the problem of peer-to-peer violence primary school pupils cited a classroom activity "the circle time" as an effective hands on way of dealing/ preventing interethnic violence as well as the rights-based initiatives, such as the UNICEF"s Rights Respecting Schools Award. Such activities bring the issue to a more practical solutions and possibly more effective. For the older age group, however the approach was more theoretical; namely it was the overall school ethos and implementa-

Table 16: Normative statements about schools dealing with interethnic violence by country
Tabela 16: Normativne izjave o šolah glede soočanja z medetničnim nasiljem po državah

Country	Age	1	2	3	4
Cyprus	Primary	2,60	1,89	1,91	2,12
	Secondary	2,69	2,43	2,53	3,04
England	Primary	2,01	1,83	1,73	1,95
	Secondary	2,18	1,66	2,57	2,68
Italy	Primary	1,86	1,50	1,58	1,68
	Secondary	2,78	2,40	2,45	2,66
Slovenia	Primary	1,77	2,33	2,18	2,02
	Secondary	2,63	2,58	2,42	3,31
Austria	Primary	1,55	1,50	2,11	2,10
	Secondary	2,57	2,01	2,22	3,19

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tion of a code of conduct that was thought to be an effective mechanism for dealing with interethnic or other peer violence. The latter appears to be more prone to external social influences that the education system and the schools possibly do not control.

The present research has also verified that the rhetoric that sees language as key in the implementation of good interethnic relations. The comments that Chancellor Merkel made with reference to this issues (see theoretical framework) hold some truth. Language is a key instrument of integration and sometimes it can become an instrument of assimilation as well. On the whole when language issues are resolved, issues of interethnic relations become less complicated. Having said the above we need to recognize that violence within the school environment connected with behavior such as bullying will not be eradicated from schools in the near future. However, when violence tends to be based on ethnicity differences it can become an explosive phenomenon particularly at times when racism and xenophobic behaviours appear to be on the rise throughout Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

Given that the content of society's supreme cultural norms and values are the framework within which adolescents are socialized, one should expect that these will affect not only young individuals' personal lives but also the prospects of ethnic co-existence in a social and cultural environment that while it keeps changing its multicultural character will be its most distinctive facet in the next few decades. Many European countries have long-established ethnic communities and often adopt a multitude of measures to address cultural diversity, inequalities and discrimination. Despite such policies, however, interethnic violence in schools appears to be a reality experienced directly and/ or indirectly by students of all ages. Most often the consequences on the educational experiences, especially of ethnic minority students, are negative. When such experiences are negative, academic achievement suffers and social marginalization follows with adverse effects on social cohesion and social justice.

Fig. 1: Educational equality for all, Thinkstock
Sl. 1: Enakost izobraževanja za vse, Thinkstock

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VPLIV STAROSTI NA NAČIN KAKO MLADOSTNIKI POROČAJO O IN DOŽIVLJAJO MEDETNIČNO NASILJE V PETIH EVROPSKIH DRŽAVAH

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POVZETEK

Namen članka je preučiti vpliv starosti na način, kako mladostniki doživljajo medetnične odnose s poudarkom na medetničnem nasilju v šolskem okolju. V raziskavi je bila uporabljena dvostopenjska sekvenčna metodologija, ki je združevala kvantitativen in kvalitativen raziskovalni pristop. Pristop »mešanih metod« je vključeval raziskavo z enotnim vprašalnikom v Angliji, Sloveniji, Italiji in Cipru, ki so mu sledili skupinski intervjuji z otroki in mladostniki starimi 11–12 in 17–18 let. Podatki so bili analizirani s pomočjo statističnih testov z namenom prikazati razlike med dvema starostnima skupina. Poglobljena primerjalna analiza je bila opravljena s pomočjo transkriptov intervjujev obeh starostnih skupin. Med dvema skupinama se kažejo razlike v odgovorih na vprašanja o medetničnem nasilju, vendar so bile le-te relativno majhne in ne kažejo na razlikovanje v načinu, kako se mlajši in starejši mladostniki spopadajo z vprašanji medetničnega nasilja. Večje razlike med starostnima skupinama so bile opazne v mnenjih, izraženih skozi intervjuje.

Ključne besede: medetnično nasilje, adolescent, evropska integracija, multikulturalizem.

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