# SOCIETY REGISTER

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## EDITED BY STÉPHANIE CASSILDE & DARRICK SMITH

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# EDITORIAL

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ABSTRACT: This is an introductory piece that sets up the scene for a special issue of Society Register dedicated to Language, Discourse and Society. It aims to briefly discuss the context, the aims of the issue and the content of accepted articles. The articles included in this issue were first presented at the ISA RC 25 Mid-term Conference in Warsaw. The conference took place at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in September 2019 with the support of Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Polish Commission for UNESCO, ISA RC 25, ISA RC 32 and the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Social Pedagogy.
KEYWORDS: CDA, Discourse, Language, power, exclusion/inclusion

Living in a complex world that beckons researchers, activists, service professionals, and many others to confront routine manifestations of injustice can be trying on the body and mind. As academics and practitioners we find ourselves in a constant pursuit of identifying social dynamics and problems for which we can extract and formulate theoretical and practical responses. To some, the notion of language or the study of linguistics is relegated to one of basic conversational interaction on one hand, and scientific analysis and the important, yet routine exercise of epistemological back and forth on the other. For our purposes here the aim is to look at language: the investigation of language, discourse and dialogue themselves as research object play a very

practical and reflective role in how educators and social service practitioners alike imagine and work in partnership with the people and communities of their world. As Chomsky (2006:58) noted:

> I think that the long-range significance of the study of language lies in the fact that in this study it is possible to give a relatively sharp and clear formulation of some of the central questions of psychology and to bring a mass of evidence to bear on them. What is more, the study of language is, for the moment, unique in the combination it affords of richness of data and susceptibility to sharp formulation of basic issues.

This edition of *Society Register* aims to provide readers with an opportunity to contemplate how meaning is constructed and sense-making occurs in dialogues of community, contemplation and conflict within the context of both professional and personal experience. Additionally, whether it be South Africa, Brazil, Europe, or the United States, each article is delving into the question of experience and the relationship between how one understands and makes sense of their reality within the context of a broader discourse that may extend far outside their own experience and into frameworks of communal discourses that extend online to other regions of the globe. Furthermore, as social beings, this edition also examines how such sense-making informs and is shaped by how we see ourselves within the complex arrangements of our social identities with in politicized environments and larger structures that perpetuate marginalization.

The introductory article from Darrick Smith, "Getting Cursed Out for Social Justice: Notes on Handling Verbal Assaults with Humanity", gives insight about ongoing challenges for educators toward student transgressions, and lines of thought to engage with those with respect, and reflection.

In "When University Becomes the Enemy: Hate Speech Attacks on Facebook" Viviane de Melo Resende, Yara Martinelli and Ernani Viana Saraiva analyse the extreme right hate speech in Brazil in its way to target the academia in Brazil. They focus on online discourse, as social networks are a key channel for ironies, negative associations, and simplification of debate.

In the article "Pure politicking! Racialised blame games and moral panic in the case of a South African high school", Marthinus Conradie uses Toulmin's theoretical framework applied to the case of Overvaal incident to examine how blame attribution, moral panic and racialization processes are interconnected in online journalistic communications. The results underline that the organization of the blame games around moral panic supports racialized conflictive dynamics.

Alexandra Filipova and Krystyna Heland-Kurzak focus on online discourse of children's in "Social and Legal Discourse of Children's Participation in Decision-Making in Poland and Russia: Comparative Analysis". While children's participation is a core right, but the practice may vary. The focus here is on the similarities and differences between Poland and Russia.

Cleide Emília Faye Pedrosa applies a usual framework to a new material in "Self-Nar-

ratives of the Brazilian Deaf People: Application of the Hypotheses of Socio-analyses", which enables to shed light on which are the similarities and differences toward deaf people's narratives. Indeed, their narratives were not previously examined from this perspective, which is important toward their social relations, their identities and their citizenship.

The article "Own experiences of abortion in descriptions of people associated in pro-choice groups on Facebook in Poland", written by Klementyna Kuleta examines the central role of language toward a marginalized position in that country, i.e. being not against abortion. A usually invisible or unheard discourse appears, and thus its contrast toward the official and most visible discourse on this topic in Poland.

Finally, an extended review article dedicated to 'The Dialectics of English Dominance' by Lila Monzo, discusses the latest book by Odrowaz-Coates (2019) on soft power of English in European context.

The purpose of this issue is to shed light on how discourses inform about the preferences, the behaviours, and the representations. This scope is based on RC25 Language and Society Research Committee of ISA's core approach to look at language rather than solely through it.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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# GETTING CURSED OUT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:
# NOTES ON HANDLING VERBAL ASSAULTS WITH HUMANITY

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ABSTRACT: A national dialogue on school discipline has now reemerged in the United States as many educators struggle with how to maintain a balance of cultural responsiveness and high expectations when addressing student transgressions on their campuses. While the field of child development, counseling psychology, and communications pose theoretical responses to such dilemmas, this article aims specifically to address the procedural challenges of dealing with verbal abuse from students and adults. Through the lens of a social justice educator, the author offers practical, humanizing steps that are intended to help secondary school educators engage with students in a way that emphasizes boundaries, respect, and reflection for students and adults alike.
KEYWORDS: social justice, education system, discipline, trust, power

## INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to address the phenomenon of student-to-adult verbal conflict which occurs in schools throughout the United States. Data has shown for well over a decade previous that in addition to the near 800,000 reported victimizations that students experience each year in American schools, there exists a dynamic in which teachers being threatened with injury (elementary = 11%, secondary = 9%,) or physically assaulted at a (elementary = 9%, secondary = 2%) throughout the country (Musu et al.

2018). Based on anecdotal accounts and observations in the field, some educators and consultants have noted rates as high as 30% of their faculty being threatened or assaulted in any given school site in various districts around the nation. One can merely search the Internet for classroom conflicts and physical altercations to get a glimpse into how widespread outbreaks of violence or hostile interactions are throughout the United States' public school systems. Parallel to these ongoing issues is a persistent concern regarding teacher attrition and recruitment – evidenced by numerous media and scholarly reports of teacher shortages at the primary and secondary levels.

There are many ways of theorizing the importance of language in the critical role it plays in the construction of our reality and the transmission of ideas, emotions, and intentions (Chomsky 2002; Civille and Lawless 1986; Hodge and Kress 1993; Widdowson 1989). This particular article does not seek to further the discourse on the theorizing of language, but would rather discuss more directly the implications of harsh language or swearing as a tool for defense, attack, and visibility in the school setting. Focusing specifically on educational environments, the goal of this piece is to shed light on what is both an under examined facet of linguistic interaction and an avoided topic in the academic discourse of educational practice. Much of the current discourse around student expression and conflict focuses on interactions that occur online. This piece seeks to swing some attention back to the realities of the persistent challenges of student-to-adult interaction within the school building itself and recommend steps and techniques to sustain a culture of clear, consistent, and socially just practices.

## FRAMEWORK

This manuscript is written through the lens of a social justice leader and educator. Shields and Mohan (2008) describe social justice education as:

> Practices that take into account and are responsive to students' disparate lived experiences, their unequal material and social realities, and their diverse needs – and that, ideally, shape the curriculum, educational strategies, relationships among members of the school community, and create an inclusive learning environment (p. 291).

Written here is a set of practices that might inform educators as to how one might approach heated conflicts while maintaining a strong fidelity to the ethics of a social justice approach. At the core of what is suggested in the following pages is a focus on the responsiveness and relationship-building elements of social justice education through an emphasis on a practical investment in a *dialogic* approach to student conversation and school discipline.

Borrowing from Paulo Freire's (2000) explanation of the importance of dialogue in education this piece seeks to situate exchanges between adolescents and the educators that work with them within the framework of dialogic leadership (Shields 2005). The importance of dialogue has been discussed for decades in the fields of communication, public relations, philosophy, and psychology as a critical part of human relationship- building and the social construction of meaning (Buber 1958; Frie and Or-

ange 2013; Heidegger 1962; Jordaan 2009). Liberation pedagogues consider dialogue as a necessary instructional component when teaching for the purposes of challenging oppression. As Freire states "Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building" (2000:16). In the development of relationships, dialogue is a critical mechanism through which common understanding is developed and boundaries are maintained and renegotiated. Shields (2005) notes that:

> Dialogue and relationships are not elements that can be selected and discarded at will; rather, they are ways of life—recognitions of the fundamental differences among human beings and of the need to enter into contact, into relational dialogue and sense making (participating with our whole being) with one another. (123)

Shield's notion of dialogic leadership suggests that authority does not have to be enacted from a place of power, but a place of responsibility—a responsibility that stems from the expressed concerns and needs of those to which a leader is accountable, and invested in building positive relationships (2004). Teachers and administrators are in constant dialogue with their students and can use the normalization of such dialogue to more intentionally develop meaning and build understanding when arguments and contentious issues arise regarding school discipline. As Wegerif (2011: 180) clarifies "Robots can interact but their interactions remain in external space. When humans enter into dialogue there is a new space of meaning that opens up between them and includes them within it". Seeking here to move a verbal assault from merely a problematic interaction to an opportunity for mutual reflection, learning, and boundary-reinforcement, the "curse-out" like many other school violations, can be shifted into a moment of meaning. With this in mind, I unpack the potential motives behind the "curse-out" itself and explore specific strategies for addressing student behavior in the larger context of school discipline policy.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE "CURSE OUT"

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines the term curse out as a phrasal verb that means "to say angry and offensive words to (someone)" (curse out 2019). If a student feels that cursing out a teacher is their last recourse, it has to be viewed as a major issue. This is not to imply that one incident should mean an automatic transfer out of the school, but I am saying that it is something that staff and leadership must pay close attention to. IT IS NOT OKAY TO CURSE or SWEAR at anyone in a learning environment – especially a teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for the safety of their students, and as such, if they can be verbally assaulted with no consequence to the student, then all of the students in the room are also at risk.

To be clear, if a teacher gets cursed out in front of their students, once the class resumes, they must express to their classroom the unacceptable nature of the act and why they are frustrated with it. By providing this context, it is then easier to explain why that student is no longer sitting in the classroom (Freire 2000; Shields and Ed-

wards, 2005). Educators should also try to link the problem to the school values (if the school has identified any) as well as their own expectations of their students (Bohanon et al. 2006; Bradshaw et al. 2009). This response, at the very least, demonstrates that the teacher has an understanding that what just happened is out-of-line and not acceptable at the school. It's always counterintuitive for me when teachers present themselves as the ONLY person in the room that thinks that they found something unacceptable. Specifically, teachers need to consistently and systemically, reinforce a school climate and high behavioral expectations of their students.

We must remember that our students are human beings, socialized with ideas of right and wrong (Haro 2000; Killen and Smetana, 2005; Park and Peterson 2006). For the most part, adolescents can clearly see when something problematic is occurring within a given place or space (Akom 2003; Jackson et al. 2008). However, it is not necessarily their allegiance to ideas of order and appropriateness that I am seeking to point out, but rather their awareness as human beings for what is currently the desire of the group versus a calling out for attention or a demonstration of power and control by one or two individuals. It is in situations of "disruption" (if we define it as an interruption of learning, not a mere act of defiance) that students can identify not only the poor timing and choice of actions by their peers, but also the way in which such behavior represents an ongoing pattern in that student's conduct or is the result of other social and relational issues that appear outside of the classroom.

It is also important to remember that students have more interactions with each other than they do with their teachers. Meaning, teachers can develop a familiarity with their students *as students*. Youth get to see their peers in a diverse array of settings with only one of which being school. This exposure gives students more of an opportunity to familiarize themselves with each other's personalities and behavioral patterns. When a student acts outside of the expected boundaries of the classroom (whether these have been articulated or not), classmates that already know that student are often the *least* likely to be surprised. For a variety of reasons, the collective attention in such situations will swing towards how the adult in the room will respond. When an educator acts in a way that gives the impression that something unacceptable is tolerable, students are sent the message that not only is that teacher "weak", but they also lack the social awareness and necessary skills to protect the classroom.

There are numerous opportunities in our schools for exchanges of disrespect and profanity to occur. Small disagreements can turn into fights if not intervened upon. These heated verbal and/or physical conflicts often result in teachers and staff intervening to deescalate the situation. It is a prime opportunity for a "curse-out". "You'll hear things like "get the f--k off me!" or "f--k you, don't touch me!" or the classic "f--k you b---h!" seemingly hurled out into the general public and to any and every one in these situations by frustrated students.

In this piece, I am not referring specifically to the profanity or "cussing" itself, but what the curse-out represents in student-to-teacher dialogue. When students verbally assault educators it is typically in response to a request or directive of some sort given by a teacher, administrator, or staff person. It's not necessarily a counterpunch but it may also happen in that way. Researchers have examined the ways in which swearing

plays a significant role in society at large (Bergen 2016), and can serve as a mechanism for marking relationships (Stapleton 2003; Winters and Duck 2001), as well as shaping public perception of oneself (DeFrank and Kahlbaugh 2019). Many of us are quite familiar with swearing as an almost "knee-jerk" reaction to pain and – depending on the cultural context – a quite routine form of expressing emotions such as anger, delight, excitement, or sadness (Jay and Janschewitz 2008).

For students, sometimes it can be a quick "f--k that" to a request to move one's seat or to step outside the classroom. Other times it can be a "f--k you" or "I ain't doin s—t" to a request to come and engage with an instructor in a hallway or to change clothes into more appropriate attire. It can get a little more technical when it comes in the form of personal possessions that have been confiscated like cell phones or iPods "you better give me my f--kin phone" or "you ain't keepin my s--t!"

### *What to do if you are the teacher*

So what do you do when you are on the receiving end of a verbal assault of profanity? Below, I outline four key steps to responding.

**1. Stay calm**. It is important to remain calm, but without being patronizing (like a boss, with patience). Although you have the power to wield over the student, that won't be beneficial to either of you in the moment. What the student(s) need to see is a confident adult that is clear-minded and strong enough to keep the space safe.

**2. Address the cursing immediately**. Without delay, respond promptly and inquire about the behavior. Ask "what was that?" or "what just happened, did I miss something?" This calls attention to the act as a disrespectful disruption that *they* caused, but *must* reflect upon – not just an offense on you.

**3. Help the student clarify their intent while you clarify yours**. For example, consider asking the following questions: What would make you talk to me like that? Is it really *this*? What did I do to prompt this behavior? You can either start or follow these questions by reminding the student of your purpose as their teacher. For example, this may sound like the following: "I am here for one purpose—your education and development. I can't do that with our folks feeling like they can't function here in a healthy way. It can't be healthy with folks cursing each other out every time they get upset. It is my job to make sure that folks are not able to threaten or intimidate people here and there is no way that I would let someone talk to you in that way and get away with it". "So, tell me what is going on so we can resolve this". What would make you talk to me like that? Is it really *this*? What did I do?" If the student is unable to calm down after this—it is time for them to go to the office.

**4. Remind the student of the school's/ community's standards**. It is important for the student to know and understand that such an inappropriate act is not our standard, nor the historical standard of their community or communities moving towards liberation and humanization. It may sound like this, "As a school that has respect for you, this community, and the history of those who struggle to be seen and valued as human beings, we cannot accept this type of behavior. We know that you are better than this and that what you represent in this world is too important for this to be your

standard or ours as a school.  If something is causing you to act this way, let me know so I can help and support you. But, we will never accept this as your standard". "So, what is going on?" What would make you talk to me like that? Is it really *this*? What did I do?

After these steps, the student needs to go to the office. The second half of the piece discusses steps that need to be taken when the student goes to the office and how these issues of student expectations and school climate and values need to be addressed from the administrator's perspective.

### *What to do as an administrator*

**1. Preparing for the office visit.** When the student and teacher arrive at the office, the Administrator should already have received a call from the teacher as to *whom* is coming to the office, and *why they are coming*. If this does not happen, the student, security staff, or the teacher should bring a referral with the basic information of what happened for the administrator to review with the student. This can often take some time as teachers have an entire class to worry about and focus on. No stress, a talented administrator can get the "low down" from the basic information form, the original call, and the student themselves.

**2. Know your staff.** As an administrator, it is in these moments when knowing your staff and the various styles of your teachers, is important. Random, frequent, classroom visits – even for just 2 minutes – can help give an administrator an idea of the environment a teacher creates in their classroom. The students' body language, collective concentration, amount of classroom movement, and teacher's behavior can vary day-to-day so frequent visits throughout the year (6-7 times per class) can give an administrator a better idea of how the teacher interacts with students. Close attention to how teachers behave in general is important to know as well.

**3. Participate in professional development**. Professional development that targets key social issues such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, privilege, and personal histories can give an administrator a clearer idea of how their staff members frame issues and, at the very least, articulate how staff is **expected** to frame issues. All of this gives the administrator a foundation from which to work with the teacher, student, and their family when violations of school policy occur as you can vouch for your staff's integrity and intent while also being prepared to help your staff improve their practice to avoid these issues in the future.

**4. Ask the "What happened" question.** This question is critical to the process. A school leader not only represents the interests of the school, but they also model the ideal expectations of behavior for students. So the disciplinary session has to begin with the administrator *listening.* I'll write more on the active listening needed here, but the point is that you are searching for the trigger so that you can understand what set the student off. This process is not intended to pathologize the student, but rather, to dig within yourself to relate to them in that scenario. For example, consider what would trigger *you* in that situation?

As educators, we want to know what happened on a scope that informs us of what

the parties understand as natural reactions, personal violations, and acceptable acts of atonement within a socialized, rational communal notion of morality. This information also helps us see our students as actors in a social world that exists outside the school while influencing interactions inside the school. Such a perspective, absent of value judgments as to the sanity of communal beliefs and habits, helps frame the disciplinary dialogue with students as an instructional one.

**5. Engage in active listening.** As administrators, it is also important to use active listening skills with the student. Pay attention to the body language and tone of every word. Ask for clarification as the story develops to make sure you understand the roles and relationships of each player in the story. This is helpful as your clarifying questions help the student take a step back and see the progression of events.

**6. Validate the student's emotion as real**. As the student explains their perspective and feelings, be sure to validate how they feel. Question their *interpretation* of the triggering act. This questioning does not mean that they are wrong. You mainly want to understand how your students respond to different elements of teacher behavior. For example, students can become upset when they feel that they are being overlooked or treated as if they are invisible. Such feelings have a string history as embedded micro aggressions within relational race, class, and gender power dynamics. In a school setting, this can often occur when a teacher has not sufficiently articulated the ways in which students will have an opportunity to engage in the class discussion. This can lead to some students raising their hands and being interrupted by students calling out; or, students calling out because the boundaries for such conversation rituals have been inconsistently upheld.

If the student's interpretation of the interaction is reasonable, it'll provide a great opportunity to have an instructional moment between you and your teacher. If you find it common in student-teacher conflicts, you may have a good topic for professional development training or possibly a town hall meeting, assembly, or advisory discussion with the student body. Sometimes it can be as simple as teachers missing a raised hand as they attend to the speaker rotation. No matter the reason, it is a common way in which students experience alienation and silencing in school environments. These actions can enhance the sense of invisibility that large school populations can inherently produce.

As an educator seeking to utilize the situation as a learning opportunity, it is important to recognize the possibilities in framing these interactions as such. Affirming the student's initial emotional response can lead to a discussion about other vantage points. It may sound like this: "I understand how that feels. I would be angry too!" Then you can proceed with questions like: "Do you think it was personal, or did the teacher just seem like they were in a rush?" Questions like this can get a student to think about the responsibilities of a teacher as difficult and the teacher as an imperfect being. It also sets a foundation for a great conversation between the student and teacher regarding what happened without the student viewing the incident as an attack, but a problematic oversight that should not happen again.

**7. Rebuke student behavior as inconsistent with the direction of the school and its mission**. This is when you must teach as an administrator. Students have to

understand the value of stopping and thinking, especially when they are agitated. And administrators have to be clear about the alternative behaviors that students should exhibit when they are upset. What students *should* do is as critical to understand as what they shouldn't do and the disciplinary conversation with an administrator or teacher should *always* articulate the expected alternative behaviors within the school community (based on the principles and values of the school).

It is also important to entertain any suggestions from students as to how staff might alter *their* reactions to student behavior. This does not mean that students lead your professional development design, but sometimes, a student will give a teacher or administrator a nugget of advice that provides them with an important step to improved practice.

**8. Work towards an analysis of teacher and/or staff intent**. As educators interested in social justice, we are always conscious of the inherent power dynamic in the teacher-student relationship. Sometimes, adults want to soften the prominence of the dynamic by acting as a friend or a therapist. Instead of doing this, it's always helpful to discuss the intent and reasoning behind such decisions. This type of conversation shifts the discussion from one of obedience or indebtedness to one of *understanding*. It also gives the student an opportunity to engage in debate as to how the adult manifested the intent (and whether or not there's a better way). This practice affirms a safe space in which both parties can discuss the reasoning of the actions taken. Prompts to foster improved understanding may sound like this: "Do you really think the teacher meant it that way?"; "What if the teacher was just trying to do this instead?"; "How would you act if you were trying to communicate with folks and someone does what you did to interrupt?" These questions are critical to ask as we encourage students to read body language, reflect on the patterns of others, and set their interactions in a context.

**9. Stay on topic – the real topic – their holistic education. This is not just about school, but life preparation.** It is important for the dialogue with students to be connected to the larger issue of their holistic education and development and not just about the cursing incident. Students need to understand how cursing is symbolic of a value system that is counter to the values of the school. The administrator needs to emphasize that they and their teachers have high expectations for the student, not only in learning and exams, but also in their overall life.

**10. Ask "what can I do to help this not happen again?"** – We play different positions and roles, but students need to understand that we are on the same team and have the same goals. Students and their families need to know that someone is in charge and that they have *what is right* on their minds as well as what is best for the student body.

**11. Give them an honorable opportunity for atonement.** This varies from student to student, but in some way students need to acknowledge that they have heard and understand (not necessarily agree with) your thoughts on: (a) Why their response was a problem; (b) Why you responded the way you did (e.g. you can emphasize the importance of education to the individual and the class); and (c) Your recommendations on a better way to handle the situation in the future. The student response may

be an apology or a statement that conveys a comprehension of the various complexities that have been presented by you in the discussion. This step is not a substitute for a consequence, but rather a key opportunity for the student to process what they have heard and learned in the teachable moment.

**12. Giving out the Consequence**. Remind the student that they made a mistake and that mistakes happen. But clarify that there is a difference between making a mistake and *being a mistake*. A school for social justice should be an institution that trains youth to challenge oppression in its conventional and internalized forms. Your students must be reminded that you are interested in having a school that works well for each student and that you will be excited to see them upon their return from their suspension. But, simply put: "We don't do that here and we know that you know why. So get it together and we'll do our part to help you grow."

## CONCLUSION – IT IS ALWAYS A TEST

Students might be testing your courage, wisdom, or concern for the student body. They are usually just doing what teenagers do—testing the location and rigidness of the stated boundaries (Baumrind 2005; Mayseless and Scharf 2009). Often, this is a secondary intent and it can be at the subconscious or unconscious level in many cases. It is always a challenge to the school's ethics and the courage of those that choose the path of wisdom over oppression. Intentional or not, it *is* a test and no matter what the student's intent might be it is certainly a test in the eyes of everyone else who is aware of the situation. These moments are ones in which everyone is waiting to see if the school leader really walks the talk. One glaring inconsistency or show of favoritism will inevitably send the message that: (a) there's a randomness to the discipline structure of the school; or, (b) one student *does* come before the whole school and due to this, you can watch your leadership ability decrease significantly in a matter of days.

Faith and trust are a leader's best assets (Greenleaf and Spears 2002; Joseph and Winston 2005; Tschannen-Moran 2014). As teachers are the leaders of the classroom, they must work to authentically build trusting relationships with students and their families. Notice I am not saying "love" – but *trust* – and in communities with histories of violence in their streets, trust it built with consistency and safety. People have to believe that the leader or teacher of a school has the skills to do the job, but they have to have faith that they will do the job. This helps the community lend some sort of support to get it done. So, in order to get high marks while being constantly tested, a school educator must be consistently *courageous, humble, thoughtful, clear, and caring*. These are the units of analysis upon which these tests are based, so when it comes to discipline issues, it is always about how you handle it.

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# WHEN UNIVERSITY BECOMES THE ENEMY: HATE SPEECH ATTACKS ON FACEBOOK

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ABSTRACT: The extreme right hate speech propagated currently in Brazil addresses a broad social spectrum, from feminist movements to traditional communities. The academic community and higher education institutions are also targets, as they are identified as poles of democratic resistance. Specific hate speech towards academy in Brazil is the subject of this paper. The persecution of academic community and knowledge itself occurs through the discursive dispute especially on social networks, and thus in this analytical exercise, we looked up at Facebook's largest bolsonarista's group – the "Jair Bolsonaro Presidency Support Group", which brings together 317,000 members. We analyzed the memetic discourse on the page, focusing memes that were published between April and June 2019, thematizing higher public education, and presenting a bimodal verb-visual composition. These criteria led to the collection of 115 memes analyzed with the support of a QDA package. Analysis reveals the disqualification of university institutions and their actors through ironies, negative associations including stereotypes, simplification of debate to the shallower. Students are often associated with nudity as immorality, professors of indoctrination and ridicule, protesters of ignorance, or bad character. Political debate is reduced to extreme left-right

polarization, with the criminalization of the left.

## INTRODUCTION

Bolsonarismo is the actual name of the extreme right ideology propagated by Brazilian President Bolsonaro and his followers, named bolsonaristas. Its hate addresses to a broad social spectrum like women and feminist movements, racialized populations, indigenous peoples and traditional communities, LGBTQ + groups, impoverished populations living in marginalized territories, Afro-Brazilian religions practitioner, among others. The academic community and higher education institutions are also targets, as they are identified as poles of democratic resistance. This perception has raised since students and university professors organized national demonstrations after the announcement of resource cuts (euphemistically phrased as contingencies by official discourse) which made clear its ideological bias. Those hate speeches and the use of memes as a mass media penetration are the subject that we will address in this article.As part of the current management of Brazil's federal executive power policies, the financial resource cuts have been implemented in the area of education, which currently operates at a budget well below what is needed to maintain activities. Some Brazilian universities have already announced that with the resources available to them after the cuts, they will not be able to maintain their activities until the end of the year. The announcement of the resource cuts in April 2019, accompanied by the suspension of scholarships and other unpopular measures, especially for their markedly ideological justifications, provoked reactions, on the one hand from the academic community and, and on the other hand, as an offensive by conservative discursive forces.

We observed that the persecution of minority groups and of knowledge itself occurs in the form of public policies that deconstruct the hardly achieved progress made during the democratic period in Brazil – in the case of universities, the struggle over financing and autonomy – but also through the discursive dispute, especially on social networks. The head of the federal executive communicates with his electorate mainly through messages on Twitter, and the unconditional defense of the ideologies that underpin bolsonarismo is the input of groups that organize themselves on social networks, especially on Facebook.

In this analytical exercise, we looked up at Facebook's largest bolsonarista's group - the "Jair Bolsonaro Presidency Support Group", which brings together 317,000 members. We analyzed the memetic discourse (Ferreira; Vasconcelos 2019) on the page, focusing only on memes that met the following criteria:

- they were published between April 28, 2019 (two days before the announcement of the cuts) and June 2, 2019 (two days after the second march against cuts in education resources);
- their theme was higher public education,
- Furthermore, they presented a bimodal verb-visual composition.

These criteria led to the collection of 115 memes. The collected data were analyzed with the support of a QDA package.

## 1. HATE SPEECH: CONSERVATIVE SPEECH STRATEGIES

Anticommunism as the basis for hate speech and polarizing political forces, was renewed in Brazil from 2015, according to Kaysel (2018). In response to post-neoliberal governments in Latin America, post-democratic inflections against President Dilma Rousseff had one of its first acts in the 2016 World Coup in Brazil (Ballestrin 2018). The communist threat discourse has been central to conquer public support for undemocratic plans, with remarkable continuities from the Cold War period – so Kaysel (2018) insists that anti-communism is not just outdated, as shown on social networks, media, and congress. Historical anti-communism – from the cold war period – was based on the ideological matrices identified in Catholic religious' conservatism, nationalism, and liberalism. Kaysel explains that these conservative forces have been resignified to this hybrid war period in which democracies are forcibly overthrown by the force of discursive technologies in the political use of big data.

Religious conservatism - nationalism, which promotes identification between nation and a particular patriarchal and heteronormative family model - and economic liberalism with low democratic density are the same reorganizing matrices, now with pentecostal political force. Even if it is a significant void, a very vague threat, the broadening of the semantic scope of anti-communism becomes an agglutinating force, which is associated in chains of meaning with other senses, contrary to feminism, to the rights of the LGBTQ + population, to black movements, and to any claim to the enlargement of the democratic debate (Kaysel 2018).

For this reason, Luciana Ballestrin (2018) understands that the composition between political authoritarianism and economic ultra-liberalism is possible in the global South because here, liberalism was not accompanied by a real democracy. Here, what happened was an enslaver democracy, which has never been completely overcome. So, in Brazil, the de-democratization goes by non-humanism, by the denial of the other's humanity, since an ideology of dehumanization is necessary to legitimize barbarism (Barbosa 2018). In this sense, the hate speech currently intensified in Brazil redraws in new shades the ontological denial of the other that Fanon (2015) already spoke about, one of the aspects of coloniality.

Ballestrin (2018) defines this global wave of de-democratization and "autocratization" as a rightward turn with the rise of conservative discourses. For her, the genesis of fascist discourses lies in the breaches of liberal democratic discourses. Wondering how democratic debate can act against democracy, in favor of de-democratization, she finds answers in social networks. Since digital communication has become a daily practice in many societies, media has become the arena of sociability and social and political commitment (Lorenzo-Dus and Cristofaro 2016). Social media has assumed an essential role in Brazilian political communication, especially since the 2018 elections, and remains relevant for maintaining the polarization state in which the country has been since then.

Radical political polarization is mainly based on hate speeches, "directed especially at minority groups" (Freitas; Castro 2013: 327). To these groups (minorized in terms of their accesses or the systematic persecution they suffer, which does not mean or need to mean demographic minority) are addressed words that offend, due to identity characteristics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, etc., including even inciting violent actions (Brugger 2007). In this case, the hate speech is addressed not to minorities linked to race or sexuality, but to institutional (university) and political (especially the Workers' Party) belonging.

The scope of hate speech covers a broad spectrum of aggression, including harassment, degradation, devaluation, and dehumanization. This large amplitude is relevant for the functioning of these discourses to divide the groups that hate and those identified as a threat, based on the separation of "us" and "them" (Gagliardone et al. 2015). For Rita Segato (2018), the discourse of moral superiority that underlies the we-they opposition characterizes a significant detriment to humanity, by creating distinctive categories of the same humanity. Benesch (2012) is also concerned with the discursive signs that call for violence, such as characterizing the target of speeches as nonhuman (worms, animals) or resorting to the we-them opposition. This call is done by emphasizing the supposed risk they would pose to the speech audience (that is, to the group characterized as 'we'). Rosane Silva and her co-authors draw attention to the discursive resources used as the apparatus of hate speech: target group stereotypes, decontextualization of events, and creation of an enemy figure through fear and anger strategies (Silva et al. 2011). Through the written record of hate speech attacks, scandal perpetuation can be achieved (WALDRON 2010), and for that, social networks are handy tools.

## 2. MEMETIC SPEECH AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION

The origin of the term meme goes back to Dawkins's (2001) neo-Darwinian research. The author proposed an articulation between genetics and cultural studies, and in this perspective, he coined the term 'meme' related to 'gene' and 'mimesis' (Junqueira 2016: 21). Reproductive and perpetuation strategies of genes, in an approximation with the theories of evolution and natural selection, are transposed to culture, related to the perpetuation of practice or idea. According to Silva (2018: 4), the question is the "transmission of information that spreads from brain to brain through a process that can be, in a broad sense, called imitation".

Contemporary researches of memetic discourse keep in mind this fundamental understanding of the concept of the meme, comprehending memes as ideas propagated by imitation of patterns and content. As with genes, "memes in their propagation process are also subject to modifications – true mutations – that help to keep the idea alive and adapt" (Junqueira 2016: 21). Furthermore, this is how the meme differs from other replications of online products and ideas: throughout the going viral process, it is transformed and readjusted, gaining more strength. This competition for propagated ideas' perpetuation occurs, according to Dawkins (2001), for attention and retention in the human brain of the message that is transmitted. In the virtual

environment, says Junqueira (2016: 21), it is mainly about "stimulus saturation, to which Internet users are constantly exposed, and that results in no longer processable amount of information". That is why the fixing strategies are so relevant.

Generally, memes are, in Andrea Silva's definition (2018: 4), messages or behaviors that replicate themselves indiscriminately and without indication of authorship. Thereby, these texts are generally multimodal, mobilizing groups that, in social networks, are engaged with the dissemination of information, with the ability to influence behaviors. The success of a meme, for the same author, depends on its content and appeal, influencing its capacity to relate to other memes already accepted and thus 'going viral'. Silva also argues that the replication of memes in the social networking environment is anchored mainly in three characteristics:

(i) Mutation – when the meme is changed as it is replicated by social network users;

(ii) Natural selection – not all memes remain active on the network and not all become viral;

(iii) Heredity – a meme as a variation and/or a combination of the original one (2018: 4-5).

Thanks to the speed and capillarity in social media (2017: 179), people are increasingly becoming informed about politics. In this environment: the vast amount of information, the speed, simplicity, and practicality of content – which is more imagetic and less written – and humor, which seems to bring relaxation to themes often thought of as inaccessible, may be reasons for this phenomenon. About this subject, Chagas et al. (2017: 178) point out that new forms of humor emerge from digital technologies, and "political humor on the Internet contributes to the creation and consolidation of a web of shared meanings that absorbs and resignifies popular culture content". Thereby, political content is constructed and shared on a large scale, using jokes as discursive strategies, and propagated as humorous messages, but carrying selected content, and of course, marked with intents.

Anyone connected to social media can be a meme's creator, transformer, or multiplier. These texts, which may be seen as only jokes, unpretentious and without impact, actually have great power: with their high ability to multiply, they spread virally and begin to shape political opinions, becoming part of the virtual environment. "About political memes, in general, in the specific context of Facebook, they have been marked by polarized clashes and fragile arguments" (Silva 2018: 9).

Initially, the possibility of transforming the content circulating seems positive and democratic; however, aligned with post-truth, fake news, and placed in a polarized political context, it can become dangerous. Because humor is exceptionally prominent, memes often gain a seemingly light and joking aspect – which masks the psychological threat of their impact, mainly when they act as a vehicle for hate speech.

When it comes to political content, this mix of humor and hate can become dangerous. The trivialization generates rapprochement and arouses interest – something that political discourses, texts, and content rarely cause. Thus, memes are becoming an authoritative new source of policy misinformation, acting as an instrument for trivializing political debate, and reinforcing hate speech.

### 3. BOLSONARISTS MEMES: THE UNIVERSITY AS THE ENEMY

The discursive construction of an enemy, by the spreading of fear and hate, is one of the main strategies for controlling people's thoughts and practices, and for justifying political actions and decisions. A great example of this is the fascist's governments of the twentieth century, which, without exception, in order to justify their actions, built by propaganda the figure of a common enemy to be fought (Fausto 1998). This discourse has a unique chance of successfully propagating itself in crisis contexts: pointing an enemy to blame for the evils of the context in question can mobilize, successfully, thoughts, and practices.

Our current crisis context in Brazil includes the economic impacts of the international crisis of 2008, in a foreign market dependent country, added to the political crisis since 2013, solidly anchored in the interference of mass media and social media. In addition, conservative groups considered many public policies promoted by the Worker's Party outrageous. They saw gender, race, and sexuality on the agenda, and felt that these guidelines went directly against their religious and conservative perspectives, which have always permeated the Brazilian mentality – and that before were not openly questioned. Elites also found it challenging to cope with access policies, such as racial and social quotas, which restricted privileges that these classes understand as their rights.

For example, in the current Brazilian government program, we can see agendas as combating "the apology of gender ideology" and "privileges deriving from quotas". Those are examples of conservative proposals that represent regression towards inclusive measures of progressive governments, despised by the most conservative and religious sectors of society. Both arguments are associated with the academic environment and public universities in the current defamation campaign.

Attacks to the universities, science, and education on a broad scale are not fortuitous in Brazil's post-democratic regime. It is a strategy consistent with a particular nation project. The Brazilian president and his education minister have been attacking the scientific and academic community since April 2019, for example, when the president falsely stated that science in Brazil was centrally developed in private institutions. On April 8, 2019, Bolsonaro stated, in an interview to a radio station, "in universities, when we talk about research, you do not have nothing…, few universities have real research, and of those few, most are in private initiative". This is the opposite of reality: more than 90% of the Brazilian scientific work is carried out in public, federal, and state universities. According to a survey conducted by Clarivate Analytics for the Higher Education Personnel Improvement Coordination (CAPES), 95% of all Brazilian scientific production is made by public universities – federal and state ones. According to the Leiden Ranking, "between the 20 universities that publish more in Brazil, there are no private ones". Available at http://ciencianarua.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Screen-Shot-2019-04-11-at-12.20.06.png. Accessed September 8, 2019.

About two weeks later, the newly appointed minister of education, Abraham Weintraub, in a video posted on Facebook, spoke out against public investment in human-

ities researches areas, which he finds unhelpful to society. He took up the subject in his first press interview – he said that it is not "against studying philosophy", but this area of study should be restricted to those who can pay for it in private universities. The next day, the president said, on Twitter, that he was studying "decentralizing investment in areas as philosophy and sociology". According to him, he intended transferring resources to areas that "generate immediate taxpayer return", which he associated with agrarian and health sciences.

A few days later, his education minister declared that he would cut funds from universities promoting "shambles", in a direct attack on the University of Brasilia, the Fluminense Federal University and the Federal University of Bahia, not coincidentally strongholds of democratic resistance. Faced with the evident political motivation of the cuts, the same day the minister decided: he would cut 30% of the discretionary resources not only from those identified as non-submitable but also from all federal universities.

What followed was the organization of resistance in the form of national marches and demonstrations that gathered millions of people, summed up in the main cities of the country but also in small cities, in all regions of Brazil. The bolsonarist offensive was also organized in the form of memes that circulated in social networks and messaging applications, especially WhatsApp groups, which questioned the relevance of universities and built a negative image of these institutions, especially in the humanities and social areas. For example, many covers of monographs, dissertations, and theses on the LGBTQI+ theme began to circulate as a way of demoralizing, by conservative bias, the science produced in these areas of knowledge.

In May 2019, two significant marches took place in favor of education and universities. The first one was called even before the financial cuts, a standstill in defense of education and against social security reform that was boosted by the mobilization against cuts in investment in higher education. This demonstration, called #15M, took place on May 15, bringing together over 1 million people in more than 200 cities in 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District. Regarding this demonstration, Bolsonaro, who was in Dallas, United States, made the following statement: "It's natural, now that most are such a rioter. If someone asks the water formula, they will not know. They are useful idiots, imbeciles, who are being used as the maneuvering mass of a smart-assed minority that makes up the nucleus of many federal universities in Brazil". The second demonstration, on May 30, gathered about 1.8 million people in the streets of 190 cities in 26 states and DF, as well as 10 cities abroad.

In the 36 days between April 28 (two days before the minister announced the cuts) and June 2 (two days after the second national march in defense of universities), 115 memes that met the temporal and selection criteria were published on the "Bolsonaro's Supporters Group". Those memes were in terms of language modalities, bimodal of the verb-visual type, and in thematic terms, focused centrally on higher education or the manifestations around universities. The memes were classified into six-time groups, which allowed us to observe that

(1) From April 28 to 30, the group published seven memes on the theme, then

(2) 25 memes in the first week of May and

(3) 17 memes in second, rising to

(4) 50 memes in the week of May 15-21 – 30 of which were published only on the 15th, # 15M date – then production slowed, with

(5) Four memes in the week of 22 May 28th and (6) 12 memes from May 29 to June 2.

This distribution of the corpus in the weeks allows us to infer that the group under analysis gave much more relevance to the manifestation of May 15 than to May 30, although the latter was more significant in terms of popular participation.

All memes were inserted in a project created in the software NVivoPRO. For sorting the data, each text was named like this: "month-day.number" (for example, text 5-15.7 would have been the seventh meme published on May 15). Nodes were created for data coding in four analytical categories, considering the nature of the data and its multimodality: discursive strategy, intertextuality, salience, and theme. The coding was done manually by reading each text on the software-coding screen. For coding in each category, the two language modalities in focus were considered, so it was not necessary to separate verbal and visual analysis categories.
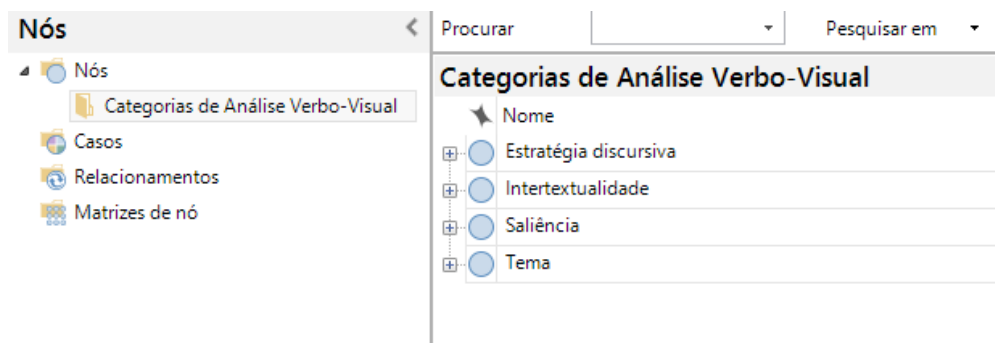


In the discursive strategy category, elements relevant to the construction of hate discourses were observed, according to the bibliography consulted: the opposition "we" / "them", de-personalization, the creation of the enemy and the representation by stereotypes:



At this node, the most recurring cases in the corpus were the appeal to stereotypes and the 'we'/'they' opposition. In the case of stereotypes, negative representations

of students were frequent, in many nudity images on university campuses, in decontextualized situations, and of teachers represented as indoctrinators. The 'we'/'they' opposition was built mostly on memes with more verbal content and with recurring opposition between the current government and the Workers' Party governments. The creation of the enemy was linked mainly to anti-communism, to icons of critical thinking like Paulo Freire and the political left. Finally, de-personalization was usually built by identity between students, teachers, or left-wing activists and donkeys (see below).

As it is possible to see by the composition of the corpus with 115 texts and the numbers expressed in the table, there were cases in which more than one discursive strategy coding was required. An example is the following meme:

Meme 5-11-01
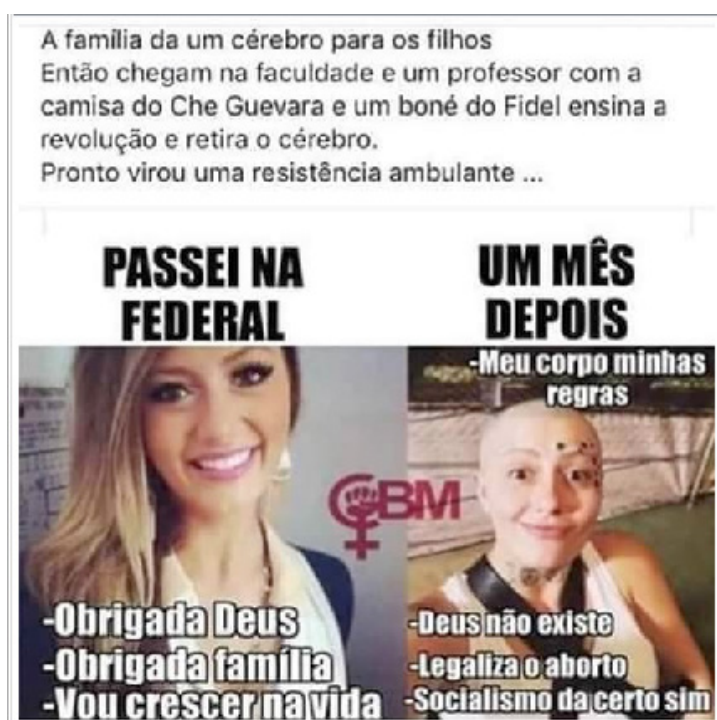


In this meme, there is the doctrinal teaching stereotype, linked to a specific image evoked in the physical description present in the verbal text at the top of the meme. Another central stereotype in the meme is that of the female figure deemed desired or appropriate, disciplined according to the norms of the church, the family, and the capitalist system of production and labor, in opposition to the female figure considered misfit, outside the aesthetic standards appropriate to the previous representation, irreverent. This simplified opposition of absolute opposites is characteristic of memetic language, which facilitates the apprehension of opposing discourses by clouding any complexity. Thus, it represents either an absolute positive identity, linked to specific aesthetic standards of presentation, to God, the family, and the capitalist meritocracy of "growing up in life", or the contrary absolute negative identity of church negation,

abortion advocacy, and of socialism. The juxtaposed stereotypes then reinforce the 'we'/'them' opposition as well as the enemy's construction, with a unique appeal to fear in this case, as it emphasizes the possibility that one of 'us' becomes a 'from them'.

In the intertextuality coding node, the intertextual relations built on verbal or imaginary features of the analyzed memes were mapped. The essential feature in this category was the relationship with banners and posters displayed in the demonstrations in defense of universities. In these cases, the intertextual attribution mainly fulfilled the task of disqualifying students, teachers, and protesters; as they focused on bands that contained deviations from the standard norm of the Portuguese language as a form of ridicule the demonstration and its participants. Intertextual references to social networks were also recurring, with replication of content from Facebook itself or Twitter in the form of captured images, and intertextual relations with online newspapers, taken to recall cuts in resources of previous governments, to applaud the decisions of Bolsonaro's ministry or to disqualify the academic community. Another relevant intertextual aspect is the replication of images from one meme to another.

Meme 5-10.1                    Meme 5-10.2

... or thematic replication between memes:

Meme 5-15.18    Meme 5-16.1    Meme 5-17.1    Meme 5-30.3

The salience coding nodes show the most prominent visual element in memes, in this case, written texts. Verbal texts are in a prominent position, for example, when

banners in manifestations and other texts from social networks and newspapers are intextually articulated. Other noteworthy elements are the protesters, often in demoralizing photographs, often comparative of conduct between pro-government marches and pro-education marches, or students in scenes of nudity or drug addiction, as also commented above.

Finally, in the theme category, the central subthemes for approaching the theme of higher education or the manifestations in the corpus memes were coded. The most recurring theme, in more than 30 of the memes, was the link between the Workers' Party and the demonstrations in defense of universities. This theme was almost always built through photographs of Lula Livre banners, CUT flags, and other symbols. In such cases, the effect was a disconnection between the manifestations and the problem of investments in higher education, reducing the debate to the right-left political polarization. Here are some examples from May 15:



| Meme 5-15.13 | Meme 5-15.24 | Meme 5-15.28 |

Other common themes in the corpus are irony to the very idea of demonstration or strike, nudity presented as a moral problem, justification or explanation about cuts in education, alleged student indoctrination, disqualification of knowledge in social and human sciences and the comparison between the demonstrations in favor of universities (associated with disorder) and those pro-Bolsonaro's government.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This first approximation to the corpus of memes collected in the most significant support group for Bolsonaro on Facebook, in the range relevant to the specific theme of this article, reveals the disqualification of university institutions and their actors through ironies, negative associations including stereotypes, simplification of debate to the shallower. Students are often associated with nudity as immorality, professors of indoctrination and ridicule, protesters of ignorance, or bad character. Political debate is reduced to extreme left-right polarization, with the criminalization of the left and the fiction of the communist threat taken as enemy-building strategies. By emphasizing hate, the group avoids any discussion on the issue of the cuts themselves and their dire consequences for public higher education in Brazil.

In the best Bolsonarist's style, joking is the easiest way to avoid serious debate

on any topic. Therefore, the threats in the field of education and science advance. After the demonstrations, there is the rubble: next to the universities that already announced they could not maintain themselves until the end of the year. In August, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPQ informed the suspension of new fellows' appointment, which affected over more than 45,000 researchers in the country, according to CNPq itself. The agency's scholarships were paid in September. However, there was a threat of suspension of all scholarships in effect from the October payment, threatening the very maintenance of the lives of students who depend on this commitment, as they have maintained the exclusivity of paid research activity – a requirement to be a scholarship holder. More than 80,000 scholarships are threatened. On September 2, the Higher Education Personnel Improvement Coordination, CAPES, announced the cut of a further 5,613 postgraduate research fellowships, adding to the 6,198 blocked in the first semester. In less than seven months of Bolsonaro's management, the agency has cut 11,811 scholarships.

In 2019, Capes had R $ 819 million contingent, representing 19% of the amount previously authorized for its annual budget. For 2020, resources will fall by half, from R$ 4.25 billion in 2019 to R $ 2.20 billion in 2020. For the CNPq, which bitter deficit of 330 million in 2019, the budget for 2020 is 962 million, which does not even cover the payroll of the agency's current scholarships.

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# PURE POLITICKING! RACIALISED BLAME GAMES AND MORAL PANIC IN THE CASE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT: This study combines two discourse analytic frameworks, and explores the utility of this combination for unpacking journalistic opinions written in response to a polarising and racialised event in South African education: the Overvaal High School incident. It uncovers strategic constructions of racism within politicised blame games, in the context of Overvaal, and discloses how blame-assertion and blame-denial became implicated in framings of moral panic. Methodologically, this study relies on the concept race trouble, as well as a practical model of argumentation. In conjunction, these two approaches supply insight into both the calculated construction of racism, as well as the incorporation of these constructions into arguments aimed at rationalising blame-assertion and blame-denial. The results are interpreted within theorisations of moral panic. The findings showcase how arguments are produced to blame an individual politician for escalating racial antagonism around Overvaal, instead of offering a deeply historicised and contextualised account of the incident. Consequently, the arguments that shaped the opinion pieces, and the framing of racism involved in these arguments, ultimately obfuscate inquiry into structural determinants of racial inequity. Implicitly, this framing of racism and its incorporation into argumentation and blame games, produce a form of moral panic, in which South Africans racialised as white are construed as embattled by self-serving (black) politicians. Such politicians are vilified, or rendered as folk devils, and the results indicate how this process evades penetrating analyses of racialisation and its intersection with unequal education.
KEYWORDS: racist, South Africa, blame-attribution, blame-denial, argumentation, news media

**INTRODUCTION**

This study complements discourse analyses on interconnections between blame-attribution, processes of racialisation and constructions of moral panic. The analysis centres on the warrants (conditional *if-X-then-Y* argumentative structures) uncovered from journalistic opinion pieces on the Overvaal incident. This racialised furore in South African education provoked violent protests, police arrests, and high media attention. Several media reactions to the debacle foregrounded social actors and arrangements that could be held accountable for the damage incurred. However, despite the presence of structural determinants, most opinion pieces blamed an individual politician for amplifying racial aggression.

Blame-attribution involves the social construction of moral codes or behavioural standards, and the application of these standards for framing problems and searching for culprits. Blame typically accrues to those who contravene these agreed-upon (yet constructed) codes of conduct. However, allocating blame to such culprits in a simplistic fashion can obfuscate other, more complicated determinants of the problem. The opinion pieces analysed for this study reflect such simplifying patterns. On the one hand, the authors of accusatory arguments justified their attack upon an individual politician based on the democratically-enshrined duties of public officials, which this politician had contravened; however, on the other hand, the same arguments ultimately elided other decisive facets of racial inequity. These results remind that even blame games premised on the constitutionally-codified duties of public officials can became ideologically problematic.

By discerning the nuances of blame-relevant argumentation in the opinion pieces written in response to the Overvaal event, I aim to disclose how standards of culpability are construed, applied to social actors, and interpolated with racism. I hone my analysis to the underlying conditional premises, the *if-A-then-B* argumentative structures, which underpin blame-attribution in the opinion pieces. To do this, I first deploy Toulmin's (2003) model of argumentation. Second, since the opinion pieces encompass strategic constructions of racism to justify its arguments, I combined Toulmin's (2003) framework with Cresswell, Whitehead and Durrheim's (2014) conceptualisation of race trouble.

Conjoining these frameworks can guide and deepen the question as to whether opinion pieces on Overvaal acknowledged or refuted structural racism. In what follows, I describe events around Overvaal, which inspired the online opinion pieces that represent the textual data on which my discourse analysis was conducted. Thereafter, I elucidate Toulmin's (2003) model, Hansson's (2018a) expansion of this framework, and Cresswell et al's (2014) race trouble as a means of analysing argumentation and race in the online opinion pieces under study. Finally, I report the findings of the discourse analysis and interpret the dominant patterns as a racialised instance of moral panic. The rest of this introduction briefly outlines Toulmin (2003), race trouble and the potential efficacy of these approaches for unravelling intersections between blame games, racialisation and moral panic.

First, Toulmin (2003) prioritises inquiry into warrants. As a heuristic device, war-

rants signify discursive repertoires that play a linking role between argumentative claims and supporting evidence. Warrants specify the normative conditions under which the claims informing an argumentative position can be said to derive from the evidence adduced to uphold those claims. Since warrants are typically articulated implicitly, and since they often hinge on ideologically-productive assumptions, analysing their linking function between claims and evidence can help to untangle the strategies used to rationalise blame-relevant argumentation. Hansson (2018a) expands this work to gain traction on the functions warrants perform in blame games. These are conceptualised as "offensive and defensive symbolic performances", during which claims and evidence are offered to: 1) contrive behavioural standards for adjudicating the culpability of potential wrongdoers, and subsequently 2) to argue for or against the blameworthiness of these targets (Hansson2018b: 228).

Second, race trouble emanates from the conceptualisation of media discourses as socially constituted and constitutive. Cresswell et al. (2014) use race trouble to uncover the discursive repertoires and situated practices that frame and reframe racism, making it expedient for parochial interests. Applying race trouble entails tracking how different framings are formulated and made functional to particular interests such as blame-making and blame-avoidant argumentation. Moreover, relying on race trouble also sheds light on elements of racism that are occluded. Taking online opinion pieces written about Overvaal as a case study, I question whether and how these opinion pieces root arguments within systemic understandings of racism, or whether comparatively more micro-level issues are favoured. The findings suggest the recycling of an existing discursive practice, in which culturally white educational institutions are constructed as embattled.

In terms of moral panic, the findings denote an arrangement of practices that pin blame to an individual politician, until he symbolises corrupt, self-interested politicking. Since the politician in question raised accusations of racism against the governing body of Overvaal High School, he is held accountable for aggravating racial conflict. As such, the opinion pieces register a moral outrage at the prospect that politicians can abuse accusations of racism to sediment their own reputations as social justice advocates. In doing so, the opinion pieces circumvent other questions about racism in favour of treating it mainly as a politicised resource.

## THE CASE STUDY: OVERVAAL HIGH SCHOOL

This study conducts a discourse analysis of blame in online opinion pieces written in respond to events surrounding the Overvaal incident in South Africa. The following contextual information is vital for an understanding of how blame is attributed or deflected in the opinion pieces under study.

Education in South Africa suffers from severe infrastructural shortages. Consequently, many young learners are compelled to cover demanding distances, at personal cost, to attain education when schools closer to home are full. High School Overvaal is situated in the densely populated Gauteng province, and its governing body was called upon to alleviating local shortages. In December 2017, the Gauteng Department

of Education required the school to enrol fifty-five more learners for 2018, who would otherwise have to travel farther. The school's governing body claimed that additional learners would exceed its capacity, and the provincial department retorted that the school was underusing its capacity as a ploy to exclude the fifty-five learners, owing to racial prejudice.

Apartheid racial classifications still shape South African identity politics and state-sponsored programmes to redress historic inequities. Within Apartheid classifications, the fifty-five learners are racialised as black, which provoked allegations of racism against Overvaal's predominantly white governing body. This already febrile situation was aggravated by Overvaal's language policy.

To clarify, South Africa officially endorses eleven languages, but only two enjoy widespread use in educational institutions: English and Afrikaans. Afrikaans remains closely associated with Apartheid and white dominance. Its presence in education, and the cultural capital sometimes conferred by proficiency in mainstream varieties of Afrikaans, has attracted accusations that its official usage sustains Apartheid-inspired divisions and inequalities by opening economic opportunities to those historically privileged by Apartheid. Overvaal High School provides education in Afrikaans, but since the fifty-five learners needed English instruction, the school's governing body asserted that its current infrastructure was unprepared. During January 2018, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in Gauteng, Panyaza Lesufi, entered the debate, levelling public allegations of racism against the school.

Ultimately, the case was tried in the Pretoria High Court, which upheld the school's original defence in terms of capacity and the inability to offer English instruction in time for the 2018 school year. Family members of the fifty-five learners responded by blocking the school gates during several days of protest action. Altercations erupted between protestors and other members of the community, including the family members of white children already enrolled at the school, until police forces intervened.

While the case is clearly contextualised by national currents and related histories, questions around access to education, racialisation and politicised blame games, speak to transnational concerns, and the research participates in these debates.

## RESEARCH AIMS

Opinion columns represent a ubiquitous component of online news. As agenda-setting tools, they furnish sites for the exercise and contestation of social power. When opinion pieces hinge on blame games, readers are exposed to arguments and counter-arguments about the severity of the damage incurred by a newsworthy event and the potential guilt of human actors whose actions or inactions render them vulnerable to accusations (Nijjar 2015; Hansson 2018b). The language policies of South African institutions are instrumental to national programmes to redress Apartheid-based injustices and moves to cement English as the most expedient solution continues to stimulate debate in numerous spaces, including online news (Reygan and Steyn 2017). Overvaal, as an episode that occasioned violent confrontations across racial fault lines, constitutes an insightful case for discursively analysing knowledge construc-

tion, racialisation and blame-attribution, as it emerges in the modes of reasoning that inflected media reactions.

This study aims to disclose patterns in these modes of reasoning by engaging with opinion pieces collected through purposively sampling. Three aims guided the analysis. First, the social actors who drew attention as potential candidates for blame were identified. Second, the study elucidates the warrants that structured inculpatory and exculpatory arguments for each candidate. Since warrants operate as "rules of inference [...] tied more strongly to concepts than to words", the analytic procedures used to extrapolate warrants from the opinion pieces can also uncover the assumptions that animate constructions of racism, and the calculated use of these constructions to rationalise blame-attribution (Grue 2009: 309). Third, based on the warrants that rationalised links between claims and evidence, the study interrogates the extent to which the opinion pieces treated Overvaal as interpolated with widespread contemporary racial inequity in South Africa. The basic terms of Toulmin's (2003) model are summarised in Table 1 below and detailed under a later heading.

Table 1: Toulmin's (2003) components of argumentation

| Claims: | Statements or conclusions that remain contestable and require corroboration/justification |
| Data: | Evidence or reasons provided to substantiate a claim. The nature of acceptable data is defined and negotiated within the contextual parameters of the discourse setting. |
| Warrants: | Discursive elements that bridge data and claims, creating the logical infrastructure on which an argument is premised. Warrants are typically rooted in presumably shared views and values between addressers and addressees. |

Source: own elaboration

The next part adumbrates race trouble, before explicating how it relates to discourse analysis of argumentation and blame games.

## RACE TROUBLE AS RELATED TO BLAME GAMES

South Africa remains a fractured society, faced with recalcitrant disparities in access to social resources. Education represents a dramatic case in point. Over fifty percent of all adolescents who enter schooling leave before completing their senior stage. The majority of these are racialised as black, mainly from rural, low-income families (Reygan and Steyn 2017). The link between this dilemma and the reverberations of Apartheid is broadly accepted. However, debates rage over the extent to which other factors should attract blame, including government mismanagement, widespread corruption and global economic instabilities. By developing the concept race trouble, Cresswell et al. (2014) advance a method of probing interactional disagreements on these complexities, anchored in conversation analytic and discursive psychological techniques.

At its core, race trouble uncovers the discursive construction of racism via interactional practices that render ideas about racism malleable and expedient to competing, situated interests. Such applications of race trouble drive research into contravening framings of racism. As one example of divisions around how racism should be theorised in South Africa, a deepening appreciation of racism as systemic has provoked calls for reconfiguring education, often voiced as the decolonial imperative, which aims to decentre Euro-centric pedagogies in favour of alternatives that address colonial and post-colonial conditions. Similar exhortations have been made to decolonise research by prioritising analytic models that address the repercussions of colonialism, neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism (Heleta 2016). On the other hand, anxieties abound that Apartheid history can be abused to obscure state corruption or to justify populist mobilisations driven by ethnic group identities. Divisive political figures such as Andile Mngxitama, Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu have become key repositories of these anxieties.

Online news media constitute a cardinal site for the application of race trouble. Its multiple platforms facilitate regular and pronounced debates over the exact nature and severity of racism, and its impact on education (Reygan and Steyn 2017; Bosch 2017). The Overvaal episode represents an instance where such disagreements surfaced in online opinion pieces.

Race trouble supplies a means of cataloguing and interpreting discursive practices that are imbricated in these processes of meaning-making, "through which the continuing salience of race [is] reproduced in everyday interactions", including attempts to justify or denounce accusations of racism (Cresswell et al. 2014: 2514). Gaining analytic purchase on how racism is selectively constructed to affirm or refute its severity offers insight into its calculated appropriation to advance parochial interests (Cresswell et al. 2017). Adopting this approach does not deny material aspects of racial injustice. Instead, interactional mechanisms, once uncovered, are investigated to chart how participants link or omit other elements of racialised identities and positions.

For discourse analyse of blame games, the relevance of race trouble rests on the observation that making accusations of racism, or defending against them, requires implicit or explicit assumptions about racism. Arguments to condemn or defend those who stand accused of racism can nest their persuasive appeals in overtly-expressed or tacit claims about how society should measure racism. This implicit dimension of the discursive struggles that produce constructions of racism points to the utility of linking analyses of race trouble with Toulmin's (2003) theorisation of warrants (unpacked at a later stage), especially for the way warrants operate in race-relevance blame games.

Methodologically, relying on a case study to explore combinations between Toulmin (2003) and race trouble affords the advantage of scrutinising a naturally-occurring instance where race-relevant blame games are at stake. Before detailing the analytic procedures of Toulmin's (2003) framework, the next section clarifies my approach to opinion pieces.

## ARGUMENTATION AND OPINION PIECES FROM A DISCOURSE ANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

Blame games are essentially interactive phenomena, and mapping how they might shape socio-political relationships demands cognisance of, "the fundamentally argumentative nature of politics" (Zienkowsky 2019: 135). Adegbola and Gearhart's (2019) comparative analyses of news consumption in the United States, Kenya and Nigeria, as well as Bosch (2017) and Buire and Staeheli's (2017) labours in South Africa, attest to the influence that mediatised arguments in online news can exercise on public perceptions of and reactions to divisive events. Hansson (2018a, b) illustrates how Toulmin's (2003) model can parse the discursive practices that set the terms an argument. Both accusatory and defensive arguments can invoke an innovative suite of cognitive, as well as affective appeals that assemble and normalise standards for judging culpability (Hansson 2018b; Boukala 2016; Nijjar 2015; Zagar 2010; Grue 2009).

Online spaces, including news sites, afford particularly powerful opportunities for contriving and contesting the normative grounds on which blame is settled, given the wide geographic and cross-demographic reach of internet-based texts. As such, online news sites were selected for this study to reflect their relatively stronger reach. Focusing on news sites that are available to internet users across South Africa is also especially valuable because events surrounding Overvaal attracted national attention, instead remaining a predominantly localised issue. Moreover, online news sources were also selected because adolescents are particularly prone to relying on online sources for news, as well as using knowledge peers as gatekeepers. That is to say, many adolescents access news via social media channels including Twitter and Facebook, by relying on the likes, recommendations, posts and reposts of peers who are recognised as thought leaders (Adegbola and Gearhart 2019; Mihailidis 2014). Such peer-led networks are increasingly influential in galvanising youth activists. Specifically, exposure to news (including opinions) via online peer gatekeepers has been linked with youth activists' efforts to grapple with emerging conceptualisations of civic engagement and democracy, as they attempt to destabilise exclusionary power dynamics premised on race, gender, sexual orientation and class. Movements such as Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, Open Stellenbosch and similar forms of activism attest to the collective, mobilising potential of networked movements in which various forms of argumentation (including news texts) circulate. The recurrence of the words *fall* and *occupy* in difference contexts could be read as gesturing towards the centrality of blame, and the transnational character of the concerns mobilising these protests has already been highlighted (Strong 2018). Media reactions to Overvaal contribute to this environment, since the event elicited significant media interest, including reactions from youth activists and recognised thought leaders, who interact in peer networks (Adegbola and Gearhart 2019; Strong 2018; Bosch 2017; Buire and Staeheli 2017; Hoffman and Mitchell 2016).

Of course, media texts such as opinion pieces and news reports never exercise a simplistic influence on audiences, even when opinions and reports are recommended by respected peers. The very networks that extend the reach of news media, also fur-

nish opportunities for various readers to interrogate, reinterpret and even reject the content of the messages (Nijjar 2015; Mihailidis 2014). Nevertheless, the discursive practices that frame pressing political questions in opinion pieces still deserve critical inquiry, particularly in terms of the normative assumptions embedded in arguments, as authors labour to persuade their target readers. Such assumptions include notions regarding the conditions under which people, organisations and institutions should, or should not, be held liable the problems that instigate blame games (Nijjar 2015).

Opinion pieces, as opposed to news reports, take an overtly persuasive and argumentative stance. A discourse-driven interest in these persuasive goals entails sensitivity to the discursive repertoires on which they depend, as well as the concurrently constitutive and constituted character of these repertoires. Following Hansson (2018a) and Nijjar (2015), my approach pays particular attention to the persuasive and argumentative dimensions of opinion pieces, bearing in mind that they play a role in shaping the normative touchstones within which audiences are prompted to react to newsworthy events.

As is the case in many parts of the world where internet penetration is growing apace, online spaces facilitate interactions where divergent views on identity and equity can be adduced, nuanced, and supported or countermanded. As South Africans turn to online venues, where they share in the process of collective meaning-making, issues around racism emerge regularly and ignite hostility. Accusations and counter-accusations are traded while online interlocutors vie over the criteria by which behaviours, utterances, policies (including language policies), institutional cultures and other facets of socio-political life should be castigated as guilty of upholding racial injustice (Hansson 2018b; Bosch 2017).

As mentioned earlier, perennial disagreement over the legitimacy of accusations of racism suggests the appropriateness of merging race trouble with Toulmin (2003) as a means of understanding developments in South African online media. During the data collection and analysis, this interest propelled my choice to narrow the scope of this study to warrants, and their relationship with blame and race trouble. As expounded later, warrants bolster coherence between claims and evidence as to where blame should be apportioned in response to polarising events. Crucially, the process of examining warrants within blame games around Overvaal can be linked with efforts to map the trajectories of wider developments in South African online media, where questions around racialised subjectivity, equity and social cohesion often arise. Despite this focus on the parameters of a South African context, the findings of this study can nevertheless prove productive for comparative analyses in other contexts.

The complete list of opinion pieces on Overvaal, sampled for this study, is included in Table 2.

Toulmin's (2003) model, as well as Hansson's (2018a) subsequent work, supplies one route into these dynamics, as elucidated in the next section.

Table 2: Warrants in opinion pieces on the Overvaal High School incident

| Topos | Description | Title, author and source of opinion pieces that employ this topos | Primary targets of blame | Extract |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Diversity | If schools desire a diversity of viewpoints, they should promote a diverse body of learners. | How can our schools ensure a more diverse and non-racial society? (Panyaza Lesufi, Eyewitness News) | SGBs of Afrikaans medium schools | The advocates of language policies believe that admitting other language groups creates a diversity of viewpoints in schools, the major reason why racial division remains entrenched in our society. |
| Utility | If education in English secures access to social resources, state-funded schools must each in English | Every child will eventually need English (Molula Musa, News24) | SGBs of Afrikaans medium schools | State-funded schools cannot by any means argue to teach in only one language that is not English. Considering the fact that those learners are supposed to go to universities where the medium of instruction is English, I would like to believe that's not fair. |
| Autonomous integration | If schools are permitted to pursue racial integration autonomously, integration will be successful | Double medium schools ideal for racial integration (Motsumi Ntsebo, News24) | The ANC-led government | If you look at double medium schools in Sasolburg, you find racially integrated schools that give quality education. Racial integration, however, was not forced upon these schools. It is something they chose to do and it happened over the years |
| Government obligation | If government can anticipate problems in educational infrastructure, it is obliged to implement precautions | Language should not be the dominant factor (Molefe Lengana, News24) | The ANC-led government | My take is that the ANC has failed all South Africans in nation-building and education. I'm a firm believer that a government governs for all. |
|  |  | EFF is protesting at the wrong place (Anita Ferri, News24) | The EFF and ANC-led government | The „esteemed" ruling party must have known at least 7 years ago how many children they would have had to accommodate but unfortunately with the ANC there isn't a problem until there is a problem! No foresight, no planning. They are NOT proactive, they are reactive. |

| Law/protocol | If a government official disregards policies/laws, that official is guilty of omission | Was the Hoërskool Overvaal crisis a plot by Gauteng's education department? (Anthony Still, Business LIVE) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | See section on topos of law/protocol. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Hoërskool Overvaal: Lesufi's awful record (Sara Gon, Politicsweb) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | |
| | | Lesufi ignored the constitution in Hoërskool Overvaal sage (Katharine Child, Timeslive) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | |
| | | Upgrade infrastructure and hire passionate teachers (Craig Joseph, News24) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | |
| | | Education problems: Are Afrikaans schools to blame? (Paul Colditz, News24) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | |
| | | Overvaal: Where is the moral leadership (Melanie Verwoerd, News24) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | |
| Human development | Since mother tongues are linked to personal identity, multilingual education should be provided | Language: An emotive issue (Bert Olivier, Mail & Guardian) | The ANC-led government | Because one's ʿown language' – the one closest to you – is inextricably and intimately bound up with your being human. [...] It is therefore misguided on the part of the ruling party, and a great pity for indigenous African language-speakers, that it seems hell-bent on creating an educational environment of English monolingualism, which is linguistically and culturally impoverishing for IsiZulu, isiXhosa, and other indigenous mother tongue-speakers in South Africa. |

| Cross-generational injustice | If systemic injustice continues to affect racialised groups across generations, affected racial groups merit urgent redress | Hoërskool Overvaal: blame SA's wealth gap (Sydney Majoko, The Citizen) | Apartheid-inspired economic arrangements | Court rulings that enforce the rights of Afrikaans-speaking pupils to be protected at all costs are legal. The side that does not have the wealth must turn to the courts to force government to build schools where they are needed. But they are very aware their disadvantaged economic position is being used as a gatekeeping mechanism to keep their children from gaining access to institutions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Hoërskool Overvaal, where language is a proxy for race (Prince Charles, Activate) | Apartheid-inspired economic arrangements | The situation at Hoerskool Overvaal is a microcosm of our nation and how it continues to approach issues of transformation […] as Ivo Vegter eloquently articulates it "we cannot replace the dominant social order of whiteness which caused so much harm with blackness, which will cause just as much harm". |
| Co-operation | If citizens co-operate, problems can be solved | Double shifts for schools (Tobie Henning) | MEC Panyaza Lesufi | We have a real problem in South Africa. However, it does not require racially based arguments to get to a solution Let's harness the intellectual powers we have and get the schools to run with two shifts. […] Let's be positive and make things work. |
| | | Time to get our priorities straight (Matthew van Rensburg, News24) | All South African political parties | It's time to knuckle down TOGETHER and start building for all those who don't have and to kick to all the self-serving politicians, ANC, EFF, DA and everybody in between out the door as they only serve to divide us. |

| Race-neutral parents | Because parents want a good education for their children, they are not concerned with race | A good teacher knows no race (Johann du Toit, News24) | Overvaal teachers and SGB | All parents want a good education for their children. Overvaal should feel privileged to be a school that parents want their children to attend. […] In all my years of teaching I never had a parent complaining about me being white. All they wanted was a teacher who is on time, well prepared, knows the learners, is a specialist in his/her subject. |

Source: own elaboration

## BLAME GAMES AND MORAL PANIC

This section theorises blame as a social practice, and connects it with studies of moral panic, before explicating Toulmin's (2003) model of argumentation and its suitability to tracking blame-attribution.

Like many other nations, South Africa has witnessed escalations in online activism, offline protests with both violent and peaceful outcomes, as well as highly mediated tensions about the nature and implementation of social justice. Events from Occupy Nigeria to #FeesMustFall, #MeToo and #WithoutUs, offer a gamut of opportunities for parsing constructions of blame and reflecting on what these permutations portend for the conceptualisation and pursuit of social justice (Buire and Staeheli 2017; Reygan and Steyn 2017; Bosch 2017). My attempts to track the manifestation of blame games under these conditions stems from three fundamental principles, derived from Tilly (2008; cf. Hansson 2018b; Leong and Howlett 2017; Boukala 2016; Nijjar 2015).

First, the socially mediated processes involved in conferring or withholding blame are often contested and protracted. The energy invested in confirming or denying blame is magnified by at least two factors: 1) the scope of the damage inflicted by an event such as exclusion from education, and 2) the intensity of disagreements over the most relevant standards for assessing the culpability of potential wrongdoers such as a school's governing body. In contrast with cases when acts of nature are blamed, human actors are more likely to face blame, if their actions/inactions can be linked with the harm incurred, which in turn demands criteria for making such judgements (Hansson 2018b; Leong and Howlett 2017; Boukala 2016; Nijjar 2015).

Second, as reactions to harm, these attempts to create and apply standards for adjudicating blameworthiness are contoured by the norms and expectations arising from existing social relationships. Simultaneously, the course of a blame game can decisively shift these relationships (Tilly 2008; Leong and Howlett 2017).

Third, mediatised blame games can become incorporated into narratives of moral panic (Nijjar 2015; Cohen 1972). The actions/inactions of those who are singled out for guilt can be constructed as grounds for moral outrage, especially under circumstance such as South Africa's history of racial oppression, which inject a moral dimen-

sion into any race-relevant argument (Cresswell et al. 2014).

## CLAIMS AND WARRANTS IN BLAME GAMES

Claims and warrants perform specific functions in the composition and rationalisation of blame games (Hansson 2018b).

To bolster the persuasiveness of an argument, accusatory claims assert and reassert that the event, which triggered the search for wrongdoers, was indeed negative enough to deserve public opprobrium. Defensive or blame-avoidant claims, by contrast, dispute the severity of whatever injury was suffered. If it has already been established that some hurt has been suffered, accusatory claims construct the causes of harm and adduce connections between those causes and the actions/inactions of potentially blameworthy social actors. Defensive claims attempt to uncouple the causes of damage from the actions/inactions of specific social actors.

In both cases, convincing audiences of the intentional involvement of possible blame-takers is instrumental, because actors are more likely to attract blame if they acted or failed to act of their own volition. Claiming that an actor inflicted harm unintentionally offers a possible escape from blame. Attesting or denying the intentional involvement of an actor pivots on two additional factors, both of which are susceptible to discursive construction and manipulation: obligations and capacity.

Obligations signify the duties associated with a given social role. In blame games, accusatory claims can indict an actor by asserting that he/she was officially obligated to predict and forestall problems, such as a shortage of space at public schools. Thus, even if such actors respond by claiming that they had not done harm intentionally, they can still be held liable, given their official obligation to honour the responsibilities incumbent upon their role.

Capacity speaks to an actor's wherewithal to execute the obligations associated with their role. Capacity is variously understood as including the necessary knowledge, information and resources required to exercise obligations. In blame games, accusatory claims verify that an actor was not only obligated to avoid harm, but also possessed the capacity to honour her/his duty. Defensive claims repudiate such allegations. For example, they might invoke wider, more powerful social forces such as economic constraints that prevented the person/institution from obeying their obligations. Essentially, defensive claims could argue that a target's agency/intentionally was suborned to external forces, which mitigate the target's blameworthiness (Hansson 2018b).

Foregrounding the obligations and capacities of some social actors, while omitting those associated with other potentially blameworthy actors, can strategically direct and deflect blame games. One outcome of such deflections is the production of oversimplified hero-villain narratives that obscure alternative narrations/framings (Hansson 2018a).

In addition to making claims, the authors of opinion pieces can chose to supply any type of evidence, as informed by predictions as to what might prove most persuasive to their target audiences.

Warrants specify the conditions under which evidence can be said to bolter claims.

However, warrants are habitually communicated implicitly, given that audiences are often expected to "fill in the gaps" by relying on "assumed common ground" (Hansson 2018:232). As such, claims and evidence generally operate at a "surface" level, compared to the "deep" presence of warrants (Zagar 2010: 23). This characteristic of warrants makes them significant for scholarly attempts to unearth the underlying argumentative premises that structure and organise an argument's appeal to its audience. Of key significance for this study, analysing warrants also prompts consideration of alternative modes of reasoning that have been omitted from a blame game. This drives the consonant question as to whose concerns, values, norms, fears and anxieties are reflected in a discourse, and which alternatives are missing.

Finally, the implicit communication of warrants also suggests a connection with race trouble, since warrants may encompass assumptions about the nature of racism and, consequently, frame racism in ways that advance accusatory or defensive blame games.

Discourse analysts extrapolate warrants by first identifying the forms of evidence and claims that pervade an opinion piece, before inferring the tacit conditional links that are exigent for connecting evidence to claims (as illustrated in the findings; Hansson 2018b; Boukala 2016). For this reason, discourse analysts typically report warrants in *if-A-then-B* conditional statements, such as the following: *if accusations of racism are premised on self-serving political goals, then the targets of the accusation do not deserve blame*. Crucially, the context-specific and ideologically-productive character of warrants implies that although they ostensibly rationalise claim-evidence structures, the warrants are also contingent and deserving of critique, as outlined during the findings.

## SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A purposive sampling technique was applied over a three-month period, starting a few days after initial protests outside Overvaal High School. Collection was conducted through a Google search of all news items regarding Overvaal, before honing the search to pieces that were specifically marked as opinions, rather than comparatively non-argumentative reports. Collection continued until the end of April 2018. At this point, all opinion pieces related to Overvaal had already been sourced for the study and new texts were no longer being generated (as confirmed by additional searches in September 2018). Eventually, nineteen opinions had been gathered from numerous South African news portals. The complete list is summarised in Table 2.

Every opinion piece collected through this method was subjected to a qualitative discourse analysis, guided by the terms of Toulmin's (2003) model. This entails conducting a first-level reading during which broad patterns and these are ascertained. Next, the overall position advocated by each opinion piece was noted, followed by an attempt to meticulously identify the claims and supporting evidence strung throughout each text. These claim-evidence chains were then interrogated in order to extrapolate the warrants, or the conditional grounds on which evidence can be said to reinforce claims about where blame for controversy should be conferred.

In deference to page constraints, the investigation reported below does not methodically interrogate factors related to the audiences' psychological readiness to read and unpack opinions that might question their existing values. Instead, I focus on mapping claims, evidence and warrants, as well as the construction of obligations, capacities, intentionality, and race trouble, as these factors emerge from the opinions piece. Additionally, page constraints also prevent a rigorous exposition of the background of each news outlet I visited when compiling the purposive sample for this study.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

## LEGAL PROCEDURE AS GROUNDS FOR JUDGING BLAME

Table 2 summarises all the warrants extrapolated from the sample. MEC Panzaya Lesufi was isolated as the central culprit across the opinion pieces, followed by the entire South African government (led by the African National Congress of which Lesufi is a member). While all the warrants reported in Table 2 deserve methodical exposition, this section concentrates on the primary blame target and the modes of reasoning that conferred liability upon the MEC.

Accusatory claims and supporting evidence against the MEC were discursively linked by a warrant that can be expressed as follows: *If a government official disregards due legal procedure, that official is blameworthy*. This warrant animates accusations against MEC Lesufi, premised on the claim that he has neglected legal procedures, specifically by making accusations against Overvaal's governing body before undertaking a methodical investigation into the details of the case. This warrant becomes entwined with a framing of racism as a political resource, inasmuch as Lesifu's allegations of racism against Overvaal are castigated as a move to advance his own reputation as an ardent anti-racist. Implicitly, this argument is adopted as grounds for exonerating Overvaal's governing body of racism. Consequently, the convergence between this warrant and this framing of racism circumvents a multi-layered understanding of racism, as detailed below.

In what follows, I account for my analysis by unpacking exemplars from several opinion pieces, in order to demonstrate the operation of this warrant, followed by a more textured analysis of the way it situates (or fails to situate) the Overvaal debacle within broader questions of structural racism in South African education. Doing so requires an elucidation of overlaps between the above-mentioned warrant and a context-specific enactment of race trouble.

As a shorthand, I refer to the above-mentioned warrant as a warrant of legal procedure. Six opinion pieces premised their attempts to blame the MEC on this warrant, and although the exact nature of the claims and evidence from these opinion pieces differ, all the arguments orbit the primary position that MEC Lesufi is guilty of exacerbating racial hostilities at Overvaal, instead of addressing and ameliorating racial injustice, as required by his office.

At is core, the blame games turn on an invocation of public officials' duty to identify

forms of racial injustice and to mitigate these injustices, but to do so in compliance with constitutional stipulations, even at the cost of personal stakes. Numerous claims are proffered to insist that MEC Lesufi failed to honour these prescripts, coupled with evidence that were mainly sourced form: 1) his conduct during similar mediatised allegations of racism as well as 2) court rulings which should have guided his conduct around Overvaal. Citing court rulings as evidence becomes particularly functional for underscoring the MEC's capacity to discharge his obligations. To clarify, as MEC, Lesufi is expected to use earlier rulings as resources and therefore to address racism only after rigorous investigations that took cognisance of these rulings.

Positioning the MEC's charges of racism as a breach of conduct offers a method of undermining his credibility as an accuser in terms of both his obligations and capacity. To elaborate, MECs are not only expected to abide by legal procedures, but also to evince detailed knowledge of constitutional precedents from similar cases. In combination, therefore, the MEC is not simply charged with dereliction of duty, but also with ignoring sources of information, which should have directed his actions away from making public allegations of racism against Overvaal without first engaging with similar court cases. Consider the following exemplars from three separate opinion pieces:

Excerpt 1:

To some in the local media, Lesufi is a superstar – articulately and in dulcet tones slaying white, racist dragons in schools for violating the rights of their black victims. Except, this crusader often lights the racial fires or feeds the conflagration. […] Overvaal is an Afrikaans-medium school. Its refusal to accommodate the 55 was because the school was already at capacity, with pupils who accepted Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, including black children. A single-medium school cannot become a dual-medium school overnight. The Act [Gauteng Schools' Education Act 6 of 1995] sets out grounds for admission: Section 18 (A) provides that the governing body must determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution.

Excerpt 2:

The Rivonia Constitutional Court judgment summarises three similar cases. Lesufi should therefore have known he had no chance of telling a school to take in 55 learners speaking a different language at the last minute in December, without fair procedure. But he went ahead anyway. In short, what Lesufi has done is pure politicking, turning an issue of insufficient places at quality schools into a spectacle.

Excerpt 3:

[Schools' governing bodies] are allowed to choose Afrikaans as their medium of instruction. They are also free to choose any other language, but in practice the only other language chosen is English. This is unlikely to change, despite what some ideologues might hope. Overvaal Hoërskool is full. This was confirmed by

Judge Bill Prinsloo. [...] Gauteng MEC for Education Panyaza Lesufi ignored the Constitution when he turned the Hoërskool Overvaal wrangle into a racial drama with inflammatory statements like 'there is no racist that can hide behind a broomstick'.

These opinion pieces hold Lesufi liable for exacerbating racial aggression in direct contravention of his obligation to promote equity and social justice. The claims hinge on the view that dereliction of legal procedure turns Lesufi into a transgressor. However, accusing the MEC of neglect is also developed into grounds for positioning his actions as guilty of intentional politicking. Agency is according to Lesufi, premised on the view that access to earlier court rulings underscores his capacity to obey the obligation to adhere to formally recognised investigative procedures. A platform is thus built, on which to hold him liable for seeking to bolster his own reputation as an advocate of racial justice.

Hansson (2018a), Boukala (2016) and Grue (2009) aver that the persuasive efficacy of a warrant emanates from its resonance with an audience's epistemic assumptions. Of course, the author of an opinion pieces could misjudge the existing worldviews and normative frameworks within which the audience operates. However, if the author possesses adequate insight into the audience, and if the argument resonates with the audience, then appealing to implicitly-held assumptions can invite members of the audience to interpret the argument as legitimising these assumptions. Additionally, the author can become positioned as a promoter and defender of the audience's values, if linkages between an argument's underlying premises and an audience's values have been made.

Within this perspective, the analysis advanced thus far suggests that a warrant of legal procedure might resonate with expectations that public officials must follow constitutional prescripts to the letter. However, inasmuch as the blame games also involve racism, another discursive practice is also present, one that can be brought under critical scrutiny through the lens of race trouble. The warrant of legal procedure becomes entangled with anxiety over the way politicians abuse allegations of racism for parochial gain. Audiences are clearly expected to harbour some knowledge of the risk that the racial hostilities sparked by mediatised events can be fuelled and exploited in a politician's bid to jockey for advantage, such as the value of being publically lauded as an anti-racist. Scrutinising blame-attribution from the perspective of race trouble therefore permits inquiry into these dimensions of blame-relevant argumentation.

Put differently, these opinion pieces situate the MEC not simply as an individual wrongdoer. Instead, his behaviour is symptomatic of a wider danger that accusations of racism might buttress the power and narrow interests of political elites, at the expense of other social actors (specifically culturally white education institutions, in this case).

The argumentative practices that ascribe intentionality to the MEC are vital in this regard. Lesufi is not simply accused of neglecting legal procedure by omitting penetrating investigation of the details at Overvaal, or of failing in his duty to consult

prior court rulings. He is charged with actively ignoring relevant information with the aim of victimising Overvaal and, by implication, to entrench his growing status as, "a superstar – articulately and in dulcet tones slaying white, racist dragons" (Excerpt 1). The crusader metaphor proffered in Excerpt 1 poignantly demonstrates this anxiety. Not only is Lesufi staged as a putative, but ultimately underserving, hero; white South Africans and Afrikaans institutions who attract his attention are framed as innocents who have been undeservingly framed as monsters. By flipping the hero-monster, or victim-villain narrative, until Lesufi becomes the perpetrator and Afrikaans institutions become the victims, the blame games resist more finely-contoured analyses, which could have exposed audiences to multi-perspectival viewpoints.

Of salient interest to scholars of racialisation and race trouble, the anxiety underpinning this warrant and its role in the blame games under study, is readable as a form of moral panic. The panic is closely allied to the omission of other aspects of racism besides its potential for exploitation by self-interested politicians. Before elucidating this element of the analysis, however, it should be noted that some of the opinion pieces did acknowledge systemic, historically-anchored facets of racial inequities. The following section deals with these acknowledgments and their function, before transitioning to moral panic.

## ACKNOWLEDGING SYSTEMIC RACISM

While the above-mentioned trend to inculpate MEC Lesufi prevailed in the pieces sampled for this study, several texts injected a level of ambiguity into the analysis by making arguments that are comparatively more complex. In particular, these opinions gestured towards a more contextually nuanced reading of Overvaaal, by reading it as symptomatic of broader issues. Nevertheless, many of the limitations outlined in the previous section were not significantly decentred, as elucidated below.

Five opinion pieces historicised the inscription of racialised hierarchies on access to education in South Africa. However, three of these pieces failed to substantively incorporate the acknowledgement into the trajectory of their arguments. Instead, the blame games articulated in these three pieces resume efforts to blame the MEC. As a result, allusions to Apartheid are not taken as a junction at which to consider the possibility that, regardless of the MEC's potential self-interest, systemic disparities are nevertheless to blame for the lack of space in South African schools. Consider the following three examples:

Excerpt 4:

"Apartheid has left us with many scars. The worst of these must be the vast discrepancy in access to public and private resources. […] Unequal access to opportunity prevailed in every domain. Access to private or public education was no exception". […] It [the Rivonia Constitutional Court] went on to say: "It is how we manage those competing interests and the spectrum of views that is pivotal to developing a way forward". The Constitution provides us with a reference point - the best interests of our children. The trouble begins when we lose sight

of that reference point, when we become more absorbed in staking out the power to have the final say, rather than in fostering partnerships to meet the educational needs of children. As tensions simmer outside Hoërskool Overvaal, it is hard to conclude that Lesufi has taken the best interests of the children into account.

Excerpt 5:

Functional schools are making every effort to reach out to disadvantaged communities and schools in the midst of their own overcrowded programs. This includes Afrikaans schools. However, there is little that any individual school can do to cope with or solve the massive systemic problems.

Excerpt 6:

Let me also emphasise that I am totally infuriated by the fact that so many children, particularly African children, still have no access to a proper education. I am ashamed at the role my ancestors played in this legacy.

By invoking history, the opinion pieces encounter an opportunity to expand the scope of its examination to cover other types of racism, which might be at play at Overvaal, especially by recognising the contemporary impact of Apartheid. These invocations take both explicit and implicit forms. For example, the outwardly neutral and purportedly non-historical reference to "functional schools" in Extract 5 is readable as racialised, since the descriptors *functional* and *quality* are often assigned to historically white-only schools (Reygan and Steyn 2017). However, instead of offering a more capacious scope, which could deepen the critical weight of their discussions, the authors who make these references swiftly return their attention to exonerating Overvaal in terms of the school's capacity (see Excerpt 5), or back to renewed assertions of Lesufi's individual guilt (see Excerpt 4). Similarly, Excerpt 6 begins to historicise Overvaal by contextualising poor access to quality education as an outcome of earlier racist hierarchies. The author also self-racialises as white by mentioning, "the role my ancestors played in this legacy". However, since the effort to contextualise Overvaal ends here, the manoeuvre becomes readable as an instance of what Leonardo and Zembylas (2013: 150-151) have termed, "a non-racist alibi", which conveniently locates racism as someone or something out here, "residing elsewhere in other whites". The potential benefit of this self-presentational strategy, in which the author labours to project an anti-racist persona, suggests that linking Overvaal to Apartheid becomes a form of interest convergence (Aguirre 2010). That is, an admission that racism is both historically-rooted as well as a present reality at the level of social structures, is adopted when other benefits, such as presenting the self as unbiased and committed to social justice, can be achieved. As a result, the primacy of a constructing racism as a politically exploitable resource remains mainly uncontested and compliant with the form of moral panic discussed under the next section (it should be noted that other authors did not openly self-racialise after the fashion of Extract 6).

Only two opinion pieces acknowledged the ramifications of Apartheid while con-

currently according prominence to this recognition. These two pieces did not exclusively frame racism as an exploitable resource, opting instead to also construct current racialised injustices as an outgrowth of Apartheid arrangements:

Excerpt 7:

A casual observer can easily be fooled into believing that because the court ruling focused on the capacity of the school, it is merely a game of numbers. It runs deeper than that. At its most basic, the parents of the 55 pupils, who are mostly black and demanding to be taught in English, are bearing the brunt of government's failure to build successful English/ African language schools in areas that are predominantly Afrikaans, but have a significant number of black people living there. The reason Mandela is always invoked by the young ones as a sell-out is because while reconciliation continues to be preached as the underlying principle of our constitution [the] wealthy are very quick to run to the courts to ensure that there is no encroachment on their privileged lifestyles.

Excerpt 8:

The situation at Hoerskool Overvaal is a mircrocosm of our nation and how it continues to approach issues of transformation, what is certain however is if we continue to use language as proxy for race violence is a guaranteed outcome, violence is contrary to the spirit of our constitution.

The opinion pieces from which these extracts were sourced avoid treating the Overvaal furore as an isolated case in which an unfortunate shortage of space forced the exclusion of black learners, or a straightforward instance in which a politician like Lesufi seized upon a racially fraught situation to strengthen his reputation. Instead, the event is contextualised in terms of broader inequalities and read as "a microcosm" that indexes the limitations of the negotiated settlement that ended Apartheid, but left many of its unequal structures intact (see Excerpt 8). They read the event and the violent protests that followed as an exhortation to engage with the racialised distribution of wealth.

**DISCUSSION: RACE TROUBLE, BLAME-ATTRIBUTION AND MORAL PANIC**

There is no necessary connection between the construction of racism as a political resource and the assumption that sidestepping legal procedures invalidates accusations of racism. Instead, the connection represents an argumentative contrivance of the texts under study. Formulating the two as intimately connected cumulatively produces a type of moral panic. This panic produces a false binary: either the governing body at Overvaal is guilty of racism, or the MEC is guilty of politicking. Alternatives remain either entirely overlooked, or at least underexplored. For example, the governing body at Overvaal might harbour prejudice regardless of the MEC's self-interested political manoeuvres, and, more importantly, regardless of either of these factors, other elements of racism deserve exploration in news media, as elaborated in this section.

To start, the warrant of legal procedure is enacted in a manner that concomitantly racialises and de-racialises the blame games. Insufficient space at schools is mainly glossed over as a race-neutral problem. Adolescents racialised as black face tremendous impediments to education, especially those from rural areas who are often compelled to travel significant distances to enter education (Reygan and Steyn 2017). Nevertheless, the opinion pieces rarely centred these factors in their development of blame games.

However, as affirmed by the earlier analysis from the perspective of race trouble, MEC Lesufi's public allegations of racism against the governing body of Overvaal High School are racialised. His premature charges are configured as grounds for public outcry and as indexing a moral failing in the leadership of the Gauteng Department of Education. His racialised identity as a black politician in a country encumbered by high rates of government corruption, ineptitude and malpractice, render him vulnerable to such narratives of moral panic.

To clarify, narratives that charge government officials with abusing the power of their office are ubiquitous in South African media. To varying degrees, government corruption has indeed curbed economic growth as well as post-1994 restitution projects, including the expansion of educational infrastructures in areas historically neglected by the state apparatuses of Apartheid. Anxieties over government corruption are real and deserve urgent attention. Moreover, they are not unique to South Africa. Therefore, given these very real concerns over government accountability, politicians' real commitment to social justice, and the danger of populist mobilisations in South Africa, my analysis is not intended to militate against journalistic enterprises to keep government officials accountable. Of course, journalists and other contributors to mediatised blame games should scrutinise politicians and all social elites, and expose how they might exploit problems such as racism. However, precisely because of the democratic imperative to monitor all social elites and to hold them accountable for the advancement of social justice, scholars should investigate instances when the imperative to counter corruption and malpractice become imbricated in dangerous simplifications, which are peddled to serve narrower interests and panics. I suggest that in this case study, most of the opinion pieces stymie opportunities for strident engagement with deeper elements of racism.

On that basis, the findings caution against the way Afrikaans institutions are configured as besieged by the partisan manoeuvres of politicians like MEC Lesufi. The former are positioned as merely defending the rights constitutionally accorded to Afrikaans as an official language, while the latter's transgressions and malpractices are folded into a victim-villain narrative that ultimately overshadows and excises other equally relevant axes of socio-political analysis.

## CONCLUSION

Online communication channels afford opportunities for cultivating the critical faculties of audiences. The forms knowledge (and ideologies) proliferated through online media retain a capacity to calibrate how audiences engage with dominant construc-

tions of identity, the operation of power, and the subtle or explicit manifestation of exclusion. Opinion pieces, news reports and comment section are cardinal constituents of this online environment, and can play a role in augmenting or enervating critical thinking by exposing readers to simplified or comparatively more richly-nuanced narratives. Even discourses complicit in instigating and inflecting moral panics can become multi-vocal and facilitate robust interaction between countervailing viewpoints, "due to a proliferation of media platforms and the diversity of opinions that operate within them" (Nijjar 2015: 2).

Relying on Toulmin (2003), Hansson (2018a) and race trouble (Cresswell et al. 2014) prompted this investigation into the way constructions of racism become folded into the argumentative warrants that tacitly rationalise blame-attribution in the opinion pieces. The results denote the function of a specific warrant in organising the blame games around a type of moral panic, premised on recycling an existing anxiety that social elites can mobilise allegations of racism to further partisan and parochial interests instead of expanding social justice.

It should be noted that a warrant of legal procedure is not inherently problematic or automatically susceptible to the power-evasive practices outlined in the analysis. Potentially, this warrant can be wed to an unpredictable array of argumentative positions. All warrants and their roles in blame games remain contingent and contestable, since they remain both constituted by, and constitutive of wider social relations and processes. In the opinion pieces under study, however, this warrant and the claim that events at Overvaal are entirely innocent of racism are drawn into a process of convergence, which occurs, "when two or more activities are linked in the process of signification" (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts 1978). For this reason, the implications of selectively converging this warrant with a single (and problematically truncated) understanding of racism deserve criticism for its simplified victim-villain narrative.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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# LEGAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN POLAND AND RUSSIA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: This article draws attention to online discourse of children's participation in decision-making. The participation of children is located in one of the core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This study examines the right of the child to express his/her opinion and the participation of the child in matters affecting his/her interests. This paper aims to compare Poland and Russia results in the search process in the Google global search engine, level from 2004 to 2019 using Google Trends. We discover that there are connecting discourses among legal policies in Poland and Russia. There are also differences between clusters of arguments about existence of children's rights in practice.
KEYWORDS: children's participation, children's right, Convention on the Rights of the Child, decision-making, discourse analyses, 'new' sociology of childhood

## INTRODUCTION

We understand the idea of participation as expressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the right of the child to express her or his views freely in all matters affecting its life, the views of the child being given due weight (article 12). Participation should become a continuous process with no visible end to it. It is about

helping to create an environment where people (adults and children) can effectively identify and address their own needs" (Okam 2008: 148). It should be noted that children – like adults – are people who have their own worries, aspirations and priorities" (Jarosz 2018). Participation as a concept is about creating platform that levels the binaries of power for inclusivity, through the social positioning of all as humans in search of the good of their society whether as a receiver or capability provider (Okam 2019: 91). The basic problems in the reflection of the sense of participation of children in decision-making are the child's development opportunities and their competences (Phillips 2011). Lansdown situated children's decision-making in the terms of the four elements (2005): (a) ability to understand and communicate relevant information; (b) ability to think and choose with some degree of independence; (c) ability to assess the potential for benefit, risk, and harm; (d) achievement of a fairly stable set of values. Harry Shier, going closer to the children, indicates that participation consists of five elements: "1. children are listened to. 2. Children are supported in expressing their views. 3. Children's view are taken into account. 4. Children are involved in decision-making processes. 5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making" (2001: 107).

Hart (1999) presents a modified version of Arnstein's "ladder of participation". Hart's ladder includes eight stages of child participation: "manipulation", "decoration", "tokenization", "assigning, but informing", "consulting and informing"; "adult initiative and shared decision-making with children"; "children's leadership and initiative"; "children's initiative and shared decision-making between children and adults". In this multitude of definitions, the belief in the ability of children to actually influence their lives and others will always remain a fundamental aspect of participation.

Both countries, discussed in the article, were influenced by Communist Party (1945-1989). In the Soviet Union children were an important part of the population. One of the main slogan was: "All the best for children". But at the same time children were a well-managed part of the population – an object of powerful ideological influence of the state. The child's participation in decision-making was integrated in pioneer organization (Kravchuk 2014). It consisted of some specific activities such as electing of child's asset, doing some daily duties, visiting special meeting. In the middle, all of these activities were educating of young fighters for the cause of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. As noted by Smolińska-Theiss, in Poland, in the period of the Polish People's Republic, children's need were hidden by mechanism of power and control (2015). However, against this background, care of the child was developed by organized school medical assistance, comprehensive feeding program, support and social assistance for children. At the time the pedagogy school of Janusz Korczak, the idea of Henryk Jordan was developed (Smolińska-Theiss 2015). Childcare is primarily exercised by the family. The rights of the child are enshrined and respected according to the rank in: (1) the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997), (2) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), (3) The Family and Guardianship Code (1964), (4) The act on supporting the Family and the System of Foster Care (2011), (5) The act on Care for Children up to the Age of 3 (2011), (6) The Education Act (1991).

All the above-mentioned legal acts imposed requirements for the respect of children's rights by adults, and are addressed to children, to be able to use them. As Smolińska-Theiss noted, it is primarily for parents and the school to teach children their rights, especially to speak, to know about themselves, to jointly establish their own plans and solutions with the teacher (2015). In the Russian Federation, there are also some important acts supporting child's rights (1) the Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993), (2) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), (3) The Family Code (1995), (4) The Act "Fundamental Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation" (1998), (5) The National Strategy for Action in Children's Interests (2012-2017). Chapter 2 of Russian Constitution lists fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms, but only two articles 38 and 39 cover children's protection. The Family Code fixes the child's right to express his/ her opinion (article 57). But it concerns the resolution of family matters affecting him/ her as well as a child can be heard in any judicial or administrative proceedings. Taking into account the opinion of a child who has reached 10 years old is mandatory.

The first document that promoted the idea of child participation in the life of the society in Russia was the National Strategy for Action in Children's Interests. The strategy was in force in 2012-2017. It contained a special section titled "Child Participants of the National Strategy". Children were referred to as participants in social relations. The section enumerated the main organisational forms contributing to the realisation of the right of the child to express his or her views: children's and young people's civic associations, youth councils, chambers, parliaments and school self-governance bodies.

The position of children's Ombudsman was introduced by decree of the President of the Russian Federation in 2009. Ombudsman appointed to position and dismissed by the President, so the Ombudsman is a part of government. In Poland, the Ombudsman for Children was established in 2000, his position is very high, from 2008 has "hard intervention powers, including the ability to defend the rights of the child in family, civil and administrative courts, on the same rights as the prosecutor, and who received the widest possible control and supervision work with children" (Michalak 2018: 52). In Poland, the most powerful authorities of the 20th century about children's right, is Janusz Korczak, who grew up in Warsaw. Korczak's ideas can be described as a fight for the child's presence in culture, religion, society, and finally the state as a citizens (Odrowąż-Coates and Vucic 2017).

The purpose of our study is to compare Russian and Polish child's rights discourses. Common past of Poland and Russia was influenced by Communist Party ideology. The effects of this influence can be observed now. So our research questions are the following: What are the social and legal discourses of children's right to participate in Russia and Poland? What are their similarities and differences? Who is the main conduit for child's participation discourse?

## METHODOLOGY

The theoretical and methodological framework of the study is set by the "new" sociol-

ogy of childhood (James, Jenks and Prout 2012; Alanen 1992, Qvortrup 1987), which involves re-opening the world of childhood, addressing children as actors actively transforming social reality, including those affecting the world of adults. This requires the rejection of the previous attitudes of considering children from the position of formation-as objects of socialising influence of adults. A new view of childhood is related to its study "here and now". A child is the same social life's participant as have an adult. The child has the same rights to health, life, an identity, equality, an opinion, education, and free time.

Data were collected using Google search requiers, that is certain word combinations – "child's right to express his/her own opinion" and "the participation of the child in matters affecting his/her interests". The first 10 results for each request in Poland and Russia are analysed. Finally, we have 40 internet-pages with the abovementioned word combinations. The selection of the first ten results of the Google search query is related to the textual and non-textual characteristics of the top 10. The text criterion means that the contents of the Internet page most fully correspond to the search query (the quality of the text is evaluated). Non-text criterion–evaluation of external reference profile (accounting for the number of references to a resource, assessment of authority of referencing resources, verification of registrations in site catalogs). Also, we used Google Trends as a tool to provide a timeseries index of the volume of queries users enter in to Google in a Poland and Russia area. It allows us to study searching requires by users from different countries for different periods of time, not earlier than 2004. We used the following word combinations: "child's rights" + "children's rights" + "child's rights in Russia/ Poland".

To interpret the collected data, we used discourse analysis, that is interactions between text and context (Fairclough 2003). There are mixture of different d-discourses (Gee 2011) inside this child's right approach – legislative, scientific, public, and others. Legislative d-discourse is created by Polish and Russian legal systems, public (social) discourse – more due to media influence (Becker and Stalder 2009). D-discourses are researched with the help of Google search engine. Nowadays, social media (including Internet) produces new knowledge, experience and discourse. And users play a significant role in the design of this discourse through their searches.

## RESULTS AND DISSCUSION

### CHILD'S RIGHTS IN POLAND AND RUSSIA – RESULTS FROM GOOGLE TRENDS

Firstly, Google trends is used to understand how interested users in Poland and in Russian Federation in the topic of child's right. To build diagrams, we used the same words combination in Russian and in Polish. They are «праваребенка» + «правадетей» + «праваребенка РФ» /prawadziecka+jakiesąprawadziecka+prawadziecka w Polsce (that is "child's rights" + "children's rights" + "child's rights in RF – Russian Federation and in Poland").
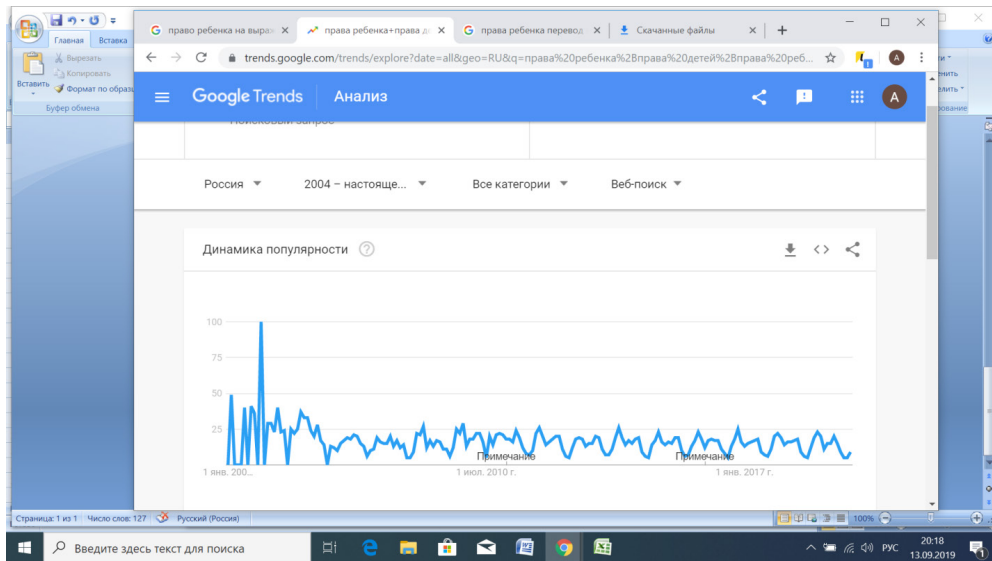
Picture 1 - Dynamics of Google search requires in Russia
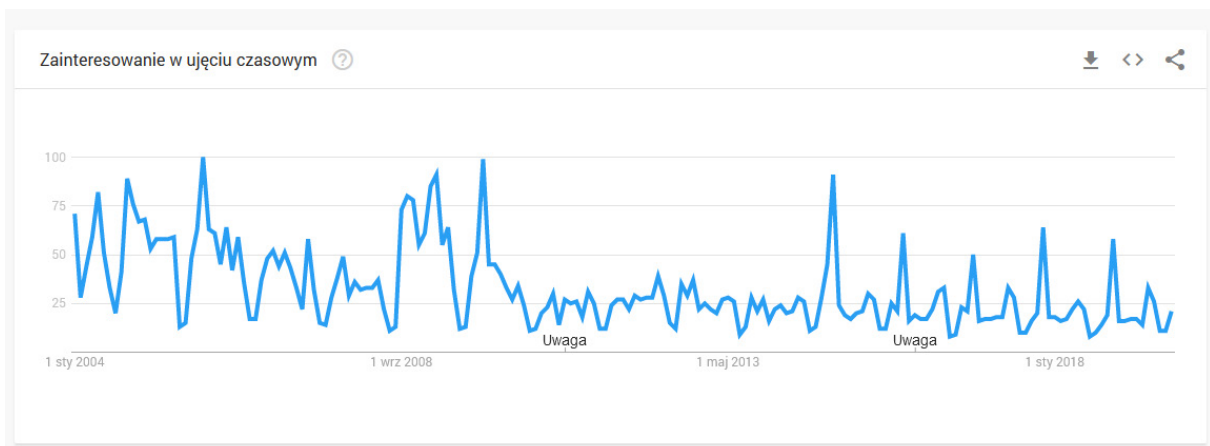


Picture 2 - Dynamics of Google search requires in Poland

In Russia, a rising of user attention occurred in the early 2000s due to a number of changes in the Russian practice of protecting children. In 1998, the Act "Fundamental Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation" was adopted; in 1999 the post of Children's Ombudsman was introduced. It is strange that the the National Strategy for Action in Children's Interests did not increase user-attention to the topic of children's rights. In Poland, the interest in children's rights was quite stable during the same period without strong ups and downs.

With the help of Google trend tool the most popular searching requires next to

"child's rights" + "children's rights" + "child's rights in RF / Poland" were found. Comparison showed specific words combination for each country. For Poland, they are (1) "children's rights scenario classes" and (2) "child's rights Korczak". In the first case, the authors speculate that teachers were searching ready-made scenarios for teaching children about children's rights. The second case indicates a very popular interest in Janusz Korczak on the Polish arena. For Russia, they are "protection of child's rights" and "underage's rights". In the Russian legislative system, the concept "child" is used by Family Code, but it turns to "Underage" in the Civil and Criminal Code to underline child's incomplete capacity. In the Russian social practice, instead of the use of the European concept "care', "protection" is because of a lot of risks surrounding the child in his/ her daily life.

## CHILD'S RIGHT TO EXPRESS HIS/HER OWN OPINION IN POLAND AND RUSSIA – RESULTS FROM GOOGLE

We use word combination "child's right to express his/her own opinion" in Google on September 18, 2019 (Poland) and on September 11, 2019 (Russia). There are about 9 920 000 (Poland) and 8 740 000 (Russia) results. The time of searching is 0, 44 seconds (Poland) and 0, 57 seconds (Russia). We selected first 10 positions and analysed them separately (in sum 20 internet-pages). All entries were considered at the same items: Who is the author? How is he/ she connected with child's rights? What is the child's position (subject or object)? What are social roles of the child (patient, daughter/son, member of a social organisation, etc.)

Data were analysed in the first approximation, deep study of them will require more thorough study of websites of organisations, expert interviews, and among others.

**Poland:**
Four (4) pages were applied to opinions and advice, 1 juridical comment, 2 reports, 1 book review, 2 articles from Ombudsman of Children. Most of the presented pages concern opinion-forming analyses on the expression that the child has the right to express her/his opinion, ranging from the choice of the toy by the infant, through the child-patient, to the child-family member. In 5 pages there is a reference to the activities of the Ombudsman for Children, 3 pages are Catolic. Child's right to express his/ her opinion in Poland – the first 10 results from Google – lie on subjective opinion and advice, in most of the family rights. Putting children's right into family right is a well-known procedure to highlight the child's belongingness to the family (Kulczyk 2016; Melton 1996; Brennan and Noggle 1997).

**Russia:**
Four (4) pages were juridical comments, 2 – scientific articles, 2 – juridical consultations, 2 had link with the same site of CRIN (Child Rights International Network). The most pages had extraction from the Family Code, mainly article 57 "child's right to express his/her opinion". According to this article, "The child has the right to express his

or her opinion when deciding in the family any matter affecting his or her interests, as well as to be heard in any judicial or administrative proceedings. Taking into account the opinion of a child who has reached the age of 10 years is mandatory" (Family Code of Russian Federation 1995). As can be seen from the text, a child has only two legislatively established spheres of his/ her opinion expressing a family and a court.

What is worth, first of all, we noticed stronger position and stronger influence by child's ombudsman in Poland than in Russia. One link in Russia and four links in Poland are connected with a large number of Ombudsman for Children in Russia (more than 70) instead of one ombudsman in Poland. Secondly, Polish publications are more practically oriented, they have some recommendation for parents, children and educators. While Russian publications set a framework for child participation in the form of legal norms, they do not contain practices of participation, and mechanisms of participation. Thirdly, it is interesting to compare sphere of child's participation and other supporting organisations in these two countries. In Poland, the Catholic Church website is an important participant of child's right realization. In the Russian Federation the legal discourse dominates; thus, child's participation is a participation in the court.

## THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CHILD IN MATTERS AFFECTING HER/ HIS INTERESTS – RESULTS FROM GOOGLE

We used word combination "the participation of the child in matters affecting his/ her interests" in Google on September 28, 2019 (Poland) and October 1, 2019 (Russia). There are about 845 000 (Poland) and 2 320 000 (Russia) results. The time of searching is 0,48 seconds (Poland) and 0,55 (Russia). We selected first 10 positions and analysed them separately (in sum 20 internet-pages).

**Poland:**
Four (4) pages were a direct link to full books (2 were scientific, 2 were guidance books), 3 pages were a kind of juridical comments, 2 were scientific articles, and 1 training material. It is worth noting that all pages of this search set professional standards of legal protection, proper care in the case of children's participation of the matters affecting her/his interests. Most of the discussions about participation of the child in these ten results – are centered in the context of court decisions about children upbringing. However, in Poland – in this background – parents are always responsible in the first instance to allow children the right of participation in matters affecting them. In modern world, it is important to stress that children's needs are crucial, because investing in children means investing in the future society (James and James 2012; Ben-Arieh 2008). The participation of the child also exists in recent studies of Children's Well-being (Strózik, Strózik and Szwarc 2015)

**Russia:**

From the beginning, it is necessary to note the assignment of three results in search of two words combinations "child's right to express his/her own opinion" and "the participation of the child in matters affecting his/her interests". They were 1 scientific article "Problems of realization of the right of the child to express his (her) opinion", 1 juridical consultation of the Site for Russian parents, Heading "For parents" and 1 juridical comment to the article 57 "child's right to express his/her opinion". Such co-incidence on the one hand means the sense proximity of two search phrases, and on the other hand, the incomplete meaning of the phrase associated with participation.

In whole, 8 pages were juridical comments. They were prepared by different legal services including Consultant plus – Russian legal-reference constantly updated system includes more than 1.9 million documents. Sometimes there were links with reviews of judicial practices, the decisions of the Plenum of the Supreme Court, Civil Procedural Code. And 2 pages were scientific articles designating two periods of exercise of the right to participate – before and after 1995. In 1995, Family Code of Russian Federation was accepted.

Comparing the results of the second search query in Poland and Russia, it can be seen that there were coincidences in the appeal to the court as a platform for the participation of the child. At the same time, polish pages were practically oriented including court proceedings and standards. In Poland, the most powerful foundation towards protecting children is "Empowering Children Foundation", studies show that every third child in Poland is a victim of violence by close adults (Wlodarczyk 2017).

## CONCLUSION

It is necessary to distinguish two different levels of children's participation. The first level is related to the expression of children's opinion, and the second level is related to the expression of children's views in decision-making. According to Harry Shier, at the first level children are listened to and supported in expressing their views. And at the second level, children are involved in decision-making processes. The first level is more expressed by legal discourse, the second – by social (public) discourse. The second level is more undefined with non-anchored practices. Legal discourse dominates in Russia. It is based on the article 57 of the Family Code. It concerns the consideration of the child's views in family disputes, especially at the courts. However court reviews show that courts are reluctant to give children the opportunity to express their views.

In Poland the first level is well organised, but as for the second level it lacks real practices of children's including in the decision-making. But in comparison with Russian situation in Poland there are a lot of educational and methodical literature (manuals, practical guides) to help adult hear children's voices.

Research showed that, in Poland there two main defenders of child's rights, including the right to participate: children's Ombudsman and Catholic associations and foundations. They have special recourses and carry out educational activities. In Russia the discourse of children's participation shifted to the rights of children of social

exclusion – orphans, offenders. So the main child's defenders are guardianship authorities, prosecutor and federal or regional Ombudsmen. But child's right to participate remains beyond their daily activities.

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# SELF-NARRATIVES OF BRAZILIAN DEAF PEOPLE: APPLICATION OF THE HYPOTHESES OF SOCIOANALYSES

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this study is to apply eight hypotheses of the socioanalysis for the interpretation and critical social reading of the "self-narratives" of deaf candidate to Higher Education at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS-Brazil). It is in the theoretical-methodological field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Deaf Studies (DS). We will analyze a deaf subject's narrative, collected in 2014, in the college entrance examination for the Brazilian Sign Language Course (LIBRAS). We will also adopt this methodological guideline, to define the object of study; identify areas of interfaces that meet the objectives; select the categories of each area of interface; establish the dialogue between categories, and identify the social meanings constructed in the discourse. The result confirms the role of socioanalysis in seeking to unveil how the practice of social relations and (re)construction of their identities in the struggle for citizenship rights articulate in the deaf individual's life.
KEYWORDS: Hypotheses of socioanalysis; Self-narratives; Higher education; Deaf Studies; Critical Discourse Analysis

## INTRODUCTION

Studies on the construction of narratives, such as self-interpretation, have grown in various fields, such as Sociology (for Social Change), Applied Linguistics (AL), and

Deaf Studies (DS). Ricoeur (2013) says that the individual can constitute their identity in narrating themselves – what he calls "narrative identity".

To this purpose, the Sociological and Communicational Approach to Discourse (SCAD), a Brazilian approach that is part of the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), recontextualizes the hypotheses of socioanalysis, from the field of Sociology for Social Change (SSC) and applies them to the self-narratives of vulnerable groups.

Therefore, the objective of this work is to apply the eight hypotheses of the socio-analysis for the interpretation and critical social reading of the "self-narratives" of deaf candidates to Higher Education at the "Universidade Federal de Sergipe" (UFS), Brazil. In order to fulfill this objective, it will be developed from the theorization of the fields in dialogues, which are: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Sociological and Communicational Approach to Discourse (SCAD) and Deaf Studies (DS). From the CDA, we will highlight its political commitment to make explicit the vulnerability of minority groups and the abuse of power relations that are imposed on them. From the SSC, we will summarize the proposal of the eight hypotheses of the socioanalysis and its contribution to the studies self-narratives. From the DS, we will summarize the history of the attempts to apply a methodology for the education of deaf people.

## "SELF-NARRATIVES" OF DEAF PEOPLE: THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

From Linguistics, we situate CDA (Fairclough 2008; Pedrosa 2008; Magalhães, Martins and Resende 2017). This field of linguistic-discursive analysis of social issues have evidenced its role in an incisive way. Their ability to being critical "springs from their dialogue with critical social science", as Vieira and Macedo (2018: 62) state. The authors continue to point out the questioning that this theory makes about the political and moral aspects of life in society.

For CDA, the role of the subject, or social actors, is crucial in the changes of discursive and social practices, evidenced in all texts, the similarity of the self-narratives that we are going to study. Thus, the analysis of texts is not only linguistic, but an "analysis of texts in terms of the different discourses, the different genres and the different styles they articulate" (Vieira and Macedo 2018: 62).

The objectives of CDA are aligned with this analytical positioning of texts and reflective of worldview. To explain the focus of CDA, we will summarize them in their fundamental objective, following Gonçalves-Segundo:

> A critical approach to discourse - and broader social life - must take into account the structural constraints of the various practices in which we are involved, while valuing our capacity to act and, above all, to reflect and to resist, so that we can glimpse the fundamental objective: the denunciation of relations of power and domination that oppress and exclude in order to try to make a more egalitarian, just and democratic society (Gonçalves-Segundo 2018: 79).

"The denunciation of relations of power and domination that oppress and exclude", as the practice of critical analysts, it is the crucial point, to "enable a more just, more

egalitarian society", including for the deaf people, as a linguistic minority that has suffered throughout the history of humanity.

According to several authors from the deaf community, the deaf people bring in their body and in their memory marks of atrocities, because social coexistence was denied to them in several phases of history. This denial can range from isolation to death (Strobel 2009).

Europe, and other continents, were also in the competition of methods for schooling the deaf. In two extremes, there is oralism, in 1755, with Samuel Heinicke, known as the father of the German method, and the signage with the French abbot Charles Michel de L'Epée (1712-1789). The importance of these representatives of deaf education is so remarkable that Heinicke, in 1978, receives a postage stamp in his honor. The abbot, creator of methodical signs and also the creator of the first school for the deaf in France, also receives a postage stamp in his honor in 1959 (Sofiato and Reily 2017).

Poland, where this research was presented[1], is a country that, on one hand, has a long tradition in education for the deaf and has suffered a great deal of historical turbulence that has had a direct impact on this model of education. According to Tomaszewski and Sak (2014: 131), in the first school for the deaf in Poland – the Institute for the Deaf, dated 1817, the manual method was adopted. This method was discontinued between the 19th and 20th centuries due to the implementation of rehabilitating ideologies. "This was the organization of the educational process involving the 'normalization' of deafness that was almost openly highlighted". In the authors' evaluation, "in fact, it was nothing more than education aimed at adapting the deaf to the majority of hearing people".

In altercations between orality and signalization, in 1880 (06-11 September), in the Milan Congress, oralism was defined as the best method for the education for the deaf. This decision made by the hearing experts in the education for deaf people had very little influence on this resolution. As Rochelle (1880) informs us, the main deliberations were for the oral method. The thesis was that the voice should precede writing. Let us see:

> (…) however, despite some resistance, the method of articulation prevails visibly. Its triumph is affirmed in a resolution formulated: Congress, Considering the undoubted superiority of the word on the signs to deaf-mute society and give it a more perfect knowledge of the language, states that the oral method should be preferred instead of mimicry for the education and instruction of the deaf-mute (Rochelle 1880: 10, our translation).

These decisions reached deaf education in several parts of the world, such as Brazil, which, in 1881, educators prohibited the use of sign language at its Institute of the Deaf-Mute (Rocha 2008).

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[1] International Conference Language and Society. Research Advances in Social Sciences Maria Grzegorzewska University Warsaw, Poland, September 26-27, 2019.

As Eiji (2012) says, in the face of the strength of the narrative plots of the hearing people's ideology and circulation of the pathological discourses about deafness, the siege for the method of oralism was closed. "From deaf people were demanded with speaking, orofacial reading, hearing training, the elimination of gestures, hearing people's behaviors, rehabilitation efforts and isolation concerning deaf communities" (Eiji 2012)[2]. It was the quest to "normalize" the deaf.

As it was aforementioned, this work has as object of study deaf people's self-narratives. Specifically, we will work with a narrative through the theoretical and methodological basis of the Sociological and Communicational Approach to Discourse (SCAD, ASCD in Portuguese, www.ascd.com.br) (Pedrosa 2016, 2018), a Brazilian approach within CDA. The SCAD was idealized through contextualization and contributions from several areas, such as Sociology for Social Change (SSC); Communication for Social Change (CSC); Cultural Studies (CS) and Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL).

In order to work on self-narratives, we chose the influence of the SSC, through its exponent, the sociologist Bajoit (2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013). According to him, the individual, in order to be subject, exercises the psychic resources of one's own consciousness, i.e., one's own capacity for reflexivity and expressiveness. The individual can also be questioned by one's own culture in order to be subject or to be an actor. However, we know that this is not always the case, especially when we speak of vulnerable groups or minorities.

The sociologist indicates two types of self-narratives (expressivity): of understanding and relief. The narratives of understanding can be of rationalization and of conscientization. The rationalization explains the reason why the subject is under the conditions described in the narrative. It can be because of his/her parents, teachers, human nature, fatalities, God, and other causes. In the narratives of conscientization, the subject reflects how he/she acts independently on his/her will, the habits he/she has incorporated, Freudian slips, etc.

Narratives of relief are classified as evaluation, withdrawal, compensation, and perseverance. The narrative of evaluation analyses the gravity of what happened to him/her as a victim, sometimes as guilty, sometimes minimizing or exaggerating the situation. The narrative of withdrawal considers only a postponement, or the act of being far from his/her mourning because of his/her failure. The narrative of compensation tries to replace a frustration to an expectation (substitution or sublimation). The last one is of perseverance, which evaluates the possibility of reconciling him/herself to the situation or change his/her life (Bajoit 2012).

The self-narrative to be analyzed will be interpreted according to the classification above and to the socioanalysis hypotheses that will be explained in the methodological section below.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to apply eight hypotheses of the socioanalysis for the interpretation and critical social reading of the "self-narratives" of deaf candidate to

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[2] https://culturasurda.net/2012/08/18/teatr-deaf-poland/, 05/05/19, at 00:59).

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We will analyze a self-narrative of a deaf subject, from a corpus collected in 2014[3]. The narrative in evidence was the textual production for the selection test to enter the graduation in LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language). The candidate, who wrote an essay-argumentative text defending bilingual education for deaf people, uses his/her own life story to support the arguments. Thus, the self-narrative, "embedded" in the text on the agenda, occupies much of the production.

We adopted the basic methodological guidelines in the SCAD, for a qualitative and interpretative study, as follows:

- To identify the areas of interfaces that meet the objectives – CDA, Sociological and Speech Communication Approach, DS, SFL.

- To select the categories of each interface area – the hypotheses of socioanalysis, types of narratives, metafunctions of the SFL.

- To articulate discursiveness to its textual materiality – indicate the textual texture by the metafunctions of the SFL and the self-narrative.

- To establish a dialogue between the categories – establishment of the type of narrative and the hypotheses; to identify the social meanings represented and constructed in the corpus – the social meanings from the methodologies for deaf teaching.

From Socioanalysis, derived from SSC, and recontextualized and applied by SCAD, we have the following literal assumptions of Bajoit (2012):

*First hypothesis:* the practice of social relations, by socializing the individual, instigates him/her to engage in a social destiny.

*Second hypothesis:* engagement in a social destiny awakened in the individual of relational expectations: some are well satisfied, others are less satisfied or are not at all.

*Third hypothesis:* relational expectations that are satisfied form the central core of personal identity; those who are not satisfied, feed existential tensions in the peripheral zones of that identity.

*Fourth hypothesis:* certain conditions weaken the identity of the individual and produce identity uneasiness that instigates him/her to question the destiny in which he/she is engaged.

*Fifth hypothesis:* the individual constructs a narrative of the subject, by which he/she explains to him/herself his/her identity uneasiness and projects what he/she wants to

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[3] Some smaller projects started in 2013 at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (Brazil) and currently at the Federal University of Sergipe – UFS, (Brazil). Specifically, the text, for analysis, is part of the corpus of the project "Studies of identities and writing processes in Portuguese as L2: deaf community in agenda" (registration code at UFS - pvd5106-2017). We collected 54 essays referring to the selection of deaf candidates of 2014 (25 essays), 2015 (08 essays), 2016 (15 essays), and 2017 (6 essays). In the latter, the project to be developed from 2019 to 2024, was submitted to the UFS Ethics and Research Council and has the title: "Critical discourse analysis and vulnerable groups: self-narratives and the identity constructions of the deaf subject".

do to relieve it.

*Sixth hypothesis:* the individual constructs the subject's reasons: his/her motivations to move to the act and the resistances that oppose him/her.

*Seventh hypothesis:* the individual implements the psychic abilities that weaken his/her internal resistances and allow him/her to perform liberating acts.

*Eighth hypothesis:* the individual moves into action: he/she somewhat profoundly redefines his/her social relations... and he/she pays the price of his/her always partial liberation!

These hypotheses, applied by Bajoit in basic research in Sociology for Social Change, will be retextualized to accompany the critical reading of the deaf's self-narrative. We justify their use because we could not find any research that applies them to socio-discursive studies in CDA and in DS.

For textual weaving, Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) will be the basis. The focus will be the general aspects of meta-functions: ideational and interpersonal. By ideational function, we analyze the worldview in a text; by interpersonal function, we follow the dialogism in the text.

The following topics, results and discussion, will, respectively, focus on critical reading from the hypotheses and Systemic-Functional Linguistics.

## RESULTS

Ricoeur (2013: 02) explains that "self-knowledge is an interpretation". According to the author, knowing oneself happens indirectly "by the diversion of cultural signs of all sorts that are articulated on symbolic mediations, which, in turn, articulate action and, among them, the narratives of daily life". It is this interposition by the narrative that promotes "self-knowledge" as "an interpretation of oneself" (Ricoeur 2013: 13, 14).

Below there is an example of analysis, i.e., a narrative that a subject built to explain his/her existential tensions.

Example:

Applicant: LL-UFS/2014[4]

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[4] Entendo que a escola bilíngue é a melhor forma de inserir os surdos na educação escolar brasileira. E faço, defendo essa posição com base em minha própria experiência como estudante.

*Eu nasci surdo e, por força do pensamento fonoaudiológico então vigente, fui rigirosamente oralizado, sendo-me negado qualquer contato com a língua de sinais.*

*Aos 7 anos, comecei a estudar em escola particular, lá estudando até entrar na [nome de uma universidade pública]. Para mim, foi um choque quando entrei na Universidade, pois esta não tinha preparação alguma para acolher o surdo, o mesmo se dando na [nome de uma universidade particular], quando entrei lá posteriormente*

*Hoje, não me sinto bem exercendo o papel de ouvinte (o que, decididamente, não sou) nem consigo ficar à vontade entre os meus iguais, pois não domino a LIBRAS, que só vim a descobrir muito tarde, com 35 anos de idade.*

Assim, com a atual onda de valorização da LIBRAS, que se tornou a 2ª língua oficial do Brasil, é mister que se busque, igualmente, a valorização do surdo em sua integralidade, reconhecendo que a sua 1ª língua é a LIBRAS, não o português, que é a 1ª língua do ouvinte.

I understand that the bilingual school is the best way to insert the deaf in Brazilian school education. And I defend this position based on my own experience as a student.

*I was born deaf and, because of speech therapy, I was strictly oralized, and I was denied any contact with the Brazilian sign language.*

*At age 7, I started studying in private school until I was admitted at [name of a Brazilian public university]. For me, it was a shock when I entered the university because there was no preparation to welcome the deaf. The same happened at [name of a Brazilian private university] when I went there later.*

*Nowadays, I do not feel good playing the role of a hearing person (which I am not, definitely) nor can I be comfortable among my equals, because I do not command LIBRAS, which I came to discover very late, at 35 years old.*

Therefore, with the current wave of LIBRAS appreciation, which has become the 2nd official language of Brazil, it is necessary to equally seek the appreciation of deaf people in their entirety, recognizing that their first language is LIBRAS, not Portuguese, which is the first language for hearing people.

If LIBRAS is treated as Portuguese, as an official Brazilian language, why not allow the creation of bilingual schools, which would make deaf people fully developed, instead of just inserting them in traditional monolingual schools, which will never give them conditions to their complete development, but, on the contrary, they could traumatize them, making them believe that Portuguese is a "boring" and "difficult" language to learn?

So, may the bilingual school be created.

In the text above, we marked in italics the paragraphs that constitute the self-narrative, which will be the object of analysis. We will also cut it into passages. To read the code (LL-UFS/2014), we have: graduation in LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language Course) from the UFS (Universidade Federal de Sergipe), in 2014.

Passage 1:

I was born deaf and, because of speech therapy, I was strictly oralized, and I was denied any contact with the Brazilian sign language.

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Ora, se a LIBRAS está equiparada ao português como língua oficial brasileira, por quê não se admitir a criação de escolas bilíngues, que permitirão o desenvolvimento integral do surdo, em vez de apenas inseri-lo nas escolas nos moldes atuais, que jamais lhe darão condições de seu desenvolvimento pleno, mas, ao contrário, poderão traumatiza-lo, fazendo-o crer que o português é uma língua "chata" e "difícil" demais de aprender?

Assim, que venha a escola bilíngue!!

I associate the passage 1 with the *first hypothesis:* "the practice of social relations, by socializing the individual, instigates him/her to engage in a social destiny". According to the sociologist Bajoit (2012), the use of the term "social destiny" in this hypothesis refers to when the subject does not choose his/her life's trajectory when he/she follows the route that was imposed or suggested to him/her. We verified that, in the case in study, his/her journey was imposed (*I was strictly oralized, and I was denied any contact with Brazilian sign language*). He/She was "strictly" forced to oralize by some external force, which he/she could not fight against. In this case, it was "because of speech therapy thought then in effect*".

If we consider that the decision of the Milan Congress was in 1880, even after a century, the influence remains strong, since the person was born between the late 1970s and early 1980s, as he/she is 35 now.

Bajoit presents another reading for "social destiny": when the social actor chooses the destination. What is observed by the text is that the social actor continues, for a long time, engaged in the destiny that attributed to him/her.

Passage 2:

At age 7, I started studying in private school until I was admitted at [name of a Brazilian public university]. For me, it was a shock when I entered the university because there was no preparation to welcome the deaf. The same happened at [name of a Brazilain private university], when I went there later.


The subject, for many years, fulfills his/her social destiny hypothesis 2 – "engagement in a social destiny awakened in the individual of relational expectations: some are well satisfied, others are less satisfied or are not at all" (*At age 7, I started studying in private school until I was admitted at [name of a Brazilian public university]*). In hypothesis 3 ("relational expectations that are satisfied form the central core of personal identity; those who are not satisfied, feed existential tensions in the peripheral zones of that identity"), the subject's expectation of personal fulfillment failed. Whether entering a public or private university, his/her experience was not what he was expecting (*For me, it was a shock when I entered the university because there was no preparation to welcome the deaf*). The subjects have projects to do, and when they seek to accomplish them, they not always succeed. This is what happened in hypothesis 3 – "the [relational expectations] that are dissatisfied feed existential tensions in the peripheral zones of that identity".

According to socioanalysis, personal identities are inserted in three spheres that approach or distance themselves according to existential tensions that are solved or not. The sphere of the assigned identity – what the individual thinks he/she must do or be in order to respond to the expectations other people have for him/her; the sphere of the desired identity – what he/she expects to have to be and to do it in order to fulfill him/herself as a person; and the sphere of compromised identity – how he/she manages to balance the other two spheres, that is, what he/she actually does with his/her life (Bajoit 2012).

We verified, by the text, that the subject seeks to meet his/her desired identity, submitted to two exams to enter public and private universities, but the "shock" of disappointment was the same. His/her search for personal fulfillment was not achieved (*For me, it was a shock when I entered the university because there was no preparation to welcome the deaf. The same happened at [name of a Brazilian private university] when I went there later*).

By the fourth hypothesis ("certain conditions weaken the identity of the individual and produce identity uneasiness that instigates him/her to question the destiny in which he/she is engaged"), we realize that the subject only sought another university – a private one, because of the disappointment of entering the public university generated "identity uneasiness" that caused him/her to question his/her "social destiny". He/She would not conform to this situation, would seek another solution –the private university.

Passage 3:

Nowadays, I do not feel good playing the role of a hearing person (which I am not, definitely) nor can I be comfortable among my equals, because I do not command LIBRAS, which I came to discover very late, at 35 years old.

Through the *Fifth Hypothesis* ("the individual constructs a narrative of the subject, by which he/she explains to him/herself his/her identity uneasiness and projects what he/she wants to do to relieve it") we encounter the subject and "his/her self-narrative". We encounter his/her identity tensions, his/her decisions about the identity spheres (assigned, desired, or committed). It is this narrative that allows us to verify the other hypotheses.

We have identified that the subject's capacity for reflexivity and expressiveness is manifested in his/her text. It reflects on the lack of identification in the "hearing person's role" and in the deaf person's – *I cannot even feel comfortable among my equals, because I do not command LIBRAS*. This reflexivity also attests to his/her evaluation-type relief narrative. The subject evaluates the severity of his/her situation.

To close the other hypotheses, we must resort to the full narrative. In the *sixth hypothesis* ("the individual constructs the subject's reasons: his/her motivations to move to the act and the resistances that oppose him/her") and in the *seventh hypothesis* (the individual implements the psychic abilities that weaken his/her internal resistances and allow him/her to perform liberating acts), we find an explanation for the socio-discursive reading of the narrative. We can look for indications of their motivations and resistances. He/She faces selections that give him/her the opportunity to pursue a career. He/She resists and persists when the public university disappoints him/her and seeks a new selection for a private university.

According to Bajoit (2012: 24), we live under the domain of a subjectivist cultural model. This model gives the subject/actor at least "three major injunctions: it tells him/her 'to assert his/her rights, make his/her own choices and become him/herself'". Furthermore, the author adds: "he/she interprets these three injunctions in his/her

way, according to his/her personal story, which will ground his/her reason and resistance". We find in the narrative under analysis that the subject is aware of his/her right to higher education and assesses it negatively when he/she finds universities without "any preparation to welcome the deaf" – *For me, it was a shock when I entered the university because there was no preparation to welcome the deaf.*

As this self-narrative was inserted in a text for selection to higher education, we can consider that the *eighth hypothesis* ("the individual moves into action: he/she somewhat deeply redefines his/her social relations... and he/she pays the price of his/her always partial liberation!") is linked to the act of redefining his/her social relations and resolving his/her existential tensions. When he/she did not get support in a university, he/she tries another one and again "pays" the price of not being accepted (Bajoit 2012). In the sociologist explanation:

> To become the subject of oneself, the individual seeks to be more actor. In order to free oneself from one's resistances and to avoid the return of one's identity uneasiness, he/she strives to obtain a better satisfaction of his/her relational expectations and, to achieve it, he/she goes back to the source: he/she acts on the social relations that are in origin of the structure of one's own identity. With and/or against the "significant others" of his/her existence, he/she tries to redefine his/her aims, powers, social influence, and retributions: he/she enters into conflict, cuts off relations, builds solidarities, negotiates, imposes him/herself or give up (Bajoit 2012: 31).

The subject's dedication to his/her education was the way he/she "redefined his/her purposes, his competences". As the Brazilian educational system did not meet his/her linguistic priority, that is, to offer bilingual education, with Libras as the L1 and Brazilian Portuguese as the L2, he/she denounces this negligence. He/She explains that his/her education was in written and "oralized" Brazilian Portuguese. Because of that, he/she feels him/herself in a floating identity, i.e., neither hearing nor deaf, he/she stands in favor of bilingualism.

## DISCUSSION

The textual analysis, necessary in research with CDA, will be added to the critical reading through the Systemic-Functional Grammar.

If we consider the metafunctions of the language in use (Halliday 2004; Ghio and Fernandes 2005), they point to a worldview based on hearing people's ideology, of normality (ideational metafunction, representational), from the position of the subject that does not feel comfortable neither with deaf people nor with hearing people. Consolidating, thus, the theory exposed by the authors Ghio & Fernandes (2005: 79), when they affirm that "as a representation: the clause contradicts some process of the human experience of the world". Moreover, Halliday (2004) distinguishes two subfunctions in the ideational metafunction: experiential and logical. We are concerned here with the experiential subfunction, since through language human beings can construct mental images of the exterior and interior "reality", some of these images:

*I was strictly oralized; I started studying in private school; it was a shock when I entered the university; Nowadays, I do not feel good playing the role of a hearing person.* His/Her experience is constituted by events that are accomplished in language by verbal processes.

Still, Ghio and Fernandes (2005: 79) explain, about interpersonal metafunction, that it "implies a transaction between speaker and hearing or audience". From this point of view, the language will serve both to establish and to maintain social relations. It will serve to realize our social roles. The subject's social relations in the narrative always occur with hearing people. His/Her assessment of this relationship is always negative, considering that he/she was forced into various hearing people's circumstances, despite being deaf. He/She was "strictly" oralized. He/She was "denied" any contact with his/her language. The university "had no preparation" at all. "I do not feel good" in the role of a hearing person.

According to Bajoit (2013), in order to be subject, the person must "build a narrative identity by which he/she explains and relieves his/her existential tensions, and he/she explains, justifies, evaluates, considers what he/she could do to solve his/her discomfort, thanks to a set of narrative processes". Furthermore, he/she adds: "He/She strives to adhere to this story, to repeat it relentlessly to convince him/herself of it, to believe that it guides his/her action".

He/she used a self-narrative in his/her text to explain his/her existential tension, resulting mainly from his/her linguistic exclusion, denial to use his/her language, and to constitute his/her deaf identity.

## CONCLUSION

The result confirms the role of socioanalysis, recontextualized by the Sociological and Communicational Approach to Discourse, in seeking to reveal how it is articulated in the deaf's life the practice of social relations and the (re)construction of their struggle identity for citizenship rights.

As Bajoit says, about the individual's ability to narrate his/her uneasiness, resulting from the social relationship to which he/she is subjected:

> The two capacities of his/her consciousness, expressiveness and reflexivity, inspire the individual to have what he/she must do if he/she wants to be more subject of him/herself: they are the ones that instigate him/her to build a credible identity narrative to understand and relieve his/her uneasiness… to mobilize their energy to give themselves reason to act (Bajoit 2012: 27).

Critical Discourse Analysis, through its linguistic, discursive, and social basis, and in dialogue with critical social science, has contributed to the analysis of the discourses of vulnerable groups through their political view of social life, exposing the structural coercion of various practices to which these groups are submitted. Moreover, in this way, it aims to promote action as resistance to abusive power relations. As a result, it tries to "make possible a more egalitarian, fair, and democratic society" (Gonçalves-Segundo 2018: 79).

In short, we can affirm that the narrative analyzed demonstrated how much the deaf subject, representative of other deaf people, suffered the imposition of a language and a culture that was not his/her own. We also affirm that we must make his/her last "cry", that he/she does not know who he/she is (*Nowadays, I do not feel good playing the role of a hearing person (which I am not, definitely) nor can I be comfortable among my equals, because I do not command LIBRAS, which I came to discover very late, at 35 years old*), be replaced by an identification with his/her people and language.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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# OWN EXPERIENCES OF ABORTION IN DESCRIPTIONS OF PEOPLE ASSOCIATED IN PRO-CHOICE GROUPS ON FACEBOOK IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT: A restrictive anti-abortion law is in force in Poland. However, many people terminate pregnancy in cases other than those specified in the Act. Public discourse on this subject is dominated by philosophical and legal issues, and it lacks the voices of those who terminated the pregnancy. Abortion is often presented as a sad necessity, as always difficult or traumatic. I conducted research on describing own abortion experiences by people from Facebook pro-choice groups. 99 respondents who had 102 abortions completed an anonymous online questionnaire. From the material of answers, I selected categories that were used to analyze the results of the study: positive emotions, negative emotions, pregnancy as a burden, good experience, difficulty experience, stigmatization, support. It turned out that the experiences of termination of pregnancy were diverse. Respondents, describing their experiences, discussed topics rarely present in the discourse, such as the fact that abortion can be a good experience.
KEYWORDS: abortion, termination of pregnancy, pro-choice, discourse about abortion, experience of abortion

**INTRODUCTION**

In Poland, the Catholic Church has a significant impact on public life, and the abortion law, introduced in 1993, is one of the most restrictive in Europe. In most cases, it prohibits abortion. Although it does not provide for a punishment for a person terminating a pregnancy, it entails criminal liability, for example for a doctor who performs an abortion contrary to the Act. Because the premises contained in the Act are formulated in general terms, doctors prefer not to risk and refuse to perform procedures. This is called the freezing effect (Grzywacz et al. 2013), which negatively affects the availability of even theoretically legal abortions (i.e. in the case of fetal malformations, risk to the health and life of a pregnant woman, rape or incest). The situation is additionally hindered by the lack of reliable sex education, insufficient reimbursement of modern contraception, the need to obtain a prescription for the purchase of emergency contraception or limited access to prenatal tests (Nowicka 2007).

In 2016, an attempt was made to enact an even more drastic ban on abortion - including imprisonment of a person aborting her own pregnancy and a ban on abortion in the event of pregnancy resulting from rape, fetal malformations and threat to the health of the pregnant person. The bill, however, caused mass protests in many cities throughout Poland and abroad. It was so-called A Polish Women's Strike took place on October 3, 2016. Two days later, the bill was rejected.

The current act is a fiction not only because it is difficult to get an abortion in cases permitted by law, but also because in cases not covered by the law, pregnancies are still being terminated. One of the ways to obtain this procedure is "abortion migration" - so common that Slovak, German and Dutch clinics open Polish-speaking hotlines and websites (Grzywacz et al. 2013). For a fee you can also find a doctor who will informally terminate pregnancy in Poland. Medical abortion that can be carried out at home is becoming increasingly popular. It is available thanks to the organizations Women on Web and Women Help Women, which send sets of pills, among others to Poland.

The situation in which anti-abortion law turns out to be fiction is not surprising. According to Gail Kligman (2010), legal bans did not contribute to the termination of abortion in totalitarian countries (e.g. the USSR, Romania during Ceausescu's rule) or in countries considered Catholic (e.g. Poland, Brazil, not so long ago - Ireland). However, the ban makes abortion invisible to the public. Everyday life requirements cause people to behave in a different way than the one that political and religious systems try to impose on them. Women's health, especially the sphere of sexuality and birth control, are strongly associated with the dominant discourse of power, regarding issues such as family model, morality model, women's place in society (Żuk and Żuk 2017). According to Gail (Kligman 2010), worldwide reproduction policies of countries are associated with hypocritical rhetoric and actions. The formulation of reproduction legislation based on ideological and religious doctrines, without taking into account socioeconomic factors, leads to a deterioration in the quality of life for people, especially women and children.

A ban on abortion can also cause people to terminate a pregnancy in less secure conditions. 21.6 million dangerous abortions took place worldwide in 2008, mainly in

developing countries. Lack of access to legal and safe abortion affects women's lives - 47,000 of them died in 2008 as a result of dangerous abortions (WHO 2011).

## DISCOURSE ON ABORTION IN POLAND

The Catholic Church influences not only legislation, but also the language of the media and legal debate on abortion in Poland (Żuk and Żuk 2017). When adopting the ban on abortion, medical and social issues were ignored in the parliamentary debate, as were women's rights. The center of the debate was the embryo / fetus, called the "conceived child" (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2009). Instead of the voices of women and other people capable of becoming pregnant, the debate was dominated by the voices of men - priests, politicians, and doctors. The ban on abortion was introduced against the will of the majority of the population and despite collecting over a million signatures for a referendum on this matter (Nowicka 2007).

Researcher Ewelina Wejbert-Wąsiewicz indicates that in the Polish discourse on abortion, there is a strong polarization of attitudes in official culture and outside that moderate acceptance of abortion dominates (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2012). At the same time, various aspects of abortion are excluded from public discourse. Because ideological discourse has the greatest impact on other areas of discourse, abortion is not portrayed as a women's everyday life problem (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2012). Ideological discussions dominate the public debate, but real experiences rarely appear there. The abortion procedure in Poland is surrounded by huge taboos. It is possible that people who have experienced abortion often do not talk about it for fear of judgment and stigmatization. When a few weeks after the women's strike, singer Natalia Przybysz told the press about her experience of abortion, she met with a verbal aggression and insults, as well as protest letters demanding the cancellation of the concerts (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2017).

In the twenty years after the ban on abortion was adopted in Poland, the language of discourse was increasingly appropriated by opponents of the right to terminate pregnancy. Neutral terms have been replaced by emotionally defined terms - for example, instead of "abortion" the words "killing children", "murdering the unborn", instead of "embryo" or "fetus" the words "conceived child", "child", "unborn man" were used. A pregnant person is called a "mother". Terms such as "unborn holocaust" and "civilization of death" have also been used. (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz 2012). Anna Matuchniak-Krasuska (Szczuka 2004) noticed in the rhetoric of the opponents of the right to abortion the following polarizing measures: the elimination of neutral terms, the exclusion of "inappropriate" terms, the introduction of appropriate synonyms along with chosen epithets, and imposing meaning.

Strongly emotional language stuck to public debate more easily, while talking about "women's rights" was less present. Wejbert-Wąsiewicz (2012) sees the weaknesses of the feminist language in the fact that it is the "official" language, too far from the real experiences of women. Currently, although negatively marked terms are still used by opponents of reproductive rights, the language of feminists began to partially return to mainstream discourse - this was due to the strong social movements associated

with the Women's Strike and Black Protest, as well as the creation of a movement to combat stigmatization abortion, in Poland associated with the group Abortion Dream Team. This movement aims to show abortion as a normal experience that is shared by a large part of society, and to show the diversity of abortion experiences. The group's goal is to prevent the association of abortion with evil and drama, with a decision that is always difficult and always ends in trauma. This way of talking about abortion - as a normal, universal experience, which is associated with various emotions, often with relief - can be distinguished from another way of talking about termination of pregnancy by supporters of the right to abortion - defensive. In the defensive discourse of abortion, abortion is said to be a sad necessity, termination of pregnancy is defined as a "lesser evil", it is said that "abortion should be legal, safe and rare", "abortion is the most difficult decision in a woman's life", "abortion it's always a drama." One of the opinions characteristic of this discourse is also "I am in favor of the right to abortion, but I would never do it myself". The allegations against this method of discourse are that it results from privileges - awareness of economic security and emotional situation, thanks to which one can enter the role of mother - and is a manifestation of the lack of solidarity towards the less well-off persons (Budgał 2011). The defensive way of talking about abortion is also accused of deepening the stigmatization surrounding this procedure.

On September 30, 2018, the March for the World Safe Abortion Day was organized for the first time in Poland. The march was co-organized by the Abortion Dream Team and is part of the discourse of the fight to stigmatize abortion and demand its full de-criminalization. The next such march was held on September 28, 2019.

## LANGUAGES SURROUNDING ABORTION

### "WOMEN-PROTECTIVE" LANGUAGE AND NORMATIVE FEMINITY

The language used by proponents of the legality of abortion is similar in different countries. These anti-abortion movements often have religious connotations.

After legalizing abortion in the United States, opponents of abortion called for stricter rules, citing the fetus's right to life. Despite some influence on public opinion, this did not have clear effects on attitudes regarding the legality of abortion. Therefore, the tactics were changed and more women-centric claims were presented, but not supported by scientific evidence that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer, depression or suicide. This rhetoric results in the imposition of further restrictions on access to abortion, such as mandatory waiting periods (Jesudason and Weitz 2015). The argument about protecting women - from feeling regret after termination of pregnancy is also used to prohibit specific surgical abortion techniques (Jesudason and Weitz 2015). The protection of women's health has previously been used as the main argument for state law that abortion can only be performed in ambulatory surgical centers, although long-term studies have shown that abortion is a very safe procedure, and such restrictions reduce access to it (Jesudason and Weitz 2015).

In recent years, people who oppose abortion have been promoting the claim that abortion hurts women and does not help them (Ziegler 2013). While advocates of the

right to abortion rely on arguments based on equality, opponents of abortion try to repaint their attitude as favorable to women or "protecting women". They often claim that abortion causes physical and psychological damage (Ziegler 2013).

Using the language of "protecting women" often causes them to be seen as passive. This may be the reason for the discrepancy between feminists and pro-choice doctors, because feminists approach abortion in a female-centric way and emphasize the self-determination of a pregnant person, while doctors can approach abortion in a medicalized way (Ziegler 2013).

Claims of the harmful effects of abortion on women's physical and emotional health also place abortion providers in the position of suspects who are not interested in women's well-being. Opponents of abortion often promote the traditional role of women in family and society. Also when formulating "protective-women" anti-abortion arguments, they treat them as passive, unable to make decisions (Ziegler 2013).

In the rhetoric of opponents of abortion, a woman decides to terminate pregnancy despite her real desires and against her own good, while restrictions on access to abortion are to help her make the right decision and protect a vulnerable woman from coercion by others (Millar 2017), and harmful effect of abortion (Millar 2017). This often justifies mandatory consultations for women in need of abortion. The assumption that the state must protect a woman from a decision she later regrets puts women as weak, vulnerable, potential victims, and at the same time means that a woman's judgment cannot be trusted (Millar 2017). This way of thinking assumes that women passively agree to abortion rather than actively want it, and also reflects the normative point of view that motherhood is the only unproblematic effect of pregnancy (Millar 2017). On the other hand, motherhood can be a reason for embarrassing and blaming certain groups of women - for example, teenage or using social help, perceived by politicians and the media as unable to emotionally and economically raise a child (Millar 2017).

Erica Millar analyzed the discourse about abortion, mainly in Australia. The researcher indicates that there is an emotional pattern in the social consciousness of how women experience abortion. It is described as an extremely difficult decision made in response to exceptional circumstances beyond the woman's control, which also includes a sense of regret and keeping an abortion secret due to guilt and shame (Millar 2017). Such a narrative belongs to a position which, according to the author, dominates the debate on termination of pregnancy, and which is both anti-abortion and pro-choice. In this rhetoric, regulating abortion is not so much a legal prohibition as combining abortion in the minds of people with a very difficult, destructive experience. Abortion, although it allows women to avoid unwanted parenthood, is rarely spoken of as a good experience - which can be associated with e.g. relief, happiness, gratitude or hope. Socially accepted talk of abortion includes feelings such as sadness, regret, guilt, shame and despair. It also means treating abortion as a unique and unusual event, unhappy or even harmful to women. This is despite the fact that abortion is a common experience, rarely causes side effects, and few women experience long-term negative feelings after it. According to Millar, normative femininity prevents us from perceiving abortion as a normal and rather unproblematic surgery. The source of representation of abortion in public awareness is not the experience of people who

terminated pregnancy, but rather gender norms. Motherhood is perceived as the only one that brings women the promise of true happiness - especially pregnant women. As a consequence, a woman is seen as being able to choose to carry or terminate a pregnancy, but the latter option is considered an abnormal and harmful choice. This means that the decisions of women who want to terminate a pregnancy are still somehow controlled - if not because of legal restrictions and limited access to abortion, then because of the emotional meanings assigned to these choices (Millar 2017). The fetus or child is perceived as a "happy" object, so a woman who terminates a pregnancy is considered confused, unaware that the child will make her happy (Millar 2017). Motherhood in the social concept is combined with happiness and is no longer seen as a woman's destiny, but as her desire (Millar 2017).

However, it should be remembered that regret in social perception is irrevocably associated with the lack of children (and the end of reproductive time without becoming a mother), no regret is ever associated with their birth (Donath 2017). However, women's experiences do not necessarily reflect this belief. There are people who regret having become mothers - but this is a problem that comes with disbelief or stigmatizing women who confess such feelings. Often the existence of the phenomenon of regret of motherhood is simply denied (Donath 2017). There still remains a social belief that regretting not being a mother is inevitable and regretting motherhood impossible. This belief has a close connection with the normative perception of a woman as mother or potential mother. In this perception, only children can bring women true happiness, which leads the notion that abortion is always a harmful choice for her, and motherhood always a happy one.

Although in most cases regret is socially seen as undesirable, it can also be valued and recognized when adapted to prevailing standards (Donath 2017). It can even be used to maintain certain social values (Donath 2017). In the sphere of parenthood, expressing regret about abortion is socially more accepted and perhaps even expected than expressing regret about becoming a mother, which appears to many people as unimaginable. Regret can be a tool of oppression, a threat to people who want to terminate a pregnancy. The role played by women's experience of judgment and stigmatization is not taken into account, as well as the fact that they may feel relief, because abortion is one way to avoid entering into an unwanted motherhood relationship (Donath 2017).

Sometimes women in need of abortion are portrayed as victims of circumstances rather than conscious decision-makers (Millar 2017). In order to appeal for the sympathy of legislators and the public in general to make abortion legal, "desperate women" are often presented. They have abortions against their wish for baby due to miserable circumstance and they are regarded as objects that need to be saved by the good will of other people. In this approach, issues such as self-determination or body autonomy are not emphasized, and abortion is the result of the pregnant person's desire to ensure a good life for potential child - an act taken in baby's best interest (Millar 2017). Termination of pregnancy is perceived here as a difficult decision that women make out of a sense of love and duty towards a potential child, but contrary to their own nature (Millar 2017). In this approach, pregnant women irrevocably make a decision

as a mothers, even when, paradoxically, they choose abortion (Millar 2017). A narrative about a difficult choice, often combined with emphasizing the reasons for abortion decisions, such as unfinished studies, lack of a good job or a permanent partner. Creating such justifications for termination of pregnancy concretizes the image of a "good mother" as an educated in a stable heterosexual relationship in a good financial situation. At the same time, this approach is expected from people in need of abortion to justify their decision to other people (Millar 2017).

## DECRIMINALIZATION

Movements seeking to de-stigmatize abortion generally postulate not so much its legalization under certain conditions as full decriminalization. The situation in which abortion is not regulated by criminal law, removes formal obstacles to access to abortion and strengthens the discourse in which a pregnant person is treated subjectively - as a free individual who makes decisions (Millar 2017).

However, Millar (Millar 2017) points out that even in places where abortion has been decriminalized, the availability of surgery is still a key issue. Low economic status may limit access to abortion. On the other hand, because of the costs of parenthood, it can also push people to terminate even wanted pregnancies. Therefore, talking about "choice" becomes meaningless. When abortion is reduced to a matter of choice (Millar 2017), it simply appears as an individual decision. However, women do not become pregnant, do not become mothers and do not terminate pregnancy in a vacuum. The decisions about pregnancy and parenthood that they make, as well as the consequences of these decisions, cannot be separated from how factors such as gender, class or race position them, giving access to certain choices, closing to others and shaping a wider society - cultural meanings assigned to these decisions. To really talk about choice, you also need to treat abortion as a legitimate decision that a pregnant person can simply make.

## STIGMATIZATION

Stigmatization of abortion can be understood as a social reaction to the rejection of norms regarding female sexuality and motherhood (Hanschmidt 2016). It can be described as manifesting in three ways. First, as the awareness of a woman about the negative attitudes of other people towards her abortion and the expectation that these attitudes can lead to discriminatory actions. Secondly, as internalizing negative attitudes, which can affect self-esteem, cause feelings of shame and guilt. Third, as actual experiences of discrimination and mistreatment related to termination of pregnancy. Stigmatization of abortion probably affects people who had this procedure, but it can also affect other groups - their partners or people who perform abortions.

It is worth remembering the mediating role that legislation can play in stigmatization. The law can strengthen the social construction of stigmatization by transforming moral disapproval into public policy through criminalization. In addition to criminal law, other legal norms that differentiate individuals can strengthen stereotypes.

The law can also perform an expressive function by sending a message about behavior, identity and moral values, which strengthens the stigma (Abrams 2015).

Millar indicates that abortion is "awfulisated" (Millar 2017:15-16), that it is portrayed primarily in negative terms, from unpleasant to disgusting. Even if it is considered necessary, it is portrayed as something that should be avoided and which always causes a woman to despair. "Awfulisation" of abortion and its stigmatization mean that parenting is presented as the only problem-free pregnancy result. These phenomena are associated with emotions - for example, shame as an internalized abortion stigma.

Stigmatization of abortion, although it may be partly a product of legal prohibitions, may also help to create, justify and strengthen them. In countries where termination of pregnancy is legal, it may in turn make it more difficult to get it - by justifying the lack of adequate facilitation in accessing the procedure. Stigmatization may also discourage doctors from studying and taking up employment in the area of providing reproductive services. The cultural climate around abortion has measurable effects on its availability (Millar 2017).

Talking about your experience of abortion can be a way to counteract stigmatization, especially since the voices of people who terminated pregnancy are rarely heard in public discourse. In Poland, the discussion about abortion takes place on an ideological level, philosophical and legal aspects are raised - real experiences are rarely discussed. The embryo / fetus is at the center of the debate, the pregnant person is out of the way of interest. The absence of voices from people who have had an abortion may cause the discourse to be dominated by inadequate opinions about what the abortion person feels or "should" feel. Lack of talking about real experiences may cause that abortion appears to be more a theoretical discussion than life practice. It may seem a marginal phenomenon, while at least 4 million Polish women (between 1/4 and 1/3 of women living in Poland) had an abortion in their lives (CBOS 2013). Movements striving to destigmatize abortion - such as #Shoutyourabortion or #1na3 - focus on presenting real women's abortion stories. Each abortion "coming out" contributes to the normalization of abortion, perception of abortion as a universal phenomenon, associated with various emotions, not necessarily associated with trauma.

In the discourse on abortion, the terms "pregnant women", "women" or even "mothers" are often used. However, although cis-female make up the vast majority of abortions, the experience of abortion also applies to other people - like trans-men or non-binary people. The use of wording suggesting that only women terminate a pregnancy makes the experiences of other people invisible, which, although less numerous, are also present and important. Transgender or non-binary people can experience overlapping stigmatization, so it's even more worth creating a place for their experiences. On the other hand, talking about "women" emphasizes the fact that obstructing access to abortion is part of the broader history of discrimination against this gender or results from the social role attributed to it. Talking about "pregnant people" may slightly blur the historical and social significance of abortion. (Millar 2017) Perhaps there is a need to create new words and terms that would refer to the people who need or may need abortion, while not blurring the fact that it is about disadvantaged people.

## METHOD

I conducted the survey using my own questionnaire, which respondents completed anonymously online. Respondents answered questions, mostly open-ended, about their own experience of abortion. They related, among others to the reasons and degree of certainty of the decision on abortion, the emotions accompanying before, during and after the procedure, the importance of abortion for the life of the examined person, the degree of openness of talking about their own termination of pregnancy in conversations with other people and the support obtained. People were also asked to answer the question, if they could turn back time, would they decide to do abortion again. The subjects were free to choose how open they were - they did not have to answer every question to send a questionnaire. People who had more than one abortion completed the questionnaire several times - one for each experience.

From the empirical material obtained from the answers, categories were selected that were used to analyze the results of the study.

## SUBJECT, TIME AND PLACE OF RESEARCH

The questionnaire was completed by 99 people who described 102 experiences of abortion (one person had two abortions, another one - three). They were people with pro-choice views. Respondents were sought after on Polish-language Facebook feminist and pro-abortion groups. Requests to complete the questionnaire were posted from November 2018 to March 2019, the surveyed people are mostly women (93), one trans man and one genderfluid person. Four people did not indicate gender. The age of the respondents was between 18 and 67 years old, one person did not specify the age. The age at the time of abortion was between 15 and 45 years. Among the respondents, 67 declared higher education, 29 secondary education, one person primary and one vocational education. One person did not indicate education. Among the respondents, three people described themselves as very religious, 6 as moderately religious, 13 as slightly religious, 76 as non-religious.

The subjects belong to a specific social category. Apart from belonging to pro-choice groups, as it turns out, most respondents have a university degree and described themselves as non-religious. It is possible that results would be different if the survey were carried out outside a specific group. Being member in pro-choice groups can affects emotional way of experiencing abortion. However, it is important to listen to the voice of people who have had an abortion and to learn about their experiences. Focusing on a specific group that probably experiences a lower level of stigmatization can be a good start.

## RESULTS

Subjects had surgical (56) and medical (44) abortions. One person injected the caustic agent. Ninety three abortions were carried out in the first trimester, five in the second

(in a few cases there is no information).

Subjects gave various reasons for their abortion decision. The most frequent (41 times) was the reluctance to have a child - at all or at this moment in life. Other often mentioned are the economic situation (21 times), age and / or the desire to get an education (20 times). In 17 cases, factors related to the partner (aggressive partner, crisis in the relationship, but also no permanent partner) were given. In four cases, the reason for the abortion decision was medical factors related to the health and life of the pregnant person, in one - incurable fetal defect, in one - rape.

The degree of certainty of the decision to terminate pregnancy was assessed on a scale of 1 to 5. The highest degree of certainty - 5 - was declared 85 times, 4 - 10 times, 3 - 4 times. One person described the degree of decision certainty as 2 and one as 1.

Among the emotions that the subjects felt before the abortion, the most frequently mentioned (51 times) was fear/anxiety (before complications, potential failure of the procedure, that something would prevent abortion, that the family members find out). Some people (16) indicated that they were accompanied by strong expectation and impatience until they had the surgery behind them. For 10 people, the situation of unwanted pregnancy was a very difficult experience - due to physical ailments, deterioration of mental health, the inability to function normally. Two people described their suicidal thoughts that they had about being in an unwanted pregnancy. One of these people was a trans-man who felt strong fear and aversion to his body. The memory of pregnancy is unpleasant for him, although the attitude to terminating it is positive. Among the emotions after abortion, relief was most often mentioned (72 times). They also described positive emotions like joy (17 times), calm (12 times), gratitude (3 times), hope (3 times), and negative emotions like sadness (11 times), regret (6 times), guilt (4 times).

Over a dozen people reported psychological discomfort associated with the fact that their surgery was "unofficial", with the need to go abroad, with a sense of insufficient access to information or medical care.

In 89 cases it was declared that if it was possible to turn back time, the decision to terminate pregnancy would be the same, three people replied that they would have made a different decision (one most likely by mistake - this is indicated by her other answers), while seven people chose the answer "I don't know ". In the statements of two people who would like to turn back time and choose to carry the pregnancy to term, the same thing appeared - that pregnancy could be their only chance for motherhood. In the situation of one of these people, many factors contributed to the fact that abortion was a very difficult experience for her. This woman became pregnant in her early twenties, she met with negative reactions to pregnancy from her parents, she was urged to have an abortion, she did not receive support, she felt the need to hide the procedure, and later she could not get the wanted pregnancy (according to the doctor, infertility is not the result of abortion). For the second regretting woman, abortion was a difficult and unpleasant experience, accompanied by uncertainty. This person had previously suffered from depression.

In the stories of these two people there are factors that, according to the American Psychological Association, increase the likelihood of stronger negative emotional

responses after abortion - such as previous mental health problems, the need for discretion, and being persuaded to abortion. Similar factors appear in the statements of people who declared that they do not know if they could turn back time, they would make the same decision. In addition to those already mentioned, they are: high religiousness, negative reaction to the pregnancy of people around, lack of support. For some people, abortion was a difficult experience, although they don't regret it. One of the respondents described that for some time after the surgery she felt emotional havoc. Another said that she did not like to think about her decision and it hurts her that she had to make it. Three other people described abortion as a difficult decision, and another two as a hard mental experience/experience that caused sadness. None of these people would like to undo their decision. Difficult emotions were associated with among others cases of termination of wanted pregnancies for medical reason.

For some respondents, termination of pregnancy was a good experience. Nine people reported that abortion was for them an experience strengthening the sense of control over their body and life. Twenty-six people, describing the importance of abortion for their lives, indicated that thanks to termination of pregnancy they realized their plans and regained the possibilities of completing education, developing a professional career, leaving a violent partner. Another nine people wrote that abortion was important for their lives because it allowed them to avoid unwanted parenthood. Five people described abortion as "release, liberation," another five said abortion "saved their lives." Several people have described abortion as a positive, empowering experience. One person indicated that in an unwanted pregnancy, she felt "delighted that abortion exists." Twenty statements made such expressions as "it was a good decision", "the best decision I could make", "one of my better decisions".

One of the more frequently appearing signs of stigmatizing abortion is that those who terminate pregnancy conceal their experience, fearing judgment from other people. Five of the respondents did not tell anyone about their abortion, the next six told some people around them only after the surgery. Fifty people indicated that they felt that they could not talk about their abortion with a person or people (it is often about some family members or friends). The reasons for this were generally a high degree of religiosity of potential interlocutors or anticipated negative reactions, rejection, lack of understanding, and stigmatization.

Perhaps the strategy of selectively telling about your experiences is somewhat effective, because 56 respondents have not encountered negative reactions to talking about their abortion. Eighteen people have encountered such reactions, most often from family or friends, but also medical staff (in the case of abortion for medical reasons).

In 55 cases, the respondents rated the support received from other people in an abortion situation as good or very good. Fifteen people rated it badly. In a few cases, this was ambiguous - support was only satisfactory from some people. Nine people indicated that other people could not support them because they did not know about abortion. Eight people declared that they did not need support.

Support methods that were most often indicated were conversations (mentioned 62 times), help in organizing pills/procedure (35 times), financial support (32 times) and

providing information (15 times). The presence, help at home, care, hugging, lack of judgment and amenities at work (temporary change of working mode from standing to sitting) were also mentioned.

As people who provide support in the event of termination of pregnancy, the most frequently mentioned one was partner (in 48 cases), close friend (45 cases), other friends (17 times), parents (18 times), siblings (10 times). Eight people indicated that they received support from other family members, and four from doctors. A psychologist, psychotherapist and employer were also mentioned. Twenty-one respondents said that they did not receive support from anyone, some of them declared that they did not need or seek such support.

Thirty-four respondents asked if they thought people around them could change their mind about abortion or its legality, if they knew they had terminated the pregnancy, they answered yes. Talking about your experience, in the opinion of these people, makes or could make the support for the legality of abortion greater. Other people will see that their friends or family members terminate pregancy and the lack of access to legal abortion is a problem more commonly than they thought. This could dispel various myths about abortion. Twenty people said that knowledge of their experience would not affect the views of other people, with two people indicating that their family and friends already have liberal views on abortion. Fifteen people answered "I don't know."

Some respondents said that they were talking about their abortion in order to fight stigmatization, inform others about possible options, and support other people in this experience.

## DISCUSSION

The most frequently indicated reasons for termination of pregnancy suggest that these were abortions due to unwillingness to have a child or for socio-economic reasons. Only in 6 cases abortions were carried out for the reasons mentioned in the anti-abortion act, most of them were "illegal" abortions, in any case in accordance with applicable regulations in force in Poland. (Among the abortion experiences examined, 14–17 of them took place before the introduction of the anti-abortion law, and some of those who completed the questionnaire terminated their pregnancy abroad in countries where more liberal regulations apply). Therefore, in the surveyed group, the vast majority of respondents performed abortions for reasons in which Polish law did not provide for legal surgery (even if abortion did not take place in Poland during the ban). This suggests that the anti-abortion law is not being observed.

Abortion in public discourse in Poland is often presented in a stigmatizing way - in terms of evil and trauma, it is less often treated as an expression of self-determination, deciding about your body and life by a pregnant person. The social discourse rarely talks about the positive effects that termination of unwanted pregnancy can have. Some respondents present a different way of talking about abortion - as a good and strengthening experience. For some of the respondents, termination of pregnancy was a liberating experience, a source of a sense of strength and control over their

lives. Many people indicated that termination of pregnancy allowed them to realize their life plans and regain their possibilities. In public discourse, where abortion is generally referred to as a difficult or traumatic experience, this way of thinking is hard to imagine. At the same time, for some of the respondents, abortion was indeed a difficult experience, in few cases regretted.

Although people who terminate pregnancies are often portrayed as victims of circumstances who agree to abortion rather than self-determined people who actively seek it, it turns out that most respondents were very convinced about their decision. Some of the respondents also reported that unwanted pregnancy was a difficult experience for them and/or that they were impatiently waiting for the procedure.

One of the most effective ways to fight abortion stigma  it to create space for people who have had this procedure to tell their stories. The feeling of the need to maintain discretion, resulting from the fear of being judged or in some cases criminal penalties (threatening people helping in illegal abortions), causes that some people do not realize that they know people who terminated pregnancy. This can make them think that the problem of unwanted pregnancies and how to terminate them is marginal, while in fact at least one in four women in Poland has had an abortion.

The research has limitations. First of all, the subjects belong to a specific group. Apart from belonging to pro-choice groups, as it turns out, most respondents have a university degree and described themselves as non-religious. It would be very desirable to repeat similar studies on the general population of people with experience of abortion in Poland or to compare them with the results from another specific group - people advocating a ban on abortion. It would be also desirable to reach more people. The research may be the starting point for subsequent surveys.

It is an interesting question whether the test results would be similar if they were carried out outside a specific group. It is possible that in this group, people who terminated pregnancy experience a lower degree of stigma than non-members in pro-choice groups, and this affects their emotional way of experiencing abortion. More than a half of women in the survey regard their decision of abortion positive while they know it is sometimes stigmatized in their society. These people participate in many other social environments and may experience stigmatization there - as happened in the case of some respondents. Most of the respondents did not share their experience with some people, generally for fear of judgment and stigmatization. There is need for more extended survey but in this survey we can conclude that decriminalization on the legislative sphere and destigmatization on the ideological sphere are expected to remove the negative recognition and emotion around abortion from Polish society.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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# THE DIALECTICS OF ENGLISH DOMINANCE

## ODROWĄŻ-COATES, ANNA. 2019. *SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AND SOFT POWER OF LANGUAGE. THE DELUGE OF ENGLISH IN PO-LAND AND PORTUGAL.* LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS (ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD), ISBN: 978-1-4985-7633-8, 188 PP. (HARDBACK)

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The Hegemony of English across the world cannot be overstated (Macedo, Dendrinos & Gounari 2016). More and more nations are encouraging, if not mandating through compulsory education requirements, that their citizens learn English (Xue & Zuo 2013). This demand for English is rising even among countries who have few native speakers of English. Importantly, making any language learning a national project carries a critical message about that language and its power. Robert Philipson (2011) points out that this growing demand and compulsory establishment of English (through schooling) can be nothing less than linguistic imperialism, with the World Bank re-introducing the historical colonial order. Nations are clamoring to learn English as quickly as possible in the hopes that doing so will boost their competitive edge on the global market (McCormick 2013). Indeed, there is evidence that English proficiency elevates the status and power of specific nations and provides individuals greater access to jobs and resources, but as Anna Odrowaz-Coates shows, in the case of Portugal and Poland, this will not happen without a significant cost to the national identity and to the identities of the people and their families and communities.

What Odrowaz-Coates argues and evidences with empirical data is that language is not a neutral system of communication but rather one that carries with it particular sociohistorical, economic, and political agendas that undoubtedly impact people's

lives in profound material and ideological ways. Odrowaz-Coates' analysis of "soft power" recognizes the subtle but insidious ways in which English (and its worldviews) becomes normalized as a status factor that not only creates further material inequities in society, but that also undermines the primary languages and cultures of its peoples.

This is a stunningly brilliant book that challenges the global hegemony of English and US imperialism through the very voices of the people most affected. This alone, makes it a superb read. However, with both philosophical and theoretical rigor as well as robust empirical research, Anna Odrowaz-Coates brilliantly pushes our thinking further to develop a reflexive, feminist praxis of English foreign language policy – one that recognizes the dialectical relationship between English learning and opportunity. While many of us challenge the global dominance of English and its imperialist agenda, there is no doubt that for many of us - English proficiency - has facilitated our roles within the academy. Here Odrowaz-Coates reminds us that while we work toward the long-term goal of justice and equity, where all languages and peoples are equally valued, people *today* need access to resources and to become more empowered within the contexts of their existing world – and this, like it or not, means learning English.

The book begins with a strong philosophical and theoretical foundation. Odrowaz-Coates draws on "soft power" and "positioning theory" as well as the specificity of institutional ethnography to hone in on the examination of language, which has not been previously developed and offers important insights that differentiate between obvious forms of power in discourse in ways that explain the subtleness by which discourses are internalized among those who are uncritically exposed to English. This interdisciplinary theoretical frame is one of the strongest features of this work, drawing from Foucault, Bourdieu, and decolonial and postcolonial theories to make a cogent argument about the ways in which learning English in Poland and Portugal simultaneously supports empowerment and imperialism. This is a very significant contribution, given that rarely do these fields come together even when they address similar problems. Furthermore, the application of these theories to language and discourse is certainly an important and unique contribution.

Until now, few studies have attempted to examine what this national process of English development looks like or how it impacts the people whose languages and traditions may be far removed from those that they are being required to adopt. In the findings chapters, Odrowaz-Coates takes us into the contexts of Portugal and Poland to help us understand, through real life examples, how learning English for some working people can have both important material improvements while at the same time challenging their ways of life and their relations to nation, family, and self.

The voices of participants are a central feature of why this work is so unique. Rarely do we find books of this theoretical rigor that also bring the concrete reality of people's lives into focus. Here, we are privy to the values and beliefs of people from Poland and Portugal and to the gendered realities and expectations that come with language shifts. With stunning precision, the author uses the participants' words to convey some of the most important issues related to learning and not learning English.

With a rigorous mixed methods approach couched within the umbrella of "institu-

tional ethnography" and the author's humbling reflexivity, we can feel secure in the trustworthiness of the study. The manuscript also has a highly cogent and fluid style, carefully building its arguments and supporting these with the empirical data collected. As the reader, I was unable to put the manuscript down, challenged to discover the way the author was connecting "soft power" with institutional discourse, captivated by the very honest and insightful comments by participants, and lured to continue reading to find the brilliant analysis that the author repeatedly provides.

Odrowaz-Coates begins with an introductory chapter that gives the reader a broad view of the book and piques our interest by dangling new ideas and meshing theoretical constructs. The next chapter titled, "Language positioning in Poland and in Portugal" focuses in on the history of language contact in Poland and Portugal, and demonstrates that language is not a mere tool of communication but a tool that can and often has been used to control and dominate over a citizenry. Coates traces how language policy shifts in accordance with who has governmental control and the political agendas they set. This chapter is filled with historical detail of the complex histories of Poland and Portugal, where language has been shaped by religion, colonization, migration, economic shifts, and even marriage, not only within nations but outside of it. The chapter documents both the endurance and flexibility of language as it comes into contact with other languages and the power that certain nations and their languages hold. It also documents how schools become spaces that support government entities to engage in their language wars. This is a fascinating and engrossing chapter.

The next few sections revolve around theory and develop a careful explanation of the theories that guide this work, connecting theories of soft power with positioning theory and discussing the ways that language discourses both reflect and create power and particular social positionings for speakers, communities, and nations. Drawing on the likes of Bourdieu, Boudon, Foucalt, and Fairclough, Odrowaz-Coates guides us to understand how these various works come together to explain that phenomena of language and power in the context of globalization. This chapter is a necessary read to understand what comes later – the analysis interwoven with the empirical data is very effective and illuminating.

The voices of the people who speak to us of their trials with learning English, with finding jobs, with figuring out who they are in the context of a growing English dominance and changing cultures and values is what follows. These are the most captivating sections, where people come to life and our critical challenge to the dominance of English is quickly confronted as we begin to hear and see the people that are in need and for whom English may be a safety net or hold the possibility of mobility. But equally evident in the words spoken is the loss of culture, world views, and even ways of being through increasing contact with English. The mythical narratives of opportunities in America (and therefore in English) begin to show their teeth as they eat away at local values in the hope of something better for themselves and their children. Yet, don't be fooled into thinking that the people are easily swayed, there is consciousness regarding the power of English and its manipulation. The people of Portugal and Poland are shown insightful, passionate, and agentic. For women, the "choice" of learn-

ing English may prove beneficial as they negotiate gender relations within the family.

Unlike too many other critical projects, Odrowaz-Coates conveys the ethical imperative to change the world by both challenging but also participating in the existing power structures. It recognizes the need to "play the game" in order to change it. Above all, this work demonstrates that language "choices" are not necessarily choices but institutionally derived programs of both inclusion and exclusion.

This is a crucially important and timely project given our globalized world and the significant influence that English and US imperialism are having on the world. The book does a great job in making the urgency of this clear by showing the growth of English dominance around the world and using Poland and Portugal as unique case studies, that nonetheless serve as examples of growing trends across the world. In this sense, this work is crucially important for scholars and practitioners in the fields of education, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, immigration studies, sociolinguistics and language studies, sociology and political science. The work is essential reading for public officials, politicians, and language policy makers. Critical scholars across these fields are certain to find this work immensely provocative. It is a must read for school administrators, teachers, community members, and families in Poland and Portugal, but also across the world where students are being encouraged, pushed, or even mandated to learn English.

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