

VULNERABLE GROUPS AND TRAUMA

Coordinated by
Savvatu Tsolakidou



VULNERABLE GROUPS AND TRAUMA

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VULNERABLE GROUPS AND TRAUMA

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Scientific Coordinator: Savvatou Tsolakidou, NKUA

Authors:

Claudia Alba Ortuno, VUB, Belgium
Figen Algul, Marmara University, Turkey
Stelios Arvanitidis, EKO, Greece
Ani Arutunyan, UNWE, Bulgaria
Nikolay Dentchev, VUB, Belgium
Abel Alan Diaz Gonzales, VUB, Belgium
Atanas Dimitrov, UNWE, Bulgaria
Tirse Erbaysal Filibeli, BAU, Turkey
Aura Kaarivo, Metropolia, Finland
Alexandros Minotakis, NKUA, Greece
George Pleios, NKUA, Greece
Michalis Tastsoglou, NKUA, Greece

Editing of the ebook: **Marc Lepson**

Ebook design and pagination: **Dimitris Koutsombolis** and **Agathi Sianoudi**

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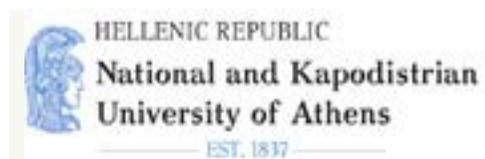
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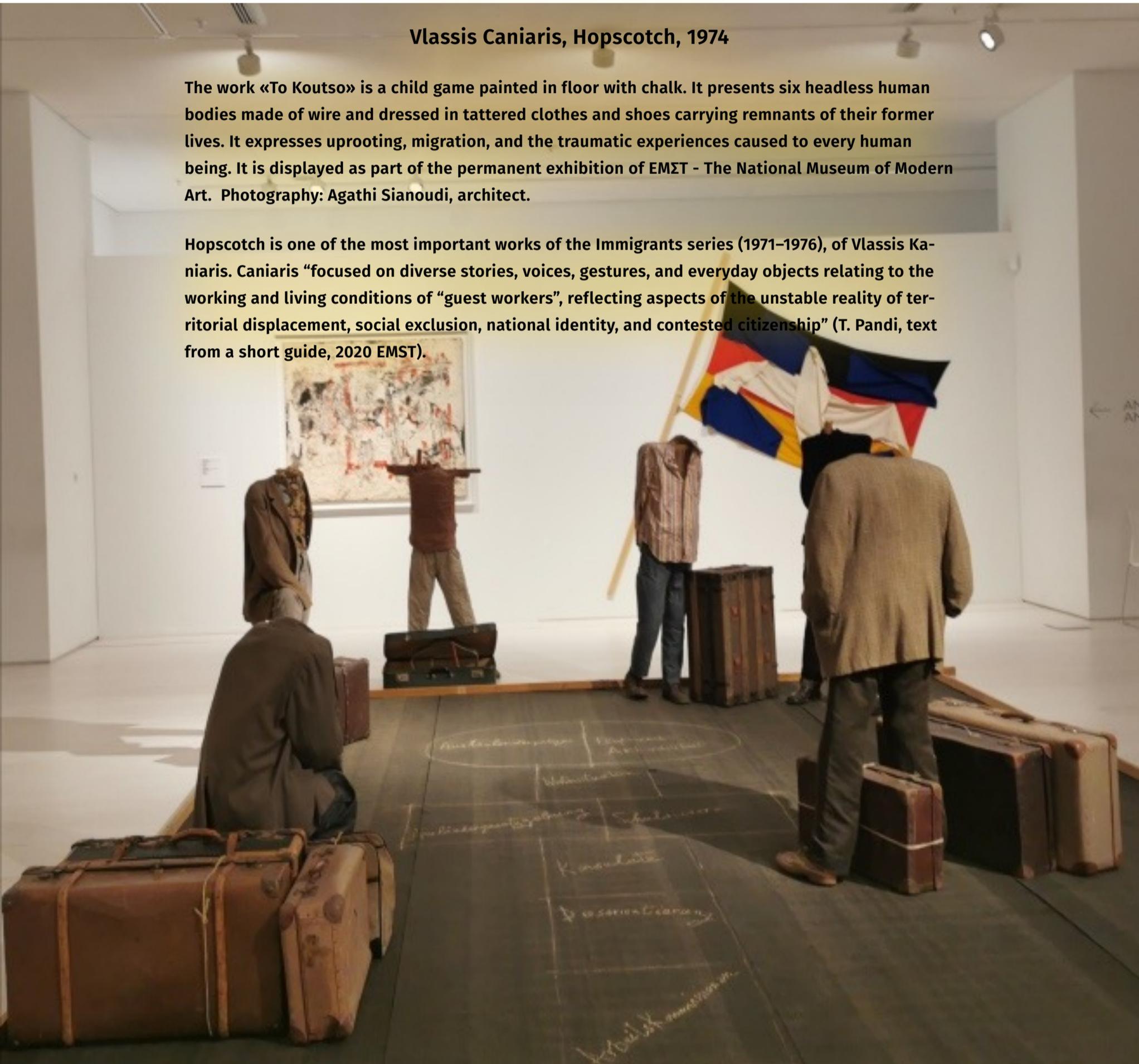
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Vlassis Caniaris, Hopscotch, 1974

The work «To Koutso» is a child game painted in floor with chalk. It presents six headless human bodies made of wire and dressed in tattered clothes and shoes carrying remnants of their former lives. It expresses uprooting, migration, and the traumatic experiences caused to every human being. It is displayed as part of the permanent exhibition of EMST - The National Museum of Modern Art. Photography: Agathi Sianoudi, architect.

Hopscotch is one of the most important works of the Immigrants series (1971–1976), of Vlassis Kaniaris. Caniaris “focused on diverse stories, voices, gestures, and everyday objects relating to the working and living conditions of “guest workers”, reflecting aspects of the unstable reality of territorial displacement, social exclusion, national identity, and contested citizenship” (T. Pandi, text from a short guide, 2020 EMST).



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Under the chapters of this book vulnerable groups are described under the lens of cultural trauma. The latter refers to the multiple and complicated ways that a trauma is experienced by a community. A cultural trauma concerns either a trauma from the past or a trauma that affected the community instantly. On the other hand, vulnerable groups comprise a kind of community that is more exposed to traumas. The traumas have impacts to these communities that could stigmatize their members both internally (mentally and personally) and externally (socially and stereotypically).

As a result, the following chapters are focused on describing the ways that vulnerability and trauma are intertwined. In order to achieve this goal, on the one hand we need a definition of vulnerability and cultural trauma, on the other hand we have to provide information and practices useful to the management of conditions like the cultivation of stereotypes, the emergence of conflicts, the need for intercultural mediation and problems attached to business models and media representations. Media representations also comprise a scientific field that falls into cultural trauma, while media and migration studies “overlap in various ways” (Wood & King, 2001: 1).

The consortium of Erasmus+ project ERMIScom attempts to present these interconnections, among other features, in order to describe how identities are structured. Regarding the identity formation, representations of immigrants and refugees is con-

sidered as a constitutive element, which strengthens specific attitudes towards immigrants both for the indigenous and the immigrants.

Under the leadership of the NKUA, the ERMIScom consortium is presenting in this book a course which could be taught to a Master program. The main objectives of this course aim to develop specific and specialized theoretical knowledge on the field of migration studies. The main portions of theoretical knowledge in this book refer to:

definitions of vulnerability and vulnerable groups, the role of trauma and its mediatization in the identity formation process, dealing with the trauma as an aspect of cultural mediation.

In order to comprehend and utilize the aforementioned theoretical knowledge, the book is focused on three categories of learning objectives for the students, including skills, and attitudes. Our objectives in terms of skills development include:

- the ability to comprehend how media and identities are mutually determined,
- the development of familiarity on how specific business models facilitate the integration of vulnerable groups,
- the diagnosis of existing problems related to intercultural mediation.

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Our objectives in terms of attitudes development include:

- familiarization with specific concepts,
- comprehension of the relation between vulnerable groups and the economy,
- good practices on how cultural mediation is conducted.

The following distribution of the workload of this course is suggested:

- Time spent in class: 3 hours per week / 39 hours per semester.
- Time allocated for course readings: 2 hours per week / 26 hours per semester
- Time allocated for cases: 2 hours per week / 26 hours per semester.
- Time allocated for preparing the “course project”: 40 hours.
- Time allocated for preparing/revising for examinations: 40 hours.
- Total hours for this Course: 171 hours.

In chapter one, definitions of vulnerability and

vulnerable groups are provided. Under the same reasoning, vulnerable groups are classified by specific categories, such as ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, etc. The same chapter also cites social problems related to the barriers that a society places to exclude foreign people from its normal life. We live in a world that would not be the same without immigrant groups (Hylland Eriksen, 2019: 51) and their dedication to work, their sociopsychological adjustment and their need for exchanging cultural habits with other people.

The second chapter concerns cultural identities. It refers to culture’s give-and-take with the subjects as bearers of identities and with the media as factors that construct and at the same time are constructed by culture. The chapter aims to delineate how culture matters and how it affects citizens as by nature political animals. Therefore, the chapter focuses on the work of the Frankfurt School, as well as on the Birmingham School of cultural studies. In its final section, the chapter attempts to describe the political essence of cultural studies by interpreting popular culture as the result of an ongoing struggle between different ideas that try to manufacture consent or to acquire the hegemonic scepters. Identity formation is a complicated process (Hall, 2010: 402).

In chapter three, the concept of trauma is theorized and distinguished into individual and collective. Concerning cultural trauma, the chapter attempts to offer a wide spectrum of trauma conceptualizations. It defines trauma culturally and includes

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various categorizations and aspects of trauma. It functions as an introduction to the term, and trauma theory in general, attempting to describe its historical context. In the second section, trauma is analyzed as a factor of building collective consciousness. The essence of humanity is not an inherent feature of the human beings. Even the self and our attitudes towards it are a matter of interaction (Bauman & Raud, 2015: 3-5).

The fourth chapter aims to analyze the mediatization of traumas in contemporary mass societies. The mediatization theory is described as a concept and a process at the same time. The chapter is also oriented towards embedding the way that media depict traumatic experiences, contributing to the transmission of them both nationally and inter-generationally. By the way, media effects lie at the heart of this attempt, as they give as a notion of how people interpret and adopt dominant views about current or historical traumas. "Culture making is a social process" (Fiske, 1989: 1).

In chapter five, the base of the pyramid concept is presented, a concept that has gained importance for the last decades. The pyramid concerns the social and economic structure, which is supported by the base: the same people that have to live under an income not more than 2 US dollars, they are the same that they have to keep the structure standing by working and consuming. The project has been developed in three phases till now. It attempts to deal with and overturn negative biases that emerge from the public opinion (Schemer, 2012: 1) concern-

ing even the working or managing skills of vulnerable groups.

The sixth chapter continues the economic thinking of the previous one, as it attempts to disseminate inclusive business models, able to embolden and develop a better way of living regarding the members of vulnerable groups. These modes comprise a method for alleviating poverty and its hard consequences. As a result, communities of learning are placed at the heart of this chapter. Education and life-long learning are activities that could strengthen and steel members of vulnerable groups by influencing their attitudes and social skills.

The chapter seven explores the aforementioned business models that could provide sustainability to economic and social realities. The quintessence of this chapter is the goals set for sustainability, as factors that could lead to a better future for the members of vulnerable groups. As a result, it focuses on the circular economy and social enterprises as a process and institutions contributing to the aforementioned sustainability.

The next chapter has to do the social integration processes of culturally different groups, especially those of migrant and refugee descent in their hosting societies. Thus, it presents a multi-perspective approach that enables students to develop a multifarious scientific approach regarding processes like integration and integration. Examples from different countries are opposed in order to facilitate the students' familiarization with civic integration. Integration refers to a process in which both the

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majority of the population and the minorities take part mutually and demands their availability for changing attitudes (Liedholm & Lindberg, 2007), as a result of transformative learning.

The chapter nine, media coverage of vulnerability, includes the description of capacities and practices of digital journalism that could facilitate the integration process. The chapter aims to provide a set of good practices according to how professional journalism should deal with the representation for vulnerable groups. It is about a complex but controversial issue (Hargreaves, 2001: 23), while the media play an important role on the ideological constructions about refugees, asylum seekers etc. (Don & Lee, 2014: 689).

The tenth chapter, media coverage and fake news on vulnerable groups, describes a contemporary problem, fake news on vulnerable groups, which is often consciously disseminated by far-right politicians, businessmen or citizens. Therefore, the chapter apposes case studies concerning minorities such as the Uyghur Turks and the Rohingya People. Fake news also contains an aspect of power which is expressed through the control of information (Burkhardt, 2017: 5).

The chapter eleven, aims to examine the cultural mediation as a term both theoretically and practically, as well as the way it is applied into professional practices that contribute to the integration of refugee populations. Thus, the transformation of cultural mediation into a professional field will be examined and the varied fields where professional

cultural mediation is necessary will be presented. Cultural mediation is a scientific field where intercultural communication and social integration should be applied dialectically.

The chapter twelve regards the communication aspects of cultural mediation. It attempts to outline the basic characteristics of cultural mediation, as well as those of the related profession. Cultural mediation is defined as a process that need interdisciplinary qualifications. However, this chapter focuses on the communication skills that the profession of cultural mediator requires. Except from communication, cultural studies also fall into this interdisciplinary object. Language and culture are intertwined and this relationship is expressed through the field of intercultural communication (Shisheng & Shuang, 2012: 147-149).

The final chapter of this book concerns an ethical approach to trauma. Indeed, political actors, media outlets and citizens can often take a defensive stand when it comes to refugee and migrant flows. However, various scientific approaches suggest that these negative biases could lead to even more unpleasant situations. Ethics is a field of study that places humanism, values, morality and governmentality under the same roof. As a result, the concept of professional deontology emerges and is described both historically and practically.

The book expects to be a useful source of knowledge for students of the departments of Com-

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munication and Media and in general for those interested in the wider field of social integration of vulnerable groups. Another important aspect of this book is how the media covers traumatic experiences of refugees/migrants and other vulnerable groups.

The different chapters include images, figures, tables, to reinforce the content. In addition, an extensive bibliography is listed in each chapter as well as online links for further research by the readers.

Finally, I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to the authors of the various chapters of this book.

In closing, I would like to note that any omissions and oversights in the e-book are the sole responsibility of the authors.

The coordinator
Dr Savvato Tsolakidou

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LIST OF RESEARCHERS

Chapters	Theme	Researchers	Partner Organisation
-	Introduction	Savvatou Tsolakidou	National Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Greece
1	Defining vulnerability and classification of vulnerable groups	Figen Algul, Marmara University	Bahçeşehir University (BAU), Turkey
2	Cultural identities	George Pleios Michalis Tastsoglou Alexandros Minotakis	NKUA
3	Theorizing trauma and its cultural dimension	Michalis Tastsoglou Alexandros Minotakis	NKUA
4	Mediatization of traumas	Alexandros Minotakis Michalis Tastsoglou	NKUA
5	Base of the pyramid	Claudia Alba	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium
6	Inclusive Business Models	Abel Alan Diaz Gonzales, University of Maastricht	VUB
7	Sustainable Business Models	Claudia Alba Nikolay Dentchev	VUB
8	Social integration of culturally different groups	Kyriaki Panourgia	EKO Greece
9	Media coverage of vulnerability	Aura Kaarivuo	Metropolia University, Finland
10	Media coverage and “fake news” on vulnerable groups: vicious cycle of disinformation and discrimination	Tirse Erbaysal Filibeli	Bahçeşehir University (BAU), Turkey
11	Cultural mediation I - Mediators and carers	Alexandros Minotakis	NKUA
12	Cultural mediation II – Communication aspects	Michalis Tastsoglou	NKUA
13	Ethical approach to trauma	Ani Arutunyan Atanas Dimitrov	University of National and World Economy (UNWE), Bulgaria

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“Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power,
but in character and goodness”

By Anne Frank, German writer (1929-1945)



Photograph by Agathi Sianoudi (2022).
Accommodation Centre Refugee Camp Schistou - Attica.

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Aim

The aim of this chapter is to define vulnerability. This includes perceptions and values that lead to prejudice toward different vulnerable groups and classification of vulnerable groups by ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religious preference, age and gender.

Expected Learning Outcomes

To gain a deep understanding of the main concepts related to vulnerability.

To understand classification of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society.

To provide detailed information about vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; children, people living alone, disabled individuals, ethnic minority groups, patients with mental disorders, homeless, refugees, LGBTI-(Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Individuals), the poor and Romany.

Keywords

Vulnerability, Vulnerable Groups, Classification of Vulnerable Groups.

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Section 1.1: Introduction

Social groups that cannot adequately benefit from the existing resources in society due to innate or cultural factors and are susceptible to risk factors such as social exclusion and marginalization are called vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Regarding the functioning of a welfare state disadvantaged groups have the right to be supported and protected by social policies. As a result, the state organizes social policies to carry out various social work practices in order to support the participation of disadvantaged groups in social life.

In health science literature, the concept of vulnerability encompasses the possibility of being under sociological, psychological and physical health risks, neglected and harmed. Vulnerability comes from the Latin word "vound". In health services, it is to be "sensitive" to a disease or risk. People (children, the elderly, pregnant women, etc.) may be disadvantaged at any time in their life due to living conditions, disease, developmental conditions, or age. Different individuals may be at risk for different vulnerabilities within the same context (eg, nurses are at risk of violence in the hospital emergency, visitors are at risk of contracting infection). The term disadvantaged groups emphasizes population groups with certain characteristics. There are different definitions for disadvantaged groups in the literature.

In general, women, the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and minority

groups tend to experience the highest socioeconomic marginalization (Bardosh, Ryan, Ebi, Welburn, & Singer, 2017), although they are defined as disadvantaged, vulnerable and vulnerable groups, these populations are at higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence compared to the general population and are also included in this definition (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020).

Some sources define a disadvantaged group as one that is denied access to the tools necessary for their self-sufficiency, rather than the traditional definition based on race, ethnic group, poverty or gender. People see themselves as disadvantaged to the extent that they are denied access to tools deemed useful by the majority of society. These tools include participation, encouragement, responsibility, self-respect, community support, health, education, information, employment, capital and responsive support systems (Mayer, 2003). According to another definition, vulnerable groups are defined as those who are potentially more prone to neglect and harm and have poorer access to health care because of their known or anticipated disadvantages (Rogers, 1997). Vulnerable groups include those who are socially excluded, have limited opportunities and income, and are exposed to adverse situations (physical, sexual, psychological and financial), suffering, distress, prejudice and discrimination. These individuals can be single parents, people with disabilities, elderly people, children, ethnic minority groups, people with mental disorders, homeless people, asylum seekers and

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refugees (Larkin, 2009).

In extraordinary situations such as epidemics, wars, natural disasters, the disadvantages of vulnerable groups increase exponentially, and they are exposed to more risks within society.

In this study, we will examine vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, children, people living alone, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, mentally ill patients, homeless, refugees, LGBTI-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Individuals, the poor and the Romany.

Section 1.2: Classification of Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups

1. Children

The disadvantage experienced by the individual in the youth phase can cause people to move away or break away from social life and negatively affect the communication and interaction between youth and the society they live in. By creating policies that will enable the individual to integrate within society and by implementing these policies effectively, it is possible to eliminate this negative interaction between disadvantaged youth and society (GSB, 2012).

The prevalence of child mistreatment in different countries and in different groups of children and families is difficult to estimate and compare. Stud-

ies on child mistreatment have quite special challenges compared to other studies (Janson, 2018). Although it seems that progress has been achieved in the studies and opinions put forward by experts on children and child development in various disciplines, this is only the tip of the iceberg (Palmer, 2018).

The environment in which children and young people live is very important in their future planning, education, and career choice, shaping all plans and life conditions for the future. Children and young people who do not have opportunities in their surroundings cannot benefit from social measures. This situation causes internal and external migrations over time, and in this case, it brings along many problems such as unplanned urbanization, unemployment, and differences in the level of welfare between regions.

Although childhood is a period of vulnerability on its own, orphaned children, refugee children, children with disabilities, children living and working on the street are more disadvantaged (Larkin, 2009). Children in vulnerable groups have increased mental health problems (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015). Depression, psychosomatic problems, mental health problems, physical health problems and pain are common in immigrant children (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

It is estimated that approximately 93 million children, or 20 million of those under the age of 15, live with a moderate or severe disabilities world-

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wide. Children with disabilities experience stigma, discrimination and inequalities. Children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience violence than those without disabilities. Children with mental health problems or intellectual disabilities appear to be among the most vulnerable and are at 4.6 times higher risk of getting sexually abused than their non-disabled peers (World Health Organization, 2015).

Among the most important health problems seen in street children are nutrition, poor hygiene and infectious diseases (Hakim & Talukder, 2016). In addition, street children were found to have increased respiratory tract diseases, skin diseases, psychological problems, and gastrointestinal problems (Rizk, El Rifai & Aboulghar, 2017).

2. Those Who Live Alone

Feelings of loneliness are closely related to mental health. Stress, anxiety and depression can cause low mental well-being. Loneliness is an important public health problem, especially among the elderly (Gerst-Emerson & Jayawardhana, 2015). Although public health and public policy officials prioritize smoking, diet, and physical activity, they place less emphasis on social participation factors such as loneliness (Gerst-Emerson & Jayawardhana, 2015). However, evidence shows that individuals who lack social connections (both objective and subjective social isolation) are at risk of premature death (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris & Stephenson,

2015).

3. Disabled Individuals

The explanation of the concept of disability defined by the UNSC in the Annex number 3447 to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights published on 9 December 1975 and in the 1st article of the Declaration of the Rights of the Disabled Persons is as follows: Persons who cannot perform the activities that a normal individual should carry out alone in their personal or social life as a result of a hereditary or subsequent deficiency in their orthopedic or mental abilities are called disabled (Pouya, 2016).

Disabled individuals are a significant proportion of society. For instance, they make up more than 12% of the US population (Krahn, Walker & Correa-De-Araujo, 2015) and the rate of individuals with at least one disability in the general population in Turkey is 6.9% (Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, 2011). Disabled individuals may encounter various problems in many different areas of their lives, including health inequalities. Obesity, smoking, and inactivity rates are higher; fewer cancer screening (especially mammograms and Pap tests) is performed; fewer breast-conserving surgeries are done when breast cancer is diagnosed. Disabled individuals have higher mortality rates from breast or lung cancer than others (Lezzoni, 2011). Health expenditure burdens of individuals with significant disabilities are higher than other groups (Jeon, Noguchi, Kwong, Ito & Tamiya, 2017).

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4. Ethnic Minority Groups

Ethnocentrism is a belief or feeling that one's "culture" is the best culture there is, and includes a tendency to judge other people's beliefs, behaviors, and values using one's own cultural values. In a given cultural environment, people may change their ethnocentric feelings either over a lifetime or at some point in their lives. If we think of culture as a line that can go in both directions, a person standing on the far left in this line may exhibit "ethnocentric" behaviors that include denying subcultures (disadvantaged groups), contempt, or may show more sensitive behaviors (ethnorelativism) by moving to the right.

Ethnicity is a cultural construct that categorizes groups of people based on their geographic origin, language, or cultural similarities. Ethnic minorities have a disproportionate burden of illness, intentional and unintentional injuries, and other health conditions (Anderson, 2008). Ethnic minority groups are exposed to inequalities due to exclusion in society. Among these inequalities are unemployment, income inequality, housing problems, increase in crime rate and health problems (Larkin, 2009).

5. Patients with Mental Disorders

It is estimated that one in six people in the world will have significant mental distress at some time

in their life, one in seven people report having suicidal thoughts at some point in their life, and 1 in 200 people have a psychotic disorder such as psychosis or schizophrenia. There is also evidence suggesting a global growth in the number of people with mental disorders. Among the problems of patients with mental disorders are discrimination, poverty, housing problems, social isolation, high rate of disease, high mortality rate, and poor quality of care (Larkin, 2009).

6. Homeless People

Although homelessness affects every racial and ethnic group, the burden of homelessness falls disproportionately on minority communities, affecting the most vulnerable individuals and families within these communities (Anderson, 2008). Among the problems faced by the homeless are unemployment, low income and poverty, health problems, high death rates, exposure to crime, social isolation, loneliness, stigmatization and discrimination (Larkin, 2009). The mortality rate of homeless adults is also higher than others. Injury, heart disease, liver disease, poisoning, and ill-defined causes are almost four times greater than the general population and account for about 75 percent of homeless deaths (Anderson, 2008).

7. Refugees

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In the 21st century, globalization is seen as one of the most important socio-spatial changes and transformation processes around the world. Among the most prominent features of globalization is the increasing cross-border circulation of capital, goods, ideas, cultural motifs and values, and people, along with the spread of transnational networks (Deniz & Özgür, 2010).

Conceptually, migration can be defined as the displacement of people from one place to another for the purpose of settling, either temporarily or permanently.

People who move from one country to another with the aim of settling are called immigrants (Faist, 2003). According to the United Nations (UN) 1951 Convention Relating to the Legal Status of Refugees, a refugee is "a person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and therefore leaves his/her country and is unable or unwilling to return due to fear" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951). "Refugee" and "immigrant" are two concepts need probably to be defined differently. There are different typologies. A refugee is an immigrant, but its immigrant isn't a refugee. Refugees do not choose to leave their country, they are compelled to do so (Uluslararası Göç Örgütü-International Organization for Migration, 2009).

Many asylum seekers are exposed to multiple

traumas before and after migration, which negatively affect their mental health. As pre-migration risk factors, the low-income level in their own country, the inability to benefit from education opportunities, professional inadequacy, political events, social support, roles and disruption of the social network can be listed as the factors affecting the mood of asylum seekers (Kirmayer, Narasiah, Munoz, Rashid, Ryder, Guzder & Pottie, 2011). Accordingly, many asylums' seekers/refugees experience or witness traumatic events such as torture, rape, detention, physical injury, murder, genocide, and war before leaving their country (Nicholl & Thompson 2004). Risk factors during migration are exposure to harsh living conditions (for example, refugee camps), route, duration, exposure to physical or psychological violence, uncertainty about the result of migration, disruption of family and social relations, traumatic experiences during their arrival and escape to the country of asylum. After migration, uncertainty about migration or refugee status, inability to be employed (unemployment), changes in social status, loss of family members and loss of social support, cultural adaptation and adaptation difficulties (for example, change in gender roles), inability to learn a language and adapt to different lifestyles can also be traumatic. When we look at the studies conducted in recent years, it is seen that post-migration stress factors cause more undesirable effects on mental health than pre-migration traumas in refugees/asylum seekers (Teodorescu, Heir, Hauff, Wentzel-Larsen & Lien, 2012).

8. LGBTI- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and

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Intersex Individuals

Gender is rather the roles that society expects from men or women. LGBTI people are discriminated against, and their physical, emotional, and social health deteriorates when they are excluded from health services, education, and work life. In very few cultures are they able to express their sexual orientation easily and participate in the socialization process. In many cultures they must hide their gender or sexual identities. Due to the attitudes and behaviours, they are exposed to, these people avoid receiving health care services or receive inadequate and poor-quality services when sought. Healthcare personnel consciously or unconsciously discriminate and may feel homophobic (hatred, fear, discontent or discrimination against homosexuals). The health problems of this group are not only related to their sexual orientation. They are faced with the negative health outcomes of relatively more common diseases, such as HIV infections, AIDS, mental illnesses (attempting suicide), exposure to violence, to which even members of the dominant culture are discriminated against.

LGBTI individuals whose sexual orientation and gender identity differ from the general population, can be pushed into a disadvantageous position by being exposed to negative attitudes in society (Hatzenbuehler, Flores & Gates, 2017). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals may be discriminated against in many areas of their lives because of their sexual orientation. Since being homosexual and bisexual may encounter

negative attitudes in the society, these individuals may experience some health problems more often (Martos, Wilson, Gordon, Lightfoot & Meyer, 2018). Research shows that discrimination against sexual minority men and women is associated with internalizing (mental health) and externalizing (substance use) disorders (Lee, 2016). Depression, suicidal ideation, peer bullying, family rejection, substance abuse, risky behaviour, stressful life, and sexual health problems are more common in gay and bisexual individuals than heterosexuals (Hafeez, Zeshan & Tahir, 2017). It has been shown that the stress resulting from prejudice negatively affects the physical health of homosexual and bisexual individuals (Institute of Medicine, 2011). Lesbian and bisexual women consume tobacco and alcohol more than heterosexual women. Lesbians and bisexual women are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual women and are more likely to miss out on needed medical care (Allison, 2000).

Transgender individuals may face more health problems due to discrimination and violence stemming from negative attitudes in society and inadequacies in institutional arrangements. Depression, anxiety, somatization, smoking, alcohol and substance use are common among transgender individuals. In addition, suicide attempts are reported 26 times more frequently in these individuals compared to the general population (Yang, Manning, van den Berg & Operario, 2015).

Controversy continues about intersex individuals

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being operated upon at a young age without their agreement. In the United States, at least 2000 operations are performed annually to determine the gender of intersex people at a young age, and the Intersex Association states that it is unethical to perform these operations on children without consent (Baird, 2017).

9. The Poor

Poverty has direct effects on an individual's health. Being poor means being less able to afford adequate housing in a safe neighbourhood. The poor have fewer resources such as gyms, markets and

shopping areas. Lower income is associated with less education and often the poor are forced to work in jobs where they are exposed to higher risks (e.g., mining). Lack of free time means they are less likely to shop for fresh fruit and vegetables and cook healthy food, and as a result, they are more likely to rely on fast food. Inadequate childcare, and stigma of being in a low social class, can cause ongoing psychological stress. Having less control over transportation and work schedules causes more stress at work and at home (Rector, 2010).

Poverty is perhaps the most important cause of inequality in health for disadvantaged groups. One's



Figure 1. The vulnerable groups

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poverty level is measured by different methods; health (death, disease rates, malnutrition); education (number of households without at least five years of education); and quality of life – non-monetary indicators such as access to electricity, clean drinking water, sewerage, floor of the house, radio, television, refrigerator, etc. In otherwise disadvantaged groups, if they lack at least 33.3% of the aforementioned indicators, they are considered “multidimensional” poor.

10. The Romany

This group, which is called Gypsies or Romany, has been given different names almost all over the world. “Roma or Gypsy” is the most widely used of these types of denominations. However, with the First World Romany Congress held in London in 1971, it was emphasized that all Gypsies in the world should be named with a common name (Özkan, 2000).

The Romany are the largest ethnic minority in Europe. In the Thrace region, the Romany constitute 6-7% of the population (Eskiocak and Akbaşak, 2017). The Romany, who are approached with prejudice in the society they live in due to their unique culture and personality traits and even by other minorities in the same lands, have encountered attitudes and behaviours ranging from oppression, assimilation, intimidation, heavy penalties, and murder in the Western lands they migrated to over time. Nowadays a crucial occasion is the development of increased social policies for the protection

and integration of Romani populations. Under the same lenses. Organization of Romany citizens as a civil society, association activities and joint work with various institutions play a major role in this recovery process in EU Member States.

Section 1.3: Summary

In this chapter, after giving the definitional framework of the concepts of vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, detailed information was given about vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society; about children, people living alone, disabled individuals, ethnic minority groups, patients with mental disorders, homeless, refugees, LGBTI-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Individuals, the poor and the Romany. In order for members of these groups to lead a healthy life in terms of social, psychological and physical aspects within society, states must implement relevant social policies.

Questions of discussion, or exercises, or other activities

- **Which groups are considered vulnerable in your country?**
- **What are the social policies for vulnerable groups in your country?**
- **How is the representation of vulnerable groups in the media in your country?**

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- **Find statistical data (using Eurostat tables) about the population size for each of the above categories of vulnerable groups, per EU member state, and present it in a comparative table.**

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CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL IDENTITIES

**“We must not only learn to tolerate our differences.
We must welcome them as the richness and diversity
which can lead to true intelligence “**

By Albert Einstein (1879 -1955), a German-born theoretical physicist, known for developing the theory of relativity.



Photograph by Agathi Sianoudi (2022),
Rhodes Island

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CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Aim

This chapter offers a general outline of the study of culture from early modernity to postmodernity. Culture is conceptualized as an integral part of personal as well as collective identities and the concomitant political and ideological struggles.

Expected Learning Outcomes

To gain a deep understanding of the different ways that culture has been theorized through modernity and postmodernity.

To understand the ways that culture ties into the social construction of identities.

To develop the notion of culture as a “field of struggle” where political and cultural identities intersect.

Keywords

Culture, Cultural Identity, mass culture, cultural industry, postmodernism

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CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Section 1.1: Introduction

This chapter offers a general outline of culture and the formation of cultural identities. First, the term culture will be examined within the historical context of modernity and the division between low and high culture. The juxtaposition between the sphere of culture and intellect, on the one hand, and the sphere of industry and economy on the other, are historical examples of how culture was understood and how different social strata built their identities around different cultures. Next, we examine the rise of mass culture and the debates that have been raised around it. Mass culture succeeded in overcoming the schism between low and high culture and created a new set of issues that are still relevant in contemporary societies. We then analyse the role of media in this context.

In our epoch, collective identities are questioned, fragmented, and rebuilt as grand narratives come into a state of crisis and renewal. Culture is now (re) shaped by commercial practices and is prominent in every aspect of our everyday lives. Culture has fragmented itself and, often self-referential, plays a crucial role in shaping post-modern, fluid identities. The political role of culture is thus reinforced and its importance as a field of struggle for meaning and interpretation is more important than ever.

Section 2.2: Theorizing Culture and cultural identity

While culture is a fundamental component of all types of society and civilization, it is only in modernity that culture has been problematized and turned into a specific field of study. This turn is linked with the industrialization and urbanization process and the new ways that collective identities are formed as well. Pre-modern societies tended to experience an organic link between culture, identity, and their way of life. Culture, embedded into traditions, stereotypes and everyday interactions, reinforces a cyclical way of understanding time that strengthens the status quo. As collective identities and ways of living have been rendered unstable by the great transformations of modernity, the role of culture is changed as well as the way it is defined. Raymond Williams (1960) traces the development of the term culture from the last decades of the

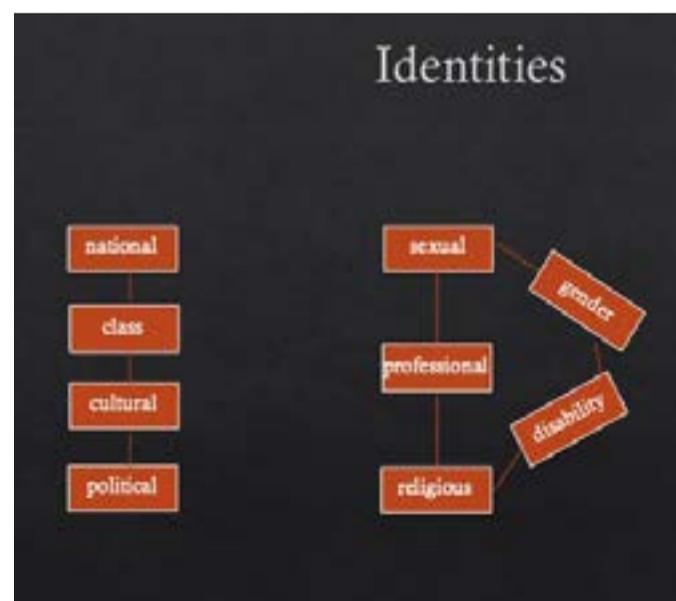


Figure 2. Kinds of identities

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eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century¹.

Culture, conceptualized as art, was referenced as part of a “superior reality that offered an immediate basis for an important criticism of industrialism” (Williams, 1960: 47). This conceptualization threatened to isolate art and possibly laid down the foundation for an elitist understanding of culture and art, removed from the everyday world and the mass of “commoners”. The notion of culture and the “cultivated man” seemed to embody an ideal that transcended the world of economy and commerce with its over-emphasis on profits, production, etc. It comes as no surprise that this understanding of culture became quite common among intellectuals and the middle-class. On the other hand, this notion exemplifies the dialectic tension between culture, cultural studies (in its first, baby steps) and the process of social transformation.

In the course of the 19th century, culture also came to refer to a “way of life”. More specifically, in the British public life of this period, the idea first arose that “aesthetic, moral and social judgements are closely interrelated” (Williams, 1960: 140). Criteria of cultural quality no longer applied strictly to culture but seemed to expand to moral questions, personal

and collective habits, and ways of thinking, judging, and acting. A link between art criticism and social criticism (Williams, 1960: 146) was established. However, this tethering of culture in the processes of everyday life, did not leave it unaltered. There was no uniform, universally accepted way of life upon which a common culture could be established and developed. The rise of the nation-state offered a new collective identity and lay the foundation for the notion of a “national culture” — a culture that pertains to the way of thinking and living of a national people. However, social contradictions within nations were also manifested and expressed themselves in the distinction between high and low culture, the former referring to the way of life of the social elites, the latter referring to the working class and the popular strata. This distinction was further promoted and reinforced by elitist thinkers who emphasized the qualitative difference between high and low culture. Nevertheless, this distinction reflected (and distorted) an existing reality — the significant gap in ways of living and consuming, of producing and appreciating art that existed between different social classes.

This distinction was rendered obsolete in the first decades of the 20th century by the rise of mass culture which had the ability to conflate elements of high and low culture into a new one, one that

1 “Culture, similarly changes, in the same critical period. Before this period, it had meant, primarily, the ‘tending of natural growth’, and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter use, which had usually been a culture of something, was changed, in the nineteenth century, to culture as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean, first, ‘a general state or habit of the mind’, having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean ‘the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole’. Third, it came to mean ‘the general body of the arts’. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean ‘a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual’. It came also, as we know, to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment” (Williams, 1960: xiv).

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is produced, packaged, and sold in the process of mass production. Obviously, this transformation did not occur overnight. As Benjamin (2008:19) noted, “it has taken more than half a century for the change in the conditions of production to be manifested in all areas of culture.” This phrase highlighted the discrepancies between the rapid changes in the process of production in the first two decades of the 20th century and the rather slow changes that occurred in the cultural field. However, the gap was closing and the German thinker, when writing *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, tried to understand the new reality brought to life by the interaction and complimentary development of mass production and mass culture. Benjamin saw the commercialization of culture as a dual process: on the one hand, culture becomes a commodity, placed in the capitalist market as any other product for sale. Instead of its traditional use for religious reasons, a work of art in modernity has also obtained an exhibition value, a use that emphasizes its value as a commodity. On the other hand, mass produced culture has the prospect of overcoming the fetishist notion of culture as “the embodiment of creations considered independent, if not of the production process in which they originate” (Benjamin, 2008: 124). The elitist distinction between high and low culture, the obsession with art as a rare object that should be collected and kept away from public life, all these ways of understanding and managing culture were deemed regressive by Benjamin. The mass, mechanical reproduction of art presented the possibility of a new cultural paradigm — a possibility that could be

realized through political struggle for the control of the means of cultural production.

Famously, the Frankfurt school posed similar questions, understanding the radical transformations brought to the fore by the mass society, developed around the “scientific management” of Taylorism/Fordism. However, they rejected Benjamin’s optimism about the possibilities of mass culture and emphasized the newly developed role of culture as a means of domination of the working class. Culture that is mass produced and employed for commercial reasons (advertisements, slogans, etc.) tends to lose its essential specificity. A culture that is produced massively and quantitatively is effectively degraded. As Adorno notes “the commercial character of culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear...the borderline between culture and empirical reality becomes more and more indistinct” (Adorno, 2001: 61). Within this (previously clear-cut) “borderline” lay, according to the Frankfurt School, the emancipatory potential of culture and art that was now suppressed by the dominant role of mass culture and commercialization. Marcuse, a late Frankfurt School thinker, further developed this notion by stating that “the radical potential of art lies precisely in its ideological character, in its transcendent relation to the ‘basis’” (Marcuse, 1978: 13). This phrase distinguishes Marcuse’s thought both from the Marxist tradition and from the dominant commercial culture. As culture transcends the empirical reality, it opens up the possibility of radically different versions of life. This concept of cultures guides the search for

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an “authentic work of art” (Marcuse, 1978: 16) that defies both the instrumental reason of the economy and the expedience of politics.

This normative dimension of the theories of culture tends to fade in the second half of the 20th century. As mass culture expanded its dominance globally, cultural studies began to form and establish itself as a distinct field. The notion of pop(ular) culture became dominant, embracing the dual meaning of the word “popular” in English. Pop culture seemed to transcend the limits of cultures that pertained to specific social and national groups. As Stuart Hall notes “the term ‘popular’ has very complex relationships with the term ‘class’...we speak of particular forms of working-class culture, but we use the more inclusive term ‘popular culture’ to refer to the general field of enquiry” (Hall, 2002: 238). The notion of culture, in this context, is associated with the construction of meaning, as cultural studies shifted into theorizing culture as “the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience, and such meanings necessarily produce a social identity for the people involved” (Fiske, 1989: 1).

The question of the intersection between social and cultural identity has been posed once again, this time in the age of late capitalism where fragmentation of collective identities is dominant. The crisis of ideologies (and grand narratives in general) influences culture and its role in shaping collective identity. These transformations are underpinned by the increasing significance of symbols

and signs in economic life. Marketing promotes the consumption of symbols and meaning, tied to the consumption of material products. Buying a car, an alcoholic beverage or a new computer are acts immersed in a commercial culture that links consumption with the construction of a personal and collective identity — an identity based on the juxtaposition between high and low culture. This distinction seems to be rendered irrelevant in the age of post-modernist culture. Contemporary pop culture seems to celebrate this mixture of old and new, classic and (post)modern, so that hierarchical classification is excluded. The question of “Beethoven or disco” is rendered mute as well as the juxtaposition of “Beethoven vs disco”. Often mixed together in commercial culture, the underpinning logic is “Beethoven no less than disco” (Jameson, 1991: 84).

Moreover, targeted advertising, especially prominent in social media, reinforces the process of fragmentation of collective identity into a myriad of consumer-cultural identities. Pop culture, personified into actors, singers, professional athletes, etc., now plays a central role in linking symbols, products, a way of life and a specific identity. Jameson foresaw this tendency and noted that “a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life — from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself — can be said to have become “cultural” in some original and yet untheorized sense” (Jameson, 1991: 47).

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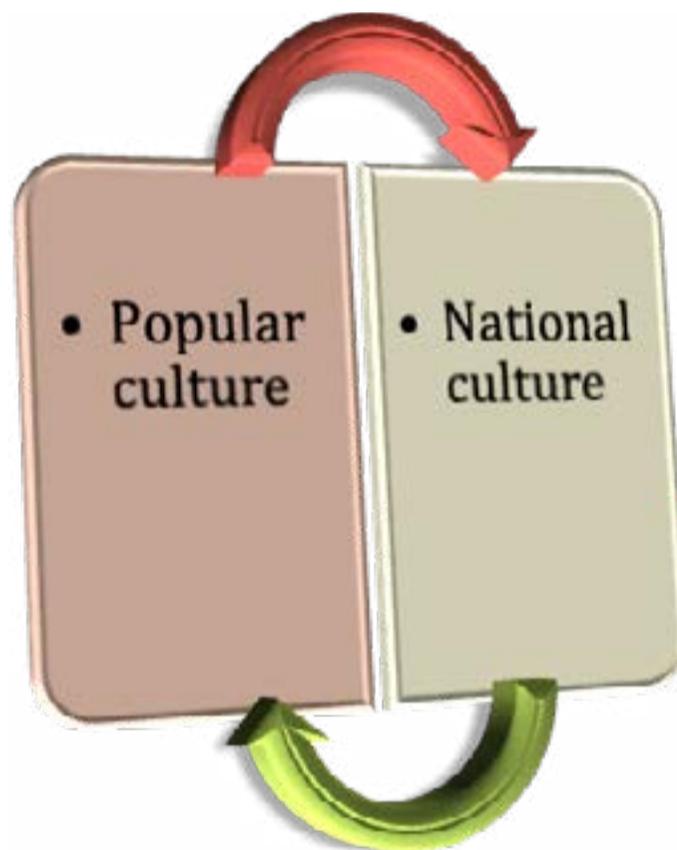


Figure 3. Culture and the media

Drawing from the work of Lukács, Jameson highlights the importance of reification as the underlying logic of capital. He notes that reification is a “force whose logic is one of ruthless separation and disjunction, of specialization and rationalization, of a Taylorizing division of labor in all realms” (Jameson, 1991: 95). In the field of culture, reification “disjoins the sign from the referent...disjoins the signifier from the signified” (ibid). As a result, “we are left with that pure and random play of signifiers that we call Postmodernism, which no longer produces monumental works of the modernist type but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments

of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage” (ibid).

This “bricolage” is not devoid of contradictions and conflicts as is evident in the so-called “culture wars” of the last decade where questions of diversity, political correctness and identity politics came to the fore of cultural as well as political struggle. While political and cultural identities are redefined through this process, there is no stable meaning attached to cultural products nor can a trans-historical, fixed identity derive from it. As Hall notes, “almost all cultural forms will be contradictory... composed of antagonistic and unstable elements. The meaning of a cultural form and its place or position in the cultural field is not inscribed inside its form. Nor its position fixed and forever” (Hall, 2002: 235).

Section 2.3: Culture and the media

According to Bauman (Bauman & Raud, 2015: 2-55), humans obtain human nature. They are not born human. In contrast, they are made humans by the society in which they belong. They join humanity as their self-formation, self-assertion and self-improvement proceed. There is a community that guides these processes starting at birth. Bauman approaches human life as “an incessant effort to fill the appalling void, to render life meaningful.” By giving meaning to their lives, humans forget or suppress the existential meaninglessness of life. The

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awareness of life requires a self, which is the creation of interaction between humans. This interaction, in which the individual takes part since birth, consists of accepting and rejecting ideas, practices, feelings, etc. This is how building an identity works.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, identity building interacts with culture. On the one hand, the individual itself makes culture by accepting and rejecting, on the other hand the culture is a priori active to this process by suggesting ideas, practices, feelings, etc. to the individual. The individual adopts some social practices and these practices, placed in a constant temporal continuum, compose a culture. If we assume that the whole society is a structure, then meaning produced by culture “among other forces” (Fiske, 1997: 115-116) strengthens it by holding its components in place.

However, the right to be exposed to different ideas, practices and feelings is not given de facto. Specific, tangible aspects of culture such as music, food, and clothing are more easily obtainable than other intangible, hard-to-find, aspects such as religion, customs, and language (Hyland Eriksen, 2019: 53). Living within a commodity culture (Fiske, 1989: 5) means that almost everything is a commodity. However, material commodities are more easily consumed than intangible ones, especially if we take into consideration that a globalized culture (if it indeed exists) is superficially embedded into local societies which assimilate these practices to varying degrees.

The class struggle in capitalist societies includes a battle over meaning (Bakhtin, 2008: 230). Each class attempts to impose its preferred meaning about specific subjects, objects, and incidents, etc. These preferred meanings derive from its own way of life. But some classes, the so-called dominant classes, also use financial, social and other forms of capital (in addition to material means) to facilitate their attempt to impose the meanings they prefer. Therefore, Fiske (1989: 1; 1997: 116) argues that culture (the aforementioned “constant process of producing meanings”) is ideological, as each class promotes its own cultural and social practices which are the result of its ideological preference. The media are an example of those means as they are usually owned by powerful conglomerates (Thussu, 2008: 2-3).

By building an identity, the individual is integrated into the social structure. The structure consists of many specific parts and the meanings produced for them need to be shared via representations to be accepted or rejected by the individual. As a result, the struggle over the popularity of meanings is constant. Popular culture is based on “the experiences, the pleasures, the memories, the traditions of the people” (Hall, 2010: 405; 2019a: 215; 2019b: 87). The media mediate between individuals and their experiences. They reproduce meanings, and making meanings coincides with making culture. Highmore (2016:119) believes that there is a reality out there and that culture—that is the meaning making process—describes how people deal with this reality.

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Despite living in a world where the dominant classes establish their own meanings, a person's identity is still something unique (Ross, 2019: 10). A single culture can produce a huge number of different identities. By mediating meaning in an increasingly globalized world, the media remains a crucial factor in identity formation, as they provide various suggestions that an individual can accept or reject. (Tsagarousianou & Retis, 2019: 4). Laclau & Mouffe (1985: 105) use the term articulation, which is useful for describing the relationship between media and identity formation. "Any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" is thought as an articulation. Articulation as a process crystalize an identity which is expressed in the form of discourse. Articulation is a concept that allows us to understand how even heterogeneous practices or elements can be stitched together (McRobbie, 2005: 22; Hall, 2019a: 389). Identity lies at the crossroads where the discourse meets the processes which crystallize individuals as subjects (Hall, 2019a; 2019b; Ross, 2019: 24). The media also provide a locus where the two aforementioned activities take place, while new media contribute to the compression of time and space (Keles, 2019: 329), which furthers the alternative choices for the individuals, even if these alternative elements of culture flow unequally (Hylland Eriksen, 2019: 53).

Culture, considered either as an a priori active force or as a result of other forces, is "a term built around conflict and confusion" (Highmore, 2016: 158). Ross (2019: 283), in order to describe

the constant adjustments of a person's identity, invokes the concept of the palimpsest identity, proposed by Balescu (2009): each person has a current cultural identity which has been written over other pre-existing forms of it. In a commodity culture (Fiske, 1989: 5), the culture itself becomes a product, whereas "the market has become a substitute for itself" (Jameson, 1991: x). The media also serve as a locus, among others, where this market is accessible. However, each social group may buy this kind of commodity from a different shop. For example, immigrants tend to consume culture via different media compared to indigenous people. The media, either transnational or local, shape how immigrants think about reality, as well as how indigenous people think about immigrants (Keles, 2019: 332-333). Ross (2019: 110-115) also refers to the case of Roma, a minority group often stigmatized by the media, despite the different cultures, traditions and behaviors that its subgroups have. The media tend to actively reproduce meanings, as well as culture. Van Dijk (1993: 241) blames the media for reproducing stereotypes and prejudices that lead to a reproduction of racism.

Section 2.4: Cultural identities and politics

The term culture, even when used in the context of cultural studies, is a political term at its roots (Fiske, 1997: 115, Storey, 1997: 2). Culture produces identities including political-ideological identities. But is political-ideological identity a cultural

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product? The answer is both yes and no. Culture is articulated through the effects of a struggle between various ideologies. Therefore, although culture shapes political identities, it is a priori politicized at its core by the aforementioned ideological struggle. An ideology is a central component of the individual's political identity (Adams, 1985: 62). Political identity is a complex and contested scientific field, especially as political identities are constantly changing under the conditions of a liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000; Ross, 2019: 1-2).

In the previous section, culture was described as the meaning-making process. Ideology functions as a system which produces answers coherently based on a rational way of thinking. According to Hall (2019b: 43) coherence is the first of the two "distinct floors" of ideology. The second floor is 'common sense' — the dominant ideology has the privilege to produce answers that seem natural to the subjects (Eagleton, 1991).

This section has described two political aspects of culture: Culture as producing political identities and culture being produced by ideology. Both descriptions come from a Marxist perspective. The former is influenced by Gramsci, while the latter relies more on Marx.

Going forward, we focus on the Gramscian, as we are more interested in describing how culture functions as a generator of political identities. As Bennett (1997: 309) argues, the Gramscian notion of cultural studies is also twofold. On the one hand,

Gramsci attempted to pave the way for a culture producing subjects resistant to various forms of power. On the other hand, he emphasized the need of a unified, collective political force—to perform in opposition to a power bloc—formulated by a mosaic of ideas (Fiske, 1989: 8). This need for hegemony is a process similar to that of articulation, proposed by Laclau & Mouffe (1985), half a century after Gramsci's death.

These potential characteristics of culture have been also employed by the dominant classes. As an example, Hall (2019a; 2019b) underlines that Margaret Thatcher was an authoritative and populist politician, who implemented Gramscian strategies to manufacture consent. Fiske (1989: 9) says that Gramscian hegemony allows "the dominant to construct the subjectivities of the subordinate and the common sense of society in their own interests", as the dominant enjoys the privilege of manufacturing consent (Herman & Chomsky, 1994) through promoting their own meanings of social relations. Nevertheless, Hall (2019b: 79) warns that hegemony does not mean the disappearance or the disarmament of different ideas.

Two subcultures related to the concept of hegemony, are the popular and the national culture. Those cultures used to be dominant in modern societies. Concerning popular culture, it is a necessary locus where political transformation can happen (Gramsci, 1992; McRobbie, 2005: 8). According to Highmore (2016: 3-30), the most prominent meaning of culture is a "way of life". By theorizing culture as such, it

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means that a subject experiences culture as something trivial, normal and natural. The appearance of culture as something natural happens due to this process, which “generates culture as culture (as a way of life)”. Television news, for example, is a trivial television program which entertains as well as it informs people. In parallel, media representations provide certain depictions of reality and news programs promote them as inherent characteristics of cultural and political life, as long as they meet the criteria set by the mid-level culture and social responsibility. Nowadays, news media consumption is a prerequisite for taking part to a contemporary democracy (Fiske, 1989: 149-191; Ross, 2019: 171).

Concerning national culture, it was used as a key-element for the expansion of industrialization as well as for the dissemination of the main ideas of modernity. National cultures produce identities by promoting meanings that have the nation as their centrifugal force. This kind of culture, although it seems heavily politicized, also remains a central factor in constructing cultural identities. Hall (2010: 443) insisted that national identities retain, more or less, their power in contemporary societies.

Section 2.5: Summary

The relationships between culture and politics are characterized by three main aspects (Johnson 1997:76), which show how Marx influenced the field of cultural studies. First, culture is a result of social relations. Second, culture is also a product of pow-

er and ideology which dictates how subjects experience their existence, their needs and their social position as selves. And third, culture is the element of the superstructure where social differences and struggles take place with hegemony at stake.

Questions of Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises, or other Activities

Name an example of a modern cultural industry. What criticism does it face?

How do digital media affect the production and distribution of cultural products?

Discuss the ways ideology is constructed and deconstructed through contemporary mass/pop culture.

In 2016, a remake of the classic *Ghostbusters* (1984) movie was released. In the remake version, an all-female protagonist cast was chosen and the only male leading role was the secretary of the group — a complete reversal (gender-swap) from the 1984 movie. The movie received backlash due to this choice. This debate tied into the culture wars surrounding the 2016 US presidential election and the following years. Based on *Ghostbusters* and similar cases, discuss the intersection of political and cultural identities in contemporary culture wars.

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“I express the man of today who bears the memory of all who have gone before”

By Alekos Fassianos (1935-2022), Greek painter



Alekos Fassianos, Eole, 2003

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Aim

The aim of this chapter is to theorize the concept of trauma as both individual and collective, and to describe the role of media in transmitting trauma from the individual to the collective level. Cultures are shaped by traumatic events and experiences. These traumas are experienced individually, collectively and intergenerationally.

Expected Learning outcomes

To gain a general understanding of the concept of trauma and the relationship between personal and collective/cultural trauma

To gain a deep understanding of the ways traumatic experiences are inscribed within cultural practices and are transmitted intergenerationally

To conceptualize the ways contemporary risk society causes traumatic events

Keywords

Collective trauma, Cultural trauma, intergenerational trauma, risk society

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Section 3.1: Introduction

Trauma theory emerged after the end of World War II and, along with subsequent studies, has been recognized as an academic corpus since the early '90s. These studies demonstrate the various social, political and economic consequences that follow the manifestation of a trauma (Coté & Simpson, 2006: 5, Craps, 2014: 45). A traumatic event generates problems that need to be solved either individually or collectively. These problems are real, even if they are based on social structures (La-Capra, 2014: 23).

According to Eaglestone (2014: 12), trauma theory attempts to study and address “the representation of human suffering and ‘wounding’, both literal and metaphorical, both personal and communal.” It combines interdisciplinary definitions and classifies trauma into different categories. Jeffrey C. Alexander, a sociologist at Yale University, a pioneer of trauma theory, evinced that an event only when is conceived as a trauma by the public opinion or collectivities can be also culturally reproduced and represented (Alexander, 2004: 1). This chapter adopts this perspective by emphasizing that a culture’s character is fundamentally shaped by traumatic events (Ataria, 2017: 1).

A trauma is an experience that disorganizes, disrupts permanently or temporarily, the life of an individual or a group (Brothers, 2008: 45). Traumatic experiences are a frequent phenomenon, experienced by an estimated 40 to 80 percent of

populations (Coté & Simpson, 2006: 5). The concept “is used to describe responses to extreme events across space and time, as well as to guide their treatment” (Craps, 2014: 48). In contemporary society, these extreme events could concern political terrorism, massacres, wars, police violence, catastrophes, environmental risks, immigration, consequences of economic crises, fatal accidents and personal experiences of minor sociological importance.

Section 3.2: Cultural and historical context

Although trauma seems to be an immanent feature of humanity, its historical extent begins with modernity, when mass society enabled collective experiences. According to Kaplan (2005: 24), trauma lies among the basic experiences of the 20th century, when two world wars, and the catastrophic events they caused, produced multiple traumas and, in parallel, a mixture of imperialism, consumerism and fascism was shaping modernity. The mass societies of the late 19th century facilitated trauma transmission from body to psyche and created the concept of psychological wounds, despite the fact that “people may have suffered from trauma throughout history” (Pinchevski, 2015: 3).

Trauma should be also framed in a political context. Trauma, especially when it is experienced collectively, is an important factor that shapes contemporary power relations. Traumatic events create a collective protective shield that delineates a border, past which an event is considered traumatic

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(Craps, 2014; Vermeulen, 2014: 141; Kaplan, 2015: 24). This function of trauma is a matter of power.

Trauma should be also understood in its cultural context. Traumatic experiences shape culture, which is reproduced through representations of trauma. Hamburger (2020: 5) argues that the term social trauma could be used for bridging several definitions of trauma as it emphasizes the common sociological aspects of those definitions. Therefore, he divides social trauma into three narrower fields: historical trauma, cultural trauma, and collective trauma.

Historical trauma is a term that focuses on political communities witnessing events and experiences, and also having an “ongoing struggle” over their representation (Meek, 2010: 1, 73). Attempting to point out the difference between cultural and historical trauma, which is delicate and almost indistinguishable (Hamburger, 2020: 5), it can be said that the historical perspective focuses on events of the past. Eyerman (2020: 37) defines cultural trauma as a field that studies “how collective suffering is meaningfully manifested through the processes of articulation and representation and the mediating factors of power and access”.

Regarding psychology, trauma is an invisible, long-lasting, devastating and life-altering wound that transforms an individual’s identity (Coté & Simpson, 2006: 8, 22; Ataria, 2017: 163-164). A trauma injures individuals in different ways and degrees. Trauma’s consequences include existential uncer-

tainty, a threatening disorder, and a world that will not be the same again (Brothers, 2008: 46-47). On the other hand, trauma is clinically conceived by the symptoms it causes to individuals, “such as nightmares, phobias, hallucinations, panic attacks” (Kaplan, 2015: 24). A traumatic experience may lead to both/either physical and/or emotional trauma. The former is related to the body, while the latter concerns the soul.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach — when connected to mass society, an individual’s trauma is experienced collectively and intergenerationally. This historical context presents media as the technology necessary for the existence of cultural trauma. Therefore, trauma should be also interpreted as a media-friendly concept. The following chapters examine the connection between media and trauma.

Section 3.3: Collective consciousness

The cultural dimension of trauma lies in people’s emotional needs and behaviors. In contemporary societies, trauma can be experienced collectively. The aim of this section is to present trauma as a dynamic feature that shapes a people’s culture. Trauma is the connective tissue that strengthens the sense of belonging in a community, transforming the collective memory and the cultural identity of this community (Attaria, 2017: 1, Demertzis & Roudometof, 2011: 12). However, before we proceed to collective trauma, there is a need to distinguish it from cultural trauma. But this is not an easy task:

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cultural trauma is connected with collective trauma, as well as with the aforementioned historical trauma.

According to Alexander (2003: 85), cultural trauma emerges when the members of a community, or even a smaller group, “feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways”. On the other hand, collective trauma is an older term, presented in the late 70’s (Eyerman, 2020: 39). Alexander & Breese (2013) define collective traumas as “reflections neither of individual sufferings or actual events, but symbolic renderings that reconstruct and imagine them in a relatively independent way.” To sum up, cultural trauma is an emotional feeling, while collective trauma is a reflection of symbolic representations. Between them, collective trauma is the more mediated one, if not a consequence of a cultural trauma. As a result, collective traumas are often referred to cultural traumas (Eriksson, 2016: 366).

One way to better understand the classifications, is to discern personal from communal trauma. Demertzis & Roudometof (2011: 12-14) analyze three major differences between the two terms. Personal trauma is a personal wound to the soul, which is experienced individually, is composed of internal mechanisms, and is connected with a specific event directly. Cultural trauma has not necessarily been experienced by each member of a community, is a

result of explicit, verbal mechanisms that confirm an event as traumatic and is referred to a specific event, which has been constructed as traumatic. On the other hand a natural disaster comprises a collective trauma for the residents of the affected areas.

Therefore, cultural trauma, as well as collective trauma, emerge through articulations and representations that take place via mediation. Trauma theory studies these articulations and representations from the perspective of collective suffering. Trauma, in order to be confirmed as a cultural trauma, depends on several factors that function as preconditions of setting a trauma. These factors are (Eyerman, 2020: 37-39):

- i) the timing of the incident,
- ii) the surrounding political context,
- iii) how authority performed,
- iv) the content of media representations,
- v) the presence, power, and performance of carrier groups.

Section 3.4: The relationship between personal and collective traumas

When a traumatic event is used for strengthening a nation’s public narratives, its impact is managed and the produced representations are a matter of politics (Kaplan, 2005: 66). When a devastating ex-

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perience exceeds its individual limits and is reproduced in the public sphere through interpretations and representations, it becomes socially accepted and comprises a collective trauma (Demertzis & Roudometof, 2011: 7-9). This mediating role of interpretation and narrative means that “traumas are made, not born” (Eyerman, 2020: 38).

However, even when a trauma is experienced individually, it still has a social impact. Traumas are often related to wider social situations. The consequent perception management determines

whether the trauma will be presented in a wider frame or not. Several aspects of journalistic work fall into this struggle. Photojournalists, journalists on migration, and anyone that covers a traumatic event is exposed to the danger of being traumatized (Coté & Simpson, 2006: 42; Craps, 2014: 50; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2019: 312). These examples concern experiencing another person’s trauma live. What about experiencing it from afar?

Earlier, the historical context of trauma was set in modernity, despite the fact that everyone in the

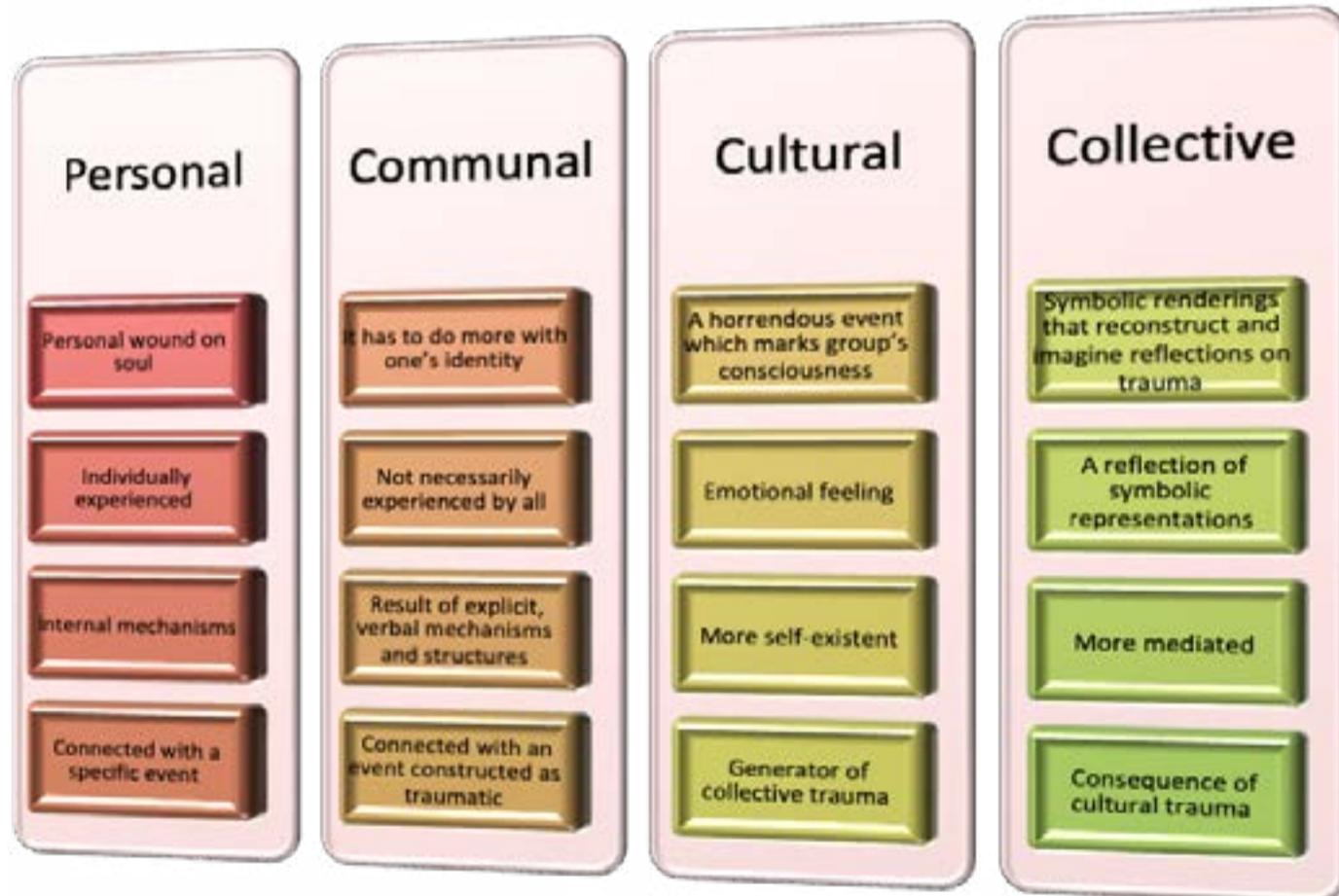


Figure 4. Categorizations of trauma

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history of humanity could be a victim. Indeed, mass society, especially its latest audiovisual products, has intensified “witnessing the pain of others from afar” (Pinchevski, 2012: 147; 2015: 18-19). The mediation of such experiences and the way that their consequences are shared in a community smooth the ground for many terms of social theory of trauma such as vicarious traumatization, distant trauma, and virtual trauma. Meek (2010: 172, 195), in spite of recognizing a transmission model of trauma that describes visual media as “able to directly convey a traumatic experience to a viewer,” suggests a more moderate-term, virtual trauma, in order to reveal a complicated set of factors that mediate between traumatic experiences and community.

Section 3.5: Intergenerational Trauma

Cultural trauma is tied to a loss of meaning and identity, resulting from a rupture in the social cohesion of a group or a nation (Stamm et al., 2004). Cultural trauma usually has a lasting effect on the collective consciousness and is transmitted through cultural mechanisms. In that sense, cultural trauma tends to be an intergenerational trauma as its effects are not restricted within a specific generational cohort. This is most pertinent in the case of refugees whose descendants are born in diaspora and face identity conflict, often exacerbated by anti-refugee policies that hinder the integration of children in the host country (Aranda et al., 2015).

“Intergenerational trauma generally refers to the

ways in which trauma experienced in one generation affects the health and well-being of descendants of future generations. Negative effects can include a range of psychiatric symptoms as well as greater vulnerability to stress” (Sangalang & Vang, 2017: 745). These effects have been studied extensively, as they cover a wide range of contemporary experiences connected to post-colonial psychology (Duran & Duran, 1995; Stamm et al. 2004: 93) such as the formation of the African American identity (Eyerman, 2002) and the collective trauma of Holocaust survivors and their descendants. In those cases and many more, trauma has been transmitted from one generation to the next “through a shared belief system that is held by the parent, the family, or even the culture” (Stamm et al., 2004: 93). A traumatic event that is not dealt with can have lasting consequences as it can “cause shifts, disruptions and disturbances in the group’s cultural identity” (Aydin, 2017: 128). A meta-analysis of twenty studies on Holocaust survivors and their families, indicated “an increased risk of adverse psychological outcomes for the next generation” (Sangalang & Vang, 2017: 753). Research on offspring of Holocaust survivors reported “a lower general positive mood.” Researchers additionally hypothesized that the cause of this is the “disengagement shown from their parents” (Weinberg & Cummins, 2013: 157). While this aspect cannot be overlooked, the theorizing of intergenerational trauma in terms of culture and cultural transmission is also necessary. Persons who have suffered traumatic events often conceptualize the traumatic experience in a depersonalized way, understanding that they have

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been “targeted because of their allegiance to their particular cultural group” (Johnson, et al., 2009: 413). As a result of this, cultural identity is strengthened and at the same time, the traumatic experience becomes inscribed within it. Through cultural practices, rituals, and institutions (mass media included), trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next and becomes part of collective memory.

Traumatic experiences that have been inscribed within a collective consciousness cannot be erased nor can they be avoided/ignored. It should be noted that this process is not a hurdle in the effort to cope with trauma. On the contrary, culture becomes part of a coping strategy that aims to overcome a traumatic event, e.g., a violent persecution that led to the forced migration of a group (Mahmoudi, 1992). As Aydin notes “characteristic of customs... is their automatic routines of behavior that are regularly repeated. By repeating it in a proper setting, the traumatic event is remembered and given the required significance... it is remembered and forgotten at the same time” (Aydin, 2017: 134). By incorporating a traumatic experience within a culture and within cultural practices, a process of collective processing and interpreting of said trauma can begin. These ways of coping are also transmitted intergenerationally and are significant factors of social cohesion, as is the case for refugee populations (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011).

Section 3.6: Traumas in the age of risk society

Ulrich Beck defines risk as “a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself” (Beck, 1992: 21). Modernization—industrialization, urbanization and the widespread commodification of labour and its products—requires constant calculation of risks and opportunities. The development of new technologies, the operation of state bureaucracies, the highly antagonistic world of trade and commerce, necessarily involve risks and hazards. However, as Beck (1992) argues, modernity has reached a stage where new technological developments shape the productive forces and the destructive capabilities of mankind in such a way that “the calculation of risk as it has been established so far by science and legal institutions collapses” (Beck, 1992: 22). In that sense, “in the risk society, the unknown and unintended consequences come to be a dominant force in history and society” (Beck, 1992: 22). In a risk society, a feeling of insecurity tends to dominate the collective consciousness. In late modern societies, the prevalence of the incalculability of risks is tied to the emergence of a globalized setting. Thus, Beck speaks of a “world risk society” (1992: 23, 1999) and poses questions addressing threats to the sovereignty of the nation-state, the importance of citizenship, and the (in)ability of contemporary nation-states and their citizens to protect their interests in the global market.

Beck’s theory allows us to conceptualize the con-

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flict between mobile capital and immobile, territorially fixed political entities and the consequences that arise for established institutions of modernity (Jarvis, 2008). The concept of risk society lays the foundation for an examination of trauma in the modern age. Ecological disasters, modern hybrid warfare, and economic insecurity are highlighted as aspects of the world risk society, where individuals and social groups experience diminished control over their environment. Bauman (2007) has also delved deeply into the idea of uncertainty by emphasizing the importance of the erosion of the welfare state and the individualization of solutions to social problems. As nation-states and the institutions of civil society fail to provide a sense of security, “the messages addressed from the sites of political power present ‘more flexibility as the sole cure for an already unbearable insecurity - and so paint the prospect of yet more uncertainty, yet more privatization of troubles’” (Bauman, 2007: 14).

This constant sense of insecurity combined with the dismantlement of social safety nets can be experienced as collective trauma, especially in developed countries of the so-called “Global North”. On the other hand, developing countries (the “Global South”) face the challenges of risk society in their own way. The majority of migrants (72%) originate from the Global South (World Bank, 2017 referenced in Wise, 2019) and this tendency can only be explained within the broader historical context.

On the one hand, the transformation of former rural societies is developing within the existing

power asymmetry, where powerful firms dictate the process of industrialization in a large part of the world (Wise & Covarrubias, 2007). At the same time, as unemployment is on the rise, cheap labor is exported from these countries and is moving towards the former industrial centers of the world. The formation of a mobile, global reserve labour army is tied to the internationalization of the economy and significant shifts in production, especially in the manufacturing sector (Foster & McChesney, 2012). Refugee and immigrant populations are exposed to traumatic events, as they simultaneously experience a loss of material possessions and of identity. This is often the case with economic migration which exists in a grey zone (as neither voluntary nor forced per se). As Wise (2019: 13) notes, “peasants deprived of land, unemployed or poorly paid workers, youths with no employment prospects, professionals without access to social mobility” form a mobile labour force that seeks to survive and, if possible, attain a better standard of living.

A significant increase in forced migration has ensued from 1969 onward (Schmeidl & Jenkins, 2003) which brings to the fore the traumatic experiences of a de-territorialized populations that flee political unrest, modern warfare and political/cultural persecution. According to migrationdataportal.org, in 2019, the countries with the highest count of refugees were Syria (6.6 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), and South Sudan (2.2 million). Moreover, according to the UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, in mid-2020, the number of people forced to leave their homes surpassed 80 million.

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among them, there are “29.6 million refugees and others forcibly displaced outside their country, and 4.2 million asylum seekers”.

Contemporary warfare may not result in widespread, global conflicts like the two World Wars in the first half of the 20th century. However, a number of changes in the way war is conducted have resulted in a shifting ratio of military to civilian deaths (Epps, 2013). In a speech given in 2015 by Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the notion of “wars without limits-wars without end” was emphasized in order to describe the nature of the armed conflicts in Middle East and especially in Syria and Iraq¹. Contemporary warfare tends to spill across borders and is not organized along strict combat lines (in contrast, e.g., with WWI). Moreover, the distinction between combatant and civilian tends to blur in the case of asymmetric wars, where conflicting sides employ unconventional methods, often aiming to actively involve civilians in armed conflict. Covert attempts to destabilize the state authorities of the enemy side, involvement of not-state actors (ISIS exemplifies this), proxy wars, are all parts of this process. Warfare is becoming a hybrid, constantly changing phenomenon, even more dangerous to civilians than it was. In that sense, traumatic events in the age of risk society often emerge from armed conflict, albeit in radically different ways than the 20th century.

Section 3.7: Summary

Traumas are an integral part of being human. We often associate traumas with personal experiences. However, major historical events have been known to cause collective traumas with distinct features that differentiate them from personal ones. Collective traumas become integrated within culture and are often linked with national narratives and nation-building processes, as well as with the sense of belonging to a group. Traumatic events inscribed within collective consciousness can be transmitted intergenerationally and their effects may linger through time. In that sense, traumatic events can attain a historical-collective status and may become interwoven with cultural identities, strengthening them in the process. Contemporary risk societies present a new setting for the development of traumatic experiences. Rising economic uncertainty, combined with new dangers (climate change, modern asymmetric warfare), render feelings of anxiety widespread. Moreover, a social context is created where new traumatic events are experienced, forced migration being an important one that is constantly on the rise the past four decades.

1 <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/wars-without-limits-are-wars-without-end>

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Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Watch the film "Son of Saul" (László Nemes, 2015) and indicate how the protagonist experiences his personal trauma, while the viewer experiences the cultural one. Compare the two kinds of trauma by locating specific elements in the film.

Climate change is often subjected to temporal transpositions. Do you think that a forthcoming experience of a climate-change-related trauma could lead people to change their attitudes about climate change, even if it is going to happen to a distant place?

In the film "Cloudy Sunday" (Manousos Manousakis, 2015) local racists of Thessaloniki throw Jewish businessmen out of their shops and take hold of them. However, this practice has not been widely recognised in Greece. Why do you think that a trauma like this has been delimited to personal experiences and has not been associated with the dominant narratives about the Holocaust?

What cultural traumas do you think that have shaped the society you live in? Could you recognize them historically?

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“There is nothing so confining as the prisons of our own perceptions”

By William Shakspeare, an English playwright, poet and actor.



Source: Stock snaps

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Aim

This chapter presents the ways that trauma is represented in mass media and the effect these representations have on traumatized persons and groups

Expected Learning Outcomes

To gain a basic understanding of the concept of mediatization and the importance of media in contemporary societies

To gain a deep understanding of media representations of trauma and the ways they are developed and framed

To gain an understanding of the effect of media representations on the ways persons and groups process traumatic events

Keywords

Trauma, mediatization, media representations, media practices, media representations

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Section 4.1: Introduction

This chapter analyses how the mediatization of traumas take place in contemporary mass society. First, the mediatization theory is described as a concept and a process at the same time by examining the existing bibliography of media theories. Second, this chapter attempts to embed the way that media portray traumatic experiences and how media transmit these representations both nationally and intergenerationally. Third, to present why media effects lie at the heart of this attempt, by echoing a notion of how people interpret and adopt dominant views about current or historical traumas.

This chapter contributes to the curriculum in writing by describing an important process which explains how media make people think about the issues they cover. Those issues concern either written or audiovisual communication. A set of social and cultural factors goes in for the trauma construction. In the past, a constructivist framework has been adopted by most scholars despite the fact that cultural trauma encompasses many scientific fields such as models of communication, representation theories, psychosociology, cultural studies, clinical psychology etc. (Hamburger, 2020). As discussed above, cultural trauma is simultaneously a social and a collective trauma.

Social constructivism argues that social structures affect how people learn and has built its own tradition in the field of education. It emphasizes the

active cognitive processes developed by individuals in order to decode scientific, media and learning content. Bertucci, Hayes and James (2018: 3) define constructivism as a social analysis approach based on three elements. First, it highlights “ideational factors” in explaining social interactions. Second, “it asserts that the most ideational relevant factors are shared.” Third, it emphasizes the way those ideational factors “construct the interests and identities of actors.” However, constructivism has been blamed for justifying inequalities, oppression and exploitation (Fuchs, 2020: 45), as it offers organizational schemas for interpreting and evaluating reality undermining the relations of production that underpin and shape social constructions.

According to Strömbäck (2008: 228-229), “The media have become the most important source of information for most people in advanced democracies around the world.” The impact of television and new media in constructing reality has been under deep investigation during the last six decades. Study of mediatization has often focused on the way media affect politics. However, political transformations are part of a larger process, as media plays an increasing role in contemporary societies which are often described as “information societies,” “knowledge societies,” “the global village” and so on. As a result, mediatized politics should be understood as a wider set of concepts and processes including various aspects of daily life, as well as economic, social and cultural perspectives.

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Section 4.2: Mediatization theory

Mediatization is a concept that seems etymologically similar to the term mediation. Although their meanings are both related to media theory, it should be noted that they describe two different, albeit interconnected, processes. When they refer to politics, they describe distinct processes (Strömback, 2008: 230). Before defining mediatization, this section collocates arguments that function as a first step toward understanding it.

Media bridge the gap between individual and political life. They comprise a structure that accomplishes a connection between citizens and politics (Papathanassopoulos, Karadimitriou & Giannouli, 2014: 89).

The term mediation has developed within the historical context of the rise of modernity. Mediation implies that media organization, serving as a bridge, play no particular role in the content of politics and on the relationships between the political system and the citizens. As it is obvious, this has not been the case as the intermediary position of mediators involved constant struggle over the terms of mediation.

This connection between the media and the political system is a wish and a curse for democracy at the same time. A wish because it forms a virtual space for discussion on political, economic, social and cultural issues. A curse because powerful factors fling themselves into power games in order to acquire the salience of their interests. As Chomsky

(2003: 4) puts it, “Controlling the general population has always been a dominant concern of power and privilege particularly since the first modern democratic revolution in seventeenth-century England.”

A useful term in order to understand better this struggle is instrumentalization of media. Hallin & Mancini (2004: 37) use this term to describe the “control of the media by outside actors- parties, politicians, social groups or movements, or economic actors seeking political influence- who use them to intervene in the world of politics.” They suggest this instrumentalization of media as the opposite term of professionalization of media and they divide it into two categories – political instrumentalization and commercial instrumentalization. The first one is more related to political power, while the latter to economic power. However, Hallin & Mancini (2004: 37) also refer to an existing opinion that commercial instrumentalization is the façade of political instrumentalization.

According to Luis Althusser media is an ideological state apparatus. Althusser (2014: 77) describes a set of structures (institutions, organizations and their practices) that support the dominant ideology of the state which he calls ideological state apparatuses. Those structures are different and discernible, but they have the same ultimate goal: they are assigned to reproduce the dominant ideology. In addition to the media, Althusser (2014: 75) enumerates seven other related apparatuses: scholastic, familial, religious, associative, cultural, juridical and political. The political state apparatus is the second

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one — along with media ¾ that concerns our essay. The instrumentalization of media comprises the crossroads where the political apparatus meets the media and their common ultimate goal (dominant ideology's reproduction) is expressed.

representations, while in other media systems the political logic is the one that affects media practices and representations.

In contemporary societies, more often than not, media systems are able to invert the terms of this

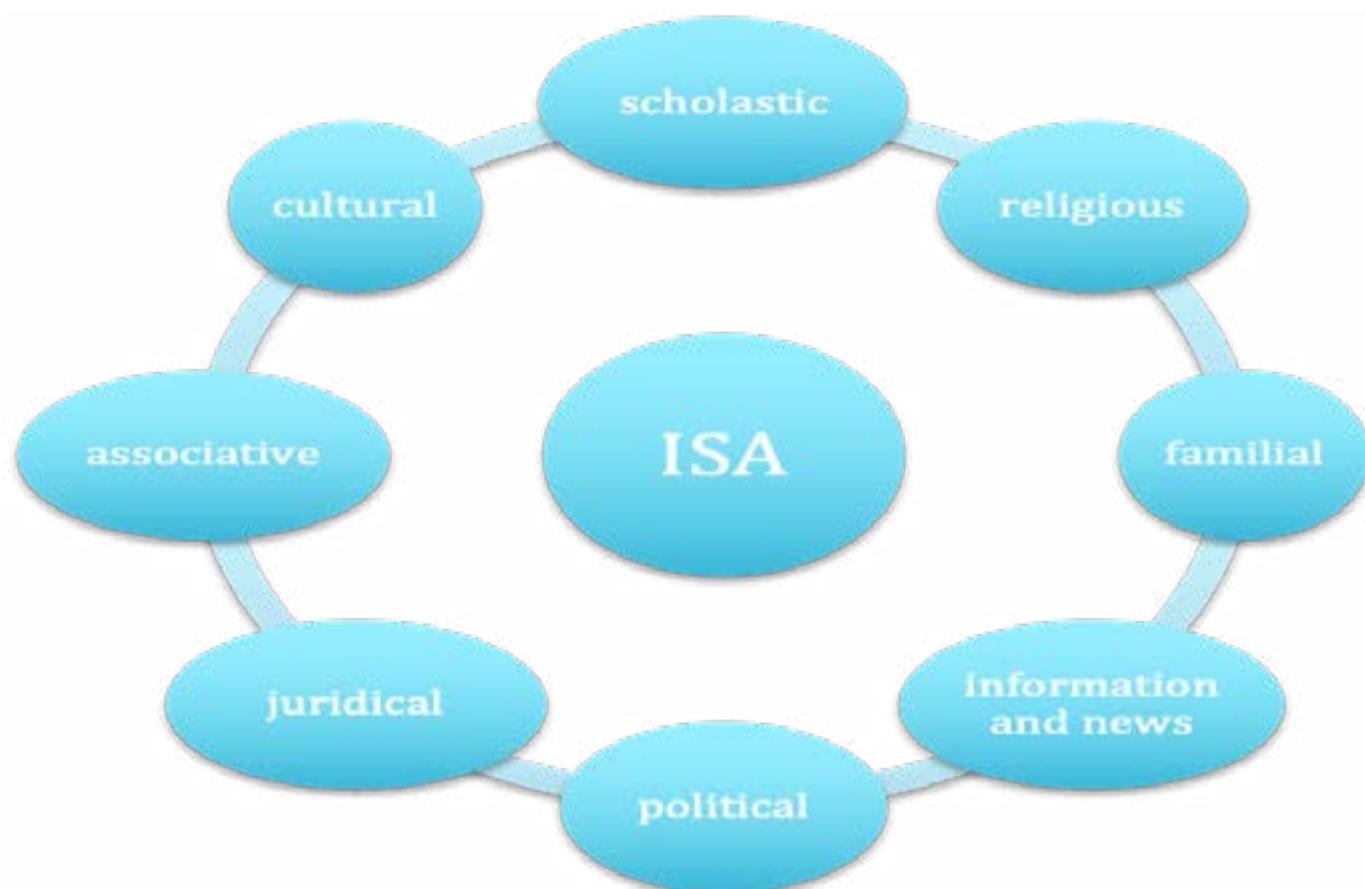


Figure 5. The ideological state apparatuses according to Althusser (2014: 75)

However, even when they attempt to achieve the same goal, their contribution to it is different both qualitatively and quantitatively. Hallin and Mancini (2004: 253) believe that in some media systems the logic of the media affects political practices and

relationship and reshape the political system. Altheide and Snow had conceptualized the radical changes at hand and described their seminal work on media as an “analysis of social institutions-transformed-through-media” (Altheide & Snow, 1979: 7). They understood that the media’s impact on society is organic and all-embracing and cannot be limited to the effects of a certain type of

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content. Later on developments in the media sector as well as the political sphere, corroborated their views. The rise of commercial television strengthened this process: the demand for short political statements (sound bites), the orchestration of electoral campaigns in order to fit the requirements of tv news bulletins, personalization of public issues, the convergence between political and commercial advertising are all manifestations of the growing impact of media on the political sphere. Meyer & Hinchman (2002) speak of a “colonization of politics” by the media and express their concerns for the quality of political debate that approaches its audience as tv viewers instead of informed citizens. Edelman (1988) formulates a different approach, noting that the symbiotic relationship between media and political elites is not dissolved but rather is restructured under the prevalence of the “political spectacle”.

What is undisputable is that in the context of a commodified media environment where the logic of the spectacle (Kellner, 2003) is the dominant one, the term mediatization is significant as it attempts to describe the changing dynamic between media and politics. Mediatization happens to the highest degree where political practices and representations are affected, impregnated, or dictated by the media’s logic. It is obvious that mediatization has to do with media transformations as well as with major transformations of public life. The term is defined as a process where the media shape and frame the practices and discourse of “political communication as well as the society in which that

communication takes place” (Lilleker, 2006: 117).

Strömbäck (2008: 234) conceptualizes the mediatization of politics as a mixture consisting of four elements in different quantities. These elements are:

the degree to which the media dominate informing the public on politics and society

the degree to which the media remain independent from the political system

the degree to which media content is a result either of a political logic or of a media logic

the degree to which political actors and their behavior are dictated by a political logic or by media.

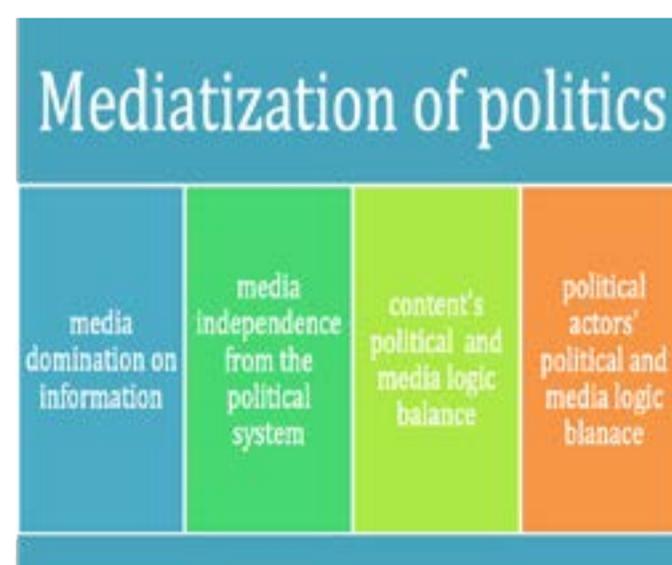


Figure 6. Variables that determinate the level of the mediatization of politics

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On the other hand, according to the same author (Strömbäck, 2008: 230-236), mediation, although is an older concept than mediatization, should be interpreted as a minor process belonging to the wider one of mediatization: “The first phase of mediatization corresponds to the concept of mediated politics.”

While mediatization first referred to transformations in political communication, it has developed into a more comprehensive term. Hjarvard (2008) notes the development and expansion of the notion of mediatization as it has come to refer to a number of mediated interactions in which media logic shapes public perception of politics, scientific developments, and culture. Discussing the notion of “hyperreality”, developed by Baudrillard and linking it to the effects of digital technologies, Hjarvard (2008: 111) describes mediatization in the post-modern, digital era as “an expansion of the opportunities for interaction in virtual spaces and a differentiation of what people perceive to be real. By the same token, distinctions like that between global and local become much more differentiated as the media expand our contact with events and phenomena in what were once ‘faraway places.’”

Section 4.3 Media practices and trauma

The past two decades have witnessed a significant growth of research on the association between media use and trauma. As media use is gradually becoming more important among the cultural

practices of contemporary societies, the question has been posed: does media exacerbate the effects of a traumatic experience or can it be considered a part of the process of coping with trauma? So far, there is an ambivalence within the existing literature. Research on residents of Manhattan post-9/11 found that exposure to television images of the terrorist attacks was linked to higher prevalence of PTSD and depression (Ahern et al., 2002). More specifically, this connection applied only to people directly affected by the attacks (e.g., were injured or had a relative and/or friend who was killed) and not to people that lived in Manhattan during 9/11. In the former category, the connection manifested proportionally: the more they were exposed to television images of the attacks, the more prevalent was PTSD and depression (Ahern, et al., 2002: 295). Exposure to media content after a disaster may drive the survivors to relive a traumatic experience, hindering thusly the healing process. However, a positive effect of media use cannot be a priori excluded. Research on the Typhoon Hato in Macao, China highlighted a different association: the type of images consumed by residents of Macao, shaped the way they were affected. This research reiterated previous findings by noting that media content that depicts “home damage, life-threatening events... lack of necessities were all significant correlates of PTSD” (Hall et al., 2019: 8). However, it also found that there are potential positive effects of media use when the content entails information related to the disaster and images of “people being heroic” (Hall et al., 2019: 8-9).

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The rise of social media that enables users to create and transmit their own content, poses new issues. Research on Facebook use by survivors of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, found a collective coping process that was facilitated by social media. People informed friends and relatives that they survived and, perhaps more importantly, engaged in a network of emotional support, exchanging content on the disaster, and narrating their own hardships (Tandoc & Takahashi, 2017: 1787-1788). In that way, they were able to regain control, interpret the problems they were facing and utilize communal resources in overcoming a traumatic event. The abovementioned case serves to remind us that dealing with trauma is a societal issue. Even when we are discussing the way specific individuals cope with a traumatic experience, their efforts are mediated by collective practices and are embedded with networks that relate to culture.

This is especially important in understanding cultural trauma, which, by its nature, is collective and is connected to the way individuals and social groups narrate their lives and construct their identities. In order for a cultural trauma to be recognized, symbolically processed and sublimated (Aydin, 2017: 133), media use is necessary. Through media, communities are built and renewed, social groups and individuals make sense of their lives and understand how personal experiences are but a part of a collective feeling. In the case of undocumented immigrants, where the cultural trauma of being rejected by the host country is expressed as a double consciousness (Aranda et al., 2015: 611-

612), media use is an important part of building communities of the marginalized and coping with the consequences of exclusion.

Section 4.4 Media depictions of trauma

As we have already discussed, the way the media represents a traumatic event may affect the well-being of traumatized persons and social groups. In the age of infotainment, the logic of spectacle often informs the way complex issues are represented in the news (Kellner, 2003). Thus, there is a danger that traumatic events will be depicted in a way that highlights aspects that draw the attention of the audience. Human suffering, in any form, is useful in the effort to attract more clicks or boost the ratings of the news. What type of coverage could facilitate the process of coping with trauma instead of hindering it?

Research on the framing of PTSD of war veterans in newspapers, highlighted the importance of the thematic vs episodic framing (Wu, 2017). As Iyengar has noted in his seminal work (1991), thematic framing tends to situate an issue within a broader social-political context, while episodic framing tends to cut off an issue from said context, instead emphasizing individuals and their own responsibility in dealing with problems like unemployment or poverty. In the case of trauma, episodic frames (more common among regional newspapers) may attribute “responsibility to individual actors for their condition rather than understanding the

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systemic problems associated with PTSD” (Wu, 2017: 230). In studying the mass shooting at Virginia Tech, Hawdon et al. (2014) speak of a “tragic frame” employed by the media when covering traumatic events. The tragic frame provides “a dramatic focus on the individuals affected by the tragedy instead of the institutional and larger social problems that contribute to the event,” that would “help bring closure to the larger social issues the event raises and help foster the social solidarity” (Hawdon et al., 2014: 206). It could be argued that by over-emphasizing the tragic consequences on individual lives, the necessary process of collective coping with trauma is not facilitated. In other cases, research shows that the media’s obsession with the most lurid aspects of a traumatic experience, may produce representations that are harmful to the victims.

In the case of hurricane Katrina, media tended to focus on the most barbaric, heinous acts committed by victims of the disaster (theft, murder, rioting). As a result, a social problem caused by a natural disaster was framed as an issue of lawlessness and an oversimplifying dichotomy was placed on victims presented either as “good people” or as “thugs/looters” (Tierney et al., 2006: 75). This kind of framing underscores the need to understand a traumatic experience and the way it affects the victims. Moreover, once a frame of “law vs chaos” is established, the public debate tends to look for solutions (and the corresponding institutions) to suppress civil unrest (Tierney et al., 2006: 76-77). In a similar vein, media representations often emphasize the connection between mental illness of

traumatized persons and violent acts (Wahl, 2003). In that way, public policy regarding mental illness is framed around the question of law enforcement. What ensues is a criminalization of victims and vulnerable social groups.

Media representations that stigmatize traumatic experiences and their victims impede the coping process of individuals and social groups and, at the same time, they are shape the public debate by conceptualizing trauma as a dangerous aberration from the social norm. Having said that, the potential benefits of media representations of trauma should not be underestimated. Traumatized persons and social groups employ interactive media to narrate their history, and to share and interpret their experiences. Additionally, a well-informed representation of traumatic events is able to highlight the society’s and state’s responsibility toward the victims.

Section 4.5: Summary

Media representations of trauma play a significant role in developing collective as well as institutional strategies of coping with traumatic events. Contemporary, mediatized societies conceptualize and visualize the notion of trauma through media frames. Moreover, even traumatized persons and groups re-process their experiences through the media lens. Media representations that over-emphasize the lurid aspects of a traumatic event tend to transform it into a media spectacle, removing

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the social context and underestimating its implications for wider social groups. These media representations may also have a negative effect by prolonging PTSD symptoms of traumatized persons and groups. On the contrary, media representations that retain their sensitivity but insist on contextualizing traumatic events, can promote a deeper understanding as well as inform and influence institutional policies. The process of coping may be facilitated through the use of digital media by traumatized groups in an attempt to regain control and narrate their own experiences.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

Discuss the effect of digital media on the process of mediatization

Discuss the ways journalists and media organizations can affect the public reception of traumatic events

How can digital media empower traumatized persons and groups? Discuss the ways Social Networking Sites (SNS) could adapt to the needs of said groups.

Case studies

Ask your friends to close their eyes and think of Je-

sus Christ. 20 seconds later, tell them to open their eyes. Ask each of them who had a real life or media person in their minds as Jesus Christ. In Greece, the most of them tend to think of Robert Powell, the British actor who impersonated Jesus Christ in the popular series *Jesus of Nazareth* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1977), which has been televised continuously every Easter since the 80's. Then, discuss about the effects of mediatization.

Ask your friends to close their eyes and think of rioting during the 50's and early 60's in the streets of an urban city. Twenty seconds later, tell them to open their eyes. Ask each of them how they imagined the place, the context, and people that were protesting. Ask them to describe their colours. The most of them will tend to describe riots in a black and white context, as the media pictures of this period were based in the black and white. Then, discuss the effects of mediatization.

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CHAPTER 5: BASE OF THE PYRAMID

“True wisdom comes to each of us when we realise how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us”

By Socrates, Greek philosopher (470 – 399 BC)



Photograph by Agathi Sianoudi.
Accommodation Centre
Refugee Camp Schistou - Attica

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CHAPTER 5: BASE OF THE PYRAMID

Aim

The aim of the present chapter is to identify the Base of the Pyramid as a vulnerable group by analysing their characteristics.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Compare the definition of vulnerable groups with the characteristics of the BoP

Recognize the multidimensional aspects of poverty

Understand the poverty mindset

Evaluate cases and best practices of projects implemented (successfully or not) for the integration of BoP groups, including case studies on social enterprises, circular economy, and other sectors

Ethical approach when targeting BoP

Keywords

Bottom of the pyramid, poverty, integration

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Section 5.1: Evolution of the concept

The bottom of the pyramid or base of the pyramid (BoP) concept has gained importance in recent decades. It refers to the base of the social and economic pyramid (Yunus, 2007), meaning the people that live with less than 2\$US per day or people that do not have enough to satisfy their basic needs. The concept has evolved over time. The BoP 1.0 tackles the market and develops strategies for multinationals to profit in the BoP. It focuses on how multinational companies can earn money by selling to the poor. The BoP 2.0 has a vision of business co-creation. In this version, people from the BoP are seen as potential business partners instead of only consumers. Lastly, the BoP 3.0 considers the BoP population as employees, producers and business owners. It has the vision to empower this vulnerable population and use entrepreneurship and business development to overcome their problems and get out of poverty.

The attributes of a BoP context include informality due to a weak legal system (Goyal & Sergi, 2015), poor infrastructure, lack of market awareness (Viswanathan et al. 2007), limited access to resources, lack of good education and bureaucracy. According to the World Bank Group, BoP markets are mostly located in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean, however, people in this vulnerable situation can be found everywhere.

Currently, the BoP concept is to eradicate poverty via profitable activities which can be developed by

the poor or for the poor (Kolk et al, 2014). This goes in line with the BoP 3.0 in which BoP populations are part of the full supply chain, from producers to consumers (Kuo et al, 2018). Currently, some researchers are starting to talk about the BoP 4.0. This iteration highlights the importance of rescuing the knowledge of communities in order to build enterprises without losing their traditions. Social enterprises are even more relevant in this new stage.

Section 5.2: Characteristics of the BoP

The BoP population is people who live in poverty. It can refer to persons that live below the line of poverty, people who earn less money than is necessary to satisfy their basic needs, or any person who feels deprived of food, clothes, or even opportunities. According to Hammond (2007), the BoP is composed of people with an annual income per capita below 3000\$US in local purchasing power and Prahalad (2002) defines the BoP population as those with an income below 2\$US per day. In 2001, The World Bank estimated there were 2.7 billion people in the BoP. Different parameters give different sizes to the BoP population, these estimations go from 600 million to 4 billion. This is a huge range. One reason for this is that the buying power of money is different in every country. For example, in certain countries, 3000\$us annual income per capita could be not enough to satisfy basic needs, but in other countries, the same amount might be enough. A second method of categorization is based on access to resources that meet basic needs. This

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refers, not only to money, but also to a person's ability to access good education and a good health care system. Depending on the goal of delimitating the BoP, one can choose their approach.

The BoP context has specific characteristics, which include:

Lack of access to good health care: The BoP population does not have money to access private health care and in cases where most of a country's population lives in poverty, the public health system is not adequate.

Lack of access to a good education: In the same manner, the BoP population does not have money to pay for education. This becomes a scaffolded problem because children with inadequate elementary educations, later fail entrance examinations for public universities. Often in BoP regions, education does not reach a high level. Additionally, many families who live in poverty need their children to work, resulting in poor attendance at school.

Poor infrastructure: No electricity, water, or internet services.

Lack of market awareness: Their limited knowledge makes it almost impossible for them to understand the market trends, regulations, and opportunities.

Limited access to resources: Besides the lack of electricity, water, and internet, there is also a lack of qualified human resources due to lack of educa-

tion.

Weak legal system: Regulations are not clear, and protections such as patents or copyrights are not respected. If you develop something new, the possibility that your neighbour will copy it and sell it is very high.

Bureaucracy: To compensate for weak legal systems, there is a lot of bureaucracy. Every document requires several forms, signatures and payments.

In summary, poverty is connected with major problems such as disease, ignorance and unemployment (Bradshaw & Finch, 2003). A person of the BoP may want the same products as a rich person, but they cannot afford them (Karnani, 2008). Normally, reaching BoP markets is so challenging that products are more expensive there than in high-consuming markets. However, the people of the BoP will do their best to acquire these products as it gives them a sense of belonging.

As mentioned before, the BoP population is mostly concentrated in four areas which are Africa (12.3%), Asia (72.2%), Eastern Europe (6.4%) Latin America, and the Caribbean (9.1%) (Hammond et al., 2007). However, most of the research has presented the BoP as homogenous (Lappeman, Ransome, & Louw, 2019). This is not correct because each area or even each country or region has its cultural factors, religion, governmental approach, and traditions that need to be taken into account when developing strategies for the BoP population. Successful experiences in one country, might not repeat in another

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country.

When studying the BoP, it is especially important to analyse culture. The culture of each market is unique, making attempts to understand the BoP market even more challenging (Pitta, Guesalaga, & Marshall, 2008). The context of the BoP market, specific traditions, and cultural knowledge have an impact on the selection of the most effective ways to support the BoP population. Taking this into account, the literature has identified three usual weaknesses in the BoP markets regarding the development of business models: access to credit, the establishment of alliances, and adaptation of the marketing mix (Pitta et al., 2008). It is critical to address these three weaknesses when helping the BoP population create enterprises and consequently overcome poverty.

Access to credit: Access to funding opportunities is very limited. In the BoP, it is not common to have access to seed capital. The presence of investors is limited or even null. The interest rate of banks is very high and as the BoP population normally does not have property that can be used as a guarantee, nor they do not have a contract with an enterprise to back up their income, banks do not provide them loans. Microcredit organizations provide loans without many requirements, but the interest rate is extremely high (e.g., in Bolivia it is around 36% per year).

Establishment of alliances: The lack of a strong legal framework and widespread bureaucracy

increases the lack of trust. This makes the process of building alliances very high consuming. Often, people do not see the positive aspects of building alliances, but mostly see the other actors as competitors. Therefore, effort and resources are used inefficiently as many times several organizations will do the same work. This also limits access to opportunities as new actors will need to be strong to defeat the current actors in the market.

Adaptation of the marketing mix: The marketing mix needs to be adapted completely for BoP markets, and as mention before, it has to be adapted to each specific BoP market because based on their consumer behaviour, the value offer that you propose will need to be different. Not only how prices are presented, but also methods for reaching people must be adapted because people in the BoP are likely not to have internet or access to big supermarkets where you can sell your product. It is important to completely understand their context, people's needs and beliefs, then adapt the marketing mix.

BoP is also characterized by high levels of informal economy as the government is usually inefficient, and there are high levels of political instability, poor governance, corruption, a weak legal system, and dense bureaucracy (London et al., 2014). Lack of infrastructure is also very common – unreliable electricity, limited access to water and limited transport are some examples. The level of education is low, as also the sources of education are limited (Lappeman et al., 2019). These conditions

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make the poor a population that is very vulnerable (Karnani, 2008). Community is important in this context as BoP consumers are highly dependent on their social relationships (Lappeman et al., 2019). However, this is a variable that varies greatly based on the region.

Economic constraints play a big role in the life of BoP consumers as they have high levels of unemployment and inconsistent income. Also, BoP persons normally pay more for the same products than wealthier consumers (Arnold & Quelch, 1998). Despite all this, the BoP can offer opportunities for the poor and also for the companies.

Section 5.3: The multidimensional aspects of poverty

A person is considered to be poor if his/her income is below the line of poverty. In the last year, this has been debated, as their well-being depends also on non-monetary variables (Bourguignon & Chakravarty, n.d.; Ferreira, Fernandes, & Kraus, 2019). If poverty is analysed only from a monetary point of view, this affects how we create policies to diminish it. As such, a multidimensional approach has been proposed due to the different dimensions in which deprivation can be present. The complexity of the poverty problem makes it difficult to agree on the correct dimensions to take into account.

Some of the dimensions of poverty are:

Basic deprivation: Related to the absence of mail, clothes, shoes, or home heating (Castillo Añazco &

Jácome Pérez, 2015; Whelan, Nolan, & Maître, 2014)

Consumption deprivation: Not having a computer, internet connection, and a car (Whelan et al., 2014)

Health: Current health status – if the person has any restrictions on activity and/or the presence of a chronic illness (Whelan et al., 2014)

Neighbourhood environment: The reported level of litter, public amenities, pollution, level of crime and noise (Castillo Añazco & Jácome Pérez, 2015; Whelan et al., 2014)

Access to opportunities: Quality education, extra-curricular activities, knowledge expressed in libraries, books, and others (Ferreira et al., 2019)

Subjective poverty: People that feel poor because they perceive they do not have the money necessary to live comfortably (Bradshaw & Finch, 2003)

Identifying the dimensions is not the only problem with a multidimensional approach. There is also the approach that can be under union or intersection identification. If a union is used, a person deprived in any of the dimensions is poor, and under intersection, a person needs to be deprived in all dimensions to be considered poor (Alkire & Foster, 2011). This decision leads to huge differences in number as focusing only on the income of the person.

Section 5.4: The poverty mindset

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The poverty mentality or mindset is developed by people that believe they will never have enough money. This belief is normally driven by fear and because of that fear, they made poor financial decisions. BoP populations usually have this mindset. Their low income makes them feel constantly worried about money and they feel guilty whenever they buy something. This mindset causes them to think small in all aspects and opportunities of their life. The lack of money makes the BoP population lack confidence which makes it difficult to achieve their goals. Once the poverty mindset is in a family, the sense of dependency passes from one generation to the next, making it challenging to transcend (Hampton, 2011).

In poor regions, people develop a shared set of behaviours that separate themselves from the culture of the main society (Hampton, 2011), children that are born in this context absorbed the attitudes that they see and by the age of six they already feel that they do not have opportunities to improve their lives. When living in poverty, people are constantly in fear of shame as they believe they will never meet the expectations and are trying to keep up appearances (Hudson, 2016). If a person is excluded from a network because of their income, they will develop a cultural trauma. This is very common as people who grow up in poverty are never sure if they will have enough to eat, therefore they lost their sense of security as well or the sense of order in their lives as they feel they do not have control (Hudson, 2016). Growing up in poverty, people exist at the limits of dependency, needing others to help

satisfy their needs, all the while seeing people around who live with abundance and autonomy. As a result, poor people feel that they are not as good as those who have things in abundance.

When reaching a new point of poverty as being homeless, you achieve the lowest point of loneliness as the poor feels no one cares if he/she is alive or not (Hudson, 2016). Even someone that overcomes poverty, will still have problems feeling secure and they will still feel no control over their life.

Section 5.5: Opportunities and Challenges of the BoP

The BoP segment brings specific challenges. Often, the BoP population is mixed in the same geographical space as the top of the pyramid population, making it difficult to identify the BoP. Accessibility is also a challenge as the BoP population is usually located far away from the cities and very broadly dispersed (Pitta et al., 2008). Also, companies that want to serve the BoP customers, normally do not know what the poor want, therefore, they do not know what to offer (Pitta et al., 2008).

Another challenge is that the BoP is people normally excluded from the current capitalist system, therefore it is considered that these consumers are the domain of governments and NGOs (Ted & Hart, 2011). Connectivity has had a big jump in the BoP context as the growing use of mobiles has allowed BoP consumers to access the benefits of information networks (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).

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To work with the BoP, time, resources and training are necessary to produce products with a certain level of innovation and therefore reduce the easy duplication (Pitta et al., 2008).

Section 5.6: Summary

The BoP population can be found in different parts of the world. Even in rich countries it is common to find people that live in vulnerability without access to resources to solve their basic needs. Supporting the BoP is very challenging as the BoP of different countries or even cities have a different backgrounds, different cultures and therefore different needs. The support BoP population needs is not only in money, but also in taking them away from the poverty mindset that maintains the cycle of poverty.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

Is there BoP population in your country?

How can you help BoP population to overcome the poverty mindset?

Do you know any enterprise that was founded by a person of the BoP?

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CHAPTER 6: INCLUSIVE BUSINESS MODELS

“If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace””

By Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States from 1933 until his death in 1945



Source: Stock snaps

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CHAPTER 6: INCLUSIVE BUSINESS MODELS

Aim

The objective of this chapter is to introduce the concept, main principles, characteristics and dimensions of the Inclusive Business Models (IBMs). These business models are found useful to engage vulnerable and marginalized communities into businesses, in order to improve their living conditions, as well as for creating and capturing value for businesses. We introduce the different components of IBMs and explain how these businesses operate to fulfil their mission of inclusiveness for both the demand, and the supply side, in mainly poor and vulnerable contexts.

Learning Objectives

To understand inclusiveness as a business model component, as opposed to traditional elements of a business model;

To realize the importance and potential of IBMs as tools to serve and work with vulnerable communities;

To distinguish the main principles, types and characteristics of IBMS;

To understand the importance of partnerships and support from different stakeholders in the process of establishment, development and scalability of IBMs.

Keywords:

Inclusive Business Models, BoP, Vulnerable Groups, Sustainability, Partnerships

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Section 6.1: Introduction

Inclusive business models (IBMs) refer to a business approach that goes beyond the traditional provision of goods and services under commercially viable schemes (Kelly, Vergara, & Bammann, 2015). The main component of inclusive business models is the inclusion of those in a disadvantaged position in society such as the poor or vulnerable communities, refugees, people with disabilities or socially segregated (Dentchev, 2020; Hahn, 2012; Schoneveld, 2020). Hence, we can argue that an inclusive business model is one that successfully integrates, within its value chain, those in vulnerable conditions in a way in which all the different actors in the chain can benefit through a win-win relationship often in a profitable manner (Sonne, 2012).

One key characteristic of IBMs is that the different actors in the value chain can be—at the same time—producers, distributors, consumers, and also beneficiaries (Halme, Lindeman, & Linna, 2012; Schoneveld, 2020). Such inclusiveness is built upon several pillars where the relationship amongst the key players are based on profitability, mutual benefit and the guarantee of sustainability over time (Halme et al., 2012). While being inclusive, IBMs strive to also achieve sustainable growth and development. This means contributing to fighting against poverty, increase equality, combat inequality, and achieve a positive impact on communities (Dentchev, 2020; Schoneveld, 2020).

Private initiatives using an IBM approach seek to enable the accessibility to different goods and services, which also become at the same time livelihood opportunities for the less favourable people (London, Anupindi, & Sheth, 2010; Rahman, Amran, Ahmad, & Taghizadeh, 2015). At the core of an IBM we find the support of the base of the pyramid (BoP), or other segregated individuals as part of their activities — as suppliers, consumers, workers, retailers or beneficiaries (Arora & Romijn, 2012). This is why inclusion is a relevant concept—and differentiator—in these types of business models. We can argue that while creating opportunities for disadvantaged individuals, private initiatives using an IBM approach are creating opportunities to expand their markets, positively impacting the different populations in which these models are developed, and benefiting the different interest groups around them (Rahman, Amran, Ahmad, & Taghizadeh, 2016; Surie, 2017).

Innovation is also at the heart of IBMs (Surie, 2017). Such initiatives develop strategies with a high level of innovation that not only improve the supply chain, but also create multiple strategies that effectively integrate, within the value chain, the manpower, ideas and input of those individuals whose employment opportunities are otherwise limited (Arora & Romijn, 2012; Goyal, Sergi, & Jaiswal, 2016). Such integrations are not easy. IBMs use the different skills, knowledge and capacities of disadvantaged communities to find the best pos-

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sible fit towards their value proposition. When this is not possible, adaptations are needed, and this is where innovation takes place (Surie, 2017). Thus, we find that are highly innovative, not only in their business approach but also in the way they design, produce and commercialize their different products and services by leveraging the specific and unique characteristics of those they count on.

Section 6.2: Dimension of inclusiveness

The inclusiveness component of IBMs relies on: (i) the inclusivity of vulnerable and marginalized actors within the value chain; (ii) serving a market that is often composed of BoP costumers and beneficiaries and (iii) a right and balanced partner mix (Halme et al., 2012). We elaborate on each of these principles below. IBMs are meant to serve low income, poor, marginalized or low-income groups (Goyal et al., 2016). However, when talking about the purpose of such businesses, we find that concepts related to inclusive growth and inclusive development tend to be used interchangeably, because of the demographics (and objectives) of the actors involved in different activities within IBMs (Rahman et al., 2016).

The main components of the IBM workforce are often considered as customers and/or beneficiaries (Kelly et al., 2015). Inclusivity here means that those who are marginalized because of any particular condition (immigrant, poor, handicapped) are

1 <https://fundacionaccioninterna.org/en/second-chances/>

integrated within the value chain as employees and thereby given the possibility of an income and market integration (Halme et al., 2012; Martin & Osberg, 2007; Norese, Corazza, Bruschi, & Cisi, 2020). They often serve, in turn, vulnerable and marginalized populations. An example of this is the “Foundation Accion Interna in Colombia¹” an organization that seeks to provide second chances to ex-prisoners by helping them to be reintegrated into the job market (as drivers, waiters, artisans, hairdressers, etc). Right after they leave prison, they are integrated into a training program given at the foundation. There, they follow different skill-based training, psychological counselling and further, have a short internship related to their career choice. The foundation is run 90% by ex-prisoners (vulnerable group) who are also part of the value chain. Lastly, the right partner mix refers to a diverse and supportive number of partners that can help IBMs be implemented and scaled to increase profitability and impact.

Section 6.3: Types and Characteristics of IBMs

IBMs capture economic value while including in its value proposition the inclusion of poor and marginalized groups. Such types of business modes take different forms, as the way groups are integrated and serve society varies depending on how the different stakeholders interact and sustain the

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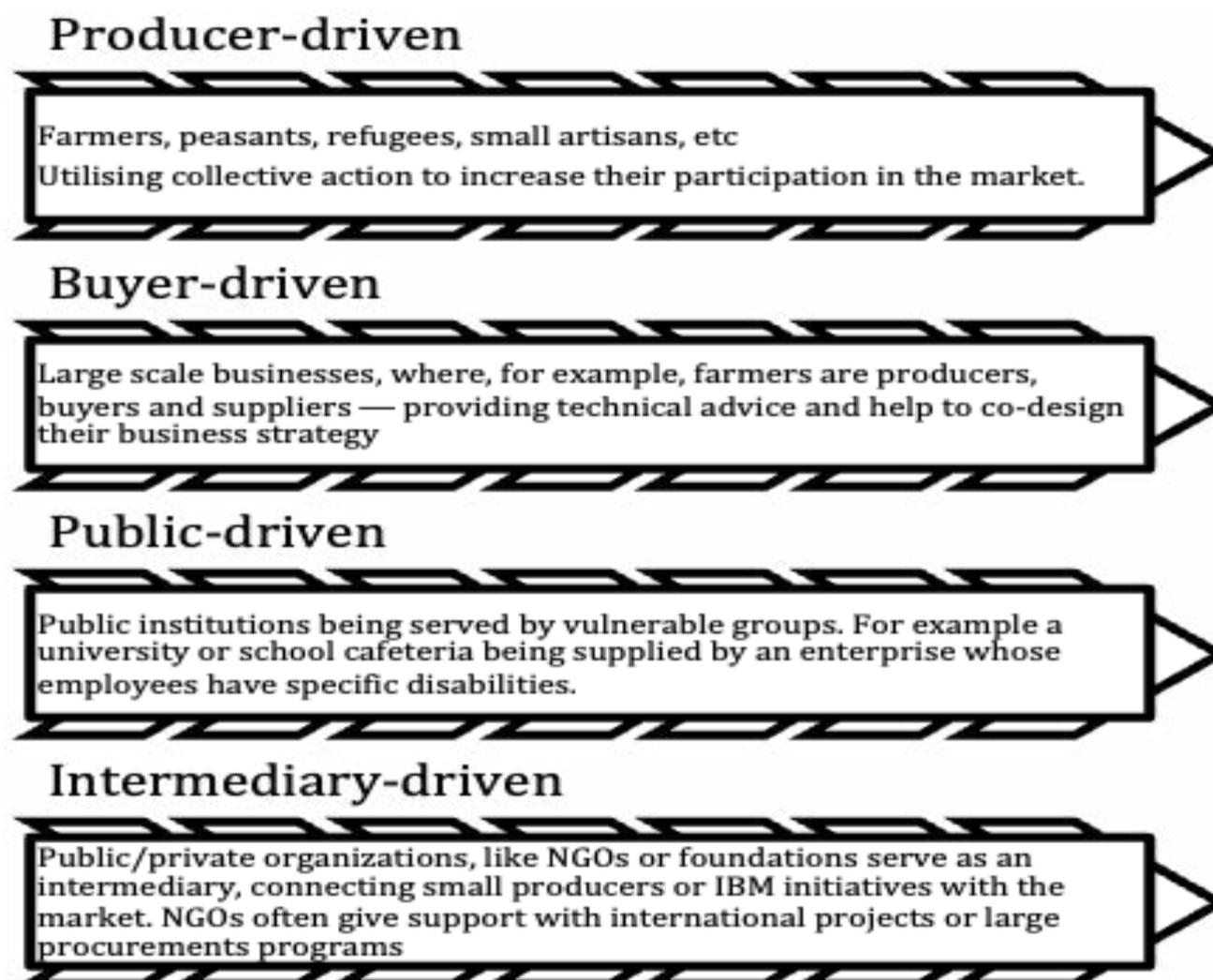


Figure 1: Types of Inclusive Business Models

business (Sonne, 2012). IBM involves a high level of innovation that is shaped by different socio-political factors, the dynamics of the environment, and the different changes and adaptations to the specific business sector (Schoneveld, 2020).

The value propositions of IBMs often integrate a 'work for and work with' approach. This means that their business activities are enabled by the contributions made mainly but those vulnerable groups,

while at the same time, they seek to serve marginalised communities (Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2018). Social entrepreneurs in vulnerable countries often adopt such an approach, using IBMs to address societal or environmental challenges that are caused by government or market failures (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004).

We identify four types of IBM (i) producer driven; (ii) buyer-driven; (iii) public driven and (iv) inter-

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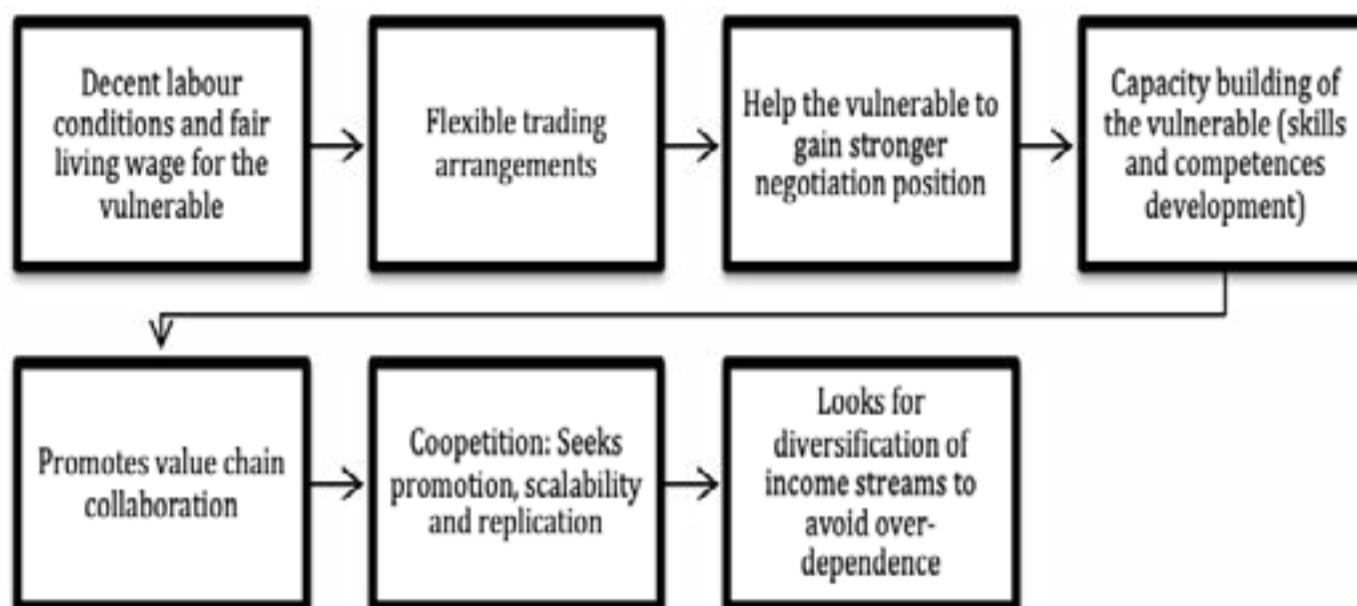


Figure 2: Key characteristics of IBMs

mediary driven. In the following figure we explain these four types of IBM and contextualize the scope of each of them:

Several characteristics are typical of IBMs. These characteristics are key to understanding how, from the demand and the supply side, IBMs facilitate the inclusion of the poor as clients as customers — but also oftentimes as producers, employees or even as business owners within the value chain (Dahan, Doh, Oetzel, & Yaziji, 2010; Jacobides, Cennamo, & Gawer, 2018). We provide eight different characteristics that can be found across the different types of IBM, that are common roots for these businesses to operate while integrating those populations in a state of vulnerability (i.e at the BoP) or those who often live with unmet needs. We present these characteristics in figure 2 below:

The first characteristic is that IBMs allows those vulnerable groups access to decent labour conditions and a fair living wage. This is quite important within the BoP context, where the wilderness of living conditions, market competition and very poor and basic living environment, limits the possibility to have a decent job or be able to have a decent income. IBMs open the possibility to generate employment opportunities to those who often are segregated and thus, they can be the labour force, serving their population while improving their living conditions (Dentchev, 2020).

A second characteristic is flexible trading arrangements. IBMs are being built where poor infrastructure and only basic resources are predominant. Thus, complex business transactions, mediated by high-end IT and financial infrastructure are not possible. IBMs should allow, based on flexi-

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bility, that trading opportunities are adapted to the local context. This means that people can use their means to facilitate trade, to create business dynamics and, overall, to allow their business to be profitable and scalable (C. K. Prahalad & Hart, 2002). Along the same lines, IBMs help the vulnerable to gain a stronger negotiation position. This is thanks to the association capacity and the collective action that are enabled once small groups are united and coordinated to make their efforts more visible and valuable (Montgomery, Dacin, & Dacin, 2012).

IBMs help build capacity within vulnerable and marginalized populations. Such capacities (skills and competencies) are based on the provision of the different training opportunities needed to operate the business. Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) of farmers provide, for instance, training in the usage of new technologies used to increase the production capacity, or compliance with the local regulations relating to exploitation of the land for agricultural purposes. Another example here is the support that Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISE) provides to their hire, helping them integrate into the job market (and a job post) while minimizing the impact of their vulnerable position (Westley & Antadze, 2010).

IBMs promote value chain collaboration (Montgomery et al., 2012). The creation of partnerships is important, as we have seen in the different types of IBMs. This is a key component for the success

of IBMs where the business is well integrated into a value chain that allows them to produce and deliver their products and services (Mäkinen & Dedehayir, 2014). Furthermore, beyond their value chain, IBMs rely on collaboration with a wider network of other ecosystem actors to leverage their resources, knowledge and capabilities, to exploit new business opportunities that improve the welfare conditions and quality of life of all different stakeholders on both the demand and supply sides (Westley & Antadze, 2010).

IBMs are based on coopetition rather than competition (Adner, 2017). Coopetition has been widely defined as collaboration amongst business competitors, often for mutual benefits². This means that IBMs seek to create a fertile ground to collaborate with other similar businesses and to foster growth among all other similar initiatives, even if they could be considered competitors. Actors within IBMs are keen to promote similar initiatives and to look for replication opportunities when possible. This allows the implementation of such business in different parts of the world.

IBMs' ultimate desire is to improve the living conditions of those who are marginalised or don't have access to better opportunities because of their environment. Through their involvement in IBMs, vulnerable groups can promote their capabilities as a labour force. At the same time, IBMs seek to collaborate with other networks of partners to promote their efficiency which is often measured by their

2 <https://www.lexico.com/definition/coopetition>

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profitability and social and environmental impact. Promoting the efficiency of IBMs sometimes lead to replication, as the way they integrate vulnerable groups and place them into the job market can be used in different places around the world that face the same challenges. Through the exchange of best practices, IBMs can be adopted internationally thanks to the collaboration of government and other civil society actors who spot implementation opportunities based on similar challenges despite having different resources.

Lastly, IBMs allow the diversification of income streams. Based on existing literature and multiple cases, we know that for vulnerable groups it is often very difficult to diversify their income sources, mainly because of the lack of opportunities, knowledge or financial capacities (Mair & Martí, 2006). Financial possibilities for well-established and innovative business models will not be an issue, due to the different income streams that they could rely on (Dentchev, Eiselein, Vander Velpen, Bouckaert, & Diaz Gonzalez, 2020). Investors are now looking for more sustainable types of opportunities—those that can leverage the 3p’s (people, planet and profit) and that in the future could be reinvested in other opportunities and thus, maximize impact (Kerr, Lerner, & Schoar, 2014). IBMs are based on multiple revenue streams that range from government subsidies to consulting and sales (Westley & Antadze, 2010).

Section 6.4: Creating supportive partnerships for long-lasting IBMs

For several years, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has studied the different conditions that can favour the establishment and development of IBMs. In fact, for IBMs to prosper, they need a fertile ground of different stakeholders that range from companies and other organizations, to their communities, local governments, financial institutions and other important elements within the market that will ensure the viability of such initiatives (Doherty, Thompson, & Doherty, 2006). Several publications have been released, such as *Brokering Inclusive Business Models*³, providing practical information not only for IBMs but also to other stakeholders on how to be supportive of such types of initiatives.

Beyond the integration of poor and marginalized groups into their value chain, IBMs need to develop inclusive market opportunities. For such markets to be established, collaboration and partnerships are relevant, as they can sustain and potentialize the different business mechanisms behind IBMs (Halme et al., 2012). Those partnerships are helping IBMs switch our traditional consumerism approach towards one that helps underserved populations become the protagonists of innovative businesses, with more diverse offerings and at the same time, more sources of supply (Schoneveld, 2020).

3 <https://www.undp.org/publications/brokering-inclusive-business-models>

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The disruptive nature of IBMs becomes an asset when developing different partnerships and alliances with other businesses, but also with local actors and civil society. This is because it can help (and accelerate) the attraction of investment due to the innovative nature of the business models. This impacts both people and the profit generated by such initiatives (Dentchev, 2020). Examples of existing businesses that transitioned towards inclusiveness are Unilever in Ghana, Procter and Gamble, Vodafone and the Gramin Bank (C. Prahalad & Hart, 1999). Social enterprises are also a good example of such initiatives, often creating better work opportunities for marginalized people, while also positively impacting their communities (Bloom & Smith, 2010).

Nowadays, we find that IBMs are spanning into different sectors, ranging from clean water and sanitation, to healthcare, gender equality, integration of disabled people, financial services, and education, amongst others. Their efforts are contributing to our Sustainable Development Goals and helping vulnerable people to regain (or gain) access to quality services that they had never experienced before (Surie, 2017). IBMs need to consider, as part of their business strategy, an ecosystem approach (Rahman et al., 2015). Companies need to rely on multiple actors, their competencies and specializations, knowledge and capabilities, to complement the different business activities and gain access to resources the population would otherwise not be able to acquire (Autio & Levie, 2017).

In this scenario, universities are very interesting partners for IBMs. They have critical masses (students, faculty and staff), accumulated knowledge, infrastructure and other potential assets of support (Martinelli, Meyer, & Tunzelmann, 2008). Universities can facilitate multiple resources to IBMs. This can be tangible resources such as the provision of laboratories, space for conferences and other activities, as well as intangible resources such as knowledge, extended networks of contacts, training possibilities and bringing legitimacy to the companies by further validating their business ideas (Vansandt, Sud, & Marme, 2009). Universities often collaborate with different business sectors, the government, and multiple associations. They have very rich social capital. This can facilitate IBMs gaining access to multiple contacts that they never (or could hardly) access as well as to further get support for the validation of their ideas through contacts with academics and researchers. In addition to this, through Community Service Learning, universities—despite their level of resources—can facilitate the integration of students, faculty and their curricular activities, to support IBMs by bringing students to develop business assignments focused on supporting IBMs with their challenges or projects (Diaz Gonzalez, Dentchev, & Roman Roig, 2020).

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Section 6.5: Summary

In conclusion, IBMs provide great benefit to low-income and other vulnerable groups. They integrate, through an innovative approach, vulnerable and marginalized groups into their business model. They become part of their demand, but also their suppliers and thus create a viable business activity where these vulnerable groups can be served and supported. The different interventions created through IBMs (vertical-horizontal) are creating inspiring success stories around the globe, in places that were forgotten by our globalization process, where business opportunities were limited, resources were scarce and where people with great competencies and skills, were never before integrated as a powerful source of productive growth.

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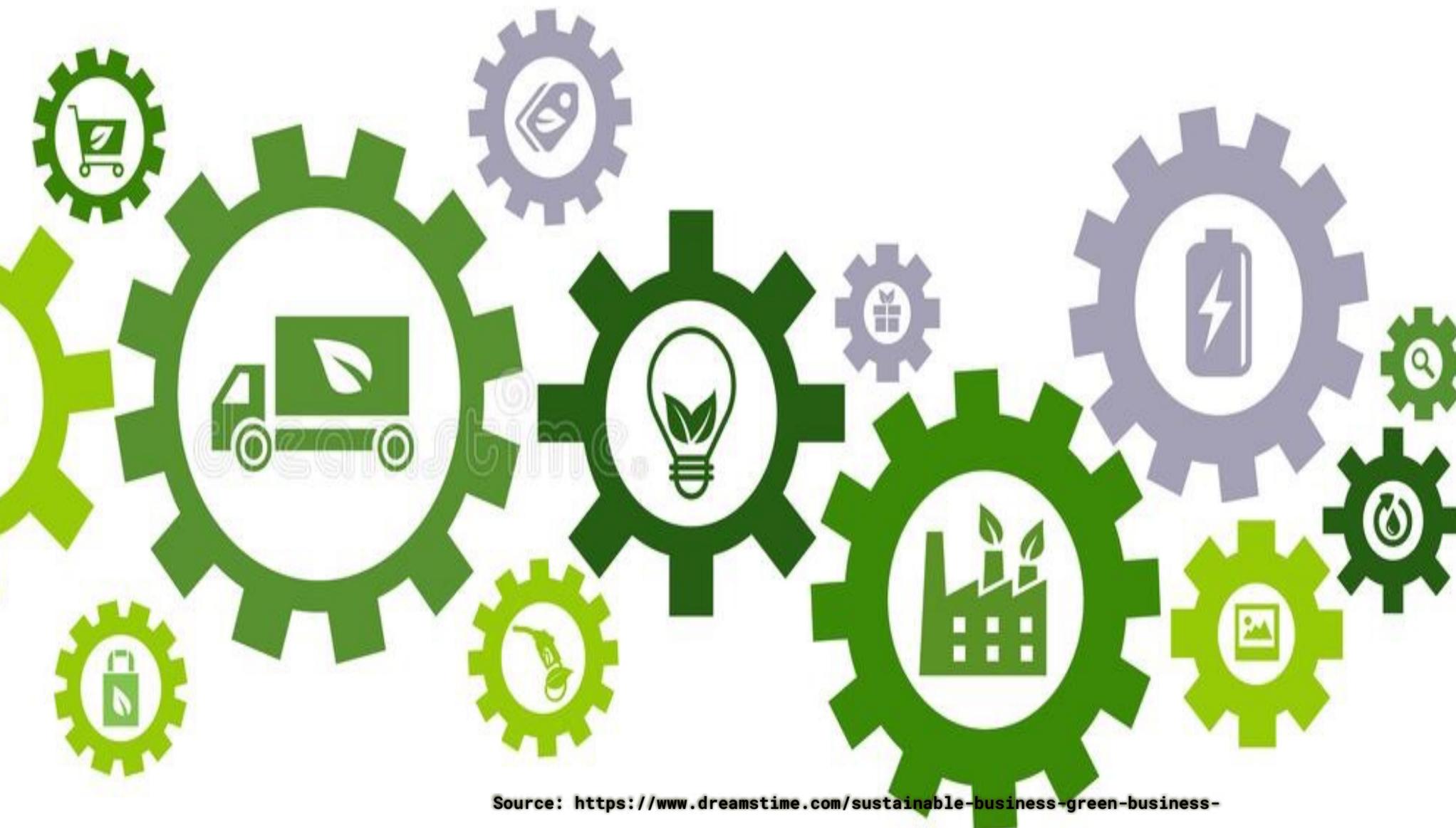
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“We can convince ourselves to do things in conjunction with one another that we wouldn’t have been able to do as an individual”

By Jordan Peele, actor (1978), source: <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/1564103>



Source: <https://www.dreamstime.com/sustainable-business-green-business->

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Chapter 7 Sustainable Business Models

Aim

This chapter introduces the term Sustainable Business Models (SBMs). SBMs provide solutions to environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Learn about the Sustainable Development Goals

To gain a deep understanding of the main concepts related to sustainable business models

Understand in depth, the circular economy and its implications

Improve the understanding of social enterprises

Keywords

Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Business Models, Circular Economy, Social Enterprises

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Section 7.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put forward by the United Nations in 2015. The objective is to reach these 18 goals by 2030. We will discuss the SDGs and connect them with vulnerable groups and the different kinds of business that can help to achieve these objectives while supporting vulnerable groups to overcome their situations by providing economic, environmental, and social value.

Section 7.2: Sustainable Development Goals

There are many attempts to define sustainability. We are going to use the definition from the World Commission on Environment and Development which is most often cited. This definition says that

sustainability must include environmental, social, and economic aspects while considering the limited resources of land and energy. Access to resources, and a transformation of society are also part of the sustainability concept (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). Initially, the concept of sustainability mostly addressed environmental concerns, but is now a more inclusive framework that can produce wider ranging results (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken, & Hultink, 2017).

The economic crisis of 2008 highlighted the impact that businesses have in the sustainability of the global economy (Schaltegger, Hansen, & Lüdeke-freund, 2016), and highlighted the need for organizations that work in a sustainable way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Schaltegger et al., 2016). The SDGs were adopted

Table 1: List of SDGs

Nr.	Goal	Sustainability Area
1	No Poverty	Social
2	Zero Hunger	Social
3	Good Health and Well-Being	Social
4	Quality Education	Social
5	Gender Equality	Social
6	Clean Water and Sanitation	Environment
7	Affordable and Clean Energy	Social
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Economic
9	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Economic
10	Reduced Inequalities	Economic
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Social
12	Responsible Consumption and Production	Economic
13	Climate Action	Environment
14	Life Below Water	Environment
15	Life on Land	Environment
16	Peace and Justice	Social
17	Partnerships for the goals	ALL

Source: Made by the author based on (United Nations, n.d.)

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by the United Nations in 2015 and propose 17 goals. The main goal of the SDGs is a general “call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity” (United Nations, 2015). One important characteristic of the SDGs is integration among social, economic, and environmental contexts, as actions in one area affect the others. In the same manner, actions in one of the SDGs affect the other goals.

Even goals directly associated with one of the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environment) are also related to other goals. For example; goal number one ‘No Poverty’ is social, but it is also related to the economical pillar.

ness Model (SBM) and traditional business models is that SBMs focus on capturing economic value while being socially, economically and environmentally responsible (Dentchev et al., 2018). In an SBM, the sustainability factor is the core of the business and not something added (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). As you might have noticed, SBMs follow the same three pillars as SDGs, therefore the SBMs are a necessity for achieving the SDGs. The fact that SBMs have social responsibility at their centre, make them useful for vulnerable groups.

In more detail, SBMs differ in three ways from traditional business models. First, SBMs create value not only for the customers but also for the natural environment (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2014).

Discussion

- **Do you agree with the sustainability area chosen for all the goals? Which ones not and why?**
- **Select a second sustainability area for each goal and explain**
- **Are there goals (besides goal 17) that approach all three sustainability pillars?**

Section 7.3: Sustainable Business Models

A business model is the representation of the manner in which a company operates to deliver value to customers (Zott, Amit, & Massa, 2011). The principal difference between a Sustainable Busi-

ness Model (SBM) and traditional business models is that SBMs focus on capturing economic value while being socially, economically and environmentally responsible (Dentchev et al., 2018). In an SBM, the sustainability factor is the core of the business and not something added (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). As you might have noticed, SBMs follow the same three pillars as SDGs, therefore the SBMs are a necessity for achieving the SDGs. The fact that SBMs have social responsibility at their centre, make them useful for vulnerable groups.

In more detail, SBMs differ in three ways from traditional business models. First, SBMs create value not only for the customers but also for the natural environment (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2014).

Second, when researching SBMs is important to also consider non-financial forms of value (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). Third, SBMs highlight the damage that some current traditional business models do to society, how they destroy value (Bocken et al., 2014). These characteristics differentiate SBMs from traditional business models ¾

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but there are also overlaps, for example with social enterprises. Not mutually exclusive concepts, these overlaps show that a business model can belong to more than one category.

A tool used for SBM is the Triple Layered Business Model Canvas. This model is based on the original business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2011) and adds an environmental layer and a social layer. The environmental layer considers the life-cycle of the product or service. The social layer is connected with the stakeholders because SBMs look for benefits not only for themselves but for all the stakeholders (Joyce & Paquin, 2016). Nature is one of the most important stakeholders (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). In the process, SBMs include teaching the stakeholders to also be sustainable (Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). When considering the three layers, you have a visual representation of how SBMs generate economic, environmental, and social value. This is also effective for enterprises with a traditional business model that can undergo a sustainable transformation with the help of this tool (Joyce & Paquin, 2016). The combination of environmental, economic, and social goals in SBMs gives an inherent complexity as these models need to be logical when connected (Matos & Silvestre, 2013). The main challenges of SBMs found in literature are the following ones:

- Triple bottom line: Combination of social, economic, and environmental goals (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008)

- Mind-set: The traditional business mindset stays in the firm and it's a challenge to introduce the new SBM (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013)
- Resources: Businesses must be convinced that the resources invested in business model innovation are worthwhile (Chesbrough, 2010; Zott et al., 2011)
- Technological innovation: Integrating technology that is clean and fulfils the sustainable requirements (Zott et al., 2011)
- External relationships: Extensive interaction with stakeholders (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013; Geissdoerfer, Vladimirova, & Evans, 2018; Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008)
- Business modelling methods and tools: As Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) are very popular and not sustainability driven.

Measuring the impact of SBMs is also a relevant challenge. There are several metrics that can be used, but these are underdeveloped or do not reflect the real impact that enterprises have (Evans et al., 2017). This process is challenging as it involves several stakeholders and several goals.

Bocken, Short, Rana and Evans (2014) propose archetypes for SBMs. They identify eight archetypes that divide three higher groups that are technologically, socially and organisationally oriented:

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- Technological SBMs
 - Maximise material and energy efficiency: Do more with the same or fewer resources. An example is Toyota which has a philosophy of maximization of the use of resources.
 - Create value from 'waste': Waste is turned into something useful and with value
 - Substitute with renewables and natural processes: Use the resources that we have to create renewable alternatives for resources that are finite.
- Social SBMs
 - Deliver functionality rather than ownership: Provide value but not the physical products to allow more people to get value from the same physical product. An example of this can be the shared bikes and/or cars.
 - Adopt a stewardship role: Adopt a role of engaging the stakeholders to be sure of their wellbeing.
 - Encourage sufficiency: Products or services that help reduce the consumption of resources such as markets of second-hand goods.
- Organisational
 - Re-purpose the business towards societal good and environmental sustainability: Traditional businesses that change their vision and mission to include social and environmental benefits.
 - Develop scale-up solutions: Sustainable solutions that can be delivered at a large scale, therefore benefiting a big portion of society.

Among the different archetypes, there are transformation and associations which show all the possibilities of SBMs.

Section 7.4: Circular Economy

The circular economy is currently the most popular proposal to sustainably integrate economic activity and environmental responsibility (Murray, Skene, & Haynes, 2017). A circular economy is "an economic system that replaces end-of-life concept with reducing, alternatively reusing, recycling and recovering materials in production/distribution and consumption processes" (Kirchherr, Reike, & Hekkert, 2017: 229). Many scientists view a circular economy as the manner in which sustainable development is implemented (Kirchherr et al., 2017) but many others do not agree, as a circular economy may lack social considerations.

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Nevertheless, according to Bockent et al. (2014), a circular economy is an archetype of creating value from waste. It can operate on a macro level like nations or cities in which policies need to facilitate circular markets, at a meso level as in an eco-industrial park, or on a micro level, which is the core of the circular economy $\frac{3}{4}$ containing circular business models (Kirchherr et al., 2017) and the design of products that are recyclable or reusable and based on clean manufacturing methods (Geng, Sarkis, Bleischwitz, Sarkis, & Bleischwitz, 2019). Important features of a circular economy include low consumption of energy, low emission of pollutants and high efficiency (Murray et al., 2017).

Section 7.5: Social Enterprises

In recent decades, the number of social enterprises has been growing as a kind of third-sector organization with economic and societal goals (Wronka, 2013). Social enterprises help reduce increasing inequalities between rich and poor and are inclusive of often-excluded social groups (Wronka, 2013). In recent years, governments started to recognize that social enterprises can help solve social problems. Therefore, some governments started creating policies to support them (Biggeri, Testi, & Bellucci, 2017). A social enterprise is “any business created for a social purpose $\frac{3}{4}$ mitigating/reducing a social problem or market failure $\frac{3}{4}$ and to generate social value while operating with financial discipline, innovation and determination of a private sector

business” (Alter, 2007: 18). Besides using entrepreneurship, innovation and market approaches, social enterprises have the following three characteristics (Alter, 2007):

1. Enterprise orientation: They produce goods or deliver a service
2. Social Aim: They have a social or environmental aim, and they reinvest all profits
3. Social Ownership: Stakeholders and community have a high involvement

SBMs (Section 1.2) and social enterprises are very similar, as both have a social and an economical goal. The difference is that SBMs are interested in generating profit while social enterprises look to reinvest all revenues (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). According to Wronka (2013), there are ten variables that social enterprises need to be successful:

1. Strong leadership
2. Motivation and commitment of employees
3. Enabling Legal/regulatory environment
4. Attractiveness and clarity of innovative concept
5. Management expertise

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6. Key personal qualities for front line service delivery
7. Effective collaboration with public sector
8. Social capital
9. Local community involvement
10. Keeping and distributing accurate financial records

As with traditional enterprises, these variables can be found in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, that in this case should be a social entrepreneurial ecosystem with entities that support social enterprises (Biggeri et al., 2017), for example, an ecosystem with only traditional bank credit may not be supporting a social enterprise.

As social enterprises generate social and economic value, they are considered hybrid organizations between traditional non-profit and traditional for-profit businesses (Alter, 2007). Social enterprises can also be classified based on their mission. When the mission is central to the social enterprise, it is because the enterprise was created for the social purpose. In mission related social enterprises, the mission is related to the organization core mission, and it could also be that the social enterprise is unrelated to the mission of the organization and is a separate part of the mission of the organization (Alter, 2007). A relevant challenge is mission drift. As social enterprises try to balance social and

economic goals, enthusiasm for meeting financial goals can overwhelm the social mandate and as a result, the social side of the enterprise slowly disappears (Alter, 2007).

Section 7.6: Sustainable Business Models and Vulnerable Groups

Social enterprises and sustainable enterprises have social goals at their core. In circular enterprises, social goals are not a necessity but are sometimes also included. Social goals benefit vulnerable groups in three ways:

Vulnerable groups as consumers: Many social enterprises and sustainable enterprises aim to serve vulnerable groups and better integrate them into society by satisfying their specific needs.

Vulnerable groups as partners: As vulnerable groups are often excluded from certain kinds of jobs, many social enterprises and sustainable enterprises will work specifically with vulnerable populations.

Vulnerable groups as producers: Persons of a specific vulnerable groups know the needs of their group best, and know the specific context in which they perform. Their knowledge is an advantage compared to external enterprises that want to satisfy their needs. Creating a social enterprise or a sustainable enterprise is a way for them to satisfy the needs of their group and their own need to have a job.

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The number of social, sustainable, and circular enterprises is increasing in different parts of the world. Governments are now creating different regulations for enterprises that provide social value. These regulations try to encourage the development of socially responsible enterprises. For example, the government can decide that social enterprises belong to a different regime with lower taxes, or do not pay taxes for a certain time, or pay workers' salaries if the person they hire belongs to a vulnerable group. In the same vein, the encouraging measures that some governments are taking benefits people from vulnerable groups that want to start their own enterprise, as the entry barriers are lower. Several researchers believe that social entrepreneurship can have a huge impact in the countries with vulnerable populations and help people overcome poverty and exclusion.

Section 7.7: Summary

The UN Sustainable Development Goals were presented in 2015 and are due in 2030. In order to achieve these goals, it is important that all components of society work in this direction. Business is not an exception. Businesses are now transforming their business models into sustainable business models, meaning that they keep a balance among economic, social and environmental value. There are different kinds of sustainable business models, such as circular models or social enterprises. These kinds of businesses open more opportunities

for people in a situation of vulnerability, as they promote the social value of inclusion and provide everybody the opportunity to work.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

In your country, are there regulation that incentivise enterprises to be socially responsible?

Do you think more social, sustainable, and circular enterprises are good or bad for governments?

Case Study

Close the Gap (Belgium)

Close the Gap is an international social enterprise. Their mission is "to bridge the digital divide by offering high-quality, pre-owned computers donated by European and international companies to educational, medical and social projects in developing and emerging countries." ("Close the Gap," 2018). To do this, Close the Gap collects computers from companies, cleans all the information, and configures the hardware based on the requirements of the end-user. Once ready, the computers are shipped to the destination country to support impact-oriented initiatives. Under this model, Close the Gap has received more than 1,007,000 computers, supported 6,280 projects, and reached more than 3,220,000 beneficiaries. Other initiatives by Close the Gap include the sustainable recycling of

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e-waste once the donated computers are no longer useful, innovation challenges in developing and emerging countries, and creation of a platform to create new partnerships between the Belgian private sector and the development sector.

Discussion questions:

Could we say that Close the Gap has a sustainable business model? Why?

If it has a sustainable business model, in which archetype? Why?

Which SDGs does Close the Gap tackle?

Is Close the Gap participating in a circular economy with their business model?

What is the relation between Close the Gap and vulnerable groups?

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“There is no alternative to the peaceful coexistence of cultures”

By Salman Rushdie, an Indian-born British-American novelist



Source: Stock snaps

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Aim

This chapter examines the social integration processes of culturally different groups, especially those of migrant and refugee descent in their hosting societies, and presents a multi-perspective approach that enables students to familiarize themselves with these processes. It reviews main integration policies on the international, European and national level. It aspires to familiarize students with the basic social integration theories and provide them with a solid knowledge on the essential features of social integration, such as decent housing, job opportunities and education. In addition, it presents instruments that facilitate the integration process, considering both the hosting societies that are mostly affected by migration flows and the cultural minorities at hand.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the European and national integration policies in place
2. Get a thorough insight into the specific needs to be tackled to achieve social integration
3. Become familiarized with the various instruments of social integration policies and reflect on them critically
4. Understand the different types of social integration methods and approaches
5. Be capable of assessing innovative practices of social integration in different fields

Keywords

Social integration, host society, cultural diversity, acculturation processes, minorities

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Section 8.1: Introduction

Throughout history, Europe has hosted different cultures and stood as a mosaic of different ethnicities. Cohabitation and neighbourliness had been defined through a variety of institutional structures, such as empires, multi-national states, feudal states, etc. However, from the period of modernity until now, the institutional organization of societies as nation-states has gradually dominated. Hence, in most cases, ethnic groups that could stand as majorities in the lands that they live in, have formed their own nation-states, consolidating the interests of the majorities. According to this pattern, even colonialist powers which were frequently in touch with distant cultures and ethnicities were organized as nation-states, facilitated by the embedded power relations, and having a marginal interest in accommodating different cultures.

Modern Europe is now facing an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants —members of a diverse range of ethnicities who are bearers of different cultures. This is a call to European societies and policymakers to investigate and implement alternatives that allow peaceful cohabitation with these new communities. The key process towards the foreseeable common future of these diverse communities is social integration.

This key process will be analysed here to familiarize readers with the concept of integration and its different approaches in relation to respective policies in various European countries. In addition,

the common European plan for social integration will be presented, and specific issues of inclusive integration will be addressed, such as access to decent housing, health services, education, and employment.

Section 8.2: Integration theories

Following the need of European nation-states to accommodate rising heterogeneity, both policymakers and societies are called to explore different paths towards the incorporation of newcomers into the social structure, to minimize segregation, and to allow everyone to have access to all aspects of community life. Social integration constitutes a dynamic process which is influenced by all parties involved; it is a process during which people of a certain descent adopt the dominant local social values, habits, and traditions, while simultaneously maintaining the core elements of their own culture. Although the maintenance of their own cultural habits is often constrained by in-group interactions, through the process of integration minorities also introduce elements of their own culture to the host society (such as music, food, attitudes, etc.).

Social science has developed different integration theories, contradicting, complementing, or merging with one another. In this chapter we will limit ourselves to four major theories: assimilation theory, multiculturalism, structuralism, and segmented assimilation synthesis.

Assimilation theory dominated social science research and policymaking throughout the 20th cen-

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ture. It is closely related to the historical context of its emergence, namely the patterns of integration of European immigrants into US society in the early 20th century. It consists of three pillars (Verdier, 2012):

1. Different cultural/ethnic groups that are brought together, share a common culture and have access to various socioeconomic opportunities as members of the hosting society.
2. New cultural patterns progressively replace old ones.
3. By the time this process is active, it becomes inevitable and irreversible.

The teleological character of this process has been disputed by Gordon (1964) who pointed out that although assimilation is the first step towards integration, integration can easily be delayed due to spatial isolation of the different groups.

Multiculturalism on the other hand, takes better account of the complexity of integration processes. The key element here is understanding integration by thinking of modern societies as a collection of diverse ethnic, racial or cultural minorities cohabitating in a social structure that is shared with the hosting society/majority (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970 & Handlin, 1973). Multiculturalism sees minority groups not just as passive receivers of the integration process, but rather as active developers of their own identities. A variety of the minorities'

cultural elements is preserved, even if they are not fully compatible with the majority's culture.

Structuralism focuses on integration based on the structural elements of hosting countries' societies that generate differences in socioeconomic opportunities that affect integration, rather than the acculturation process itself. Structuralists emphasize that persistent disparities are generated due to different access to wealth, employment, housing, education, as well due to power relations, and thus inherent conflicts among the in-group and the out-groups emerge (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Portes and Borocz, 1989).

The segmented assimilation synthesis provides an alternative theory, complementing the assimilation theory since it highlights the minorities' adaptation to the new societies as a multistranded process. It provides three alternative possible patterns of adaptation; an upwards mobility pattern, indicating full cultural and economic integration into the hosting society, a downwards trajectory, indicating both cultural and economic integration into an underclass of the hosting society, and a pattern of economic integration accompanied by lagged cultural assimilation (deliberate or not) (Portes and Zhou, 1993).

Section 8.3: Domains of Integration

The achievement of an effective integration process is closely related to the operational definition of integration. This refers to key areas which enable not only members of minority groups, but also any

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individual or social group to properly engage in social life. Employment, housing, education, and health care are these areas/domains, in which successful integration can determine the overall outcomes of the process. These are demonstrated below, accompanied by examples of best practices in each domain.

Employment

Employment is a key domain to be addressed beyond the obvious necessity of making a living. An individual, and especially a member of a minority group, is influenced by their employment status in various ways that cannot be thoroughly discussed in this chapter. However, it is important to understand that being employed or not directly affects one's social life, as it determines the possible interactions (or their lack) with members of the hosting society, as well as limiting or expanding opportunities to become familiar with the country's language. Moreover, employment status can reinforce one's self-esteem and sense of security (Bloch 1999; Tomlinson and Egan 2002). Investment in newcomers' vocational training and education, though, can have two-way benefits, both for themselves and for the communities they live in.

Best practice example: Action Emploi Refugies (AER)- France

AER was initiated in 2016 as an online tool that brings together refugees and employers in France. It facilitates job research for refugees that have the right to work legally in France. Later on, it devel-

oped various other activities, such as education projects and communication events to create advocacy about integration. It also offers professional guidance for applicants in its offices in Bordeaux. AER collaborates with local and transnational authorities to ensure more opportunities will be available for vulnerable people.

So far 40.000 employers are subscribed in the platform, publishing more than 1.800.000 job vacancies. AER aims to find employment for 5.000-10.000 refugees yearly.

Housing

Housing is a cornerstone when it comes to the well-being of any person, both in physical and emotional terms. However, newcomers are usually far more vulnerable in this context. Proper housing refers to the amount of space in relation to the number of people living together, the quality, and the facilities included. Housing status also generates a range of social and cultural consequences. As hosting societies are already stratified, the stratum in which minorities are called to integrate is of great significance. For instance, when immigrant families are settled in highly degraded areas, there will be an impact on their safety and sense of security. (Ager & Strang, 2008)

Best practice example: Estia I/II - Greece

Estia program is being developed with the collaboration of UNHCR, NGOs and the Greek local and national authorities, such as municipalities and the

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Ministry of Migration and Asylum. It is co-financed by the European Union Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund. It offers two main benefits; housing options and a monthly benefit given to 188.858 refugees from 2017-2020. Estia stands out as one of the most innovative and effective integration programs in Europe because it ensures proper housing for people in need. These houses are spread within cities or villages, while refugees interact with locals and blend in their neighbourhoods.

Today the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has managed to provide 16.062 accommodation places under the ESTIA program. 93.6% of it is already occupied. Meanwhile, UNHCR provides 12.664 places, 97.3% of them occupied.

Education

Education is another necessary good, and access to it is obviously a prerequisite in order for anyone to acquire the necessary skills and competencies that enable them to enter the labour force. In broader terms, it is a prerequisite for entering society as active members. More precisely, schooling is a significant aspect of integration for “students”, regardless of their age, to interact with the hosting society and form bonds with it.

Best practice example: Welcome Student-Refugees Program – Belgium

In 2015 Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) launched a tailor-made admission program for refugees wanting to continue or start their tertiary education. It

aimed to give refugees the opportunity to rebuild their educational path and gain knowledge useful for their future careers in the EU or elsewhere. The program offers guidance, language support and flexible financial solutions specially designed for refugees.

Health care

Health care, constitutes a universal human right, as well as a major element of integration in the hosting societies. It is considered as an important area for minority members to engage with state services (Ager & Strang, 2008). Addressing this basic need successfully depends on the degree to which all aspects of providing this service are taken into account: provision of comprehensive information for the proper use of domestic health services, overcoming language difficulties, etc.

Best practice example: Tesserino STP (Stranieri Temporaneamente Presenti)- Italy

Italy issues to all non-EU citizens a health card that ensures migrants and immigrants access to basic healthcare services. Migrants are referred to local health offices and are provided with the necessary documentation. Cardholders (migrants) have the right to access the national healthcare system for urgent, essential or chronic care. Irregular immigrants have access to maternity care, care for children, vaccination and care for infectious diseases. Doctors and other health workers are not allowed to report irregular immigrants to the authorities. Meanwhile, Italy implemented a national campaign

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targeting migrants and immigrants all across the country to inform them about basic health problems and their rights to access healthcare.

Section 8.4: Civic integration in European countries

Civic integration refers to the integration processes of employment, civic engagement, and typical individual commitments, such as language learning and adopting the country's values. Civic integration includes the legal rights and status of foreigners. Every state may change the prerequisites for civic recognition and raise the expectations for new citizens (ex. Ask for a higher degree of language knowledge).

Civic access to foreigners has not always been the same. States frequently change their policies and usually make it harder for foreigners to gain civic recognition. From 1997 to 2009, EU countries raised language requirements and introduced various other tests and qualifications needed. This section demonstrates the evolution of selected European countries' policies on the matter.

Criticism of these systems stems from the fact that they try to control migrants entering the country by giving them less access and impose on them hazard bureaucratic procedures. Countries focus on integrating certain categories of migrants that can follow and access these procedures, leaving the remainder of migrants on the margins. (Goodman,

2010)

Greece & Italy

Since these countries have always been sending migrants to other countries, they have never prioritized policies of civic integration, even as they now become receiving countries. Access to these rights is so limited that trying to achieve the requirements seems pointless for the newcomers.

The Netherlands (Joppke, 2007)

The Netherlands' multiculturalism policy was thought to be pioneering in the 1980s and set the guidelines that many other countries followed. It aimed to emancipate migrants within their own institutional system organized and run by the Netherlands (ex. Ethnic schools, ethnic media etc.). However, it was not as successful as expected, since it did not manage to handle the unemployment of migrants who remained either totally out of the labour market or who survived on benefits. At the same time, school drop-out was 2.5 times higher for immigrant children (compared to native Dutch) and Dutch prisons were overpopulated by migrants (1997-32% of the total population)

As a result, officials turned their policy towards civic integration, leading immigrants to mainstream institutions accessible to everyone and aiming for language acquisition (thus achieving faster autonomy and employment). They introduced new legislation provisioning a 12-month integration course consisting of language classes, civic education,

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and preparation for the labour market. In 2006 this law was revised and required migrants to pay fully for the classes. They did not have to attend them strictly, but they had to pass the final exams. It was a more autonomous, individualistic approach to integration. Still, this civic integration policy leaves aside many families and individuals that simply cannot follow the process. Some 800.000 dropped out of the program. Another side effect is endogamy, which multiplies the problems of marginalization.

France

In 1998, France introduced half-day instruction classes for newcomers, and in 2003, it introduced a one-day civic class along with French language classes without any important success. For this reason, the government changed the policy for 10-year residence permits. Under this new policy, migrant wives could apply for a one-year permit and after two years they could re-apply for the residence of 10 years. To get the 10-year residence permit they had to pass language acquisition exams and provide travel documents and visas.

Germany

Since 1990 Germany has offered language classes to future migrants in their countries. Before arriving, they had to pass the test and then follow more classes in Germany (600 hours of language classes + 30 hours of civic classes). Attending classes was dually communicated as obligatory & non-obligatory at the same time. Sanctions were applied

to absenteeism — such as cuts in social benefits, non-renewal of temporary permits, or the denial of a permanent residence permit (except for migrant families).

Sweden (Valenta & Bunar, 2010)

Since 1975 Sweden has established integration policies based on equity & cooperation, social inclusion, and multiculturalism. However, by 1990 housing had been segregated, unemployment rates for migrants were high, and certain urban areas had been stigmatized. Since then, governments have launched wide social programs to tackle these problems in twenty-four neighbourhoods in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo. The central government helps local authorities integrate migrants and provide them with education. The scheme includes language and civic courses and a short internship. If someone is not attending, local authorities decide on the sanctions.

A more modern approach to this housing policy allows migrants to choose their housing from among different places provided by the authorities. Asylum seekers are placed in collective reception facilities or they can receive a benefit and find their own housing independently. They are also granted language courses and work permits.

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Section 8.5: Common European integration policies

The European Union has been implementing common integration strategies since 1999, through the application of the Treaty of Amsterdam. This first common scheme lasted until 2004 when the EU shaped the Common Agenda for Integration. It included a range of supportive mechanisms that served for the facilitation of integration and knowledge exchange through 2010, when a European Council agreement to increase funding of integration processes for the period 2011-2015 was enacted. In 2016, amidst the unprecedented influx of immigrants and refugees a new Action Plan on Immigration accommodated support of integration.

Since the beginning of 2021, the EU has launched a new Integration Plan for a six-year period. In this context, the Commission considers integration as a major priority, acknowledging the need to tackle rising racism and xenophobia. The plan takes into account that in 2021 more than 22 million third-country nationals are residing legally in Member States. It is noteworthy there is great diversity among member states' implementation of integration strategies, and that the Commission's goal is to assist and homogenize integration strategies.

This new proposal consists of the following 4 main pillars of action:

Education and training

Almost a fifth of the migrants entering and living in

the EU have not completed secondary education, while thousands of children remain excluded from the educational system. The EU is aiming to create an inclusive multicultural educational environment by giving teachers and professors the right tools and guidance. For this purpose, the European Commission has taken steps to:

- Publish new toolkits
- Offer targeted support to education workers
- Organize peer counselling to support member states
- Target training for youth workers
- Create a transparent recognition process for knowledge
- Collaborate with member states to create a comprehensive learning program
- Provide employment and skills

One-third of the migrants entering the EU are highly skilled and end up being overqualified for the jobs they usually find. Overqualification renders their skills less valuable. Many of them also remain jobless due to racism, discrimination, or simply high unemployment in the hosting country. Female migrants very often are obligated to stay at home to look after their children, as they are not perceived as equal breadwinners within their family.

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The EU has put forward a system that takes advantage of skilled workers and gives equal opportunities to women and men. The Commission has taken steps to:

- Facilitate the validation of existing skills
- Provide information and promote entrepreneurship
- Work with social and economic partners
- Enable migrants to make full use of EU funding
- Facilitate access to the healthcare system
- Create info material and health promotion programs especially for migrants
- Guarantee access to mental health facilities

Health care

Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right granted to all people. Many migrants especially in transit countries like Greece or Italy are not granted entrance to hospitals or any other public healthcare facilities. Pregnant women are extremely fragile and very often they have no access to gynaecologists or maids. Migrants are at high risk of developing mental health problems due to trauma from this extremely inhumane treatment or from other experiences they have gone through. Addressing this matter, the Commission has taken steps to:

- Provide training to healthcare workers dealing with delicate cases of migrants with traumatic experiences
- Enhance working independently with Member States to ensure affordable housing
- Fight discrimination in the housing

Housing

Safe and stable housing is an important factor when it comes to integration. Migrants should have a safe home from which to develop relationships with the local community. The EU aims to avoid the ghettoization of minority populations within Member States. Secure housing ensures that migrants stay away from illegal activities and raise their families in a healthy environment. There are various methods to access safe housing. In recent years, the EU has tried various methods to secure housing for migrants, such as partnership with locals, co-housing and linking housing with employment and social services. The EU's main goal is to grant autonomous housing to migrants, speeding up the integration process. For this reason, it issued policies which:

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market by promoting mutual learning among Member States

- Promote autonomous housing

Section 8.6: Summary

This chapter discusses the social integration processes of culturally different groups, especially those of migrant and refugee decent in their host societies. On the one hand this chapter covers integration policies' experience on the international level of the European Union, and on the other hand it focuses on the regional, national and local level of these policies' application.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

1. Find specific examples of housing, healthcare and education/training support to migrant and refugee financed by a. the European Union b. other international organizations (e.g. UNHCR, IOM) and prepare a 10 min presentation to be held in class.

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Media coverage of vulnerability

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CHAPTER 9: MEDIA COVERAGE OF VULNERABILITY

Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realise our need of one another”

By Desmond Tutu (1931 – 2021), a South African Anglican bishop and theologian



Source: Stock snaps

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CHAPTER 9: MEDIA COVERAGE OF VULNERABILITY

Aim

This chapter discusses how vulnerable groups are represented in the media.

Expected Learning Outcomes

To gain a deep understanding of the main concepts related to media coverage of vulnerability

To provide detailed information about media representations of vulnerable groups

To gain an understanding of the diversity of vulnerable groups and their sub-groups

To understand good practices and capacities for inclusive coverage of vulnerable groups.

Keywords

Media representation, vulnerable groups, journalism

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CHAPTER 9: MEDIA COVERAGE OF VULNERABILITY

Section 9.1: Introduction

Vulnerable groups are those who are socially excluded and have limited access to information and other tools necessary for them to act as full members of society. This leads to a situation where vulnerable groups do not participate the public conversation and they are not the creators of media content. As outsiders, vulnerable groups are poorly covered in media and when they are, they are represented in prejudicial, coloured, and even negative ways. Vulnerable groups are rarely shown by the media as normal citizens among others.

Media plays a complex but important role in the ideological constructions of refugees, (Don & Lee, 2014: 689), women, persons with disabilities, minority groups, etc. (lähteitä). Representation refers to how media presents gender, age, ethnicity, national and regional identity, social issues, and events to an audience (BBC, 2021). In sections 1.2 and 1.3 we describe the role of media and journalism in covering vulnerable groups. In section 1.4 we will present some examples of the problematic media representations of vulnerable groups.

In just a few decades media has changed because of the progression of media technology and mainstreaming of social media. Professional media is no longer the distributor or the sole owner of information, and the internet and social media has partly placed journalism into the hands of citizens. The information flood easily leads to disinformation, inaccuracy, and even hate speech. Journalists and

content creators need to pay more attention to creating inclusive media content. Section 1.5. includes a description of capacities and practices of digital journalism that could facilitate the integration process of vulnerable groups.

Section 9.2: The role of journalism in covering vulnerable groups

It is well known that film, TV, advertising, and news images provide many of the cultural representations of vulnerable groups. Stereotypical, prejudiced, and one-sided ways of representing vulnerable groups in the media stimulate the audience to create various generalizations about different vulnerable groups and to label these groups. The problems of media misrepresentation and public conversation framing affect the news coverage of vulnerable groups, and research has shown how the media can report about certain groups in a negative or positive light. Examples are endless: refugees are represented as criminals (Council of Europe, 2017), disability is only a medical or social welfare problem (Briat, 2013), etc.

Media holds a powerful position in building democracy and social change. Vulnerable groups like disabled people, refugees, minority groups, and so on, still experience many barriers (occupational, educational, communication) that limit their role in society and keep them from acting as full members of society. The news topics, images, and stories that the media tell, shape opinions and help define

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the role of vulnerable groups in society (Happer et al., 2013). Mass media has been shown to be the main source of information about vulnerable groups, especially for those who don't have direct contact with them. Media exposure can also act as an extension or substitute for real-life contact and thus operate as a catalyst for tolerance toward that group (Jacobs, 2020, 2).

Exceptional situations such as epidemics, crises, and natural disasters make the headlines and are the basis for compelling storytelling in media. These situations sometimes put a certain already vulnerable group in the spotlight and not always in a positive way. Since the representatives of vulnerable groups are not seen in the media as often as so-called average citizens, the risk of generalization and stereotyping rises (Kotilainen et al. 2021) (Soto-Perez-de-Celis, 2020).

The issue is not only the stories and images that the media present. In many societies, media content creators are representatives of the majority (male, caucasian, middle-aged, etc.) and their expected target audience is, sometimes subconsciously, like them. This creates a situation where the entire media appears one-sided and causes alienation and exclusion. Without careful analysis, it is difficult to recognize these hidden unbalances, and therefore it is important to ask vulnerable groups themselves how they feel about their media representations.

Media professionals have a responsibility to create

a multivocal environment where different kinds of people are seen in different roles, vulnerable groups get the opportunity to speak for themselves, the language and terminology is respectful and inclusive and they are not limited as representatives of a certain vulnerable group (Dunford, 2007).

Section 9.3: Vulnerability in film and television

News media contain more than just "hard news". They also feature human interest stories, reviews about other media content and cultural reporting which affects the overall representation of vulnerable groups (Baker, 2013). The one-dimensional image of a human in films is a global problem. It has a long history that relates to power structures, discrimination, racism, homophobia and transphobia, and numerous other ways to silence different groups and deny their human rights (Annenberg Foundation, 2020). The film and television industry is one of the most prolific in creative cultures and in many ways reflects and shapes society and culture (UNESCO, 2017). In the modern digital world where all media content is available on mobile devices, it would be a fallacy to think that only journalism and news media shape the way we see vulnerable groups. All media content we see, hear and consume affects the way we define vulnerable groups.

The imbalance in film and television representation stems from inequality inside the industry. Accord-

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ing to UNESCO's 2018 Global Report, "Re-Shaping Cultural Policies" minorities are under-represented in key creative positions and have less access to funding and resources. (UNESCO, 2017) (UCLA, 2020) Studies show that the imbalance and under-representation of women, people of color (POC), and other minorities in the film and television industry is bound to have an impact on the content of artistic expression and cultural production (UNESCO, 2017).

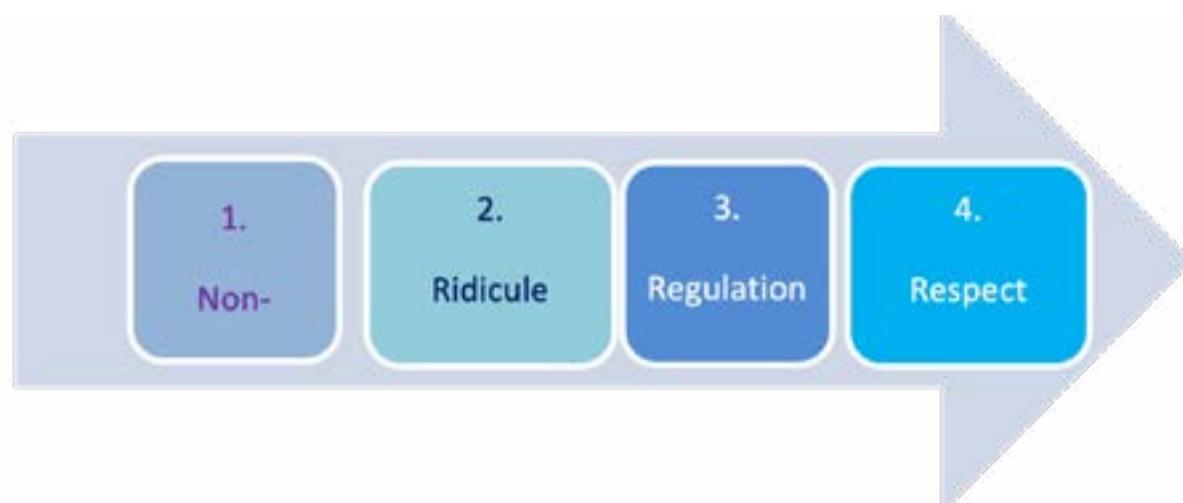
When vulnerable groups are marginalized in the content creation process, it impacts the degree of diversity in characters and casting. Audiences already demand diverse content but the industry has been slow to change. In recent years the diversity in protagonists has increased but the stereotypes in the way these groups are portrayed have stayed the same. When minorities and vulnerable groups do not control their narrative, the storylines may lack authenticity and may be written stereotypically. (UCLA, 2020)

Section 9.4: Media representation of vulnerable groups

Each vulnerable group has its own identity. Media plays a significant role, not only in presenting these groups but also in shaping public attitudes towards them. The context in which vulnerable groups are presented defines and moulds their image.

In the late 1960's C. Clark defined the four portrayal stages of media representation for minority groups (Clark, 1969).

The first stage refers to complete exclusion, where the members of a group are rarely seen in the media. The second stage refers to negative and stereotypical portrayals where they are often the object of humour. In the third stage, the group is presented in limited but socially acceptable roles. In the fourth stage, minority groups are shown in both positive and negative contexts, in everyday life parallel to all other people. (Clark, 1969) Even though media coverage of many vulnerable groups has increased significantly in past decades, there



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are still some groups that have been left behind. Clark's definition does not apply similarly to all groups but it gives a historical perspective and a framework for the development of the media's representation of vulnerable groups. In this section, we present examples of vulnerable groups and how media has affected their representation, and how they differ from each other.

9.4.1 LGBTI- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Individuals

LGBTI people were barely visible in the media for a long time. When they were, the portrayal of LGBTI communities in media was cruel and homophobic. For example, LGBTI individuals have been presented as visibly and behaviourally different, morally corrupted, and mentally unstable, which has led to reinforcement of stereotypes and stigmas (Mediasmart, 2021). The LGBTI community has also been framed as a group with legitimate demands and as victims of discrimination and physical violence. (Jacobs, 2020, 8) In recent years LGBTI people have gained visibility in media and the tone is less negative and more inclusive. It can be stated that media and journalism have shifted from problematizing LGBTI people to problematizing homophobia and transphobia (Jacobs, 2020, 20). According to studies, the LGBTI communities have reached Clark's 4th stage of respect (Amber et al., 2008) (Mediasmart, 2021). Even though LGBTI people now see their reflection in media mainly in a positive light, there are still issues.

LGBTI communities should not be treated as one

group but, notably, this group has distinct characteristics (Jacobs, 2020, 9). Different subgroups (gay, lesbian, transgender, etc.) face different stereotypes and prejudices. There is also an imbalance in media visibility: Gay men are quite a visible group in media where transgender and lesbians are much less seen (Jacobs, 2020, 9).

In mass media, it is important that LGBTI people be seen and given a voice. Instead of passive representation, there should be active news representation where individuals are taken seriously and are being recognized as news sources. LGBTI individuals are at risk of being reduced to their group membership but when they are addressed as "experts" they can promote the diverse nature of the community.

9.4.2 People with disabilities

Neutral portrayals of people with disabilities in media is lacking (Road map to inclusion). There has been limited advancement in the number of representations of disability in the media overall, but the absence of diverse people with disabilities in daily media content is still conspicuous (Inequality in 1,300 Popular Films). When people with disabilities are represented in mainstream media, they tend to be treated as stereotypes. Most commonly this group of people is represented as victims of their disability, heroes who overcome their disability, scrounger or a cheat, or childlike fool who is laughed at and abused (Roadmap) (Briat, 2013)

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(Basselín, 2020).

Some groups of disabled people are more visible than others and public opinion towards disabled sub-groups varies. Disability in media commonly refers to people with a physical or sensory impairment (Briant, 2013). People with ‘invisible’ impairments (mental health, chronic pain, etc.) are under-represented and more likely to be presented in a negative light (Briant, 2013).

The number of disability-related articles has increased within past decades but the tone has changed depending upon the contemporary political debate or agenda. People with disabilities are often used as a political tool when debating health services and welfare policies. Disability is a social construct and linked to control of changing benefits, and thus requires a definition of “who is disabled” (Briant, 2013). In this context, people with disabilities were excluded from the conversation and, for example, divided into ‘deserving’ and ‘non-deserving’ groups of welfare recipients.

Demeaning and pitying vocabulary is still used in media even though the awareness of its impact has increased. Phrases such as “suffer from”, and “wheelchair-bound” are still used in journalism (Burns, 2010). These kinds of words limit and distort the understanding of what it is like to be a person with a disability. Media has a responsible role in articulating definitions of disabled people and addressing the topics with relevant vocabulary without creating alienation, exclusion, and inequality.

9.4.3 Refugees and asylum seekers

Media played a central role in framing refugees’ and migrants’ arrivals in 2015 as a ‘crisis’ for Europe. While migration and population flows have a long history in Europe, 2015 was a game-changer for the European media due to the explosively increased need for information about the topic (Council of Europe, 2017). The narrative about refugees and asylum seekers changed across Europe from compassionate and empathetic to suspicious and even hostile. After several years, the media still faces challenges to safeguard fair and inclusive journalism about refugees and asylum seekers (The European Journalism Observatory, 2015).

Refugees and asylum seekers are often portrayed as a group of unknown and unskilled outsiders who are either vulnerable or dangerous (Council of Europe, 2017). Visually, they are expected to look poor, ragged, and hungry to fit the normalized representation of suffering refugees. The representations of asylum seekers in media images, where their habitus is well-dressed and clean raise doubts about their motives and raise insecurities and fears (Kotilainen et al. 2021, 10).

When refugees and asylum seekers are depicted as a large, anonymous group, the public response is more likely to be negative (Aalberg & Beyer, 2015). The narratives in media coverage are very limited. The predominant coverage of refugee and asylum seekers is in the context of control of borders and security, consequences of immigration, and human-

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itarian aid. Even though there is a large amount of coverage, and the discussion is vivid, the refugees themselves are often presented without individual characteristics and are rarely allowed to speak for themselves. (Council of Europe, 2017) In reality, refugees and asylum seekers include millions of people from different countries, societies, languages, and thus countless amounts of stories and experiences (Baker, 2013, 123).

Section 9.5: Good practices for inclusive media

“Imagine the changes in the newsroom and civic culture if our classroom corps of student journalists could land their first jobs armed with a greater knowledge of the ethics of nonwestern, nonwhite cultures, and a more informed understanding of people outside their own comfort zones.” (Burns, 2016)

Media professionals select the content and frame of the news, and by doing so they construct reality for those who read, watch, or listen to their stories (Burns, 2016). Better accessibility to media and the rise of social media platforms has decreased the level of media democracy and equality. Audiences are asking for diversity but the media is reacting slowly. As presented in this chapter, there is a sufficient amount of research material, literature, and statistics to show that change is needed, requested and the media would even profit from it.

Constructive journalism (or solution journalism) is based on reporting solution-focused content, instead of stressing negative and conflict-based topics. It aims to present a fair, accurate, and contextualized picture of the world without emphasizing problems. (Constructive Institute, 2021). According to the Constructive Institute (2021), the constructive journalism practice offers an approach where journalists consider more carefully how they construct their stories and pay attention to the impact of their work on public opinion. From the perspective of vulnerable groups, this means avoiding generalizations, categorizations, exaggerations, and stigmatization of whole groups of people.

Public journalism and community media aim to engage the public in media content creation. Direct participation through community media provides an opportunity for representation to those groups that are neglected and misrepresented in the mainstream media (EFJ, 2018). This practice offers, especially to minority groups, a tool for community development. Vulnerable groups that are rarely seen or heard in the mainstream media can speak for themselves, contribute to the public conversation, and raise the topics that are relevant to them (EFJ, 2018).

Additionally, multilingualism and inclusive illustration have a direct impact on experienced inclusion. The interaction between journalists and vulnerable groups is another key element of inclusive and diverse media. Discussion forums and social media offer a platform for discussion but access alone

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does not guarantee equal participation. Vulnerable groups and minorities face abusive and threatening comments more often. Therefore, keeping the forums free from hate speech is an important challenge for journalists and media organizations (EFJ, 2018).

Section 9.6: Summary

In the digital era, it is unacceptable for media to fail to represent the diversity of the population. Vulnerable groups and their diverse qualities must be addressed in media more holistically. The change starts from inside the industry by hiring and giving members of vulnerable groups equal opportunity for professional development and owning, leading, and participating in the content creation process. This leads to a more diverse and multi-voiced media where vulnerable groups can become active and equal members of society.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Activity 1

Create a portrayal of yourself (writing, drawing, mindmap, collage, etc.). Define yourself in terms of ethnicity, gender, appearance, social status, age, religion, and any other means necessary.

Scroll through your daily media platforms: social media, news media, film, television, radio, magazines, and other media platforms you use.

Questions for discussion or writing:

- Did you see reflections of yourself or representations of people similar to you on the media platforms?
- How were they presented and how did the representation make you feel?
- How would you prefer to be represented in media?

Activity 2

One reason that there is low coverage of vulnerable groups, is journalists' difficulty to approach the interviewee with appropriate and respectful vocabulary. Search for examples of both negative and positive vocabulary by analysing media content, reading additional literature, or interviewing members of minority groups.

Questions for discussion or writing:

- Did you find contradictions or inconsistencies in the use of terms?
- Do you find it difficult to approach people outside your comfort zone? Why?
- How could you as a journalist interview and create content more inclusively and

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constructively?

sition or as active members of society?

Activity 3

Choose a vulnerable group and search for articles or other media content (5-10) of your language, related to this group. Analyse the materials and concentrate on the vocabulary, framing, and tone of the article.

- How would you write about these people?

Questions for discussion or writing:

- What is the media representation of the vulnerable group in question in the materials you have selected?
- Is the approach negative or positive and how?
- Is there a link to a public conversation topic, a current political issue, or an exceptional situation?

Activity 4

Search for examples (5-10) of media content where a member of a vulnerable group is represented as an individual and given a voice. Define the roles and positions in the society of the people presented in your materials.

Questions for discussion or writing:

- Are the roles stereotyped?
- Are the people presented in a weak po-

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CHAPTER 10: MEDIA COVERAGE AND 'FAKE NEWS' ON VULNERABLE GROUPS: VICIOUS CYCLE OF DISINFORMATION AND DISCRIMINATION

“Those who lack the courage will always find a philosophy to justify it”

*By Albert Camus (1913 – 1960), a French philosopher, author, dramatist and
journalist*



Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/>

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Aim:

The aim of this chapter is to clarify how media coverage of minority groups create a vicious cycle of disinformation, how disinformation causes discrimination and a vicious cycle of violence, and how news on vulnerable groups should be covered for a healthy society.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

To gain a deep understanding of the main concepts such as disinformation, vulnerable groups, and vicious cycles of violence by

Developing a critical understanding of media coverage of vulnerable groups

Exemplifying how disinformation cause a gap in society

Detecting disinformation and false content on vulnerable groups

Keywords:

Disinformation, discrimination, fake news, vicious cycle of violence, news coverage

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Section 10.1: Introduction

On September 2, 2015, to emigrate to Europe, the Kurdi Family tried to leave Turkey in a small plastic boat in an attempt to reach the Greek island of Kos. Tragically, their boat capsized and Alan Kurdi drowned. Press photographer Nilüfer Demir took a picture of the three-year-old child. The photograph was uniquely poignant in that it showed only the body of Alan wearing blue pants and a red t-shirt, lying lifeless and facedown at the water’s edge. Alan’s mother and brother also lost their lives that day, the only survivor from the family was his father. When Nilüfer Demir was taking Alan’s picture, she didn’t know what the tragedy would engender. The death Alan Kurdi made people aware of the Syrian Civil War and the refugee crisis as a problem in imminent need of a resolution (Erbaysal Filibeli, 2017). However, this press photograph did not solve the conflict in society.

Every day we see news on attacks against refugees or some other vulnerable groups. In this chapter, we will discuss, “who fires up hatred against others? What is the main reason for those attacks? Who or what should we blame?”

Section 10.2: What does disinformation cause?

Since 2011, when the war began in Syria, more than 5.5 million people migrated to other countries. Ac-

1 The documentary can be watched via the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Myf2kYnoxgs>

ording to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) data on Syrian Refugees, in Turkey alone 3,671,811 registered Syrian refugees are living (April 21, 2021). Many of those asylum seekers try to find themselves a place in other countries. This has caused a border problem between Turkey and the European Union. Just before the World Health Organization declared the global pandemic, the Turkish Government opened its borders for refugees to leave. News about Turkey’s opening of the border with Greece to let refugees pass to Europe dominated news agendas all around the world (“Europe Is Nicer,” 2020).

In Turkish media, illegal human trafficking and asylum seekers resisting crossing borders were covered immensely. At the same time, the international news media covered how people (especially far right-wing supporters) were unwelcoming toward refugees. On both sides of the borders, news was biased. Then the pandemic was declared, and this border crisis lost its agenda. Despite the pandemic, it is clear that refugee crises will always be a hot topic especially for politicians. For this reason, there is a lot of disinformation spread on social media regarding refugees.

The Turkey based fact-checking organization, Teyit has collected valuable data on disinformation about Syrian refugees. The organization also shot a short news documentary called “Syrian Refugees: The Usual Suspects.”¹ They identified and analysed five categories of fake news; adminis-

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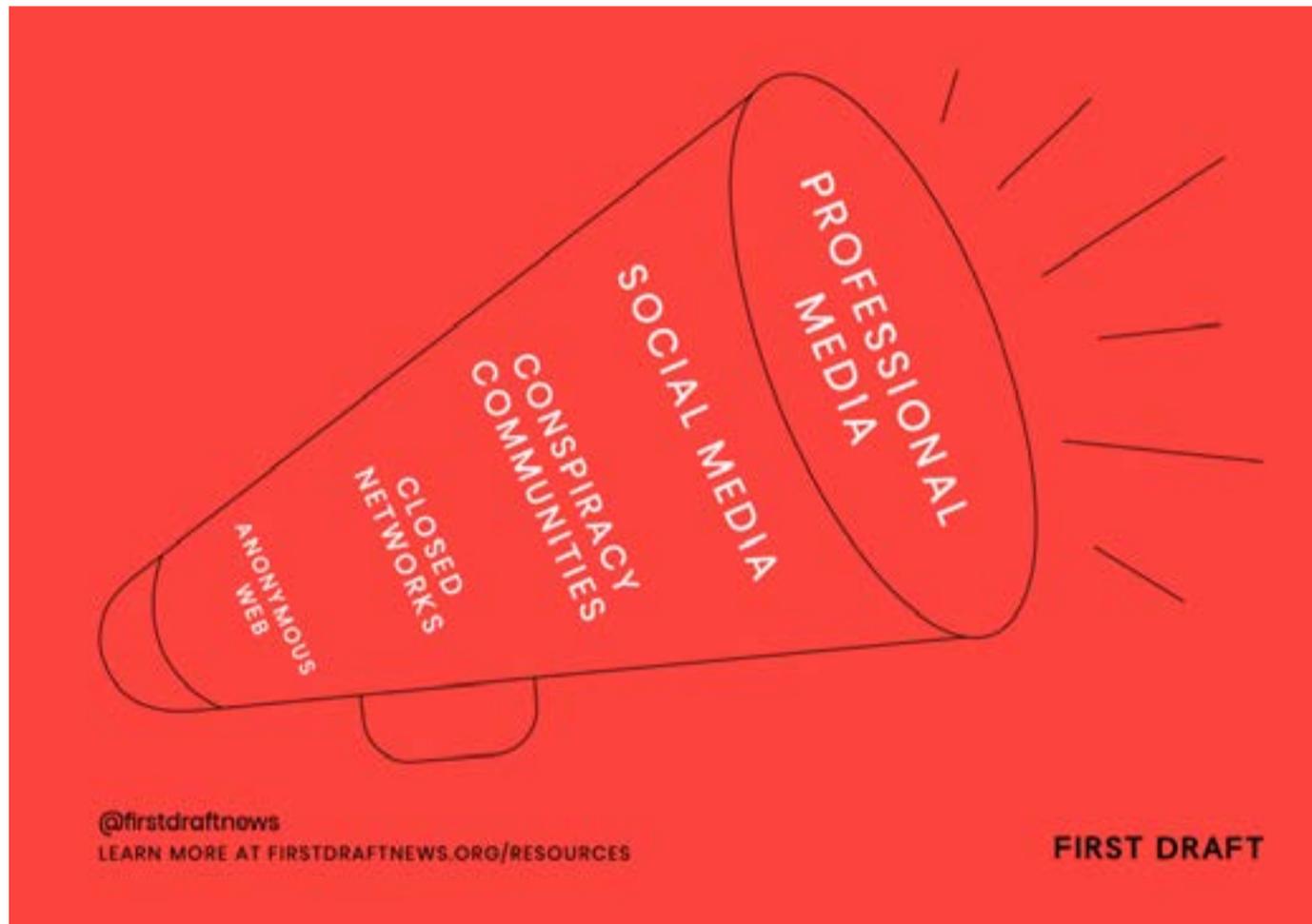
trative and economic threat, cultural or religious threat, crimes committed by Syrians, education and health, other (Erbaysal Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021). Comments below those fake news posts shows that people mostly see Syrians as a problem or a threat, and clearly disinformation on Syrian refugees fires up hatred within society (Erbaysal Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021). Most dangerously, sometimes news media cover fake stories on social platforms. For example, on June 29, 2019, because of disinformation spread on WhatsApp about an alleged harassment of a 12-year-old Turkish child by a 12-year-old Syrian refugee, an angry mob was mobilized and they demolished and vandalized shops and apartments belonging to Syrians. In a very short time, claims of the alleged harassment spread on different social media platforms with hashtags such as “#Idon’tWantSyriansInMyCountry” and “#SyriansGoAway!” (“İkitelli’de yaşanan gerilim,” 2019; “Küçükçekmece’de mültecilere saldırı,” 2019; “Uluslararası mülteci hakları derneği,” 2019). Eventually, a wave of disinformation about Syrians spread on the websites of news outlets. In this way, social media fuelled fake news about Syrian refugees. With this example and many other examples, it is clearly seen that false information about vulnerable group as refugees causes a vicious cycle of violence. Johan Galtung (2004) indicates that direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence compose three corners of a triangle (paras. 1-6). Galtung defines direct violence as visible, while cultural and structural violence are invisible. He argues that cultural and structural violence are most dangerous, as they reinforce indirect violence

and by doing so they cause direct violence. Cultural violence relies on beliefs and understandings that make direct and structural violence look or feel “right” — or at least not wrong. Structural violence is systematic violence like the limited access to basic needs of humans such as education, health-care services, and legal services (Galtung, 2004; Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 35, 42) — or in the case of refugees, the systematic violation of the right to asylum. Disinformation and harassment is a perfect example because it represents both direct and indirect violence. In this example, disinformation spread on WhatsApp can be defined as a form of cultural violence since it triggers people and makes them feel like direct violence is normal. The indirect form of violence causes a direct form of violence. For this reason, the most dangerous form of violence might be defined as cultural violence that might cause structural changes and direct violence by seeding negative perceptions and/or ideologies (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Erbaysal Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021).

When the news outlets cover stories on false claims, by disseminating false information on vulnerable groups, they strengthen cultural violence repeatedly. However, in the digital news ecosystem, especially for digital news editors who are in a rush to get clicks, if something is viral, it is worth to be covered (Erbaysal Filibeli, 2018). It can be said that there is no time to think about its short and more importantly long-term consequences.

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The illustrated trumpet of amplification prepared by First-Draft shows how false content can travel across different platforms. It makes its way from anonymous web posts through private messaging channels, then spreads to conspiracy communities and then to the most popular social platforms. At the end, journalists can amplify stories either by debunking or reporting false information.

Section 10.3: Refugees as potential covid-19 carriers: How to cover claims against refugees/legal migrants?

The first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020, was a year full of fake news. Especially false information on what caused the pandemic, how to cure Covid-19, and how to protect yourself from the virus spreading all around the world. World Health Organization used the term infodemic to define the dense circulation of false information on Covid-19.

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During the pandemic, not only was health-related false information on Covid-19 shared, but false claims about the carriers and causes of the fast spread of the virus were also shared as well. In some countries, populist, mostly conservative politicians used the infodemic as an excuse to suppress journalists and social media platforms. However, creating new laws and regulations or declaring a state of emergency were violations of human rights and did not repair this very damaged information sphere. This information pollution created a social gap between nations, races, and social classes (Erbaysal Filibeli, 2021).

From the USA to Europe, and in many other countries, illegal immigrants and asylum seekers have been accused of spreading the virus. Because COVID-19 tested more refugees than anyone else, not only with a health crisis but also with a socioeconomic crisis. At the same time, the fear of COVID-19 accelerated xenophobia, racism, and stigma. For example, in Italy, "fake news" fuelled anti-immigrant sentiment and exacerbated anti-refugee propaganda circulating online (Lucifora, 2021). A research report by the European Policy Center shows that in Spain, Italy, Czech Republic and Germany, refugees and minorities were accused of spreading the virus and not respecting social distancing measures.

Many countries with low-capacity health systems have gone down the path of implementing rather harsh COVID-19 policies. As a result of home isolation applied to citizens, border crossings closed

to avoid further weakening health systems and spreading of the virus, refugees have experienced a great deal of stress and friction with state authorities.

Refugee camps were a major concern for public health and human rights experts even before COVID-19. In March 2020, a large number of coronavirus cases were detected among the nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees who left Myanmar and moved to Bangladesh. In Germany, refugees faced crowded living conditions as they applied for asylum. More recently, in the town of Ellwangen, a refugee shelter housing 606 people from all around the world, saw a serious increase in COVID-19 cases, with the number of cases rising to 251 in just five days (İnceoğlu, 2021).

Many countries have tightened their border controls to prevent the spread of Covid-19. On March 27, 2020, more than 5,000 refugees who were waiting to cross the border from Turkey to Greece in Pazarkule were sent to guesthouses due to the Covid 19 outbreak. Because of the open border policy of Turkey and the reaction of Greek security forces, thousands of refugees became homeless, broke, and unemployed (Candan, 2020). Greece stepped up migration restrictions, and since March 2020 abandoned hundreds of migrants at sea. The United Nations (UN) and rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented illegal pushbacks of irregular migrants and accuse Greece of using the pandemic as an excuse (Kingsley & Shoumali, 2020; Valadares, 2020; HRW, 2020; McKernan, 2021).

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Just before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Syrian refugee issue was at the top of the media agenda. When the pandemic was declared, refugees suddenly became invisible in the mainstream media of Turkey. In Turkey, some refugees fear being accused of carrying and spreading the virus or being reported to the Home Office and deported. Turkey is home to more registered Syrian refugees than any other country. Refugees are cited in the news as the source of problems such as economic burdens, rent increases, labor losses, and cheap labor. News sources are selected from either police officials or citizens of the Republic of Turkey. So, Syrians are represented in the media as a threat to the nation and/or a problem, especially when it comes to their socioeconomic position. Media representation often lack depth, are disconnected from context, and define refugees through negative traits and words. In general, news about refugees is presented in a format that does not exceed the standard judgments, lacks depth, is disconnected from context (İnceoğlu 2020, Erbaysal Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021).

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) shared concerns and procedures for protecting rights of refugees – migrants must be seen as both potential victims and as an integral part of any effective public health response. Implementation policies must comply with effective public health strategies and prioritize the protection of laws in accordance with international law and human rights obligations. In this context, it is vital that the restrictions are applied in a proportionate and non-discriminatory way, without vio-

lating human rights and the right to seek asylum, limiting the freedom of movement. For refugees, it should be made very clear that they will not have security concerns due to COVID-19, they will not be discriminated against, and that the quarantine is not for criminal purposes but for the purpose of protecting themselves and their relatives. On the other hand refugees are still the subjects of misinformation spread on social media. For this reason, international organizations should launch widespread campaigns to combat misinformation and draw a reliable roadmap for refugees on how to protect themselves from coronavirus (İnceoğlu, 2021).

The media helps draw the boundaries of the facts for us, construct identities and create a social map, while providing visual indicators that allow for the formation of meaning schemes (İnceoğlu, 2021). OHCHR (n.d.) underlines the importance of adequate, affordable, truly universal, health coverage. As OHCHR determined while reporting on Covid-19, the inclusion of all migrants and marginalized groups is necessary in all aspects of prevention, detection, equitable access to treatment, care or containment measures, and safe working conditions. To prevent information pollution, it is necessary to disseminate risk communication messages explaining how to protect everyone within all communities, and to make these messages understandable and accessible by all. These messages that have critical importance should be available in different languages and media formats.

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Section 10.4: Summary

In all these examples, false claims that are covered repeatedly by media outlets might be defined as a form of cultural violence, since those claims create discrimination against vulnerable groups (such as refugees). In addition, measures taken by countries such as abandoning refugees at the sea are structural violence. At this point, fake news creates a vicious cycle of violence. We now return to the main question of this chapter: how we should cover false claims against vulnerable groups?

Three-year-old Alan Kurdi's picture raised awareness about the refugee crisis, however as mentioned, the unexpected and somehow positive effect of this tragic accident created an opportunity for false claims. The fight against disinformation is necessary, but it is very complicated, since anonymity and invisibility on digital platforms encourage people to disseminate all kinds of false content (Erbaysal Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021). For this reason, journalists need to report fake news with care. When covering fake news, journalists should be sure about the source of the content. They need to fact-check false claims/information and in order not to cause major problems in the society, they should cover false claims by giving all the necessary information in different languages using platforms for informative content that are accessible to everyone.

First Draft listed tips for journalists on how to cover Covid-19 (Kwan, Wardle & Webb, 2020). To keep the

digital sphere free from infodemic misinformation, and in some cases free from discrimination and violation of human rights, giving accurate information is crucial and media professionals should work hard to sustain a healthy information sphere. By helping vulnerable groups, media professionals give a voice to voiceless (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005). Instead of pumping up false claims, they need to talk about equal access to health care, shelter, vaccines, human rights, freedom of movement, etc.

It is in the interest of all humanity to ensure the safety of refugees worldwide, share the responsibility to protect them equally on a global scale, and to respect international human rights, refugee law, and human dignity. Not only media professionals, but all who produce content and share it on social networks should act responsibly.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

- How does disinformation/misinformation spread on social media?
- How should journalists act when they see false claims on the web?
- Should journalists cover disinformation on vulnerable groups? If so, how they

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should cover it?

- How should professional journalists fight against disinformation?
- What kinds of characteristics should be prioritized in the news about vulnerable groups?

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“We are reminded that, in the fleeting time we have on this Earth, what matters is not wealth, or status, or power, or fame, but rather how well we have loved and what small part we have played in making the lives of other people better”

By Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a white rectangular sign. The sign has the words "Immigration Service" written in a black, cursive font. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or service center with orange and white elements.

Immigration
Service

Source: Stock snaps

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Aim

The aim of this chapter is to examine the term of cultural mediation and the way it is applied to professional practices that contribute to the integration of refugee populations

First, the terms of cultural mediation and cultural mediator will be presented and briefly analysed. The challenges involved in the process of mediation will be examined focusing on the importance of inter-cultural communication. Then, the transformation of cultural mediation into a professional field will be examined and the varied fields where professional cultural mediation is necessary will be presented. The challenges, skills and attitudes involved in becoming a professional cultural mediator will be examined, focusing on the need for a consistent and systematic training of cultural mediators.

Finally, the issue of mediating the needs of refugee populations will be addressed. Refugees should not be expected to conform to the cultural practices of the host population and abandon their own cultural heritage in order to be accepted. A growing body of literature can guide cultural mediators on the pitfalls and challenges involved.

Expected learning outcomes

- To gain a basic understanding of the notion of cultural mediation and its importance in contemporary societies.
- More specifically to understand the emerging field of professional cultural mediation
- To develop a general outline of the skill sets that distinguish professional cultural mediators from volunteers
- To gain an understanding of the complex strategies involved in assisting, as a professional cultural mediator, refugee populations.

Keywords

Cultural mediation, cultural mediators, intercultural communication, interpretation, professional mediators, refugees

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Section 11.1: Introduction to cultural mediation

The interaction of different cultures is an integral part of contemporary societies and interconnected global economies. These interactions pave the way for a better world, built around common values and shared beliefs that contribute to overcoming existing conflicts. However, cultural interaction does not always occur in an egalitarian setting and all the social groups involved are not equally protected. New forms of vulnerability arise as persons migrate either in groups or alone. In the case of refugees, a host-dominant culture comes into contact with social groups that may have been forced to migrate and may have experienced traumatic events. Refugee populations suffer from a lack of resources (monetary and otherwise) and face difficulties in adapting to new environments. Humanitarian values as well as international human rights treaties, dictate the need for assisting refugee populations and other vulnerable social groups.

Cultural mediation bridges the gap between people from different cultures. It is a core part of a comprehensive strategy that aims to boost social cohesion and substantially improve the lives of refugee populations.

What are the fundamental principles and requirements of cultural mediation?

Cultural mediation highlights the importance of cultural fusion as a way to overcome the notion of assimilation/acculturation. As Croucher & Kramer

note, “cultural fusion involves both acculturation and cultural maintenance” (2017: 102). Refugees, national minorities, or any other group that comes into contact with the culture of a host majority population, cannot simply abandon their culture, its values, and practices. Any demand to do so, raises barriers and hinders the integration within a new cultural context (McAllum, 2020: 367). The approach of cultural fusion incorporates this fundamental understanding of the importance of cultural heritage. Cultural fusion, in that sense, “represents this blending of learning new behaviors/traits (acculturation) and maintaining old behaviors/traits” (Croucher & Kramer, 2017: 102). The maintenance of a cultural heritage, the continuation of cultural practices (rituals, customs, commemorations) is not a luxury afforded to vulnerable social groups but an important aspect of their resilience and their ability to cope with traumatic experiences (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). The aim of cultural fusion through cultural mediation is to balance out the power asymmetry and achieve a mutual understanding and transformation of the two (or more) cultures and social groups that co-exist in a given setting.

Cultural mediation is an integral part of that process. Cultural mediators are persons and institutions that take up the task of mediating between the interacting cultures. Mediators need to position themselves as intercultural individuals (McAllum, 2020: 368) that occupy a hybrid third place while drawing perspectives from all the interacting cultures. The role of cultural mediator can either

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be employed professionally (state employees that assist refugees, NGO employees, translators) or not (for example by volunteers in refugee camps). The notion of cultural mediation is so broad that even translators of literary texts can be considered cultural mediators (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006). This in-between position, that a cultural mediator attempts to achieve demands a specific skill set and intercultural knowledge.

Translators Without Borders defines a cultural mediator as “a person who facilitates mutual understanding between a person or a group of people, the migrant/refugee population for example, and a caregiver, a doctor for example, by interpreting, considering cultural elements. S/he can give advice to both parties regarding appropriate cultural behaviors” (2017: 4).

Section 11.2: Cultural mediator as a profession

Cultural mediation refers to a wide range of activities exercised by professionals and non-professionals. The thousands of volunteers in refugee camps during the refugee crisis of 2015 are a characteristic example — people from the population of the host country, expressed their sentiments of solidarity with refugees and by assisting in the gathering of resources and the organization of the camps, they were involved in a process of cultural mediation. In the case of refugee flows, mediators can also emerge from the refugee population or from im-

migrants who have already spent time in the host country. These volunteers are important because, among other things, they actively combat prejudices and affect the way refugees are perceived by the population of the host country. As long as civil institutions face a lack of funds, there will always be the need for volunteer nonprofessional cultural mediators.

Nonetheless there is a prevailing tendency towards professionalization and the need for certified professionals in the field of cultural mediation has increased in the past decade. Cultural mediation is a demanding task, involving a number of skills as well as specific knowledge of foreign languages and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the cultural mediator bears the burden of transforming his/herself into a “liminal persona” which mediates cultural differences and different perspectives (Wilkinson, 2012: 300). This “in between” position is only feasible when a certain set skill has been acquired and developed. In addition to that, a set of institutions is necessary which are tasked with training, employing, and assisting professional cultural mediators. As cultural mediation involves a wide range of activities and tasks, a professional cultural mediator can be a state employee, an employee of the private sector or of an NGO.

As a result, cultural mediation tends to be recognized as a professional field. The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering defines intercultural mediation as “a profession whose main objective is to facilitate the relations between

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Figure 7. Fields where a cultural mediator can work

natives and foreign people, in order to promote knowledge and reciprocal understanding, to enhance positive relations between people with different backgrounds”². Unfortunately, in a number of European countries, there has been no official/legal recognition of cultural mediation as a profession³, raising barriers in the education and training of cultural mediators. However, in France and Italy, cultural mediation has been recognized officially as a profession and state authorities have undertaken the task to offer specialized courses that qualify someone as a cultural mediator. Studying and analyzing the specific challenges faced by a

cultural mediator helps raise awareness on their importance and paves the way for changes in the legal framework.

In which field can a professional cultural mediator work? In interconnected modern societies, cultural mediators may be employed in a variety of fields.

Humanitarian aid

- In case of emergencies, authorities and humanitarian organizations often need help to overcome cultural barriers, for example when operating in a foreign

² <https://www.iriv-migrations.net/fichiers/TIPS/Comparative%20research%20report%20-%20July%202009.pdf>

³ http://www.mediation-time.eu/images/TIME_O1-A1_National_Report_Greece.pdf

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land after a natural disaster. A cultural mediator can guide the humanitarian efforts by providing information and mediating between the officials and the affected population. In that way, needs and problems are better assessed.

- Education — especially important when refugee children enter an education system which is built around the culture of the host population.
- Interpretation — which always entails a cultural aspect. In the process of interpretation, an intercultural speaker is not tasked only with conveying information but informing both sides of the context within which the information is situated.
- Cultural policy development. State institutions as well as NGOs often attempt to assist the integration of refugees by promoting cultural events that will help refugees familiarize themselves with the culture of the native population. While the importance of such enterprises is undisputed, the guidance of a cultural mediator is necessary. Cultural mediators embody the ideals and goals of cultural fusion which dictates that refugees should not be cut off from their cultural heritage in order to adopt a new culture and

its practices. Cultural events, aimed at refugee populations, should be organized in a way that respects and acknowledges both interacting cultural backgrounds.

- Integration in the labour market. Cultural mediators assist refugees entering the job market in a foreign country, helping them with preparing CVs and applications. Additionally, cultural mediators can help the official institutions to understand the economic needs and problems of the refugee population and prepare a welfare response that corresponds to their specific condition.

Health services

- The access of refugees to the health system of their host country is often fraught with problems, bureaucratic and otherwise. More importantly, cultural differences are also involved in the way non-Westerners and Western medicine interact. Research focused on PTSD and Posttraumatic growth among refugees highlighted the importance of retaining connection with culture in overcoming a traumatic experience (Johnson, Thompson & Downs, 2009)

Social movement institutions

- Apart from official state policies and

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NGOs, civil societies develop their own strategies involving refugees. Social movements often emerge from civil society and aspire to protect human rights, especially in cases where the state of the host nation refuses to undertake this responsibility (Fiske, 2006: 225). Cultural mediators can assist citizens involved in social movements in understanding the most suitable ways that they can assist refugees.

Which are the skills most valuable to a cultural mediator?

Language knowledge is one of the most important skills of the cultural mediator. As Translators Without Borders notes, “interpreters and cultural mediators are key allies for humanitarian actors sensitive to the needs of those affected by disaster to receive and share information in their own language” (2017: 3). Vulnerable social groups often tend to express themselves in their own language in order to convey complex messages about their needs. Humanitarian aid that responds in the mother tongue of people in need is able to build trust quicker and more efficiently.

Knowledge of a culture, its specificities, its customs, and its worldview, are also important assets. Byram draws a comparison between intercultural competence and the process of learning a new language. Learning fundamental grammar rules,

expanding vocabulary etc., are all necessary steps in that process. However, really mastering a foreign language should place emphasis on “the ability to use a language not only with correct application of knowledge of its grammar but also in socially appropriate ways...with ‘intercultural competence’” (Byram, 2012: 88).

This requires a significantly different level of understanding, one that is able to situate a language and the way it is used within a culture and the way it is lived and reproduced by native speakers. The intercultural mediator is not simply a native speaker of two or more languages but a person with a wide variety of skills that enable her/him to adapt in a number of different settings. As Wilkinson notes, intercultural competence (2012: 301), “does not equate to learned knowledge about a specific culture but rather to a general set of skills that enable the learner to interact with new people from other contexts.” The cultural flexibility of the cultural mediator is rooted in a reflexive understanding of his/her own culture. The cultural mediator is not detached from his/her culture but is able to critically assess it as well as understand the ways it can interact with other cultures. There are no “structurally incompatible cultures” but specific ways in which different cultures interact, differ, converge, and potentially fuse. In that sense we can speak of the “intercultural competence” of cultural mediators which requires “cultural sensitivity and self-reflexivity” (Wilkinson, 2012: 304).

Byram takes note of the attitudes, skills and be-

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behavioral traits that should be included in a training course on intercultural citizenship. Based on what we have highlighted so far, they are equally important for cultural mediators. According to Byram (2012, 94-95), intercultural citizenship ought to embody the following characteristics:

Attitudes and feelings

- Acknowledging the identities of others: noticing how others have different identities and accepting their values and insights.
- Respecting otherness: showing curiosity about others and being willing to question what is usually taken for granted and viewed as 'normal'.
- Having empathy: being able to take someone else's perspective, to imagine their thoughts and feelings.
- Identifying positive and negative emotions and relating them to attitudes and knowledge.

Behavior

- Being flexible: adapting one's behavior to new situations and to what other people expect.

- Being sensitive to ways of communicating: recognising and using different ways of speaking and other forms of communication that exist in different languages.

Knowledge and skills

- Having knowledge about other people: knowing facts about people whom one meets and knowing how and why they are what they are.
- Discovering knowledge: using certain skills to find out about people one meets by asking questions and seeking out information, then using these skills in real-time encounters.
- Interpreting and relating understanding people, places or things by comparing them to familiar people, places or things in one's own environment, then seeing similarities and differences.
- Being critical: noticing how other people think and act and distancing oneself from one's own ways of thinking and acting, then being able to explain one's judgements about both.
- Becoming aware of one's own assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices.

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Figure 8. The characteristics that an individual needs to develop for an intercultural citizenship



These traits summarize the challenges that arise when trying to attain the in-between position typical of a cultural mediator. The “liminal persona” of the cultural mediator needs to understand other cultures and relate their content as well as self-reflexively analyse one’s own culture. Specific skills as well as a certain mentality and world-view are necessary in this process. However, that does not exclude anyone from becoming a cultural mediator. On the contrary, the necessary skills can and should be provided from both formal and non-formal institutions. Additionally, as the demand for professionalization in the field of cultural mediation is increasing, so does the need for standardization and certification which can only be

met through the development of courses in cultural mediation. Universities and vocational schools can be involved in the process of teaching, training, and certifying the future generations of cultural mediators.

Section 11.3: Cultural mediation strategies to support refugees

Cultural mediation rejects the notion that refugees should mimic the native citizens of a country in order to adapt. This widespread misconception is based on an “image of ‘the’ citizen of the state”

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that “implies a unitary and uniform set of expectation of what each is and can do.” (Byram, 2012: 91). This approach wrongly assumes that a) the native citizens form an undivided body which conforms to a single way of living and b) the refugee population will be more efficiently integrated if they (gradually or abruptly) lose touch with their cultural heritage. Public debates and policies that are based on this misconception tend to hinder the process of cultural fusion and may harm refugee populations. Cultural mediation ascribes to a radically different strategy that is based on the intercultural competence of professional mediators combined with the resilience of the refugee populations. This resilience is strengthened when their cultural heritage is maintained and practiced within the host country (Mahmoudi, 1992).

What are the main components of a cultural mediation strategy that aims to support refugees?

Benevolent intentions, empathy, a feeling of solidarity, are all important aspects of cultural mediation strategy. However, these qualities alone are not sufficient. Research has highlighted the tendency among volunteers in refugee camps to position themselves as purveyors of the host culture’s values and practices (Florian et al., 2019), thus exhibiting a paternalistic attitude. This tendency is not limited to nonprofessional cultural mediators. Research has shown similar attitudes expressed by state officials who found unacceptable the habit of Afghan refugees to sit on the floor while eating (Nawyn, 2010: 158). McCallum in her research (2020)

studied the different ways that volunteers face the challenge of cultural fusion. In the case of volunteers that tried to discipline the refugees, a narrative of authority and responsibility arose, as they felt that they were responsible for teaching the refugees how they should act in the new environment of the host culture (McCallum, 2020:379). The above cases should not be considered proof of mala fides by the volunteers or the state officials. Rather, what is manifested in these cases, is an implicit belief that refugees, in order to be integrated and accepted, should abandon their own culture.

This, however, is not always the case. In a conflict between refugees and Danish authorities regarding the upbringing of children, volunteers mediated between the refugees and the government, considering the cultural differences that framed the dispute. Functioning as cultural mediators, they maintained a double loyalty, advocating for refugee rights and adherence to the law. In that way, they achieved wide recognition within the refugee community which helped with their tasks as cultural mediators (Fehsenfels & Levinsen, 2019: 430). The prospect of cultural fusion is based in the ability of refugees and of the dominant culture to expand their cultural knowledge (Croucher & Kramer, 2017). A strategy of cultural mediation that aims to assist refugee populations must build and expand upon this fundamental understanding.

This strategy may or may not be assisted by official state policy. In some cases, the highest state officials may openly implement policies of exclu-

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sion and adapt a rhetoric that frames refugees as “invaders” (Fiske, 2006). Understanding the opportunities and the potential pitfalls of the state’s policies, navigating within those boundaries, or even challenging them are important aspects of a cultural mediation strategy for refugees. Fehsenfels & Levinsen (2019:431-432) note the importance of the “watchdog role” that cultural mediators may have to assume, by facilitating the co-operation between refugee population and civic employees and ensuring that the state officials respect the rights of refugees. In a more demanding situation, when faced with bureaucratic mechanisms that impeded the asylum-seeking process, cultural mediators had a twofold task: to assist refugees in their attempt to claim their rights as asylum seekers and, at the same time, inform local communities and individuals of the host culture of the hardships that these refugees faced (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016: 231-232). This exemplifies the two-way process that is involved in cultural mediation. Supporting refugee populations entails assisting the familiarization of host communities with elements of the “newcomers” culture, as well as with the specific difficulties that refugees face.

Section 11.4: Summary

The role of the cultural mediator should not be considered strictly as a guide for refugees in a different political and cultural landscape. Refugee populations themselves always develop their own

resilience strategies, drawing from their culture and tradition in order to survive and adapt. These strategies may be rooted symbolically (in political ideologies, rituals, religion) and materially (in refugee solidarity networks, in political institutions that are linked to their homeland etc). Hussain and Bhushan highlight the importance of Buddhism in helping Tibetans adapt to refugee life, while at the same time serving as a foundation for political institutions built in diaspora (2011: 585). Cultural mediators need to recognize that the refugee population have political resources and a political culture of their own and adapt their mediation strategies accordingly.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

Discuss the terms ‘cultural fusion’ and ‘cultural assimilation.’ Why is cultural fusion a crucial part of cultural mediation?

What are the challenges that a volunteer, non-professional cultural mediator faces?

Case studies

Case Study 1: In 2017, refugee children from Syria and the Middle East attended Greek public schools for the first time. Rallies for and against the integration of refugee children in the education sys-

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tem were organized and a public debate unfolded regarding the best way for the children to become acclimated in a new environment.

How could cultural mediators assist refugee families as well as school authorities and teachers?

Case Study 2: Since 2015, the number of immigrants arrested for illegal entrance and illegal stay in Greece has more than doubled. Far right groups and parties have framed this data as “criminality”, connecting the movement of refugees and immigrants with an increase in illegal activities.

How could cultural mediators utilize their experience of working with refugee populations in order to influence the public perception of migration flows?

Case Study 3: In the past decade, international humanitarian organizations have criticized Greek authorities for hindering the process of asylum seeking. Thousands face substantial problems in their efforts to be granted asylum or to receive subsidiary protection status.

How can cultural mediators, professionals as well as nonprofessionals, engage with this situation?

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CHAPTER 12: CULTURAL MEDIATION II: COMMUNICATION

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others”

By Tony Robbins, an American author, coach, and philanthropist



Source: Stock snaps

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Aim

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the position of cultural mediator through the lens of communication science and cultural studies. We examine the communication skills that facilitate mediators' work as they attempt to confront the obstacles presented by the meeting of people from different cultural origins.

Expected Learning outcomes

To recognize the meaning of different communication models and their properties.

To describe the four variables that a communicator has to take into account to achieve a goal.

To solve mediation problems by applying fundamental communication skills.

To apply the fundamental principles of different communication models in daily practice.

To encourage both celebratory and supporting behaviours.

To recognize the importance of understanding emotions and their expressions.

Keywords

Communication, cultural mediation, communication models, intercultural context

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CHAPTER 12: CULTURAL MEDIATION II: COMMUNICATION

Section 12.1: Introduction

Cultural mediation refers to the process when a third actor mediates to resolve a conflict between two sides coming from different cultural contexts. In such a process, a translator or a social scientist, although bringing specific and necessary knowledge to resolve the conflict, should have further qualifications related to the specific cultural identity the two sides present. Here, a cultural mediator is better qualified.

The section that follows this introduction describes communication models that could be applied to conflict resolution regarding vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees. Although there are a variety of models, we present only three as indicative cases of how information flows affect the communication between two struggling sides. The next section concerns soft skills. A cultural mediator should recognize the differences that characterize the two sides' communication and interpret them both culturally and pedagogically. The fourth section attempts to introduce the reader to the complex but scientifically conventional concept of context, which helps the reader to understand the importance of an intercultural approach during mediation. Finally, the last section presents cultural mediators as communication experts managing to achieve the most safe and unmistakable encoding and decoding of culturally variable messages.

Section 12.2: Communication models for approaching vulnerable groups, migrants, and refugees

Cultural mediation is a scientific discipline that falls into the humanitarian and social sciences. Sociology, communication, psychology, anthropology, and cultural studies cooperate to explore this complicated concept (TIME, 2016a: 17). In this chapter, cultural mediation is analysed under the scope of communication and cultural studies.

Communication models are "simplified representations of complex interrelationships among elements in the communication process, which allow us to visually understand a sometimes-complex process" (West & Turner, 2010: 11). They attempt to organize fundamental communication elements such as source, message, receiver, and channel in order to describe different modes of communication. These models include an historical perspective, as well as a genealogy of media theories. In this section, three models of communication are described. This choice was made based on three criteria. The first one is their generalized use, the second one their utility for cultural mediation as connected to cultural studies theory, while the last criteria includes tools that could facilitate their implementation in cultural mediation. Finally, this chapter argues that the three proposed communication models are not mutually exclusive.

Robert E. Park conceived social life as a matter of four main principles. First, he distinguished

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social group membership between ingroups and outgroups emphasizing the notion of interaction between them. Second, he suggested that social life should be understood via tensions, contradictions, and change. Third, he proposed a bidirectional relationship between interaction and culture. Finally, he argued that there is a need to constantly explore the relationship that an individual maintains with their social group (Lengermann, 1988: 367). Concepts such as membership, interaction, bidirectional relationship, and culture could be synthesized to produce a suitable communication model to outline cultural mediation as a process. As a result, the first proposed model is the symbolic interaction theory.

George Herbert Mead, the father of symbolic interaction theory, one year older than Park and also affiliated with the University of Chicago, was in favour of studying the use of symbols by individuals. Symbols are “arbitrary labels or representations for phenomena” (West & Turner, 2010: 7). This theory assumes that society is shaped by the interactions of its members. Consideration must be given to the active role that this theory attributes to the members of a society, and to the bidirectional flow of effects. According to Liedholm & Lindberg (2007), the perspective of symbolic interactionism could help us better understand the role that a cultural mediator has to play in order to confront problems concerning individuals from different cultures that are living in the same society.

Contemporary western societies are characterized

by an increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) tools in crucial areas of daily life such as education, work, and entertainment. These technologies are useful tools for both the mediation community and the interested parties of a confrontation. Videoconferences, online live broadcasting, chat, and social network communication (TIME, 2016b: 28) comprise at the same time a channel for information and a locus classicus where the symbolic interaction is highlighted.

A second proposed model that cultural mediators should have in their minds is the contexting theory model, which was constructed ad hoc, to identify the communication between individuals coming from different cultures. This model is based on the observation that individuals that share the same culture also share the same bias “either towards communication through the text or the context” (Shisheng & Shuang, 2012: 149). Context is defined “as the mentally represented structure of those properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or comprehension of discourse”. It includes information about the situation, setting (time, place), ongoing actions, participants and their social roles, their ideologies etc. (Van Dijk, 2001: 356). The contexting theory argues that cultures are divided into those that give primary importance to texts and those that give primary importance to contexts. The first category prefers unambiguous, explicit, and clear communication, while the second one is less direct and gives priority to cognitive elements (beliefs, attitudes, values etc.) instead of persons. Social context and inter-

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actions are critical when a scientist attempts to investigate individuals' behaviour.

A third option suggested for cultural mediators is the encoding/decoding model proposed by Stuart Hall (1980). This model emphasizes the active role of the receiver in a communication process. Although, it seems to be linear, it includes interaction, as well as a cyclical approach. It analyses the message by breaking down each communication phase. At first, it is the sender who makes up an idea (message A1). The sender encodes the idea to a form suitable to be transmitted successfully (message A2). Then, there are one or more individuals who receive this message, which is also a product of the channel used for its transmission (B1). But the receivers decode this message in different, even multiple, ways (B2). These ways vary according to the receiver's social class, experiences, cultural identity, ideology etc. Hence, each receiver may decode a message differently (Bn).

According to Hall (1980), a message can be read in three categorical ways: the dominant, the oppositional, and the negotiated. A dominant reading of a text means that a reader accepts what is encoded and reinforces its ideological or preferred meaning. In this type, message A2 and B2 are almost identical. An oppositional reading means that a reader rejects what is encoded and attempts to interpret it in a different way. In the oppositional type, message A2 and B2 are almost opposed. A negotiated reading describes the individual's effort to interpret a message by adopting it partially, manifesting

doubts about selected pieces of information. In the negotiated type of reading, message A2 is also decoded in a different way, but not as antithetically as in the oppositional reading.

Section 12.3: Communication skills

Whereas the communication models proposed in the previous chapter fall into the hard skills of communication science, communication skills refer to soft skills that still retain their scientific profile. In order to communicate effectively, each person has to improve communication skills on three different levels: non-verbal language, content and voice. This section argues that communication is based on these three components and each of them includes a sending and a receiving level. Emotional expression and the corresponding management, for example, is something that requires knowledge and implementation of communication skills. This kind of management is a three-phase process. The first phase includes the encoding of emotions: to know how to interpret and classify an emotional stimulus. The second phase includes regulating emotional displays: to know how to express an emotion depending on its degree. The final phase concerns decoding emotions: to know how to recognize and understand the emotions of others (Burgoon & Bacue, 2008: 186-191).

Concerning communication skills, the term refers to communication virtues that either are taught or are innate characteristics of an individual's personality.

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These techniques relate directly to the encoding and decoding process. The ability of the individual, on the one hand, to recognize the barriers that are inserted between them and the recipient, and, on the other hand, to apply the appropriate tools that inhibit these barriers. Along the way, various obstacles may arise in each phase of the communication process. This section aims to provide a short but indicative list of communication skills that could help cultural mediators to do their jobs effectively. Communication skills allow us to cooperate with other people and to avoid misunderstandings (TIME, 2016a: 17).

Furthermore, a mediator should know how to function interculturally. Intercultural skills are divided into knowledge (cognitive skills), life skills (emotional or soft skills) and know-how (behavioural skills). Knowledge regards “the ability to analyze and understand a set of issues and the ability to think through the differences, ethical principles and values involved in a decision.” Life skills consist of general characteristics of personality such as cultural awareness, openness, empathy, social interaction etc. Know-how concerns action ? the practice and implementation of theory and techniques (TIME, 2015).

Mortenson (2002: 57) attempts to classify communication skills into two categories of ego support provided to others. The first category includes encouragement (encouraging support), while the second one is celebrating (celebratory support). According to the same author, these two categories

of support affect close personal relationships such as friendships or romances. Individuals who are considered as having both support types have been found to be more desirable as partners in those kinds of relationships and also have more friends.

Windahl, Signitzer & Olson (1998: 52-55) argue that encoding decisions does not suffice for communicating effectively. A communicator should take into consideration four different variables to achieve their goal. The first one is the social perspective which allows us to understand better the available options that an individual had before making a specific choice. Second, an understanding of the criteria that define the relationship between the communicator and the receiver: the ability to recognize how the receiver thinks of the communicator. Third, the awareness of a case, which depends on the degree to which the communicator recognizes what must be transmitted under the existing conditions. Empathy is the last variable, but the most important according to the same authors. It refers to a person’s ability to recognize and understand how another person interprets the world and to accept the latter’s way of thinking without departing from the former’s view of reality.

Section 12.4: Communication in an intercultural context

Intercultural communication, as well as social integration, is among the most central objects of cultural mediation (TIME, 2016b: 11). Globalization

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requires intercultural communication, as individuals from different cultures must communicate in order to solve personal or social problems (Salmon et al., 2013: 887). Furthermore, globalization, neoliberalism, and climate change produce crises with greater frequency than in the past. A crisis, as well as the various traumas it implies to individuals, also requires intercultural communication, as it causes immediate, unpredictable events which “can overwhelm the ways that they naturally cope” (Duffey & Haberstroh, 2020: 40).

Mediation refers to the role assigned to a third person to act between people or groups. This person and the two sides of a conflict agree to participate in order to prevent or solve the problem by creating new relationships. It is a conflict resolution practice with both legal (foremost) and social (secondarily) meaning. However, the process of mediation itself divides scholars around the world, and its definition has not been unanimously accepted (TIME, 2015: 7-8).

Immigrants are a group that needs a cultural mediator on a regular basis. Despite this need, the majority of people working as mediators have not been certified as intercultural mediators. As a result, the related labour market also presents corresponding problems, creating situations where even the most incompetent interpreter is condemned to mediate. For example, in Greece, although the synthesis of population has shifted, intercultural mediators are not established as specialized professionals. The cultural mediator cannot be sim-

ply an interpreter. The qualifications for this work require intercultural communication, as successful communication between individuals from different cultures is the final deliverable (Sergio, 1998: 60; Shisheng & Shuang, 2012:146; TIME, 2015: 5-6, 12).

Even interpretation involves culture. Interpretation is based on language use. The latter is a social practice full of socially shared meanings. The knowledge of a language presupposes the knowledge of the culture that shapes it. Although language is a tool for communicating, it also extends to social and political activity, which produces meanings and constructs power relations. To sum up, experiential understanding of a language is a necessary but inadequate qualification for interpreters. The profession of intercultural mediator also requires the analytical understanding of a language as indicative of a whole culture (Shisheng & Shuang, 2012:147, Pohjola, 2016: 640-647).

Section 12.5: Cultural mediators as communication experts

The responsibilities of cultural mediators have gained importance due to globalization. Different individuals from different cultures should develop a harmonious way of living. A cultural mediator is defined as “a person who through his social position in two or more groups can help the individuals in one group to gain more knowledge and understanding and make more contacts with the individuals in the other group and vice versa, which can

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result in better cooperation concerning both topical issues and measures and future developments” (Liedholm & Lindberg, 2007). This description is provided by the two authors as the definition of a link-worker. However, other scholars (TIME, 2015) use it to outline the profession of cultural mediators. In addition to link-workers, cultural mediators are also known as “negotiators”, “facilitators”, “go-betweens” and “conciliators”. These terms have a common essence: they emphasize interpersonal skills and communication abilities as requirements for resolving problems between individuals. Their counselling goes beyond mediating by focusing on relationship issues that lie at the conflict’s core (TIME, 2015: 8; Duffey & Haberstroh, 2020: 45).

Being the third person is a difficult responsibility not only in romances, but also in counselling. A cultural mediator should take part in the process of counselling by acting like a “non-person” (Shisheng & Shuang, 2012: 145-146), a scientifically experienced individual that attempts to express no feelings and has the obligation to represent both sides adequately and faithfully. However, this indispensability does not mean that a cultural mediator does not develop specific tactics, strategies, and ways of behaviour. Salmon et al. (2013: 888) state that mediation includes a variety of tactics. They suggest a classification of mediation tactics divided into formulative and manipulative styles. A formulative style of cultural mediation means that the mediator contributes to the dispute by suggesting settlements which aim to the substance of the case. On the other hand, a manipulative style

of cultural mediation maintains a system of threats and rewards towards the disputants, which aims to push them for agreement. The same authors think that manipulative styles of mediation are more suitable to cases of intercultural mediation.

Liedholm & Lindberg (2007) also record a list of prerequisites for a successful cultural mediation process. They discern several principles that facilitate mediators’ work. The most prominent among them are the following nine principles:

- Information channels should be constantly opened,
- trust is a prerequisite for a better understanding,
- close and personal relationships cultivate trust,
- a mediator should be aware of the differences between cultures and situations,
- a mediator should enjoy freedom of action,
- a mediator should obtain respect, trust, and acknowledged status,
- professional secrecy should condition mediation actions,
- a mediator should work on a con-

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flict from start to finish, or facilitate a smooth transition if abandoning a case

- management and coaching require standing activity and sensitivity.

Section 12.6: Summary

This chapter discussed the profession of cultural mediator. It outlined the basic characteristics of cultural mediation, as well as those of related professions. Cultural mediation is defined as a process that needs interdisciplinary qualifications. This chapter was focused on the communication skills that the profession of cultural mediator requires. In addition to communication, cultural studies also fall into this interdisciplinary skillset. Nevertheless, cultural studies is of secondary importance. This chapter was divided into two parts, one that discerned between necessary hard and soft communication skills and another that provided intercultural aspects of mediation, suitable for active or future professionals. The three models proposed here (symbolic interactionism, contexting theory and encoding/decoding) represent different philosophical origins and are not the only models capable of facilitating a mediator's work. However, interaction, context and decoding lie at the heart of cultural mediation. Furthermore, this chapter proposed that mediation has to do with culture. Thus, an introduction to cultural studies functions as a prerequisite for a professional, as immigrants need a cultural mediator on a regular, if not daily, basis.

Finally, the chapter presented some useful principles for successful cultural mediation.

Questions for Discussion, Case Studies, Exercises

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss how cultural identity affects how people decode a message.
2. Discuss ways to recognize empathy as a person's virtue.
3. How could a cultural mediator become a communication expert?
4. Communicate with an immigrant and try to describe his/her cultural identity after conducting a ten-minute semi-directed discussion with him/her.
5. Think of broken relationships of your past and then write which side did not consider empathy, awareness, social perspective or/and understanding of the criteria that define a relationship.

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CHAPTER 13: ETHICAL APPROACH TO TRAUMA

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit”

By Aristotle (384 - 322 BC), Greek Philosopher



Photograph by Agathi Sianoudi (2022), at Pelion Mountain, showcase photo

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Expected Learning Outcomes

Understanding the concept of ethics when dealing with refugees and other vulnerable groups

Familiarity with the deontology code and its implementation into the refugee context.

Keywords

Ethics, refugees, asylum seekers, vulnerable groups, deontology code

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CHAPTER 13: ETHICAL APPROACH TO TRAUMA

Section 1.1: Introduction

Political actors, media outlets and ordinary citizens often take a defensive stand when it comes to refugee and migrant flows. Such a position can be provoked by certain fears related to the unknown, some incidents, insinuations and even propaganda. Nowadays, we primarily observe mixed migrant flows towards the so-called Western world, which leads to the formation of certain generalized behaviors towards newcomers. Public reactions can range from blaming refugees and asylum seekers for their own misery to patronizing and seeing them as powerless and even as exotic victims (Halilovich, 2013, p. 129). The reasons behind one's decision to leave her or his country of origin, however, when properly understood, can lead to the common perception that many of those people should be protected and assisted. As a matter of fact, according to estimations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forcibly displaced people in the world has reached 89.3 million at the end of 2021, of which 41% were children (UNHCR, 2022). Furthermore, approximately 650 million people lived below the extreme poverty line in 2019, with their number expected to significantly increase due to the covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine (The World Bank, 2022). Still, both positions, in favour of or against refugee allocation and intensive flows of asylum seekers, are widely diffused, hence they imply certain ethical concerns. In the EU alone the refugee and migrant flows have been regarded by many as a crisis involving different political, economic and social

aspects, which involve inevitably ethical considerations. Among these is also the ethical approach to trauma which is more often than not neglected against the background of political struggles and divisions among different groups of the population of the EU member states.

Section 1.2: The concept of ethics

Before discussing any ethical approach to trauma when dealing with refugees and asylum seekers, it is important to turn to the concept of ethics. According to Norman (1998, p. 1 in UNODC, n.d.), ethics are "the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the nature of human values, of how we ought to live, and of what constitutes right conduct." The Cambridge Dictionary regards ethics as "the study of what is morally right and what is not" (n.d.). Ethics are also defined as "a set of moral principles, issues or aspects" and "the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As ethics and morals are often used interchangeably, Merriam-Webster (n.d.) dictionary precises that while the former concern broadly moral principles, morals "describes one's particular values concerning what is right and what is wrong". Singer (1999, p. 10-12) notes that although philosophers and moralists are considering the idea of ethical conduct as acceptable if the point of view is predominantly universal, "this universal aspect of ethics provides a persuasive, but not conclusive, reason for taking a broadly utilitarian position". Generally, ethics can be regarded from many perspectives and in many aspects such as political,

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theological (see for example Green et al., 2011), medical, military and so on.

It is to be noted that morality is often used as a synonym of morals or ethics. Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (n.d.) defines morality as (1) the quality of being moral, (2) behaviour in relation to accepted moral standards and as (3) a particular system of moral standards. Some scholars (Gert and Gert, 2020) suggest that the term “morality” can be used in descriptive and normative sense, that is, either to “refer to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group or accepted by an individual for her/his own behaviour, or to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational people”. Haidt & Kesebir (2010, p. 815) argue that apart from dealing with matters of what is harmful or fair, from a descriptive perspective morality is about connecting groups of people so that they can build cooperative moral communities with a capacity to achieve goals that an individual cannot achieve on its own.

Morality is inextricably related to an agreement and respectively to a disagreement in terms of what is a moral act and what it is not. While an individual or a whole community can find the rejection or expulsion of refugees normal, out of, for example, fear of changes in their daily life, other individuals and groups are seeing this as a lack of morality and even as a racist act. Whiteley (1960, p. 141) states that the morality of a community is based on behaviour that the community members are

taught, bidden and encouraged to adopt within the community, hence moral behaviour should be in accordance with the recommended patterns. The existence of many definitions and understandings of what is moral and what is not, logically materializes in many people denying that an act can be classified as moral when it suits them, no matter what other members of the community feel. In fact, “many people cannot find a grounding for morality, as moral claims and judgements are hardly proved or demonstrated to be true”, in addition to the fact that in many societies, religion no longer plays the role of a moral pivot, while selfishness and materialism thrive (Barrow, 2007, p. 21). Garcia-Zamor (2018, p. 129) notes that finding an approach to immigration that can satisfy all actors involved from a moral point of view, is a task very unlikely to be achieved.

When dealing with refugees and generally with vulnerable individuals and groups, political actors, media outlets and the host country population have the potential to significantly influence the decision-making process. Nonetheless, the academic institutions, including researchers have also an important role in it. Therefore, in the case of vulnerable individuals and groups, trauma related studies “require a flexible approach that counters assumptions and biases about victims, assures a favorable ethical cost-benefit ratio, and promotes the advancement of knowledge that can benefit survivors of traumatic stress” (Newman et. al, 2006). It should be noted that post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety disorder are among

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the most frequented trauma in people displaced as a consequence of armed conflicts, which can be partially contributed to psychosocial vulnerabilities of internally displaced people and refugees (Morina et al., 2019, p. 29). In this line of thinking, Ketefian (2014) suggests that before coping with the case of vulnerable persons in a research, it is necessary to investigate the ethical issues related to the human subject research.

According to the egalitarianism doctrine all people must be considered equal and thus, they deserve equal rights and opportunities. Egalitarians argue that people in need of protection would never rationally accept any argument that excludes them from the needed protection (Märker and Schlothfeldt 2002; Ladwig 2011, p. 81; Ladwig 2012, p. 72, in Tiedemann, 2021, p. 4). Yet, such people are indeed neglected on a daily basis across the globe. People that we consider potential migrants, can be victims of violence or other form of aggression in their home country, or in their (temporary) host one in the case of refugees that have already been on the move.

Although international documents and related recommendations to follow are in place, usually the given state has its own policies and documents to take into account. In some cases this can lead to challenges to the protection of vulnerable groups as well as to divisions within the local population. For example, in the case of the EU, over the last few years migrant and refugee matters have been even seen on different occasions as impetus for verbal

confrontation and political tension between the member states. Dividing all those people who are leaving their countries for fear of persecution or violence or for food insecurity into refugees and economic migrants, that is, into people who do need assistance and people that do not, is a common practice in many countries and their populations. With respect to this, Singer (1999, p. 250) points out a very popular attitude – that we are not morally obliged to accept refugees at all and if we do, then we have to be seen as generous and humanitarian oriented, to contradict our generally held belief that all human beings are equal.

Tiedemann (2021, p. 2) states that acting ethically requires moral responsibility, hence a conscience. However, only an individual can have a conscience, not the whole, which suggests that a given state cannot be considered as the addressee of ethical requirements when dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, in the role of addressee should be seen those who work in and for the state, including all citizens who can influence the political processes. At the same time the state is supposed to answer the questions whether and to what extent its citizens and officials are allowed or not to act in accordance with morality (ibid.). Furthermore, Hollenbach (2016, p. 153) argues that national borders carry considerable moral weight in determining ethical responsibilities toward displaced persons, but at the same time there are obligations to the displaced as well. Both suggest certain duties to all parties involved with the key question of defining the relative weight that should

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be assigned to these duties in different circumstances, as not a single duty can be considered absolute.

Section 1.3: Deontology code and its implementation in the refugee context

A code of deontology can be regarded as the way a profession or activity is exercised ensuring the respect for ethics. The term deontology derives from the Greek *deon* (“obligation” or “duty”) and *logos* (“science”). Although throughout history philosophers as well as religious and military leaders regarded ethics as important in different contexts, Immanuel Kant is considered the first great philosopher to define deontological principles. He argued that an act can be moral only if it is done willingly following the so-called categorical imperative (Ellner et al., 2016). This is a universal ethical principle according to which one should treat other people in a way he or she would like to be treated by respecting moral rules that could apply to everyone.

The name of Jeremy Bentham is also often associated with the nascency of the deontology. Sørensen (2008, pp. 70-71) states that despite being the inventor of utilitarianism, Bentham also constructed the neologism ‘deontology’, but not with the intention to oppose it to utilitarianism. Therefore, from a historical point of view, it is broadly accepted that the modern concept of deontology is rooted in the distinction between deontology and teleology set forth by Charlie Dunbar Broad in his ‘Five Types of

Ethical Theory’ (Ibid.).

More recently, the principles of deontology have been reflected in various professional codes of representatives of a number of professions, including social workers and other people working with vulnerable groups. In the case of social workers, for example, it can be said that they professionally help individuals in need, mainly those who are not protected in social terms (e.g. elderly people, disabled people, children deprived of normal family upbringing, people with mental disorders, refugees etc.). According to the International Federation of Social Workers’s definition, social work involves, among other important principles those of social justice, human rights and respect for diversity. Having this in mind, it is not a surprise that the social work is associated with stress and burnout (see for example Lloyd et al., 2002). With regard to this, Idareta and Ballesterro (2013) argue that ethical training is needed so that social workers can be supported in dealing with many problems such as for example the bureaucratization of the profession. Martín-Ruel (2020, p. 168-169) further underlines the importance of training programmes, stating that due to the fact that professional practice is more often than not unethical, comprehensive training that includes modules focused on deontology is needed. In other words, this profession deals with ethics, which in turn leads to the need for certain deontology code to follow. In its code of ethics National Association of Social Workers, which is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, defines

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the guiding standards for the professional conduct of social workers.

When it comes to asylum seekers, the EU Asylum Procedures Directive states that in assessing applications for international protection in an objective and impartial way, the professionals in that area have to act “with due respect for the applicable deontological principles” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2013). It should be pointed out that although refugees and asylum seekers represent a vulnerable group in need of special protection, some of them face particular difficulties and require specific support in the reception and/or protection procedures to ensure their rights. Among these are, for example, children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, victims of torture or violence. As a matter of fact, the EU member states are required to take into account the situation of vulnerable persons during detention, reception and the respective procedures regarding asylum seekers and migrants, including in exercising the rights of asylum seekers (Official Journal of the European Union, 2013). It is to be noted that there are differences between admission needs and needs during the procedure: a person with special admission needs (e.g. an asylum seeker in need of a wheelchair) does not necessarily need special procedural guarantees. Explicit guarantees regarding reception conditions, including detention, are provided for vulnerable persons with special needs such as children, unaccompanied minors and victims of torture and violence.

The need for a code of deontology can be encountered in the work of psychologists, interpreters and even in the refugee and migrant studies, especially when it comes to forcibly displaced people. Block et al. (2012) argue that in such a fragile context, there are certain obligations to which a researcher is expected to be bounded. With regard to this, some scholars (Fox et al., 2020) state that such obligations might be constrained by external contexts during virtually every stage of the research: from planning to field work and reporting. In other words, others can decide what is worthwhile, responsible, respectful and dutiful, which generally can be seen as unjust (Ibid.). Furthermore, Halilovich (2013) argue that researchers also contribute to misperception among the host societies, by focusing mainly on human rights violations at the expense of other aspects of refugee experiences. He also suggests that the excessive use of the term “trauma” leads to overlooking of diversity of refugee experiences (Ibid., p. 130-131).

In general, it can be argued that it is necessary for those working with refugees and asylum seekers to follow a certain deontology code. This should take into account the national context in which the various activities take place, as well as other features related to the nationality and cultural and social characteristics of the newcomers. Beyond the differences related to the context, a more common approach must be taken in the EU countries. On the one hand, it should support the continuity in the activities of those working with refugees and asylum seekers in different countries. On the other

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hand, the approach should be aimed at minimizing the likelihood of hindering the adequate and proper performance of the work activities of the respective professionals and thus at limiting the negative impact on the perceptions of the host society.

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Ani Arutyunyan, PhD is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Research and Educational Projects at the University of National Economy (UNWE) in Sofia, Bulgaria. Dr. Arutyunyan is also a guest lecturer in Political Studies at UNWE. She possesses long-term experience in the sphere of research and refugee protection as she served as a Case Manager Assistant at the Center for Legal Aid - Voice in Bulgaria in the period 2017-2019. Dr. Arutyunyan has taken part in numerous international conferences, symposiums, trainings, etc. related to International Relations and International Law. Her interests are focused on providing legal assistance to asylum seekers and migrants, and proper integration of beneficiaries of international protection in the Republic of Bulgaria. Ani speaks Bulgarian, English, Armenian, and Russian.

Claudia Alba Ortuño is PhD Student at the Department of Business at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB). After obtaining her Master on International Business, she is preparing her doctoral dissertation on international support for enterprises in the bottom of the pyramid. She is researching vulnerable entrepreneurs from an ecosystem/international point of view. Also, she is part of the VUB Chair of Social Entrepreneurship that focusses on encouraging social and student entrepreneurship.

Figen Algul is an Assistant Professor at Marmara University, Faculty of Communication. She worked as a reporter, program producer and presenter at various TV channels and production companies

during her undergraduate and master's degree education at Marmara University Faculty of Communication. She also studied at the FH Fulda Intercultural Communication and European Studies program in Germany in the 2009-2010 academic year, during her doctoral studies at the same department. She received her doctorate in 2012 with her thesis on Community Media in parallel with ethnic and minority groups in Turkey. She has a book called "Community Media - The Example of Nor Radio" and she completed her Post Doctorate in NKUA in the 2018-2019 academic year, on "Soft Power and Intercultural Communication: Perception/Reception of Turkey in Greece through the study of Turkish soap operas". Her academic fields of study include Media and society, audience studies, alternative media, intercultural communication, political communication, and social memory studies.

Nikolay A. Dentchev is Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and CSR at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium) and a Visiting Professor at the University of National and World Economy (Bulgaria). He holds the VUB Chair of Social Entrepreneurship. His research is published in journals such as Business & Society, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Journal of Business Ethics, and Business Ethics, the Environment and Responsibility. He serves as associate editor of Business and Society Review, and occasionally as guest editor to special issues. His research interests are related to BOP entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable business models. He leading several projects that provide hands-on support to vulner-

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able entrepreneurs in various countries in Latin America and Africa.

Atanas Dimitrov, PhD, has been teaching since 2015 at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE), Bulgaria, where he currently holds the position of Senior Assistant Professor. He has also been a guest lecturer in Italy, Poland and Spain. Former EVS volunteer, Consultant at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E4) Integrity & Ethics Champions Programme) and a Transparency International School on Integrity fellow. Atanas Dimitrov has a PhD in Economics and Management (Defense and Security Economics) from the UNWE. His research interests and publications are focused on peace and conflict studies, migrant and refugee studies, tertiary education, ethics, and integrity.

Tirşe Erbaysal Filibeli is an associate professor of media and communications. She received her M.A. degree and Ph.D. from Galatasaray University in Media and Communication Studies. In 2018 she co-edited “Journalism a Peacekeeping Agent at the Time of Conflict”, in 2020 she edited “Information Nightmare: Fake News, Manipulation and Post-truth Politics in the Digital Age”. Since 2016 she has been a researcher in the country team Turkey for Media Pluralism Monitor Project of the Centre for Media Pluralism and Freedom (CMPF). In 2016, she worked as a special rapporteur for Hrant Dink Foundation, Asulis Discourse, Dialogue, Democracy Laboratory and contributed to the report entitled “A new Discourse, Dialogue and Democracy against Discrimination”. Her research interests focus on algorithmic

manipulation and computational propaganda, big data and data privacy, information disorder and fact-checking, disinformation/misinformation about minorities and othering in the post-truth era, populism, hate speech, and peace studies. She has been working as the chair of the Department of New Media at Bahçeşehir University since 2018.

Abel Diaz Gonzalez is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Organization, Strategy and Entrepreneurship at the School of Business Economics, Maastricht University. He holds a PhD in Business Economics from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB). His research focuses on ecosystems for social entrepreneurs, and their supportive function and mechanisms. Part of his research is dedicated to investigating the supportive role and interaction of universities’ main stakeholders, processes, and activities within and across the ecosystems of social entrepreneurs. Abel has conducted field research in Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Belgium. His research has been presented at different international conferences. Prior to his appointment at UM, Abel was a visiting professor at the Department of Business and a postdoctoral fellow at the Chair of Social Entrepreneurship at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (Belgium), where he supervised master theses and co-supervised doctoral students. He also was an adjunct professor of social entrepreneurship at the Brussels School of Governance. He has been actively involved in the coordination of large international projects (Europe, Africa, Latin America) focused on capacity building at universities in the field of social entrepreneurship, funded

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by the European Commission and VLIR UOS.

Alexandros Minotakis has a PhD in Media studies in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of University of Athens, Greece. He has completed a Master on Political Communication and New Media in the same department. His thesis was on “Neo-liberalism and the Greek Media System”, focusing on the transformations in Greek public sphere during the debt crisis and was funded by an Onassis Foundation fellowship. His research interests include critical political economy of media, propaganda, alternative media, and social movements. In 2020 participated in the design and development of Ermis project on the integration of socially vulnerable groups, writing on issues of misinformation and stereotypes as well as cultural trauma and media representations of vulnerability. In 2022 he has published on fake news and newswork as well as on media reporting of Covid-19 pandemic.

Aura Kaarivuo, is a Senior Lecturer & Head of Degree Programme at Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, working at degree programme of Film and Television since 2009. She is a doctoral researcher at University Jyväskylä and Master of Arts in New Media from Aalto University. She has a passion for pedagogy and has vocational teacher’s qualification. As the senior lecturer in film and television sound, Mrs. Kaarivuo teaches TV, documentary, drama production, journalism, social media, podcasts and innovation projects. She has a long experience in HEI’s media education and international academic project work in media, journalism,

freedom of speech, democracy, digitalization, and capacity building. She has wide audiovisual working experience in Finnish media companies since 1999. She is an active member of the Union of Journalists in Finland and the president of Vikes, The Finnish Foundation for Media and Development.

Kyriaki Panourgia is a social scientist and female entrepreneur, with studies in the field of educational and cultural planning and organization in the context of regional development. She holds an M.Ed from the University of Manchester-UK, and a PhD from the University of Geneva-CH. She works as a consultant and evaluator mainly for central and local government bodies in Greece (i.e., Ministry of Education, of Labor, of Health etc.). Furthermore, she is an expert in events management, being involved in scientific international conferences mainly in the field of Intelligent Systems. As an educational expert she plans and organizes educational/cultural trips for different target groups, such as school-kids, youngsters, families, civil society organisations, etc. For many years she held and been still holding important positions in different Bodies, Organisations and Associations such as the Women’s Organization of Managers and Entrepreneurs, and general secretary of University of Manchester Alumni Association Greece. In addition, she holds the honorary title of a European Ambassador of female entrepreneurship, in the context of which she has worked as a mentor in Greece, Europe and elsewhere to encourage different target groups to get involved in Entrepreneurship.

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George Pleios is Professor at the Communication and Media Studies at the NKUA, former member of the Supervisory Board of the ECPMF and member of the council of NCRT of Greece. He taught also in China, Hungary, Ukraine, Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Portugal. Author, coauthor, and editor of 9 books, PI in more than 25 research projects. 28 chapters and more than 45 articles have been published in Greece and internationally (UK, USA, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania, China, Australia, Turkey). His recent publications focus on fake news, media and the pandemics and the rise of war reporting.

Michalis Tastsoglou currently works as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). He holds a PhD on discourse analysis, while he studied Communication and Media Studies. He also teaches in the master programme MSc in Politics in the Era of the Internet. He has also worked as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Department of Communication and Digital Media of the University of Western Macedonia, as well as for various research and educational organizations.

Savvato Tsolakidou is Laboratory and Teaching staff at the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the NKUA. She is also Consultant Professor at the Hellenic Open University, lecturer in the postgraduate programme "Adult Education". She studied Sociology and French Literature (Paris 7-Jussieu, Paris III - Nouvelle Sorbonne) and she holds her PhD in Pedagogy from the NKUA. She

possesses consolidated analytical and drafting skills acquired through the carrying out of reports and studies which has been part of her professional responsibilities as deputy director of the Institute of Training of the Greek National Center for Public Administration and Local Government, head of Unit within her previous job's positions in Greek civil service, and as a Detached National Expert for five years at the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs. Currently, her research interests and publications are focused on Lifelong learning and communication, European studies and organizational communication, integration issues of vulnerable groups, human research development. She is the Scientific Coordinator and Project manager of the ERMIScom university partnership project funded by IKY, the Greek National Agency for the Erasmus+ programme.

