Cultural Psychology of Education 6

Angela Uchoa Branco
Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira *Editors*

Alterity, Values, and Socialization

Human Development Within Educational Contexts

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Foreword

Relative Symmetries in Dialogical Relations: A Necessary Fiction

It is nice to be in a dialogue—when your perspective upon what the dialogue is about is safely in a dominant role, which is to be maintained. If it is not—you are likely to want to move it to such place. The classic example used by Ragnar Rommetveit ("Mr. Smith") illustrates such moves. At the manifest content level, the observation is clear—a certain "Mr. Smith" is mowing the grass in his garden on a Saturday morning. Yet this ongoing event acquires quite opposite meanings for a certain Mrs. Smith—the wife of Mr. Smith—who is getting telephone calls from her friends:

> A neighbour prying into the miserable marital relations of the Smiths may even tell us that he "sees" Mr. Smith AVOID THE COMPANY OF HIS WIFE. And this may indeed also be the way in which Mrs. Smith, left alone in the kitchen with the morning coffee in front of her, makes sense of what is going on.
>
> This, let us assume, is also the gist of what she is muttering to herself as she is sitting there, feeling angry at her husband and sorry for herself. We hear her say: "He is once more avoiding a confront…". At this moment her bitter voice is drowned by the sound of the telephone, and she picks up the receiver. It is her friend Betty who is calling, and Betty initiates her chat by asking "That lazy husband of yours, is he still in bed?" To which Mrs. Smith answers: "No",
>
> *Mr. Smith is WORKING this morning, he is mowing the lawn.*
>
> A short time afterwards Mrs. Smith receives another call, this time from Mr. Jones, who, she tacitly takes for granted, as usually when he calls, wants to find out whether Mr. Smith is free to go fishing with him. He asks: "Is your husband working this morning?". And Mrs. Smith answers "No",
>
> *Mr. Smith is NOT WORKING this morning, he is mowing the lawn.*
>
> Mrs. Smith is on both these occasions telling the truth, and in everyday ordinary English. (Rommetveit, 1992, p. 26)

This classic example of relativity of meanings is used widely in socio-cognitive language analyses to demonstrate how the meaning of the same event can cardinally

change over very short time frame, depending on the assumptions of the intentions of the other by the person who is making the meanings. Yet it can also be seen as an example of negotiation of the position of the self in dialogical relations. Mrs. Smith's dialogical power position—that of knower about Mr. Smith and his current activity—is *maintained as the same* ["I know and I tell you X (or non-X)"] despite the use of diametrically opposite meanings in the two conversations. Fluctuations of meanings can occur in rapid sequence without changing the dialogical power relations. Actual possibilities—the true relativity of a dialogue—need to be distinguished from the façade of such relativity in the manifest event.

Efforts to produce a change into an ongoing dialogical relation may need forms of dramatization to accomplish that. Children learn to dramatize their meaningful quests in social settings. Fatima Mernissi remembers from her Moroccan childhood how the children handled the negotiation of the relative nonsymmetry in their dialogues at home:

> We children were not usually allowed to go to the movies either, but we staged our own revolts, just like the women, and sometimes were finally granted permission. When I say "we," I mean Samir really, for I had a problem with screaming at grownups and showing my displeasure by jumping up and down like he did, or better still, rolling on the floor and kicking bystanders. Staging sedition was a tricky business and never stopped being so for me, if only because of Mother's strange attitude. Often she encouraged me to rebel, and kept repeating that relying on Samir to be aggressive for the both of us would not do. But whenever I threw myself on the floor and started screaming at her, she would stop me on the spot. "*I did not say you ought to rebel against me! You should rebel against all the others, but you still have to obey your mother. Otherwise, it would lead to chaos. And in any case, you should not rebel stupidly. You ought to carefully consider the situation, and analyze everything. Rebel when you know there is some chance you may win.*" After that, I spent much energy analyzing my chances to win whenever it became evident that these people were taking advantage of me, but even today, almost a half-century later, the answers I come up with are always the same: inconclusive. (Mernissi, 1994, p. 117 added italics)

Dramatization entails creating an attention catching focal point in the given dialogical context. Dialogues are filled with dramas—from the temper-tantrum of a toddler in the middle of a supermarket to the daily declarations of loyalty to the country—or from watching an opera in the theater to joining the theater of war as an enthusiastic soldier. Relativity of the dialogical positioning is in the service of some kind of monologically "fixed" knowledge or power position.

Our educational practices have encoded the relativity of dialogical positions into their "toolbox". The real educational practice includes the combination of both of these conditions—persons in dialogue are structurally unequal partners (adult > child:; teacher > learner) who in the process of the teaching<>learning encounter exchange roles in a dynamic sequence (Maciel, Branco, & Valsiner, 2004). Relativity of dialogue is first of all the readiness to alter one's positions with intentionality of changing something in the relations. The teacher pretends not to understand giving the leadership role in the teaching<>learning process to the inexperienced learner. The latter tries, and tries again, until the problem is solved by the learner or by the teacher regaining the dominant role in the process. Dialogues

are a form of dance of constant negotiation of the knower roles, and educators who master the dynamics of that dance in ways that look mutually equal are the most skillful leaders of the education process.

A move from absolute to relative symmetries notion for dialogical relations is the central feature of this volume and needs further theoretical elaboration. This can be accomplished via temporally emerging asymmetries or through intransitive structural setups. In this foreword, I briefly outline both options that exist in human educational practices worldwide.

Jaan Valsiner

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Preface of the Series Editor

Educating for What?

In Searching for New Coordinates for the Twenty-First Century Education

This book *Alterity, Values, and Socialization: Human Development Within Educational Contexts* written by Angela Uchoa Branco and Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira witnesses the authors' commitment to unfold the complex topic of values in human development and educational practices. The volume covers a wide range of issues (from inclusion, to creativity, to migration, etc.) related to the management of education with respect to values and alterity in a multicultural society. It critically combines the dialogical approach in educational contexts with the sociogenesis of the human values in a cultural psychological perspective. Branco and Oliveira, in fact, propose an innovative look at the value developmental processes that account for the complexity of ontogenesis in highly culturally structured social setting as the school systems.

This book nicely complements the previous one in the Books series edited by Meijers and Hermans (2017) that is the first book in which the Dialogical Self Theory is applied to the field of education. More specifically, *Alterity, Values, and Socialization: Human Development Within Educational Contexts* focuses on the idea that values at school cannot be produced by authority but only by dialogue. It provides the readers with the theoretically and empirically foundations for understanding values in education as the products of collective activity, rather than emanating from abstract universals.

While scholars in the field of developmental and educational psychology generally agree upon the relevance of the values in the ontogenesis of the human species, this topic is often disregarded in the current academic debate or—if considered—it has been treated from a cross-cultural perspective that overlooks the endogenous process of value education and the local specificities. The

cross-cultural value approach, indeed, focuses on inter-individual differences between contexts using culture as an independent variable. From this perspective, values are considered as given entities or fixed categories that can be studied or—even worse—"extracted" from individuals (Branco & Valsiner, 2012). This volume, instead, shows the process of emergence and dialogical construction of values and alterity *in interaction*.

Why the value's issue went through such a kind of scientific underestimation? Probably because it calls for a definition of the horizon of human development and urges an answer to the question of "What we are educating for?"

As Tateo pointed out:

> Educational institutions have the specific purpose of instantiating the system of values of a given cultural community by creating an environment that sets the acceptable range of developmental pathways, including the age steps and the transition processes that the individual can follow to become a legitimated member of the community. (2015, p. 32)

Thus, the never solved educational dilemma is the tension between guiding and following the human development.

This becomes of terrific importance if we consider the global impact of the outcome hierarchies created by PISA that have pushed many school systems into being tightly focused and regulated. The impact of testing systems resulted in teaching becoming more focused on externally determined, specific success criteria. The foundations for teaching and learning become distorted and driven by a deterministic output regulated system, in detriment of the full development of children's lives and learning.

By observing the current situation of educational contexts and the variety of social settings in which life unfolds, I notice the coexistence of antagonist tendencies: inclusion of larger sections of students, who were once excluded from education for historic reasons AND the pressure on competitiveness, productivity, and leadership competences; the development of student's potentialities AND the standard homogenized teaching in schools; the openness toward "the different others" (as in the case of immigrants) as an opportunity for enriching people's experience AND the fear that the local culture is threatened by this Alterity.

Any discourse about values in human development and educational practices evokes, then, the *phantasm* of who is the "Men" of the future, what kind of human being we are promoting.

Also, the value's issue dramatically shows the poorness of the scientific reductionism which permeates the contemporary academic world, almost incapable of a holistic perspective on the human being and his psychological functioning (Valsiner, Marsico, Chaudhary, Sato & Dazzani, 2016) which, instead, is the very core of the cultural psychology perspective.

After all, as Branco and Valsiner highlighted:

> Values *are* culture, not *of* culture […]. They guide our conduct, yet are ephemeral when we try to locate them. They are everywhere in human lives, and by being there, they are nowhere to be found (2012, p. xiii).

Educational contexts are the human arena for starting to detect *values in action*, how they frame our cultural ecology and our life development. Branco and Oliveira will gently guide the readers in exploring values, alterity, dialogicality and culture as possible coordinates for a renewed culture of education in the twenty first century.

Aalborg, Denmark
September 2017

Giuseppina Marsico

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Contents

1 Chronotopic Analysis of Values in Critical Ontological Dialogic Pedagogy 1
Eugene Matusov

2 Values, Education and Human Development: The Major Role of Social Interactions' Quality Within Classroom Cultural Contexts 31
Angela Uchoa Branco

3 Distributed and Participatory Creativity as a Form of Cultural Empowerment: The Role of Alterity, Difference and Collaboration 51
Vlad P. Glăveanu and Edward P. Clapp

4 Individual Achievement and Social Progress: Mending the Broken Alliance Between School and the Community in India 65
Nandita Chaudhary, Shraddha Kapoor and Bhavna Negi

5 Identity and Belonging in Third Culture Kids: Alterity and Values in Focus 87
Esther Sofie Fanøe and Giuseppina Marsico

6 Ethics and Alterity: The Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education 103
Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira and Ana Cláudia Rodrigues Fernandes

7 Social Dynamics and Students' Developmental Perspectives Within a School Located in a Poor Urban Community in Brasilia 131
Angela Uchoa Branco and Theresa Raquel Borges de Miranda

8 Intersubjectivity in Action: Negotiations of Self, Other, and Knowledge in Students' Talk 149
Sandra Ferraz C. D. Freire

9 Diversity, Social Identities, and Alterity: Deconstructing Prejudices in School 167
Ana Flávia do Amaral Madureira and Ana Luiza Cruz Sá Barreto

10 Continuity and Discontinuities in the Self-System: A Values-Based Idiographic Analysis of Gender Positionings 191
Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira, Davi Contente Toledo and Cláudio Márcio Araújo

11 Encouraging Dialogical Practices to Mediate Prosocial Values in Educational Contexts 209
Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira and Angela Uchoa Branco

Index 217

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Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira is Professor at the Department of Developmental and School Psychology and at the graduate program Processes of Human Development and Health at the University of Brasília. She coordinates the Laboratory of Cultural Psychology (LABMIS/University of Brasilia) and the Dialogical Psychology working group at the National Association of Psychological Research-ANPEPP. She also leads GAIA research group, concerned about youth development in conditions of poverty and social vulnerability, and the development of critical methodologies for professionals working in Justice and Social Assistance institutional contexts. She coedited with Angela Branco the book *Diversidade e Cultura da Paz na escola: uma abordagem sociocultural* in 2012, and, recently, edited *AAdolescência, direitos humanos e socioeducação: perspectivas interdisciplinares* (in press). She has been a consultant to governmental projects on social policies and human rights, especially those aiming at benefiting the developmental perspectives of adolescents in conflict with the law.

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Introduction

The Role of Alterity and Social Values in Promoting Human Development Within Educational Contexts

The major goal of this book consists of bringing to the attention of those in charge of children, adolescent, and young adult education the central role of dialogical practices between self and alterity within educational contexts. The notion of dialogue presupposes the acknowledgment of the other—alterity—as a fundamental ground for human development. In contexts such as educational settings, though, this "other" needs to be necessarily qualified as another human being whose active participation in sociocultural and pedagogical practices is valued and welcome. In other words, traditional educational practices, characterized by activities exclusively guided by adults with the intent of transmitting specific knowledge and skills to the students do not qualify as dialogical practices.

In contemporary societies, schools represent a key scenario for human development and the main socialization context for young individuals, after their families. In schools, both bidirectional processes of cultural transmission and the reconstruction of social values by new generations take place. Considered as subsystems within the broad societal system, schools are characterized by constant dialogical transactions that aim at educating their students. However, most of these transactions are neither smooth nor democratic, but, instead, are hierarchical and conflictive, reproducing inequalities and power struggles also found in other social settings.

The sort of dialogue we propose here recognizes the significance and value of the contributions of both professionals *and* students. Certainly, to revert and reconstruct traditionally vertical and unidirectional practices, in which adults exert unlimited power over students, will entail a substantial effort to bring teachers–students relations to a level of relative symmetry. This symmetry is evidently relative because teachers will—or should—always position themselves in their inherent professional role of guiding students' learning and development. After all, this guidance responsibility consists of their job description. According to a

dialogical perspective, everybody involved in teaching-learning experiences are active human beings, and are legitimate partners in the educational process. Therefore, the attempt to reconstruct teacher–students relations is the only way to grant the necessary trust and respect that must characterize any educational dialogical practices. If educators understand, believe in, and put into practice their disposition to establish and develop relationships with students marked by a deep trust and a sincere desire to better communicate with them, we will witness a huge difference—toward a coconstructive direction—in the quality of the communication and metacommunication among the whole group.

Following the assertions provided above, it is possible to summarize our aim with this book by saying that improving the quality of human interactions and communication within educational contexts—something apparently simple to achieve—will effectively promote constructive learning and human development. All contributors to this book, no matter where they come from, share a dialogical and cultural psychological approach. This means that we share a perspective that emphasizes the operation of cultural canalization processes, but also share a perspective according to which each individual is an active, constructive agent of her/his own development.

Along this volume, we will particularly highlight the role of alterity in human development as a whole, and its essential impact upon the development of human values, social motivation, and moral positioning, taking into account the multiple aspects and contexts of our contemporary societies. To achieve this goal as organizers of the book, we invited academic experts who have carried out research projects and investigated issues concerning the book's topics in different parts of the world.

The authors who contributed to this volume are experienced theorists and researchers, and they provide the reader with a fresh understanding on the topics, contextualizing their investigations and ideas in different educational institutions, and taking into account factors operating at macro, meso, and microsocial levels. All contributions aim at analyzing and discussing various aspects and dimensions of human development with the focus upon the dynamics between self and other from a dialogical and developmental perspective. Therefore, the scope of their analysis is broad and include culture, socialization processes, pedagogical practices, values, inclusion, ethics, and morality.

One particular motivation to organize and bring this book to publication derives from the need to investigate the ontogenesis of values—a relatively rare topic in the literature concerning psychology and educational contexts. How do values emerge, develop, or are internalized? What sort of values impregnate most school contexts? How those specific value systems influence the development of different groups in schools? How can we provide a critical appraisal of the historically and culturally organized structures and semiospheres that characterize educational institutions? The social institutions dealt with in the present book are settings organized to promote the education of children and young people, and the questions elaborated above are absolutely pertinent to all levels of the educational system, from childcare centers to universities.

Another important goal we have in mind with this volume is to provide theoretical, methodological, and practical ideas and tools capable of unveiling what happens within educational contexts that may impact over the coconstruction of values of peace, justice, and cooperation among students and teachers, instead of values of individualism, violence, and competition often found in contemporary societies. Though acknowledging the historical reproduction of social inequalities by traditionally structured educational contexts, we will explore, analyze, and suggest ways to approach some of the gaps and contradictions of the educational system in different cultures, in order to promote their actual transformation.

We believe that school professionals should be engaged into meeting the developmental needs of children, adolescents, and youth to achieve broader educational goals, and not only to foster their students' intellectual capacities. In other words, those in charge of educational institutions need to recognize the main role played by culturally structured contexts in favoring individuals' self-development, autonomy, reflexivity, creativity, and a deep sense of social responsibility. To achieve this goal, institutions should plan their activities beyond granting their students the mere acquisition of useful knowledge, skills, and abilities to, later, successfully engage in professional activities. In other words, educational institutions should also fulfill their mission of cultivating ethical, critical, autonomous and cooperative human beings.

The chapter by Eugene Matusov elaborates, along the lines the author has been working for years, on the status or meaning of promoting values in educational institutions. His arguments build on the need to situate the issue within the context of a dialogical pedagogy, so that students have the opportunity to analyze and evaluate the issue of values through intensive discussions and group reflections upon the meanings of specific values *vis-à-vis* one another.

Next, Angela Branco approaches the role played by communication and metacommunication processes along classroom social interactions. She highlights the effects of the affective quality of relationships upon students' motivation, learning, and moral development, as she analyzes topics such as cultural canalization, individual agency, and internalization processes.

Vlad Glaveanu and Edward Clapp bring to our attention the role of alterity and collaboration in the experience of creativity within educational contexts. They explain how a new approach to creative phenomena—so much valued by experts in education and psychology—now conceptualized as distributed and participatory actions, may engender cultural empowerment among students.

Nandita Chaudhary, Shraddha Kapoor, and Bhavna Negi then explain important historical and cultural aspects of educational institutions in India, as the country struggles with challenges stemming from tensions between native and colonial educational policies, pedagogical practices, and curriculum guidelines.

Esther Fanøe and Giuseppina Marsico, in their chapter, analyze and discuss topics related to identity construction and sense of belonging among migrant children attending to school in cultures different from their own (the TCK, or Third Culture Kids). This is a contemporary and relevant topic, due to high levels of

migration in the present days, which leave children under the stress to deal with—and feel like they have to belong—to different cultures characterized by conflicting values and rules.

The existence and operation of social prejudices within educational institutions consist, in a way, of a topic addressed by all chapters in this book. The next chapters, though, particularly deal with social prejudices. Maria Cláudia Lopes de Oliveira and Ana Cláudia Fernandes address the relations between ethics and alterity, as they present arguments for the inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs in higher education in Brazil and Portugal. They build their claims while discussing data from a qualitative research, which shows that universities are, still, very far from providing resources to allow people with diverse characteristics and needs to fulfill their rights concerning equal educational opportunities as members of a just and democratic society.

In Angela Branco and Theresa Miranda's chapter, we find a discussion on the issue of violence within school's context. In their study, they analyze conceptual aspects of the construct of violence and investigate what happens within a school situated in a poor urban area close to Brazil's capital. From a cultural psychology perspective, they analyze the data, showing how students experience serious tensions, prejudices related from their cultural background and also discuss how a culture of violence may constrain students' future perspectives. Notwithstanding, and despite the school's shortcomings, the authors provides suggestions on how to implement changes in order to help schools better fulfill their promise to promote students' development.

The concept intersubjectivity is investigated in Sandra Freire's chapter. The author theoretically presents and discuss the issue as she examines empirical data from a study carried out with students attending to a public school in Brasilia. She elaborates on the central role played by social negotiations in dialogical school practices, concerning not only self and other, but also negotiations between different self-positionings, as students talk about their own feelings, ideas, beliefs, and experiences.

The chapter by Ana Flávia Madureira and Ana Luiza Barreto elaborates on assumptions and evidences regarding the longstanding existence of prejudices and discriminations against those who do not correspond to cultural and normative identity social expectations. In their study on how issues such as gender and sexual orientations are approached within a school context, they argue for the significant potential to work together with students. This could be done, they allege, by promoting social pedagogical activities where teacher and students are able to open up their ideas and experiences while discussing relevant subjects lying at the basis of democratic values and cultural practices that favor diversity inclusion.

In line with the topic concerning gender identity and educational contexts, the chapter by Maria Cláudia Lopes de Oliveira, Davi Toledo, and Cláudio Araujo investigates discontinuities and continuities in gender development. They analyze the role played by values and prejudices found in schools and in religious cultural settings, and how they may block, canalize, namely, participate of adolescent developmental trajectories. They explore the empirical data provided by a case

study of an adolescent with gender dysphoria who had dropped out school, and analyze semiotic complexes related to his sense of self-continuity/discontinuity.

The book ends with reflections by the editors on possible future perspectives for further studies. They also underline the challenges of educational practices to deal with issues of values and alterity, which consist of promising venues to promote the development of human beings, so they can construct—and become citizens of—democratic societies.

Along the book, the reader will find three major orientations. The first elaborates on the need for educational contexts to consider their own responsibilities regarding the development of the socio-moral dimension of human *psyche*. We critically discuss concepts and theories relevant to the topic, and argue that its investigation still lags behind *vis-à-vis* the need to understand the topic. We claim for—and demonstrate—how initiatives along this direction can be productive, particularly from a cultural psychological perspective, providing parents, teachers and the general public with useful knowledge, thus contributing to theoretical advances concerning human development.

The second orientation involves the presentation and analysis of empirical studies that provide evidence on the scientific and practical need to better explore and understand the ontogenesis of values, self, and identity as well as the development of ethics and social responsibility, at both individual and institutional levels. If human beings hold expectations of living together in peace, fostering cooperation, reciprocity, and basic moral principles, people must face the challenge of bringing the values issue into our everyday life within educational environments. This can be done through the promotion of reflexivity, dialogical pedagogy, and democratic negotiations.

The last orientation consists of inviting the reader to reflect upon the issues discussed in the chapters in order to elaborate further on theoretical aspects of the topics therein addressed, what can take place at different levels of analysis, namely, the micro, meso, and macro levels. Moreover, the book intends to propose some alternatives to facilitate the development of dialogical practices and the improvement of educational contexts and institutions in terms of accomplishing their social and developmental goals. We believe that such improvements can follow intensive, critical and democratic negotiations between those particularly engaged and interested in the coconstruction of a better world.

Angela Uchoa Branco
Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira

Chapter 1
Chronotopic Analysis of Values in Critical Ontological Dialogic Pedagogy

Eugene Matusov

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen my discussion of the role of values in critical dialogic pedagogy that I started in my article with Jay Lemke (Matusov & Lemke, 2015).[1] In that past article, I considered two common opposite approaches to "teaching values" in education. The first common approach argues for active socializing students in "good values" such as honesty, industry, patriotism, voluntarism, social justice, democracy, nationalism, collaboration, empathy, and so on. In contrast, the second common approach argues for restraining education from teaching any values by teaching only facts, tools, laws, and practices to let students make their own value-based decisions, informed by education, later on. In my 2015 article, I both appreciated truths in each of the common approaches and criticized them for being both impossible and undesirable. Let me briefly summarize my findings.

In the first approach of "teaching good values," I appreciated the ubiquity and essence of values in defining any alive organism. What makes any organism alive is the presence of simple values, like biases of attraction, repellence, and neutrality to environmental clues. This fact makes any human endeavor, including education, unavoidably value-driven. Any educational practice is value-loaded. It unavoidably throws its participants to socialize in values of this practice. On the other hand, I argued in my 2015 paper that setting the goal of education as students' socialization in "good values," selected by the society, is highly problematic. To summarize my expensive argumentation, the goodness of value is rooted not in its content (e.g., such values as honesty, social justice, and patriotism) but in a participant's authorial and responsible judgment of what goodness means in a particular context and for

[1]In that 2015 article, Jay and I wrote separate parts. Here, I will refer only to my part when I refer to "my article" or "this article".

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whom. For example, during the WWII, an honest, truthful, answer to a Nazi German officer about where Jews were hiding might arguably be dishonest, dishonorable, cowardly, or simply stupid. Thus, I argue that the goal of education should become not instilling "good values" in students but engaging students in critical evaluations of the goodness of values in context.

In the second approach of not teaching values, I appreciated the approach's emphasis on and respect for students' own authorial judgment, informed by education. Students' informed authorial agency as a goal of education is very attractive, although is insufficient, as I argued in my 2015 paper. Facts, tools, practices, and laws—the primary curriculum in this approach—are also unavoidably value-loaded. For example, a mathematical fact of 2 + 2 = 4 involves hidden value assumptions about the nature of added entities and their relations (e.g., two friends plus two friends are not necessary four friends). Without revealing and critical analysis of these hidden values behind particular facts and educational practices to and by the students, the hidden values are smuggled—arguably they are taught even more effectively than in the first approach because they are invisible for the students. This defeats the overall educational goal of the second approach to promote informed authorial agency and judgment in the students.

In my current chapter, I argue that critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is one that tries to embrace values as omnipresent, necessary and welcomed in education while focusing on critical deconstruction of them. I defined the goal of critical ontological dialogic education as "a leisurely pursuit of critical examination of the self, the life, and the world," including education itself (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015a). Revealing values, bringing them in a contact with alternative values, testing values, and deconstruction of values in a public dialogue guided by a teacher and students becomes the primary goal of critical ontological dialogic pedagogy. Besides being the primary target of education as objects of critical deconstruction, values provide students' passionate and interested points of entries—ontological engagement (Matusov, 2009)—into emerging inquiries for the participants. They make the learning curriculum personally relevant for the students. Finally, emerging new values in the educational practice can contribute to building a community of learners that can transcend the immediate classroom.

At the same time, the relationship between values and their critical deconstruction in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is not without their own tensions. Critical ontological dialogic pedagogy demands a certain separation of participants from their own dear values, which can be rather problematic. Values define people and their relations with other people. Critical deconstruction of these values or even freedom of expression of values, that may be offensive to others, so core in the critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, may throw the participants in unwelcome existential crises and/or disrupt relationships with other people that can be very dear and relevant for the participants. Critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is inherently risky and unsafe. Also, deconstructing values of the pedagogical practice demanded by critical ontological dialogic pedagogy undermines the practice and a community of learners.

In this theoretical chapter, I analyze these relationships and tensions between critical ontological dialogic pedagogy and values using chronotopic analysis. Bakhtin introduced the notion of "chronotope" ("time-space" in Greek) for his literary analysis of novels to describe the unity of time and space where the novel events are tied and untied (Bakhtin, 1991). By now, several dialogic educationalists introduced chronotopic analysis in education (e.g., Bloome & Katz, 1997; Brown & Renshaw, 2006; Marjanovic-Shane, 2011, 2016; Matusov, 2009, 2015a; Matusov & Brobst, 2013; Rajala, Hilppö, Lipponen, & Kumpulainen, 2013; Renshaw, 2013; White, 2013).

Paraphrasing Bakhtin, educational chronotope is the unity of time, space, axiology, participants, and relationships where educational events are tied and untied. Similar to Bakhtin's chronotopic analysis of novels,[2] for the purpose of my analysis of values in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, I abstract here two "orthogonal" educational chronotopes: critical (didactic) and ontological. The educational critical (didactic[3]) chronotope is where critical deconstruction of values occurs for the participants. In the critical (didactic) chronotope, values are revealed, juxtaposed with alternative values, deconstructed, and tested. The educational ontological chronotope is where a community of learners and an educational practice, supporting value deconstruction, occur. The ontological chronotope promotes and affirms values that support the critical chronotope, critically deconstructing values. Below I consider each of the chronotopes and their ambivalent relationships. Finally, I will turn to investigations of values of education themselves since critical ontological dialogic education involves critical examination of education itself (and its values).

Critical Chronotope of Dialogic Pedagogy: Internally Persuasive Discourse

The critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy involves the unity of time and space where values are revealed, deconstructed, and tested against alternative values. For example, while considering issues of bullying—the topic voted by students to study in our class on that particular class meeting—my undergraduate education students, most of whom are future teachers, are often interested in how they can effectively punish and suppress bullies in their own future classes. Their initial approach to the

[2]Bakhtin (1991) also discussed two "orthogonal" chronotopes of a novel: one chronotope where the novel characters' events are tied and untied and the other chronotope where the author's events of writing the novel are tied and untied.

[3]I refer the educational critical chronotope as "didactic" because it belongs to curriculum and instruction—cf. "Where are we in our class?—We are in addition of fraction", i.e., in the fraction didactic space (Matusov, 2009).

issue seems to be instrumental. Their own values apparently remain hidden and unexamined for them. To dialogically provoke their focus on their underlining values in their approach to bullying, my colleagues and I introduce a survey "Bullying: Teacher's pedagogical desire" with the following prompt:

> In my future classroom, as a teacher, I want my future students to say, "I don't want to bully my peers because… [choose as many as applied].

A class of mine with 25 teacher education students (fall 2015) provided diverse justifications to their responses and ways to promote and guide their future students. Please notice from the Table 1.1 that a high majority of the future teachers' replies focused on their axiological rather than instrumental desires. According to the survey, my future students mostly wanted their future students to be prosocial because their genuine commitment to prosocial values (see items 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9) and not so much because effective punishments, fears, and/or rewards (see items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11). As one student wrote, "I picked the ideas that generally regard bullying as something morally wrong; students should not avoid bullying due to consequences [i.e., punishments], but should avoid because it is generally a morally wrong and unethical thing to do. The focus needs to be on students' characters and how they as citizens should act towards others."

In our class meeting on bullying, we also discussed the minority opinions, focusing on their instrumental desires to suppress bullying (items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, and 11). The discussion revealed these future teachers' care and responsibility for victims of bullying, general classroom atmosphere (i.e., safe learning environment), urgency to stop bullying immediately, and concerns about the teachers' institutional safety (i.e., their stand with the school administration and parents). This discussion led to revealing diverse roles and obligations of a teacher and their prioritization: teacher-as-educator, teacher-as-police(wo)man, teacher-as-peacekeeper, teacher-as-lawmaker, teacher-as-social-worker, and so on. Although we, as the class, agreed that the overall role of the teacher-as-educator should be prioritized, we came up with diverse scenarios when, for example, teacher-as-police(wo)man should take over teacher-as-educator.

One future teacher of mine came up with a paradoxical conclusion that having a bullying incident in her future classroom might be an important lesson for the entire class. I supported the development of this idea by showing a fragment video from a Japanese preschool classroom where Japanese educators apparently argued similar point that children's conflicts, fights, and even bullying have important educational potentials for teaching/learning moments (Tobin, Davidson, & Wu, 1989). Other students of mine disagreed, prioritizing children's well-being and safety. Some of my future students criticized the classroom management unilateralism common in many conventional US classrooms where teacher is considered to be "a monarch", solely responsible for solving all problems and making all decisions. They introduced ideas of engaging their future students in democratic self-governance and conflict resolution that we practiced in our class, including Town Hall meetings.

Table 1.1 Teachers' pedagogical desire for their students' reasons not to bully (*N* = 25)

Possible answers	% (*N* = 25)
1. "…I do not want to be punished by my teacher"	4
2. "…I want to get rewards from my teacher"	8
3. "…I want to be a good, kind, fair, respectful, friendly person"	100
4. "…I don't want to be treated by my peers as another bully"	76
5. "…I'm afraid my parents would learn about my bullying, shame, and/or punish me"	4
6. "…I know how handle conflicts with my peers without bullying"	100
7. "…we as a class not like that"	76
8. "…I'm afraid to violate the class' rules"	8
9. "…bullying is bad"	84
10. "…grown-up bullies may go to jail"	24
11. "…I'm afraid to be caught by the school authorities"	4

After you select your choices, please briefly explain/justify them. How do you, as a teacher, think you can support them? Develop teaching strategies in your group that will promote and support these choices. Write them down here

Also, I introduced my students to a teaching dilemma, I discussed in my previous classes: can and should teacher make all his/her students morally good as the goal of education. We discussed that responsibility for our own deeds implies a possibility of being evil for us. Without our free will, involving a choice to be evil, with or without excellent education, we cannot be human. Education is not about molding people in some preset form of goodness but critical consideration of what constitutes "good" in each particular case against all other possible values in a critical dialogue.

This critical dialogue helped to reveal, evaluate, and prioritize my students' diverse and conflicting concerns, fears, desires, and excitements. Rather than being colonized by these concerns, desires, and values, through our critical dialogue, the students became authors of their informed judgments.

The space of the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is the space of ideas, values, concerns, fears, excitements, and so on. This didactic space is not limited to our class participants' own idea but involved research (e.g., Tobin's), ideas from my past students, ideas that my students and I had heard and read before the class, and so on. This space does not have limits. It does not involve any physical space—rather it is space of meanings.

The time of the critical (didactic) chronotope involves revealing the students' own dear ideas, concerns, values, and excitements, evaluation and testing them against alternative ideas, and prioritization of these ideas overall and in particular situations. Again, the critical chronotopic time is semantic and not physical. There is no urgency to make a judgment. The students have "eternity" to consider emerging issues. Postponement of their authorial judgments is neither risky nor costly. Uncertainty, ambivalence, and indecisiveness are fine.

I argue that the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is "the internally persuasive discourse" (Bakhtin, 1991). Bakhtin (1991) coined the notion of "the internally persuasive discourse" (IPD) in his opposition to "the authoritative discourse" (AD) to contrast a discursive process of free persuasion versus a discourse process of imposition and coercion. There have been different interpretations among educationalists of what IPD exactly means. Specifically, what "internal" means in "the *internally* persuasive discourse"? "Internal" to what? Some educationalists assume that "internal" defines the individual, the psychological, and internal to the individual: the individual's cognition and psyche (see many examples of this interpretation here, in Ball & Freedman, 2004). In this interpretation, the most salient characteristic of IPD is its demands for and recognition of the *autonomous* individual. In contrast, my colleague and I (Matusov & von Duyke, 2010) argue that "internal" defines the discourse itself, *internal to the discourse*—both localized in time, space, and among the immediate participants and distributed in time, space, and among diverse remote participants. In our interpretation, the most salient characteristic of IPD is that it is *dialogically critical and critically dialogic*. This means that any critique (e.g., of values) should be embedded in a never-ending public, interpersonal and intrapersonal, and historical dialogue. Also, any of such dialogue has to challenge any opinions, positions, paradigms, worldviews, and values.

As Morson (2004) characterizes IPD similar to our interpretation, in IPD "Truth becomes dialogically tested and forever testable" (p. 319). Paraphrasing Morson's statement about truth in IPD for values, we can state, "In IPD, values become dialogically tested and forever testable."

Based on my pedagogical practice, I see three types of values in education:

(1) *discussed values*—educational and noneducational values that are brought for public forum among students and the teachers[4] (and beyond them),
(2) *espoused values*—values that the participants claim as their own ones aimed at guiding their practices and deeds inside and outside of education, and
(3) *in-action values*—values that emerge and actually guide their actions and deeds inside and outside of education.

I argue that all these three types of values have to be a part of IPD testing. Dialogic IPD testing of values both involves and extends "self-contained rationality" (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015b). Marjanovic-Shane and I define "self-contained rationality" as a self-contained discourse limited by the universal logic and the consideration of relations in one sphere at expense of all others. We contrast self-contained rationality with dialogic testing where "…what

[4]In my view, there is nothing wrong for a teacher to share her/his values with the students in dialogic pedagogy, IF the teacher does not aim at making the students to accept them. Teacher's values are just some particular values among other values worth of investigation.

has been tacitly naturalized in self-contained rationality of one paradigm becomes problematized, replied, and, thus, relativized ('ratio'—brought in the relationship with an alien other)…." (p. 214). Dialogic testing involves "diverse spheres of life, diverse opaque consciousnesses, and personal mediated or unmediated biases—rational or not—come together in a dramatic tension of critical deconstruction of values and power relations through dialogue. We believe that an unmediated personal bias—an initial personal emotional relationship of attraction, repulsion, disorientation, or indifference—is the basis of any rationality. However, we think that only public critical dialogue can justify rationality and point at its limits" (p. 214).

IPD and the Ontology of Values

In the critical chronotope of the internally persuasive discourse, deconstruction of values occurs through their critical examination. I argue that there is a rather ambivalent relationship between IPD and the ontological nature of values in the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy. On the one hand, IPD tries to capitalize on the ontological nature of values involving in deconstruction. First, IPD benefits from the students' ontological engagement in examination of particular values. For example, majority of my students URGENTLY WANTED to discuss the educational issues of bullying in our particular class meetings. In campaigning for this topic to their peers, they told that they experienced or observed bullying in the school past, they felt clueless how to address it, they worried about the school administration and parents, and it was a hot topic in the national media at the time (especially cyberbullying). Second, IPD benefits from the students' ontological tensions, worries, fears, excitements, and interests—both pre-existing IPD in class and emerging. This helps students generate their dear ideas, values, concerns, opinions, and so on. Third, IPD benefits from emerging ontological dramatic tensions when students agree and disagree with each other (as a particular dialogic teacher, I try to avoid sharing my own views unless asked by my students or it is needed as one of the alternatives to students' views[5]). For example, in the case above my students split on the issue of whether moderate bullying can be beneficial for education or not by revealing their own diverse values.

Fourth, IPD benefits from ontological testing values. For example, in one of my graduate classes, because of their paradigmatic differences, the students could not come to agreement of topic choices for next classes on a systematic basis. They decided to split the class on two and have two different topics to study at the same time. While experiencing this new practice, they realized that they needed both—nurture their own paradigmatic ideas and having critique of them from an

[5]In the latter case, I do not reveal that this view is mine.

unfriendly paradigm. This realization leads to more ontological testing ideas and values. In sum, the ontology makes IPD more personally and culturally relevant for the participants (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and provides important testing opportunities.

On the other hand, IPD tries to de-ontologize ideas, beliefs, concerns, and values making them objects of open-minded, fair, and even dispassionate deconstructive analysis. IPD welcomes all ideas and values for consideration—however, offensive, painful, humiliating, disgusting, degrading, ridiculous, and crazy they may feel for some of its participants. Where else these ideas and values can be publically discussed, if not in education?! The critical chronotope of IPD calls for a moratorium on the participants' responsibility, belief, commitment, and passion in deconstructing both objectionable and dear ideas. In IPD, participants are required to suspend their ethics and passion—i.e., their ontology (unless they become discursive ideas in themselves). In the critical chronotope, a person who expresses a hideous view for testing ideas and values must not be defined by this hideous view or be responsible for its negative (if not harmful) effect on other participants. In the IPD, ideas should be criticized, not people. In sum, the IPD tries to stay above the ontology.[6] Excessive ontology can suppress unpopular ideas and, thus, make IPD shallow or can create balkanization and, thus, collapse of IPD. In contrast, excessive de-ontologization of IPD can transform it into an intellectual game without much investments, passion, relevancy, and commitments by the participants.

IPD often creates pressures on the participants' ontology. Some ideas, concerns, values, and beliefs can be deeply rooted in a person and provide the foundation for the person's relationship with significant others. For example, in one of my classes for future teachers, we discussed issues of homosexuality in education in the mid of the 2000s. I raised a provocative question of whether the current political struggle of the LGBTQ+ community was similar or different from the civil rights struggle of Black people in the 1950s and 1960s in the US. I did not even finish asking my question for the class as a highly religious African American male student Tom (pseudonym) passionately replied from his seat, "They are nothing to do with each other!" I asked why. Tom replied that because while Black people could not choose their skin color—they were genetically born with it—gays chose their "sinful lifestyle." He quickly added that he was not a homophobe because he "loves a sinner but hates the sin." Tom was a very religious Christian. He often brought religious arguments, which were welcomed by the class. This was the second part of the semester and, by that time, Tom had developed a high reputation of an open-minded critical learner, a keen observer, and a passionate educator.

[6]Of course, the IPD practice—critical examination of the self, the life, and the world (and values)—is a value and ontology in itself promoted and imposed on the students by dialogically minded educators. The latter can be addressed by IPD by engaging in deconstruction of critical dialogic pedagogy itself and its values within the IPD (Matusov & Lemke, 2015).

The class had a teaching practicum at a local afterschool center serving working class African American children and Tom was very helpful for many of his peers connecting them to the kids. The class erupted after his last comment. Some people were talking to the class from their seats without raising hands, and some split in their small groups (sitting in clusters) and talking without much attempts to gain the class floor. I was patiently waiting for an emergence of this public floor. I could hear three major topics of their discussions: (1) whether nonheterosexuality is a lifestyle or inborn, (2) what constitutes homophobia (i.e., is Tom homophobe?), (3) how can Tom, such a nice, kind, and deep person they knew, be so closed minded and hurtful toward "the other" (i.e., the LGBTQ + community). While I was waiting for the class to regain a common focus, I was thinking how I was going to help them. However, my own focus was on a different issue—I heard hidden racism in Tom's statement that Black people cannot choose their skin color, which justifies their rights. Suddenly, a student who was sitting at the end of class yelled over all noise, "Eugene, what do you think on this issue? Help us!"

I told my students that as being born outside of the US, sometimes I had trouble understanding common ideas in the US. "For example," said I, "Tom and many other people justified the civil rights by the fact that Black people cannot change their skin color. Let us conduct an imaginary experiment. What if scientists invented a pill that changes skin color from black to white—can Blacks who refuse to take this pill be legitimately discriminated because it was their choice?" I turned to Tom and asked him if he would take this pill. He strongly replied, "No!" So, I continued, "So, now we, White people, could discriminate you because now, your race is your choice, your lifestyle, right?" I told him, "When I hear this nativist argument, 'We are born with this skin color that is why you—White people—should respect us,' I hear a hidden message, 'Black is bad but unfortunately, nothing can be done about that—it is not their fault so we have to grant them rights'." I said that for me justification of the civil rights should be in these rights being unalienated for all humans and not because something is inborn and nothing can be done about that. There was silence in the class for a while. Then Tom replied, "I disagree," but his tone showed that he was not sure. I was able to not ask him about what he disagreed or what the other students thought because the class was over.

In a few days, I got an email from Tom asking us to meet. We met at my office and he told me that he was thinking constantly about our last class's discussion and what I said and he admitted to himself that indeed the nativist justification of the civil rights—because nothing can be done with the born skin color—was indeed self-inflicted racism and, thus, self-hatred. When he realized that he was shocked that he did not notice that before. He went to his church and talked about our class to his preacher, who encouraged him to share it with the entire church.

Meanwhile, related discussions continued on our class online forum, in which Tom and some other students participated. One of such memorable discussions was about Christianity's promotion of racism (slavery) and homophobia. One student brought a link to the Brick Bible (http://www.thebricktestament.com/) and brought scenes on slavery (http://www.thebricktestament.com/the_law/slavery/ex21_02a.html) and homosexuality/homophobia (http://www.thebricktestament.com/the_law/homosexuality/lv18_22.html). She was an atheist and argued that modern Christians cherry-picked what they liked or disliked in the Bible. Some liberal Christian students replied that Jesus did not justify slavery or talk against homosexuality. Some (very few) religious students of mine sided with Tom, condemning "homosexual lifestyle" as being sinful, immoral, and "unnatural." Other online discussions involved nativism of diverse sexual orientations, supporting non-heterosexual students by teachers, homophobia discourse among kids at the after-school center where they had practicum, and high rates of suicide among LGBTQ+ youth.

Tom kept informing me about the development in his church. After he made his presentation there, the congregation split. Somehow, the issues of race and homosexuality kept interacting with each other there. Being very active in his nature, Tom set up a Bible group studying issues of slavery (interpreted by him as "racism") and homophobia in the Holy texts of the Old and New Testaments (I do not know how much our class online forum encourage him to do so). Later, almost a year after our class was over, I bumped into Tom on a campus, and he informed me that his church split on two as a result of the turmoil created by our class. He told me that he realized that his old church was racist and homophobic. Again being socially active, he organized support for Black gay men, welcoming them to the new church. He also reported about tensions that he experienced with parents, family, and some of his friends that he had to manage.

Bakhtin (1999) introduced the notion of "person-idea" that involved: (1) person's commitment to live the espoused idea, (2) person's taking responsibility of his/her idea in challenging dialogues with others, and (3) testing his/her ideas with his/her life.

> The idea *lives* not in one person's *isolated* individual consciousness—if it remains there only, it degenerates and dies. The idea begins to live, that is, to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, and to give birth to new ideas, only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationships with other ideas, with the ideas of *others*. Human thought becomes genuine thought, that is, an idea, only under conditions of living contact with another and alien thought, a thought embodied in someone else's voice, that is, in someone else's consciousness expressed in discourse. At that point of contact between voice and consciousnesses, the idea is born and lives.
>
> The idea—as it was *seen* by Dostoevsky the artist—is not a subjective individual psychological formation with "permanent resident rights" in a person's head; no, the idea is inter-individual and intersubjective—the realm of its existence is not individual

> consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses. The idea is a *live event*, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses (Bakhtin, 1999, pp. 87–88, italics is orginal).

> In Dostoevsky, the adventure plot is combined with the posing of profound and acute problems; and it is, in addition, placed wholly at the service of the idea. It places a person in extraordinary positions that expose and provoke him, and it connects him and makes him collide with other people under unusual and unexpected conditions precisely for the purpose of testing the idea and the man of the idea, that is, for testing the "man in man" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 105).

It is clear to me that Tom put himself on the adventure journey as a part of our IPD.

There is a temptation among dialogic educators to try to throw their students into these adventure journeys to test their dear ideas with their lives similar to what Tom experienced. I used to be among these educators (Matusov & Brobst, 2013). In one of the past graduate classes, I challenged my advanced doctoral students to reply to themselves of why they deeply engaged in scholarship only when being forced by their professors and never on their own (they admitted in that first). This persistent IPD throws some of my students into a deep existential crisis, described by Jane (pseudonym), a student of mine (Edward was my pseudonym in the book):

Jane: I guess it [this IPD] becomes obsessive such that it interferes with other aspects of life… I dunno, Edward, it's so weird and hard to explain but it feels like a ball and chain like a drug or an addiction or something… maybe it's just me though? Maybe I'm too sensitive? Like with my other [personal] issues I have in my life… [these internal dialogues prompted by Edward are] all related to all this stuff… it's all so very penetrating… excuse the French, but it's like a mindf–k. Because maybe it does conflate with personal issues I have, but I'm sure other people have similar issues, so some of your other students could have or could be suffering like me…. but I'm sure it's worse on grad students than undergrads… I think you are very good at asking very important and penetrating questions… and sometimes you can get people to question their existence or their ways of living or why they're doing what they're doing, etc. etc.… you have that blessing that is a curse maybe…

Edward: Of course, by now you can imagine me asking, "What is wrong with that—i.e., asking about life?"…

Jane: because I wonder if you could question someone to despair or death?

Edward: No, it is not my goal. My goal is to ask myself and others out of despair and out of death.

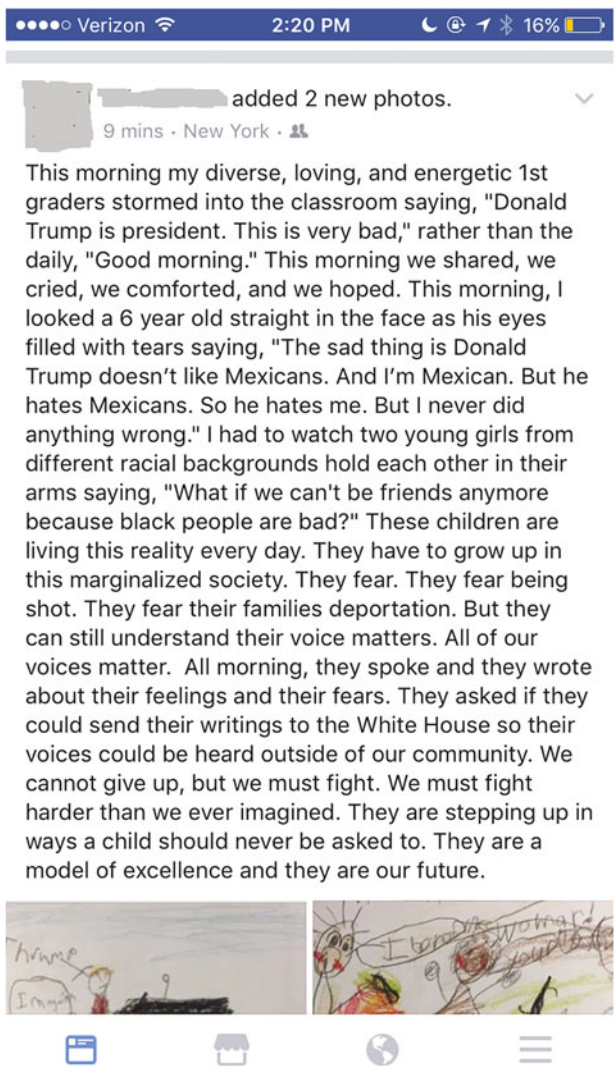
Jane: that may be your intention, but intentions and effects don't always match up… am I now getting you to question…. and possibly be in anxiety [about yourself and your actions] (Matusov & Brobst, 2013, p. 82).

From this pedagogical experience, I have learned to play Dostoevsky or God in throwing my students into existential crises through IPD. My students are not heroes of my novel but authors of their own lives and education (Matusov & Miyazaki, 2014). It is up to the students, and not the teacher, to set themselves on an adventure journey testing their dear ideas and values with their lives.

The critical IPD provides both ontologically centripetal forces and ontologically centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1991) in the classroom community. The critical IPD may help to build a community by aligning like-minded students together, by taking each other diverse voices seriously, and by appreciating diversity of ideas/values and mutual challenges when they are respectful and open-minded. However, the critical IPD may also pull the classroom community apart when students' half-baked ideas got prematurely challenged, when students' ideas are not welcome (especially by the teacher) (Marjanovic-Shane, Meacham, Choi, Lopez, & Matusov, 2017, in press), when students' ideas/values undermine the existence of other participants or relevant/loved others (Matusov & Lemke, 2015), when students do not have much interest in each other ideas (e.g., for paradigmatic reasons—see my example of a graduate class splitting in half above), when students are disrespectful to each other, and so on. Thus, in my first article on values in education (Matusov & Lemke, 2015), I described a case of my past class, where an Aztec nationalist student argued for ethnic cleaning of all Whites from Americas. When one older White female student shared that her daughter tried to commit suicide, he said that it was too bad that the student's daughter was not successful—one White person would have been fewer in Americas. I planned to expel this student from my class but the rest of the students, including the female student, argued that they highly benefited from his views, however, personally hostile they were.

Sometimes started as ontologically centrifugal, the IPD can dramatically and eventfully promote ontologically centripetal forces in the classroom community. Thus, recently, the election of the controversial President Trump was such a case in my undergraduate fall 2016 course on urban education. Our class meeting was on day of the election and it was canceled by the university because of that. On the class web, a few of my students—openly Democrats—expressed a need to discuss the educational consequences of the elections in our class,

> Justa (all mentioned names are pseudonyms): I know it is a sensitive topic; however, I think on Tuesday we should respectfully discuss the election results. I thought the guidelines that Eugene posted [NASP guidelines supporting students after 2016 election, https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/media-room/press-releases/nasp-guidance-for-reinforcing-safe-supportive-and-positive-school-environments-for-all-students] were helpful. I think it is important to discuss how the election results affect children and how they view themselves and others. I have attached a Facebook post from a teacher that lives in my town. I think we should also talk about how the election results will impact policies relating to education such as the common core and even just how this will affect urban and minority communities. Also, here is a Huffington Post article about the issue: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/what-should-we-tell-the-children_us_5822aa90e4b0334571e0a30b



This morning my diverse, loving, and energetic 1st graders stormed into the classroom saying, "Donald Trump is president. This is very bad," rather than the daily, "Good morning." This morning we shared, we cried, we comforted, and we hoped. This morning, I looked a 6 year old straight in the face as his eyes filled with tears saying, "The sad thing is Donald Trump doesn't like Mexicans. And I'm Mexican. But he hates Mexicans. So he hates me. But I never did anything wrong." I had to watch two young girls from different racial backgrounds hold each other in their arms saying, "What if we can't be friends anymore because black people are bad?" These children are living this reality every day. They have to grow up in this marginalized society. They fear. They fear being shot. They fear their families deportation. But they can still understand their voice matters. All of our voices matter. All morning, they spoke and they wrote about their feelings and their fears. They asked if they could send their writings to the White House so their voices could be heard outside of our community. We cannot give up, but we must fight. We must fight harder than we ever imagined. They are stepping up in ways a child should never be asked to. They are a model of excellence and they are our future.

(Webtalk, 12 November 2016).

Bea: “I’m very nervous about having this conversation, I think its super important, I’m just scared. It’s been really hard to be on campus and social media lately because I am a Republican, and as you all may have noticed, that’s not the best thing to be right now. If we do have this conversation, I hope we can make it productive and respectful to all sides. I want to hear what everyone has to say and for us to figure out what’s best for many of our future students, I just don’t want world war three to break out like it has been in other places.” (Webtalk, 13 November 2016)

Stella: "I really do think this is an important conversation to have, although very touchy. I was recently at [the local afterschool center where the students were doing their learning activities with urban minority children] doing some work with the Student Literacy Council. We were making some books with the kids (that we had written and that they were to illustrate). The kids were in a different type of mood than usual. They seemed to not want to engage in the activity and were very keen on making their own books. Although they started out with various topics like vacation and cake making, they ended up talking about the election. Many students stated, 'Trump won't like me because I'm Black. He's probably going to send me back to Africa.' When they were talking about this, I wasn't sure what to say. I was almost at a loss for words. I tried to talk about how we should just all focus on loving one another and learning about each other's differences. I think it might be important to have some discussion about how to talk to children about these kinds of impactful events." (Webtalk, 14 November 2016).

Lisa: "I agree that it is important to discuss, but this has been a very intense and emotional election and I am concerned how it will go. Everyone has the right to their opinion, but in my other class we discussed the election results by writing down our thoughts and having them read out loud anonymously. Even through this process, people got upset and I think having an open discussion would be worse. I think talking about it in the context of children, while avoiding (somehow) sharing specific opinions could be beneficial." (Webtalk, 15 November 2016, in the morning before our class meeting)

Reading these class forum postings made me apprehensive of how to approach this controversial and very important topic in the class while preventing its breaking down. One improvement of our class voted in by the students at the Midterm Town Hall meeting was allocating time at the beginning of the class for discussing current political events relevant to our class on urban education. Just before the class started, while I was already in the classroom, my colleague stepped in and shared with me a local university newspaper describing an incident in a student dormitory of somebody posting a racial slur note against Latino and Black students with justification by Trump's presidential victory (http://udreview.com/racial-slurs-posted-on-bulletin-board-in-west-tower/). I had many concerns about the class that was voted by the students (before the election) to be on "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for urban students" (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I was also concerned of the Trump election issues taking over our topic and an organic transition to it. I put the following Class Agenda on the blackboard (projected from my laptop). Here is its relevant fragment:

1f. Tough class today for me!
1g. Presentations of and reflections on our Learning Activities at the Center
1h. Current educational events:

   i. Trump & Clinton's lack of policies and discussions
   ii. Election and split in education (NASP Guidance for Reinforcing Safe, Supportive and Positive School Environments for All Students)
   iii. Sharing our hopes and concerns: Trump's policies and urban education (teacher professionalism controversy)

2. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in urban education.

I shared my concerns and expected difficulties about the current class meeting (1f) while some of my students were relieved but some were tensed that the election was on the Class Agenda. Three students presented about their teaching experiences of the learning activities that they designed at the center. Stella was the third presenter. She described how she had planned to read and discussed a book of children's interest as she did before but these elementary school African American and Latino children refused to listen to the book—instead they spontaneously started sharing discussing the election of Trump. They were worried that Trump would order to expel them to Africa or to Mexico. Based on our past discussions in class, Stella stopped pursuing her preplanned reading activity and instead suggested the children to discuss how they felt about the election and made a book on that together. The children drew pictures, wrote text, and some younger kids who could not write yet dictated Stella their text. The children's book was full of worries and fears that the children probably heard from their parents.

I open the whole class discussion about Stella's teaching experiences by asking how they felt about Stella's approach to her teaching challenge and what they might have done differently if they were in Stella's shoes. Many of the students highly praised that Stella did not insist on the preplanned activity but instead focused on what was relevant for the children at time (later I connect this point to our new topic on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy). They also praised high educational quality of her new learning activity of development of a book of worries about Trump's presidential election. One student, who wanted to be a school psychologist, praised Stella for potential therapeutic nature of her learning activity—this student argued that therapy of a traumatic event often starts with a person public sharing worries and fears, which was exactly what Stella's learning activity promoted. Then, the floor was taken by Bea who indirectly criticized Stella for a lack of guidance about the election and staying on the periphery of her learning activity. Bea said that if she were in Stella's shoes she would reassure the children that the President could not expel US citizens from the country. She shared her own experience.

Bea told us that during the week, after the election she babysat a 9-year-old boy. The boy was also very upset and worried about the election of Trump. He said to her that all Republicans who voted for Trump were bad people. Bea asked the boy what he felt about her and then admitted that she was a Republican who voted for Trump. The boy was stunned. Bea immediately explained to us that she disagreed

with many of Trump's positions and statements and she voted for him mostly out of her loyalty to the Republican Party and her family who is traditionally Republican. Bea explained to the boy that the US President could not do many dramatic actions unilaterally being constrained by the Congress, the law, the courts, and the Constitution. She told him about the division of powers and checks-and-balances in the US. Bea suggested that Stella might have included this lesson about the US government structure in her mostly therapeutic learning activity.

Bea ended her discussion by sudden reflection on her voting choice. She asked us and herself if her voting choice was a mistake and she should take responsibility for fears and pains that election of the President Trump would and already did cause. Nobody replied to her and there was an uncomfortable silence in the class. So, Bea replied to our silence that she was going to think more about that but that she felt sorry for her voting choice (she expected Trump to lose essentially making her vote a protest vote against Hillary Clinton).

Stella thanked Bea for her terrific suggestions of more proactive guidance and said that she would definitely try this approach next time. Stella said that Bea-suggested guidance would probably sooth some of the children's worries, while teaching them about the structure of the US government and reasons behind them. I raised an issue of whether political institutions alone could prevent potential power abuses or not (I gave an example of the Weimar Germany, where institutions could not prevent abuses of power by Hitler). We discussed the role of people in preventing power abuses.

The class discussion shifted on how other professors addressed the election at the university if at all. One student shared that her professor reassured possible underdocumented immigrant students that they were saved in her classroom. Some of the students praised this approach but some disagreed that a professor could not promise what she could not deliver. At some point, I introduced the local newspaper article about a racial slur in the dormitory. We discussed our worries and hopes—both education and noneducation in nature—about the election of Trump. We also discussed how to discuss politics in elementary school. Bea, Stella, and other students were very active in these critical discussions.

Finally, I transitioned to discussion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) by pointing out that Stella's and Bea's learning activities were good examples of CRP, which surprised both of them (and the rest of the class) because they thought that CRP was about celebrating the students' own cultures (like food and heritage).

After the class, Bea commented to me that it was one of most influential classes for her in her school life. Started as ontologically centrifugal, our critical internally persuasive discourse promoted ontologically centripetal forces that made our classroom community stronger. By far, this—preservation of the classroom community in the internally persuasive discourse—cannot be guaranteed in each and every case. For example, I wonder what might happen if Bea were a true believer and follower of Trump—could critical and open-minded examination of the participants' dear and alternative ideas survive in such polarity of antagonistic political division.

Ontological Chronotope of Dialogic Pedagogy: Political Cultural Community of Learners

The ontological chronotope of dialogic pedagogy involves the unity of time and space where the participants live with each other to promote their education and, specifically, IPD. The ontological chronotope includes organization and decision-making about education, negotiation of human ecology and relations, prioritizing diverse concerns and demands of the participants' lives with their educational goals, and so on. The space and time of the ontological chronotope are both physical and meaning-based.

For example, I often start teaching my 3-hour classes (undergraduate and graduate) without having a break. Sometimes (but not always) my students raise concerns about a need for a break because they get hungry or need to get to a toilet or need to walk or need to socialize with each other and me. We discuss consequences of having a break that cuts the time of the class. We discuss why a break is needed when the participants can do almost all of these activities on an individual basis (some students said that they did not want to miss anything when they leave for toilet). The ontological chronotope often does not have clear boundaries between its physical and meaning-based aspects.

The class culture and IPD

One of the most important aspects of the ontological chronotope is that it creates a culture of the classroom community. For example, does the class feel like as a flow of assignments imposed by the instructor? Or does the class feel like a flow of exciting opportunities for the participants to educate themselves and each other about something very interesting and important for them? Or a little bit of both? Or something else (e.g., busywork)?

Here is an example of the culture of a community of learners. Five minutes at the end of each of my classes, I asked my students to provide their "Mind attendance"—a brief reflection on the class, written online: what attracted their attention, questions they did not ask, feedback on the class, and what they want to study next (although we usually make decision about that before this activity). Here is one of the students' entry after a class on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995):

1. I learned that we all had varying perspectives on the movie, Freedom Writers [fragments]. I did see some pros to the movie that I had never considered before. One was that Eugene pointed out which was the fact that Erin Gruwell [(Freedom Writers & Gruwell, 1999)] really did reflect on her teaching and saw the pros and cons to her first lesson. The idea of growth is really important. Another interesting thing that I've learned is that rubrics put ideas that are out of the box into boxes and that it is hard for a teacher to have expectations of a project before they even see it!
2. What are some other ways that we can be accountable as teachers but not give out grades? Are there any classes doing this right now that Eugene or the class knows about?

3. So exciting and inspiring because I am beginning to see that there is so much value in just the experience of education itself rather than sticking to the plan [the student reflected on the relationship between lesson plan and pedagogical improvisations in learning activities that the students made at an afterschool community centers with urban children].
4. I'm excited to talk about the next topic ["14. Bottom-Up (for failing students) and Up-Bottom (for advanced students) models of education for urban students"] after Thanksgiving! (Mind attendance, 15 November 2016).

In my judgment, this student's Mind attendance reflects our class culture as a place of exciting learning opportunities that the student was looking forward for. In a community of learners classroom culture, students can be critical about some aspects of the class expecting the instructor (and other participants) to address these concerns:

> I think I learned a lot more today than last class and that the discussion was a lot more interesting. While I like our open curriculum, I've gotten used to the structure of a closed curriculum and I find it a little uncomfortable to have all of this freedom in the course. I liked watching the videos today and learning about the different perspectives of the children and what they had to say about science. I thought it was really interesting how we compared it to Bea's [classmate, pseudonym] experience as well before watching the videos. I found it really cool how engaged the children were and how they didn't just reject all the prompts they were given by saying 'I don't know.' I'm excited for our next topic about flexible academic curriculums impact on testing, but I'm hoping to spend more of the class talking about it. I still feel like for most of class today we talked about how our class was going to work, instead of the topic (Mind attendance, 6 September 2016).

In contrast, the following Mind attendance seems to reflect the classroom culture of imposed assignments, "1. Today I learned about privileges and disadvantages [summarizing the class' topic]. 2. None. How long should Self-Study be? 3. OK, useful. 4. Whatever" (Mind attendance, 12 March 2015). The student seemed to be mainly concerned about fulfilling the class assignments, while seeing some usefulness of them for himself. Alternatively, it is plausible that this student views the class as simply a busywork being insincere about usefulness of the class. However, for some other classes, he posted "None" for the class feedback. Another possibility was that this particular class topic and instruction did not click with him. For some further classes, the same student became excited, apparently changing his attitude toward the class,

(1) I found it interesting that there could be so many positive aspects to cliques and that in some situations it could actually better to have them. Before I thought that cliques [the topic of the class] were all bad.
(2) I wanted to see if individual students [in our class] had experience with cliques and their thoughts on them.
(3) Class was pretty good, I didn't know that much about the nature of cliques so it was interesting to study it from a different perspective. Should teachers promote and guide cliques rather than only suppress them? Exciting class!

(4) I want to study immigration—legal and illegal—in education. I am doing my MLP [Main Learning Project] on immigration so it would be interesting to touch on that subject. This is a topic of [my] long-term interest. I'll try to convince the class to select it (Mind attendance, 23 April 2015).

The class culture of the ontological chronotope seems to be related to the critical chronotope of IPD. The more a student got ontologically engaged in critical IPD, the more he or she might perceive the class as a community of learners.

However, as I discussed above, some dramatic ontological engagement in critical IPD may also try to turn a classroom community of learners apart.

Political and Cultural Aspects of Ontological Chronotope

However, not only IPD contributes to the participants' sense of class culture. For example, at the beginning of the undergraduate teacher education class in spring 2015, described above, the students voted to allow the teacher (me) to call only on students who raised their hands, despite the fact that the teacher warned the students before their voting that it might lead to a negative consequence of only a few students talking in the class. During the Midterm Town Hall meeting, some students noticed the problem and suggested to fix it, "I think that only calling on people when they raise their hand isn't working very well. Some students aren't participating at all and it is not helping to better themselves or the other students. Perhaps we could take another vote on that" (Midterm Town Hall meeting survey, 26 March 2015). "I disagree with the raising hands. I feel as though this is a course that requires participation and I find that sometimes people may feel disengaged from the class if they are not concerned about the potential to have to participate. The 5th amendment[7] keeps people participating who might otherwise not feel comfortable or may wish to be somewhere else. I think we could increase our participation my implementing the '5th Amendment' rule. I feel as though some individuals will not otherwise participate if not given the explicit opportunity first" (Midterm Town Hall meeting survey, 26 March 2015). After discussing PROs and CONs of the current and proposed class policy on calling students, the class voted 74% in favor of the 5th Amendment rule. The new classroom policy changed the class culture. Before it was a small vocal group of students who talked, and the rest were a silent majority. After the 5th Amendment rule, everybody spoke in the class. Some (shy?) students reported that our class was the only where they spoke up.

I argue that the ontological chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is a political cultural community of learners. Ontological community of learners involves viewing the participants as autodidact "learners" genuinely interested in pursuing their own

[7]"The 5th Amendment rule" refers to the following class policy, "Eugene can call on people who don't raise a hand but people will have the right to say 'pass' without any explanation" (cf. Shor, 1996). The 5th Amendment refers to the US Constitution, according to which an accused has the right not self-incriminate him/herself and remain silent.

education rather than in pleasing the teachers' demands (i.e., "students") (Matusov, von Duyke, & Han, 2012). The teacher's role is Learner#1 in the classroom with and from the students on the subject matter (Matusov, 2009). While the cultural aspect of the ontological chronotope is about the emergence of attitudes and relations supporting a sense of the IPD community in the class, the political aspect of ontological chronotope is about decision-making about the organization of education in narrow and broader contexts of the students' lives.

In a conventional classroom, usually the teacher, school administration, educational experts, test designers, and the entire society, not students, are those who make decisions about students' education: what to study, how, with whom, whether to engage in education, under what conditions, to what aim, what constitutes the quality of education, and so on. As one of my undergraduate freshman teacher education students exclaimed during the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, "A few months ago [in the student's High School], I had to ask the teacher's permission to go to pee. But now I'm deciding what it is good for my education, what I want to study and why I should want it, and how!"

Democratic self-governance that I introduce in my undergraduate and graduate classes often contributes to the class culture as many students comment how it gives ownership of their own education and life and they are treated "as adults." In anonymous after class evaluation, a student wrote, "I thought the professor was really respectful about all the students' perspectives and allowed us to voice our own opinions and teach us about differing perspectives on every topic. He treated us as adults. I loved to make decisions about our class because it made me want to learn more" (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016). Similarly, a graduate student wrote, "I really appreciate Eugene's continued effort to allow us to choose topics that interest us rather than just what he thinks we should learn. This is a really nice way to foster engagement in the material at the graduate level" (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016).

However, democratic self-governance can go against the class culture as well. For example, at the end of my undergraduate 2015 class described above, some students raised objections against engaging them too early in democratic self-governance. They argued that although it was nice to taste democratic self-governance from the day one of the class, when I had engaged them in my teaching dilemma about whom I should call: (a) only those who raised their hands, (b) randomly, and (c) the 5th Amendment rule; it was also counterproductive. These students argued that the democratic self-governance robbed the class from inclusive discussions during the first part of the semester. They insisted that they had not been ready for the democratic self-governance because they had not had a taste for the class and wrongly prioritized their own comfort over educational opportunities, based on their past experiences in conventional classrooms where many had not had safety to speak. They suggested me to introduce democratic self-governance gradually: initially through voting on a next topic for the class (i.e., Open Curriculum) and then through the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, where all aspects of the class are open for evaluation, critique, and change. Listening to their reasoning and reflecting on my own pedagogical experimentation, I had to agree with

them and since that I use the 5th Amendment rule unilaterally from the beginning of the class. So far, students never suggest revising this rule in their Midterm Town Hall Meetings.

The tension between the democratic self-governance and the class culture manifests itself about several other issues. Thus, when I run my classes as Open Syllabus where my students had an opportunity to fully design the class from scratch on our first class meetings, some students complained that the democratic self-governance takes too much time from the studies on the subject matter themselves. A famous British writer, Oscar Wilde, captured this tension in the following way: “The trouble with Socialism is that it takes too many evenings.” The class culture shifts from a community of learners to a community of education designers. Another issue with introduction of the intensive democratic self-governance from day one is that, as my 2015 students pointed out, often there is a shallow nature of their decision-making, guided by their past experiences in the Closed Syllabus pedagogical regime, where teachers make organizational and pedagogical decisions unilaterally and when the class culture of pleasing the teacher’s demands and assignments prevailed (see Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017, for more description and analysis of these tensions).

The class culture is also shaped by the students’ life demands—institutional, economic, and personal—outside of the class. For some of my students, the Open Syllabus pedagogical regime did not work because without having any pressure, they moved the class resources (primary time and efforts) to address other demands of their life, which were less exciting than the class for them. This is what one of my Open Syllabus undergraduate students wrote in a non-solicited email to the instructor (me), addressing her often absences from the class,

> In short, I am having a terrible semester. I have bit off more than I can chew in having a part time job and taking 2 honors classes as well as extracurricular activities. When I miss class it is because I am either working extra hours at work or I am cramming for my next exam. I realize I have not been the ideal participant in our class but I can assure you I do really enjoy our EducXXX class and the topics we discuss. Urban education is a passion of mine and I looked forward to this class until I became so stressed this semester. It probably obvious to you, as well as to myself, that because of our open syllabus and “no grades” policy, that I have used this class as a cushion for my heavy workload. I apologize because I know I have taken advantage of what was supposed to beneficial to my learning and our class. I don’t know how to make up for the class time that I have missed except to tell you that I really have enjoyed what I have been there for and that I have tried to use webtalk to understand the days I missed. I hope you see that when I am in class I enjoy participating and have a lot to offer (email, November, 2012) (Matusov, 2015b, pp. A198–A199).

In this email, the student started with a list of burdens that she faced in her semester in parallel with our Open Syllabus class, but then she shifted her reflection on the non-coercive nature of the Open Syllabus that allowed her to neglect her commitments to her own educational self-actualization. This indicates a lack of culture of taking responsibility and care for one’s own self-actualization while prioritizing other responsibilities mostly coming from instrumental necessities and resting from these instrumental necessities coming from outside of the class.

However, without this culture of commitment to one's own self-actualization, the life feels like an empty struggle for survival (Arendt, 1958).

Thus, I switched from the Open Syllabus pedagogical regime, where the democratic self-governance is introduced from day one to the Opening Syllabus pedagogical regime, where the democratic self-governance is introduced gradually. First, as Open Curriculum, where students are engaged in deciding the next topic of the class from the Curriculum Map list, developed by the teacher and amended by the students. Second, through the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, where students are engaged in evaluation of all aspects of the class, proposing improvements, analyzing their PROs and CONs, and finally voting on the proposed changes.

Still, the Opening Syllabus pedagogical regime is not without its own tensions between the democratic self-governance and the class culture—some of these tensions go in the opposite direction now. Thus, one graduate student who chose Open Syllabus for herself (i.e., deciding the organization of the class by herself) commented in her online class evaluation, "I am not sure the structure of the class is the most conducive environment for the open syllabus students. The structure gives students an uncomfortable feeling of deviating from the prescribed path and venturing out into the open syllabus world" (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016). It seems the class culture of Opening Syllabus, which highest majority of the students chose to stay (what the student refers as "the structure of the class"), does not promote emergence of the class culture of Open Syllabus for the students who chose it. The collective expectations, attitudes, excitements, and relations did not emerge around Open Syllabus for the minority of students who chose this pedagogical regime. I had to learn how to support two (or more) class cultures in my classes.

The Class Culture and the Class Ecology

The educational ecology is a part of the educational ontological chronotope. Ecology involves the participants' emergence of emotions, moods, relations rooted in the chronotopic unity of the time and space, affecting their participation. The class ecology can contribute to the class culture. For example, students' sitting arrangements can promote or hinder the emergence of certain relationships among participants. For example, in my small undergraduate class of 9 students, students' sitting in clusters promoted their working together in small groups but hindered whole class discussions. Also, our classroom without windows and sterile walls made the room and, thus, our communications more impersonal. The students suggested changing the room at the Midterm Town Hall Meeting and during our following-up online discussions. We discussed both PROs and CONs of changing the current classroom,

> PROs: We have a sterile, not inviting, not stimulating, and poor environment in our class. Is it a goal of conventional education … to make the classroom environment very sterile and

> poor so the students won't be distracted their attention [away] from the teacher? Also, our class is often either too cold or too hot. Outside of the class may allow us to do learning activities that are difficult to [do] in class. Exciting and rich places may stimulate our creativity and improvisation and make us less tired.
>
> There is another room that is upstairs in [the building] that [another professor] would take us to in [another class] to get a change of scenery. The room has a conference feel, there are 'spiny' chairs and a big open space to move around. This way we would have internet, no noise from other people, and could watch videos and share web posts. Maybe we could look and see if it is open during our class period?
>
> I think it would liven up the class and make it more exciting, as well as promote discussion! Maybe we could use a different room or something or go somewhere!
>
> I think that switching it up would be very refreshing and help us partake in conversations and discussions more easily.
>
> CONs: Noise and people around may distract us. There is difficult to watch videos or share documents/webs. There may be no Internet or electricity. Sometimes we need privacy (e.g., during our discussions and simulation of Learning Activities) (Webtalk, 2–6 November 2016).

We voted on the proposal and it passed unanimously. I found different cozy conference rooms for our class meetings until the end of the semester. The students were sitting around a long table on very comfortable soft chairs surrounded by art pictures on the walls and having a window. Interestingly enough, students commented on that ecological change causing cultural change in their attitudes in their Mind attendance notes, "I really enjoyed today's class, specifically the change in scenery. It made the class room discussion much easier" (Mind Attendance, 29 November 2016). Some students made oral remarks that the conference rooms made them feel being "adults" and "respected".

Encouraging students to bring food and eating during our long 3-hour class not only made students less hungry and less tired but eating together also contributed to the development of a sense of community. Having mid-class break and me coming 15 min before the class allowed some students to informally communicate with me about diverse issues of our class and provide both informal academic advisement and even consulting about diverse issues of students' lives (e.g., about a student's conflict with her parents). At the beginning of each class meeting, I provide space for students' brief sharing issues and events of their lives that can be broadly relevant to our class. Students share education related to local and national news, and tensions they experience in their other classes. For example, one student who loved to teach yoga—she did this learning activity at the afterschool center with urban children—was criticized by another professor for "stealing", "commercializing", and "secularizing" this Indian spiritual activity. They also share their birthdays—leading to an interesting discussion of possible controversies of celebrating birthdays in classrooms, for some students' cultures or religions might strongly reject this tradition. This practice of sharing at the beginning of the class contributed to both critical IPD on topics initiated by the students and creating a sense of a community of learners.

My fall 2016 undergraduate class for preservice teachers described above generated unusual and very thought-provoking ecological issues during our Midterm Town Hall meeting. Thus, a student raised an issue that our Self-Studies—in-class learning activities to explore the discussed topic in depth—should not be in writing only. She proposed, "no written self-studies, still have exploration, just do not write down answers, discussion only instead" (Webtalk, 2 November 2016). Our follow-up discussion revealed the following PROs and CONs:

> PROs: Some people are more oral. Some people need to talk in order to think. Sometimes writing can extinguish collective exploration and creativity. CONs: Individual exploration is also very important. Writing has its own strengths that orality may not have (e.g., a possibility to reread and edit, fixating ideas and points making the points more visible and durable). Writing discourse is very important professionally and in general in our society and sometimes (over?) prioritized. It may be a good idea to challenge people who is not comfortable with writing (Webtalk, 2 November 2016).

Some students insisted on having writing. The compromised proposal that passed involved diversification of means—some students could do Self-Studies orally and some in writing (at the end all but on student were writing their Self-Studies). Another issue was giving choices to do Self-Studies individually or in group. Diversification of medium and organization of Self-Studies made this learning activity more meaningful and personally relevant for students.

Axiological Aspect of the Critical Chronotope: Values of Education Itself

Finally, I want to discuss axiology of education itself—what value education has for the participants. Axiology of education is an aspect of the critical chronotope. It is interesting that in his early literary analysis in the early 1920s, Bakhtin (1990) always emphasized the unnamed triad—time, space, and axiology—while later, in the mid-1930s, he focused only on the unity of time and space in his notion of chronotope (Bakhtin, 1991). Elsewhere (Matusov, 2015a), I argued that chronotope has many more aspects that only two—time and space—and includes such aspects as axiology, participants, relations, and so on.

There is a common expectation in education that the goal of education is unproblematic and it often pre-exists the educational practice itself, thus making the latter *poïesis*, using the Aristotelian term (Carr, 2006). In conventional education, the goal of education is often viewed as students' predictably arriving at the curricular endpoints, preset by the teacher and the society under the guidance of the teacher (Matusov, 2009). Students are expected by the society to be willing subjects of teacher's instruction, to unconditionally comply with teacher's demands and requirements, to do diligently all assignments on time, to guess actively what the teacher wants from them, and to please skillfully and pro-actively teachers' pedagogical desires. They are expected to be a willing object of teachers' pedagogical

actions, to study hard, to be cooperative, thankful to teachers' efforts, to postpone their own desires and goals—that may be in any conflict with the teachers' pedagogical plans, objectives and desires—to self-discipline themselves, to provide self-surveillance to avoid any distraction from teacher-defined activities, and to prioritize the study over all other possible life demands. Meanwhile, teachers are expected to make (i.e., instruct, force, police, surveil, support, reward, and punish) the students arrive at the preset curricular endpoints through moving them through the predesigned sequence of lectures, texts, demonstrations, assignments, tests, and grades.

In critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, an educational practice is viewed as *praxis of praxis* (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2012). The goal of the educational practice emerges in the practice itself and does not pre-exist it—i.e., it is *praxis*, using the Aristotelian term (Carr, 2006). But even, the goal of education is a subject of critical examination (as anything else) for its participants, making an educational practice praxis of praxis. In contrast to conventional views on education where education is viewed instrumentally as the primary concern by the society, in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, education is viewed as an inherently personal endeavor. It expects the participants to have diverse goals for their education—ontological and/or instrumental—that may dynamically change depending on topics, changing interests and needs of the participants, and on their critical reflections concerning their education. Here is a non-exhaustive list of possible participatory goals and roles in education.

Professional practitioners, researchers, and advocates of the targeted practice
To share professional experiences, critical reflections, resources, achievements, difficulties, successes, puzzlements, frustrations, and inquiries; to ask questions; to ask for help; to help others; to build professional networks; to challenge and struggle with the professional (often paradigmatic) opposition; to nurture half-baked ideas; to discuss professional issues (including managing out of practice life issues); and to treat education as an important aspect of their profession. There is no expectation of arriving at the end of their education—never-ending education. Educational environment is a professional forum.

Hobbyists, fans, dilettantes, amateurs, and enthusiasts of the targeted practice
To enjoy the targeted practice as a part of their nonprofessional life; life-long learners; learning as a way of life; and there is no expectation of arriving at the end of their education—never-ending education enriching and supplementing their life. Educational environment is an interest leisure club.

Critical learners of the targeted practice
To evaluate critically the practice; to test ideas, values, and truths against as many alternative ideas, values, and truths as possible; to engage in critical dialogue and self-growth; to play with ideas; and to jailbreak the existing practices. Education is viewed as a never-ending inherent goal in itself (rather than a professional aspect of problem-solving): education for education sake. Educational environment is an inquiry and critical dialogue public forum.

Becoming a professional practitioner of the targeted practice
To learn how to creatively socialize into the practice in order to be recognized by the relevant practitioners and non-practitioners as capable (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991); to join a community of practice; to apprentice into the practice; to get a job involving the targeted practice; to become skillful and knowledgeable practitioners; to join a professional discourse, worldviews, attitudes, orientations, networks, and knowledge; to get involved into a legitimate peripheral participation; to observe and lurk on the professional forums; to play with ideas; and to jailbreak the existing practices. Education is viewed as socialization into the existing practice. Educational environment is apprenticeship.

Credential students
To get credentials established and recognized by the society, to prepare and pass exams, tests, and other summative assessments aiming at credentials, to follow the roadmap of assignments that will help to pass the credential summative assessments, to cooperate with the teacher who is helping in getting the desired credentials, and to ask the teacher and all other participants for help. Education is equated with getting credentials (e.g., diploma, degrees, class credits, certificates, and mark grades), pre-defined by the society through curricular endpoints, tests, and exams. Education is viewed as space- and time- bounded (e.g., during a lesson online), having a clear end (e.g., course term, semester, and degree term). Credentials are viewed as a gateway to the desired profession and economically good life. Educational environment is a series of challenges with earning the symbolic rewards (i.e., credentials). However, this series of challenges does not need to be rigid, as it is often done in conventional classes—ideally, a student can join at any time, at any point, and for any duration of time (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013).

Uncommitted visitors and lurkers
To observe the educational practice and what other participants do there, to see if one can enjoy the educational and targeted practice and learning, to test one's own commitment to the practice and learning, to find and meet interesting people, and to enjoy time spent in education. Education is viewed as exposure to something new and potentially interesting and as window-shopping. Educational environment is a potentially interesting place to visit.

Reluctant forced students
To resist engagement in the educational practice, to minimize possible negative consequences of this resistance, to smuggle other (educational and noneducational) activities of one's interest, to pass by the educational practice, to try to get out, and to manage one's own fatigue and boredom. Education is viewed as an oppressive practice to fight, resist, and cope with. Educational environment is oppressive imprisonment, imposed by others.

Teachers
To facilitate learning for and among diverse participants; to mediate conflicts; to promote democratic self-governance; to provide learning resources; to build educational networks; to guide and to promote critical dialogue; to design ontological

dialogic provocations, to couch, to encourage, to praise, to offer, and to provide feedback; to help the participants negotiate challenges, with which they are faced; to connect the participants who may be helpful for each other; and to participate in a professional forum with other educators. Education is primarily viewed as support of participants' self-authorship and voices in their education and the targeted practice. It is viewed as both permanent process practice and as bounded in time (for some other participants). Educational environment is a learning environment and ecology for others.

In the critical ontological dialogic education, all these diverse educational goals, values, and roles—their dynamism, multiplicity, ambiguity, emergence, and critical reflection—are recognized as legitimate, requiring educators' support. The diverse educational values and goals provide both synergy and opposition for each other. For example, I had an undergraduate student, a preservice teacher, who, according to my observations, was disengaged in the class and in the afterschool practicum with urban minority children. She was texting and shopping during the class and barely engaged in learning activities. I tried to engage her by trying to find her interests or sending kids to play with her but nothing helped. Although it was difficult in my classes even then (when I did not realize fully the detrimental effects of grades on education), she got C in my class.

Once I bumped into her on a campus street a year after, to my big surprise, she was extremely happy to see me. I was openly perplexed and she told me that our class was the best education that she got. I was even more surprised. She told me that in our class she had realized that she did not want to be a teacher. She said that through my pedagogical engagement efforts (that miserably failed) and promotion of critical reflection on that, she was thinking why she was so disengaged, especially with kids at the afterschool center. She came to the conclusion that she did not want to a teacher, and transferred to the theater department to become an actress. And she felt happy there. Thus, in our class she embraced diverse roles as reluctant student, credential student, becoming a professional practitioner, and critical learner that led her on an important educational realization. I was ashamed for giving her C because I so narrowly and rigidly defined the goal of education and educational role as becoming a good teacher in the subject matter of my class and critically reflecting on that. I did not include an educational goal of testing whether a teacher profession was good for my students as a legitimate one.

Conclusion

In this theoretical chapter, I argue that the critical ontological dialogic pedagogy has a complex relationship with values. Using a chronotopic analysis, I view three pillars of this relationship. First, it is the critical chronotope of the internally persuasive discourse (IPD) aiming at critical examination and deconstruction of all values. Second, it is the ontological chronotope of the political and cultural community of learners aiming at the affirmation of values ontologically supporting IPD.

Third, it is diversity, multiplicity, dynamism, ambiguity, emergence, and critical reflection on the values of education itself. These three pillars provide both synergy (centripetal forces) and contradictions (centrifugal forces) among and within each other.

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Chapter 2
Values, Education and Human Development: The Major Role of Social Interactions' Quality Within Classroom Cultural Contexts

Angela Uchoa Branco

Schools, as historical institutions in charge of children and youth education, consist of culturally structured environments characterized by a wide range of tasks and responsibilities. They are in charge of teaching society's new generations its most important cultural legacy and tools, in terms of substantial knowledge, skills and competences that will allow for students' personal development and, consequently, the development of society itself. Intellectual development, socialization, and skills' acquisition are traditionally considered the major goals of schooling in our societies. Throughout historical time and different cultures, academics and educators have extensively described, analyzed and discussed the double yet contradictory actual functions of educational institutions. On the one hand, schools pursue the successful transmission of knowledge and skills considered as relevant to youth to become well-adapted and adjusted members of the society, therefore providing for the reproduction of the cultural system. On the other, schools proclaim to aim, at least ideally, at encouraging curiosity, creativity, autonomy, active citizenship, and the construction of new knowledge and ideas in the search for the advancement of human kind. Many theorists and experts from diverse fields of philosophical and scientific knowledge (cf. Bourdieu, Passeron, Maturana, and a legion of other scholars), though, have thoughtfully identified and criticized educational institutions for their predominant conservative bias. In other words, most schools, all over the world, tend to invest their efforts on its social reproductive function, what creates a serious, problematic impasse.

An important question, emerging from the literature on educational institutions is: Why is it so difficult for schools to fulfill expectations concerning the promotion of creativity, autonomy, and active citizenship? Why do educators fear the emergence of novelties, and abhor the notion of their alumni speaking out their ideas, divergences, and critical views on different matters, as though students' voices would necessarily do away with adults' authority?

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In this chapter, I will bring forth and develop arguments that may help clarifying some aspects of possible answers to the above questions, in total agreement with those who criticize the predominant conservative and retrograde function of schools. My intention is to analyze and discuss why it is so difficult to implement changes within school contexts. In other words, the issue is why changes that could contribute to transform traditional old-fashioned practices usually encounter strong opposition among educators, and why the promotion of creativity, openness, and construction of new roles and dynamics within classrooms seem to scare teachers and those in charge of institutional administration. In the contemporary world, despite the good intentions of some educators, we still witness significant problems afflicting teachers, administrators, students, and their families, and most of these problems found in school settings tend to persist and, sometimes, even get worse. This holds true, particularly, in poor areas of the globe, where violent practices prevail and dominate human relations. Hence, we wonder, what are the most resistant barriers that ultimately block the efforts of well informed and good will professionals, when they face day-by-day activities that typically characterize most school contexts in different cultures?

The major point I want to make in the present chapter is that most of such resistance and difficulties derive from schools' lack of awareness about core issues concerning human relations. Most educators are not aware of how their own underlying beliefs and values guide their actions and interactions. For instance, if they fear students' protagonism, autonomy and criticism they will never try, actually, to instigate students' active participation or creativity. Or else, if teachers think that discipline and strict obedience are essential for controlling wild bodies and minds, or if they believe that learning is, indeed, an individual strive, teachers will not make efforts to promote initiative, creativity, cooperation or discussions within their classrooms, for they fear to lose control of the group and of the whole teaching-learning process. Ideal classes are pictured as quiet, with receptive (uncritical) students totally dedicated to their own business under teacher's commands. Why would teachers bother? If they think their major mission is knowledge transmission, and other educational goals being, in fact, a matter of family's responsibility, why bother? As a consequence, school professionals may end up not paying the due attention to a core dimension of human existence, namely, *social relations* occurring in specific contexts—in the present case, within educational institutions. However, *human interactions and relations do play a central role* in school contexts, and to know how to deal with alterity is an inescapable necessity to policy makers, practitioners and teachers, an issue they can no longer ignore.

When schools do not address the issue of alterity properly, the consequences can negatively affect all dimensions of their institutional missions, as well as the experiences and well-being of students, teachers, and everyone else involved in the process. As the notion of *alterity* intrinsically relates to matters as social values and moral development, in this chapter I will elaborate on these topics, and lay emphasis on how educational institutions can benefit from the scientific knowledge already available, and at educators' disposal.

The School as a Cultural Context: Key Goals and Shortcomings

Educational contexts, viewed as social institutions in service of forming societies' new generations, need to start asking and reflecting upon what they are and what they are doing, what are their actual practices, and which are their goals and responsibilities. Are their goals, actually, achieved? Are their responsibilities fulfilled? The answers to these questions, unfortunately, generally reveal numerous shortcomings, from the poor quality of students' performance to the lack of motivation of both students and teachers to failures concerning successful socialization.

Van Oers (2009) summarizes this problem with precision when he refers to the emphasis, by the Report of the EU Educational Council-2001, upon the notion of knowledge-based economies. The author disapproves the stress the report puts on the fundamental role of schools in attaining to that specific political goal—the development of knowledge-based economies in the contemporary world. He criticizes the "canonization of mandatory school contents, standardized goals, [which prioritize] children's adaptation to and performance at school, especially literacy and numeracy" (p. 214). As he analyzes the conditions of the educational system in the Netherlands and Europe as a whole, he informs and criticizes the main features of the Council's educational propositions:

> The tendency to focus on essential contents, programme-based schooling and accountability by frequent testing had been growing since 1980, but this tendency was still more strengthened by the increased emphasis on the knowledge economy. Gradually, schools were put under pressure to embrace the idea of teaching for the knowledge society. The idea of the knowledge society was embraced by many politicians, policy makers, and practitioners as a valid basis for the innovation of schools. Given the tenets of the knowledge society (and economy) there is a strong predilection to favour schools as places for the transmission of cultural knowledge and skills. The transmission-type schools, which already had a long tradition in our society, were reinforced by the emergence of the knowledge society (p. 214).

Van Oers explains that in the Netherlands a significant number of investigators and practitioners are putting into practice a reconstruction of their schools according to a new paradigm designated as 'developmental education'. This paradigm draws on the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and the cultural-historical approach to human development. It aims at transforming human beings in critical and autonomous participants in sociocultural practices and activities that make sense to them. Meaningful learning, associated to active participation, dialogue, and awareness through critical observation are the main objectives of 'developmental education'. However, van Oers' explanation of the tenets of this approach does not refer to some of the relevant psychological higher functions, such as creativity, nor does he highlight the central role of the affective quality of social interactions and relationships within educational contexts. Particularly noticeable in his analysis is the absence of a single mention to the moral dimension of human development. He seems not to seriously take into account the importance of promoting prosocial

motivations in the extremely competitive-individualistic contexts of most societies in contemporaneity (Baggio, 2009; Lash, 1982; Morin & Prigogine, 2000; Sennett, 2004, 2012).

The crucial issue of human relations, therefore, remains and entails a couple of disquieting questions: How can educational institutions achieve the goal of promoting the development of active and responsible citizens, if they do not invest in the cultivation of human values and moral development? How a true commitment to the necessary construction of democratic and inclusive relations, within complex and multicultural societies in the globalized world scenario, can be encouraged and enabled? Is it possible for families, isolated, to be able to produce responsible, moral, active and creative human beings? How families can do that, if not in cooperation with other institutions or social settings like schools, for instance? Without such alliances, not much can be done for sure.

In Brazil, we have developed numerous research projects that unveil teachers' and administrators' beliefs concerning their lack of responsibility regarding socio-moral development (Branco, 2009; Branco, Barreto, & Barrios, 2017). As a 6th grade teacher recently put it (Branco & Miranda, this volume), "my role as a teacher is to *teach* those kids, and not to educate them. Their families are in charge of their education, this *is not my role*, no way!" Certainly, this teacher is not the only one blaming students' parents, or attributing the whole burden of the responsibility for students' education to their own families. Therefore, we should start our search by looking for the obstacles to implement changes in school contexts, so that schools, also, take their responsibilities in encouraging students' socio-moral development. We need to examine those deep-rooted, affect-laden beliefs that prevent changes and institutional development. This should be the first step because most teachers seem to be convinced that human values, moral development, and social motivation *are not issues concerning their work* within the classroom. They say, and are usually right, that they did not receive any specific instructions or training regarding how to deal with such subjects within their classrooms.

In social conflict situations involving students or themselves, teachers usually act according to their own socialization experiences and beliefs acquired along their lives. They do this without any further analysis or reflection whether their actions are, or are not, the best way to deal with the problem. In short, they are not prepared to promote pacific conflict resolutions or to foster, in practice, inclusive, prosocial and respectful interactions among the diverse students in the classroom environment. Their best guess, usually, is to verbally admonish the students to stop the conflicts and mind their own business, since teachers are convinced that only quiet and compliant students are able to learn. The notion of cooperation is solely associated with 'cooperation with the teacher' (Palmieri, 2003), i.e., students should keep their mouth shut and follow their teacher's instructions. In sum, teachers—as most school staff members and parents—are genuinely persuaded that they are hired to transmit specific contents, skills and knowledge—Mathematics, Geography—according to

the school curriculum. Consequently, their role is to control the students to make sure everyone will listen and do whatever they are told to do.

Realizing the existence of the above-mentioned scenario consists of the first step in removing the obstacles to changes in school contexts. The next step is to acknowledge the absence of theoretical instructions, training and practical experiences concerning social interactions and moral issues during professional undergraduate and graduate courses for teachers and other educators. This absence has, of course, cultural-historical explanations that I will not further explore in this chapter. However, such absence demands an all-encompassing analysis to be carried out at different levels, i.e., at a macro-level (historical-cultural), meso-level (inter-institutional), and micro-level (face-to-face interactions). The last level, which should, especially, be taken into account by psychology and education, refers to the characteristics of ongoing activities, social interactions, and the dynamics of communication processes. Investigations carried out at this level would enable investigators to identify, analyze, and suggest concrete solutions to problematic situations that arise within classrooms.

Another point worth mentioning in relation to fostering prosocial and cooperative interactions within classrooms is well developed and demonstrated by education theorists who experimentally study the effects of differently-structured activities, such as competitive, individualistic or cooperatively organized pedagogical practices (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 2009). Their research results consistently show that, compared to competitive or individualistic activities, cooperatively structured and oriented practices promote superior school performance in diverse disciplines. Besides better academic achievements, they found significant results concerning the improvement of students' motivation, inclusion, and narratives about a general feeling of wellness associated to working within cooperative, instead of competitive or individualistic, contexts. Students said that if they could choose, they would choose cooperative teaching-learning activities.

McDermott (1977), whose ideas I will further explore in this chapter, also supports the construction and practice of good quality socio-affective interactions and relationships within classrooms. According to the author, teachers and students spend a long time fighting relational battles in the classrooms, only because teachers are unaware of the excellent results of investing time to develop, with students, what he designates as 'trust relations'. Instead of wasting time and energy trying to control students' behaviors and minimize their social interactions, teachers should try to coconstruct with students a receptive, dialogical climate based on trust, which would ensure a pleasant atmosphere within which attention and learning contribute to better grades and general development. To be prepared to dialogue and create a free expression, conversational climate within the classroom, also entails an ability to deal with criticism and conflicts. Hence, the need to work with teachers to help them develop the required emotional balance, democratic values, self-confidence, high positive expectations, and social skills that are mandatory to create an open and free new basis for their interactions with students.

We cannot overestimate the role of values and beliefs in determining which methodologies and activities teachers select and develop in their classrooms (Branco, 2009, 2012; Branco & Valsiner, 2012). Values and beliefs lead their goals, plans and actual classes. Values and beliefs powerfully guide the dynamics of teacher-students and student-student interactions taking place inside classrooms and other school contexts. Redundant social messages and specific experiences lead to the coconstruction of values of violence versus peace, egoism versus justice and competition versus cooperation via cultural canalization processes (Valsiner, 2007, 2014). Cultural canalization refers to the existence of particular goals and constraints, present in specific contexts, that lead or direct (canalize) actions, interactions and meanings' interpretation in certain directions. Within classrooms, cultural canalization occurs throughout teachers' and students' participation in specific activities and interpersonal communication. Values and beliefs usually translate into actual interactions; however, very often teachers choose activities and act in ways that are divergent, or contradictory, to what they think they are promoting. For instance, suppose they say they do not want to encourage competition, but never miss an opportunity to compare students' performances or to present a student as a model to be followed by peers. In other words, frequently teachers are unaware of their choices and actions, which ultimately will promote cultural canalizations. Another problem arises when double bind messages (Bateson, 1972) prevail, creating uncertainties that may only contribute to relational battles, nonconstructive divergences or persistent defiant attitudes.

Students continuously learn and internalize what is right or wrong in a certain culture (Shweder, 1991), yet they are not passive in this process. Each individual, due to her/his singular characteristics and previous experiences, actively internalize social messages. However, when messages are redundant and/or impregnated with affectivity, the developing person ends up creating and reinforcing motives, tendencies, preferences, goals, values and beliefs in closer accordance to the original cultural message. This is why, in violent cultures, aggressive actions are more likely to occur, and in cooperative cultures, we find cooperative practices and people (Mead, 1934). Some questions, therefore, become very relevant: Why and how values of individualism and competition—in some cases, even violence—prevail in most of our schools? How the presence of the social other—as a fundamental component of alterity—affects the lives of teachers and students? Why do we observe a lot of unnecessary tension in teacher-students relationships? Why is it so problematic and challenging for people to deal with individuals considered as different from themselves, individuals with different characteristics or coming from a diverse culture or ethnic background? Why label people as freaks or losers only because they do not fit—for whatever reason—the pre-established pattern of social desirability? In other words, we need to investigate and find ways to overcome the segregation between 'us' (ingroup) *versus* 'others' (outgroup), to identify and act upon the factors that instigate and sustain all sorts of prejudices in our culture.

Alterity, Inclusion and Prejudice: How We Perceive and Interact with the Other

In this section, I focus on alterity and its function in originating our key differential characteristic as a biological species. Human communication, the sophisticated communicative interaction (Fogel, 1993) with alterity is the only and exclusive way to develop higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1978) and, consequently, the special way we perceive, interpret and interact with each other as we coconstruct culture (Bruner, 1990). To highlight the role of the other in human development (Simão & Valsiner, 2007), I revisit the basic concepts and principles of cultural psychology—such as cultural canalization, active internalization and semiosis—and how these operate to give rise to social values and cultural practices along human ontogeny (Rogoff, 2003). The aim is to offer a working model to make sense of how the selective co-creation of meanings along life trajectories may contribute to the emergence of specific social motivations, as individualism, competition, violence, or else, cooperation and solidarity. From a cultural psychology perspective, such social motivations and interactive patterns gradually develop along life trajectories, especially during childhood and adolescence, and they entail the configuration of those social values that ultimately sustain actions and interactions aligned with inclusion and solidarity, or instead, with discrimination and prejudice.

Humans are meaning-making organisms. As Vygotsky brilliantly explained in his work, the capacity for utilizing semiotic tools—language, imagination—is what differentiate us from other species. This capacity allows us to overcome the here-and-now of our existence (or experience) and enable us to revisit the past as we reconstruct memories of lived-through experiences at a present moment, in which possible anticipated futures also play an important part. Language, imagination and affectivity guide our present actions and psychological functions while reconstructing past experiences and projecting the future in terms of expected events and experiences. The semiotic capacity, emerging early in ontogeny, gives rise to verbal thinking and language (Vygotsky, 1978), but to do so it demands the presence of the social 'other' (alterity) to develop, what can exclusively occur within sociocultural contexts as individuals interact with each other. In other words, we do not exist as humans without the other (Levinas, 1993; Simao & Valsiner, 2007).

Maturana (2002), along the same line, argues for the basic role played by social others in originating the human condition. The author stresses the meaning of 'conversation' experiences, and considers such experiences as the kernel of human nature. Maturana asserts, together with most scientists (Fuentes, 2008), that humans do not have any dominant biological predispositions to aggression or violence, on the contrary, a sort of prosociability is somehow ingrained in our condition due to our intrinsic need of the other to survive and become human (Hinde & Groebel, 1991). Consequently, we can affirm that specific patterns of social interaction are not inherited or cemented in our biology, but alternatively, are culturally constructed within the historical context of each society. No wonder Margaret Mead

(1934) found social groups governed by different values, practices and rules, a finding that anthropological and social psychological research consistently confirm (see the work of Triandis, 1995, and his analysis of collectivistic *versus* individualistic societies).

From a historical-cultural perspective (Bruner, 1990; Valsiner, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978), we know that depending on the kind of practices and interactive patterns a particular group promotes, individuals will internalize and develop certain dispositions to interpret and act according to those cultural practices and corresponding meanings. For example, if I believe the social other does no matter much for my own development, nor is relevant for me to achieve my goals and interests, my tendency will be to perceive, make sense, interact and communicate with him/her from an *individualistic* stance. I will not care much for her/his goals, problems, success or failure, because, for me, this makes no difference. In such cultures, it is not rare to find individualistic dispositions that become associated with competition, in different degrees. As the social other is progressively seen as a competitor, someone that may take my share or succeed in achieving the position I wish for myself, kicking me out of the picture, we are talking about *competitiveness*, what characterizes many of the activities and contexts of our contemporary cultures. In cultural contexts where *cooperation* and sharing are encouraged, though, it will be more likely to find people who consider the interests and welfare of social others, people who see the other as a collaborator or partner, showing a willingness to help, and ready do things together. The point, then, is: if cultural canalization processes are so obvious, why do not teachers analyze the kind of activities they develop, or do not engage in monitoring how they actually interact with their students?

In the same way we instigate specific values and beliefs, we may encourage our students to develop prejudices, and to act accordingly (Madureira, 2007, 2012). For instance, in a study about bullying among 5th graders in a public school in Brasilia (Manzini & Branco, 2016), all teachers said that bullying did not occur in their classroom. However, as we observed the class, and according to students' narratives, that was not true. The research not only demonstrated that teachers did not pay attention to what was going on, but it also revealed that many of the bullying events targeted minority groups (black children, poor children), but were interpreted as candid play. In other words, prejudice in action took place in the open within teachers' classrooms, but they were unable to see it!

Socialization and Moral Development as Educational Goals

Before further arguments in behalf of social objectives for school education, I want to clarify the very meaning of socialization as a psychological concept. Usually, socialization is understood as a generic process of promoting good manners and social skills among children and adolescents. This understanding, though, is reductionist and therefore fallacious and inappropriate. Socialization, in fact,

encompasses a much broader meaning, and necessarily includes the development of moral reasoning and practices, as individuals interact with each other.

Socialization implies caring for others, working together in collaboration, developing interest for others' well-being. This is true because the meaning of the concept designates to *socialize*, which should be interpreted as to take the other into account in everyday life. As Simmel (1949) puts it, sociability (socialization) maintains an intrinsic link to the notion of *pro*-sociability (Glaveanu, Branco, & Neves-Pereira, 2016). Hence, we need to bring back the actual meaning of the concept, and avoid using it in its reduced, incorrect connotation. When we use the concept properly, we include the moral dimension, and bring forth relevant issues concerning other key concepts such as ethics and morality.

Inspired by Kohlberg's work, many theorists and practitioners have proposed, developed and investigated moral education experiences within schools (Blasi, 2004; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008; Kohlberg, 1981). In Harvard School of Education (USA), this subject still guides many studies, with interesting results. Some educators, though, resist to the idea of moral education for they suspect that ideological, conservative values and beliefs can find a way to contaminate the apparent serious intentions of such projects. This fear is not completely wide of the mark. However, I next elaborate on why I do not agree with a general or uncritical suspicion of educational attempts that seriously address the issue of moral development within educational settings.

The first reason to consider moral development as an essential and appropriate educational objective comes from the undeniable evidence that we live in a normative and moral context, no matter the specific culture to which we belong. As Brinkmann claims (2004, 2015), human condition is intrinsically normative, therefore moral, and so are all scientific disciplines that study social and human issues, among them psychology and education. We live our lives within the context of activities characterized by explicit, but mostly implicit, tacit, rules. Even activities labeled as *free*, such as play, encode specific rules or constraints to human actions and interactions. Consequently, as intentional human beings operating within normative cultural contexts, it is impossible to act or live without assuming particular moral positionings, either in conformity or in transgression to those rules and social expectations ingrained in every activity.

The concept of morality as something impregnated with a religious or ideological orientation needs to be replaced by an understanding that morality does play an unavoidable role in human affairs. Of course we cannot, or should not, deny the cultural-historical or traditional meaning of the term, closely linked to religious and conservative values; but now it is time to free ourselves of such misleading constraints in order to face our responsibilities as educators of the new generations. As Matusov claims in this book and elsewhere (Matusov & Lemke, 2015), we must not come to the classroom with a set of predetermined values to 'teach' to our students. Teachers and students should engage in dialogical practices to explore the meanings and appropriateness of rules, values and beliefs. However, I must add here that, as teachers and individuals, we are never neutral as we navigate inside culturally structured contexts; therefore, we should approach our students with a general

disposition—rooted in some basic values—to be open, democratic, and to dialogue and welcome novelties, creativity, diversity, and divergent thinking. Neutrality, in fact, does not exist. We always take a particular stance, or positioning, which stems from our existential, axiomatic and epistemological beliefs. If we bear on democratic values, we actually should operate according to values and beliefs in tune with principles of justice, respect and ethics in our relations to fellow human beings. In my point of view, when we take a critical and serious standpoint regarding the issue of moral development—unfortunately, often reduced to moral reasoning according to cognitivists and constructivists—we conclude for the need to incorporate social and moral objectives into educational, pedagogical practices.

Faigenbaum (2014) points out that Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau made clear that education is unable to foster morality and values of citizenship among young students by means of theoretical discourse. Instead, students need to experience actual social relations within the contexts of practices and activities, within which Bruner (1990) would assert they could actually experience social interactions of specific kinds (in this case, moral experiences). Faigenbaum reports an empirical study where he analyzes the characteristics of exchanging and sharing objects in the interactions of children, from kindergarten to the 7th grade. As he analyzes the kinds of exchange and the meanings provided by children to make sense of their interchange of objects, the author elaborates a convincing argument about the origin of values of equity, respect and justice amongst youngsters: those are built, he argues, within children's early practices and experiences of reciprocity. The principle and practice of reciprocity, indeed, emerge very early in ontogeny, and can importantly contribute to strengthening the sense of justice among children. Moreover, according to Rochat (2011), children between three to five years-old already utilize an ethical stance to judge about individuals' rights in conflict situations, what indicates that principles of equity and justice have an early appearance in human development.

As we will see in the next section, affectivity is the substance of communication. It impregnates verbalizations in a way that participants inevitably convey to each other, through nonverbal clues and signs, significant indexes about what they evaluate as right or wrong in normative and moral terms. Moral knowledge and values are, hence, necessarily learned and internalized during communication, via explicit and, especially, subtle and nonverbal communicative processes. This leads to the conclusion that most narratives are, thus, moral narratives in a way. Brinkmann (2004) agrees with this conclusion and elaborates on the moral ecology of social practices, arguing that, since all practices are normative, they presume correct/good *versus* incorrect/bad forms of social participation. Consequently, this entails the presence of a moral dimension inherent to any cultural practice.

Bergmann (1998) goes further, and asserts that more than the use of words, nonverbal communication—such as body postures, facial expressions, and voice intonation—is enough to pass on moral messages. A good example we find in story telling: not just the sentences composing the story itself, but especially the way a person narrates the story, communicate the audience what is, or is not, morally appropriate in a certain context or culture. For instance, a father telling a bedtime

story to his child may send moral messages by ways of facial expressions, voice intonation, and many other paralinguistic signs.

A word of caution about educational planning regarding moral issues, though, is actually required for two reasons. First, because there is, indeed, the risk of schools imposing on students certain sectarian doctrines or ideologies by pretending to foster ethics and moral development, what could serve governmental policies, religious fundamentalisms, or local agents' interests to keep control over people. The second reason lies in the human tendency to hypergeneralize particular or local moral norms and conventions, as though such norms/conventions were universal, and, therefore, applicable to all cultural contexts. In any case, we must keep a permanent awareness and critical assessment of what sort of norms and principles are at stake. We must be aware and critical about the kinds of interactions and relations that are actually encouraged within specific educational settings. As we do so, we will be able to correct the route and, intentionally, propose alternatives to guide our pedagogical work.

Communication and Metacommunication

To investigate, make sense and appropriately evaluate the role and characteristics of the socio-affective quality of human interactions and relationships, we need to study the issue of human communication and metacommunication in closer detail (Bateson, 1972; Branco & Valsiner, 2004; Leeds-Horowitz, 1995; Watzlavick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967). In a book I organized with Jaan Valsiner (*Communication and metacommunication in human development*, Branco & Valsiner, 2004), we put together very interesting contributions by different authors who strived to analyze how communication and metacommunication intertwine to originate and transform meaning making processes, giving rise to specific messages' coconstructive interpretations.

Communication, conceptualized as the process that conveys coconstruction of meanings, involves the interplay of a complex collection of signs that dynamically change as it proceeds, through a multitude of expressive channels. Through communication, meanings are endlessly created, constructed and re-constructed by the participants of social interactions. We understand that communication, and particularly metacommunication (communication about communication, Bateson, 1972), plays a crucial part in the dynamics of internalization/externalization processes that occur while personal meanings are in continuous elaboration and transformation along human interactions. The most important assumption here, from a cultural psychology perspective, is that meaning constructions take place under the dominant influence of affective semiotic processes and social suggestions existing within culturally organized contexts. Such assumption consists of the very foundation for understanding the processes involved in human development, as it unfolds in multiple, dynamic and integrated forms and dimensions along ontogeny.

Communication and metacommunication (communication *about* communication) play a fundamental role in human social interactions and relationships. The bi-directional and co-regulated (Fogel, 1993) nature of communication and metacommunication processes needs to be analyzed within the systemic organization of interactive processes in its multiple, dynamic and interdependent levels (Ford & Lerner, 1992). Communication participants coconstruct and negotiate meanings according to the semiosphere (Lotman, 2005) of cultural-historical contexts, and to the quality of the affective-interactive frames that contain, or embody, participants' communicative exchanges. Goffman (1974, 1992) proposed the notion of *frames* to designate particular interactive contexts in which participants make sense of each other intentions. In his research of boys' interactions, he noticed that their use of laughter and joyful vocalizations signaled to each other that tough physical contacts —which otherwise could be considered aggressive—were just play, or just fun. Here I revisit the concept of *frame* by adding the terms *affective-interactive* ('*affective-interactive frames*') to designate messages interpretation contexts, due to the amount of empirical evidence and theoretical elaborations (Valsiner, 2014; Zittoun, 2012) on the affective-semiotic nature of sociogenetic processes that promote human development.

During communication, multiple channels are activated, engendering affective-semiotic textures that provide the basis for specific interpretations and internalization processes. Hinde (1976) refers to the historical dimension of 'interactions' between individuals as their 'relationship', i.e., a history of interactions between people lead to the construction of a specific kind of relationship between them. Therefore, both concepts are relevant to make sense of communicative phenomena. Communication events comprise two intertwined functional levels: (a) a non-relational level, conveying information about *specific contents* other than the interaction or the relationship between the individuals; and (b) a relational level, focusing on information about the *quality* of the interaction and the relationship between them (Fogel & Branco, 1997).

The relational level is also known as *metacommunication* (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1995; Watzlavick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967), and reveals itself mostly by nonverbal cues that participants continuously provide each other during their interaction, but verbal references may also occur (verbal metacommunication). Verbal metacommunication happens, for instance, when someone says 'I don't like the way you are talking to me!'. Metacommunication indicates *how* one should interpret a certain message. For example, if a teacher says to her student "Why don't you better explain your point?" the verbal message conveys a need for explanation, but the nonverbal and paralinguistic signs are those that will actually inform the student what the teacher actually means. Depending on her tone of voice, facial expression, and body posture, as well as the quality/history of their previous interactions (relationship), the message can be interpreted as hostile, ironic, friendly or even helpful. That is, metacommunicative signs play a fundamental role in the interpretation of a message by creating an affective-interactive frame, or interpretative ground, for evaluating what the message actually conveys.

However, not always such signs are clear and easy to understand. As Bateson (1972) explains, often people have to deal with ambiguous messages, what he nominated as ‘double bind’. Double binds are contradictory messages, and tend to occur when someone says something but her nonverbal actions or expressions contradict what she is saying. Experiencing troubled double bind messages creates tension and causes insecurity and confusion, what may eventually drive the person to a psychotherapist. Parents and teachers can inadvertently send contradictory messages, and this can become a source of anxiety and disquieting self-doubts.

Metacommunication flows through a continuum of facial expressions, postures, gestures, voice intonation and other paralinguistic signals. When individuals interact with each other, metacommunication is always active as a sort of interactive background for content communication. As said before, at certain moments metacommunication may undertake a verbal format, from single words to complex verbal elaborations over the quality of the interactions. The fact is that absence of communication (non-communication) is impossible whenever there are clear-cut indications of social awareness. Watzlavick et al. (1967) stress this point discussing examples of communication about the unwillingness to communicate. For example, this happens when we enter our residential elevator and do not greet our neighbor. In another example, in a classroom context, a child attempts several times to show his work to the teacher, but she totally ignores his attempts even though the way he tries to call for her attention is impossible to ignore (Tacca, 2000).

People in interaction constantly create unique affective-interactive frames, and the original history of interactions between certain individuals consists of the basis for the configuration of affective-interactive frames. However, frames are dynamic and continuously change as individuals co-create them along their communicative flow. Conflicts may turn into friendly interactions, and a fight may engender negotiation processes that turn previous antagonism into effective collaboration. In fact, conflicts are relevant for human development (Valsiner & Cairns, 1992), for they may end up mobilizing constructive efforts to novelties generation through negotiation processes. Negotiation processes, then, may ultimately lead interaction participants to reach diverse forms of mutual understanding—sometimes even including the popular saying ‘we agree to disagree’. Hence, the best option to promote cooperation and prosociability is to encourage people to negotiate.

Participants continuously negotiate the affective tone (Valsiner, 2007) or the quality of affective-interactive frames of their interactions, as each person interprets and gives specific meanings to each other’s words and actions. Such negotiation processes, however, do not necessarily entail a permanent awareness on the part of the individuals in interaction. This means that interpretations, very often, are influenced by non-acknowledged emotional and motivational states actually experienced by the participants, emotions and motivations that are not within the individuals’ field of awareness. Moreover, ‘friendly’, ‘hostile’ or ‘competitive’ frames entail completely different message interpretations and the way each participant makes sense of the interaction do not necessarily coincide. This leads to

numerous misunderstandings, ambiguities and ambivalences, which may lead to either negotiation, or to a joint (or a personal) refusal to continue the interaction.

Specific message interpretations depend on the quality of the frame—friendship, antagonism, care, provocation etc.—within which the communication participants are, but interpretations also depend on the specific sociocultural context where interactions occur. Examples of how cultural, contextual and relationship characteristics create the ground for message interpretation abound. In some cultures, you should never praise an infant for this would attract bad spirits: such compliment would be considered as aggressive. In another examples, a friend can tell you things you would consider offensive from anyone else, and a simple greeting by a foe may trigger a hostile exchange of insults. Beyond the quality of the relationship we establish with each other, other aspects of the context and history we have together are essential to interpret a simple message. For instance, if you tell me something like "I know your mother loves chocolate a lot!", are you referring to her full figure? Are you suggesting I should buy her some chocolates? Are you criticizing me for buying her apples? Or are you criticizing her for not teaching her children the value of a healthy diet? The only way to know the right answer is inferring from the whole set of cultural, historical, relational and contextual information available about everyone involved in the picture.

In short, as individuals proceed in their interactions, they permanently negotiate affective-interactive frames at both verbal and nonverbal levels. Negotiation processes, therefore, constitute the key concept to understand the emergence of new meanings, ceaselessly engendered along social interactions. Some meanings, if internalized, may gain further support along ontogeny, and develop into deep-rooted values and beliefs, while other meanings may disappear, all in consequence of subjective experiences impregnated with various kinds and degrees of affectivity.

Cultural Practices, Social Motivation and Values Development in the Classroom

In this section, I want to provide the reader with some practical and research examples to illustrate how cultural practices and meaning constructions (semiosis) mutually coconstruct each other.

In his analysis of conflict, Kruger (1993) emphasizes the danger of classifying social interdependence patterns into exclusively defined categories. Despite his controversial suggestion of a clear-cut distinction between 'self' and 'other' orientations, the author argues for a complex integration of convergent and divergent social interactions. This means conflict (divergence), help and cooperation (convergence) can combine and coordinate with each other in interesting and diverse ways. In the analysis of his data concerning joint problem solving by 48 pairs of 8-year-old girls, Kruger thoughtfully reminds us that

> It would be misleading to characterize the dyadic discussion presented here as simply conflictual or simply cooperative … Collaboration is organized by the consideration of multiple perspectives, and consequently it is conflictual as well as cooperative. By being in conflict with each other's ideas, but not necessarily with each other, they discover together a more coordinated view of the dilemma … conflict [is] linked with cooperation, and both [are] linked with development (1993, pp. 177–179).

However, the complexities found in communication flow do not prevent the existence of a dominant, general affective interactive framework within which communication flows. As Deutsch (1949, 1982) proposed in his seminal work, activities can be differentiated according to a general structure, active in each specific context, which specifies the rules for social interactions within that context. The organization of activities—structural and functional—hence, may promote cooperation, competition or individualism among the participants, depending on such rules. When the rules allow for just one winner, meaning, if only one person or group can achieve the goal while the others are necessarily excluded, competition prevails. When the goals can only be achieved if participants work together, we refer to cooperation, and when the achievement of the goal is independent of others' participation, the activity certainly encourages individualism. Here I revisit the results of two different research projects where we demonstrated the power of the structural/functional organization of activities over the kind of interactive pattern fostered in different contexts.

Branco and Valsiner (Branco, 1998; Branco & Valsiner, 1994) carried out an experiment in Brasilia that well illustrates the interplay between cultural canalization processes and the dynamics of social interactions. The experiment goal was to investigate the microgenetic flux of social interactions among 3 years-old children in structurally different situations. We invited two triads (two boys and one girl) to participate of six experimental sessions (each about 25 min), followed by a test situation session. The baseline observations of children's free-play and all experimental sessions were videotaped.

The observation sessions with children's triads aimed at creating an arrangement sufficiently non-complex for the purposes of analysis of their social conduct, as well as rich opportunities for interpersonal coalitions or confrontations in the task-oriented contexts. The selected children showed neither excessive social inhibition nor dominance during baseline observations. An additional selection criterion was the absence of a history of close interaction between members of the triad. The toys and objects used during the sessions were selected to keep up children's motivation to participate, providing possibilities for the emergence of different kinds of action's coordination. For instance, we used wooden blocks, a family-doll set, puzzles, bowling game, and other play materials that proved to be interesting to the children.

One triad participated of cooperative activities, and the other, of individualistic/competitive activities. In the 'cooperation' context, we asked children to interact with each other in order to build a unique structure from small pieces of a same material, or asked them to play together within a fantasy-play context. In the 'individualistic/competitive' context, we asked children to play alone, saying that later their tasks' productions would be registered and exposed for everyone's

appreciation. For instance, the adult took photographs of their constructions in order people could later choose which was the best one, or alternatively, we would register their individual scores during competitive games on a cardboard.

During the test situation, we instructed both triads to perform the very same pretend-play task: to carry around a big doll, supposedly ill, to be undressed, "bathed", "dried", dressed again, carried to the "hospital", "examined" and ""medicated", and, after that, to bring her back "home". For sure, we expected different results for the two triads, but what we observed actually amazed us: the triad submitted to the six cooperative sessions showed a cooperative interactional pattern during 81% of the test session, while in the other triad (individualist/competitive sessions) only 8% of the time was spent in cooperation between any of the participants (Branco, 1998). This result clearly demonstrates the power of cultural canalization processes.

Another study, by Palmieri and Branco (2015), found results along the same line. The researcher asked two preschool teachers, from different institutions in Brazil, to select, organize and develop an activity meant to promote cooperation among their students. One teacher, despite asked to promote cooperation, clearly promoted competition as she invited children to participate of a competition game among groups. For the whole time of the activity, she cheered those who performed well towards beating the others! The second teacher did not promote competition, but promoted a mostly individualistic activity, because she oriented children to, individually, perform their tasks, one after the other, to compose a big poster to be exposed later on a preschool wall. The study, which encompassed other procedures, provided evidence that the teachers did not know the differences between cooperation, competition, and individualism. Needless to say, this finding was extremely worrisome and problematic.

In sum, we can conclude that specific activities are structured to create frames that favor particular types of social interactions. However, teachers are *not* aware of that. They are not aware that their *values* and *beliefs*, concerning the importance and appropriateness of individualism and competition, end up prevailing in the activities they plan, organize and develop with their students within the school context. Consequently, if we expect to change the direction of socialization processes within educational contexts, teachers need to become aware of their activities' selection and their own way of interacting and relating to each other and to their students, deconstructing the old historical-cultural taken-for-granted conviction (value) that competition and individualism are the best way to promote learning and human development. Because *they are not* (Branco, 2009, 2015; Dumont, 1993; Johnson & Johnson, 1999, 1989; Kohn, 1992; Lash, 1982; Slavin, 2009; Sennett, 2004, 2012).

Conclusion

In this chapter, my point was to stress the major role played by the quality of socio-affective interactions that take place within classrooms and other school contexts. I especially emphasize the role of trust relations (McDermott, 1977), and

teachers' high expectations concerning their students as human beings (self-fulfillment prophecy, Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Consequently, we need to invest in working with issues related to human communication, values and beliefs regarding human development and education in the contexts of educational institutions, particularly with teachers.

Teachers must understand the importance of their daily interactions with students, and with each other, in order to foster trust relations, cooperation, autonomy, creativity, and self-development. By assuming constructive values and beliefs concerning the value of human communication and relationships, they can promote activities that will facilitate dialogue, collaboration and reflexivity, all contributing to a deep sense of social responsibility and democratic negotiations. Such well-intended, critical and democratic negotiations will favor the constructive transformation of educational institutions. Cultural psychology, thus, can help providing the tools and strategies to change practices and meanings in order to promote societies characterized by democratic and ethical principles, translated into everyday activities. This is the only way to transform and create a better world and a life worth living. In conclusion, schools should plan their activities beyond granting their students the mere acquisition of useful knowledge, skills and abilities to later engage, successfully, in professional activities . They should also, and very importantly, pursue the fulfillment of their mission of fostering the development of ethical, critical, autonomous, morally responsible and cooperative human beings.

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Chapter 3
Distributed and Participatory Creativity as a Form of Cultural Empowerment: The Role of Alterity, Difference and Collaboration

Vlad P. Glăveanu and Edward P. Clapp

The mix and remix culture of the Internet is emblematic for today's rapid processes of social and technological transformation, with more and more content produced by people keen on participating, sharing, remixing and being in dialogue with others. New types of invention, innovation, self-expression, art making, communicating and civic engagement are now available, even if they might not always lead to positive or durable social change. The current age of connectivity has at least the potential to connect us, on a daily basis, to different people, different worldviews, different ways of being—in a word, to alterity. We should avoid, however, romanticising this state of affairs but also being overly pessimistic. This era of distributed knowledge and creativity might not have overcome previous barriers to participation (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushatma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006), but it certainly shapes how we see ourselves, how we deal with information and how we relate with other people, both online and in the physical world. The clockwork universe metaphor is replaced by a more dynamic, emergent, less predictable world, one in which linear relations and simple causality leave room for complexity, chaos and entropy (Montuori, 2011). These macro-social, technological and cultural shifts also encourage new perspectives on creativity, seen by many as a fundamental twenty-first century skill (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n. d.; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). If the psychology of creativity initially grew in the USA out of a Cold War mindset (see Weisberg, 2006)—which saw competition and the glorification of individual potential as keys to survival and growth—its contemporary developments bear the mark of today's ethos of collaboration, globalisation and participation.

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And yet, these times of transition are described by a rather unique combination of old and new ways of thinking and acting, of maintaining structures even when they are obsolete (for a military example, see Padfield, 1973), of generating new practices while placing them within existing categories. These unequal and often unsettling processes are taking place in many spheres of our individual and collective lives. They are particularly striking in education, where traditional conceptions of knowledge, the curriculum and assessment sit side by side with radical innovation prompted by the use of digital media and new forms of teaching, learning and evaluation (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013). At the same time, the educational sphere still largely relies on individualistic forms of achievement measured against standardised benchmarks of 'success' on high stakes tests that value right answers over experimentation, play and the exploration of new ideas.

The same applies to our understanding of culture. Beyond the walls of museums, art galleries, opera houses and the lists of 'geniuses' that are annually named by national and international foundations and academies, the production and consumption of cultural innovations now takes on a pronouncedly participatory dynamic (Russo, Watkins, Kelly, & Chan, 2008). This participatory dynamic equally plays out across the web, where young people and adults contribute to online platforms by uploading, remixing and commenting on content, on platforms like Scratch or Youtube—or by crowd-funding creative endeavours in the physical world via platforms such as Kickstarter and Inidie-go-go (see Literat, 2012; Literat & Glăveanu, 2016).[1] In all cases, new ways of 'thinking', 'doing' and 'participating' in creativity are at play. From creative products, the focus shifts to processes, from isolated creators to the relations between them, from revolutionary creativity to everyday expression and from isolated artefacts to evolving creative ideas. The old paradigm of the genius is constantly challenged by distributed and participatory accounts of people creating together (Clapp, 2016; Hanchett Hanson, 2015; Sawyer, 2007; Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009), engaging with the symbolic and material means of their heterogeneous culture (Glăveanu, 2010). Being creative in education is no longer reserved for gifted students (and teachers) (Kaufman, 2013). Being creative in relation to one's culture no longer means having your work exhibited in a museum or being named a 'laureate' in your field. The spaces, actors and means of creativity have been transformed.

It is this transformation in the direction of creative collaboration, participation and empowerment that we would like to address in this chapter. The basic premise we start from is that creativity is best understood as a form of cultural participation (Clapp, 2016; Gaztambide-Fernadez, 2013; Glăveanu, 2011a). And this participation cannot be reduced to generating 'high culture' but rather include more democratised, localised, and community-specific culture. What we define here as culture is neither the set of institutions and gatekeepers postulated by systemic models of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), nor the cluster of values and traits that condition our minds from the outside (a view specific for cross-cultural research; Hofstede, 1991). On the contrary, culture is for us the symbolic, social and material

[1] www.scratch.mit.edu; www.youtbue.com; www.kickstarter.com; www.indiegogo.com.

environment and ecosystem in which we develop and grow (Cole, 1996). This environment and ecosystem does not only surround us but also actively constitutes our psychological processes and guides our activities by providing us with the signs, tools and social prompts necessary to act on ourselves and on the world (Vygotsky, 1978). Last but not least, the interdependence between mind and culture (Shweder, 1990), marked by constant processes of internalisation and externalisation, of appropriation and self-expression, is at the core of creativity. In fact, creativity, far from the internal quality of specific individuals, is in our view precisely the phenomenon that occurs at the *encounter* between person and world (May, 1959). The technological and cultural revolution we referred to above is shaped and shapes this new meaning of creativity as a process embedded not in people but in relationships and socially situated ideas. This change of perspective has profound consequences for how we understand education, culture and ourselves. From creators as individual agents to creators as *cultural agents*: people who create culture with the means of culture, who participate and take ownership, collaboratively, of the various cultural environments they 'populate', from families and classrooms to offices and public spaces. Distributed and participatory creativity leading to a view of creative action as *cultural empowerment*: Seeing oneself as an actor and agent of change within more complex systems, giving voice and cultivating personal and collective agency (Clapp, Ross, Ryan, & Tishman, 2016). Creativity as a way of engaging with alterity and difference in today's changing world.

This perspective on creativity has its own historical roots. We build here on a wide array of scholarship, including systemic accounts of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1999; Gruber, 2005), participatory accounts of creativity (Clapp, 2016; Hanchett Hanson, 2015), participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, Ito, & Boyd, 2015a, b; Jenkins et al., 2006), connected learning (Ito, et al., 2013), cultural and developmental psychology (Vygotsky, 1978, 2004; Valsiner, 2000, 2007) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2000; de Sousa Santos, 2015). The authors above, each in their own terms, proposed dynamic, relational views of creativity and culture, a view of 'creativity that unites'. They stand in contrast to accounts of creativity that fragment and individualise it—what could be called a 'creativity that separates'. We start this chapter with a brief review of the latter and its consequences for self, others, education and culture. This helps us set the ground for distributed and participatory creativity and, most importantly, their connection to cultural empowerment. In the end, we reflect on the multiple theoretical, methodological and pragmatic implications of our new perspective—the 'creativity that empowers'.

Creativity that Separates

The scientific study of creativity illustrates a double tendency to separate. On the one hand, it separates the person of the creator from his or her environment and, going further, it tries to distinguish within the person between mind and body and,

within the mind, between different functions or processes that contribute to creativity more than others (primarily cognitive mechanisms). On the other hand, there is a separation at work between 'true' creativity and everyday life, between what is called 'Big C' and 'little c' creativity (Simonton, 2013). This separation serves to marginalise or exclude some individuals and communities from the discourse of creativity altogether (for example, children; Glăveanu, 2011b). These two tendencies are in fact inter-related. They arguably stem from the *individualistic worldview* (Slater, 1991; Hanchett Hanson, 2015) that permeates creativity theory and practice —and the *individualistic cultures* of the West, where many of the field's most authoritative voices have emanated from. The fact is that when we think about creativity we tend to think about people isolated from others and from context, including culture. By falling prey to the fundamental attribution error (Kasof, 1999), creativity researchers, particularly in psychology, achieve two aims. The first one is to adopt the reductionism specific for positivist science and, consequently, the aura of prestige associated with it. The second one is to be able to develop assessment tools (particularly psychometric measures) that distinguish between people and/or products that are more or less creative. In both cases, entities have priority over processes, componential models over holistic approaches, exclusion mechanisms over the potential for inclusion and collaboration.

This ethos is vividly illustrated by the strive towards 'parsimonious models' (Runco, 2015; Weisberg, 1993), models that include nothing else than what is necessary for creativity to take place. While the Ockham's logic has its benefits, its expression in the psychology of creativity often led to an almost exclusive focus on intra-psychological function at the expense of inter-psychological processes. The internalisation of creativity is obvious in research concerned mainly with establishing correlations or causal links between various inner attributes and creative outcomes: divergent thinking, lateral thinking, openness to experience, grit, intrinsic motivation, different neurological systems, etc. The problem in these cases is not being analytical but not being able (or interested) to reconstruct the *system* of creativity around fragmented findings.

Take the example of openness to experience, a highly popular variable in creativity research since the 1980s (e.g. McCrae, 1987). While it is interesting to learn that there is a relationship between this personality trait and creative outcomes, it is also clear that numerous contextual variables come into play in the relation between personality and creative production as well as in the acquisition of personality traits. It is perhaps comforting to think that one's research can focus on one level of the phenomenon and that of others cover other levels. And yet, a comprehensive view of what it means to create does not come from simply juxtaposing knowledge about different 'levels'; just like in the case of any other system, it is the *interaction* between levels that gains emerging properties and helps us understand the whole.

The outcome of research into the elements of creativity, taken separately, has more than conceptual consequences. It also helps legitimise creativity as an individual ability, a personal skill that is certainly worth cultivating. However, just like the 'inner' fragments of creativity are considered in isolation, so are creative people and their achievements. The cultural propensity, at least in the West, to celebrate

individual creators and overlook collaborative efforts is associated with increased pressures to be creative (particularly in the creative industries; Gotsi, Andropoulos, Lewis, & Ingram, 2010). Treating creativity and social recognition as zero-sum games favours competition instead of cooperation and this is reflected not only in organisational contexts but also in schools and after school programmes that explicitly promote innovation competitions, or more implicitly establish a culture of creative one-up-manship.

Previous research has shown that, when aiming to promote creativity in the classroom, teachers tend to design activities based on competition and individual responses even without intending to do so (Palmieri & Branco, 2008, 2015; Neves-Pereira & Branco, 2015). The discourse of lone creators is powerful enough to shape practice and separate rather than bring people together. Within the educational sphere, this takes the form of isolating young people who identify (or whom have been identified by others) as 'creative types' from their peers who may identify (or have been identified) otherwise—setting up a culture of creativity haves and have-nots with great social and academic implications. Even today's emphasis on group creativity and the use of brainstorming techniques can hide individualistic assumptions (Glăveanu, 2011c) by merely extending the myth of the creative individual to groups of creative individuals.

Finally, the logic of separation easily translates into the *discrimination* of people or communities with other ways of doing things or engaging in creativity. Too often, this discrimination falls along race and class lines, wherein the interests of the culture of power are emphasised over the interests of non-dominant culture (Clapp, 2016), through a process referred to by Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues as social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; see also Bourdieu, 1998). Western definitions of this phenomenon and the tests that derive from them often find, for instance, that participants from Western cultures tend to score higher than their counterparts in Eastern cultures. Is this because the latter are genuinely less creative (i.e., they miss the creativity 'skill'?) or less likely to express the kind of creativity asked for/assumed by the test? Even more, what if the test itself favours participants who have a schooling experience particular to Western societies—or, more specifically, dominant cultures within Western societies? (for the classic critique of intelligence testing, see Cole, 1996).

In conclusion, the 'creativity that separates' discourse disconnects self and other, mind and culture in the creative act. It has inscribed within it the values of positivist science (e.g., objectivity; for a critique, see Daston, 2007) and individualistic, competitive societies. It is further inscribed with social and cultural biases that privilege cultures of power over non-dominant cultures. In the West, this largely translates to the preferencing of white educated culture over the values and interests of communities of colour. While in most cases the researchers and practitioners who contribute to this general approach might be unaware of these values and the way they impact their work, the pragmatic consequences are clear. By creating divisions and legitimising certain people and discourses of creativity and not others, this approach favours the few and disempowers the many. By promoting assessment and intervention tools focused on the individual, it remains silent about the

contexts of creativity. More importantly, it overlooks the *shared responsibility* we have for cultivating creative expression in a participative, inclusive manner. And yet, this is not the only 'story' of creativity available. The counter-narrative, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, is on the rise. And it goes as follows.

Creativity that Unites

A relational perspective on creativity needs to start from recognising it as a systemic phenomenon (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Glăveanu, 2014). This means that creating is not only about thinking but acting, that this action is not solitary but collaborative, and that the interactions that foster creativity are embedded within a social and material context. This context, culture itself, participates *in* creativity and it cannot be disentangled from it as easily as 'parsimonious models' want us to believe. We create *with* and *for* others, with the means of culture that is both internalised (e.g., signs and symbols), constituting our minds as social and dialogical, and surrounds us (e.g., tools, technologies), constantly renewed through interaction and communication. The ideology of geniuses being able to create by opposing their society and culture and somehow changing them from the outside is not only misleading but *wrong*. While great creators do struggle against some of the norms of their culture and the views of other groups within society, they still do so with cultural means (at a most basic level, by using language) and inspired by the example of others. The same applies to all 'levels' of creativity, from professional to mundane. The implication is that, instead of being detached from society and culture, creators need first of all to be *immersed* within both in order to acquire and master the tools and resources that enable creativity. This basic premise was asserted by Vygotsky (2004) in relation to imagination, the process he placed at the core of creativity:

> Now we can induce the first and most important law governing the operation of the imagination. This law may be formulated as follows: the creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person's experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to. This is why a child has a less rich imagination than an adult, because his experience has not been as rich. (pp. 14–15)

Creativity is nurtured by the diversity of cultural experiences we acquire as we participate in our groups and communities. It is, at once, *enabled* by culture and it *enables* its growth and transformation by diversifying the range of experiences possible for both self and others. This is a view of distributed creativity, a creativity that brings together person and context, people and material objects, and recognises their participation and co-evolution within creative activity (Glăveanu, 2014). To consider creativity distributed means to postulate all creative action as *collaborative* (Barron, 1999). The chains of collaboration that make creativity possible are sometimes visible (as in, for example, teamwork), oftentimes hidden (for instance, when we build on the ideas of others, on the division of labour that generated the

tools we use, or create for imagined audiences, etc.). From this perspective, all creative outcomes are best considered *co-creations*. Our task as researchers is to unveil the interactions and collaborations that made them possible. As practitioners, we are called to foster these exchanges and foster environments marked by openness, diversity, mutual respect and communication. It is only by adopting a 'unified', relational view on creativity as a phenomenon that we become able to harness its own potential to unite people, contexts and experiences. It is ultimately a view that not only invites us to participate in culture but also empowers us to do so.

Creativity that Empowers

The view of creativity as a distributed phenomenon that connects us to other people and our world, that helps us participate in culture and, most of all, as a process that empowers, cultivating personal and collective forms of agency, is deeply linked to the *value of difference*, *relation to alterity* and *seeing the world as series of malleable systems*. Unlike past discourses of lone creators being empowered by their creative potential to, single-handedly, change their society and cultures (Montuori & Purser, 1995), sociocultural frameworks understand creativity as a reflexive, inclusive and participatory process. Cultural empowerment is a shared achievement, never an individual one, and the agency that carries it is equally shared, best understood as *co-agency* (Glăveanu, 2015a), *collective agency* or *collective efficacy* (Bandura, 2000). This is because agentic action is shaped by and shapes, in turn, the agency of others. As Bandura (2000) explained, 'a group's attainments are the product not only of shared knowledge and skills of its members, but also of the interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions' (p. 75). Creativity builds on relationships and differences in the very process of constructing common ground and shared understandings of the world. Yet, in a dialogical sense (Bakhtin, 2010), self—other differences and the creative tension they generate are never fully resolved. Creativity as cultural empowerment considers the ways in which, by using cultural means and in interaction with others, we turn *differences into resources* for creating new cultural forms and practices. The commitment to alterity embedded in this conception helps us rethink as well the ways in which we study and we cultivate creativity, including in educational settings.

In regards to alterity, it is well known within the academic community that diverse groups largely outperform homogenous groups in creativity studies (see, for example, McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996). While participatory approaches to creativity emphasise the role that diversity and alterity play in supporting co-agentic cultural empowerment and collective efficacy, it is important not to fall into the trap of advocating for diversity, while still maintaining traditional power imbalances. This is a hallmark of the 'diversity is for white people' critique (Berrey, 2015; for a specific case from the business field, see also Berrey, 2013), which argues that many institutions intending to promote diversity (particularly racial and gender diversity) do so only in name, and that non-dominant individuals do not stand to

benefit from such initiatives. In order to safeguard against this folly of diversity initiatives, we argue that perspective taking and understanding the positionality of oneself and others within a system (Clapp et al., 2016) is a key aspect of participating in creativity for cultural empowerment (see also Glăveanu, 2015b). To this end, issues of power need to be candidly and realistically addressed whenever issues of alterity and diversity are being discussed. For example, as authors of this chapter, we must be clear to acknowledge that we are both white males steeped in the culture of power, and our positionality and privilege shape our perspectives on alterity, diversity and cultural empowerment.

In relation to diversity, the study of creativity conceives creative outcomes as visibly different from what already exists (to the point where we can talk about a novelty/originality bias in creativity research) and yet favours similarity and consensus over difference in the way it assesses the creative process. Historiometric research is based on consensus between experts about the creative value of historical creations (Simonton, 1999), while most other creativity studies use expert judges and the similarity between their viewpoints as a basis for evaluating creativity (e.g., the Consensual Assessment Technique; Amabile, 1996). While useful for reaching a numerical expression of creativity that serves psychometric and experimental research designs, the strive towards similarity and consensus also legitimises certain views about creativity, about who and what is creative, at the expense of alternative positions (for a counter methodological proposal, see Glăveanu, 2012). This is how, for instance, the traditional, Western understanding of what it means to be a creative person is actively used to *silence* other worldviews, for example, those emerging from oppressed communities in the Global South (Glăveanu & Sierra, 2015). Traditional conceptions of creativity that ground it in the values of individualism, competition and consumerism, specific for WEIRD populations (Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic), leave little space for other ways of enacting and recognising creativity; for instance, its relation to nature, solidarity and social justice—or its relation to particular sociocultural orientations, such as blackness or Islamic culture. By promoting uniform criteria for the assessment of creativity and upholding them through the use of experts (usually reflecting a homogeneous cultural background), we legitimise consensual ways of being creative and discriminate against those whose conceptions and practices might be different from our own; the latter we end up calling non- or less creative, bizarre—or even dangerous.

This dynamic is particularly present in education. Traditional schooling has been said to 'kill creativity' for a long time (Torrance, 1967). The main explanation is that it tends to encourage convergent thinking—i.e., learning to reach the one, true, or right answer—and fails to foster divergence in the way students learn to think about themselves and the world. In other words, it favours sameness and consensus over recognising and engaging with *difference and diversity*. However, it is precisely in moments of rupture, when the taken-for-granted becomes questioned that new understandings emerge (Beghetto, in press). Being sensitive to the many differences embedded within the educational act (e.g., between students and teachers, between students themselves, between knowledge systems, values and so on) and,

most of all, *valuing* such differences, empowers creativity and participation. This recognition should not favour, once again, the uniqueness of individuals standing apart from their group and being distinguished by their personal qualities; on the contrary, differences are embedded within self—other relations and cannot be disentangled from their dynamic.

Instead of 'openness to experience', a personality trait that focuses on individual responses, we should theorise and promote 'openness to difference' in education, a contextual notion pointing us towards social relations and their situational unfolding (see Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2017, for a proposal in this direction). But ultimately, we should promote one's 'openness to participation': The ability to see the world as a series of complex systems that include other stakeholders, seeing those systems as malleable, identifying the role that oneself and others may play within those systems and then finding opportunity to effect change within those systems—through the collective engagement of one's self and others (Clapp et al., 2016). In this process, one's unique knowledge, skills and cultural perspectives are leveraged, but so too are the unique knowledge, skills and cultural perspectives of others (Clapp, 2016) in a collectively efficacious, non-exploitative manner. The creative classroom is not one in which all students end up learning the very same thing, nor one where all students *bring* the same perspectives to their collective learning experiences. It is neither one in which each student fights to promote his or her unique understanding. The creative classroom is the one where differences are paid attention to, discussed, leveraged, reflected upon, celebrated and further cultivated.

Conclusion

This chapter stands as an open invitation to consider what exactly we encourage in schools, in organisations, in our daily lives, when we promote creativity. What exactly stands behind this notion? What values and what histories underpin our fascination with creative people and processes? We are reminded that creativity is a relatively recent, 'modern' value (see Mason, 2003) and that, historically, we live in a rather unique age—one that opens itself, more and more, to novelty and difference, partially promoted by the rapid and irreversible social and technological changes of the past decades. In this new, dynamic context, *what does creativity stand for*? We have the option of continuing old associations with individual qualities, competition and the creation of economic value through incessant consumption and exploitation. This view, however, can serve to empower primarily those already privileged by their position and existing creativity discourses (think, for instance, about the easiness with which financially successful individuals are credited also with great creativity or the many icons of creativity who have benefitted from their white privilege). It remains, however, essentialist, exclusivist and divisive for society as a whole. In exchange, we have the chance, with the rise of digital media and other participatory technologies (Brennan, 2012), to reshape the

narrative of creativity and ground it in a new set of values—access, equity, inclusion, cultural participation, alterity, difference and collaboration.

Creativity as cultural empowerment is a view that respects individual contributions while placing them in a broader frame of community and society. It is a systems perspective of cultural engagement that promotes co-agentic action and collective efficacy that rises up all members of society, not just the (already) privileged few. It acknowledges creative thinking but integrates it within action and, particularly, interaction and communication. It does not deny the role of individuals and individual minds but gives alterity and difference a central role in the creative process. It pays attention to personal agency and yet defines it in terms of cooperation. It is a rewriting of creativity theory not only demanded by the very different, global world we live in today, but called for by the renewed challenges of racism, populism, isolationism, exceptionalism and exclusion that have taken hold in response to the globalisation and changing demographics that have begun to challenge the status and social position of traditional cultures of power. It is our responsibility, as researchers, as educators and, most of all, as citizens, to stand up to these powerful forces and cultivate creativity as cultural empowerment, give voice to difference, and foster meaningful collaboration.

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Chapter 4
Individual Achievement and Social Progress: Mending the Broken Alliance Between School and the Community in India

Nandita Chaudhary, Shraddha Kapoor and Bhavna Negi

One of the central contexts of childhood apart from family is the school. That is, if the child does attend school. A staggering 1.4 million between 6 and 11 years of age are out of school in India, among the top five nations in this category (Gohain, 2014). For these children, the fact of being out of school places several important limitations on what can be accomplished during a lifetime. For those that do attend school, the experience as a learner repositions their understanding of themselves and others, their own family, society and country to which they belong. In this chapter, we do not evaluate children for being out of school, since the circumstances that lead to such an outcome are often unavoidable, such as not having access to a school nearby. Yet, it is important to mention that Indian families universally believe in the institution of school and education as favourable for a better future for their children. No one sees the child out of school as a 'better' option, it is most often, a compromise made on account of circumstances. Thus, if a child is not in school, somewhere it is the system that has failed, either to reach the child, or has pushed the child out of school on account of unfavourable attitudes.

Neither do we place the past over present systems of education; choosing rather to use several studies, reports and primary data to contextualize the missing links between the learners' homes and school. While making a note of school influence on childhood, the authors also acknowledge the genesis of school in Indian society and its links within a larger global scenario as well as how fields of developmental psychology and education discuss concerns for the construction of childhood. For instance, if a system of education is a by-product of a colonial enterprise, the consequences for the local construction of childhood can have a significant impact on ideology. The model used for children may indeed follow a 'corrective' stance rather than a developmental one. This is an important question for an ancient culture

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that has historically passed through a great range of influences from within and outside. From ancient times, India attracted the imagination of travellers fuelled by the prospect of trade, power and prosperity. Millennia old traditions of the different communities have shifted in significant ways, but as Thapar (2014) writes, the past remains strongly evident in present-day India. In recognition of these features of cultural communities, several important observations and recommendations are made that may enhance the status of the child in the school-society interface.

School and Home in Indian Socio-historical Context

This section explores ancient and colonial systems of education against the backdrop of Indian learners. It examines some central themes like values and morals and their translations within home and school. The first understanding of school in ancient India converges with a form of school called *Gurukul*, whose literal meaning is Guru—teacher and *kul*—house; the house of the teacher. The *Gurukul* format of instruction in ancient Hindu society finds mention in mythological and religious scriptures. Some *Gurukuls* survive even today (Chandur, 2016). Students, usually boys, in this form of school, move out of their parental home and family and live in the teacher's home for several years up to early adolescence. Only when a learner is able to demonstrate eager enthusiasm and merit, the teacher used to take him on. In Hindu *ashrama* theory (Gandhi, 1955), this particular period in the life of an individual is labelled as *Brahmcharaya*, a period of study and scholarship, the learning of skills. A learner was expected to study and alongside also learn to care for himself and housekeeping. Education during the Vedic period was practiced with the objective of spiritual enlightenment. Although the *Gurukul* may have been harsh in comparison with the comfort of a home, where a child would have family members to care for him, there was a consonance in beliefs and values, as is also found in contemporary *Gurukuls* (Chandur, 2016). The emphasis of this system of education for learners and their families focused on preparing for life rather than solely academic learning. The ancient education system had an institutional socio-moral obligation towards the society and the socialisation of young boys.[1] One central educational role was to align children to their caste sanctioned social roles for the future community participation. One does not find records of individuals or families challenging caste assigned roles against imposed social norms in the past (Mookerji, 1989).

The Vedic period followed 'dialogical or catechism method which was a compendious system of teaching drawn up in the form of questions and answers, or discoursing was the method in higher learning or the teaching of *Sastras*[2]' (Shodhganga, p. 36). Memorization also played a central role in learning. Indian society followed this form of the education system for around 25 centuries,

[1]Usually, only boys were sent to *Gurukuls*.

[2]Sacred scriptures.

which gave the educational systems a very strong cultural base. A separate space for learning emerged during Buddhist period (3 BCE onward) in the form of monasteries that had limited access only to Buddhist monks. Unlike the Brahmanical system, learning in these monasteries was based on conduct rather than external rites. Institutionalization of education and its socio-moral obligations in a student's life were imperative in this form of education.

The institutional educational learning continued in the form of *Pathashala*s and *Madarsas* (Islamic schools of religious teaching) in medieval India. Continuity with traditional science subjects and influence of religious text and craftsmanship continued to be taught in these institutions. The educational system seemed to have a high degree of coherence with the sociocultural and ideological format of society. The indigenous education system followed traditional methods of instruction and was highly adapted to and closely connected with local ecologies and cultural practices. Girls and lower caste groups continued to have lower access to these institutions until social reform movements started.

This form of education was reviewed and transformed after the arrival of the British in India around 1800 A.D. (Visvanathan, 2016). When the visiting traders established British rule in India, a formal structure for primary, secondary and university education was implemented. The *pathshala*, with its mixed ages and cultural teachings was seen as inadequate and ineffective. Also, the exclusion of girls and lower castes was cited as a problem. Schools were meant to be 'secular'. However, with that shift, education was also transformed into an instrument of colonial dominance. The aim and purpose of education changed to support the colonial rulers by preparing students as subjects to be ruled. Separate schools were established for the children of the British officers and administrators, and separate ones for the other ranks. Inequality remained, but it was an inequality between the English and Indians, rather than among Indians. Major changes were made in the teaching of English and other subjects. The curriculum was designed so as to make it easier for the British to administer the country (Devy, 2017).

Alongside this, missionary schools had already been running in India. Christian missionaries from the sixteenth century onwards had travelled from different parts of the West to teach, and established schools in far-flung and remote areas as well as cities (Heredia, 1995). Among missionary schools, the evangelization of the local population was an important objective. Missionary schools are still running in the country. These institutions have contributed towards religious conversions, but for the most part, they simply offered an alternative school system even to the non-Christian that was highly valued, and is still valued in some parts of India.

Global Trends Related to Childhood

On the global platform, nineteenth century witnessed an overwhelming attention to children that spearheaded the ideology of 'protection and care' of young children by keeping them from participation in the workforce. Ethnographic studies (Flora &

Heidenheimer, 1981) suggest that institutions like orphanages and schools were favoured for the protection of children in Europe and North America. The 'child saving' movements in this period marked devising laws for security, compulsory school attendance and mass secondary school enrolment and placement in school up to adolescence. This period reflects that economically advanced societies made a significant shift from religious doctrine towards scientific research for developing educational institutions. The construction of childhood as a special period of the human lifespan also found important mention here. In fact, the emergence of school in technologically advanced societies during this period bore an overwhelming interconnectedness to the ways in which sociopolitical construction of childhood evolved.

Trends in India

The present day conceptualization of the school in India can be traced back to the missionaries as early as the sixteenth century and later in the colonial state by Lord Macaulay in the 1830s. Thapan (2014) emphasizes that the present system of schooling in Indian has been heavily influenced by the colonial pattern regarding curriculum and school administration. The modern day school carries timetable-based activities and teaching strategies that are distinctly British in flavour. This fact may leave local populations at a disadvantage, although the upwardly mobile, educated Indian family remains quite comfortable. The appreciation for English literature and economics elevated during this time. Another feature of the educational system during the colonial period highlights access to schooling for girls as well as children belonging to the lower caste or untouchable Hindu families. Nambissan (1996) notes,

> British policy documents relating to the education of the untouchables reveals a dualism following from a liberal stance on the one hand and a tendency to compromise with dominant caste pressures on the other. (p. 1011)

Thus, local inequalities perpetuated in the form of class differences, although gender and caste had been somewhat neutralized. One of the important contributions to the education of girls came from the establishment of separate girls' schools by the missionary as well as the DAV (Dayanand Anglo Vedic) schools. The latter institution was established in 1886 with the objective of setting up secular educational institutions (schools and colleges) for Indians with the secular outlook of the Aryasamaj movement of Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekanand, even though they came under the umbrella of Hindu teachings. Presently, there are 800 + schools and 75 colleges and one university being run by DAV educational society.

Educational Thought and the Contemporary School System

The authors of the Constitution of Independent India envisioned a nation with a strong educational foundation free from hierarchies of colonial rule, from the outside, and caste, gender, class, region, language and accessibility, from the inside. However, it became difficult to start afresh and after 200 years of colonial rule, the impact had been deep and profound. Some grappling educational challenges for the independent India were resolved by establishing structures such as the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1948. However, there were several challenges to the establishment of a local agenda for education completely fresh and independent from the past. Inevitably, the tried and tested ways of missionary and colonial schools sustained in important ways.

Orality is a strong feature of Indian local communities. Rampal (2007) refers to this tradition of learning that was utilized during adult literacy programmes in India. In an article about everyday life mathematics, the author notes that teaching math to adult learners who already has functional oral knowledge in managing their daily chores with numbers and measurements requires special strategies. The process of learning for an adult is far from linear, the author explains. They grasp higher mathematical tasks confidently, and this is facilitative in their market transaction. Another aspect of this learning was that adults followed non-standardized/conventional methods in their oral arithmetic strategies to deal with their daily transactions. Children who live in primarily oral traditions, like first generation learners, are also likely to have related patterns of learning which schools must address. Strategies for meditating knowledge exist in all traditional societies through socialization practices, informal and formal teaching (Devy, 2017). Additionally, local communities always have rich resources of knowledge that are part of social learning. The spread of modern education in India (from the time of independence, 1947), based on the scientific rigour and technological development, is likely to take a corrective position on traditional learning. Traditional systems of education would need to be replaced in order to break away from the old and bring in the new, with an ideology that seriously distances folk wisdom from the classroom.

An interesting theory about the linkages between school and society advances a proposal that school and societies reflect each other not only in terms of what is taught to society members in school but also how schools are organized and how they function (Feignberg & Soltis, 2004). They chose three umbrella terms as heuristic devices for convenience to explain how societies socialize their members through the kind of school or education they participate in while growing up: ‘functionalist’, ‘conflict’ and ‘interpretivistic’, each with different consequences for school-community linkages.

In general, the ‘functionalist’ generally sees schools as serving to socialize students to adapt to the economic, political and social institutions of society. School is believed to serve latent functions like producing people who share basic eco-political and cultural practices and norms of the society. In the functionalist

paradigm, school is seen as vital and integral to the socialization of future generations. From the 'conflict' perspective, mentioned in the previous paragraph, schooling is visualized as a social practice that supports and is utilized by those in power to maintain dominance, whereas from the interpretivist approach it is believed that 'to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it' (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Thus, the social world is believed to be a world made of powerful actors who acquire, share and interpret a set of meanings, rules and norms that make social interactions possible. Children in schools should learn society's ways of life through songs, fables and other cultural resources (Howe, 1998).

The forerunners of Indian educational reforms already understood the serious issue pertaining to the fusion of modern education with local traditional community practices and their implications. The coherence between Knowledge and Work was emphasized in *Nai Taleem* (new teaching), an educational concept proposed by Gandhi (1955). He talked about bringing a transformation in the structure of education that was heavily dependent on textual and abstract knowledge, and which favoured upper caste groups. He believed that reforms were needed not only to decolonize education, but also to free the classroom from local inequalities. The possibility of going back to the traditional education system was also not very attractive.

The pioneers of Indian education envisaged the role of education for rural and urban poor communities, for their progress. The possibility of bringing in manual work like spinning yarn[3] and weaving, and other local community work practices into school curriculum was emphasized under Gandhian philosophy. *Nai Taleem* talked about a school built up onto strengthen local practices and knowledge with access to everyone and independent from the interference of the State. The Indian State woke up to its dream of educational pursuits, which was centrally regulated by the government and had a large stake in planning and commissioning nationwide schools. The paradox between having contextual relevance while leaving behind unfavourable aspects of cultural practice was a clear vision in Gandhi's ideology, but one that continues to confound policy and planning for education even today. How to proceed with a developmental agenda for the future while taking along a specific selection of the past that has an important significance? In the issue of language of instruction and multiple language formulae, the tussle between mother tongue teaching-learning and the teaching of standard languages (Hindi, English and State languages) is one such issue that persists as a robust debate. Whereas, parents of all social strata clearly understand the importance of learning English and place it as an important expectation from schools, the loss of local languages in schools is a serious issue (Devy, 2017; Mohanty, 2006). Similar problems arise in teaching math and other concepts. There are some difficult questions—how much and how should local contents and methods be incorporated within a multicultural

[3]Gandhi was well-known for his promotion for spinning cotton yarn and making fabric from that. He promoted this and other skills for children at school.

system where teachers are not always from the children's community, also considering that each classroom is likely to have ethnic and linguistic diversity?

The modern education distanced itself from regional and local practices and the two worlds of knowledge, one coming from family and communities, and other from the school, ended up dividing and distancing the Indian learner from community life and local culture. Education as a central force to cut across several hierarchical socially stratified themes has not been very successful. The independent India witnessed a strong arrival of class systems wherein the upper and middle-class families have better access to knowledge and easier access to schools. Some concerns for Indian education were caste, class and modern vs. traditional values in school functioning (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1984).

Although repeated committees recommended the use of local languages and strategies, regional languages and context-bound learning as prime pedagogic thrusts, it was far easier said than done. The fate of first generation learners, especially rural and tribal children met with high dropout rates from the school, a more appropriate expression would be that they were pushed out! School dropout was mainly seen as a child's individual inability to cope with the educational system. Marginalized and poor families struggled to send their children to school without much to gain. On several instances, when a child could not attend school for several days on the pretext of family responsibilities then parents were scrutinized for their anti-school attitudes. Their motivation to participate and send their children to school was questioned. However, for families working in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and other similar occupations with seasonal variation in work and the need for temporary migration, this became an unfavourable policy, and children were pushed out of school. Within schools, many children from a varied background fell in-between the two worlds of home and school, which could be conflicting and contrasting. In small experimental programmes, where NGOs made an effort to understand and adapt to local populations, though, the outcomes were miraculous. Experiments such as mobile schools, evening and night classes, brought children back to the classroom in large numbers. Yet these experiments were hard to apply on a large scale, and thus remained local, albeit very significant in the educational movement in India.

The conceptualization of educational themes in schools was also based on the individual achievements and scientifically acknowledged de-contextualized concepts towards the objective of finding a career and a vocation in the industrialized and urbanized world. Significance to traditional themes, local occupations and the ecological background was lost. Modern education heralded changes in society but not in consonance with Gandhi's *Nai Taleem* (Batra, 2005). India's diversity seemed like a mismatch with the enterprise of a unifying educational system. In many ways that remains true even today, but it has not weakened the magical belief in the importance of schooling as a fast road to a successful life.

Various kinds and categories of schools were envisaged on account of geographical diversity and socio-economic challenges. Despite the Ramamurti

Commission (1964–1966) recommendations stating otherwise, the system of education in States, categorized schools as Government, Central (Navodayas, Model, Sarvodyasa), Semi-private, and Private to address the schooling demands of learners coming from different communities and with different abilities (Kingdon, 1996). The investigation of educational access initiated with quality and equity concerns made it evident that children from poor families were (if at all) studying in government schools, where a minimal fee is levied. Learners from middle and upper strata families were attending private schools, where educational quality concerns were better addressed, and exclusive high fee-paying schools were available for wealthy families. This clear-cut separation of school type has sustained and become even more exaggerated with the entry of very high fee-paying international schools with international boards. Over the years, the phenomena of higher participation in education through private schools picked up in the rural areas and small towns as well, wherein dominant and affluent caste groups started sending their children to private schools (NCAER, 2011). The choice of spending money on fees for an 'English medium' private school began to be considered worthwhile even by poorer families (PROBE, 1998; ASER, 2014). The strong caste-based stratification of the previous centuries has now morphed into stratification as a new social-economic divide. The Ramamurti Commission laid an emphasis on a 'common schooling system' without any separation on quality, access and curriculum. Everyone was supposed to have equal access to schooling. But this is a distant dream for India. Schools still remain segregated and different communities and locations have differential access to the classroom. There are places where parents want to send children to school but there are no schools accessible.

Another aspect of schooling is linked to the creation of a 'distant knowledge' from that knowledge which is part of learner's context. De-contextualized and distant information is key to the development of literacy and education. Kumar (2007) notes the pedagogic culture and dual character of schooling as follows. The home and school are separated, and there seems to be no way of putting them back together. In India, we are struck by the assiduousness with which the linkages between home and school are maintained in a weak State, suggestive of a model that separates the worlds between school and home. All major enunciations of educational policy since independence have chosen to stay vague about culture, offering no idea of the use to which the child's experiences at home and in the community might be put to at school. In everyday life of Indian school, one finds the same indecision and reluctance by the teacher and the principal in the matter of drawing upon children's out-of-school life to scaffold their learning inside the classroom (Kumar, 2007, p. 203)

In the next section, we introduce several examples to elaborate on how the separation of home and school contexts throws learning challenges to Indian children. In a later section of the chapter, we discuss reasons and trends for the recent attraction towards private, fee-paying schools by families, even among the poor.

Indigenous Childhood Socialization: Family and School

Taking a cue from Kumar (2007), let us examine how schools conflict with local ecologies. As we know, along with the family school is a major socializing agency in the mediation of cultural knowledge for children. This becomes especially true in underdeveloped or developing worlds, where families may not have the resources or time over and above their sustenance activities to devote to children's learning. In this section, we will examine the close links between socialization practices within the family and school with reference to childhood. Within the family context, there is an important focus on attaining a 'functional membership' in any given society. Our academic understanding of adult–child and child–child relationships, and the familial role in childhood socialization have largely been influenced by the assumptions of a nuclear family with few children. This representation of family structure was highly invested in literacy, and inspired learning practices that are favourable to modern schooling, like reading to the child, dialogues with children, and face-to-face interactions. These practices are predominantly, and unconsciously, borrowed from a specific section of the West, the white-urban middle class (Henrich, 2013; Keller, 2007; Lancy, 2015). The indigenous view of children and family life vastly diverges from this ideology, even among affluent Indian families (Keller & Chaudhary, 2017). Along with a highly diverse within-country variation, this creates unfair assessments and unjustifiable expectations of children and families. In a community, where sibling care, multiple carers and multi-generational households are common, this ideological clash places unreasonable demands on children, in addition to overlooking local strengths and resources.

The industrial awakening and the colonial remnants witnessed a significant impact among Westernized Indians. The local community and families in Indian society has had the indigenous participation of children in familial chores. These were not, until recently, argued as interfering with school participation and school-based tasks at home, like homework and preparation for exams, but it became an issue under the emerging rights perspective. Traditional societies with strong agriculture-based economy like ours expected and trained children for participation in household, agricultural and animal husbandry tasks, as well as craft work (Lancy, 2015). Childhood socialization is intricately linked with adult roles and children's participation in home tasks as apprentices (Rogoff, 2008). Children work with their families in cattle rearing, sibling care, fetching water, assisting parents in small home-based business like milking, craft work and so on. This is a pattern observed among rural and tribal communities all over the world. A psychological concept often referred to as 'interdependent self' (Wang & Chaudhary, 2005) in societies where the relational values and practices prevail, brings another important point of diversion. In the PROBE report[4] (1998), it is discussed that family responsibility comes before self-development. For instance,

[4]Public report on basic education in India.

Fig. 4.1 Images of childhood and learning. *Source* Nandita Chaudhary

a father from a village in Uttar Pradesh who makes implements for the village is quoted as having said: 'If the demand for *khurpis*[5] is high, I keep my son Ramji at home to help me' (p. 35).

The indigenous socialization during childhood is organized around children participating in domestic chores and fulfilling family responsibilities of sibling care, cooking, tending to animals and other tasks. The notion of childhood free from household chores for school and study after school is both alien as well as a luxury for many. In emerging urban locales, one can often witness children engaged in such tasks, even when children attend school. There is also a clear emphasis on learning from authority and expressing obedience (Raj & Raval, 2012) (Fig. 4.1).

Despite the fact that schooling is respected and families have a great motivation to send children to school, seasonal demands in agriculture, for instance, place severe restrictions on maintaining the annual timetable of school attendance. Peak seasons of work and temporary migration can prove to be a hurdle to the annual system of learning and evaluation. When there is a conflict, family roles gain primacy over schooling as childhood experiences are believed to equip children for better participation in the roles as adults. Also, adults may have to move, or leave for the fields so early in the morning, that leaving children alone can become an issue of concern. A similar debate picked up by Lancy (2015) and other anthropologists (Bandura, 1977; Lancy & Grove, 2011) highlights the dichotomy between 'chore curriculum' and 'core curriculum'. The latter, found in schools, emphasizes a top-down approach while the former is informal and found in the social contexts of families and communities, where children assist, participate and fit-into become 'self-efficacious'.

In the Indian context, sociocultural constructions of childhood are significant for learning adult roles from an early age. These were not considered 'exploitative' in the socially situated and mediated practices interwoven within the community. One could find a strong justification for social development as well as the development of self and identity constructed around the familial learning for children. Most families also engage children in learning by observing others and doing in preference over instruction and explanation. Several psychologists link the

[5]An implement.

Fig. 4.2 Growing up in Non-WEIRD culture: An Indian case. *Source* Bhavna Negi, Nandita Chaudhary

'interdependent self' in non-western society as having a substantial effect on childhood learning (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). It also becomes vital to note here that the understanding of schooling experience that emerged as part of WEIRD[6] (Henrich, 2013) societies has neglected the childhood and schooling experiences of non-WEIRD cultures (Lancy, 2015) (Fig. 4.2).

Migration is common from villages and small towns to cities, and brings specific struggles for the family during and after the movement. Children and women seem the most under pressure in such circumstances; they have left the extended family and neighbourhood, where support could be sought. Yet for some, it is also a path away from rigid socially prescribed roles, and the anonymity of the city can bring relief. Undoubtedly, however, children find themselves in unsafe and even hostile situations of an unfamiliar city life, frequently remembering their native villages with joy and affection (Suneja, 2017). Migration can thus have many consequences, and one of them is changes in patterns of socialization to adapt to the new environment. Kagitcibasi (2007) argues that:

> A functional perspective proposes that those human traits and interpersonal orientations that are incompatible with the emerging environmental demands should and would disappear. Others that are not incompatible with new lifestyles and particularly those that are adaptive to them would continue. (p. 183)

This may relate to choices families make while determining the family size and number of children, occupation and other details.

Childhood and Expectations Towards School

The onset of institutional spaces for formal learning should have attempted to strengthen childhood learning without stigmatizing their contexts. In schools, where indigenous learning is sensitively positioned in the school space, increased

[6]Western Educated Industrialized Rich and Democratic.

participation and enthusiastic learning have been experienced (CECED, 2015). Placing the ecological features of the community and their cultural practices in a favourable light enhance community participation and children's attendance in school. Schooling demands five to 6 hours every day, with a minimum of 180 days in a year. This is easily accomplished in urban environments, but among the rural and tribal families that live with the vicissitudes of nature, this often becomes demanding and schools need to be adapted to the daily and annual routine of the community for reducing school dropout. A public report on basic education (PROBE, 1998) affirms that the persistent lack of participation in schools of many children among rural, tribal and urban poor communities, as well as the overall performance of the children at school compounded by low attendance, indicate a great need to adapt schools to the local community life.

Local sociocultural practices generally remain outside the walls of schools. Historically, the British perspective placed native learners in an isolated, unaddressed and secluded position in classroom transactions, and their (the natives') representation in school curricula was marginal or absent (Jhingran, 2009). The process of schooling which emerged more as a complex phenomenon of addressing childhood as a distinct stage of curriculum-based learning missed giving due consideration to local cultural nuances. From some perspectives, schools can be seen as cultural violence (Valsiner, 2003).

In Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the sub-stage corresponding to the school period outlines several important accomplishments in scientific thinking about the world. While looking at the scientific understanding of children engaged in work with materials as part of their everyday lives, research has shown that children are able to master cognitive tasks like conservation earlier than expected (Mwamwenda, & Mwamwenda, 1989). The primacy of several human development theories contributed to epitomise schooled childhood in industrialized societies as the highest human achievement. At the same time, theories are unable to incorporate context, local and informal construction of knowledge and learning. There seemed to be a clear bias in theory and research, in favour of technologically advanced and wealthier societies. Situated, informal learning and cognition are either underestimated or ignored as the reasonable study of development must take into account the diversity of the context in which children develop (Keller & Chaudhary, 2017).

Many argue that the young child is overburdened by too much formal learning too soon. Many schools have become the antithesis to the learning centres that they claim to be. A child who is unable to keep pace with the schedule and fit in with the calendar of schooling is pushed out of school. Small wonder that there are so many children out of school; yet, it remains a mystery that people still believe in the magic of schooling, it is still believed almost universally to be a place that will transform the child's life through learning. Often a child may be lost between family and school and may feel alienated in either or both places. We need urgent attention to many of these issues, and serious attempts are being made to consider children's and community perspectives in learning at school in different experimental projects in the country.

Indian learners and schools grapple with intrinsic social struggles. Many attempts to universalize elementary education fall short against caste-/tribe-based discrimination prevalent even in present times in certain pockets of the country. An episode was observed by a researcher (third author) as part of a national study on evaluation of State education services at Tonk, district in Rajasthan. During a survey on community perceptions of alternative schooling, we came across a family belonging to Sansi tribe. This tribe has a traditional role of being sex workers in the community. An interview with one mother revealed that the dominant caste group (some other caste) of the village interfered with the education of her daughters and one of them were able to complete schooling. She said (translated here from Hindi), 'When my daughter walks down to the school, she is chased and teased by boys of higher castes. In the school, these boys even drag her out on occasion, and no teacher dares to intervene in this abuse'. She reported that, once, her house was set on fire in response to the persistence of her daughters to attend school (Evaluation Report on AS/EGS, EDCIL, 2002). The system failed to protect this family and did not support them in their endeavour to send their daughters to school, after which they dropped out. School-community relations in India experience many challenges, both from within (between school and community) and outside (political, national level issues). The sheer extent of the problem in terms of numbers is mind-blowing. And, yet, as Shukla (2016) argues, a lot of ground has already been covered. We just need to continue working in the directions that have proved to be beneficial.

Bucket Versus Book

A news item on an Indian television news channel (Inter Press Service News, May 3rd, 2016) showed how an adolescent girl died while fetching water for the family in a drought struck village of Maharashtra. The reporters view was that this death occurred due to cruel treatment by the family as they expected their young daughter to fetch water.

Families are seen as sites for childhood victimization and abuse and the roles (or lack thereof) of the communities, government and governance in alleviating natural and man-made calamities was not emphasized. Is it simply, the parents' fault? Or is there a failure of the government to ensure the basic requirements of tap water to every family? It is easy to place the sole blame on the family for not sending children to school, but this blame gets the State off the hook for not providing basic services to citizens.

The centrality of gaps between home and school is captured in the 'bucket *versus* book' debate. In areas of scarcity, and absence of running water, fetching water for the home every day is an important time and energy consuming task. The primary metaphor for home-based learning could be any artefact or purpose-based task like fetching water. In families living in remote areas, members contribute to these everyday tasks that deal with ecological adversities for the purpose of survival and

adaptation. When the bucket is replaced by textbooks at school, that is, when children go to school, their participation in sustenance tasks is replaced by formal learning. This leads to a fundamental shift. Although the circumstances of family life do not change, the children who shared some of the work are now missing since they attend school. This creates an inadvertent conflict that needs attention in order to find solutions for families, instead of simply dismissing this as exploitation of children.

If a book in your hand is able to alleviate water scarcity, the purpose of education is met and schooling will naturally take over as the next social agency after the family for childhood learning. This scaffolding from homes to schools as socializing agency is found missing in the Indian children's learning amalgamation. In a recent article, Ojomo (2017) argues that poverty alleviation programmes have failed in their efforts for many reasons. He felt that had society worked more systematically towards creating prosperity rather than fighting poverty, there would have been greater success. The family needs an immediate solution for water; that is something that needs attention along with school participation, health and survival. For increased school attendance, Government should focus on the pressing issues that force families to keep their children away from school.

The schooling experience for most of the Indian children also witnessed constructing their knowledge exclusively around the informed school curricula that most often does not acknowledge the ecological setting, family background or learning environment at home. In fact, the informal learning at home is either questioned or dismissed, something that needs to be discarded. This creates an unfortunate cycle of meanings for the child. An ethnographic study conducted by Sarangapani (2003) reveals how the traditional ways of learning, rested on memorization, were replaced by learning through understanding and raising questions.

> In fact, in the popular, progressive, child-centred approach to education and learning, memorisation is the least important aspect. It is even felt that memorisation is contrary to learning and comes in the way of real/true learning and understanding. There is a feeling that only when one does not understand, does one resort to memorisation; memorisation is thus taken as indication of non-comprehension" (Sarangapani, 2003, p. 178).

In this manner, a whole system of traditional instruction is discarded with a single stroke. The author notes that the pedagogic thrust on child-centred learning that focuses on understanding concepts conflicts with the traditional ways of learning through memorization. Surely multiple modes of learning can be and are being adopted in some institutions with high success.

Another common perception about children and education is that children from socio-economically marginal families do not participate successfully in schools. The ground facts problematized and highlighted, as the family poverty and parental illiteracy, form two central concerns for unschooled or poorly performing learners. Several answers to these disconnected stories and assumed apathy of poor families towards schools and their own educational pursuits are articulated by education reports (PROBE, 1998; ASER, 2014). Two central debates highlight the children's struggle: The 'work versus study routine' and the 'burden of non-comprehension'.

The language, illustrations and methods of teaching and format of textbooks frequently remain alienated from children's local culture. In the absence of dedicated linkages made by committed teachers, comprehension is compromised on account of unfamiliarity.

Most learners, especially from rural India, are not able to read or write despite three to four years of uninterrupted schooling. The reading and comprehension of a child in grade 5 often corresponds to level 2 [Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2014]. Also, as discussed above, schools in rural India and small towns did not adapt to children's contexts and schedules. In the agricultural setting, a child could be away helping parents in the fields that results in expulsion from school. Issues of sibling care, domestic work and other responsibilities shared by children are not addressed, they are only attacked as being anti-school.

In a grassroots programme at an urban resettlement colony in New Delhi, the researcher (third author, field notes, Ankur Society for alternatives in Education, 2002) also witnessed a similar conflict. In afterschool remedial classes for the girls, aimed at pulling them back into school and preventing dropout by supporting learning, the young girls would often bring their younger siblings with them, what was not encouraged. Not accepting this reality was, in fact, seen to place a double burden on the carer, she was still expected to care for the child, but could not come to the learning centre because she had a younger sibling with her. The fact remains that children participate in family chores and sibling care and that should be handled with sensitivity, rather than otherwise. Another common problem was the regular return of these migrant families to their native homes, a place that all of them really valued. This was also seen as a conflict with schooling.

In order to strengthen school-based learning for children, Indian society needs to consider and complement the learning happening in children's home and school environments. The strength of family-based learning and child socialization if acknowledged at school, may build a grounded and enriched experience for children, instead of a disconnected one.

Getting to School

Beyond the access, quality and comprehension concerns that pose a challenge to the Indian learner, prominent social and psychological gaps also disconnect formal learning. The nature of learning emanating from family socialization processes demand acute obedience to authority while school learning is often enhanced by engaging children to question teachers in acquiring knowledge under ideal circumstances. The family performs its learning often through filial piety and cooperation, visible features of socialization in some cultures. School emphasizes competition-based individual achievements. Family socialization is often seen promoting sharing and social responsible cognitive behaviour while formal learning demands mastering abstract individual cognitive tasks. Serpell (2011) highlights

(while conducting a survey in a Zambian village) that notions of intelligence among children can have varied interpretations at the community and at the level of school.

Apart from the central struggle posed to the child and families in accessing school, several other features, like a strong link between early childhood education programmes and formal schools is found to have weak linkages in the Indian context (Mohite, & Bhatt, 2008). Several countries that boast of educational success have intricate community-based programmes that serve as a mediating link between homes and formal schools. Scholars highlight the positive schooling experience of children closely linked with their participation in early childhood programmes, especially for families with the poor economic background (Barnett et al., 2015; Boo, 2014). A systemic investment in childcare and formal learning readiness is evident through ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) programmes that have multifaceted benefits for the community.

One can also think of strengthening indigenous childcare practices, locally available models of mother–child bonding in addition to monitoring infant mortality, immunization boosts and school readiness through ECCE. Evaluation studies indicate that high-quality ECCE programmes reveal impact on several childhood social indicators, like malnutrition, stunted growth, endemic diseases and deficiencies (Penn, 2005). A pilot study in Jamaica (Grantham-McGregor, Powell, Walker, & Himes, 1991) found that stimulation and supplements have significant beneficial effects and the interventions, when combined, were significantly more effective for children in age between 9 and 24 months. A study conducted by Behrman, Cheng, and Todd (2004) in Bolivia with low-income children in urban areas, between the ages of 6 and 72 months, found that better positive cognitive and psychosocial outcomes were evident among children exposed to the ECCE programme early in life, and for more than a year.

In the Indian context, a strong linkage between ECCE programmes and primary schooling could be worked to find solutions to school dropout rates and poor academic performance in reading, writing and arithmetic (the 3 r's as these are known), provided the preschool is able to offer a better environment than the home. Community-based and State-supported early childhood programmes could help in increasing school enrolment, attendance and performance in school in later years.

India and Other Countries

Indian poor families are often labelled ignorant in terms of schooling pursuit. Such assumptions are often incorrect and unfair. Certain social variables, if consistently invested in by nations, show better universalization of education in a society. For instance, Cuban authorities recognized that achievement in education is related to the country's systematic approach to health and education services for its citizens, what initiated in the year 1960. Present-day statistics concerning literacy rates, eradication of certain diseases, public health, hygiene and infant mortality rate in

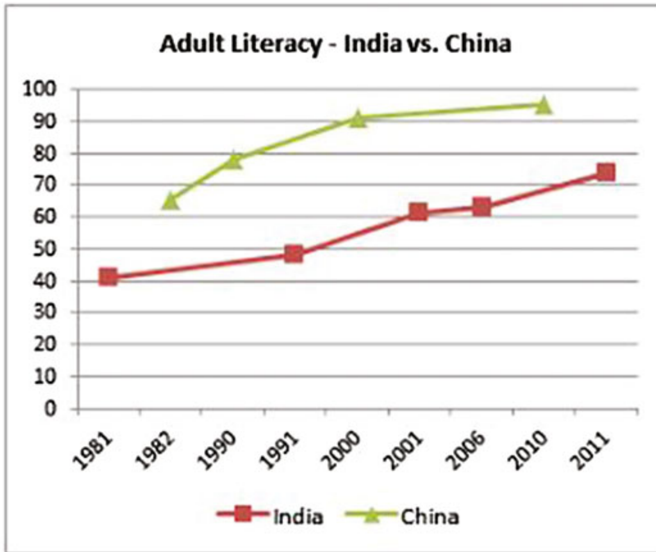

Fig. 4.3 Comparison of adult literacy. *Source* https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/why-china-ahead-india-fascinating-analysis-amartya-sen

Cuba stands at par with technologically advanced countries.[7] This kind of investment in the human sector is desperately required in the Indian policies and programmes. Several arguments cited in Drèze and Sen (1989, 2002, 2012) highlight the underperformance of India in terms of social indicators like life expectancy at birth, infant and child mortality rate, fertility rate, health and literacy rates to substantiate a low quality of life despite a higher GDP per capita income. A comparative analysis between educational reforms of India and China, as highlighted in Sen's work (James, 2013, p. 1), notes that

> [I]t is not the nature of government that is the main factor in China's success but its investment in health and education that provided fuel to its explosive growth. India has underinvested in these key areas and hence its economic growth is poorly supported by quality human capital […] countries could grow economically first and then invest in education later saying that it was the reverse that is true (Fig. 4.3).

According to a comparative analysis between India and other countries, Drèze and Sen (2012) found that in the neighbourhood, Nepal is almost at par on social indices with India with just one third the income level. Sri Lanka also is ahead on literacy levels in comparison to India, despite the absence of private schools. Even comparative statistical figures related to BRIC countries reveal that India is an exception on reaching success in universal, or near universal, literacy in younger

[7]https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/02/how-education-shaped-communist-cuba/386192/.

age groups, in universal child immunization, and also concerning the problem of child undernourishment, that has almost disappeared in China, Brazil and Russia.

Conclusions: Child Rights and Education

In the global south, cultural practices in traditional societies has confounded the inception of rights over and above socializing. In the Indian context, social-moral activities have close connections with, and are mediated through institutional agencies. The understanding of rights exists in the social fabric of Indian society, but it is mediated through local inequalities. A rich oral tradition of stories, like Panchtantra and Jatak tales, have an inbuilt purpose of socio-moral teaching regarding the responsibility of an individual towards others. The familial understanding of rights lies in socializing children towards the welfare and needs of other family members and the community. South Asian families emphasize and hold 'communitarian values' (Behera, 2007; Bhatia, 2007) towards rights unlike Europe and the U.S. Mutuality of rights and obligations towards each other is an integral complement to the issue of rights. This is a reality for the school-community interface in India.

Often at the State level, protection of individual rights is seen in legal provisions. On account of culture variability, the pan-national definition of an individual's 'right' may or may not correspond to social constructions in the numerous and widespread populations within India. Regarding the issue of children's work, for instance, the recent addition to Child Labour Amendment Bill (2012), wherein a provision to legitimatize family work by children below 14 years, has been hotly debated. On the one hand, activists claim that this waters down the bill against child labour, and on the other hand, communities of agricultural and craft workers are heavily dependent on the work by children in subsidiary tasks. 'Child's work' within the family has been contested by several international and national agencies including UNICEF and *Bachapan bachao andolan,*[8] a local NGO working against child labour. Most critics highlight that the addition to the bill would further escalate the victimization of children, especially among the poor. The contrary viewpoint is that a family has a right to expect participation from children in a family occupation that should not be treated in the same way as factory work. Another point in this debate is that whatever work children do (whether at home, at a workshop or a factory), participation in work does conflict with universalization of education, since children are not able to attend school regularly when they work. Here, we find many complex issues related to family life and school attendance, especially for children living in rural, tribal and urban poor families.

The supplementation to the Bill clearly voices and treats the rights of children to participation in cultural and familial enterprises. In the implementation of the Right

[8]Campaign to save childhood.

to Education Act (RTE), India is one of 135 nations that have attempted to make free and compulsory education of children a responsibility of the State. The constitutional commitment through RTE to ensure mandatory schooling for children is a big promise by the nation. However, an act cannot ensure education. The implementation of RTE could have better addressed children's rights if every school also shared the responsibility towards children. Similarly, reserving 25% seats for EWS (economically weaker sections) in leading public schools as part of RTE will not ensure the marginal learner's participation, adjustments and adeptness in the classroom, although some schools are running successful programmes under this provision. Approaching a learner's rights through quota reservations in education (for economically and social disadvantaged families) is problematic at level of processing and implementation. Often, learners from deprived backgrounds could be bullied, isolated, and thus unable to cope with academic demands that may deny their rights in the educational institutions meant to take them in. Further, these positions only articulate the linear understanding of rights as facilitative under certain conditions or environments. There is no best way of ensuring the rights of children. All partners (schools, family, State) have to keep a keen watch on local dynamics to ensure children's access to and attendance in schools. Rights exist and emerge in contextual interactions and this plurality to its understanding is vital. A link and audit to socio-moral perspectives in our society is thus a prerequisite in answering several issues related to children's rights before we arrive at a system that is effective.

In Indian society which is at the brink of transition while deeply imbued with tradition, the perception of child rights, schooling, education and several other social parameters on the ground level need careful understanding before becoming aligned with a universal mandate. Local realities of education should take precedence over the national and international ones. The diverse contexts in which learning takes place must be acknowledged as there is no singularity in achieving education, the multiplicity and diverse developmental issues need recognition. The missing links need to be found and addressed.

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Chapter 5
Identity and Belonging in Third Culture Kids: Alterity and Values in Focus

Esther Sofie Fanøe and Giuseppina Marsico

With increasing globalization, the number of people living outside their home country continues to rise. This is true of both refugees and asylum seekers, as well as employees on international assignments, and, consequently, more research is done on the effects of leaving one's home country, and the challenges it causes in identity development and feelings of belonging (Mann & Heineck, 2012; UNHCR, 2015). One group, in particular, stands out, as it does not really fit into the category of being forced to move, nor choosing to move. These are children of families that move to work in a country other than their own. These children are forced to move because their parents choose to move, and their number is increasing on the global scale, as international travel becomes easier and companies expand globally.

This chapter is an attempt at conveying the research made in the area of expatriate kids and individuals who have grown up outside of their passport country. We focus on identity and belonging, concepts that will be clarified primarily using theories presented by Pollock and Van Reken (1999), Erik Erikson, and some other theorists. In the next section, these topics are analyzed and discussed. It introduces key terminology and relevant theories as well as the methodological background and historical context of the research we use to illustrate our contributions on the subject.

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Identity Formation in the 'Global Village'

The world around us is growing infinitely smaller. First, the world was bigger, but then came better ships, followed by planes and phone lines, and now we can get reliable internet connections allowing us to communicate instantaneously with people all over the planet (Moore & Barker, 2011). The world became a 'global village', and as such, travelling abroad became easier and more usual, and the number of families living outside of their passport country has increased exponentially in recent years (Knell, 2001; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Immigration is common, and as of 2010, 216 million people (3.15% of the world population) lived outside of their respective home countries.[1] This number is likely to have increased following the war in Iraq/Syria and the exodus of people from Africa to Europe.

A person may feel forced to leave their home country due to circumstances such as natural disasters, job scarcity or war, resulting in refugees and asylum seekers migrating to countries where they may have a better chance of survival or prosperity. Also, a person may choose to leave their home country in search of a better life ranging from migrant workers to highly educated people working in typically highly paid positions. In all cases, children will also be leaving their home country to accompany their parents, and, similarly, will have to face the challenges of rupture and transition. The difference, however, is that children and adolescents are more fragile, since they are still working on understanding themselves and their world.

While the formation of identity begins in early childhood, more individual identity development is centred around adolescence and early adulthood. During this time, the main factors influencing identity development are family, peers, school, community and culture, as the individual constructs a narrative and sense of self-continuity. At the same time, become very important to find a place to belong to, as well as feeling accepted and part of something is very likely to enhance the meaning of life (Lambert et al., 2013). The question, then, is, what happens if you grow up as part of different cultures, where 'home' is not necessarily your passport country, and as you grow up you are no longer able to simply consider as home 'the place you live currently with your parents' (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999)? This speculation is the reason for this chapter.

As the authors of this paper, we too have a personal interest in the topic. The first author has lived in several countries since childhood, have friends up to nine time zones away, and have spent several years at the international schools. She knows from first-hand experience how culture influences identity, and that life can be filled with adverse difficulties when you live in a country that you do not consider as your own.

The second author has built her professional and personal life among many countries, many universities and homes, travelling quite a lot all the time and constantly experiencing the feeling of being 'in-between' people and different social settings. This work, therefore, aims at illuminating the psychological

[1] See https://peoplemov.in/.

experience of people that struggle with identity and belonging and with the dialogicality of encounters with the *Alter* as one of the highest human value.

Migration as a Human Movement Across Borders

Humans are migrants. A migration can be temporary or definitive; can be individual (Marsico, 2016) or collective; it can happen within the same territory (e.g. from South to North in Italian immigration flux) or outside it, overcoming its borders (transnational or transcontinental emigration). It can be imposed by some specific circumstances as in the case of refugees or voluntarily chosen (Gypsies or Bedouins) or, even, ritualistic as in the case of pilgrimages (Beckstead, 2012).

Moreover, human history provides evidence of many sociopolitical locomotion and encounters with the others: conquest of a new land by war, occupation of foreign territories by missionaries to convert the autochthons to a new religion, educators' attempts to introduce new schools in different sociocultural contexts, merchants' travels worldwide to find new markets for commercial purposes and so on.

A migration is a rupture in a cultural continuity. The shift in people's place—with its already well-known symbolic system—means primarily entering a new symbolic realm, and encountering a new cultural texture where different social norms, moral values and religious orientations are in place. From here, the risk of cultural misunderstanding is very possible. In contemporary globalized society, such intercultural frictions in everyday life are likely to increase and generate tensions and conflicts that become more evident when ethical behaviors are at stake in a specific context. All this call for a never-ending process of relocation and adaptation to the new cultural setting (Zittoun, 2007, 2009; Valsiner, 2014), with relevant psychological implications for identity (re)definition and for the re-modulation of interpersonal relations among members of the same group—as in the case of migrant families—and between social groups. It raises some crucial questions about how individuals live 'between societies' and how they construct their life's trajectories under the double culturally guided prescriptions provided by both native and host communities. In the same line, one may ask how the complex process of self-identity construction and the meaning-making about 'others' occur in our multi-ethnic and multicultural society, and what kind of relationship exists between an ethnic group and a specific territory.

From a cultural psychology perspective, cultural identity has been conceptualized as a never finished result of an interactional context-dependent process where individual and collective levels are in a mutual shaping relations. Despite this model of *feedforward loops* (Valsiner, 2007) among these dimensions is progressively filtering in contemporary social sciences, the overlapping of group identity and a specific geographical territory (so-called 'ethnic space') keeps playing a strong role in everyday discourses about migration. This happens because the common element in all different forms of migration is the alteration of a given equilibrium in which the spatial component has a fundamental importance.

As Simmel (1971/1908) pointed out, when a foreigner enters a specific context, s/he produces a cultural and special disorganization. This 'intrusion' generates a possible collision between spaces which forces both migrants and autochthonous to redefine and re-measure their own spheres and limits with respect to others. The migrant will try to find his place within the recipient community, the autochthonous will defend what she considers her property. The result of such a kind of sociocultural negotiation is unpredictable in advance. Thus, after the mobility, it becomes evident another core element of migration: its deep uncertainty. Any migration evokes a transfer from one side to another, thus a boundary crossing (Marsico, 2013). But, also, any migration, or any social locomotion, displacement and subsequent relocation, represent an arena for studying the values of self and society (Branco & Valsiner, 2012), and, particularly, the specific helical nature of mutual in-feeding processes between values and practices. From a cultural psychology perspective, moving from one place to another means to deal with cultural practices that encapsulate values and with the always complex dialogue with the Alter, the one who is different from me.

Hence, the special case of expatriate children that live for a period of time outside their home country poses major questions like: Which are the processes involved in the construction and negotiation of human values in cultural meeting experiences? How do such values (like the sense of belonging to one's home nation and the respect for the other's cultural identity) work in the case of expatriate children? This is a particularly relevant topic to investigate all over our contemporary globalized world with the massive flux of migrations.

We may see people struggle with returning to their passport countries, others that choose living in a completely new country rather than return, and still others being unable to do a short assignment about 'symbols that are important to your nation', as, for instance, happened to a 17-years-old girl, who did not know to which nation she identified with. Figuring out one's identity and to where one belongs is hard enough for anybody at any age, but, predominantly, it is difficult at teenage. Yet, what happens when you have to accommodate several cultural identities and having your close relationships spread across the globe? These thoughts lead to the question: How does growing up as an expatriate child outside of your passport country affect the individual's sense of identity and belonging?

The Third Culture Kid Profile

There are many different reasons why a child may grow up in a country other than their home country. However, in this paper, we only focus on a subgroup. For example, we decided against including refugee children as well as asylum seekers because of the implications that may stem from being forced to leave your home country in this way, and the additional trauma these individuals are likely to have experienced. The focus here is on those migrants who live abroad temporarily as part of their job, and intend to return to their home country, whether military personnel, missionaries, diplomates as well as those] expatriates (expats) whose employers provide housing and schooling

for their children. This is based on the attempt to limit external factors and focus primarily on the consequences of transition and changes in the cultural context, as opposed to issues stemming from trauma likely to occur in the life of refugees and other ‘forced’ migrants (Betancourt et al., 2012, p. 628).

Internationally, mobile children and young adults have been given many names over the years, including cultural hybrids, global nomads and cultural chameleons (Moore & Barker, 2011). What these names have in common is an understanding that the individuals in question are able to move between countries and cultures effortlessly, and are able to adjust to their new surroundings with relative ease (ibid.).

In this chapter, we chose the term *Third Culture Kid* (TCK), the most commonly used to designate them, term that well describe the individuals we studied in the research. However, it is important to note that, in later years, the definition of TCK has evolved, and may now, depending on the context and authors, refer not only to “children whose parents’ work took them abroad to live” (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. xiii), but also to children of refugees, immigrants and others in similar situations. This distinction will be further explained in the next pages, and, at this point, it is sufficient to clarify that TCK here refers to children of expats who live abroad as part of their job. All things being equal, the main variable for these TCKs is that, compared to most other immigrants, they tend to have stable family backgrounds, are relatively affluent and have access to high-quality education. The expat children are, then, the focus of the chapter.

Identity and Belonging

Identity and belonging are both key components in a child’s understanding of self. As such, it is relevant to explore how the TCK lifestyle affects the individual’s understanding of who they are and where they belong (Meier, 2015). Identity construction involves defining who you are, what you value, and the directions you pursue in life, all vital issues for later becoming content and productive in life.

Belonging is a poorly defined concept, which is not thoroughly researched as is the concept of identity. Feeling a sense of belonging can, therefore, be seen as a colloquial term; however, it is nonetheless a crucial part of human life, being different from feeling a sense of identity (Moore & Barker, 2011), and being essential for feelings of meaning in life (Lambert et al., 2013). Next, we elaborate on theoretical aspects of the issue, and clarify how the psychological understanding of TCKs has grown and developed over the last century.

Historical Perspective on TCK

What means to be a TCK has changed significantly in the last 100 years. Because of the cumbersomeness of travel in the early 1900s and up until the 1950s, anyone going to live and work overseas would generally commit to a minimum of at least 4 years before returning home (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). This meant that the majority of TCKs born in this time were born in their parents' host country rather than their home country. Nowadays it is more common for pregnant couples to return home for the delivery of their babies, since travelling may take a few days at the most, rather than the 6–12 weeks it would take in earlier years.

Another notable difference between TCKs born prior to WWII and those born in the post-War Era was the number of children left in their home countries with caregivers, to ensure their safety and quality of education (ibid.). Many TCKs who grew up in those times went to boarding schools[2] and would only see their parents every few years. When air travel became commercial and travel times were minimized, families became more inclined to bring their children and home school them, but older TCK still had to struggle with a rather different set of identity problems than their younger counterparts.

Furthermore, for TCKs who did grow up overseas alongside their parents, biculturalism was often seen in a primarily negative light, as if it were an obstacle to overcome (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). American sociologist Robert E. Park (1928) claimed that individuals born and raised in different cultural contexts were marginal people, and argued that this marginality would lead to conflicts and a divided self. However, he still saw migration and the intermingling of cultures as beneficial for society in the long run, and discomfort would only be present for the individual. This type of conflict-centred thinking prevailed up to the 1990s.

LaFromboise et al. (1993) argued that only if a person's sense of identity is high enough, s/he will able to reduce the negative psychological impact of biculturalism and navigate this competently. However, while TCK lifestyle may hold unique challenges (Knell, 2001), the current literature also underlines its positive aspects; the joys, adventures and wonderful experiences TCKs get to be part of (Christensen, 1996; Knell, 2001; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999).

Although in the past decades, the literature in the field focused on the potential risks associated with the TCKs' identity development and sense of belonging, the TCK lifestyle is now considered something to treasure, due to an overall good experience (Moore & Barker, 2011). A thing to note, however, is that the TCK experience is ever changing, alongside what happens to the rest of the world. Now, and in the future, it is relevant to explore how the Internet, with its instant, portable communication tools, impacts over the way TCKs grow up, as well as their identity formation.

[2]This is the case of many Persian girls who were sent to study *in British Boarding Schools* because of the 1979 revolution in Iran and then have experienced separation from their parents and a relocation in a new culture, in a new educational setting, regulated by new institutional rules.

The Theoretical Framework: Identity and TCK

The following paragraphs focus on the theoretical framework of this chapter. The first section addresses the TCK profile, as this is a key concept for this paper. Subsequently, follows a section explaining Erik Erikson's understanding of the identity concept, also detailing its relevance for TCKs in particular, and the next section focuses on the significance of cultural identity in relation to TCKs. After that, follows a section elaborating on a more general view of self-concept and self-esteem as these pertain to healthy identity development. The reason for this choice is to show the implications of the TCK lifestyle in a more concrete way, as self-concept and self-esteem are less convoluted terms than that of identity. Finally, we look at the concept of belonging, and why it is important for TCKs and those who study them.

The TCK Profile

The term TCK was originally coined by Hill (1973), after she spent time researching Indian nationals who had received their higher education in Western countries, and American nationals living in India.[3] Later, David Pollock embellished the term, and his definition is the one most often used. According to Pollock and Van Reken (1999),

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background (p. 19).

Although each individual has a unique composition of countries and duration of stays, the common implications and struggles that come from experiencing new cultures and living a nomadic lifestyle result in camaraderie and common understanding. However, in what ways do such experiences affect TCK, and, also, how is this 'global citizenship' a sufficient form of identity?

Identity is a commonly used word, but its exact definition and understanding differ depending on the theoretical standpoint taken, and on where the focus lies. According to Erikson (1963), identity is composed of four aspects: individuality, wholeness and synthesis, sameness and continuity and social solidarity. These together represent a person's identity, without which a person will experience identity confusion; a feeling of inner fragmentation and an inability to make sense of where life is headed. He also sees that society and culture affect the individual's personality.

[3]For more information see Smith, TCK World https://www.tckworld.com/.

Erikson developed an eight-stage life cycle scheme of development that he called the eight epigenetic psychosexual stages of personality, each centred around a developmental crisis, which is understood as a turning point and to some extent the catalyst allowing the individual to progress to the next stage (Erikson, 1963; Kroger, 2007; Meier, 2015).

In the context of this chapter, the most relevant stages are schoolchild, adolescence and young adulthood, as will be further clarified in the following subsections.

Specific Challenges for TCKs

During the schoolchild stage, children start spending more time, as the name implies, at school, where they learn to identify and distinguish between success and failure. The potential positive outcome of this stage is to embrace competence and learning how to deal with personal challenges—a quality that is useful and necessary throughout the lifespan. Problems may arise in this stage if the child continually feels inferior and unable to participate at the expected level. For TCKs, the likelihood of this happening is greater if the child experiences a move from one school setting to another, where the focus may be vastly different from what he is used to. Achievement and accomplishment are central during this stage of identity development, and while the international school systems try to streamline the educational experience, there will always be discrepancies, and the inability to keep up can feel devastating.

Moving into adolescence is the time for discovering one's own identity, as the adolescent bridges the gap between childhood and adulthood. TCKs will, at this time, struggle with various identities developed for different physical and social contexts, and, during adolescence, these different identities will be brought into focus and questioned, as the individual must decide which aspects to embrace and which to reject (Meier, 2015). Social change during puberty also affects the identity crisis (Kroger, 2007), and while this happens for most adolescents, being uprooted and moved to another country during this time would make it very challenging for the individual to reach the quality of fidelity and devotion that implies successful development during this stage. TCKs who have not managed to achieve the goal of adolescence are more likely to experience problems in their young adult stage, as it is during this time the individual's relational identity is developed.

Cultural Identity

With the focus on how a TCK's sense of identity and belonging are formed, it is important to understand how the TCK identity is affected by the community and culture of the countries in which they have lived. Cultural identity refers to belonging to a group and identifying with this group. The identity may be based on

Fig. 5.1 Four ways of relating to the culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. 53)

Foreigner Look different Think different	**Hidden Immigrant** Look alike Think different
Adopted Look different Think alike	**Mirror** Look alike Think alike

the nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class or any other group with its own distinct culture (Ennaji, 2005). As such, this ties in well with the concept of TCKs, as they hold a unique position in the society and cultural context they inhabit.

There are generally four different ways of relating to the surrounding culture, as illustrated in Fig. 5.1.

Foreigners are those who both look different in their appearance from the inhabitants and have a different worldview, for instance, a person from Scandinavia visiting the jungles of Papua New Guinea would raise no doubts that they do not belong there. *Mirrors* are those who look the same as those around them and have the same behaviour and understanding of the world, what would require that the individual either belongs to a community that is multi-ethnic or has similar features as the majority of the population. *Adopted* can either be understood in the literal, traditional sense—e.g. a Danish family adopting a child from Colombia, or else, a child born of Middle Eastern parents that have lived the majority of her life in a Northern European country, who identifies with the latter nationality. *Hidden Immigrants* outwardly resemble the people around them, but inwardly do not feel like they belong—this could be as simple as a Swedish person visiting Norway, or more complicated as TCKs returning to their passport country after spending most of their life abroad.

Foreigners and Mirrors are the easily distinguished individuals we encounter—they either clearly belong or clearly do not, and everyone agrees that this is the case. Complications arise when the ingroup/outgroup distinction becomes less obvious. This can be either because the individual is a Hidden Immigrant or is Adopted. Hidden Immigrants may appear to fit into the culture around them, but if you were to ask them, they would not identify with it. On the opposite side of the table are the Adopted, or those who identify with the culture around them, but outwardly do not appear to belong.

It is important to clarify that everyone, not just TCKs, may fall into any of the categories at any given time, however, what makes it different for TCKs is that they are likely to continually bounce between several of the categories depending on where they happen to be (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). TCKs rarely just move from one culture to another, but go repeatedly back and forth between their host and home country. As they begin to identify more with their host than home country, there is a shift from foreigner/mirror to adopted/hidden immigrant. Those around them will have a certain set of expectations based on their outwards appearance and frustrations are likely to occur. This may happen when members of the host community treat the TCK as a foreigner assuming he does not understand the local language (what would make the TCK frustrated). Or, instead, when members of the

home community treat the TCK as a mirror, and get frustrated when she does not act accordingly –does not understand idioms, or knows how to behave in traffic.

Consider the real-life example of a boy whose family moved from India to Denmark. Already he stood out based solely on his physical appearance. Then the parents chose to send their son to an international school. There he was expected to adhere to a Western mindset where he was allowed and encouraged to ask questions, and when he did assignments he was marked down for not being critical of the sources. Socially, he tried his best to be considerate and respectful, and although he made friends, his peers still found him overly formal and unable to relax. At home, his parents struggled with their son's newly found attempt at independence. As he began to fit in more with his peers, he became distanced from his parents. Concerning sports, he found it strange that no one was familiar with cricket, and found himself at a loss when everyone else knew the rules to volleyball and he did not. While there may also have been other extraneous factors, these facts support the argument that this young man's experiences regarding academic, social, and athletic competence, as well as his physical appearance, affected his feelings of self-esteem negatively. While we can only postulate that this was the reason, the fact is that he struggled with self-esteem issues: he had a hard time blending in socially, his grades slipped, and as a result, his parents were unhappy with him. Although he slowly adjusted to his new life, it was not easy, and things became worse when he returned to India and was chastised for arguing with the teacher. Because of this and many other stories reflecting similar struggles, we can argue that there are many challenges connected to identity formation and social interactions concerning the TCK.

Belonging as a Value

To feel like you belong somewhere is something most people long for. However, it is not necessarily simple to reach a point of belonging. This is doubly true for TCKs who not only have to find likeminded people in the physical place they belong, but first, figure out which country or culture they want to invest in belonging to. The following paragraphs address this problem, first by considering a model explaining biculturalism, and then the importance of feeling a sense of belonging in general. Lastly, follows a paragraph clarifying how relocation affects the individual especially as it pertains to these close personal relationships.

The *alternation model* assumes that it is possible for an individual to have a sense of belonging in two cultures without compromising his or her sense of cultural identity (LaFromboise et al., 1993). As such, there is an understanding that it is possible to 'switch' between cultural identities, without needing to give up one for the other. Furthermore, those two (or more) cultures need not be in a hierarchal relationship, but can have equal status and value. However, a potentially negative aspect of having this blended identity described in the alternation model is that it may leave the individual lacking a sense of true belonging. Moore and Barker

(2011) describe specific TCKs being 'able to adapt and fit into different cultural contexts and environments, but feel like they do not truly belong anywhere' (p. 558), which in turn reflects the challenges raised by Pollock and Van Reken (1999) as they confront issues of rootlessness and restlessness among adult TCKs. These issues are many and varied but can be condensed to include relational patterns, developmental issues, as well as unresolved grief.

According to Lambert et al. (2013), feeling a sense of belonging enhances the meaning of life, and while it is possible to satisfy the need to belong in a general sense through positive relationships, you may still feel like you are not fully accepted—you do not truly belong. For example, a student has friends in her class, in the sense that she has people she can sit with during lunch and to whom she can talk to about assignments and other activities. However, she does not feel comfortable sharing personal feelings and struggles with these friends and, sometimes she may sit with them but still feels all alone. Feeling a sense of belonging can provide stability, and helps individuals in creating a shared social identity, meaning that such close relationships not only provide social stimulation, but also allow them to feel part of something bigger. This may be as part of a sports team, a religious organization, or simply a close-knit group of school friends.

Relocation, as experienced by TCKs in greater measure than the average person, is known to affect the individual's sense of belonging. Especially in the case of cultural relocation, it is very important to find a group to which to belong. Kroger (2007) explains how adolescents, in particular, are very susceptible to relocation related difficulties, unless they have a peer group to include them. The move may also be made easier by good support within the family, but still, it is vital for the TCK to build relations outside of the immediate family. Simply put, 'having a sense of belonging is to have a relationship with people, or a group of people, that brings a secure feeling of fitting in' (Lambert et al.). Therefore, TCKs are left at a disadvantage as their lifestyle is characterized by migratory tendencies (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999), meaning that most of their cultivated friendships also have a feeling of urgency to them. Nothing is permanent, everything is a short-term commitment, including relationships. Roughly, this challenge forces TCKs to respond in one of two ways: either the individuals try to protect themselves by avoiding intimacy and refusing to acknowledge that they care about others, or they will commit strongly to relationships and go to greater lengths than what may be considered normal to nurture relational ties.

The Disadvantages of a TCK Lifestyle

Considering the theoretical perspective, it appears that TCKs are at disadvantage when developing their sense of identity and belonging. In the following sections, this will be analyzed and discussed.

As previously stated, there are definite challenges stemming from the TCK lifestyle. These encompass struggles with both personal and cultural identity

development, an unclear self-concept, as well as low self-esteem. This means that from a theoretical perspective TCKs are at a disadvantage since, all things being equal, during adolescence they have a transient environment in terms of country, culture, friends and schools in which to develop their identity.

However, as we analyze research on the topic, and talk to TCKs, we find that their majority seem rather well adjusted (Fedorak, 2014; Moore & Barker, 2011; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). It is possible that they are able to compensate for their lack of 'natural' national identity by replacing it with an 'international' identity or an identity rooted in relationships rather than places.

Another issue that presents itself in TCKs is that many also experience a form of delayed adolescence. The delay in areas such as personal identity, independence and decision making is generally rooted in the fact that TCKs have been occupied with attempting to understand the culture where they are living, or else, have been extremely compliant during adolescence for safety reasons (Knell, 2001), what is rarely an issue to non-TCKs. This may be due to the fact that expatriate families generally have a smaller social circle or are more worried about crime and the safety of their children than the locals, who know how to manage themselves in their environment (Christensen, 1996).

Adult TCKs may also struggle with settling down. As a result of their transient lifestyle growing up, many TCKs develop a migratory conduct; their current situation always seems lacking, and they may switch studies, jobs, and romantic partners in the hope that the next will finally be 'home'. Furthermore, there is the issue of intimacy as well; because of transiency and the resulting loss of friends and confidants, many TCKs struggle with being truly intimate. This fear of intimacy is most likely rooted in a fear of loss, and, as such, it happens without any conscious effort, but the result is that many TCKs tend to close themselves off, and become scared to allow other people in, as goodbye seems to be inevitable.

The Advantages of a TCK Lifestyle

Even though there are many potential negative repercussions of growing up as a TCK, for most TCKs the benefits outweigh the detriments (Moore & Barker, 2011). Most are able to speak several languages, adapt easily to new situations, have a broad worldview, and they are generally more open-minded (Knell, 2001). Many TCKs also appear more mature than their age would imply. There may be many reasons for this, including, but not limited to, the following. First, they may have a broad base of knowledge—either because their understanding of the world situation is advanced compared to non-TCK peers or because they have practical skills not usually associated with their age group. Second, they tend to have significant relationships with adults, since the international community usually is quite small, and it is normal for children and adults to mingle and spend time together. They, also, tend to develop an early autonomy, since TCKs often have much experience with travelling and may have had more freedom as children than other children

living in their passport country. Lastly, TCKs often have very good communication skills and may act as translators from an early age. As such, TCKs generally have skills associated with older children or even well-educated adults, they tend to possess advanced social skills and adaptability, as well as they are able to seemingly move from one country to another without much problems (Fedorak, 2014). TCKs exhibit what is known as *transcultural literacy*, which is defined as the understandings, competencies, attitudes, language proficiencies, participation and identities necessary for successful cross-cultural engagement.

Psychological and Practical Implication

Three different factors may help explain the psychosocial difficulties in TCK life experience. It is necessary to discuss how negative repercussions associated with a lack of national identity can be minimized or avoided, how organizations can replace or help mitigate feelings of not belonging, and finally, how awareness may help change the narratives on TCKs, allowing them to focus on the positive aspects of their experiences.

First, there is the case of a missing national identity. Fedorak (2014) states that 'their international life experiences will create a unique sense of identity that can have a dramatic impact on their lives and the lives of those around them when they return "home" and may preclude the development of a national identity' (p. 113). As such, it supports the argument put forward in the previous pages that TCKs may struggle with a sense of cultural identity and to where they belong. Because of this, it is understandable that TCKs may struggle upon re-entering their passport country, and that some may choose to study, or settle down, in a foreign country rather than in one they were born. They no longer feel like they are part of the culture their parents call 'home', and they cannot identify with people there. When you feel like a foreigner in your home country, as well as in the country in which you live, being given a cultural identity can be empowering. You are no longer an outsider, you belong to a group—a group with shared understandings, and even though you may have never lived in the same countries, you are bound together by your nomadic lifestyle and lack of belonging.[4]

The second aspect to be considered is the presence of many strong international communities. One of these is the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The IBO was founded in 1968 as a 'non-profit educational foundation offering […] highly respected programmes of international education that develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly

[4]Another way to handle a lack of national identity is to replace it completely. This is seen specifically in United Nations (UN) employees. Not only are they expected to put the UN and international community above their home country, they must also pledge themselves to the UN (2012, p. i). As such, some UN employees consider themselves "global citizens" rather than a representative of their native country.

globalizing world' (IBO a). Nowadays there are International Baccalaureate (IB) schools on every continent apart from Antarctica, and while they have a reputation for excellent education, their focus is on creating a better world (IBO b). What makes the IB schools a feasible candidate for helping young TCKs is that they are not just individual institutions but a community. There is a culture within the IBO, and as such it allows the students to embrace this culture as their own. One requirement for IB schools is that they must follow the academic outline so that students seamlessly can pick up their schooling where they left off, whether they live in the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, or Australia. They also embrace the cultural differences of their students, allowing and encouraging them to learn more about their parents' culture through different projects and activities such as international festivals, culture days and celebration of national costumes. While the IBO is by no means a flawless organization, they make it easier for TCKs to transition and be part of a community no matter where they go.

A third factor that is likely to help TCKs overcome the hurdles they face regarding identity and belonging is their families. As the term 'TCK' becomes more widespread, more expatriate families become aware of potential challenges and can be oriented on how to overcome them. Most books written on the subject have at least one chapter, if not several, designed to help parents navigate their experiences and help their children do the same. By educating the families, it is possible to avoid some of the pitfalls of the TCK lifestyle, and as this knowledge becomes more available, more TCKs are allowed to enjoy their transient experiences to the full extent.

Conclusion

Growing up as a TCK is a unique experience. There are many challenges tied to the lifestyle, and handling the move from country to country and culture to culture have proven to challenge the successful development of the individual's identity. However, these challenges can be overcome, and for many TCKs the benefits of their upbringing outweigh the detriments. In TCK environments there is an awareness of how this transient lifestyle may have a negative impact on identity development, and, as such, schools, organizations and families attempt to help their TCKs transition more smoothly.

As for how the TCK lifestyle affects the sense of belonging, there are two key factors to note: first, the fact that feeling a sense of belonging directly enhances meaning in life, and second, many TCKs feel like they do not truly belong anywhere. With this in mind, it appears that growing up as a TCK negatively affects the individual's sense of belonging, making it harder for them to find meaning in life and values to guide their everyday goal orientations and actions. Hence, it would be important to research this area further, as it is central to explore possible ways to help TCKs deal with these values issue while being on the move.

According to Branco and Valsiner (2012), 'values *are* culture, not *of* culture […] They guide our conduct, yet are ephemeral when we try to relocate them. They are everywhere in human lives and by being there, they are nowhere to be found' (p. xiii). TCKs life experience somehow relates to this 'nowhere' issue. By appreciation at their conducts over their developmental nomadic trajectory we can understand better the feeling of being equal or different or the sense of being 'part of' 'or excluded from', as complementary parts of the same psychological process. This is a playground for investigating how to promote one of the highest value of humankind: the full acceptance and appreciation of the Alterity.

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Chapter 6
Ethics and Alterity: The Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education

Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira and Ana Cláudia Rodrigues Fernandes

The educational inclusion of students with disabilities/special needs in regular schools constitutes a solid governmental policy in our country and an ethic social practice encouraged at all academic levels, from daycare centers to graduate studies all around the world. This public policy resulted from a long story of national and international political movements related to human rights, which underlined the protagonist role of educational systems regarding societal development and citizenship. According to the general idea of *educational inclusiveness*, schools should have an active role in providing equal developmental opportunities for all students, in order to allow for their full social participation in their family, the work market, and the community. Inclusive education policies intend to minimize the psychosocial and practical effects of innate or acquired disabilities/special needs over the individuals. Diversity is the premise of inclusion. Despite the fact that disabilities may define different starting points for each individual, and although they may have disadvantageous (motor, perceptual, or intellectual) conditions in comparison to the majority of their peers, persons with disabilities/special needs should be granted equal opportunities for learning and developing in all schools (Anache, 2009; Carvalho, 2006; Fleith, 2011).

National and local initiatives to improve inclusive education are often found in Brazil and in many other countries. Thanks to the growth and strengthening of such initiatives along the last two decades, children and young people with disabilities/special needs participate of a diversity of academic, social, and political spaces. However, to deal respectfully and ethically with people with special needs con-

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tinues to represent a challenge for the most educational institutions at all levels, and challenges seem to be even more significant at university or college levels.

Data from an educational census carried out in 2012 by the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos Anisio Teixeira* (National Institute of Pedagogical Studies, INEP, 2013), indicate the enrolment of almost 700,000 students with some type of disability in Brazilian elementary schools, 70% of those enrolled in regular classes. This is a major breakthrough when one considers that just over 200,000 students with disabilities/special needs attended to Brazilian schools in the year 2000. The striking growth (250%) of these students in regular and special classes is recognized as a meaningful indicator of the positive impact exerted by current laws and social policies, all elaborated to grant basic human rights to everyone.

Unfortunately, when we turn our attention up to higher education, the picture is quite different and much less promising. In that same year (2012), according to the census, there were just 27,000 undergraduate students with some kind of declared disability out of a total of 7 million enrollments, what represents only 0.3% of the total number (Andrés, 2014). In other words, data survey shows that persons with disabilities and special educational needs usually find huge barriers to cross the borders between basic and higher education, including those with perfect mental conditions. Why is that?

Historically, higher education has been a topic of less interest within general educational research, especially when the focus of investigation goes beyond administrative topics such as funding policies, relation with the work market, and degree of graduation success. Higher education is a niche for specific human developmental transitions coinciding with the psychosocial migration from adolescence to adulthood, but this is a topic scarcely debated. Similarly, the role of cultural, political, and moral experiences, and the effects of different styles of intersubjective and collective interactions during higher education years over personal development are topics of little concern for most of the scientific research found in the literature. Furthermore, the function of higher education in the prospective developmental trajectories of the adult individual is a topic usually kept out of the current educational research agenda.

Exceptions to the abovementioned lack of research are the studies by Barnes (2007), Bolt (2007), Ferrari and Sekkel (2007), Fuller, Bradley, and Healey (2004), and Miranda and Galvão Filho (2013). But, what are the reasons for the scientific invisibility of this phenomenon? Some reasons pointed by these studies are that universities population are usually not representative of the society. Thus, minority groups as students with special needs are scarce, and they are mostly spread all over different courses. Unless they find a way to get together to create and politically engage into associations, their reduced presence in colleges and universities turn them invisible and barely noticed. Another point is that these students are not considered as persons with disabilities/special needs anymore because they were able to overcome the many difficulties Brazilian higher education institutions pose

to everyone. Whatever difficulties they may have had, their limitations tend to be minimized and made invisible vis-a-vis their merit in being successfully admitted to the university.

The study we present and discuss in this chapter (Fernandes, 2015) emphasizes the analysis of the developmental process that occurs along the life course of university students with distinct self-declared disabilities/special needs. We aimed to identify and point their needs and potentials, considering the role played by the institutional culture of the universities investigated in the construction of the semiotic system that regulates these students' perspectives of academic success and self fulfillment. The research investigated four public universities into two countries, Brazil and Portugal. These universities were inclusive higher education institutions and counted on especial services conceived to provide social, psychological, and pedagogical support for students with disabilities/special needs. We analyzed their administrative and educational documents, did observations in natural settings and interviewed both students and those professionals engaged in providing them with the means for an effective inclusion. Study results clearly show that the dynamics of inclusion, and its effect over each student's academic trajectories, substantially differed between the universities investigated. This proved to be the case in those contexts where inclusion was genuinely assumed as part of the institutional mission, as a value intrinsically shared by the major group, and where differences in academic performance were conceived as examples of human intrinsic diversity. In other words, disabilities were not seen as a source of problem per se. In contrast, prejudice, discrimination, shame, indifference, and other socio-institutional barriers were usual, and reproduced, whenever the special educational needs were ignored. Students' special needs became invisible and kept out of interactive and discursive practices. In such contexts, diversity—in general—tended to be negatively highlighted and transformed into an unbearable "noise" disturbing the quality of interpersonal transactions. Under such negative condition, students' well-being and academic performances along university years were deeply affected, provoking suffering and negative effects on their lives.

Based on data from the research mentioned above (Fernandes, 2015), we explore in this chapter the relations between the university contexts and developmental processes lived by students with special needs. We analyze the social engagement and participation of students who declared to have different problems related to sensorial, motor, intellectual, and behavioral disabilities or disorders. We analyze specific relational dynamics and their role in promoting results in terms of social and academic inclusion/exclusion, during the students' university years. As much as our interest also includes an analysis of the students' self and identity, our goal is to provide a broader scenario about how values concerning inclusion in university

contexts may shape the identities of persons with self-declared disabilities/special needs that attend such institutions.

Youth and Adult Development

Human development is a broad and systemic phenomenon that involves a psychological synthesis of interdependent organismic, psychic, social, and relational processes. According to this perspective, human development leads to higher levels of hierarchic organization of the *psyché*, paving the way for unique and the intrinsically diverse personal events occurring in the irreversible time (Carvalho, 1996; Valsiner, 2002; Zittoun, 2007).

Interpreting human development implies in providing abstract models that can guide the movements of the researcher in the effort to make sense of human beings as a systemic totality. Individuals are here conceived as agentic subjects, who intentionally perform different activities together with other subjects in the context of concrete activity systems. Agency is a developmental force that converts persons into transformative managers of their environments, thus exerting some control over their lives' circumstances (Macmillan, 2007). Any consistent interpretive frame in psychological research has to consider the imbrication of personal, environmental, cultural, and societal levels of change in the irreversible time. In other words, human development is a complex, nonlinear process (Zittoun, 2007; Zittoun et al., 2013), in which each specific event reverberates over the totality of the person. Following this perspective, a scientific approach to human development needs seriously to take into account the following principles:

1. Development is a multicausal and complex phenomenon in space and time; to approach the inherent complexity of human development, one needs to go beyond purely descriptive or standardized scientific models;
2. An adequate methodology to study development demands that one bears in mind the integrative quality of human beings, concerning biological, affective, cognitive, cultural, political, and historical processes, considering both space and time coordinates. The unity of analysis of human development adopted needs to consider each person as a member of a community and, at the same time, a unique human being, who carves his/her biography in terms of a psychological coherence along the life course.
3. Some of the developmental processes we identify in a particular subject can be generalized; those processes refer to specific fields of experience shared by those who refer to the same cultural background, institutional belonging or age group, for instance. However, the most expressive amount of our experience is unique, absolutely personal, and is defined by an original process characterized as a double frame. This frame includes the internalization of lived experience in the form of general schemes of action known as memory, and the anticipation of the future operated through the mental function of imagination, a mental process

> that enables us to make sense of events not yet lived. Memory and imagination are core mental functions, and they are essential to the coherence of the self system.

The concept of life trajectory is the unity of analysis adopted in our work, following the theoretical path paved by various scholars (Andrew, Eggerling-Boeck, Sandefur, & Smith, 2007; Fernandes, 2015; Matos, 2013; Pais, 2009; Zittoun, 2007; Zittoun et al., 2013). Life trajectory is the psychological unity that sets cohesive semiotic bonds between distinct fields of experiences and events along time. One's life trajectory embraces diverse activity spheres and a variety of lived experiences along the person's life course. In other words, trajectory is the subjectified story of each person by which the person fluidly integrates normative and non-normative events lived in the irreversible time, articulating them into a coherent narrative. By means of a personal narrative, a sense of unity and continuity is imaginarily forged by the person *vis-a-vis* other people.

The idea of life trajectory is deeply intertwined with the notion of self. The sense of continuity/discontinuity upon which the idea of trajectory emerges depends on the assumption of some form of semiotic bond that forges a provisional cohesion between lived-through events, memories, projections, and narratives of a given person at a given time. Thus, the self is both an ontological condition and a construction, that is, without some sense of "selfness" there is no room for internalization/externalization and, also, the internalized version of oneself is constantly subjected to differentiation and reconstruction in the irreversible time, due to the relations between otherness (other people, social forces, cultural norms, values, beliefs, etc.) and I-ness.

The understanding of the dynamics of human development demands of the researcher to assume a holistic and relational stance, necessary to grasp development's different aspects in their complex relations: individual/context; intrasubjective/intersubjective; past/present/future; I/other; and so on. We need to consider development not as an exception but as the norm, something that is intrinsically inherent to the life of all living systems.

The epistemological principles that guide us in this study, therefore, diverge of most principles traditionally assumed by developmental science. In its historical construction, the abstract models that populated developmental science's different theoretical tendencies shared the following features (Lopes de Oliveira, 2006; Araújo, Lopes de Oliveira, & Rossato, 2017): fragmentation of developmental processes (*versus* integration); focus on linear time (*versus* irreversible time); and scientific interest in discrete events (*versus* the totality of the psyche). Adulthood and old age are mostly ignored by developmental psychologists, except for works along the lines of Paul Baltes (Baltes & Baltes, 1990) and Eric Erikson (1994).

Traditional theoretical models to study adult human development are, also, limited to make sense of young people's developmental issues, their needs and expectations, in times of uncertainty, discontinuity, and fluidity (Bauman, 2004). When we take into account the massive political, economic, technological, and

institutional changes that so drastically affected the world as a whole, at the second half of the twentieth century—the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence and global impact of digital technologies, the re-emergence of conservative political powers in Europe—it becomes clear that psychology needs to assume broader and critical perspectives, if it aims at providing better theoretical tools for understanding humanity's contemporary problems and human development (Valsiner, 2016).

Dramatic political shifts tremendously affected ideological tendencies and the systemic organization of most cultural values, transforming community transactions and paving the road for new forms of sense-making and personal development. Such a complex sociohistorical process altered the dynamics of societies and the intersubjective dynamics of human functioning. However, political changes somehow allowed for more democracy and the opening up of perspectives, potentially creating new zones of possibilities for individual choices. In other words, new generations, gradually, are free from the obligation to follow traditional paths of human development and, consequently, they may find new ways to experience their transition to adulthood in face of cultural transformation. The major features of emergent adulthood are greater individual autonomy and new possibilities for individual developmental trajectories (Andrew et al., 2007; Arnett, 2000; Holmstron, Karp, & Grey, 2002; Macmillan, 2007; Pais, 2009).

Adulthood corresponds to most part of the life course, considering the average life expectancy in most countries nowadays, and this single feature turns middle age into a topic of major importance to developmental psychology. The psychological development of human beings along adulthood represents a relevant portion of the broad set of substantive psychological changes that occur throughout life. However, adulthood is radically plural and diverse, and most developmental processes along adulthood deal, not with norms and progress, but with disruptions, crises, and a constant demand for self-reorientations. This open, and highly dynamic, system propels human development toward varied directions leading to a unique, singular rhythm and results (Andrew et al., 2007; Brandão, Saraiva, & Matos, 2012; Macmillan, 2007).

Thus, as far as we recognize that each biography entails a unique story, and this story is composed by a plurality of plots generating different branches of storylines that grow with age, scientifically approaching the issue of adulthood becomes a hard task. Changes occurring along maturity show little regularity and continuity among individuals, turning theoretical generalizations a challenge, a difficult task. The more a person lives, the broader and more diversified the spectrum of personal experiences, in social, cultural, and subjective terms. While circulating among a plurality of contrastive social scenarios (workplace, family, educational institutions, peer groups, cultural practices, sexual partnerships etc.), young adults have the opportunity to continuously amplify their spheres of activity, and their zones of action as a consequence (Holmstron et al., 2002).

Development is a cogenetic process (Tateo, 2016). The more young people are demanded to improve their knowledge and abilities in order to behave properly in

distinct spheres of activity, the more competent they become in transforming the reality and making sense of themselves as active subjects in each of these spheres (Branco, Pessina, Flores, & Salomão, 2004). Every time a young adult participates of a new social setting s/he is propelled to reposition her/himself as a whole, altering her/his perspectives regarding reality. New constructions, internalizations, and externalizations prepare the subject to behave in a culturally adjusted fashion in radically different social contexts.

Jeffey Arnett (2000) has contributed to current theoretical advances consistent with such analytical approach of adulthood. Arnett considered the transition to adulthood as a culturally constructed process and, in his search for a non-normative perspective on the topic, he coined the concept of "emergent adulthood". Emergent adulthood is the set of experiences lived by individuals at the semiotic border between youth and adulthood in contemporary societies. Those experiences exhibit features of the two stages and face the vicissitudes imposed on both by contemporary western societies. Arnett's elaborations on emergent adulthood have a heuristic value especially for the topic of our present debate, since most individuals in higher education experience emergent adulthood. On one hand, this stage represents an opportunity for free personal exploration of life possibilities, what is important for human development. After all, try-and-error opportunities (concerning sex, alcohol, illegal drugs, risky conducts, and so on) are probably more frequent at this stage than at any other time. On the other, developmental transition to adulthood nowadays represents a critical moment, part of a psychic-social puzzle, involved by negative social representations (prejudice, discrimination and criminalization against young generations, mainly those coming from specific socioeconomic and ethnic groups). This transition is also related to various demographic and socioeconomic issues, such as the vulnerability of underprepared young people regarding work demands, the decrease of job posts due to technologies, the postponing of retirement, and the growing competitiveness in the labor market. As a consequence of this ambivalent and miscellaneous scenario, contemporary young adults deal with contradictory feelings: dependence *versus* autonomy; freedom to choose *versus* lack of choices; freedom to make their minds in face of many topics *versus* the lack of motivation to make decisions and to achieve results at all (Arnett, 2000).

Finally, the way specific cultural, social, and economic conditions can amplify the inequalities and diminish the opportunities found by individuals coming from different social layers should be emphasized. A recent work of Andrade (2010) explores the impact of economic ups and downs, and unstable societal cycles over the emergent adulthood. According to the situational frame encountered by each generation in the first two decades of life, there is a chance young people will depend for a long time on their families or social assistance, which will be required to invest a great amount of money and time to educate, train, and prepare them to assume their social roles and responsibilities in the years to come. Thus, depending on the concrete material conditions of a given society at a given time, young adults may demand a longer support by their parents or the State. Young people from low-income classes, for instance, can rarely count on parents' economic support

and are obliged to join the work market much earlier, spend less time at school, and, consequently, become less qualified than wealthier peers. Such conditions force them to accept informal, unstable, and poorly paid jobs, what distance themselves from their social rights, autonomy, and citizenship. Unfortunately, the majority of young people in the two contexts investigated in our study (Brazil and Portugal) belong to low-income groups. For them, access to higher education may be far beyond their reach.

In the following section, the role of universities in providing a developmental niche young people's transition to early adulthood is analyzed.

Higher Education as a Complex Social Scenario for Professional Training and Self Development

Higher education in Brazil is unevenly distributed between public and private education systems. While in basic education 82.8% of the students are enrolled in public schools, 88% of higher education certificates are awarded by the private education network (INEP, 2013). In Portugal, 81% of basic education students are in public schools, while in higher education the number of certificates awarded by the public network stands at 89% (INEP, 2013).

Brazilian public higher education, although free of charge, is still characterized as selective and elitist, with access restricted to a small part of the young population. In Portugal, the rate of access to university education is significantly higher among young adults. However, Portuguese public education is only partly funded by the State, and students are responsible for bearing part of the cost of their education. Therefore, it is not a free system.

The demand for good universities among Brazilian students aged 18–24 years-old, who meet the requirements to enter public higher education, is high. This is true despite the significant expansion of this network—from 45 federal universities (148 campuses) to 63 universities (321 campuses) between 2002 and 2014 (INEP, 2013). To create more democratic conditions for the access to university studies by historically excluded groups (Afro-descendants, indigenous people, and public school students among others), led some universities to establish racial and/or socioeconomic quotas to favor students belonging to minority groups. However, these initiatives do not include persons with disabilities/special needs. In other words, there is no quota system for this category. As a result, when those students enter the university in Brazil, they do so based on performance criteria identical to those applicable to any other candidate. Unfortunately, their achievement rarely guarantees them the legal right to physical and curricular adaptations, or to pedagogical innovations that would help them in the new context. In other words, they have to face many physical (accessibility, architectural barriers), and especially, symbolic barriers that arise during their university life, and, sometimes, these may become impossible to overcome.

To grant students with disabilities/special needs' permanence in higher education, and favor the successful completion of their studies, is a very important way of empowering them. Furthermore, providing them with conditions for active participation in university life in the pursuit of their rights of citizenship is a significant driving force to promote their inclusion in larger spheres of society.

Higher education access, though, is still very restricted in Brazil, and most young people will never have the experience of studying in a college or university. Others may go to private colleges, but due to their high costs, students need to reconcile study and work, what leads to disturbingly high rates of dropout in higher education (Ribeiro, 2005). In some cases, they can even succeed, but many courses show a low academic quality.

In other words, becoming a university undergraduate student is an unusual event in the life course of most students in Brazil. We are convinced, though, that good quality higher education improves students' professional opportunities, and open new life perspectives, leading them beyond the limits they would probably reach without such experience. Additionally, higher education encourages students to assume new positions in the community. Colleges and universities, as heterogeneous social contexts, may offer to students a closer contact with a variety of culturally diverse social groups and novel spheres of personal experiences, learning practices, and professional training. The atmosphere of higher education forms a unique semiotic universe in which unprecedented inter- and intra-psychological processes are experienced (Marinho-Araújo, 2009; Ressurreição, 2013). Specific social, academic, and professional markers are defined within universities, offering to emergent adults a contradictory, plural and rich institutional scenario, which create and intensify opportunities for intellectual, affective, political, moral, and personal development.

Coulon (2008) attributes to higher education the major role in mediating youth transition from the social status of *pupils* to that of *students.* This shift depends on the occurrence of empowering experiences able to promote active criticism and cognitive autonomy, as well as political positioning and social engagement. However, Coulon reminds us that higher education institutions deal with two problems: on one hand, thanks to their historical commitment with professional training, institutions focus on providing technical excellence at the expense of sociopolitical experiences. On the other hand, being a new, complex and heterogeneous context, such institutions may provoke several ruptures in students' lives, which require their ability to self-adjust and negotiate forms of affiliation.

Shifts and ruptures are still more critical when students are persons with disabilities/special needs. Universities are compelled by law to be inclusive, and to develop their mission in accepting diversity and reducing inequalities; therefore, they should provide students with special needs with basic tools for their success in the work market. In spite of the existing laws, however, most colleges and universities are not designed as inclusive environments, nor support these students to overcome the existing physical and symbolic barriers. The institutional "inclusive turn" is therefore urgent in order to convert colleges and universities into truly democratic contexts, able to embrace needs and expectations of all students,

including those with disabilities/special needs (Sousa, Soares, & Evangelista, 2003; Zago, 2011).

Inclusive universities adopt inclusive, responsible, ethical and respectful strategies to support students, and are ideologically committed with dialogicality and empathy. Institutional actors need to be actively committed with diversity of people and life trajectories (Sousa Santos, 2005). Multiplicity is the opposite of individualism and rigidity, it involves flexibility and negotiation dispositions and strategies to be adopted in critical situations, such as disruptive events that demand self-reorientations and reorganization. Multiplicity, or diversity, requires a dialogical, relational dynamics, made of the consideration of distinct paths. In fact, multiplicity is a precious psychological tool that is especially useful in ambivalent situations. One example of a situation in which multiplicity can be a psychological resource is dealing with interpersonal situations in which the subject is confronted with radical alterity and needs to deal with his/her own ambiguous feelings (Cunha, 2007).

In this section, we explored universities' role in promoting educational inclusion. In the next, we highlight their role in providing professional training and encouraging personal autonomy and empowerment in individuals with disabilities/special needs. The better they are qualified, the stronger their autonomy in achieving better professional futures. Universities can become a powerful instrument for the construction of opportunities and developmental alternatives.

Educational Inclusion and Values in Higher Education: Potentialities and Barriers

The university is an educational institution historically designed with the function of operating the conversion of pupils into students, forging the "office of university student", according to Coulon (2008). The emergence of engaged and agentic citizens along higher education is possible thanks to the effects of a deep pedagogic operation mediated by different aspects of the lived experience in this context. However, such empowering experiences are affected by the contradictions found in the university as well. These contradictions derive from core social values that permeate higher education as a liberal bourgeois historical construction, namely, efficiency, deserving, meritocracy and autonomy.

Universities are intricate semiospheres (Lotman, 2005) in which, with few exceptions, the basic semiotic structure is formed by traditional values concerning what to teach, how to learn, why to focus on specific cognitive styles and forms of knowledge construction, how to behave, with whom to interact, and so on. These traditional values confront other values, related to change, criticism, and openness. Furthermore, universities in general are not aware, nor actually assume, their expected role regarding human development. They conceive of undergraduate students as mature adults, who share features such as readiness, social adjustment,

focus, discipline, and goal-orientation. Considering that, at least in Brazil, there is a huge gap between high school and college education, for the reasons already indicated, the small group of students who manage to reach college are seen as intellectually gifted and emotionally balanced persons. They are expected to have a superior capacity to solve problems, and to well communicate ideas in oral and written forms. They are also expected to make good choices, in comparison to the average population of young adults, and be psychologically apt to deal with ambivalence regarding the future, and other ambiguities and challenges inherent to the academic experience and training as future professionals. Indeed, these expectations are, actually, fallacious.

Albeit largely disseminated in the higher education system's culture, those frozen images of adulthood are mostly inadequate. From our perspective, human development dynamics operates as an open system, and all individuals are necessarily developing, changing throughout their lives. Thus, young adults are far from readiness and stability, they are constantly affected by their experiences and continually transformed as the effect of critical events that may disorganize their self-system and pave the way for novel forms of organization. This means that ruptures and discontinuities are inherent aspects of people's life courses, functioning as engines that propel human development fueled by ongoing experiences.

The image of a "ready" adult, suggested by those traditional expectations, is contradictory with the cogenetic understanding of the human being (Vygotsky, 1983; Tateo, 2016) along adulthood, being inadequate to a developmental approach to human *psyché* consistent with the understanding of the developmental processes of students with disabilities/special needs in higher education.

What is our point here? In order to have the right to enroll in a college or university, they need to overcome difficulties and show evidence of merit similar to other students. Nevertheless, University's and college's liberal, meritocratic values often do not take into account the needs and rights of students with disabilities and special needs. The reification of a culture of individualistic meritocracy within colleges can convert students with disabilities/special needs into targets of different forms of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination (Goffman, 1988; Skliar, 1999; Sousa et al., 2003), despite their personal academic excellence. If physical barriers to accessibility were not enough, they also have to face diverse symbolic obstacles to succeed.

According to semiotic cultural psychology (Valsiner, 2012, 2014, 2016), values are hypergeneralized signs that participates in the regulation of the future conduct and the affective orientation of intersubjective transactions (Branco & Valsiner, 2012). Values are mostly silent as they operate embodied in inner layers of individual's subjective structures, affecting their self-perceptions and the moral orientations that guide the person's positions toward reality and other people. Values are present when the self-conceives of and behave *vis-à-vis* other selves, considering them either as part of the group—as *one of* us—or as aliens, outsiders, *one of them*. The values system shared by those who form part of the same community are an important aspect of their cultural identity, providing individuals with a sense of participation and belonging. Values systems offer common meanings, shared goals,

and objectified entities that will guide the community members toward desired actions and experiences (Rosa & González, 2012).

Meritocracy is a highly appreciated social value in liberal capitalist societies, which refer to "the power of merit", and the importance of merit-based performance standards to distinguish individuals and insert them on hierarchical structures. Meritocratic societies understand that individual trajectories are determined just by one's personal merit, translated as inner capacities, individual efforts, goal orientations, resilience, and self-commitment to results. In other words, traditional meritocracy discredits the role of sociocultural and historic scenarios over subjective trajectories, whose point of departure in the competition for social positions and ascension is considered as supposedly equivalent (Santos & Scopinho, 2016).

The culture of meritocracy is part of a liberal ideology broadly cultivated in institutional settings populated by practices, norms, and symbols that reinforce the notion that personal derive, almost exclusively, from individual capacities, efforts, and willingness. Some examples of institutional meritocracy are the profit sharing based on workers' performance that complement wages in some companies; honor titles and comments to individuals who stand out in defense of civil or military organizations; and the belief on the intrinsic relationship between personal commitment and academic success in higher education.

Western cultures hold strong meritocratic values and shape potent semiotic complexes that creates an aura of normality and adjustment around those who conform to dominant beliefs. The dominance of meritocracy in public institutions, such as universities, has many semiotic and practical effects over social relationships and personal trajectories. Indeed, an individualistic and meritocratic approach has an especially perverse and unfair impact on people with disabilities and/or special needs. College individualist and meritocratic values nourish prejudices and picture students with disabilities as powerless, using disrespectful images to refer to them, like crippled, weak, fool, impaired, and so on. All terms often used refer to inefficiency, incompleteness, incapacity, or maladjustment.

Prejudices nourish ignorance and generate misunderstandings. Ignorance leads to discrimination, which fails to legitimize the other and induce nonethical and disrespectful relationships between people. Furthermore, prejudices lead to reductionist views, downgrading the target groups as if they were doomed to defeat in consequence of their specific and/or supposed disadvantages and difficulties. People's abilities and their many other capacities, as well their compensatory strategies, eventually developed along life course, tend to be totally ignored by the prevalence of prejudice.

College students with disabilities/special educational needs are constantly subjected to prejudice and discrimination, running the risk of being reduced to the disadvantageous condition, as if they had no other abilities and capacities, as if their selves, as human beings, were disabled. Teachers and peers ignore their special needs, and their right to special adaptations, all this hidden behind the shadow of an individualistic meritocracy. Day after day these students are demanded to reassure their resilience, mental strength, and intellectual competence, in order to be recognized as deserving the right to be in higher education (Coulon, 2008; Valle &

Connor, 2014). For such reasons, they deal with a double challenge: to be able to do their academic jobs on equal conditions to their peers, with no sort of adaptations; and to hide their special needs, otherwise they risk to be endlessly obliged to prove efficiency and competence, in order to outpace the rigid normative patterns and criteria of higher education.

The negative effects of prejudices and discrimination on educational institutions' everyday relations have been investigated by Branco, Lopes de Oliveira, and colleagues. (Branco & Lopes de Oliveira, 2012; Costa, 2015; Dias, 2014; Dias & Lopes de Oliveira, 2013; Toledo, 2014; Fernandes, 2015; Madureira & Branco, 2014; Wortmeyer & Branco, 2016). Those authors share the perspective that values are not elements located *out there*, somewhat above our individual consciousness, and distant from our actions and attitudes. On the opposite, values result from the mutual interconnections between the cultural foundation of the society, the material basis of actions and intersubjective transactions. Values undergo cycles of reproduction and innovation, and the alternation between conservation and transformation mediates the content and direction of the construction of renewed forms of interpersonal and intrapsychic relationships. Many examples concerning the imbrication of shifts of moral values, at a given time, and changes regarding social practices such as clothing, eating, praying, earning money, having sex, parenting, and so on, can be provided.

Inclusion in higher education, thus, deals with a complex semiosphere, in which existing and novel complementary/contradictory value fields are in active tension, participating in the construction of both exclusion and inclusiveness. This semiosphere is impregnated, at different levels, by issues concerning human rights, institutional and legal norms, ethical principles, and a set of deep-rooted cultural beliefs observable in the everyday life of universities. An example of contradiction can be found in the very mission of the institution. On the one hand, universities have progressed in promoting inclusive educational scenarios—i.e., through accessibility, growing rates of enrolment of students with disabilities/special needs, attempts to adapt methodologies and creation of offices in charge of psychosocial and pedagogical support. Nevertheless, on the other, such advances do not suffice to neutralize the conservative and homogenizing cultural norms and practices that preside over the educational system as a whole.

In view of the complexity of students with disabilities/special needs' experiences in universities and colleges, we analyze below the main results of the study we conducted in Brazilian and Portuguese university (Fernandes, 2015). The investigation explored the perceptions, ideas, and evaluations of students with self-reported disabilities/special needs about aspects that encouraged or hampered their self-development along their university trajectories.

Inclusion and Adult Development in Higher Education in Brazil and Portugal

The experience of public university students in Brazil and Portugal self-declared as persons with disabilities/special needs was the subject of the study. Its major goal was to investigate the challenges met by attempts to transform universities into academically inclusive environments. The study focused on the dynamics of meaning processes regarding higher education experiences produced by the participants during individual interviews and in the letters addressed to the researchers. The reported events formed the basis for the identification of meanings and positions constructed by the individuals along their developmental trajectories along university life. The research included, as participants, eight university students with self-declared deficiencies, three Portuguese and five Brazilians, and carried out interviews with professionals responsible for the supporting services of the four universities investigated (one in Brazil and three in Portugal).

Making use of a qualitative approach, the study was designed from a cultural-semiotic perspective, which establishes—as principles for the production of scientific knowledge—the centrality of meanings production processes, i.e., meanings are the unit of analysis of subjective and sociocultural processes. The aim was at addressing the contact points among different layers of the inclusion phenomenon in higher education. First, the *institutional layer*, involving the services that should support the inclusion, and the role played by eventual pedagogical support to enhance the academic success and inclusion of the students. Second, the *interpersonal layer*, or the socio-affective interactions and academic relations established with classmates and faculty members. Finally, the *personal layer*, which focused on the interviews' reports and on the contents of the letters addressed to the researcher, whose topic was each participant's personal development in the context of higher education.

First Layer: The Institution

Initiatives found in the four universities investigated, in Brazil and Portugal, originated in different conceptualizations and attended to distinct realities in order to fulfill the mission to promote inclusion. In general, the purpose of their services was to empower students and help them live their daily lives in the university context, increasing their opportunities for building autonomy and achieving academic and personal success (Antunes & Faria, 2013; Fernandes, Almeida & Mourão, 2007).

At the Brazilian university investigated, special services assist students with disabilities/special needs upon their arrival and throughout their permanence. To that end, students had to enroll as "persons with disabilities" and make a formal request for support. In other words, the university did not take the lead but rather

waited for the students themselves to request support. This way of organizing the support to students with different disabilities/special needs is, though, controversial: on the one hand, it can be understood as respectful of students' autonomy; on the other, it tends to put the individuals in evidence, emphasizing their status as "different" and "dependent". Goffman (1988) mentions this kind of problem, pointing out the risk of associating the condition of disability with actions and procedures that establish differences and impose stigma under the pretext of inclusion.

In the Portuguese universities investigated, the existing services cater students with disabilities mainly upon their arrival at the university. The pedagogical support is concerned to avoid reducing the students' autonomy, who should assume and indicate their own demands, deciding together with the professionals the actions required to meet their needs, according to the nature and severity of the deficiency. Other needs arising during their stay in the university are negotiated with them over time.

In both contexts investigated, initially the students voiced their demands and the University team—pedagogical experts, graduation program coordinator, other team members—decide with the students what types of support should be offered. The institutional expectation is that, after a certain period, longer or shorter, the students will gain autonomy and gradually reduce their demand for support services. There are cases in which the students, at a given moment, no longer need institutionalized support services, after acquiring the tools and skills that allow them to move forward. Fischer (2014) stresses the importance to involve all university actors in the inclusion process as facilitators of changes and adaptations.

Second Layer: The Importance of Interpersonal Relations

On this level of analysis, we consider the essential role of the relational dimension of the inclusion process. Practices of inclusion understood from an ethical perspective, occur in the context of social relations among concrete individuals. Throughout history, social interactions with different "others" have favored collaboration, dialogue, and positive valuation, which results in mutual acceptance (Valsiner, 2012), and, therefore, inclusion. However, there is still no consensus, at least in the investigated universities scenario, that inclusion is an inalienable right of those students, and that the institutions need to provide appropriate means to guarantee their success along their educational trajectory. In the absence of the expected consensus, it is ultimately up to each student to seek for mechanisms that can enable them to solve and overcome daily academic difficulties that emerge in the relational layer. These compensatory mechanisms would involve, among others: having the support of friendly classmates; to search for materials and resources in advance in order to follow the pace of the classes; or even choosing to give up on a discipline, to attend it on a later period, whenever difficulties are bigger than the resources available to overcome them.

For inclusion to be effective, adequate educational, methodological, and material resources are necessary. However, the quality of professor–student relationships are central, because they reveal that attitudinal, relational issues can significantly contribute to academic success or failure. The professor, in special, is an important agent for effective inclusion or exclusion, because s/he is the one in direct contact with students, mediating teaching-learning processes. If the professor is not familiar with the laws, though, and does not adjust pedagogical methodologies and has or is prejudiced, s/he definitely contributes to deny the necessary conditions for students with disabilities/special needs to successfully perform academic activities. Consequently, professors may contribute to their exclusion, instead of inclusion. Reports about the insensitivity and indifference of higher education professors toward students with disabilities/special needs are frequent, a reflection of power inequalities that prevail in contexts such as universities.

The investigated students had difficulties in accessing the materials needed in the classroom, in special if they depended on the teachers to provide them in advance. Depending on the disability, the student would need prior access to the lesson material, through audio means or bigger-font printed materials, or digital files, PowerPoint presentations, Braille translations and so on, but, on many occasions, no special resource was available to the students. This simple fact implies difficulties in performing academic tasks and attending classes, especially in the case of students with sensory impairments (blindness and deafness), dyslexia, and autistic spectrum disorders. The development of alternative strategies, such as open databases, for instance, would certainly facilitate access to learning resources and is essential to the successful education of individuals with disabilities/special needs (Dias, 2004).

A positive experience reported by participants from institutions of both countries relates to the supportive role of classmates. Students with disabilities/special needs highlighted the advantages of building strong networks among peers, what many prefer over the formal, institutional support system. This situation reminds us of the importance of otherness, here represented by the social other, a positive contribution to the development of everyday activities in academic life. Unlike relations with professors, which are mostly asymmetric and permeated by meanings of power, relations between students often are marked by symmetry and horizontality, leading to potentially more authentic exchanges that enable development and help to overcome difficulties. The attention and solidarity of classmates also contributed to their sense of belongingand much of the hold the students praise comes from peers. In sum, in the developmental process, the *others* are of capital importance, for it is in social interactions that meanings constructions and reconstructions occur, as occur conflicts' resolutions and decision-making processes (Rey, 2005; Valsiner, 2012; Vygotsky, 1989).

Accessibility conditions in the university space exemplify the difficulties and barriers imposed on students with physical disabilities and/or reduced mobility. Accessibility, understood as free and easy access to spaces by means of safe and ample mobility conditions (Caiado, 2010), is the more basic requisite to be attended in order to favor inclusive actions. Yet, the adaptation of environmental conditions

to provide full access are usually expensive so, as pointed out by Fischer (2014), mobility resources are provided only to main buildings and those spaces that are visited more frequently by students with disabilities/special needs. The lack of accessibility in all open spaces and surrounding areas restricts their possibility to circulate and perform certain activities freely. In one of the institutions investigated, the buildings are listed by historical patrimony, what hinders the installation of elevators, ramps, and tactile signage. Difficulties cause students to face challenges getting to the campus, moving to-and-fro one space to another, and leaving the university in appropriate and safe conditions.

Third Layer: IntraSubjective Relations

This layer refers to the subjective impacts of participants' academic and social experiences over their personal development, mediated by the conditions of persons with disabilities/special needs. Three case studies are briefly described, and each points to a particular dynamics in relation to the tension between participant's subjective positions, as an "*efficient and capable person*", and a position characterized by *real limitations imposed by the disability* and the social restrictions facing them.

João

João was a 61 years-old Brazilian man. He was married, had three children, and worked as a federal civil servant. He had a partial bilateral hearing loss, resulting from two surgeries for the removal of tumors in both ears when he was in his fifties, first in one ear and, 7 years later, in the other. João had a troubled school life, marked by difficulties and interruptions. He grew up poor and without a father, and lived with his mother and five sisters. He attended school from 7 to 14 years of age. However, due to repeated school failures, he felt demotivated and eventually dropped out of school.

As an adult, João got married, had children, and felt the need to go back to school. The need to support his family, however, prevented him from doing so before the age of 50. With this in mind, João enrolled in adult education. He studied by himself, was approved in all tests and was able to finish high school at the age of 55. Then he began his journey toward higher education. Five years later, he passed the university entrance exam for applied social sciences. At the time of the research, he had been attending the course for 1 year. His reported experiences in university were about situations of self-denial of demands, self-depreciation, and resistance to be assisted, which were expressed in his refusal to use hearing aids: João had some residual hearing and a linguistic memory accumulated in the five decades during which he was a listener. This led him to forego the use of hearing aids in the

university, thus creating some peculiarities in his daily communication with professors and schoolmates. This peculiar position, however, eventually reinforced meanings related to his disability, therefore weakening self-related meanings that would support his efficiency as a student.

Maria

Maria was a 20 years-old Portuguese girl, an only child who lived with her parents and had *retinitis pigmentosa*. This degenerative eye disease causes a decline in vision, especially night vision, leads to the loss of peripheral vision, and affects the central vision. Maria showed high self-esteem and self-confidence. During basic education, she was apparently successful in terms of cognitive capacities. Her most significant school problems, as she reported in the interview, were due to her status as an intellectually advanced student in relation to her classmates. She described as very positive the fact that she started her school life at age two and a half, and said that before that, her mother had already started the literacy process with her, hence when she first entered school she "could already read mostly everything". Maria used strategies that concealed her visual impairment from other people. She entered university in the second half of 2011, where she attended a course in the area of technology. At that time, she was already experiencing significant visual loss, a situation that caused a tension: the degenerative disease led to increasingly acute limitations due to accelerated visual loss, and this condition contradicted the requirements of both higher education and a future professional life, because activities performed in her professional area necessarily demanded visual acuity. The difficulties she reported while in university (not being able to see the blackboard; not having the support of some professors; difficulties getting to and moving around the university etc.) contributed to modify her self-organization and led her to question the possibility of continuing to see herself as a student and an efficient future professional. The difficulties she experienced were due to the clash between the organization of the university and her status as a visually impaired person, imposing limitations on her full participation in university activities as a student (Coulon, 2008).

Maria internalized positions that denied any disadvantageous conditions created by the social contexts, in special, those marked by little inclusive values throughout her school and university years. She took upon herself and reproduced hypergeneralized signs and beliefs that modulate people's feelings, thoughts and actions in the university context. These related to the efficiency, merit, and autonomy expected from the students, and created a zone of tension with her specific needs and rights. Faced with this tension, she finally decided to enroll in a different course almost at the end of the first one, in search of a professional career that she believed she could pursue with greater autonomy and fewer restrictions due to her visual impairment.

Alice

Alice was a 22 years-old Portuguese girl, single, the only child of divorced parents, who lived with her mother and had a diagnosis of dyslexia. Her school life was marked by severe learning difficulties, high parental demands for good performance, misunderstandings regarding her school difficulties, and emotional suffering. She entered school at the age of 6 and faced many obstacles, as verbal delay, difficulty to keep up with the class, to talk like other children and express herself, and all this prevented her from following classroom activities. Like Maria, she entered university in 2011 for a course in the teaching area, through the exams[1] taken at the end of the 12th school year. According to her, the diagnosis of dyslexia was a positive rupture in her life trajectory. This diagnosis changed her perception of educational processes and allowed her a novel self-conceptualization, freeing her from the previous characterization, by social others, as a non-motivated and inattentive student. Once she learned about the origin of her difficulties, she was able to seek support and to fight the problem.

The Study's Major Findings and Discussion

The three cases described above show that just allowing students with disabilities/special needs to enroll and accessing appropriate methodologies for each type of disability is not enough to include them in higher education. They reveal the interdependence between the person's specific disability and the totality of his/her *psyché*, evidencing that each individual can create and develop mechanisms to overcome disabilities and difficulties that are unique in nature. An inclusive university needs to deal with a very different profile of demands, denying universally attributed categorizations (Mantoan, 2008).

In João's case, his specific disability intertwined with problems deriving from old age adult education, and with the very definition of deafness: Is it appropriate to characterize as deaf someone who lost his hearing after the age of 50? Does he identify himself as deaf, in the same way, a person born with a hearing impairment does? These questions lie at the heart of understanding his resistance to using hearing aids. Maria wanted to hide her impaired vision probably because it indicated a limitation that she resisted to incorporate to her sense of self. She kept herself apart from socio-institutional conditions that would highlight her problem and decided to enroll and start over in a new course right before her professional internship in the previous one. Alice, on the other hand, found in the diagnosis and publicity of her status as a person with dyslexia the opportunity to move on and

[1]In Portugal, access to public universities is subject to national exams taken at the end of the 12th school year. According to the grade obtained in the exam, the student competes for one of the places offered by the universities in the country.

construct an academic identity, which was previously denied to her. Inclusive educational policies in higher education need to be more sensitive to the specificities of each person.

The linchpin of the study's results is the general issue regarding the tension between inclusive ethics and meritocracy in universities. Next, we seek to emphasize the challenges that this tension represents for the autonomy and development of students with disabilities/special needs, in their own voices. They point out to different critical dimensions that need to be addressed for the effective academic and social inclusion. They are the positive but limited role of institutional support services; the impasses existing in students' experiences with faculty and peers; and the meanings, attributed by students, to their own personal and academic trajectories.

Inclusive Experiences in the University and Its Ethical Challenges

Life in the Universities

When asked to tell their general impressions about personal experiences in the higher education and the career they chose, participants say,

> I love my course, it has opened my mind, so … you know?! I consider myself pleased with [name of University]. Look, I don't know if, because it was a dream and I'm here, and I'm doing everything to learn, as best as possible and doing my best (Brazilian student).

> I started in [name of university] and it did not disappoint me at all. I expected my struggle to be even greater. It was the first year with the statute and it was all new. But I had people whom I can say carried me in their arms. They helped me a lot. People who accompanied me, it was very good. They showed ways that could help us overcome the problems. When I came to university [name of the second university], it was a disappointment, and I ran away because of that. Because I knew I was going to deal with a teacher who does not believe in any of these disabilities. This is all boloney to her! And I, since I knew she was going to be my teacher, I came here, because I knew nothing would come of it (Portuguese student).

Probably, the difficulties faced, therefore, were not seen as problems. In fact, difficulties are a characteristic inherent in the trajectories of people with disabilities/special needs and were perceived as an opportunity for the emergence of new positions and future developmental tracks. In other words, feelings of worthlessness are *not* inherent in conditions of disability, but can emerge in social or institutional situations in which the individual is weakened, humiliated, or prevented from fully participating in the collective activities.

When participants were invited to describe the challenges universities faced to develop more inclusive and ethical programs, the statement by one of the students was particularly insightful. She said:

> I think that inclusion in higher education, in school and in the labor market should be what we find in books. It says that inclusion is basically equality for all and everyone having the same opportunities, and maybe, who knows, that should be put more into practice. Not only in higher education, but in schools and in the labor market. In higher education, this does not happen. And here, in the university, they are going to mess up on their own, because they do not have the support of a special education teacher, in university this does not exist. Students have to figure out everything by themselves, they will be the ones going to the teachers and saying how it works … we will be the ones who will have to explain these things, and often these are details that teachers have no idea they can cause us a problem because they do not know them. It should be said to everyone: "You are going to the university, but now you are going to have to do those things that used to be done by the special education teacher." Here, unfortunately, they are forced to learn to live, and to explain their needs to the teachers, by themselves. And they need to learn (Portuguese student).

This participant highlights her perception that inclusive practices cannot rest only upon teacher's good will and empathy. Inclusion in the university scenario raises, as a central issue, investments to enable the adequate training of faculty members to work in educational contexts committed to the promotion of ethical relations. Such training needs to integrate elements related to the ethics of inclusion and to the culture of human rights, legal and theoretical aspects linked to human development and learning processes. Universities should also encourage actions focused on raising awareness and acceptance of differences, what can happen by organizing campaigns, granting the adequacy and accessibility to the institutional spaces and services (e.g., library and cafeteria). Other initiatives include the establishment of forums for discussion and referral of student demands and in-service faculty training.

As the university context is impregnated by values of competence and merit, inclusion in higher education turn out to be hampered by cultural prejudices, beliefs, and values typical of a society based on highly exclusive models of normality and competition (Dias & Lopes de Oliveira, 2013; Mantoan, 2013; Sousa Santos, 2005). Hence, universities should commit to promote a true re-signification of issues such as competence and merit, in order to actually contribute to the construction of truly inclusive practices.

Concerning pedagogic support services, participants answered as follows:

> I think it's a group that does not have much strength in [name of university] because they depend on authorization from the Dean's Office to act. (Brazilian student).

> I think it needed a specialist … And I think it would need a psychologist, a specialist, to help people like me, it would be more appropriate. I think it [the service] could, in relation to my needs, provide better assistance, a specialized professional…that would be good. (Brazilian student).

> Within the possibilities, they try, within their limitations, to do what is possible. They send e-mails to the faculty, but for some problems, there is nothing to be done. (Portuguese student).

The students recognize the value of the very initiative of this *pedagogic support office*, in which one find help to solve academic and social problems reported. At the same time, the services lack specialized professionals and share limited

(financial, practical, management) autonomy to act in the face of students' needs. For this reason, participants soon give up to seek support in the office and develop alternative strategies to surpass most of emerging difficulties.

On the experiences with *professors* in the university context, participants reported as follows:

> Teachers help, they give us more time (during examinations). I ask for more time to read and everything. I also ask them to help me, I go to them to see if they explain the theory to me. Then they explain it to me. Are you following, right? That's what most teachers in my course help me with. So far, all of them have been good, except one. From [area of knowledge], he was a Master's student and didn't want to accept … (Brazilian student).

> This semester I had to give up a discipline because the teacher did not want to change the room. I already took two disciplines in which the teachers chose to change the room so that I could attend the classes, but I had to give up a discipline because the teacher did not want to change the room. Even after I exposed the situation, I also went to the (support service), but unsuccessfully. You see, she was a very difficult teacher, you know, she is very difficult, and then I chose not to get in the fight, I chose that, I gave up the discipline, I took it with another [teacher] later and no harm was done. (Brazilian student).

Difficulties in relationships with faculty, sometimes translated into inflexibility by teachers, are a barrier faced by participants in the study, also reported in other studies (Abreu, Antunes, & Almeida, 2012; Antunes & Faria, 2013; Fernandes & Almeida, 2007; Fernandes et al., 2007). As those responsible for the daily work with students, professors should be involved in the debate and reflect about their role in inclusion processes of all students, in encouraging the personal and social development of all individuals (Mantoan, 2008, 2013). Excerpt 1 refers to something that is a legal right (adjustment of the time of tests to each one´s specific impairment) as it was a "help". The participant mentions the problems he had with a Master's student (teaching internship) who resisted accepting his special educational needs. The episode denotes that higher education teachers' training programs are very likely not discussing teachers' central role in inclusive education.

Classmates played a prominent role in successful educational inclusion, according to the participants in this study. This aspect reminds us of the importance of otherness in the development of everyday activities in academic life. The relations between students, more symmetrical and horizontal than student–professors or pedagogical staff, can lead to interesting exchanges that enable development and help students to overcome difficulties. The attention and support of peers became a resource for development, as they helped participants to carry out activities in a regular and confident manner. In fact, classmates' support was considered as essential to their successful permanence in the university, favoring compensatory processes that are within the reach of students with disabilities (Vygotsky, 1983). In developmental processes, social others play a fundamental role, since the formation of subjectivity comes from social interactions that provide the conditions for the construction and reconstruction of meanings, conflict negotiations and decision-making processes (Rey, 2005; Valsiner, 2012; Vygotsky, 1983).

When participants reported their experiences in exchanges with peers, they, mostly, highlighted positive situations:

> In fact, at the peer level I have always been very lucky, fantastic classmates who provided me with notes, books, everything to improve my performance. Therefore, impeccable people […]. And when it comes to tests, they help me. And when we start the year, I inform them in the group activities. I tell them that I am dyslexic, that it is a great pleasure to work with them, but if they do not want to work with me, I understand, and it's okay for me to do it by myself. But they have always included me, I was never alone […]. I've been very lucky with my classmates. I can say that the greatest help comes from them, indeed. (Portuguese student).

> Right now, in a discipline that I'm taking, on the first day of class a colleague … came to me and said: "I'll help you, regardless of anything …" Then he said to me: "I'm here for you, if you need help you can count on me." (Brazilian student).

> Classmates always help a lot, […] Sometimes they help me, when there are no materials, or when there are problems with scanning, they help me understand what is there in the materials and then also in the group, by working together, it makes many things easier to me, we are ultimately always together, inside and outside the classroom. And when there is a harder assignment it is easier, because they already know how it works, and this is easier for me. They are very important. (Portuguese student).

In the events reported by the participants above, cooperation and empathy among peers prevail over competition and indifference. Everyone wins when there are cooperation and comradeship among peers. With the other's mediation, students with disabilities/special needs can experience development and autonomy. Moreover, students willing to help also benefit because they develop themselves in the mediation process: by discovering new ways of dealing with differences, with social others and with the knowledge being constructed and shared between them.

Overcoming the Tension Between Ethics and Individualistic Meritocracy in Inclusive Institutions

When we consider the characteristics of the social scenario of higher education, and the features of young people with disabilities/special needs, as in the reported study, we have the opportunity to reflect upon the tensions between meritocracy and democracy.

In the historical process of Brazilian public universities, the reduced number of places for all students led to the naturalization of individual merit as the sole criterion to regulate the entry of candidates to colleges. However, merit should be the only criterion to hierarchically classify people when equivalent conditions are granted at their starting points—what is not true regarding students with disabilities/special needs. The narratives and episodes analyzed in this chapter indicate the centrality of an individualistic meritocracy in shaping students' personal trajectories in universities. Merit becomes a hypergeneralized sign that mediates different levels of interactions and social relationships within universities, thus reinforcing social inequalities and stigma against specific groups all along their permanence at the institution.

In West liberal societies, cultural representations related to high personal merit involve individual primacy, talent, intelligence, autonomy, and self-efficacy.

However, no matter the characteristics of their special educational needs, students with disabilities are usually associated with heteronomy, incompetence, and dependence, what reveals implicit and explicit expressions of prejudice and discrimination. Hence, the present study highlighted some of the semiotic devices that, in the daily lives of colleges, may end up putting students with disabilities into positions of lesser social value, even when they demonstrate better academic performances than students with no identifiable impairment. The greater the barriers, the more creative the psychological resources students with disabilities/special educational need to develop are in order to overcome those barriers. For many, this resilience becomes the fuel and condition for their academic success.

Communication experiences with peers were of central relevance. There were narratives of solidarity, commitment, and social responsibility, especially about students' interactions with classmates and friends. Concerning professors, however, they reported episodes mostly involving inflexibility and lack of empathy. By not allowing adaptations and changes in the academic routines teachers revealed their resistance to creating more democratic classrooms, genuinely committed with students empowerment and development. The examples mentioned by the participants inform that teachers lack pedagogical training and support concerning the adjustment of their conduct and methods to the ethics of inclusion. Universities' staff should, therefore, participate in systematic training in issues regarding ethics, human rights, and human diversity and disabilities (sensorial, motor, communicative, intellectual), and possible impacts over development and learning.

Another challenge faced by the participants were the borders between university and labor market, that is, the encouragement of symbolic transactions between the world inside and outside the university in order to benefit future professionals with disabilities. A democratic inclusive university should invest not only to prevent dropouts and promote academic success, it also should have a goal to expand the value of inclusiveness to other social contexts, employers in particular. If Maria had known in the first place about the visual requests inherent to her chosen career, she could have chosen another profession more compatible to her condition.

The topics explored in the paragraphs above indicate the importance of further studies, in special, about the perspectives of teachers, the only segment of colleges' staff directly engaged in educational inclusion that were not investigated in the study. Teachers should be asked about their main concerns and difficulties in dealing with inclusive classes, and how institutional policies could support them to develop good quality practices. We assume that the universities investigated have examples of generous, solidary, and cooperative teachers, but they were not voiced in this research.

It would be relevant to investigate as well the dialectics of inclusion *versus* exclusion in educational settings according to the perspective of the dropouts. We assume that the participants of the study were, probably, exceptions to the rule, the winners who survived the many difficulties imposed upon them by the educational system along with their whole school life. If the regular dropout rates are incredibly high among higher education students both in Brazil (21%) and Portugal (26%), the problem is probably worse for students with disabilities/special needs, in special,

those who need to conciliate university and job. The subjective impact and disappointment caused by the interruption of professional studies—in special for those who face so many troubles—are worthy of future investigation.

We conclude by quoting Alice's disquieting words: *Nobody can teach anyone if s/he cannot see that the person right there is different and, at the same time, is so close exactly because s/he is different from us. Because we are different, we can teach each other and can learn with one another.*

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Chapter 7
Social Dynamics and Students' Developmental Perspectives Within a School Located in a Poor Urban Community in Brasilia

Angela Uchoa Branco and Theresa Raquel Borges de Miranda

The present chapter aims at identifying and analyzing the multiple facets of violence within school contexts—an area of great concern in Brazil (Abramovay & Rua, 2002; Bispo & Lima, 2014) and other countries, as we present and discuss data from a study carried out in a poor and violent community close to Brasilia. This research, carried out as part the Master dissertation of the second author under the advice of the first, was grounded on a cultural psychological and systemic theoretical perspective (Borges de Miranda, 2017). In this chapter, in addition to school problems deriving from typical poor and violent contexts, we emphasize the role of cultural practices and personal meanings, arguing for the bidirectional constitution and development of collective and individual practices and values along processes of cultural canalization (Branco, 2009). Together with cultural constraints, values and beliefs cultivated within school contexts operate as signs that either encourage and support auspicious life perspectives for students, or, on the contrary, may generate narrow or antisocial life's projects among students. This is particularly problematic when students are children and adolescents attending to schools in communities where violence and organized crime tend to be a visible problem in people's everyday lives.

Along the text, the reader will find an initial discussion about the concept of violence, in order to pave the way for a more extensive discussion of the topic from a cultural psychology perspective. After a literature search, we verified the high amount of theoretical elaborations and empirical studies about violence (Flannery, Vazsonyi, & Waldman, 2007); however, we noticed that few empirical studies addressed the issue of violence from a cultural psychology approach (Rengifo-Herrera, 2012). Therefore, we aim at constructing scientific knowledge about the topic as we build on such approach, theoretically elaborating on the issue and providing an analysis of research data concerning specific practices and values

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observed within a school situated in a violent community. We firmly believe that cultural practices, values, and beliefs have, indeed, a powerful impact over students' development, and this is why processes of cultural canalization, together with individuals' agency regarding internalization processes, must be investigated.

Basic Conceptual Issues Concerning Violence

Debarbieux and Blaya (2002), discussing violence within schools, argue that there is no absolute concept, or definition, of violence. According to them, "violence is both a matter of daily oppression and brutal, terrible acts." (p. 82), and, in addition, they say that "social exclusion is one of the major causes of school violence" (p. 84). The use of violence, however, cannot be justifiable due to the existence of "social inequalities: instead of eliminating injustice in the world, it will strengthen it." (p. 85). Violence, then, is a cultural concept, for ideas such as abuse, excess, damage, or hurt, often used to describe it, are cultural categories.

The World Health Organization (WHO) define *violence* as "The intentional use of physical force or power, as a menace or an act against oneself, another person, group or community, that causes, or may likely cause, physical or psychological damage, death, developmental disruptions or deprivations." The international agency experts also explain (WHO, 2014) the meaning of interpersonal violence defining it as the kind of violence that occurs between family members, intimate partners, friends, acquaintances, and strangers, including child maltreatment, youth violence (including that associated with gangs), violence against women (for example, intimate partner violence and sexual violence), and elder abuse.

From a cultural psychology approach, we conceive of violence as a relational category defined from the perspectives of both collective and personal cultures. Hence, follows the difficulties to define the term, because what is considered violent in one culture can be a legitimate, or even friendly, way to communicate with an interactional partner. Violence is a complex phenomenon that encompasses diverse levels and degrees of social judgment within specific cultural contexts, and it often results from intrinsic asymmetries found in human relations, asymmetries that may become more or less extreme within contexts of oppression and power struggle between individuals and groups (Branco & Borges de Miranda, 2017).

Due to its complex and systemic nature, violence can occur at macro, meso, and micro levels, and needs to be analyzed from the viewpoints of many different sciences, from biology to psychology to sociology and other social disciplines. Violence, also, may happen at different levels, such as macro (wars), meso (structural violence within social institutions), and micro (interpersonal transactions) levels. The categorization of actions as violent depends on collective cultural meaning attributions—that define what is considered as damage and suffering regarding the subjects targeted by the supposed violent action. Moreover, even when the collective culture finds an action perfectly legitimate as nonviolent, a person may understand the action as violent due to his/her own individual

interpretation: some people are more, or less, sensitive to aggression, and the way contextual cues are interpreted makes a huge difference to a cultural judgement. The attribution of the adjective "violent" to an action depends upon which signs are, therefore, used by the collective and personal culture for the inference of meanings related to violence. Attribution and differentiation of degrees of violence, as well as its appropriateness—or necessity—in specific circumstances, will always depend on cultural judgment or evaluation.

In addition to the understanding of violence as a relational category, sometimes people refer to nonsocial kinds of violence, stressing the amount of damage or suffering caused to people by accident, self-infliction or natural agents as beasts, hurricanes, and so on. Here, though, we will constrain the meaning of the concept to its interactional and relational dimension.

From a psychological framework, violence can be defined by the use of violent means—means that provoke other people hurt or losses—to achieve a personal or a collective goal. Such means can be physical or symbolic, verbal or nonverbal (Flannery et al., 2007). What could make violent means different from other means is the noncompliance of the other(s) involved in the interaction, expressed or inferred from the other(s)'s conduct. The other(s)'s reaction may suggest the occurrence of some sort of damage or suffering inflicted by those utilizing the so-called violent means. Their action(s) may also produce fear or terror, but the actions are considered as violent only when such consequences are inflicted upon the other(s) against their will. There are controversies related to sadomasochism, for instance, but voluntarily going to horror movies may not qualify as violence. Such criteria, however, is far from consensual, since violence is a word with a long historical tradition in many languages involving multiple dimensions and cultural diversity. Therefore, its use entails a permanent controversy upon its meaning, and the word should always be employed with caution, due to its polysemy.

Another important dimension of the concept consists of its occurrence at different levels: there are symbolic (verbal and nonverbal) and physical forms of violence, as well as interactional (taking place at the micro level of human communication) and structural kinds of violence, situated at both macro and meso levels (society, social institutions). In other words, the term encompasses everything from a punch to the face to the unfair distribution of privileges existing in most human societies.

Examining the topic from a cultural psychology perspective, we find very fruitful ways to make sense of the emergence and development of violent practices and values. History and culture are the utmost factors playing a role in what we are here describing as human violence. Along recurrent and fairly consistent experiences of violence, social groups and individuals end up incorporating into their practices, values, and beliefs the use of violence as the best way to get what they want. Cultural canalization processes lead to transformative internalizations of how to succeed in life, and, unfortunately, most people find the use of violence as the best, and more effective way, to achieve their goals. Laws and regulations are, of course, imposed upon the members of a social group as a mean to foster justice and equality among people, as a way to improve democracy in our social transactions. However, most

people still seem to be very far away from the ideal moral and ethical principles that should grant, at least in democratic contexts, justice, equal opportunities, and solidarity among all individuals. Consequently, if an ethics of mutual respect is more the exception than the rule, it is not so difficult to understand why violent means of interacting and relating to each other historically prevail in the context of most societies. Successful violent practices generate violent values and beliefs, and the latter stimulates further violent practices, and so on and so forth.

Valsiner (2009), a prominent cultural psychology theorist, explains the role of internalized hypergeneralized signs, which becomes powerful affective-semiotic fields, in promoting the construction of a culture of peace. According to him, hypergeneralized affective-semiotic fields operate as values that guide human *psyche* (Branco, 2015) along the irreversible time. Consequently, values such as peacefulness and respect for others will guide people away from using violent means, that is, violent actions towards each other, for regulating tensions or dealing with conflicts. According to Valsiner, a society whose educational system leads their students to use peaceful conflict resolution strategies is potentially ready for peace (Valsiner, 2009).

The Empirical Study

In Brazil, we find far too many schools located in poor and dangerous areas, usually in the periphery of our cities, where living conditions are difficult for a population that continuously strive to survive and raise their children despite the numerous challenges and shortcomings. In such areas, many are those who end up joining gangs linked to organized crime, such as drug trafficking. Indeed, the life perspectives of poor people in urban areas are very limited, and families struggle to keep their children away from illegal activities. In these communities, then, episodes of violence are common in people's everyday lives, due to constant disputes of territory and control of power positions. The students that attend public schools in such areas also struggle, as well, to build alliances with gangs in order to be—or feel—protected from gang members related with their peers, in other words, to survive.

Then, some questions arose from the above-mentioned considerations: How schools deal with the problems of their students in such communities? What teachers and administrators do to face such challenges? How schools perform their jobs within contexts extremely impregnated by violent practices and beliefs? What happens in schools located in extremely violent urban areas in Brazil? And what are the students' contexts for development under violent, poor extreme conditions? After visiting the administration of one such area we selected a specific school to investigate, and obtained the authorization to do our research (Borges de Miranda, 2017, Master dissertation of the second author under the advice of the first). The school staff welcomed the researcher, and she (the second author of this chapter) began to observe and participate in the school routine, ultimately selecting one of

the 6th grade classes to carry out the qualitative study. We verified that, indeed, many of the characteristics of the selected school were typical of other Brazilian public schools situated in poor and dangerous contexts, and, at this point, we decided to formulate the research objectives. The study's goal became, in short, to identify, analyze, and discuss some of the most important characteristics and dynamics found in schools located in typical Brazilian violent poor communities, with a focus on students' development and developmental perspectives. We aimed at making sense of developmental processes and life perspectives of those particularly vulnerable to that violent environment, and that is why we selected the most difficult class in the school, according to the staff. The selected class was composed of 21 boys and nine girls who had repeated the 6th grade at least once and were seen by teachers as the "most difficult" students in school.

Next, we specify the characteristics of the cultural context, the participants and the methodology used in the study. Regarding the results, though, in this chapter, we focus on the subjective account of one specific student, named as Victor (fictitious name). Other results are discussed elsewhere (Borges de Miranda, 2017). We interviewed Victor about his views on the school, teachers, and peers, on his own experiences as a student, and about his future perspectives. How does Victor live and develop as a student, as a citizen, and as a human being within such cultural contexts?

The Community

To choose a specific school and community, we consulted the *Multidimensional Poverty Index* of Brasília area (Gonçalves, Andrade, Araújo, & Rosa, 2015), and decided for a region not too far from Brazil's capital to investigate. After a visit to the regional administration of education (of the community here designated as Z), we scheduled the first visit to a specific school. Following the school administration willingness to participate, authorization was obtained and ethical procedures were carried out.

The population of Z amounts to 130,000 people, most of which with low educational levels, with 70% of its labor force consisting of construction, domestic, and general services workers. Below, we display a picture of the school (school X), which may help the reader to understand some of the following analysis.

The total number of students attending to School X, a public Middle School, was 1100 students, distributed in classes from the 6th to the 9th grades. Half of the students attended to school in the afternoon, that is, about 550 students shared the space composed of 22 classrooms located in three parallel buildings and a sports area. The 6th grade class selected for the study was one of the three 6th grade classes of School X. Its 30 students were older than usual, their ages varying from 11 to 15 years old. The class daily routine occurred as follows: six consecutive classes, with a 20 min break after the third one. Students physically moved from

one class to another, because the classrooms were assigned to the specific teachers of a certain discipline. Meals were offered by the school, and took place within the classroom, under the monitoring of the teacher. During the break, classrooms' doors were locked, and students jammed in-between and around the buildings.

Participants and Procedures

The participants of the study were the 30 students of the already-mentioned 6th grade class. We also observed and interviewed the eight teachers who worked with this class and the vice-principal (the principal's function in this school was, according to staff members, exclusively bureaucratic). The procedures of the study consisted of:

(a) observation: two months, 32 hs, notes taken in a field diary;
(b) focal group session with students, divided into small groups to collectively draw violent episodes that were later discussed in the session;
(c) focal group session with teachers and vice-principal, where we discussed their difficulties, students' problems, school violence, and school relations to the community;
(d) individual interviews with four boys, four girls, and the vice-principal.

Results

In this chapter, we refer to some of the results of the broader study (Borges de Miranda, 2017) by providing extracts from teachers' narratives, but we focus our analysis and discussion on the narratives of Victor, an adolescent that was evicted from the school. Hence, we first present some excerpts from teacher's narratives (during the focal group session or informal conversation) to provide a general picture of the school and the community characteristics, as well as of the dynamics of the 6th grade class selected for the study. For example, teachers said things like

> they all come from a cycle of violence, and they reflect this violence even more intensely. (…) they find violence everywhere. (…). I'm very much afraid of the chairs, that they will use them to hurt one another… (Teacher H)

> We hear that the father is in prison, is a drug addict, the mother is a domestic maid, leaves at 6:00 in the morning from Monday to Saturday, and is back home at 7:00 PM, (…) I ask: 'Why are you feeling sick?', 'Because I'm hungry…' (Teacher V)

> trafficking and drug addiction are inside the school, they're trying to infiltrate more and more everyday; together with the logic of violence comes the violence of organized crime! (…) the profile of those students is identical to the profile of boys convicted to socio-educational freedom restraint and assistance by the State (Teacher Ed).

During the focal group session, teachers discussed their ideas and difficulties with students and concluded for their own lack of training to deal with and to find ways to teach students like those attending the school, especially the specific 6th grade class we selected to study. As one teacher complained, "Me neither…I…I have no control over that 6th grade class, I don't know how to give classes to them, I was not prepared to do that! No way, I cannot go there and teach them… (Teacher G). Other teachers joined the colleague's burden, and the dialogue progressed as follows: "(…) because I can't even talk to them… I don't mean to teach them, I mean talk, speak, actually talk to them! (Teacher P); "I don't know how to deal with this…" (Teacher H); "Me neither, I feel impotent" (Teacher P); "Those boys need much more [to interact with]… (Teacher M starts the sentence)…a human being than with a teacher… (Teacher H completes the sentence).

In fact, during the observations, we confirmed their difficulties to lead the class and to motivate and capture the attention of the students in order to engage them in teaching-learning activities. The pedagogical resources used were limited, and most classes encompassed activities such as copying contents from the blackboard. While teachers tried to control students' behaviors, following a foulcautian logic (Foucault, 2012), many engaged in teasing and bullying each other, and threats of violence were often displayed among them, especially among boys.

When students were interviewed, they made explicit their evaluation of school's experiences, and provided a better picture of what it means to live within poor and violent community contexts. Life threats were constant, particularly due to drug traffic gangs' disputes that entered school's walls, and students felt in certain ways compelled to find protection with older adolescents and adults, feared by their history of violence and dominance in the area. In this chapter, Victor's narratives illustrate the dilemmas faced by most students and point to the school's risks of losing students to the world of drug trafficking. Victor was 14 years old. He ended up expelled from the school because of problems and misunderstandings deriving from the complex relations established between the school and the community contexts. His story reveals, among other matters, the insidious and multiple ways that violence is expressed in both contexts, leaving not many opportunities to adolescents to escape the vicious circle of violent relations.

Victor

Victor was expelled from school during the research. The formal reason for this extreme intervention was, according to the school staff, his verbal aggression toward a female teacher. The likely reason for his eviction, though, was the suspicion of his involvement with a drug-trafficking gang.

Victor lived with his mother and father, both working as cooks in different restaurants, and having a good relationship, according to him. He had informally worked in a Lan House in the area, but had quitted his job because the owner only payed him a very small amount of money (about 100 dollars per month). He studied

in school X for about three and a half years. When asked how he would describe his experience there, Victor used the word "messing around" three times, referring to his own behavior, and voicing the adults' complaint about his lack of attention and self-discipline. During the time of the research, he was extrovert and often aggressive with his peers—but so were most of the students. With teachers, though, he was particularly defiant. However, he developed a good relationship with the researcher, who tried to listen to him during her time in the classroom. This allowed the development of a trust relationship between them, which allowed for his full collaboration with the study. Next, we transcribe some excerpts from his narratives along the interview, and bring to the picture some of his ideas and evaluations obtained during informal conversations that were later registered in the researcher's field notes diary. The interview took place after his eviction. When asked about his experiences in the school, he first emphasized his own faults and inadequacies:

Victor: I messed around, did the activities so and so, not finishing… I just wandered outside the classrooms, just played…

Researcher: Why?

Victor: I don't know…because the guys said "no, we'll play now, come to play with us…," and I "sure", they're bigger, you know? They practically controlled the whole school…then I hung out with the big guys not to be the little guy, who is always beaten up…

He considered the older boys in school as his safety warrant, as confirmed below:

> Before [I had their protection], the guys came after me, messed with me, did whatever they wanted; after I hung out with the 8th grade boys, they stopped. Then I earned the school respect, people knew who I was, never messed with me anymore…

During the school break, boys used to switch school cameras away to prevent them from recording what they did (what included drug trafficking, according to Victor). We learned from the school staff that two students were also expelled at the same time as Victor due to drug trafficking. Another girl, that same year, was evicted because she robbed the English teacher's mobile phone. Victor, himself, was accused of verbal aggression to a teacher, but he was sure he had been evicted because the administration suspected of his involvement with gangs since the day a teacher saw him dispose of some drugs in the school's dumpster. However, during the interview, he argued he had not sold any drug, and that this event happened only once when gang members gave him stuff to sell but he decided to throw it away.

He resented his eviction because he thought he had recently changed, and many teachers had said he would be able to go to the 7th, and then 8th grades until the end of the year. When questioned about what is the purpose of schools, he pondered:

> Well….let me see…a kind of learning…because we also learn in the streets, but in schools you learn what is right and what is wrong, especially what is right, the right way, not the wrong ways of the streets (…). In the streets, if you live in a '*quebrada*' (kind of slum), you, or you… either you become an *aviãozinho*, a trafficker, or you die…it depends, if you do not study…

It is amazing how appropriately he summarizes, in a short sentence, the drama especially lived by male adolescents in violent contexts like this community. Immediately after the sentence above, he went on reflecting on the prevalent and conspicuous major activity that involve so many adolescents and young adults in the community, and the struggle they face when they want to go to school: the omnipresence of the drugs commerce.

> If you study, like…I studied here [school X], I left and now I study in school Y. If I come down here with school Y's uniform, they will think I hang out with school Y's boys, who fight the guys down here. Then the war starts, war here, war there, that is it…in front of school Y you find more bad guys then down here… (…) they are there, in cars, in bikes, just monitoring everything…

Gangs' disputes are actual "wars"—as Victor narrates—for people living in the community, because often someone gets hurt or even die in consequence of the permanent tension between gangs. In few words, drugs and crime are an overwhelming presence in most students' lives. Not rarely, they result in prison or death. Therefore, the affective-semiotic reality within which students live is impregnated with violence, physical abuse, disrespect, and hostility. To be part, or to have relatives or friends directly involved with drugs trafficking, are symbols of power within the community, including within the school. They serve as powerful markers used by students to control others and avoid being hurt ("after I hung out with the 8th grade boys, they stopped"). In a way, the school is perceived by Victor as a temporary protection, and the older boys—gang-related boys—are viewed as authorities, and not the adults (teachers or staff members). Those are the guys who can actually protect him.

The following dialogue provides a better picture of how deep is Victor's comprehension of the violent and hostile world in which he lives, and why he needs protection:

Researcher:	When you said, like, "Hey, I know someone there in the *morro* (a specific gang territory), what does that mean?
Victor	It's because, like, I am… let's say, kind of…, let's say I'm involved [with trafficking], then you know me…then you're kind of an ally, I respect you, you respect me. Then a guy comes, says he knows, like, he says "Hey, I know a guy from the *woods* (another specific gang territory), he'll kill you…I'll tell him to kill you"; then you say, "Right, it's OK, I'll call my friend from the *morro*, since he knows you're involved, he…he'll take that into account, then, he'll do that for you, you know?
Researcher:	Yes, it's like he protects you…
Victor:	Yeah, he kind of protects you…or he gives you the gun so you…do something

Gang disputes are the major concern of the adolescents, according to Victor. He tells many stories about such disputes.

Victor: If you don't disappear, you've got to disappear for a while. Otherwise, they'll hunt you down. They say, like, if they find out that you're *passando o pano*, like, you're looking what's going on here to tell the guys up there to come down to kill the guys down here, where they are…

Researcher: Did this ever happened here, Victor? (…) within the school?

Victor: I guess that was three years ago, they shot twice at this gate here, look! There were marks there, but they fixed the gate…

Researcher: Why did that happened?

Victor: Because they wanted to catch a guy who was from up there...

According to Victor, boys from the gang that controls the area where he lives cannot sell drugs in his school, because it is not their territory. They can only use the drugs sold by the other gang, but not sell. The excerpt below pictures the dangerous cultural practices occurring in the community where the students live. Victor explains that once a guy from the gang that controls the surroundings of school X asked him to sell drugs in the school.

> I said, 'I won't sell this f___g thing here, no way, I don't have to', and the guy said 'yes, you must do it, bro, if you don't you're gonna die", and I 'OK, then', then I talked to the guys from [the other gang], then when I got there, at the time I got to school, I took my time, then I ran up to the boys, the boys came here and did not find anyone, then I said 'OK, then I'll throw this s__t out, and I did it…I was about to throw it out when the teacher saw me…

In other moments of the interview, as well as during his informal conversations with the researcher, Victor did not feel shy to mention his own experiences with drugs. He talked about Rohypnol, a drug usually used by rapists, but which he said provoked hallucinations. According to him, "it's a drug that gets you insane, like that guy over there (he points at a guy passing by them in the street). You see things…but the worst of all is the mushroom tea." Victor familiarity with drugs reveals the extent to which he is already embedded in the traffic culture.

The Naturalization of Violence

Victor's conceptualizations about one of the issues of our investigation—the meanings of violence—and its occurrence within the school context can be inferred from many of the excerpts of his narrative.

Researcher: Let me ask you, do you think there is violence here in the school? What do you think would be violence?

Victor: Well, more or less…because…it depends on people, and also on the class…(…) sometimes a class doesn't like the other class and may start a fight…also, the girls here fight over men, too young for that…

Study's data indicated that, to Victor, violence meant physical aggression or fight. He said that in some classes boys also fight over beautiful girls, what did not happen in his own class because those girls were not pretty. When asked about other kinds of violence among boys in his class, he explained that

> No, we do punch each other as we play, when we play…kind of, it's a way to talk to each other, indeed, to punch, then, OK? To play, to beat each other up without hurting…

His explanation of punching the other as a "way to talk to each other" makes explicit the degree of naturalization of physical abuse. That was the way they had learned to communicate with each other, to call the other's attention, and continually dispute power positions (status) among peers. We often observed that they teased or bullied one another as though testing the peer's limits, and that was why such teasing, eventually, turned out actual fights. Victor mentioned many instances of violent practices, what confirms that such cultural practices are totally naturalized within the cultural contexts of the community:

> Once there was a party up there, a guy stepped, on the other guy's sneakers, the guy just killed the other… he took the gun and killed because the guy stepped on his sneakers… Once in a while…sometimes…like yesterday. Yesterday the guys from here went up there to shoot someone, but didn't find anyone and came back…they go up there when they're high, *rohipnolized*, *papelado* (LSD)…

The School Context, Social Dynamics, and Perspectives of Personal Development

The quality of teaching at school X was poor. Data from observations, individual interviews, general conversations, and focal group sessions were compatible to Victor's assessment of his classroom activities, teachers' procedures and interactions with students. He said that teachers themselves were critical of the books they used, considering the books as not good, and yet those books were used. We did not observe teachers bringing to the classroom interesting materials or activities as a way to motivate the students. Usually, teachers asked them to copy contents information from the blackboard, a boring activity that did not capture any attention or helped students to make sense of the meaning of what they were doing, or supposed to learn. After copying information from the blackboard, the teacher checked students' copies, and that was all. Moreover, Victor said (and we observed) that teachers did not explain—or discuss—the contents to the students, and most teachers, he complained, "practically give us the answers…." He mentioned, though, a teacher he used to like but that teacher had left school X for a "better school", according to him.

When interviewed, Victor was attending a new school. His opinion about this new school was even more critical than his evaluation of the quality of teaching-learning processes in school X. When asked about the new environment, he pondered

> Victor: There, it is very strange…they [teachers] don't like to explain, they just show us the answers. Like the Math teacher, she teaches, talks and talks, then we ask, 'Teacher, how come it's like…', and they give you the answer, 'Look, write it down, that's it!'
>
> To that, he added: "There is more physical education than classes (…) Each…everyday, just one class…once in a while we have two…

Unfortunately, the same problem related to drugs and drug trafficking haunted students' lives in the new school. Victor explained:

Victor: Luca, who studies there, at school Y, his brother is a trafficker there. Now he's in prison, but no one messes with him (Luca). He can mess with everyone, beat them up, all of them…
R: But his brother, even in prison, can he control people here?
V: Oh, yes!

Victor compared schools X and Y to a school that many people considered as a good school in the region, but we cannot say how he got this information, he might have simply repeated what he heard about it:

> There [at school W] they want to teach the students, not like these teachers, like, they write the contents (on the blackboard), just want you to copy and answer, never check if there's anything right or wrong. Like, many teachers [here] just say "hey, answer it!", that's all, they do a check mark (on the written task), and that's it, you go to the next grade. The never pay much attention… [to the student], like, they never help the guy with what he actually needs.

The picture provided above deserves a more detailed analysis. One aspect to consider relates to the school's decision to put together in one specific class all students with difficulties, instead of including them in regular classes. As that specific 6th grade class was considered particularly problematic, academic objectives and contents were reduced, turning the classes even less stimulating or interesting. The walls were empty, no audiovisual resources were used, as though any effort to make the schooling experience more attractive was doomed to failure. The environment, poor of pedagogical resources associated with teachers who seemed to have given up on students, ended up conveying the message that those students had, indeed, very slim opportunities to succeed, or even, they had no future. No wonder they often referred to each other as "trash", a powerful symbol to represent a lack of worthiness and merit in tune with low expectations and fatalism. However, this is not surprising when educators have difficulties to critically evaluate their own activities and conduct in the classroom, and, especially, when they seem not to understand the culture from which their students come. Unaware of the need to actually establish a trust relation with students, to communicate with them, speak their language and listen to their needs, interests, and doubts, it would be very unlikely that teachers would feel encouraged to do much about the situation. The lack of motivation of the students, from a narrow, uncritical perspective, would be students' own fault and problem. Notwithstanding, we know it is not, and it is exactly up to schools and educators to take responsibility and find ways to reach their students, and create new practices and activities that encourage them to engage and participate.

According to Victor's narrative, the school as an institution is somehow seen as an alternative way to the drugs universe, a possible distancing strategy in relation to engagement in criminal activities. However, he did not elaborate further on this subject, or suggested how this distancing, or the discovery of alternative pathways to a better future, could come true. We suspect he does not see, or envision, this possibility—of alternative life trajectories—too clearly, and his references—family and friends—do not seem to suggest other directions for his own development or life trajectory. All along the research, during the interview and his numerous conversations with the researcher, Victor did not specifically mention how the school could become a way to open other work perspectives to him or his peers, a venue for constructing a better future. The school just stands out in a present-day time dynamic and in a tense opposition to the world of drug traffic. Victor, consequently, lived in constant stress from such tensions, since the dangers deriving from the criminal activities he was so familiar with were real, and related to prison, revenge, suffering, and even death.

From his narrative, we can also infer a conflict between the concepts of autonomy and discipline. Life in the streets demands a lot of boldness, courage, and autonomy, while within the school he is continuously told to conform and to obey, to be quiet and respectful. While the streets require active and defiant attitudes, the school expects adolescents to remain passive and obedient, even when not treated with proper attention and respect. In fact, as we observed, teachers rarely listen to, or ask for students' ideas and suggestions. The result is the production of a coexistence of strong and irreconcilable positionings, a contradiction that generates tensions and stress in the students, making it difficult for them to develop an autonomy associated with respect and responsibility.

Another aspect worth mentioning consists of the distance between the school and the community, in terms of both students' families and communal programs, activities, and projects. School X, according to the whole set of data deriving from all the procedures employed in this research, did not maintain a systematic relationship with families or with the communal network. It seemed that staff members could only remember the organization of a typical Brazilian celebration—a folk "religious" holiday called São João—when they invited families to the school's environment. As a result, teachers hardly knew their students' families or culture. Due to such lack of knowledge, they tended to blame families for everything wrong with students. In Victor's case, though, it seems that neither his mother or father had drugs or police problems. Still, Victor's narratives and behaviors clearly indicated his high vulnerability regarding a future criminal life project. His mother, according to him, had probably given up on him. During the interview, he mentioned that

Victor: Sometimes when I mess around, leaving at 7 PM, coming back next day at 5 AM…

Researcher: Wow, and you mother didn't say anything?

Victor: She says "I'll give up on you," well, then I said "If you wanna do that, go ahead…

In short, more often than we think parents have difficulties in dealing with adolescents, especially when they live in dangerous areas where most youth are recruited to participate in criminal affairs as a way of living. When jobs are scarce or pay shameful salaries, it is very difficult to resist the fast money that comes from illicit activities, even when the person's life is at risk.

Conclusion and perspectives

The scenario drawn by the research results is not very promising regarding the development and future of children and adolescents attending to school X. Unfortunately, this kind of scenario is not too different from what we find in other poor urban communities in Brazil (Silva & Salles, 2011). Therefore, the problems and shortcomings of school X cannot be considered as unique, nor the difficulties faced by teachers and students should be attributed to a lack of responsibility of those in charge of the school's educative mission. Teachers do not receive the proper orientation and training necessary to put forth the necessary actions concerning how to approach the students and their families, and how to create efficient ways to promote teaching-learning processes, students' self-esteem, and socio-moral development. Hence, it is inevitable to detect inadequacies from the very architectural structure of the school (as seen in Fig. 7.1) to the quality of social interactions between teachers, between students, and between teachers and students.

Fig. 7.1 The School X

To reflect on Victor's and his peers' chances of development and perspectives for the future seems to be a priority to be assumed. The fact is that when we analyze children's and adolescents' lives within poor and violent communities, we cannot be optimistic. Something needs to be done, and done soon. Otherwise, the words pronounced by a teacher—when she said that the profile of her students were similar to those of convicted delinquent youth—may, sadly, become true. In accordance with the violent and dangerous context within which students and school staff members develop their daily activities, the affective-semiotic universe that impregnate their lives is full of tension, contradictions, and suffering. Furthermore, there is the strain of poverty and all of its consequences. School–community relations are almost absent. For example, the school never approached nor discussed the existence—and danger—associated with the criminal gangs. School professionals simply ignore the problem and do not discuss about the issue of permanent, serious conflicts affecting those living in the area. Maybe this happens due to their feelings of helplessness, but ignoring the problem does not make it disappear.

As schools, in general, insist on blaming students and their families for their own failures, classifying them as noneducated, deviant, and so on, they lose the perspective of the reality of injustice and abandonment to which such communities are submitted by society and its governors and administrators. By blaming the victims, schools reinforce the problems, instead of actively searching for constructive ways to overcome the real difficulties of the community.

When school X decided to expel Victor—who was actually showing signs of improvement at that point—it, in fact, turned his life even more difficult. As he said during the interview, his chances to be promoted disappeared, and he had to deal with a new environment that, according to him, was even worse, and more dangerous. Considering Victor as a potential criminal, they decided to expel him instead of minimally trying to approach the adolescent, and treat him as a human being in process of development.

To summarize the major aspects of the school life, found in the research, that are possibly contributing to the naturalization of violence, and the poor perspectives concerning students' development and life projects, we identified 14 weaknesses that should be addressed in order to change. After taking these aspects into account, we elaborated some guidelines that may help supporting initiatives towards change and improvement of the conditions offered by school X to fulfill its mission. Such suggestions may also be useful for schools with similar characteristics for they are very much in agreement with dialogical practices recommended by experts (Matusov, Smith, Candela, & Lilu, 2007; Ortega & Del Rey, 2002; Salgado & Ferreira, 2012). They are:

(1) enrichment of the physical environment;
(2) rethinking of the school routine;
(3) change in the composition of the class itself;
(4) initiatives to grant indispensable professionals, like experts in pedagogy and psychology to support and collaborate with teachers' work;

(5) reorientation of the principal's functions to avoid excessive bureaucracy;
(6) effective integration among teachers and their teaching activities;
(7) activities of monitoring, self-monitoring, and evaluation;
(8) effective collaboration with other institutions and projects;
(9) effective collaboration with families and the community in general;
(10) permanent discussion for the implementation of adequate, creative teaching-learning methodologies to motivate students;
(11) initiatives to grant physical and pedagogical resources, that should be provided by the governmental education department;
(12) permanent discussion and implementation of adequate guidelines to deal with specific problems of the community, namely, poverty, drugs, crime, gangs, and violence;
(13) promotion of teachers' higher expectations concerning students' learning and academic performance; and
(14) teachers' continuous training and orientation to construct good quality and trustful interactions with their students.

We are aware of how challenging it is for schools located in poor and violent contexts to implement the above-mentioned changes. To be naïve and expect schools to be able to transform by simply indicating the direction of the necessary changes may not help much. However, schools—particularly those in poor and violent areas—need to become aware of the real extension and characteristics of the communities within which they are located, making an effort to do something about it. Aware of their limitations and possibilities, they can make a difference in collaboration with other institutions and the community itself, making possible the emergence of new and more constructive perspectives for their students' development. New ways to promote students' development in extreme and unfavorable conditions, hence, have to be created and adopted whenever it is necessary to grant students from poor and violent areas their constitutional right for better schooling and developmental conditions. It does not make sense, namely, it is unrealistic to think you can successfully teach academic skills to your students when their own lives—and even yours—are at risk. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that schools are precious, singular social tools to promote citizenship, values of respect and justice, and the internalization of human rights and democratic goals.

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Chapter 8
Intersubjectivity in Action: Negotiations of Self, Other, and Knowledge in Students' Talk

Sandra Ferraz C. D. Freire

The normative character of schools is historically related to efforts in establishing categories to classify students. As a consequence, "categories referring to intellectual ability have played an important role for deciding who is normal and who is deviant" (Hörne & Säljö, 2014, p. 2). Little attention has been paid to how learners establish relationships with their teachers and learning partners and engage in classroom's social practices. If we look carefully to how children communicate with each other, we may find that their utterances, claims, and positions are highly sophisticated. Students' language and actions draw on references and categories from the broader social system—like race, social class, gender—as well as categories canalized by the institutional system, such as school competence, intellectual abilities, and expected behaviors. In addition, socio-affective experiences may provide psychological resources to relate—in the here and now situation—to such categories in unique ways, giving raise to possibilities for the present self to engage in self-development toward a future self. In which ways relationships, social values, and self-development are acknowledged, by conventional teaching, as part of meaning making processes related to knowledge construction?

The relations between learning and ontogenetic development are highly complex and difficult to address empirically, and so is the role of subjectivity in these relations. Historically, most learning theories and practices overlooked the role of the subjects and communication processes in the production of meaning and knowledge construction. Therefore, the power of knowledge as social construction in transforming peoples' lives has been minimized. In addition, principles of autonomy, equity and justice, dominant in Western individualistic discourses seem to promote a false notion of individuals as self-sufficient. It is assumed that a person can constitute her/himself by direct—or non-mediated—interactions with estab-

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lished science, laws, social values, dominant morality, etc. (Bergmann, 1998; Correia, 1993).

Thus, I address intersubjectivity and the process of self-other relations in situated learning practices from a developmental perspective. By analyzing communication and action coordination among children, adolescents and adults, we verify that intersubjective relations appear to have specific dynamics across schooling. The following questions pave the discussion: How do students coordinate and negotiate meaning making and value-laden social categories of self and others related to learning practices' dynamics? How do knowledge and social values mediate "I-you" intersubjective processes? Why does the disposition towards intersubjective relationships within learning situations seem to diminish along learners' formative trajectories, mostly in higher education?

This chapter examines the role of intersubjective relations and the role of the other in the process of knowledge construction and self-constitution in three different educational settings. It discusses the dynamics of communication and outlines the developmental functionality of social values as an important semiotic field that sits at the core of the relationship dynamics established during schooling. Finally, it discusses dispositions toward intersubjective relationships as part of knowledge construction and the professional development in higher education.

Intersubjectivity and Alterity: The Dialogical Self-Dynamics

Contemporary studies from diverse theoretical backgrounds have outlined intersubjectivity as a complex phenomenon with significant consequences in terms of novel forms of action, social interaction, and self-understanding (Smolka, De Goes, & Pino, 1995). In addition, intersubjectivity has become a key concept in the social sciences. As a field of study and empirical interest, intersubjectivity has been mainly addressed as the "I-you" relation in many disciplines[1] (Bergmann, 1998; Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). By defining states, levels, and modes of intersubjectivity, cognitive approaches emphasize cognitive processes of taking and negotiating one's perspectives, while sociocultural approaches emphasize social interactional practices in terms of shared focus of attention, shared mind, shared perspectives, and common knowledge. Even so, diverse views of intersubjectivity converge in valuing agreement as the utmost important aspect in the process (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010; Martin, Sokol, & Elfers, 2008; Matusov, 1996; Smolka et al., 1995). Most perspectives agree on the fundamental role of intersubjectivity in mutual understanding, which may be the precondition for human communication

[1]See Smolka et al. (1995) and Matusov (1996) for very interesting systematic reviews on the concept of intersubjectivity, and Zlatev et al. (2008) for a discussion on the topic by different disciplines.

and awareness of self and other (Zlatev, Racine, Sinha, & Itkonen, 2008). Last, but not least, the notion of intersubjectivity can also refer to a "variety of relations between perspectives" of individuals, groups, or institutions (Bergmann, 1998; Gillespie & Cornish, 2010).

Trevarthen (1992) and Rommetveit (1992) developed the concept of intersubjectivity on studies of human interaction based on face-to-face communication, including verbal and nonverbal exchanges situated in the flux of interactions. The communicative competence of infants before language development inspired Trevarthen (1992, 2008) to approach this phenomenon:

> One discovery of major significance for any theory of the causal factor or processes of intersubjectivity, whether of humans or animals, is that the rhythmic timing and modulation of energy in moving is a code or principle of conduct that makes motives share-able (…) human communication before language has come from the demonstration of its special polyrhythmic musicality (Trevarthen, 2008, p. viii).

On a similar direction, Rommetveit (1992) defined communication as an initial state of intersubjectivity. While communication assumes a primary function, including negotiation of multiple perspectives, intersubjectivity involves attunement, a mutual attunement to each other. From a Vygotskian approach (Vygotsky, 2000), J. Wertsch, B. Rogoff, and M. Tappan, among others, focus on shared understanding, shared thinking, shared activity, or shared presuppositions. Wertsch defines levels of intersubjectivity based on shared aspects of a situation definition, Rogoff emphasizes "shared understanding based on common focus of attention and some shared presuppositions" (Smolka et al., 1995, p. 171), and Tappan (1998) sees intersubjectivity as an agreement between child and adult that may occur within the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Thus, in this chapter intersubjective relationships and intersubjective understanding refer to the complex phenomenon of mutual self-constitution in situated social interactions (Smolka et al., 1995). As part of the dialogue dynamics, it involves highly sophisticated ways of communication and negotiation of perspectives. The internalization of significant others' discourses goes beyond verbal references and meaning, and includes other's subjectivity as well. Intersubjective relationships, hence, may involve self-positionings constituted by social values, ideologies, and motivations that persons' coconstruct with each other (Freire, 2008).

Self-positionings are based on the idea of self as a dynamic and dialogical semiotic system that mediates and is mediated by interpersonal and intrapersonal relations. It involves the negotiation of self-other-culture semiotic qualities. Self-positioning processes are highly dynamic, and "change overtime according to context, experience and meaning construction and reconstruction" (Branco & Freire, 2017, p. 273). Thus, dynamic self-positionings emerge in meaningful social interactions, but also change and develop as they interact with other self-positionings at the intra-psychological level—the person's subjective semiotic world—by the use of shared signs and utterances from other contexts.

Since antique Greece, Aristotle acknowledged the role of the other, the alterity, in human constitution, consciousness, and ethics. Alterity is a concept that addresses the emergence of the very consciousness of the self, which results from a differentiation process between self and non-self (other). As the concept of intersubjectivity, but with a different discursive configuration, the concept of alterity includes the presence of social voices beyond immediate social interactions (Magalhães & Oliveira, 2011). According to a Bakhtinian tradition, dialogism and alterity are defined in the

> relation I-other-others in socio-historical-cultural contexts [that] allows the possibility to expand subject's horizons, to unfold enunciative places, of voices multiplicity, in polyphony configuration between what is said and how it is said (Magalhães & Oliveira, 2011, p. 106).

The principles of dialogism imply the flow and dynamics of the relations of self with the social other. Our speech, including in its written form, is full of others' words, characterized by others' expressivity and value-laden intonations. We assimilate, restructure and change those in our own speech. Thus, we learn to communicate using social others' words, not our exclusive, own words (Bakhtin, 1997). Communication is extremely relevant for a Bakhtinian interpretation of dialogical relations: one's subjectivity depends on the subjectivity of the other as one learns from this other's words. As Bakhtin says, the "essence of the dialogic relationships implicit in the deep substantive structure of parataxic sentences cannot be reduced to the logical, formal-grammatical, psychological, or mechanical, or to any other natural relationship" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 33). The dialogical relationship in communication, then, necessary involves an alien, the alterity, which breaks the message into different voices.

Intersubjective Relations in School's First Grade: Engaging in Dialogue as Part of Learning

In Sousa's (2015) study, a multimodal learning experience was staged in a first grade class of a primary school, with a highly diverse group of students. The 6-year-old students were used to work individually for most of the time. The teacher struggled to provide activities to deal with different levels of literacy, and to address different types of learners. For the research, a three days learning plan was designed, in which students had to work collaboratively in solving tasks and creating artifacts that were presented in various forms of representation. The thematic unit composed of multimodal narratives staged an adventure of a pirate that had hidden his treasure. Children dressed like pirates and were involved in a treasure hunt. Activities involved an interdisciplinary mix of music, drama, tasks' solving, collaborative writing, drawing, artifacts' crafting, and a final dialogue which promoted reflections upon the whole experience.

The class had 22 students that were divided into two groups for this unit experience. One group was led by the research-teacher and the other, by a teacher

assistant. They had the support of the regular class teacher and two video camera assistants. The treasure hunt took place within the school's inner patio and playground. Students had to find treasure chests hidden by the mysterious pirate. Each group was to find eight to 10 chests to unveil the pirate's true story. Inside each chest, there was a task (object, image, or written artifact with a message) and a clue for the next chest. After they found the chests, the activities continued in the classroom.

In the following excerpt, a group faced a conflictive challenge while solving the task of the third chest. The clue for the next chest was a puzzle with a photograph of a place inside their school. The research-teacher opened the chest. When Ives and Mark tried to get the pieces to assemble the puzzle, some students complained, because the two boys had already done the previous tasks.

Excerpt 1a

Participant	Dialogue
Tammy:	No, Mark, you already had a turn. Now it is my turn!
Maria:	Oh, no, teacher! (addresses the researcher-teacher). I also want to do it. It is not fair!
Laura:	Teacher, I think you have to choose, otherwise they (addressing Mark and Ives) will do all the tasks and won't let anyone else
Research-teacher:	Hey, pirates. Attention: What will we do about this? Everyone wants to hold a piece. There are few pieces for so many pirates! But, another pirate told me that there are more tasks and clues. What will we do now? I am here just to help, you are the pirates. You decide
Anita:	First one of us has a turn, then the other, then the other (pointing to the partners casually)
Research-teacher:	Great idea. But, how will we know whose turn is now?
Maria:	Well, Mark and I and Ives already had a turn. Then, someone else needs to have a turn
All children, including Mark and Ives:	Me, me, teacher, choose me!
Research-teacher:	Do pirates have to yell at me? I am not a pirate and do not even have a scarf. You have to decide, not me

Excerpt 1b. Cont.

Episode description
After few minutes of negotiation, Laura suggested that one pirate might become the turn keeper, choosing who would do each task. They all shouted at the same time: "Me, me, pick me." Then, Mark got up, stood in front of each participant, and asked them: "Can it be me?" He waited for the partner's answers and moved to the next child. After asking to all of them, he went to the research-teacher and said, "Teacher, everybody thinks it can be me!" The research-teacher asked the group: "Do all of you think it can be Mark?" They agreed and Mark became the one to decide on the turns for each task, based on the criteria of who had not had a turn yet. On the last task, two girls were having a hard time assembling the clue. Ives approached them twice, and on the third time, he asked, "Can I help you?" The two girls said yes. Meanwhile, Maria, who had been watching carefully realized she might have a solution and asked the girls if she could also help

From a Vygotskian perspective, intersubjectivity consists of inter-psychological processes of communication that precedes internalization, intra-psychological processes and individuals' self-regulation (Wertsch, 1995). According to Matusov (1996, p. 30), "This function of intersubjectivity as the social glue of sociocultural activities makes possible the development of communicative discourses, languages, and finally cultures that constitute the global sociocultural and historical fabric of the human world." Intersubjectivity occurs in the public sphere, once social practices involve the public use of signs and shared meaning. Even private meanings, private cultures, and private values (Colapietro, 2006; Valsiner, 2007) are related to social actors and complex meaning making mediational processes. Here, meaning making (semiotics) functions in multiple forms and modes, not only as linguistic signs, or meanings conveyed by linguistic signs. The joint activities, described in excerpts 1 and 2, show that children are necessarily involved in a complex net of intersubjective relations while interacting with different modes and language representations. Intersubjectivity implies emotionally charged interactions with signs, utterances, and practices. For Colapietro (2006), practices necessarily imply intersubjectivity, because signs and utterances are translated into practices. From a developmental perspective, the example also points to the reverse direction: through experience, children translate lived practices into signs and utterances.

One important process of intersubjective use of public signs and utterances in social practice is addressivity. Hayes and Matusov (2012) define addressivity as the expectation of the other's reply, i.e., of the mutual engagement in the act of communication. The one who addresses, and is addressed, in a communicative activity is being agentive (Colapietro, 2006). Mark demonstrated agency by being reflexive and using signs and utterances successfully, engaging his partners in order to get a specific role in the activity. The addressivity dynamics during the interactions may be an evidence of Mark as a responsive participant in human practice that uses signs and utterances to regulate self-functions and self-orientations. A successful pedagogical project may, thus, consider the usefulness of addressivity as a criterion of collaborative working (Hayes & Matusov, 2012).

The following excerpt may support further our discussion about addressivity and illustrates the argument that dialogical exchange and listening are primary properties of the dialogue (Hayes & Matusov, 2012; Hjörne & Säljö, 2014; Rommetveit, 1992).

Excerpt 2

Episode description
Children were engaged in drawing and coloring the parts of the story they had written together with the researcher. Maria had finished her drawing and approached Anita, who stood there looking at her own drawing. Maria kneeled down, looked Anita in the eyes and said: "Oh, Anita, I will help you, OK?!" Anita seemed sad, glanced away. Maria sat in front of Anita and said firmly: "Tell me what you are thinking about this drawing so I can help you!" Anita retold the part of the story she was illustrating, pointing to the drawing as she talked. Maria seemed very attentive to Anita's explanations. Maria leaned her head on both hands, fingers crossed under her chin and elbows rested on her knees. She nodded as Anita talked. After Anita finished talking, Maria got a colored crayon and started to color while Anita finished her drawing

While in a Vygotskian approach intersubjectivity as shared meaning is a prerogative for learning and development within the Zone of Proximal Development (Wertsch, 1995), for Bakhtin the dialogical relations involve differences and divergences among participants. Alterity refers to the other's position within the dialogue, or interaction, which implies responsivity, responsibility, and coauthoring (Magalhães & Oliveira, 2011). Alterity does not necessarily requires the physical presence of the other in the dialogue, but the other's participation in one's utterances and perspective taking. However, intersubjective relations are indeed established within the interaction (Matusov, 1996; Trevarthen, 2008) and are the primary mechanisms for crafting the alter within one's own subjectivity. Depending on the nature of the interaction, it involves a sophisticated coordination of eye direction, body movement, voluntary attention, listening, and engagement into other's communicative action.

The interactions between Maria and Anita illustrate overlapping subjectivities when one participant assumes to share the other background knowledge or perspective about something (Matusov, 1996; Rommetveit, 1992). The episode represents the disposition toward understanding the social other as part of the learning activity—the use of tools for specific learning purposes. Maria seems very involved in Anita's mental life: "intentions, thoughts and feelings, and that much of this intimacy in experience (that) cannot be carried in words" (Trevarthen, 2008, p. vii). I would argue that this is a unique moment of transcendence made possible through communication, which involves responsiveness via the complex perceptual and emotive contents of speech (Rommetveit, 1992) and action.

Intersubjective Processes in Negotiating Social Values of Self and Other

Intersubjective processes constitute identities and societies and are permeated by social values and cultural beliefs systems. Culture here is understood as an *organizing principle of mind* (Valsiner, 2007). Although institutions may promote cultural canalization of considered good social values through specific practices, like generosity, nationalism, environmentalism, humanitarianism, and so on, people have to fill these values with meanings (Matusov & Lemke, 2015). Cultural values and beliefs activate meaning making, which consists of "semiotic elaborations on topics relevant for everyday life experiences, as well as for future cultural practices and actions" (Branco, 2015, p. 225). Although values are generalized and hypergeneralized beliefs of a society, social values are not an imperative of *musts* and procedures that need to be taught and learned monologically. Quite the contrary, values, morality, ethics, and beliefs result of ongoing psychological processes that are culturally mediated in dialogical and dynamic ways. The discussion in the current section highlights microgenetic aspects of human development, in which intersubjective relations are established within social interactions with

consequences to psychological functioning and actions. However, when it comes to teaching, relationships and subjectivity are more likely to be seen through normative, adaptive lenses:

> it seems to be impossible to avoid teaching values. (…) on the other hand, shaping students in some preset molding is apparently non-dialogic and uncritical (…). In the former case, successful teaching is defined by how well and deeply the students accept and commit to the taught values. In the latter case, successful dialogic teaching may be defined by students' critical examination of their own values against alternative values in a critical dialogue. (Matusov & Lemke, 2015, p. E1)

Education is recognized as a potential field for human development facing society's challenges in times of digital revolution and globalization, which come along with population migration, religious, ethnical, political and economic conflicts, gender and intergenerational issues, and so on. At the core of such challenges, there is a significant diversity of racialized individuals and modes of discrimination. Social values are part of intersubjective processes as they emerge from the disturbances generated by psychological conflicts between self and non-self in social interactions and in self-reflection situations (Bergmann, 1998; Colapietro, 2006; Gergen, 2006).

Freire's study (2008) investigated the development of self of 10–12-year-old students who went through radical school achievement changes during their transition from the 5th to the 6th grade of a public primary school (Branco & Freire, 2017). The dialogue in excerpt 3 was part of a focus group meeting with four boys and two interviewers. Interviewer 2 challenged the participants to consider value-laden social categories including gender, migration, and social class to discuss learning and school practices, in order to encourage qualitative evaluations and negotiation of the relations between self and non-self.

Excerpt 3

Participant[a]	Dialogue
Interviewer 2:	In my version of the story, there was a girl who migrated from the countryside to this town. The boys from her new school teased her saying that her former school was bad, was weak. Do you think there is any difference between a student who attends to a countryside school in a poor region, and a student who attends to a school like yours, here in the big city?
Paul and Robert:	Yes, there is. Yes there is! (Shouting together)
Ken:	No, there isn't. No, there is not! (regular tone of voice, enlarged eyes, commotion, looks at interviewer 2)
Paul:	Some people have less conditions to come to school. Sometimes they miss a class, or a lesson, or an individual work [test], and then, they will have more difficulties to learn. When someone lives close to school, he can come to class and will not miss it, right?
Ken:	But, then, maybe the student from there is well organized, and committed, and then he [the student][b] can come [to class]… (Looks to interviewer 1)

(continued)

(continued)

Participant[a]	Dialogue
Paul:	But, then, one day, like this, he doesn't have a car (initially addresses Ken, but circulates his glance to all). Then, he takes the bus, ok? Then, one day he misses the bus, and misses the lesson
Robert:	It is like this, S. (addresses interviewer 1), the way this student talks is different. (Interviewer 1 recasts) Yes, it is different
Interviewer 1:	Then, what? (Addresses Robert)
Ken:	(Interrupting) But you need to respect others!! (He shows conviction and commotion. Looks down, does not look at anyone. There is a long pause)

[a]Focus group, session 2, with four boys: Ken, Maurice, Paul, and Robert. Interviewer 1 (Sandra, researcher); Interviewer 2 (Stéphanie, research assistant)
[b]Student in Portuguese is a male noun, so the reason for the use of "he"

According to Branco (2015), ontogenetic experiences are coconstituted within social contexts (mesogenetic level) and social interactions (microgenetic level). The dynamics of self is set by a dialogical self-system comprised of an agentic aspect (the "I") and a reflexive aspect (the "Me"). The self, understood as a dialogical semiotic system, mobilizes plural and dynamic relations between self-positionings regarding the negotiations between self and non-self qualifications (Branco, Freire, & Roncancio, in press). This dynamics involves centrifugal forces—instability, diversification and change—and centripetal forces—toward relative stability, integration, and continuation of the system along time (Branco, 2015).

The challenge proposed by Interviewer 2 brings implicitly social values that the participants negotiate by establishing self and non-self-relations with the imaginary student based on their positions as students. Initially, there was a shared understanding, a shared presupposition about what it makes a good student: attendance, participation in school activities and evaluative tasks. Thus, they all seem to acknowledge the value-laden social meanings conveyed by the imaginary student's situation. Then, as part of negotiating perspectives, Paul and Robert unpacked the generalized voices going beyond of what makes a good student, and discussed about the relation of social class conditions and learning: The imaginary student lived far way, did not have a car, and used public transportation.

Stepping forward, linguistic diversity was brought to the discussion. In an effort of interpreting the organizing principle of thinking in Robert's statement "the way this student talks is different," we can infer that he was not referring to a different national tongue, to an outsider. But, he seems to be elaborating upon a stereotyped difference within society; about those that belong to a disadvantaged social class, whose speech characteristics, and communicative style diverge from the norm. In Bakhtinian's terms, Robert's issue is not due to linguistic or grammar aspects of the speech. It rather relates to "the other in I," the conflict generated by visualizing the possible intersubjective relationship with what the imaginary student might socially represent.

A third element emerged in the rich excerpt 3 with the dynamic of Ken's positioning and the way the dialogue collapses at the end. Divergences and negotiations are part of dialogical, intersubjective relations. The other's positions in the dialogue also implies responsivity (Bakhtin, 2004; Magalhães & Oliveira, 2011). Here I would like to point to the emotional commotion that Interviewer 2's challenge promoted. In the dialogue, the emotional intensity of an utterance has a powerful socializing character, and in that excerpt, we can verify the rich diversity of imaginary social others that took part in each of the participants' utterances and perspective taking.

Ken's agentive role in the discussion supports his position held against all the reasonable arguments presented by his partners. Although meaning making, agency and emotions are outcomes of the relational coordination (Gergen, 2006) in the group, Ken's actions and positionings, resulting from his participation in the activity, were activated by areas of awareness and intentionality, and seemed to be regulated by "deeply affect-rooted values" (Branco, 2012, 2015).

> Being more resistant to change (due to its deep-rooted affective quality), values play the centripetal role within the open system as it interacts with the world. Their role is to grant a certain degree of stability to the system in order to allow for a sense of self-uniqueness, persistence, or a sense of oneness that invest the "I" with power to retain a certain degree of control over the dialogical self-system. This power is translated in what we acknowledge as the individual's intentionality and will, or the ability to reflect upon and intentionally choose among life possibilities and alternatives. (Branco, 2015, p. 237)

Indeed, while the sequence of argumentations reveals the participants' efforts to interpret the complex relationship of self and society within the cultural system of values, Ken's utterances emerged with nonnegotiable self-positioning. The closing utterance "you need to respect others" is morally charged. It may indicate that Ken had an ontogenetic engagement with the interviewer's challenge, and that his implication with the imaginary student's issues may concern his personal self-motivations (Valsiner, 2002, 2007).

It is interesting to note that participants completely disregarded gender issues introduced by the interviewer's challenge. Paul even referred to the girl as a broader category of student, which was rapidly shared by the others. Gender did not appear in this specific case as a sign of self-other difference regarding the conditions for a good learner. This may suggest that this specific school, through its social practices, have been addressing the relation of gender and learning differently from stereotyped gender's differences canalized by society.

The next sequence of excerpts illustrates the relations of self-other by discussing a moral conflict. Students had participated in a special class about the Brazil's Constitution and discussed concepts of justice and democracy, among others. Children received a booklet with illustration and stories about the topic. Note that the narrative articulates different past–present positionings concerning students' different experiences of a same conflictive communicative practice, which implied a moral dimension: telling a lie.

Excerpt 4

Ken's narrative
I—Every time I saw someone lying I felt, like, I felt I wanted to help, I wanted to tell, but I could not. It was not me, so it was not my business. Only people who had done that (wrong to others) could explain themselves. Sometime ago, I defended the person who was being wronged but then, there was more confusion [It possibly means that Ken's intervention generated more discomfort among the ones involved in the conflict]. I changed because, because, because, well, I saw in the booklet of justice[a] (released his posture and seemed relieved) that people have the right to defend themselves
II—It was like this, sometimes someone would come and say [about an absent person] "he is an idiot." Then, later, after people tell others what he said that person would come and corner him, and he would say "Oh, it was a lie, I never said that." I tell you, gossips happen among my peers, and it is more among the girls, right? I will tell you about the boys. But you know, with girls there were lots of situations like that, but I do not remember. One day, Todd offended a friend and hit this friend during soccer. Then, the guys told the teacher, and then, he [Todd] said it was a lie, that he had not done it. But *it was true!!!* (Intense emphasis) Then, the teacher told him … (paused, looked away) Well, the teacher solved the problem

[a]The Federal Law Agency (FLA) holds an educational program in partnership with public education systems. FLA's staff promotes workshops in schools to teach children about the country's constitution and concepts like justice, civil rights, citizenship, and democracy among others. The pedagogic material includes an illustrated booklet with a diversity of practical situations representing those concepts

Value-laden qualifications, words that subjectively qualify self and others, are present in our everyday discourses. But, when they are part of intersubjective processes, of making meaning processes, "innocent expressions may in the course of an interaction acquire a moral meaning and may be treated in a moral frame of reference" (Bergmann, 1998). The communicative discourse also relates to communicative actions. The separation between communicative discourse and communicative action may lead to intersubjective and intrasubjective conflicts, as it happens when Ken narrates Todd's story. The moral issue there is someone's lying act, and Ken's narrative is an elaboration about complex intersubjective relations involving Todd and others, Todd and the teacher, Todd and Ken. He acts as a moral agent and his utterances regulate his participation based on sophisticated principles of conduct articulating general and particular values.

It is interesting to note, in the excerpt above, indices of an integration of knowledge of other, knowledge from information (the *booklet of justice*) and knowledge of self. This integration, then, enables Ken to change his positioning about the issue by the activation of sophisticated means of combining his own feelings, willingness to act and his moral awareness of the other. The other became viewed as someone with moral competence, and not as an anonymous person rigidly stuck to a class, or immutable category—a liar—with no capability for transformation.

I noted in Ken's narrative, the emergence of a moral and rational awareness, which, apparently, expands from family moral values, and actively reaches and connects with his positionings about social relational experiences. In school, his narratives about Todd's episodes outlined a gender difference related to his friends

communicative actions. Gossip was a term he used to talk about the girls. When he refers to boys, he uses words like curse, scold, and calling names. It seems that, for him, lies, gossips, and name-calling are wrongdoings, and they affect the construction of trust between people, what is needed for establishing friendship relationships. Friendship is another dominant topic in Ken's self-narratives and discursive interactions. Across time, his positioning in coeval relationships in school changed from the expressions of miserable exclusion feelings to a more selective positioning based on deciding who could be his true friends (cf. Freire, 2008).

Moral relations are reciprocal (Correia, 1993) in the sense that the acknowledgement of alterity implies the encounter of one's own and the other's integrity as subjects of rights, capable of engaging in relationships of mutual transformation. Alterity, therefore, acknowledges persons' active participation in the constitution of each other, the dialogical being, as proposed in M. Buber and L. Jackubinski. According to Rommetveit, moral participation involves *response*-ability (Bergmann, 1998; Linell & Rommetveit, 1998), which is the ability to respond to the other in dialogue. In this sense, subjectivity and morality develop through one's capacity for an attunement to others (Rommetveit, 1992).

Cultural traditions highlight moral functioning as a higher mental process or activity mediated by language (Rogoff, 2003), a vernacular language that communicates moral issues (Tappan, 1998). Linguistic and communication traditions focus on moral narratives (Marková, Graumann, & Foppa, 1995) or moral discourses (Linell & Rommetveit, 1998), which argue that, in dialogue and discourse, moral voices interact through a complex of actual selves and desirable selves. In few words, regardless the normative accountability of one's moral functioning or activities, participation in dialogues is how the person is constituted as a moral agent (Bergmann, 1998; Colapietro, 2006; Linell & Rommetveit, 1998; Matusov & Lemke, 2015).

Dispositions Toward Intersubjective Relations and Learning in Higher Education

A study conducted with 42 higher education students in a specific class in the second year of their teaching degree (Bento, 2014), participants (P) were initially asked to express their opinion about collaboration and group work in a questionnaire. The study also conducted a focus group with volunteers, followed by individual semi-structured interviews. Initial results showed that participants preferred individual (40%) instead of group work (28%) in learning situations. The rest of them were cautious: 32% may prefer group work depending on the kind of the task, group partners, and context in which they would need to work together. Participants in favor of learning practices in groups explained their preference: "A way to get new knowledge as a result of working with different people" and "learning to work with different people" (P5); "a dynamic way to learn, where different students are united by knowledge as a main tool of connection among them." (P. 7);

“collaboration, mutual respect and diversity of ideas.” (P. 11). Overall, participants stressed that it was very challenging to combine intellectual achievement with social relationships.

In the section regarding the dynamics of group work, responses expressed concern with who they would group with. Most participants (72%) preferred to work with people they already knew and were used to pair with. The qualities taken into account for choosing a working partner were (in *decrescendo* order): personal affinity, similar learning/working methods, mutual understanding, trust, good communication, freedom to express ideas, ideas’ convergence, balanced division of labor, productivity, and good relationship. Only one participant preferred to have new partners in a learning group, explaining that it would beneficial to meet new people, to try new experiences and new working methods. Similar reasons motivated the 24% of the participants who checked the “It depends” option.

No matter who the learning partners are in a group, responses in Table 8.1 outlined a disposition toward the quality of the discussion, development of the task, combination of different visions, mutual motivation concerning the topic, and the optimum coordination and management of the work. P4 welcomed diversity and differences, but those had to be subordinated to the productive participation in the task. It is challenging, based on such responses, to make sense of how students coordinate and negotiate meaning making processes and value-laden social categories of self and others related to learning practices’ dynamics. It seems that the accomplishment of the activity is what really matters. It seems that participants’ intersubjective understanding is peripheral to what happens in academic learning. Matusov’s (1996) idea of intersubjectivity as a glue to sociocultural activities that enables the development of communicative discourses, emergence of culture (Valsiner, 2007) and self-development (Branco & Freire, 2017) is less important, or not sufficiently observable, in higher education learning.

Interestingly, other responses tend to value the interpersonal affective quality of the group work just as a way to promote well-being and emotional comfort. Relational aspects valued are affinity, trust, mutual understanding, and “good communication”, just as discussed by Braten (1998) and Marková et al. (1995).

Table 8.1 Who should my partner be?

Participant	Statement
P1	Any person that is willing to collaborate, because any kind of partner can enrich the discussion
P3	I have no preference for a specific partner; I like what is best for the group performance
P4	In pedagogical classes/subjects, it is nice to have a very diverse group to interact with, participants from different scientific fields, to allow for different views regarding the learning objective. However, it is important to coordinate extra-class working time and provide a good strategy for labor division
P5	I like to choose my groups by topic, not by choosing my partners. Thus, people will study a subject they are willing to, and this facilitates learning

Divergences and conflicts are not acknowledged, although in developmental terms, disagreements are important aspects of intersubjectivity (Matusov, 1996).

If intersubjective understanding is a broader phenomenon within the relationships (Smolka et al., 1995), according to the responses, participants' intersubjective understanding concern affection, communication and perspective sharing, not disagreement. It may include diversity of ideas, novelty, new learning methods, task and time management, but, a major concern is the coordination with affective components with a given task. Affection, as the ability to affect and be affected by others, is central for many different theories (as in Wallon, Trevarthen, Vygotsky). Every social experience is an affective-experience. Along ontogenetic development, socio-affective experiences are the basis for intellectual abilities, and higher mental functioning (Valsiner & Han, 2008). But, in the study, affection and interpersonal relations seem disconnected from cognition.

For the participants in the study, intellectual abilities, with consequences to academic performances and achievement, are the result of individual efforts in activities like drills, exercises, and practices. It seems that schooling, teaching practices, and teacher–students relations have successfully canalized the value of individual over collaborative work (Hjörne & Säljö, 2014). When faced with learning as a collaborative process in their academic trajectory, participants seem reluctant to engage, due to the ambiguities that such learning practice represent to their individual achievement.

On the other hand, when asked to write about aspects that negatively interfere with group work, participants attribute more relevance to lack of individual commitment toward the group and the learning task, and to bad communication. Both categories indicate a discomfort generated by the lack of disposition to negotiate ideas, establish relationships, and participate in the activity. A third category was bad labor division, which connects to the other two, since they considered as lack of commitment whenever a partner does not complete his share of the work, leaving it for others to do it. There is an important intersubjective aspect to be outlined here: mutual engagement in communication as a criterion of collaborative work (Hayes & Matusov, 2012) and as the grounding for intersubjective dynamics. Such engagement relates to being agentive in the process of learning (Colapietro, 2006; Gergen, 2006; Matusov & Lemke, 2015). In developmental terms, a joint activity may result in lack of success due to bad communication, disengagement or poor participation coordination. But the experience can provide learning for coordinating participation in future joint activities (Matusov, 1996).

An important learning groups' pedagogical assumption is that the experience of intersubjectivity would provide for the emergence of novelties and productive exchange uniting knowledge, social interaction, and personal self-motivation. Most likely, it would provide for the emergence of constructive affective dispositions and respect toward one another, what ultimately engenders effective learning. When participants attribute their bad experiences with group work to others' lack of commitment and bad communication, it indicates the lack of disposition towards intersubjective relationships. When the partners are not willing to construct together a true interpersonal, relational engagement, group work becomes very difficult, and

so the relation with knowledge. Social interactions may or may not involve mutual engagement, commitments, and response-abilities, as the participants of the study have pointed out. Therefore, intersubjective relations involve affective dispositions towards the other and mutual engagement in communication within joint practices, as a social condition for knowledge development.

Final Remarks

Communication lies at the core of all relationships established in learning situations. Without effective communication, learning objectives can be lost. Intersubjective relations are, hence, fundamental to constructive communication because they stage receptive dispositions toward the other, including others' subjectivities and knowledge. Therefore, intersubjective processes in learning practices are closely linked to the capacity and possibility of mutual understanding, and to the activation of knowledge construction processes among individuals participating in learning activities. The empirical illustration presented in this chapter, drawn from different contexts and moments of learners' educational trajectories, allowed us to build up arguments regarding the relations of intersubjectivity and learning.

Firstly, the analysis of learning activities with first-grade students with different literacy backgrounds and abilities brought up some ideas on how they coordinate and negotiate meaning making, and value-laden social representations of self and others, related to learning practices dynamics. Activities seemed open enough to agentive and creative participation, by using wisely mediational features of signs and utterances according to children's social situation and development. Children's interactions suggest that intersubjective relations precede intrasubjective processes, such as self-regulation. Intersubjectivity involves interpersonal assistance, sensitivity toward another's needs, willingness to share the same focus, interpretation of one another intentionalities and actions, and addressivity. It is an intrinsic part of learning, of shared knowledge and of meaning making regarding novelties. Addressivity and listening are important aspects of communicative actions, and are constitutive of agency, which involves responsive participation in learning practices.

Second, when knowledge and social values meet as parts of the curriculum, this combination may mediate psychological processes towards learning in interesting ways. Social values and cultural belief's systems activate meaning making while deep affect-rooted values regulate meaning, agency, emotion, awareness and intentionality. Intersubjective relations among young adolescents are constituted by social values and this implies disturbances generated by psychological conflicts between self and non-self in face-to-face encounters or in self-reflexive activity. Intersubjectivity may result in alterity relations when the social other's subjectivity is transformed into a voice with important participation in meaning making, self-regulation, and ontogenetic development. In this sense, moral functioning as a capability to engage in relationships of mutual transformation may enable the

construction of integrated psychological resources to acknowledge and engage with different social others and with a broader set of social values' principles, that is, the social basis of knowledge.

Finally, the study with higher education students revealed a dominant preference for individual work, and mixed feelings about the connections between academic learning, knowledge and social relationships. For the participants, group work represented a challenge regarding the achievement of intersubjectivity. The concern about others' lack of commitment in learning groups, as well as the lack of trust and confidence on each other's subjective dispositions, may result, though, from participants' inexperience in collaborative situations throughout schooling. Consequently, dispositions towards intersubjective relations, which are the grounding of collaborative learning practices, may not be developed. A mistrust deriving from the notion of an autonomous self and from individualistic moral discourses, therefore, contributes to the deep-grained beliefs about partners' lack of responsibility.

There is a meaningful difference between coordinating a diversity of individual actions and participatory contribution to the activity. A normative activity or a homogenized participation in the activity do not constitute intersubjective relations per se. There must be diversity in participants' shared attention and shared focus. Contradictions and disagreements are also part of intersubjective relations and dialogical communication when alterity is generated. In cultural terms, it is impossible to expect reciprocity based on full correspondence of psychological experience, perception and knowledge organization, as the concept of overlapping subjectivity may entail. It would be impossible to create new meanings from sameness. Although intersubjective relations are established through social interactions, social interactions do not necessarily constitute intersubjective relations if there is no communicative engagement involving self and other's subjectivity, and their agentive participation in the interaction. Shared and constructed knowledge comes into play through meaning making mediated by signs and symbolic exchanges in cultural activities, which can involve disagreement and conflict. Indeed, it is the reflective, and dialogically oriented, activity that may develop further the intersubjective understanding of the links between self-other relations, learning, and knowledge construction processes.

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Chapter 9
Diversity, Social Identities, and Alterity: Deconstructing Prejudices in School

Ana Flávia do Amaral Madureira and Ana Luiza Cruz Sá Barreto

Adopting a cultural psychology framework, this chapter focuses on theoretical issues concerning the relations between diversity, social identities, and alterity, and on some educational contributions aiming at overcoming prejudices and discriminatory practices observed in school contexts. Since the last decade of the twentieth century, cultural psychology has invested efforts in the construction of a more integrative and systemic view about human *psyché* (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007a). In this chapter, we intend to bring some contributions along the venue of this integrative direction. More precisely, we will develop the theoretical argument according to which *social identities and prejudices are boundary phenomena that have historical, cultural, and deep affective roots* (Madureira, 2007a, b, 2012; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b).

In a social world permeated by discriminatory practices and intolerance on issues such as religion beliefs, gender, sexuality, nationality, and so on, the promotion of empathic interpersonal interactions in daily life experiences cannot be a secondary concern. In order to promote a democratic culture in schools—where diversity is to be valued as an important *resource* and not as a *problem*—it is essential to deconstruct different kinds of prejudices. In a world that is still constructing (metaphorically and/or concretely) diverse kinds of walls to split or separate people and social groups, the authors share the conviction that we should devote our efforts to the construction of bridges to connect different people, social groups, and nations.

This chapter explores the tension between two particular metaphors: the construction of "walls" *versus* "bridges" between individuals and social groups. Both are powerful metaphors that convey interesting analytical potential and relevant educational implications, which may contribute to promote a culture of peace

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within schools. In this direction, we suggest the use of images in educational contexts as cultural artifacts are able to work as fruitful tools to promote empathy and deconstruct different discriminatory practices anchored on diverse prejudices. We illustrate our arguments with empirical examples extracted from a qualitative research carried out in a public high school located in a city near to Brasília (the capital of Brazil) by the second author, under the supervision of the first.

Social Identities, Alterity, and Diversity from a Cultural Psychology Framework

> The real joy of human living is the play of ideas and practices. Cultural Psychology, as conceived here, is the study of the extraordinary nature of the most ordinary aspects of daily human living at any place on the planet. We are all one—by being individually unique. (Valsiner, 2007, p. 18)

Each person is individually unique and, at the same time, member of humankind. Therefore, psychology must acknowledge the biological unity of our species on the one hand, and the cultural diversity of human beings on the other. In few words, general and particular dimensions of human lives are deeply connected and need to be taken into account.

Since the 1990s, cultural psychology has pursued the construction of a more integrative, dynamic, and systemic view about human *psyche* (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007a). Nonetheless, how to integrate an extreme cultural diversity with the biological unity of our species? This was the dilemma proposed by the anthropologist Geertz (1989), a theoretical dilemma also relevant for cultural psychology. As Valsiner (2007) questions:

> How every person who lives in any location in the contemporary world is integrating culture into his/her psychological life? How is culture present in human feeling, thought, and action? And how do human beings guide their own subjectivity through various cultural means? (p. 16).

Cultural psychology shares with other sociogenetic theoretical perspectives the assumption of the *social genesis* of individual psychological development. Concepts like *culture, semiotic mediation, and experience* are relevant conceptual tools in a cultural psychology theoretical framework (Madureira, 2012, 2016; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b; Valsiner, 2007; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007a, b). After all, human experiences always happen within structured cultural contexts permeated by historically rooted beliefs, values, and practices that, in different ways, canalize meaning-making processes in daily life contexts.

We adopt the concept of "cultural canalization of experience" (Valsiner, 2007), instead of "cultural determination", due to the active role played by concrete individuals in the meaning-making processes that relate them to the world, and to themselves. The concept of cultural canalization is, also, coherent with the bidirectional cultural transmission model (Valsiner, 2007), according to which cultural

messages are actively constructed and reconstructed by people in their social interactions, through the processes of internalization and externalization.

Culture, as a structuring conceptual tool in cultural psychology, is a very difficult concept to define (Valsiner, 2007). In social anthropology, the difficulties to define culture are amply recognized. According to Laraia (2002), diverse anthropological perspectives define culture in many different ways, for example, (a) culture as an adaptive system; (b) culture as a cognitive system; (c) culture as a structural system; and (d) culture as a symbolic system. In this chapter, we consider culture mostly as a symbolic system (Laraia, 2002) and emphasize the *interpretative anthropological perspective* proposed by Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) as a fertile way to define culture.

Geertz (1989) adopts a semiotic conceptualization of culture. For him, "human behavior is seen as symbolic action" (p. 8). Moreover, he adds "this suggests that there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture." (p. 35). This definition supports cultural psychology in its efforts to understand the constitutive role of culture concerning the development of human *psyche*. Geertz's (1989) adoption of a semiotic conceptualization of culture was inspired by Max Weber. For Geertz (1989), anthropology is a science that provides interpretations of the symbolic universe of culture. For this reason, anthropology is a fruitful interlocutor to cultural psychology.

According to Valsiner (2007), the concept of culture "implies a constructive modification of the natural course of affairs." (p. 19). In everyday life, we deal with multiple cultural artifacts: clothes, shoes, computers, books, cars, glasses, bikes, smartphones, advertisings, television, Internet, art, science, philosophy, and so on. All introduce "constructive modifications" in the course of life. All are examples of cultural artifacts and, in different degrees, all integrate the dimensions of the material and the symbolic (Pino, 2005). Definitively, we live our lives in a world saturated with cultural significance. As stressed by Valsiner (2014), we are compulsive builders of meanings.

Meaning-making processes would be impossible without the tensions and ambiguities between sameness and difference. For instance, imagine a hypothetical world without any differences or ambiguities, where everybody is identical to each other. In this strange and dehumanized world, meaning-making processes would be impossible. Therefore, we conclude that differences are central to meaning-making processes, *and boundaries mark such differences.*

Social Identity and Prejudice as Boundary Phenomena

Social identities and prejudices are both boundary phenomena. In life experiences, symbolic boundaries always delimit—in semipermeable or non-permeable ways—the differences between individuals and different social groups, in terms of nationality, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth. According to Silva (2000),

> to say that identity means the establishment of boundaries means to make distinctions between what is inside, and what is outside. Identity is always connected with a strong separation and a distinction that suppose, assure and reassure power relations. 'We' and 'they' are not, in this case, only grammatical distinctions (p. 82).

Some of those symbolic boundaries, though, do not make much difference concerning social interactions, but others do have deep and problematic implications at macrosocial, inter-psychological, and intra-psychological phenomena (Madureira, 2007a, b, 2012). Surely, phenomena occurring at these different levels of analysis are dynamically articulated. In order to illustrate how powerful the implications of symbolic boundaries over people's lives are, we bring forth the case of homophobia (Madureira, 2007a, b). The reproduction of homophobia in daily practices usually transforms semipermeable boundaries—which symbolically mark the differences between heterosexuals, gays, lesbians and bisexuals—into non-permeable boundaries. The last symbolically mark, in rigid ways, the differences between excluding categories. Therefore, *semipermeable boundaries are semiotically converted into cultural barriers,* in one word, into *prejudice* (Madureira, 2007a, b; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b).

In the previous example, it should be noted that more than simply marking the existence of differences—what actually derives from rigid boundaries—exists a hierarchical and evaluative understanding—a socio-moral judgment—regarding diverse sexual orientations. The reproduction of homophobia plays a strategic role in the maintenance of the *status quo* concerning the domain of traditional sexuality and gender relations. Moreover, we find deep connections between homophobia and sexism, as discussed by numerous authors (Borrillo, 2009; Bourdieu, 2005; Madureira, 2007a, b; Lionço & Diniz, 2009; Junqueira, 2009, 2010; Welzer-Lang, 2001).

Meaning-Making Processes and Affective Semiosis

From a cultural psychology framework, it is important to clarify that meaning-making processes always occur in the irreversible flow of time (Valsiner, 2007, 2014). Therefore, the development of interpretative *dynamic* models to account for meaning-making processes is necessary. Taking this into account, Valsiner (2007, 2014) proposed the *Semiotic Regulatory System Model,* which consists of a dynamic affective-semiotic perspective on psychological phenomena. The model suggests five different levels of analysis: from Level 0 (physiology) to Level 4 (hypergeneralized affective-semiotic fields).

As we focus on the goals of this chapter, the level that includes more abstract and hypergeneralized domains of cultural mediation—Level 4—is the one of special interest. This is the case because at this level, we find values and prejudices, both actively and strongly internalized by the individual along her/his ontogenetic history, and both responsible for guiding the person's actions, feelings, and thoughts (Madureira, 2007a, b; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b). Level 4 integrates

promoter signs (Valsiner, 2007) that assume a dominant hierarchical position in the self-regulation of meaning-making processes. In other words, promoter signs present a strong power of generalization and canalize, in different ways, the interpretations, thoughts, feelings, and actions of people inserted in the irreversible flow of time.

Herrera (2014), in his research about the development of social values among Colombian and Brazilian boys, studied meaning-making processes within playful scenarios ambiguously suggestive of violence. According to the study, uncertain and ambivalent situations are, exactly, those that promote increasingly complex and abstract psychological processes, which can favor the emergence of values and prejudices. If uncertain and ambivalent situations are relevant to the development of personal values (Branco, Branco, & Madureira, 2008), then the notion of alterity gains a strategic significance in studies about self-development from a cultural psychology framework. After all, the *other* is always the unknown, a mystery to us at different levels. As a mystery, the other "opens the door" to new situations of uncertainty and ambivalence in interpersonal interactions in the irreversible flow of time (Valsiner, 2007, 2014).

Gusmão (2003) claims that

> What alterity means is that the other exists, and is present in our world, as we are. This encounter challenges us, and demands for our self-definition. The self and the other are part of a relational context marked by hierarchy and power relations. (…) How to live together and establish solidary and equal relations among different subjects? These are permanent challenges for education and schools. (p. 89)

Alterity, Self, and Non-self

According to Boesch (in Valsiner, 2007), the other, the "non-self", challenges us and stimulates us to assume positions that can be characterized by a movement of approximation (*FERNWEH)*, or distancing from something new (*HEIMWEH*). The general processes of *FERNWEH* ("road to the far away") bear on curiosity and on the desire to learn something new from this "non-self". It leads to adventure and novelty, but also to risks. The inverse movement (*HEIMWEH*) relates to the desire for distancing from novelties, what leads to closing oneself in relation to the "non-self". The general processes of *HEIMWEH* ("homeward road") mean striving toward the secure and the familiar. Therefore, to make sense of meaning-making processes, it is necessary to take into account the notion of alterity, especially in studies that adopt a relational and cultural contextualized perspective on the analysis of psychological phenomena. When we talk about alterity, we are talking about relations, alliances, and tensions between self and social others.

There are specific moments in life that the other, the "non-self" can be emotionally perceived as a threat. During those moments, the "non-self" reminds us that the alterity, what is strange for us, is not only something external to the self, but also resides inside. In such situations, the modern Cartesian conception of "sovereign

self" is deeply questioned (Figueiredo & Santi, 2011; Hall, 1998; Hermans, 2001). We do not have an absolute control over ourselves, as the notion of a "modern subject" would suggest (Figueiredo & Santi, 2011). In general, while the perception of dangers and risks relate to the promotion of *HEIMWEH* processes, feelings of curiosity and pleasure push the person toward *FERNWEH* processes. As Joerchel (2007) argues:

> According to Boesch (1998) *the relations between 'home, secure' and the 'strange, unfamiliar' is a key element in developing a self-system*. (…) *Thus, the self-concept is comprised of both the familiar, the home environment, as well as of the strange and unknown*. It is within this tension that humans develop a self-concept: the secure home environment provides the base for the self-confidence and self-actualization; the strange and the unknown provides a platform for hopes, dreams, and desires for potential actions, and potential self-concepts, as well as a platform for fears and threats to the self-system. (…) *In this respect the construction of social barriers can be seen as defense mechanisms in reaction to a perceived threat to the self-concept* (p. 257, emphasis added).

Those issues are relevant in critical discussions about diversity as an intrinsic human condition, as well as in approaching challenges concerning the construction of a culture of peace. The full acceptance and promotion of respect for diversity are certainly necessary to construct peace within educational contexts (Gusmão, 2003; Madureira, 2007a, 2013; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b). Moreover, it is pertinent to clarify that, as proposed by Demo (2005), we adopt an immanent perspective—and not a transcendent perspective—on ethical issues regarding human relations, in the direction of constructing a multicultural ethics (Demo, 2005).

From an immanent perspective, in order to deal with the delicate ethical equilibrium between *the respect for cultural diversity* and *the respect for human rights*, it is essential to overcome the boundaries that, for instance, split different scientific disciplines, and the domains of science and art. Complex ethical dilemmas permeate human relations and pose diverse challenges, which cannot be properly addressed without a broad interdisciplinary understanding. Therefore, the construction of alternative ways to deal with human diversity, inspired by the principle of multicultural ethics (Demo, 2005), should encourage researchers to transgress traditional scientific boundaries.

Walls *Versus* Bridges: Two Powerful Metaphors in the Study of Identities and Prejudices

> (…) this is the challenge our time poses to us: Will we be able to reconstruct those pacts that would make possible to recognize the other as similar to us—despite always diverse—and, therefore, as a peer along the journey, as a valid communication partner in the fragile route of existence? (Roitman, 2000, p. 12).

Metaphors are productive resources to stimulate our scientific imagination, essential for the interpretative task of any scientific discipline (Alves, 2012). Inspired by the fertility of metaphors coming from the field of verbal images, as discussed by

Santaella (2012), we explore, in this section, the interpretative potential of two powerful metaphors. More precisely, the construction of *walls*—as cultural barriers derived from prejudices affecting people, social groups, and nations, *versus* the construction of *bridges*—meant as connections between people, social groups, and nations in contemporary world.

Nowadays, we observe a significant expansion of discourses anchored in hatred and intolerance toward diverse social groups, in terms of nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic belonging, religion, and so forth. Unfortunately, this social phenomenon is present in several countries in contemporary world, including Brazil. Understanding the importance of mutual respect to build a multicultural ethics (Demo, 2005), we need to acknowledge that we live today in a historical moment marked by a dangerous growth of social discrimination deriving from extremely harmful discourses and practices, which seriously disrespect social diversity and human rights.

The most important ethical commitment of psychology, as a profession and a scientific discipline, is the promotion of health and well-being among human beings. However, to do so, psychology must overcome the traditional individualistic and pathological perspectives that historically marked the discipline. That is, psychology should invest its efforts to construct an inclusive, historically and culturally contextualized approach to issues concerning human rights. It should reveal and confront the numerous mechanisms that underlie discriminatory practices (prejudices in action) in people's daily lives. As psychologists, we need to identify and further analyze the factors and mechanisms that incentivize physical and psychological violence that cause suffering to so many people all over the world. Unfortunately, we live in societies that feed and inflict all sorts of suffering on people, especially those seen as "different" from cultural norms. Suffering can even be a lucrative activity in contemporary world, and it is no coincidence that one of the most successful businesses is the pharmaceutical industry. Hence, it is urgent to develop theoretical and conceptual tools to face the challenges of our time.

According to cultural psychology framework, social identities and prejudices are *boundary phenomena,* as explained before, and have historical, cultural, and deep affective roots. Prejudices are defined as *rigid symbolic boundaries*, culturally and historically established, characterized by strong affective roots that operate as cultural barriers between social groups and individuals (Madureira, 2007a, b, 2012). The metaphorical image of boundaries as semipermeable membranes is, then, a promising metaphor for the study of diverse social and psychological phenomena—as the construction of social identities (as, for instance, gender identities, ethnic identities, and so on). Metaphors also help to make sense of prejudices in action, the dynamics and tensions between in-groups and out-groups, stigma and discriminatory practices such as sexism and racism (Madureira, 2012; Madureira & Branco, 2012b).

Recently, many authors stressed the role of cultural, social, and political processes related to the erosion of traditional references used to anchor social identities, for instance, religious and national identities (Bauman, 2005; Galinkin & Zauli, 2011; Hall, 1998, 2000; Sawaia, 2014; Woodward, 2000). On the other hand, we

witness an increase of religious fundamentalism, which warrants a feeling of belonging. As Bauman (2005) claims, fundamentalism promotes "a *feeling of certainty* and eliminates every doubts concerning simple, easily absorbed code of behavior that is offered. (…) It conveys a *comfortable sensation of security*" (p. 93, italics added). Therefore, it is not surprising to verify the existence of deep connections between sexism, homophobia, racism, and religious fundamentalism, the last not a particular characteristic of specific religions, but a potential possibility present in all religious traditions. In other words, *we find deep affective roots in both identity processes and prejudices*.

Regarding religious traditions, Santos (2014) offers an interesting and relevant discussion on the differences between pluralist and fundamentalist theologies in contemporary world. He develops this topic in a chapter entitled "The globalization of political theologies," from a book originally written in Portuguese with the suggestive title of "If God were a human rights activist". Santos' main point is:

> According to fundamentalist theologies, the revelation is the divine discourse (…) human interpretation cannot be more than a sacrilegious reduction.
>
> Pluralist theologies conceive the revelation as a contribution to public life and the political organization of society, but accept the autonomy of both. They deal with a tension between reason and revelation and seek a balance between the two (2014, p. 42).

Relations between religion and prejudices, therefore, are much more complex than they seem at first sight (Myers, 2014), and pluralist theologies consist of a strong presence against hegemony and fundamentalism. They do that together with secular social and political movements that strive for more just and equal societies, as argued by Santos (2014). Relations between religions and prejudices are complex, and to conceive linear causal relations between them is a reductionist approach (Myers, 2014; Santos, 2014).

When we analyze relations between identity processes and prejudices as boundary phenomena, we find that there is no natural or supra historical substance in the notions of identities and prejudices, for both constructs are *cultural inventions*. As Bauman (2005) stresses:

> My opinion is the same as yours… Yes, in fact, the 'identity' only reveals itself as something to be invented, and not to be discovered. (…) The fragility and eternally temporary condition of identity cannot be hidden. The secret was revealed, but this is a new, too recent fact (pp. 21–22).

Identity processes involve complex and dynamic connections between personal identities and social identities (Deschamps & Moliner, 2009). The focus on identity, as a social and psychological phenomenon, also raises a more general problem concerning the integration of people *in* collective spaces (feelings of belonging), because, at the same time, people seek a *unique and specific* place within the collective space. They seek to differentiate themselves (Deschamps & Moliner, 2009), and those tensions are highlighted when we analyze identity processes: there are (a) *tensions between social identities versus personal identity* (Deschamps & Moliner, 2009); and (b) *tensions between stability versus change* (Sawaia, 2014).

"We" Versus "Others"

The relevant zones of tension mentioned above pose important challenges to theoretical and empirical investigation on the issue of identity. As Sawaia (2014) puts it, "identity is the [creative] synthesis of multiple "ongoing identifications" and, therefore, it is not a permanent set of attributes" (p. 124). Hence, identity and differentiation, instead of being exclusive, opposing concepts, are complementary to each other. *Identity depends on the symbolic marking of the differences*, a central topic discussed by diverse authors (Deschamps & Moliner, 2009; Galinkin & Zauli, 2011; Hall, 1998, 2000; Madureira, 2012; Moreira & Câmara, 2008; Sawaia, 2014; Silva, 2000; Woodward, 2000).

Differences, ambiguities, and tensions lie at the core of meaning-making processes in the irreversible flow of life experiences (Valsiner, 2007) along the cultural construction of identities and symbolic boundaries that mark differences between individuals and social groups (Madureira, 2007a, b, 2012). A fundamental problem is: How differences between individuals and social groups transform into inequalities? A significant explanation, in interconnection with others, can be found in the emergence and operation of a very powerful social control mechanism, namely, *prejudices*. Social identities and prejudices are, thus, boundary phenomena, and, in a way, they are the sides of a same coin.

Symbolic boundaries, however, may assume either the function of bridges, or the function of walls. Around the world, bridges are constructed as cultural artifacts to connect, for instance, the margins of a river. Walls, in contrast, are cultural artifacts constructed to divide, and actually split what was previously parts of a same whole. Prejudices, as cultural barriers, have a similar function to that of walls: they delegitimize and dehumanize those considered as alterities, as "others". In extreme cases, the person is transformed into a dangerous enemy that must be converted, modified to become similar to "us", or eliminated; many crimes of hatred are motivated by racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious intolerance.

Bulgarian philosopher Todorov (2010) stresses that the central mark of a civilization is the cultural construction of the ability to recognize the humanity of others. The author warns, "No culture brings with it the mark of barbarism, no people is definitely civilized; everybody can become barbarous or civilized. This is the very nature of human species" (p. 65). Todorov (2010) also stresses that "the *fear* of barbarians is what threatens us, turn us into barbarians" (p. 15, italics added).

Conceiving prejudices as boundary phenomena, the role of uncomfortable emotions they elicit deserves a special attention (Madureira, 2007a, b), particularly the role of fear and *fear of others*. Brandão (2005) elaborates an interesting analysis of "the control of emotions, fear and violence", based on the contributions of Nobert Elias. According to Brandão (2005),

> The indignation of Elias is especially directed to the fact that we, human beings, use reason in dealing with nature, to dominate it in the service of our needs; but we are not able to use the same reason regarding our own social and collective life, to eliminate wars from our social horizon (p. 65).

We share the conviction that psychology should develop relevant contributions aiming at the construction of favorable contexts to bring forth what is best, and not the worse, in people, such as violence, hatred, and intolerance. Instead of building walls between people, social groups, and nations—concrete or symbolic—we should invest our efforts on building ethical bridges, in the direction of fostering respectful and fraternal human relations. The promotion of empathy among people is an excellent starting point. However, in order to promote social sensibility and empathic capacity in people, it is necessary to overcome the limits of traditional research methodologies, mostly anchored upon rationality and the "objectivity" of sensory experiences (Marcondes, 2000). This can be done by taking an interdisciplinary approach connecting scientific domains to other kinds of knowledge construction, as, for example, the visual arts (Madureira, 2016).

Images and Meaning Construction Processes

According to the German critic and art historian Panofsky (2012), a work of art is any object produced by humans that demands "to be experienced aesthetically" (pp. 33–34). In other words, he suggests that an artistic object is a cultural artifact intentionally produced to create aesthetic experiences. For Santaella (2012), visual arts are inserted into the wider territory of visual devices, "the field of images as visual representations. They correspond to drawings, paintings, prints, photos, film images, television images, holographic and infographic images (also called 'computer images')" (p. 17). This "image field" is a particularly fertile resource, because it integrates, in the same category, images produced within the context of the artistic universe with other images produced in everyday cultural practices. For instance, pictures people take with their smartphones, and those appearing in magazines and newspapers can be useful methodological tools. Meaning-making processes involve a dynamic hybridism between different kinds of signs—indexes, icons and symbols—in the irreversible time (Valsiner, 2007). Thus, to use such visual tools can be a fertile way to elaborate more sensitive and accurate cultural interpretations about human psychological phenomena, about human *psyche* (Madureira, 2016).

As we know, schools are social institutions that have a strategic role in the formation of new generations (Louro, 1998; Madureira, 2013; Marsico & Iannacoone, 2012). If we want to promote a culture of peace in schools—by conceptualizing diversity as an resourceful plus, and not as a problem to be solved in the name of homogeneity—it is essential to develop analytical strategies *to interpret the social and psychological mechanisms underlying the reproduction of prejudices.*

Sexism, homophobia, racism, xenophobia, religious fundamentalism, and all sorts of prejudice are obstacles to processes of peace construction, and peaceful resolutions of conflicts. For this reason, it is necessary to find ways to investigate and deal with the prejudices found in everyday life. Next, we explore an interdisciplinary approach where images were used as methodological tools in the study

of social identities and prejudices, according to the point of view of high school students in a specific educational context in Brazil (Barreto, 2016).

Images and Meaning Constructions: Social Identities and Prejudices in a Brazilian Public High School

The study hereby reported is part of the Master's Dissertation of the second author, under the guidance of the first, and titled "The school and its role in the construction of different social identities" (Barreto, 2016). It investigated how students of a public high school in a city near to Brasilia, the Federal Capital of Brazil, made sense of the school's role in constructing different social identities, related to topics such as gender, race, and sexual orientation. The research was carried out from a qualitative methodological approach, which used focal group sessions and workshops as methodological procedures for constructing relevant information.

According to Marques and Castanho (2011), the number of empirical investigations, seeking to understand students' point of views concerning school, is limited. Curiously, those who are the target of schools, and to whom pedagogical practices should be directed, are barely heard about how they feel and make sense of the institution. Therefore, we believe that educational psychology should develop more empirical studies focusing on students' perspectives about different subjects. As previously mentioned, research data concerning students' conceptions, beliefs, and feelings (Marques & Castanho, 2011; Patto, 2000) are still limited. However, students are able to, critically, reflect upon the social contexts in which they live, and, consequently, they can offer valuable contributions concerning school's pedagogical practices. Barreto's qualitative research (2016) here reported, therefore, sought to listen and analyze students' voices when they were asked about their ideas regarding social identity and prejudices, and to provide suggestions that might contribute to the improvement of the quality of education in schools as a whole.

Research participants were eight teenage students, five girls and three boys, from age 17–19. The school was located in a low-income community close to Brasília. This low-income community came to life when people migrated to the capital, especially from the country northeast, looking for better job opportunities—available during the construction of Brasília (1950s to 1960s). They settled down in the region, and today are the local population.

The choice for studying participants within this age range was due to the relevance of social identity issues to teenagers within the complex social network they experience during their second decade of life. During this developmental period, marked by several physical, emotional and social role changes, adolescents are caught by questions and doubts regarding who they are, and how they can position themselves in the different social contexts within which they live. One of the major tasks teenagers face is to find out what is their social position within social groups and institutions, and how they may gain relevance as human beings.

It is worth mentioning that the participation in the research process was voluntary and characterized by the students' genuine interest and commitment deriving from self-motivation. Two conclusions resulted from this study: the need to construct a favorable space for the active participation of students in the school context as a way to facilitate the emergence of relevant information; and the productivity of using images as a methodological tool to investigate ideas, values, and feelings of the individuals.

The Construction of a Favorable Space for Students' Participation

While constructing a "learning community" (Hooks, 2013), it is important to grant that every participant feels encouraged to contribute by building a space in which they can freely speak their minds and express their opinions. In our research, we sought to create an environment in which participants could feel comfortable to discuss openly any issue related to their social identities (race, gender, sexuality). The cocreation of inclusive dialogical environments is a core feature of qualitative studies, not only in educational contexts. For example, interviews should be dialogic spaces for the co-construction of meanings between participants and researcher (Madureira & Branco, 2001), and the construction of dialogic spaces is fundamental to improve the quality of the empirical indicators produced along the interactions. Surely, this is essential for the successful outcome of studies using interviews.

Therefore, the classroom was organized—the research context—as a circle, using pillows and rugs, encouraging the students to feel comfortable and at ease. Also, the small number of participants contributed to the creation of a favorable environment for the emergence of free opinions and feelings about the topics. We built the research design on what Fernandes (2010) designated as the "creative occupation" of the classroom; in the study, there was a "creative occupation" of the research scenario. The participants could look at each other, listen to one another, pay attention, and reflect on what others said, safely practicing their right to agree or disagree with different opinions.

In the following excerpt, participants discussed about the school's role while addressing issues related to different social identities. One of the students elaborated on the idea that family was the institution responsible for discussing identity with children; family should help the new generations to deal with various issues that arose from the construction of social relations and relationships. At that point, participants—fictitious names—confronted their opinions:

Erica: But sometimes the family also… Let's say, about sexual orientation … The school would help more than the family, which sometimes does not accept it [homosexuality].

João: The two of you… she mentioned homosexuality, and you mentioned homosexuality, right? I don't think the school should, in any way, interfere with the sexual orientation of a student.

Fernanda: Yes, but, like, it's not interfering to stand against it, it's so that they can join society without minding what people will think of them, since the person has chosen, or sometimes didn't even chose it, sometimes that's the way it is. All right, but, like … I think, for them to interact with society and not be like, 'Oh, this is me, people will think that and that about me …', sometimes people may get depressed over this, not being accepted. I do think schools should get into this matter. Why? So that everyone can have a different view, that they are normal and have the right to live the same way as we do. That's it.

Alice: Yeah. There are no campaigns even inside schools offering support to students, to their perspectives about life, you have to figure everything out yourself. Fernanda is right about that…

The discussion of controversial and taboo issues such as sexuality usually favors the emergence of very contrasting opinions. In the excerpts above, we identify the following: João argued that schools should not interfere with the sexual orientation of students. Fernanda explained that, if schools held debates and discussions regarding the topic, the point would not be to define students' sexual orientations, but instead to lead to an understanding and a respectful positioning regarding individuals' diverse ways of existing and being in the world. At that point, Alice felt comfortable to express her agreement: "Fernanda is right about that."

The creation of dialogical spaces favors research, but, particularly, are excellent opportunities to promote learning. Learning through dialogue is extremely fruitful because it strengthens strategies of collective coping with problematic situations by the practice of democratic participation and respect for diversity. Thus, when we favor the practice of genuine dialogues within classrooms, we contribute to building democracy among students, generating democratic attitudes that tend to generalize to other social contexts.

Debates over sexuality often are avoided in the classroom, maybe as a way of granting teachers more control over students' conduct. Diverse studies have stressed teachers' difficulties to deal with issues of sexuality, sexual diversity, and homophobia in schools (Lionço & Diniz, 2009; Louro, 1998, 2003; Junqueira, 2009, 2010; Madureira, 2007a). However, in the dialogue's excerpts above transcribed, we see how students were able to negotiate their own points of view about sexual orientation, listening to diverse opinions, agreeing and disagreeing with each other with respect, ultimately *proving that dialogues are possible even with those who think differently*.

Another important aspect we noticed, while reflecting upon the emergence of dialogues as those transcribed above, is that students, when encouraged to get involved in educational processes, have a genuine desire to share personal experiences related to the matters discussed. To Hooks (2013), "the act of sharing

personal narratives, linking this knowledge to academic training, really increases our ability to learn." (p. 198).

Students' ideas, opinions, and beliefs concerning themselves and the school's role in building different social identities were our object of analysis. In the following example, Alice shares with the group her experience of suffering from racism inside the classroom:

> A girl … She didn't like me, like, in front of me, you know? But I always wanted, I think it's kind of crazy, but I always wanted the best, even for those who wants to, I don't know, kill me. Crazy like that. So here's what happened: I just asked her, "Would you please excuse me," just that. I knew she hated me, but it didn't hurt to excuse myself; I just asked it so that I could copy from the blackboard. What happened – it was in the first year – yeah … she turned to me and said: "Hey, you monkey, I'm not moving here just for you. If you want to copy, go to the other side." I looked at her like that, not to offend her, because I'd rather be hurt than hurt someone else. People were looking, so I kept my head down, took a deep breath, looked at my friend and left.

Debates over topics such as racism in schools are not only necessary but fundamental in addressing all forms of intolerance and inequality. The discussion of personal experiences is a way of relocating the debate from an abstract, generic sphere to a more realistic and localized perspective. When Alice told us about the offense she suffered for being black by a classmate, she demonstrated clearly that racism is part of our lives, very close to us.

Erica also described how she experienced an unequal relationship with her brother at home. In the division of roles and responsibilities, she and her sisters were forced to perform household chores, while their brother did not have to, just because he was male.

> At home, we are four women and my brother. So I do everything, wash and all. And then I ask my mother, "Mom, why does he get to sit there while I'm stuck here?" And she replies, "No, he is a man. He can do it [sit]." I think it sucks, huh? Sometimes I wash all dishes and then he comes and gets it all dirty, you know? I think that's, like, it's unequal.

The present research shows that when teenagers are encouraged to express their opinions about a topic, their personal experiences being valued and respected as legitimate, there is a good chance that the group discussions will motivate them to participate. In addition, sharing experiences in learning environments allows individuals to contribute with their singular stories to the learning of others.

According to Marques and Castanho (2010), teachers should encourage their students to express their individualities inside the classroom. This pedagogical practice, though, challenges most teachers because they need to be prepared to deal with the unexpected, the unplanned, and this can be quite stressful for many of them, according to Louro (2003). Nevertheless, for those who face the challenge, it can be a great opportunity to promote dialogues and the effective participation of students within the classroom.

Images as Methodological Tools: Understanding Subjects' Ideas, Feelings, and Values

Barreto's research (2016) made use of images as one of the methodological tools to instigate participants to express their ideas. The procedures were (a) two focal group sessions; and (b) four workshop sessions. During the second focal group session, images previously selected from the Internet served as material for students' reflection upon the main topics of the research. Images worked as an initial strategy that allowed us to identify matters further explored in subsequent meetings. Some of the images are in Fig. 9.1.

Besides talking about ideas and feelings the images evoked, the participants also created new images through collages, clay artwork, and drawings during the workshop sessions. Workshop sessions involved the production of images by students as a form of expression of their conceptions, ideas, feelings, and beliefs related to research topics. Workshop sessions covered the following topics: (a) first session: gender; (b) second session: race; (c) third session: sexuality; and (d) fourth session: conclusion and evaluation of their participation.

Information constructed in research sessions would hardly be available if we had exclusive used verbal instruments. Images, as visual representations (Santaella, 2012), proved to be useful tools to approach delicate issues (Paula, 2016; González, 2005; Madureira, 2016; Silva, 2014), as those addressed in this study.

By asking students to produce images, we could assess their affections, feelings, ideas, and beliefs (Santaella, 2012). We valued each participant's active role in data construction, because knowledge production does have a constructive and interpretative character. It is not a "linear appropriation of a reality set before us." (González Rey, 2015, p. 5). As results indicate, the production of images by students contributed to their active and productive communication among themselves and with the researcher.

In the workshop session about race, we asked students to produce, in pairs, a collage that expressed their understanding of racism and inequalities between whites and blacks in Brazil. We carefully chose the available magazines to avoid any guidance of their work productions, in one direction or another. If magazines were of the same kind, such as celebrity magazines, participants would not have the chance to fully explore, in their collages, aspects not related to celebrity magazines' topics. To allow for wide-range and varied expressions about the issue of racism, for example, the available printed material included popular (fashion, TV artists and gossips), art, and educational magazines. Some examples of participants' productions (collages) are in Fig. 9.2.

In the second collage (Fig. 9.2), a participant duo depicted the effort black girls have to go through to follow beauty standards associated to white people: hair straightening was the most popular practice in this regard. Lilian said that

Fig. 9.1 Examples of the images used in focus group's second meeting

> It might not seem like that, but she is black (…). She dyed her hair, and did it basically to change herself, because she doesn't accept herself for who she is, like Michael Jackson (…) Girls in school, they dye their hair blond to look different, because they don't accept themselves as black girls. They are pretty, but they don't accept themselves (…). Who knows you have the courage to change?

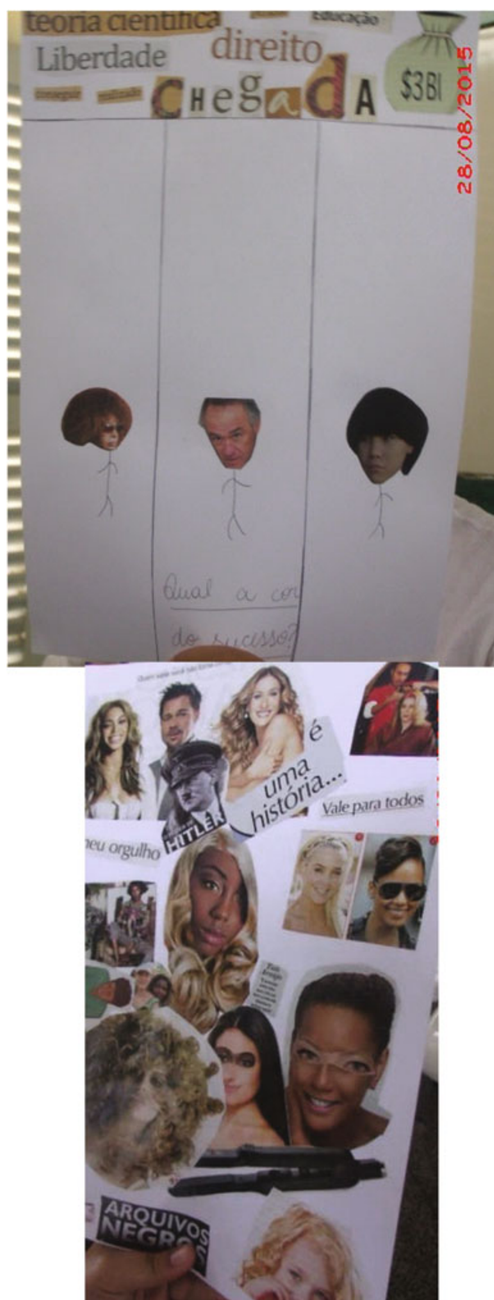

Fig. 9.2 Examples of the race workshop productions

It takes courage to change, according to Alice, because accepting their own style and racial characteristics can set them apart, identify them as black, causing judgment and rejection from social others. In other words, Lilian indicated the importance of being courageous to face others and oneself.

> You need to have a really strong personality so you can … avoid an overall change. I think this is a complex word. I guess, to accept yourself (…) in the sense of "I want to get out of this prison in which I feel myself, like, expecting people to accept me and wanting to change to please them." To change would be to accept myself just the way I am, to go to back to my roots and make people realize that this is good, too…

It is not easy to live with the dilemma individuals face everyday: to please other people and be perfectly adjusted to cultural norms; or, instead, to accept and value those features that highlight their uniqueness. To analyze and reflect upon hegemonic models or standards of beauty, which define what is beautiful, or not, in our culture, may facilitate the emergence of questionings, critical appraisals of such standards, and promote the appreciation of new forms of beauty.

While doing the collage, students shared with the group their understandings about racial issues: Brazilian black people must confront, day after day, with images that praise white people's physical features. Therefore, they often end up trying to pursue ways to fit themselves into such aesthetic references. However, when given the opportunity to collectively discuss, participants may realize that those beauty patterns are socially and historically constructed, and, therefore, can be reconstructed and transformed. Courage is necessary, as students stressed, but people—in Brazil or elsewhere—have the right to question and go against such forms of cultural canalization. In this way, cultural changes take place and foster diversity inclusion, democratic values and respectful practices.

In the first collage (Fig. 9.2), the duo showed their understanding about their school's commitment in fighting against social inequalities. According to them, schools reduce inequalities when treats students equally, and offer education to everyone without distinctions:

> We wanted to portray our school. It treats everybody equally. I see no difference here. It encourages everyone to achieve success, to be successful, to have freedom, their rights. Success does not have a color. We all have the same ability for achieving success.

Other participants held similar points of view about the school. Their collages and comments showed that they perceived schools—and education in general—as an opportunity for black people to improve their life, achieve success, and have a better future than their ancestors. Participants considered the school as a context for knowledge dissemination and, therefore, as an institution that can improve students' living conditions. They argued that schools have the potential to reduce race inequalities. According to them, if everyone has the right to go to schools and have learning experiences, they would have equal conditions to achieve social success, an argument that, certainly, deserves a critical analysis.

Participants' perceptions, then, reveal their difficulties to realize that actual schools, unfortunately, are not efficient in their mission to contribute to reduce social inequalities. As matter of fact, schools often develop subtle mechanisms that,

unfortunately, contribute to preserve and even reproduce social inequalities (Gusmão, 2003; Junqueira, 2009, 2010; Louro, 1998; Madureira, 2007a, 2013; Moreira & Câmara, 2008; Paula, 2016; Silva, 2014). In our study (Barreto, 2016), the same students that praised school's social mission referred to events of prejudice within school, and recognized that most black people face many forms of social inequality in Brazilian society. They also recognized that schools do not develop initiatives to prevent intolerance and discrimination in order to promote black people' inclusion.

More precisely, when asked to give examples from their own experiences, participants confirmed, instead, the existence of racism within school contexts. Such results challenge the usual notion that Brazilian society is free of racism, and that black people are perfectly capable of meeting their achievement goals without facing discrimination. This notion, anchored on the myth of the existence of a racial democracy in Brazil, then, end up contributing to perpetuate inequalities regarding the life conditions of the black population in the country.

During sessions in which we discussed sexuality, students again expressed an inaccurate perception about schools' actual contributions. Claudio, commenting on his collage artwork, argued that schools dealt equally with students expressing different sexual orientations (Fig. 9.3).

The image created by Claudio showed a teacher treating students exactly in the same way (first image). The blindfold he draw covering the teacher's eyes symbolizes teacher's ability to equally treat all students with impartiality. The blocks of clay in front of each student, according to the participant, represented the equal knowledge they all receive. In Claudio's words,

> [this happens] because he [the teacher] doesn't look at them differently. (…) This is the teacher who doesn't care who is homosexual and who is heterosexual. Here are the contents [the clay blocks in front of the students] that he delivers to both heterosexuals and homosexuals. This is an equal treatment, no matter to whom.

The researcher asked "Is this how it works nowadays?" to which he replied, "I see it that way." However, a collage by another student revealed a different perception, contradicting the image of school as an institution that reduces inequalities. In his

Fig. 9.3 Examples of the sexuality workshop productions

production (second image), Pedro covered a ball of clay with a piece of cloth, and called it a "problem". To him, the problem was the amount of prejudice attitudes and discriminatory practices existing in school, which put homosexuals in bad situations:

> the equal-looking figures represent different individuals within the school, which should assume they were treated as equals, as if they were valued the same but, in fact, what exists is a great problem [the ball of clay] that they try to hide under a piece of cloth, but it doesn't really work. The cloth covers, hides the problem. It is all about the good image they try to project about the school, the true problems are the prejudices, the rejection.

It is clear, therefore, that even though students might see the school as an inequality-reducing context, they also recognize there are prejudices and discriminations within it. According to participants' perception, the school often acts as if seeking to disguise or hide the inequalities that occur inside its walls. That is, it usually works to maintain things as they are, and it does not teach students about why and how prejudice practices exist inside and outside of school. Moreover, they do not discuss with students how *prejudice's deep affective, cultural and historical roots can be found in different contexts* (Madureira, 2007a, 2013; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b). Unfortunately, schools—as strategic institutions for the socialization of new generations—do not explain nor suggest that discriminatory practices, in fact, exist and should change.

In sum, discriminatory practices against diverse social groups are cultural and not "natural" facts that cannot change. This is a fundamental lesson to teach the new generations.

Final Remarks: Construction of Bridges Instead of Walls

In this chapter, we explored some theoretical issues concerning the relations between diversity, social identities, and alterity from a cultural psychology framework. Identity processes and prejudices were analyzed as boundary phenomena with historical, cultural, and deep affective roots (Madureira, 2007a, b, 2012; Madureira & Branco, 2012a, b). In order to promote inclusion and a culture of peace, we concluded that schools should value diversity as a very welcome resource, and not as a problem, directing institutional efforts to deconstruct all kinds of prejudice. This is an important challenge for all educational institutions—from preschools to universities—in contemporary societies.

The use and construction of images as cultural artifacts can be extremely fertile in the context of empirical research (Barreto, 2016), as a methodological tool, but also, as a pedagogical tool (Madureira, 2016). Thus, we believe schools could integrate into their pedagogical practices the use and construction of images as visual representations (Santaella, 2012), especially in educational projects about polemic and controversial subjects, like prejudices and discriminatory practices. This happens because the use of images—selected by teachers or produced by students—can be a promising way to grant access to powerful affective and

emotional hypergeneralized signs linked to issues such as identity processes, values and prejudices, signs that exist at an affective dimension unlikely accessed only by verbal means.

When we encourage aesthetic experiences in educational contexts, we can promote a kind of "recovery of sensory pathways", as proposed by Schlindwein (2010), to "sensitize the way we look, see, and feel the strangeness of things (…)" (p. 34). We believe that it is a productive strategy to promote a "capacity for strangeness" in a social world permeated by numerous forms of injustice, discrimination and intolerance, in order to favor more empathic social relations among people.

Dialogue occupies a central position in the construction of empathic relationships within school contexts. Dialogical practices are important tools to deconstruct the different forms of veiled prejudice and intolerance. When students are encouraged to dialogue, they learn to improve their ability to express opinions and to respect other people's opinions. The dialogue is the fundamental principle of a genuine democratic culture, and it bears on the appreciation of diversity as an intrinsic human condition. In conclusion, the interpersonal construction of dialogical spaces has relevant educational and methodological implications.

Finally, we can say that in a world that often constructs all sorts of walls to separate people, social groups and nations, we hold the conviction of the importance to invest efforts *in constructing bridges to connect people, social groups and nations*. This is one of the most significant challenges of our time. Cultural psychology, hence, can provide relevant contributions in this direction, namely, toward the construction of more respectful and fraternal human relations.

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Chapter 10
Continuity and Discontinuities in the Self-System: A Values-Based Idiographic Analysis of Gender Positionings

Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira, Davi Contente Toledo and Cláudio Márcio Araújo

This chapter approaches issues related to socialization in childhood and adolescence, appreciating the critical role played by institutional settings—mainly, family and school—concerning the constitution of a healthy self-system along lifespan, capable of sustaining a sense of unity and integration albeit dealing with the tension between continuity and discontinuity in the irreversible time.

As far as socialization refers to almost everything when human developmental processes are at stake, our focus is directed to the understanding of one specific facet within the dynamics of self-formation in the social context, i.e., the gender identity. Gender formation, in special along adolescence, is a challenging topic in developmental psychology debate nowadays. According to semiotic cultural psychology, the theoretical perspective that guides our approach, human development is totally dependent on the a given cultural group's organization and the way it constructs meanings regarding reality—the imaginary zone that forms the group's semiosphere. In order to understand properly this semiosphere, it is essential to consider the system of values and beliefs that impregnates human interactions and affective bonds forged inside it.

The domain where we will set the debate, aiming at feeding a theoretically productive analysis, is a case study extracted from a research project originally developed by the second author (Toledo, 2014). This investigation concerned the role played by schools in canalizing semiotic processes related to the development of gender identity, in this case, a nonnormative gender position. The study was

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initially motivated by the researcher's interest in gender development in adolescence and his motivation was fueled by empirical evidence found in his professional work in a public mental health care center. He observed that a growing number of adolescents were appointed to psychological care by school or family due to issues related to gender performance, learning issues, and school dropouts. The original study (Toledo, 2014) investigated four case studies involving adolescents with nonnormative gender identity positions. In this chapter, we will explore the case of Robson (fictitious name), a 17-year-old adolescent who, after showing important school difficulties in terms of learning problems and poor social abilities, finally abandoned school in his first year of high school. Right after the dropout, he attended to psychological care in the center where the research, later, was carried out, led by his parents, who initially seemed not aware of the connections between Robson's gender issues and his school difficulties.

The peculiarity of this clinical case is the intricate semiotic complexes within which Robson struggled for the right to unveil his homosexual orientation, at times exposing it and suffering institutional and social consequences of his self-exhibition, at other times hiding his self-orientation behind a fake heterosexual performance. What is at stake here is that this hide-and-seek identity game was part of important negotiations between Robson's motivational system and the conservative social moral norms of the three cultural settings in which he participated: family, school, and church. The values of these institutions were centrally relevant in the construction of his personal culture, and all three played an important role in his development.

Our goal in this chapter, then, is to explore Robson's case and provide meaningful interpretative elements to construct a more elaborated understanding of the relations between values, culture, and the development of the self-system, according to a semiotic cultural and dialogical approach.

The Self in Developmental Psychology

Since the Renaissance, and throughout modernity, topics related to individuality and self increasingly became objects of philosophical and scientific interest. The individual gradually took center stage in social and scientific debate, strengthening a paradigm termed as egological by Salgado and Cunha (2012). Cartesian rationalism was broadly accepted in the Western world, and it infused the collective culture of this part of the planet with liberal values fundamental for the internalization, by individuals, of a novel self-image as modern subjects. The construction of modern subjectivity involved not only rationality but also other values inherited from the bourgeois social ideals, such as independence, assertiveness, persistence, and self-efficiency. Hence, by converting reason into the main category of intelligibility of the human condition, Descartes tradition indirectly contributed to consolidating the economic and sociopolitical changes that took place between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially after the industrial revolution

(Araújo, Lopes de Oliveira, & Rossato, 2017, in press). This period coincided with the emergence of the project for a scientific psychology. According to Sampson (2008), the emergence of psychology as an autonomous discipline separated from philosophy took place in mid-nineteenth century due to the necessity of understanding the individual's subjectivity, thoughts, and behaviors through the objective approach of scientific lens. The interest behind this scientific project involved knowing, intervening, and exerting control over human's interiority, in the benefit of the new economic *zeitgeist* of industrial revolution.

Along the twentieth century, mainly after WW2, psychological scientific trends struggled for the power of controlling the "object" of psychology, an object that could vary enormously according to the epistemology and theory adopted. It varied among external observable phenomena (reflexes, behaviors, motor reactions, etc.) and internal, indirectly approached, semiotic structures. Considering this second group of objects of psychological interest, the search for a unifying concept, a unit of psychological analysis capable of integrating the totality and complexity of the person, was a challenge faced by many epistemological trends throughout psychology history (Taylor, 1989). Concepts such as "personality", "character", "temperament", or "ego" are examples of twentieth century; many efforts are in search for a consensual integrative object in the investigation of person-hood. However, some of these constructs are now considered, by many relevant current theoretical psychological approaches, as narrow, limited, and shortsighted, providing therefore a mistaken conceptualization of the person's psychological unit (Hermans, 1992, 2001, 2002; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Classic theories of personality have been criticized because (a) they conceive the *psyche as a natural stance* and the personality as an innate feature of human beings; (b) they share an *individualistic approach*, in which the individual is disconnected from others and from social reality; (c) they assume that personality is part of the individual's inner side, *indifferent to the sociocultural conditions* of human existence, and their constitutive effects over subjectivity; (d) they exclude *historicity*, the genetic structure of subjectivity and the role of time in defining phenomena concerning human beings.

Following a different trend, semiotic cultural psychology (Valsiner, 2014b) is a contemporary interdisciplinary field that developed from the 1990s on with a focus on the role of semiotic processes in shaping subject–culture relations. The theoretical path trodden by this field reveals an alternative version of the effort to theorize about the person-hood. It was fueled by various niches of divergent ideas, which sprang up exactly in the gaps of traditional psychological theories, highlighting the *systemic nature* of psychological phenomena and the role of the sociocultural and material *environment* in offering concrete possibilities for the functioning of the personal system. Semiotic cultural psychology deals with the dialogical tensions emerging from the game between *social others'* expectations (pressures, prohibitions, obligations) and *subject's intentionality*, the person's system of motivations and orientation toward particular goals (Valsiner, 2014b).

According to Valsiner (2014b), culture and the self—the collective and the individual sides of sociocultural life—are interdependent, and their relationship is characterized as bidirectional. The self is constituted through the active

internalization of the symbolic systems of the culture in which the person is immersed; the culture, in turn, brings together the historically constructed and socially transmitted symbols of a given group. But, culture is not frozen or crystallized, it is constantly changing and renewing its structure over time by the reification of the intentional actions of each person, in his/her concrete actuations and social interactions. Therefore, there seems to be some consensus within semiotic cultural psychology on the premise of subjectivity being a phylogenetic conquest of human beings. Nevertheless, subjectivity is not ready at birth, and it is rather under construction, from nativity until death.

The dynamics of subjectivity formation is represented in cultural psychological studies in a rather polysemic fashion, through a variety of related constructs.[1] These different terms integrate argumentative structures in which the relational and systemic nature of the self, the person-context unity, signification processes, temporality, etc., are highlighted. However, such terms are not equivalent and it is necessary to consider, in each case, their ontological and epistemological basis in order to prevent treating different phenomena as being the same. Thus, according to Gülerce (2014), the numerous definitions and uses of terms representing the self actually refer to distinct phenomena without the apparent recognition (explicit) or the sensitivity (implicit) of the various nuances of these terms.

In the last two decades, we have seen a growing convergence between researchers interested in the self-constitution regarding the use of the concept of *dialogical self* and references to the theoretical-methodological approach called Dialogical Self Theory (DST).[2] More than a theory of the self, DST has become a matrix for a dialogical science, a broad umbrella that hosts different facets of the theoretical elaboration on the phenomenon of self, interesting not only to psychologists but also to scholars and practitioners coming from different areas of humanities and social sciences.

DST occupies an important theoretical and conceptual place by offering a dynamic model for the organization of the self, conceived in the intrinsic and interdependent relationships with otherness. Besides, this approach contributes to the elaboration of interpretative maps of psychological phenomena occurring in different scenarios. DST has given evidence of theoretical vigor regarding the understanding of different processes related to the self in different moments of the life course. In other words, whenever a synchronic stance suffices to generate a frozen image of the self-system at a given moment of the lifespan, DST is a productive theory. However, DST has not advanced much in the direction of adjusting its theoretical models to represent the dynamic structure of the transformation of the dialogical self in the irreversible time, taking into consideration the

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[1]A brief search in the most important journals publishing cultural psychology studies, *Culture & Psychology*, *Theory & Psychology*, I*nternational Journal of Idiographic Science*, and *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, one finds the following terms: "person", "subject", "subjectivity", "identity" "agent", "actor", "author", "I/Me/My", "self", "selfhood", "self-system", "dialogical self", and "selfing".

[2]For a broader elaboration on Dialogical Self Theory, see Freire (this volume).

active and intricate game of self-positionings and repositionings within the self-system. This chapter, then, aims at contributing with elaborations along this direction and considers that to succeed in conceiving a developmental approach to the self-system, one needs to elaborate on the basis of case studies, one eye on general structures and the other on the singularity of each person.

The Idiographic Stance

According to the research methodology cycle [a beautiful effort to make sense of research design in psychology by Branco and Valsiner (1997), Valsiner (2014a, b)], method construction in cultural psychology should take into account important aspects of the proposed research. These are (a) the nature of *the system* being investigated (be it a person, a group or community), (b) the nature of *the environment* and specific affordances and constraints this context may establish with the system, (c) the expectations encoded in the self and *the different social* others that may affect system/environment relations, and (d) *the intentionality and goal orientations of the person/s* while dealing with the former three aspects. It is also essential, according to them, that those principles are coherently intertwined with researcher's intuitions and basic assumptions, the theory s/he uses, and the nature of the psychological phenomena s/he is willing to explain, what is in congruence with an idiographic stance (Valsiner, 2012a; Salvatore & Valsiner, 2012b).

Considering the features of psychological phenomena, researches that follow an idiographic orientation are particularly interesting. Idiographic science focus onto everyday life events and the meaning they may have to individuals, taking into account their own standpoint or the position of those who lived the experience to be interpreted, which is personal and unique (Valsiner, 2012a). Moreover, idiographic science considers uniqueness not as a given inner feature of the individual, but indeed, as a product, in a certain sphere of experience, of active and tense negotiations between the subject, the culture and its institutions.

The idiographic stance was originally described by Kant and followed by Windelband (1998) in reference to the effort to understand cultural and subjective phenomena. It focuses on individuals and is based on cases studies. However, this particular kind of research practice should not suggest it is a "science of single cases", nor does it mean abandoning the scientific commitment to generalization. On the contrary, this scientific orientation operates with a different kind of generalization, based on research processes instead of its products (Lopes de Oliveira & Guimarães, 2016). This characteristic requires of the researcher a fine adjustment between the general principles of a rigorous scientific enterprise and the uniqueness of the resources able to mobilize the participant's authentic expression, leading to contextualized explanatory models and to generalizable knowledge, although open to new insights, especially by the consideration of new case studies.

Next in this chapter, we will explore a case study concerning gender identity development along adolescence. Before that, though, it is helpful to dedicate some lines to discussing the conception of gender identity.

Gender Identity as an Open-Ended Process: A Cultural Semiotic Approach

The topic of gender identity and gender relations has long been a subject of interest in social sciences. Thanks to the consolidation of the feminist movement and its reflection upon feminist philosophy and theory, we now count on a broad scope of abstract models to explain gender issues and approach gender inequalities and diversity. Gender is both a category of analysis, object of direct scientific interest, and it is a topic approached indirectly in interdisciplinary studies in which the gendered condition of human beings is emphasized as a basis of different psychosocial dynamics. Hence, both perspectives—gender as a social and cultural construction of specific identities, and as an ontological condition of the subjectivity primarily associated with the biological matrix of the body, naturally equipped with male or female sexual organs—are productive and have triggered interesting theoretical and empirical debates.

Our goal here is far from criticizing any paradigm in gender studies, but, instead, to highlight some possible contributions, dialogical and cultural semiotic psychology can provide to the understanding of gender regarding the theories of self. Consistent with this perspective, we understand gender as a hypergeneralized sign (Lopes de Oliveira & Toledo, unpublished manuscript; Lopes de Oliveira & Madureira, 2014; Madureira, 2012; Toledo, 2014). According to Valsiner's theoretical model of affective-semiotic fields regulation (Valsiner, 2005), hypergeneralized signs are upper level signs that function as highly abstract semiotic regulators that catalyze and push forward different psychological mechanisms. Such signs contribute to maintain or modify the status quo at both personal and social levels. On the personal level, gender positions are creative personal identity compositions, and being culturally constructed, gender can be deconstructed and transformed. Thus, gender is not a definitive or fixed characteristic but is open to change or even to be redesigned in the irreversible time (Santos, 2006).

The provisional gender identity, being a sign, operates in the border zone in between social and personal structures and has a regulatory role. In other words, this hypergeneralized sign organizes, activates, and may turn on many semiotic operations, guiding the person to construct a provisional self-perception as man, woman, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, or any other self-image and social identity that can be assumed in function of very complex self-other mechanisms of identification/differentiation. In sum, gender is a complex sign related to the active coordination of highly abstract socially and culturally constructed meanings. It concerns sexual differences vis-à-vis unique affective orientations of the person toward self and alterities. This construction usually involves broader and possibly different fields of experience, other than just sexual attraction.

Seen in this way, gender does not fit in traditional social identities. On one hand, normative gender positions usually cohere to conventional binary hetero-normative sexual patterns, sustained by a conservative social morality. On the other, the so-called nonnormative gender positions represent a rupture with this conservative

morality, made possible when sociopolitical shifts participate into the cocreation of an alternative social status quo, whose features leave more room for uniqueness and self-innovation. Thus, gender positions make possible intersubjective negotiation and problematize conventionalized patterns of interactions, social performances, and affective transactions with social others in different institutional scenarios. Such positions converge to the configuration of one's self-system and singular personal trajectories along lifespan. In sum, gender is not a definitive acquisition. Self-positionings configure a totally open process which is subject to temporal differentiation along ontogenesis, and the same happens concerning gender positionings.

Next, we present a case study involving gender reconfigurations along adolescence. We selected Robson's case study considering the new psychological qualities that emerged out of his interpersonal experiences during adolescence, which involved intense reconstructive work of the self, entailing a peculiar scenario for the investigation of self and gender constitutions, mediated by cultural values and social institutions.

Robson's[3] Case Study

This case study gathered information from 18 months of clinical reports on Robson's psychotherapeutic care conducted by the chapter's second author (named Phase 1), and, also, from follow-up research interviews (Phase 2) that occurred some months after Robson voluntarily interrupted the sessions. During psychotherapy, Robson lived with both parents and an elder brother. As a child, he had lived for short periods in his aunt's and maternal grandmother's places. He seemed to share a trustful affectionate relationship with his mother, but scarcely talked about his parents in psychotherapy.

Phase 1: The researcher first met Robson in 2011 when he was 16 years old, and went for psychotherapy sessions in a public mental health center in Brasilia. His parents (and not Robson himself) sought for care, complaining that he had dropped out of school and spent most of his time in complete social isolation at home, just chatting in social media with people stranger to the family. Parents' demand for psychotherapy was strictly related to his dropout and isolation, and gender issues were not a complaint at that time. During the first psychotherapy session, however, Robson vaguely commented that he performed gender differently at school. Along the following months (2011 and 2012), mother's preoccupation about social isolation increased. Also, he had not enrolled in school and was accompanied by separate professionals, namely, a family therapist, a psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist. However, there was no major change in his original clinical condition after months of psychotherapy efforts; he usually kept silent during sessions with

[3]Robson (fictitious name).

the different specialists, or exhibited a disjointed discourse, sometimes difficult to follow, that leaded some therapists to a non-confirmed hypothesis of psychosis.

Phase 2: Six months after discontinuing psychotherapy, Robson accepted the invitation by his ex-psychotherapist to be part of the research, participating of two interview sessions. He was attending to school by that time, and showed a much more talkative and cheerful disposition than during the psychotherapy sessions. He spontaneously provided some long, detailed, and somewhat disorganized narratives, yet more coherent than in the previous phase. Curiously, his positive mood and emergent innovative self-positions were visible in his external appearance and, at the first interview session, Robson appeared with his hair dyed green, and, in the second, he was sporting a silver hair.

Our present analytical effort aims at interpreting Robson's semiotic movements between the first and second phase of the research, considering the changes in his narratives in the two moments, and other observed developmental changes regarding both his self-system and his social relationships. In this process, peculiar events concerning his gender positions took place along his participation of socio-institutional proximal environments. The part played by social and institutional values in sculpting those changes is the point explored in the following lines. After attentively analyzing his narratives, we identified two major semiotic complexes related to values, which were at the basis of Robson's developmental processes: the first one, to be further explored ahead, mixes *sexual orientation/schooling/family relations*; the second, relates to the semiotic bonds related to *sexual orientation/identity/religious values*.

According to a semiotic cultural approach, a semiotic complex is an aggregate of core signs, identified by the interpreter from his theoretical framework and the vantage point of the person (or group) under analysis. As part of the researcher/researched semiosphere, these complexes mediate the construction and structuration of a sense of self-system continuity at a given time while innovative processes emerge along self-developmental trajectory (Lopes de Oliveira, 2013, 2016).

The utilization of semiotic complexes as an analytical tool in psychological research is based on an understanding of human conduct and mental life in which meaning production is the core element of human development. This perspective leads to the foundational contribution of theorists as Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Charles S. Peirce. The latter proposed a semiotics quite different from Saussure's and other linguistic structuralists. Peirce´s proposal is grounded on a triadic model of the sign, which structure is formed by the signifier, the signified, and the interpreter. Thanks to this third element, semiosis is never the mere repetition of a conventional link between signifier and signified; on the contrary, according to Peirce in each situation where a semiosis occurs something totally new is introduced, a plus of meaning is added due to the work of the interpreter. This new element is exactly what corresponds to the development of the semiotic system, since every new meaning produces changes in the system. According to Peirce, generating meaning is developing (Andacht, 2008).

Peircean philosophic system leads us to think according to a semiotic logic, i.e., the logic of signs in action, in an ever-ending semiosis. This means that his model is

pragmatic (*pragmatistikí* in Greek, workable, operable), related to action, therefore it is neither rational nor does it emphasize the role of human intra-mental semiotic activity, as Vygotsky did. In fact, although there is no evidence that Vygotsky had read Peirce's work, there is a strong synergy between them, in special, concerning the notion of semiotic mediation (Ma, 2014).

For Vygotsky, semiotic mediation refers to the signs' function in the constitution of mental activities. Signs are social means internalized as psychological tools and, in this process, they lead to higher psychological functions. From this perspective, the very idea of semiotic mediation indicates, on the one hand, that cultural meanings act as a tool box where the resources necessary to new catalytic processes are found. Psychological catalysis (Valsiner, 2002) occurs when certain events become signs with power to regulate semiotic processes. These signs, then, may favor the emergence of new self-positions, in service of new configurations of the intra-psychological world (Rosseti-Ferreira, Amorim, & Silva, 2004, 2007; Valsiner, 2012a).

Hence, the use of semiotic complexes as analytical tools to make sense of psychological processes in the context of developmental psychology research can be very productive. They are useful whenever the goal of the investigation is to grasp the dynamics and direction of one's psychological trajectory of development along a time lapse.

Semiotic Complex "Sexual Orientation <> Schooling <> Family Relations"

At the end of 2012, the topic of sexual orientation emerged for the first time in a psychotherapy session, showing a meaningful connection with his interpersonal difficulties at school. Robson commented, with intense emotions, on his divergent position concerning traditional gender roles, and on his adoption of effeminate social performances, inclusive in school. He narrated many episodes in which he was subjected to acts of humiliation, violence, and harassment of homophobic nature throughout his school years. In one occasion, for example, he was locked inside girls' restroom. In other occasions, he had his goods stolen, he was cursed and called derogatory nicknames, or was physically assaulted.

The intimidation by his schoolmates, which, according to him, increased in 2011, seemed to be unnoticed by teachers, or, in case they perceived it, the humiliation did not bother them. Ultimately, fed up with all that, he decided to drop out of school. Up to that moment Robson's gender performance had never been a topic open to conversation at home or, later on, in family therapy sessions (in which his mother was usually present). Sometime after disclosing the topic in individual psychotherapy, he brought it into a family therapy session as well, opening up to the mother his nonconformity to masculine patterns. They had, then, the opportunity to talk about the problems his gender performance imposed to him at school. She was

surprised and did not reproach him, but was ambivalent regarding her son′s sexual orientation ("*I respect but I don't accept…*"). Yet, probably due to the new opportunities to talk about gender and sexuality in the clinical and family contexts, Robson decided to go back to school in March 2013, when he decided to quit psychotherapy. During the research interviews, he mentioned that the *homophobic behavior by his classmates had not ceased*, but that *he had then learned to deal differently with these behaviors*, by ignoring them.

Semiotic Complex "Sexual Orientation <> Identity <> Religious Values"

Robson's family is Christian evangelical. This institutional environment seemed to protect Robson in a way, for he said he felt comfortable in his church and had very close and affectionate relationships with pastors and churchgoers. For example, he mentioned the day he was followed by a hostile group shouting at him due to his mannerisms, and said they did not attack him because some guys recognized him as a member of the same church. However, he complained that his church religious orientation was very narrow-minded and judgmental.

Once, during a psychotherapy session, and before he had brought up the issue of his own gender positions, he explained that in his religious culture, homosexuality was conceived as a sin, a matter of individual choice between fighting or surrendering to desire. Those who do not fight their homo-affective desires will be driven mandatorily to hell, with no right to salvation. Later, during the research and in the beginning of the second interview Robson informed that he was not homosexual anymore. He provided then an amazing story to explain the change.

He said that, in the past, he was kept under the control—a sort of obsession—exerted by spirits named as *Pombagira* and *Exu-caveira.*[4] Under the influence of "*the Pombagira of homosexuality*", his sexual attraction to men had flourished and lasted for a while. Yet, his homosexual attraction was definitely suppressed after a religious service, or procedure, during which the malign "entities" were removed from his body by God and a woman pastor. The exorcism followed the ritual he had explained to the researcher before: first, the pastor announced by the sound system during the prayers that there was someone there, among the public, who was "obsessed" by "*the Pombagira of homosexuality*". When he listened to that, he volunteered and moved to the front and went to the pastor. He then fell unconscious and, after the pastor and God "healed" him, he woke up and felt no more sexual desire for men. Instead, he felt a new "curiosity" regarding women, although he did

[4]Those are archetypes traditionally linked to Umbanda, a religion that mixes some African religious symbols with some principles of Kardecism and other Brazilian catholic traditions (according to Birman, 2005). "Exu-Caveira" e "Pombagira" correspond to the male and female versions of the same spirit, who are in different stages of evolution in relation to the transit between incarnate and spiritual life.

not date girls or boys since 2011. In short, after the exorcism he no longer considered himself as homosexual.

The selection of Robson's case study has nothing to do with offering some kind of support to the idea of a "cure" of homosexuality, a still controversial topic among people despite consistent scientific evidences to the contrary (APA, 2009). The point here is to go beyond and analyze the complex issue of gender development and its role in the dynamics of self-development along adolescence and thereafter, considering the complementary dynamics of stabilization/destabilization of the self-system.

Continuities, Discontinuities, and Dialogical Tensions in the Self-System

The general approach to human psychological development from a critical contemporary trend requires the researcher to assume a nonnormative or prescriptive standpoint. Developmental psychology nowadays is especially attuned to innovative approaches that consider diversity, duality, and creativity as venues to social improvements. In order to understand unique self-trajectories, characterized by both continuity and discontinuity within the self-system, non-hegemonic, original trajectories should be investigated by science with the same attention and rigor as the normative ones. In other words, feasible explanatory models for human development and personal transitions along lifespan should take into account, at least, two aspects: the intrinsic heterogeneity of human beings' psycho-socio-cultural experiences and the specificities of the different social-institutional scenarios in which human development takes place operating in irreversible time.

Some aspects of the case described above are worthy of additional attention. During a period of 3 year, from the time Robson dropped out of school, did psychotherapy and finally accepted to participate of the research, there were, at least, three distinct periods characterized by specific modes of gender positioning and self-(re)structuring. Each new position apparently emerged after Robson lived important ruptures in his self-images related to social institutional values systems. Those ruptures were provoked by regulator signs that engendered psychological catalytic processes, generating new forms of self-functioning and organization, in a provisional balance between self-maintenance and self-development. These experiences exerted different levels and forms of pressure on his self-system, and were schematically interpreted by the authors as follows:

The *first* period—*Robson in the closet*—corresponds to his school years, a time during which he was victim of repeated experiences of bullying and violence at school but, at the same time, school was the place where he could perform differently and the context where he occasionally felt supported and cared by. In some excerpts of his narrative, he mentions events of bullying at school, in which he was targeted by invasive questions (excerpt 1), provoked by a peer to expose his

feminine mannerisms (excerpt 2), humiliated, silenced, and excluded (excerpt 3, 5). But he also mentions a feeling of being protected by meaningful others, namely a woman friend (in excerpt 3), his brother (excerpt 4) and mother (excerpt 5):

(1) Then, on the first school day, the guy came and asked me if I was a gay…
(2) Then, you know, he [the same guy] took my camera out of the backpack. Then a woman friend went there and asked him [to return the camera] during the school leave.
(3) Well, we were all next to the girls' restroom. We were chatting, then the guy held me and threw me inside the restroom and locked the door. He held it and I had to stay there, in the girls' restroom. Not even my mother knows it!
(4) Then, there was a time the boy threw his backpack to the other side [of the classroom] and it hit me on my face, ripped it a bit, it was a cut like that! My elder brother almost got him kicked and even my mother went to school.
(5) Because they were cursing me. Then they cursed so much that I said to my mother that I would not go back to school again.

These excerpts of narrated experiences suggest that Robson used to deal with very complex and dramatic relational situations motivated by a social rejection, at school, of his sexual orientation. These events of bullying lasted for almost two school years and he could not count on the protection of teachers or school specialists. When we analyze his explicit nonnormative performance at school in comparison with the way he usually behaved in the context of the mental health care center (in this case, consistent with normative social expectations), we notice that his self-system was conflicted with contradictory alternatives in terms of his self-positionings in each social and institutional frame. It is worth noting that, during this first period, even in psychotherapy the allusion and discussion of gender issues was blocked. Robson kept silent about the subject, a device he adopted in order to maintain his gender orientation "invisible" to others, including the therapist, thus protecting his self-system from possible destabilization and change.

The *second* period begins when *Robson gets out of the closet*, opening up his gender orientation to psychotherapist and mother within the context of a psychotherapy session. This disclosure seems to have paved his way back to school, for then he was apparently stronger than he was before. This novelty seems to calm down the interpersonal tensions regarding the expected reaction by parents and peers respective to his gender orientation. Contrary to his expectations, parents (especially mother) had a mild reaction to his self-disclosure. The then recently assumed gender identity seems to have created a new zone of stabilization and integration in Robson's self-system: He goes back to school, and, also, to the mental health center, no more as a patient but as a research participant. He changes the color of his hair—he dyes it in green—and overcomes isolation and silence becoming more talkative and lively.

According to a traditional developmental interpretation of his developmental processes, in face of the elaborations he reached, one would set the hypothesis that Robson had accomplished satisfactorily the construction of his own identity.

However, this apparently positive developmental result did not eliminate the inner tensions, especially those provoked by the antinomy between his own motivational system (as a gay) and that of his religious group. This became clear because of the event that marks the transition to the third period of Robson's gender development, explained next.

The *third* period starts with an exorcism session, the event in which he finally surrenders to the religious framing of his sexual desires, and starts to adopt a self-reference as "ex-homosexual". It is interesting to focus on the disruptive event of the exorcism itself, and analyze its impact over Robson's subjectivity (gender position, in special) and development. It is particularly interesting to analyze the effects of the tension emerging in between his two self-positions, named by the researchers as "I as an effeminate/homosexual" and "I as a Christian evangelical".

The exorcism event, according to Robson narrative, occurred as follows. He was attending to a regular Sunday religious service when the woman pastor announced that someone in the audience was possessed by the "*Pombagira of homosexuality*" and should come to the front of the temple. The spontaneity and obedience that guided Robson toward the pastor, exposing him to the public in a session of exorcism indicate his intentional adherence to that religious system of values, according to which homosexuality is a choice, and this choice is a sin, the sinner being away from God and possessed by evil entities. In face of the high level of inner tension caused by that ambivalence, the adolescent fainted before the public. The fainting marked the rupture with his previous gender positions and is metaphorically represented by the projection of his own deviant desire onto this 'transcendental otherness', the "*Pombagira*". In a few words, the previous position "I-with-the-*Pombagira*, a homosexual not fully admitted as part of the religious group" would then become the "I-without-the-*Pombagira*, not homosexual, who can now be recognized as a member of the religious group".

Our interpretation regarding this event is that the tension between those two self-positions is associated with semiotic complexes that became unbearable to Robson in face of his thirst for identity, which is somehow associated to adolescence. The tensions he experienced possibly led to this developmental rupture in order to ensure the continuity of his self-system. Believing that his homo-affective desire was taken away from him at the very moment the *Pombagira* entity left his body during the operation performed by the pastor, turned out to be a dramatically performed *semiotic operation.* It involved the imaginary production of a self-fiction (I-as-an-ex-gay) as a construction necessary to reach new forms of stabilization and to provide his self-system with a renewed sense of continuity and integration, after the exotic experience lived in the church.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that tensions are absolutely necessary to life, as they are to human development. The complementary dynamics of ruptures and transitions identified in Robson's lived experiences should not be interpreted as guiding his life trajectory toward a state of equilibrium associated with the suppression of dialogical tensions. Just on the contrary, tensions are a source of energy and activity in all living systems and they cannot be completely eliminated of the self-system. Indeed, what happens within the self is the qualitative transformation

of the old tensions into new ones, by semiotic shifts deriving of catalytic processes. In Robson's case, the emergence of the position "I-as-an-ex-gay", involves new tensions related to the two spheres of experience (gender identity and religion), which bring gains and pains. These include, for example, the satisfaction of homo-affective desires, consisting of a sphere of experience marked by pleasure, as well as the suffering due to bullying and offenses experienced in school and in religious community. Therefore, an attempt to neutralize his homosexuality (consisting of pleasure repression and thus a cause of dissatisfaction) may favor, perhaps, his potential adjustment to both school and religious life, making his life easier to cope with.

Final Remarks

As an open and constantly changing theoretical system driven by the renewed contours of subjects–culture relations consistent with the complex organization of the contemporary world, developmental cultural psychology is challenged to provide new answers to new problems. It is expected that the discipline enlighten the debate concerning human life in contexts of increasing complexity and differentiation, approaching coherently problems and challenges of a globalized world. In face of the increase in life expectancy in some parts of the world, human development in the life course is now object of growing interest to psychology as a science and as a professional practice. It should create, then, interpretative models capable of fostering a clear and critical understanding of the developmental dynamics. These models are necessary for dealing with developmental peculiarities and for guiding the interpretation of the dynamics of human development throughout life. In this chapter, we dealt with some of the mentioned above challenges.

First, we propose some theoretical elaborations on the field of theories of the self, based on the concept of dialogical self-system, originally coined by Branco and Freire (2010). We share with them the notion that the self is an open system, continuously reorganized because of the semiotic impacts provoked by new knowledges, circumstances, experiences, and practices lived by the person in different spheres of activity and social-institutional settings.

Institutional scenarios (and here we referred to issues related to family, school, church, and psychotherapy) have their own semiospheres and values systems that regulate—both triggering and blocking—human development in terms of form and direction. From the theoretical framework of semiotic cultural developmental psychology, human development is an open-ended process, thus, a process in which no final point is reached, and any result is equally probable at the beginning. Yet, as far as the logic of life is to keep the system alive, the maintenance of the system as a whole is a critical issue. The theoretical solution rests on the idea of tension: changing/maintaining, stabilization/destabilization are dialogical processes that operate in the border zone (Marsico, 2011; Marsico, Cabell, Valsiner, &

Kharmalov, 2013) in between the temporal construction of the sense of psychological unity along lifespan and the intense processes of differentiation–integration across life.

The second challenge addressed by us involved advancing an innovative interpretation of gender and identity development in the life course, consistent with the principle of radical openness of the self, for one side, and its quest for conservation, for the other. In this respect, the alternative found in this investigation was to adopt the idea of "gender positioning" instead of the general idea of gender identity.

The last important aspect to underline in this conclusion is the bidirectional relationship between personal and social culture, mediated by values. Basic values orientation can act as catalysts for belief orientations (Valsiner, Branco, & Dantas, 1997). In the case study here analyzed interesting empirical evidences were provided, consistent with the main theoretical issues explored along the chapter, namely, the conception of human development as an open-ended process, the notion of gender positioning, and the cocreation of social and personal values system.

In sum, a complex combination of personal and institutional factors leads development to unpredictable and innovative directions. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of change and the psychological construction of self-continuity at different times of individuals' lifespan are in need for further studies in the field of developmental psychology.

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Chapter 11
Encouraging Dialogical Practices to Mediate Prosocial Values in Educational Contexts

Maria Cláudia Lopes-de-Oliveira and Angela Uchoa Branco

Concluding a book represents a critical moment that mobilizes contradictory feelings in the authors (and editors). This is the moment we realize that finishing the work is nothing else than a brief break to breathe before taking the next steps and move on, a moment when the work, as an open system, becomes ready to be complemented, transformed, and recreated through readers' analysis, criticism, and intellectual contributions. Furthermore, it is also time to reflect on the reach of the ideas elaborated and the perspectives for the future they may eventually open.

With this book, we complete a set of three publications dedicated to the topic of values and its relationships with issues such as culture, social institutions, subjectivity, and alterity. The first publication was the book entitled *Cultural Psychology of Human Values* (Branco & Valsiner, 2012), and the second, published in Portuguese, was named as "*Diversidade e cultura da paz na escola: contribuições da perspectiva sociocultural*" (*Diversity and peace culture in schools: contributions from a sociocultural approach*) (Branco & Lopes de Oliveira, 2012). The third publication, the present volume, completes the series by advancing new topics and theoretical elaborations to the general theme of alterity and values in educational contexts. It was originally motivated by the need to bring together ideas and empirical evidence for a fresh discussion about the matter, in the effort to highlight the relevance of education, as a network of sociocultural practices, to society's development. We understand it is crucial to recognize education's general role concerning the reproduction, recreation, and the necessary innovation regarding the cultivation of prosocial values toward a better life for all human beings.

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Historical Notes on Educational Practices: *Episteme* and *Phronesis* Basic Values

From the eighteenth century on, education and professional training changed, leaving the protected, intimate context of home and nearby community toward broader institutions, specially tailored for this function. This happened as consequence of the growing complexification and differentiation of social roles in capitalist economies. In the new social order, schools became a socio-institutional apparatus that, after families, were in charge of the (a) transmission of the community's cultural-scientific heritage in a way consistent with capitalist aspirations (at least in Western societies), and (b) enculturation of the new generations according to their class habitus, values, and future perspectives.

Along the social history of modern societies, schools developed intricate relationships with the issue of values. Values are intrinsic aspects of school's everyday life and culture. First, because values guide every actions and interactions of real human beings in real contexts. Values emerge as person's active identification with the semiotic complexes that characterizes a given values system. As the person believes and identifies with them, s/he tends to transmit, reproduce, and operate in concrete social and institutional contexts accordingly. Consequently, values regulate interpersonal transactions by different means. The second reason why values are a relevant topic to be considered by schools is because the core social values of a given group are actually transmitted, repeated, and reified, intentionally or not, within the context of school educational practices. Thus, observation of interactions, communication patterns, and everyday practices impregnated with specific ideologies and goals, which take place within schools and other educational contexts, consists of a powerful analytical strategy to make sense of the historically engendered—and socially rooted—values of a given group.

Regarding school education, values concerning knowledge construction are usually at the center of the stage. Both formal and informal social interactions in schools express the basic tension between *episteme* and *phronesis* and they reify the dominance of the former over the latter (Aristotle, 1496/1947, in Branco & Valsiner, 2012). While *episteme* refers to the epistemological grounds of scientific knowledge, whose reproduction is usually recognized as the main social function of schools, *phronesis* relates to wisdom, a different kind of intellectual activity that shares "a fluid, interpretative (subjective) and relative basis, strongly embedded in affectivity, motivation and subjectively 'biased' foundations" (Branco & Valsiner, 2012, p. viii). However, while *phronesis* is highly impregnated of values, one should not commit the mistake to consider episteme voided of them. Scientific knowledge production, especially in humanities and social sciences, is full of examples of scientific concepts imbued of contradictory social values. Thus, to transform values within schools' contexts demands a radical *de*-constructive stance grounded on critical reconceptualizations of many scientific constructs, together with the construction of new interpretative frames to substitute the ones that have historically guided educational practices. The work of Glaveanu and Clapp, in this

book, incorporates this request and explores the concept of "participatory creativity" in place of the traditional view of "individual creativity" held by teachers at school. Moreover, the conceptual elaborations of Matusov, in Chap. 1, on the idea of "dialogic morality do a similar work, for they suggest that alterity and dialogism are central to the notion of moral development.

Adopting the cultural semiotic approach grounded in the epistemological perspective taken throughout this publication—a perspective that acknowledges the role of subjectivity and affectivity in values-based human activities—does not mean limiting our theoretical approach to the "inner world" of individuals. For a broader understanding of human values, it is absolutely essential to take an approach that includes addressing personal and interpersonal dimensions, and that stresses the role of alterity in relation to values, intersubjective motivations and their effects on social relations. Values, thus, are not an isolated aspect of the intramental *psyche*, and they are culturally and historically embedded. Social values translate, and infuse cultural practices and operate in the construction of each person's motivational system. Furthermore, values play a central part in the development of the dialogical self-system (Branco, 2015; Rengifo-Herrera & Branco, 2014). Hence, educational practices in schools are of primary importance when the transformation of social values and individual minds is at stake.

Educational Values and Culture: Challenges of a Globalized World to Schooling

This book's chapters refer to varied aspects of the complex relations among different values and their role in shaping educational scenarios, practices, and subjectivities within diverse (inter)cultural settings. From US to India, from Denmark to Brazil, and back to Norway, the theoretical and empirical studies here presented demonstrate the importance of the cultural basis of values in society, indicating schools' relevance as stakeholders of both conservative and innovative values, the latter committed to creativity and social transformation (see Glăveanu & Clapp, this volume). By directing our attention to schools' characteristics, and to routinized educational practices, we find rich elements to analyze critical aspects concerning sociocultural and personal values in schools' everyday life, and to investigate their role in shaping the self as well as guiding persons' life trajectories.

In these final remarks, we draw our conclusions on the rich material provided by the contributors, calling the reader's attention to some special topics that transverse all chapters in this volume and deserve a closer analysis by those interested in the issues discussed so far.

One point in need of further elaboration, in view of its relevance and the challenges it brings for the future of schooling in a globalized world, concerns the tension between local and global cultures, a topic addressed by Chaudhary et al. We should notice that formal education is one of the sectors of modern societies over which globalization probably had the longest historical impact. The work of

European Christian groups in charge of the moral education of their countries' colonies, for instance, is an example of the infusion of schools with alien values. Such alien values, along time, nourished most of the emergent local institutionalized educational systems. Christian pedagogy was mostly based on a narrow group of religious and secular educational theorists (such as Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas, and others), who had substantial influence over modern pedagogy. The latter is grounded and implies a rational, moral, self-controlled, and idealized conceptualization of the human being—in which affectivity, intuitions, emotions, and empathy are usually conceived as underdeveloped expressions of the mental life. These classic pedagogic perspectives, then, brought about the naturalization of concepts and practices regarding teaching–learning activities, schools' and teachers' role in shaping students' worldview, knowledge, and behavior. Thus, the historical predominance of a Western philosophical matrix within educational systems in different parts of the world, and its dissemination as the best and only epistemological basis to school education, over time, had a homogenizing effect that originated the WEIRD educational system (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic). The WEIRD system became a hypergeneralized sign within educational contexts and among education policy-makers, as Glăveanu and Clapp (and Chaudhary et al.) analyze in their chapters. The system was so strongly imposed over indigenous worldviews and educational practices that it led to their transformation and even elimination.

Schools acquired an increasing importance in the contemporary configuration of the economic world. This happened, especially, for the fact that in complex societies—where socioeconomic functioning is highly influenced by digital communication and novel information technologies—different forms of working, and multiple alternatives ways of engaging in working teams, are necessary. In such technological environment, educational practices are central to provide society with well-trained workers for a changing world. School trajectories today are lifelong processes, and higher education, historically related to professional training, is now committed to a much broader scope of demands and objectives. Professional education became a life span developmental experience, dealing with subjective and interpersonal challenges in order to cope with diversity and with different issues related to alterity and meritocracy. In order to go along this direction, educational contexts (universities included) are compelled to renovate their methods, strategies and, overall, they need to improve the quality of self-other transactions occurring within their domains (see Lopes-de-Oliveira & Fernandes, this volume). Incorporating new perspectives aligned with human development, ethics and peace are, therefore, necessary in order to reach the goal of improving educational processes in face of the current challenges.

We learned with the chapters' authors that many schools still tend to follow the "productive" logic of factories. Instead of improving creative forms of collective action, educational institutions persist targeting at individual minds, producing comparisons, hierarchies and classifications, and emphasizing liberal individualistic values associated to personal capacities, endurance, and merit. Unfortunately, the latter remain reinforced by teachers and school specialists, according to traditional

pedagogical concepts. In few words, there is a long way to go from the traditional goals and practices toward innovative and informed educational practices and activities in tune with the requirements of contemporary and democratic societies.

Chaudhary's et al.'s contribution to this volume clarifies that pedagogical ideas and methods are not mere technicalities needed just to improve teaching–learning efficacy in objective ways. In fact, they are powerful semiotic tools in close interdependence with broader societal conceptions and beliefs concerning projects and goals for new generations' socialization processes. What we can infer from their analysis of Indian society is that when the association of power and ideologies overtake the social political arena, penetrating schools and educational practices, the result may be the weakening, or even the elimination, of the historical-cultural foundations of society itself. The authors' interpretation concerning the negative changes imposed by English colonization upon India's local educational system in fact provides important ideas to our reflection on a variety of social phenomena in the globalized world.

Another topic related to differences in cultural contexts is migration. The intense flux of human beings to and from different parts of the planet tends to grow in years to come, due to unresolved economic, political, and religious crisis in different parts of the world. Migratory displacement, due to one's own decision or to external mandatory imposition, changes the linguistic and cultural contexts of a person's life and creates significant problems for individuals' identity construction (see Fanøe and Marsico's chapter). The chapter focuses upon the effects that parents' decision to live in a foreign country may have on children's cultural experiences at school and their identity construction. The authors analyze the issue as they discuss topics such as learning, socialization, and the development of social bonds through identification with new alterities in the host country.

In both chapters, schools become an arena in which potentially conflictive debates between groups sharing diverse values rooted in different cultural matrices do take place. This scenario represents an important pedagogical challenge for those in charge of school education, especially when the aim is to promote and improve dialogical pedagogies, in which the dominance of a given values system upon others is avoided by making values explicit and negotiable through open debates. This was the topic thoroughly examined by Matusov in this book.

Cultural Values, Personal Values, and the Self-System

It is undeniable the critical role educational contexts play concerning the promotion of prosocial values, paving the way to the transformation of societies into a more inclusive, respectful, and cheerful context as a whole. We have learned with cultural semiotic psychology that social values give rise to individuals' subjectivities and vice versa. As hypergeneralized semiotic tools, once internalized by a person, values intermingle with different dimensions of the intramental world and are converted into part of the basic structure of the individual's own value system,

guiding his/her motivations and future orientations. Internalized and recreated as part of one's personal culture, a given value system may become stronger or weaker, always transforming along life span. In other words, there is no such a thing as an isolated, point-like value, working as a fixed and static social category. Values are field-like affective–semiotic complexes that only survives if they function as operative means for human actions, and this is only possible in case they are internalized by individuals and are continually active in the midst of self-other transactions through affective–semiotic negotiations.

Clear examples of active open-ended mutual feeding between self, other, and institutional cultures, by means of the operation of values upon human development, are provided by Freire's, Lopes-de-Oliveira et al.'s, and Madureira et al.'s chapters in this book. The three chapters explore complementary dimensions of the bidirectional coproduction of value system and self-systems. Focusing on Elementary school first-grade students' talk as a dialogical arena for the negotiation of self and values, Freire addresses the intersubjective construction of subjects' inner worlds, considering intersubjectivity as the sphere in which signs and border zones between social and intramental worlds are negotiated. Lopes-de-Oliveira et al.'s contribution to issues of self consists of an interpretive account of gender development based on a study with an adolescent. Taking into consideration values related to gender performance circulating in different institutional settings, the authors argue that the idea of a definitive gender identity should be replaced by the notion of gender positioning. They highlight the radical openness of the self-system to new possibilities triggered by new experiences—related either to internal differentiations of a given cultural setting or to the possibility of changing developmental contexts. Madureira et al.'s chapter also examines gender issues as they ask students to evaluate how schools are, or are not, encouraging prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion among people. As the other authors in this book, they claim that the quality of communication and metacommunication interactions, within each classroom cultural context, is central to promoting either prejudices or diversity acceptance among students—therefore, affecting societies' future generations.

As for a conclusion, we can say that all chapters are deeply related and point to a set of fundamental guidelines regarding the importance of raising values education to a prominent position, and a core aspect, of school practices. Values deserve the full attention of those in charge of educational institutions. We will next enumerate some of them, highlighting their importance for school educational principles, practices, and goals:

(i) Together with the authors, we recognize that contradictory values populate each society, and schools' contexts do reflect and have to deal, daily, with such contradictions. Thus, it is impossible to prevent children and adolescents from facing issues related to all sorts of social orientations, namely, prosocial and antisocial cultural values. Schools are an arena where contradictory values should feed constant dialogues.

(ii) Independently of the dominant macro-political scenario and cultural systems of a given society, schools do not merely reproduce a pattern of homogeneous,

static social values. Instead, they are compelled to take into account the contradictions and the systemic complexity of the phenomena; therefore, educational practices should be committed to the task of examining and making such issues visible through open and democratic debates, in which discussions would trigger informed negotiations and innovative positionings regarding the plurality of values and the social practices they endorse.

(iii) Values evolve in the irreversible time'. They are highly dynamic systems and intimately permeate different dimensions of social life and meaning-making processes by each person. They affect people's identification as members of a given community, as foreigner, or as inserted somewhere in-between cultures, in the border zone between the two. Differentiation and development are values' fate. If schools ignore the bidirectional process that feeds the semiotic development of values, they may end up moving away from its central sociocultural missions in the society.

(iv) Dialogical practices concerning values education are absolutely necessary, and they should not just encourage values experts to think about what is best to be taught to new generations. It is necessary that *all* values are thoroughly analyzed, scrutinized, and discussed in educational institutions and within the classrooms. Furthermore, the debates should engage all those who participate in the process of formal education in schools—teachers, students, and practitioners—from daycare centers to universities.

(v) Due to its very nature, values lie in the deep layers of affective–semiotic dimensions of the dialogical self-system. Values, conceived in this book as hypergeneralized signs, are indeed regulatory social devices that can be converted into self-regulatory devices through active internalization processes, and, consequently, activities such as discussions (interpersonal) and reflections (intrapersonal) operate simultaneously along their own (values) construction. Through discussions and reflectivity, we encourage children and adolescents to participate in the negotiated construction of novel life experiences and possible new worlds.

In sum, together with the collaborators of the book, we argue that schools are much more multifaceted and plural than we thought, in terms of the complex cultural suggestions they provide to everyone. They provide motivation and ideas to adults' and students' elaborations and constructions of their own collective and personal set of goals, values, and life's meaning. Educational practices are dynamic cultural contexts where multiple and divergent sociocultural perspectives—such as indigenous and 'WEIRD' ones—meet and dwell, struggling for assuming dominant positions within personal and interpersonal motivational systems. As we reflect upon the five general guidelines presented above, we find countless research questions to empirically pursue. Furthermore, we realize that the more we investigate about values, the more we face their widespread and powerful operations in structuring and guiding people's lives, what certainly entails their central role in transforming individuals and societies.

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Index

A
Abuse, 16, 77, 132, 139, 141
Accessibility, 69, 110, 113, 115, 118, 123
Achievement
  educational achievement, 25, 34, 81, 94
Action
  action's coordination, 45
Adaptation
  curricular adaptation, 110
  physical adaptation, 110
Addressivity, 154, 163
Adolescence/adolescents, 37, 66, 68, 88, 94, 98, 104, 191, 195, 197, 201, 203
Adulthood
  adultcentrism
  emergent adulthood, 108, 109
Advantage/disadvantage, 18, 21, 68, 97, 98, 114, 118
Affection, 75, 162, 181
Affectivity
  affective-experience, 162
  affective-interactive frames, 42–44
  affective-semiotic perspective, 170
  socio-affective experience, 149, 162
Afterschool center, 9, 10, 14, 27
Agent
  agency, 2, 53, 57, 60, 78, 106, 154, 158, 163
  agentic action, 57
  collective agency, 53, 57
Alliance, 34, 134, 171
Alterity, 32, 36, 37, 51, 53, 57, 60, 101, 112, 152, 155, 160, 163, 164, 167, 171, 209, 211, 212
Ambiguity, 27, 28
Ambivalence
  ambivalent scenario, 109
Art, 23, 51, 52, 169, 172, 176, 181
Artifact, 153, 176
Attunement, 151, 160
Authority, 31, 74, 79
Autochthonous, 90
Autonomy
  cognitive autonomy, 111
Awareness, 32, 33, 41, 43, 99, 100, 123, 151, 158, 159, 163

B
Balkanization, 8
Beauty
  beauty patterns, 184
Beliefs, 8, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 46, 47, 66, 114, 115, 120, 123, 131, 133, 134, 155, 164, 167, 168, 177, 180, 181, 191, 213
Belonging, 68, 77, 87, 89–91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 99, 100, 106, 110, 113, 118, 173, 174
Bidirectional, 131, 168, 193, 205, 214, 215
Boundary
  boundary crossing, 90
  semi-permeable boundary, 169, 173
  symbolic boundary, 169, 173, 175
Bullying
  cyberbullying, 7

C
Caste
  dominant caste, 68, 77
  lower caste, 67, 68
Catechism, 66
Change
  political, economic, technological and institutional changes, 108
Chaos, 51
Child
  child rights, 83
  children, 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 23, 27, 33, 38, 40, 44–46, 65, 67, 70–74, 76–79, 82,

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83, 88, 90, 92, 98, 99, 119, 131, 145, 152, 154, 163, 214
expatriate children, 90
Childhood
indigenous childhood, 73, 74
Children care
children raising
Christianity, 10
Chronotope
chronotopic analysis, 3, 27
critical chronotope, 3, 5–8, 19, 24, 27
educational chronotope, 3
orthogonal chronotope, 3
Citizenship, 31, 40, 93, 103, 110, 111, 146
Civilization, 175
Class
socioeconomic class, 110
Classroom
class culture, 17–22
classmates, 116–118, 120, 124–126
classroom community, 12, 16, 17, 19
classroom transaction, 76
undergraduate and graduate class, 17, 20, 35
Coalition, 45
Collaboration, 1, 39, 43, 45, 47, 51, 52, 54, 56, 60, 117, 138, 146, 160
College, 68, 104, 111, 113, 115, 126
Commitment, 4, 8, 10, 21, 26, 34, 57, 83, 97, 111, 114, 126, 162, 164, 173, 178, 184, 195
Communication
communication processes, 35, 149
communicative action, 155, 159, 160, 163
communicative discourse, 154, 159, 161
metacommunication, 41–43, 214
metacommunicative signs, 42
Community
community-based programmes, 80
community of learners, 2, 3, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27
low-income community, 177
recipient community, 90
Competence/incompetence, 31, 94, 96, 114, 123, 126, 149, 151, 159
Competition
competitive contexts, 34, 35, 45
competitive games, 46
competitiveness, 38, 109
Complexity, 51, 106, 115, 193, 204, 215
Conflict, 4, 23, 25, 26, 34, 35, 40, 43, 45, 73, 74, 78, 79, 82, 89, 92, 118, 124, 134, 143, 145, 156–159, 162–164, 176
Conformity, 39
Confrontation, 45
Consciousness, 7, 10, 115, 152
Consensus, 58, 117, 194
Conservative values, 39
Constraint, 36, 39, 131, 195
Construction/de-construction, 2, 3, 7, 31, 34, 35, 41, 42, 46, 65, 68, 74, 76, 109, 112, 115, 124, 134, 135, 149, 163, 167, 173, 175–178, 186, 187, 192, 194, 196, 202, 203, 205, 210, 213, 214
Consumerism, 58
Context
cultural context, 37–39, 41, 91, 92, 95, 97, 132, 135, 168, 213–215
structured context, 39
Conversation
conversational climate, 35
Cooperation
cooperative culture, 36
cooperative practices, 36
Country
foreign country, 99, 213
home country, 87, 88, 90, 92, 95, 99
host country, 92, 213
Creativity
Big C' and 'little c' creativity, 54
collaborative creativity, 56
distributed creativity, 56
Critique
critical dialogue, 7, 25
criticism, 32, 35
Cultural
contemporary cultures, 38
cultural barriers, 173, 175
cultural canalization, 36–38, 45, 46, 131, 133, 155, 168, 184
cultural context, 33
cultural diversity, 133, 168
cultural empowerment, 53, 57, 58, 60
cultural legacy, 31
cultural psychology, 37, 41, 47, 90, 113, 131–133, 167–171, 186, 187, 191, 193, 195
cultural semiotic approach, 211
cultural violence cultural, 76
enculturation, 210
Curriculum, 20, 22, 52, 70, 76
academic curriculum, 18
curriculum-based learning, 76

D

Debate, 70, 74, 77, 78, 82, 109, 124, 179, 180, 191, 192, 196, 204, 213, 215
Deconstruction, 2, 3, 7, 27

Democracy
democratic, 4, 20–22, 26, 34, 35, 40, 47, 58, 110, 111, 126, 134, 146, 167, 179, 184, 187, 212, 213, 215
Democrats, 12
Development
developmental education, 33
developmental psychology, 53, 65, 108, 191, 199, 201, 204
developmental science, 107
human development, 33, 37, 40–43, 46, 47, 76, 106–109, 112, 123, 155, 156, 191, 198, 203–205, 212, 214
Dialogue
dialogicality, 112
dialogic communion, 11
dialogic engagement
dialogic relations, 10, 152
dialogical practices, 39, 145, 187, 215
dialogism, 152, 211
Difference
differentiation, 107, 133, 152, 175, 196, 197, 204, 205, 210, 214, 215
Digital revolution, 156
Disability
acquired disability, 103
innate disability, 103
Discourse
critical discourse, 7
everyday discourses, 89, 159
moral discourse, 160, 164
persuasive discourse, 6, 7, 16, 27
Discrimination
discriminatory discourse
Discussion, 1, 4, 9, 10, 14–16, 18, 20, 22–24, 32, 45, 121, 123, 131, 136, 146, 150, 154, 155, 157, 158, 161, 172, 174, 179, 180, 209, 215
Distributed knowledge, 51
Divergence, 31, 36, 44, 58, 155, 158, 162
Diversity
gender diversity, 57
racial diversity, 57

E
Economy
agriculture-based economy, 73
economic background, 80
Education
basic education, 76, 110, 120
formal education, 211, 215
higher education, 93, 104, 110–112, 114–116, 118, 120, 122–125, 150, 161
Indian education, 70, 71
indigenous education, 67
private education, 110
public education, 110
secular education, 68, 212
Educational
educational contexts, 33, 46, 123, 172, 178, 187, 209, 210, 212, 213
educational practices, 2, 210–213, 215
educational research, 104
educational system, 33, 67, 68, 71, 103, 115, 126, 134, 212, 213
educational theorists, 212
educational theory
functionalist, conflict and interpretivistic educational theories, 69
international education, 99
special educational needs, 104, 105, 114, 124, 126
Efficacy
collective efficacy, 57, 60
Embedment
Emigration
transcontinental emigration, 89
transnational emigration, 89
Emotion
uncomfortable emotions, 175
Empathy, 1, 112, 123, 125, 126, 168, 176, 212
Empowerment, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60, 112, 126
Engagement
civic engagement, 51
disengagement, 162
Ephisteme/phronesis, 210
Equity, 40, 60, 72, 149
Ethic
ethical dilemmas, 172
ethical principles, 47, 115, 134
ethical stance, 40
immanent ethics, 172
multicultural ethics, 172, 173
transcendent ethics, 172
Experience
personal experience, 108, 111, 122, 179, 180
social experience, 119, 162
Experts, 20, 31, 58, 117, 132, 145, 215

F
Family, 10, 16, 32, 65, 66, 68, 71, 73–79, 82, 83, 88, 91, 95–97, 103, 108, 119, 132, 143, 159, 178, 192, 197, 199, 204
Fear, 4, 5, 7, 15, 16, 31, 32, 39, 98, 133, 175
Feminism
feminist, 196
Frame

framework, 45, 57, 93, 133, 167, 168, 170, 173, 186, 198, 204
Free will, 5
Fundamentalism
fundamentalist theologies, 174
religious fundamentalism, 41, 174, 176

G
Gender
gender development, 192, 201, 203, 214
gender performance, 192, 199, 214
gender relations, 170, 196
Generation
new generation, 31, 33, 39, 108, 176, 178, 186, 210, 215
Global
globalisation
globalization, 51, 60, 87, 156, 174, 211
Goal
goal-orientation, 113
Goodness, 1, 5
Groups
group work, 160–162, 164
majority groups, 19
minority groups, 38, 104, 110
Guidance
proactive guidance, 16

H
Hatred, 173, 175, 176
Historical-cultural perspective, 38
Homophobia, 9, 10, 170, 174–176, 179
Homosexuality, 8, 178, 200, 201, 204

I
Identity
cultural identity, 89, 90, 93, 94, 96, 99
identification, 116, 196, 210, 213, 215
personal identity, 98, 196
social identities, 167, 169, 173–175, 177, 178, 180, 196
Ideology
liberal ideology, 114
Western ideology, 55, 58
Image
imagination, 37, 56, 66, 106, 107, 172
Immigration
legal and illegal immigration, 19
Inclusion
academic inclusiveness, 105
inclusive education, 103, 122, 124
inclusive relations, 34
Indifference, 7, 105, 118, 125
Individualism
individualistic context, 34, 35
Inequality, 67, 180, 186
inequality-reducing context, 186
social inequality, 185
I-ness, 107
Infancy, 44, 80, 151
Ingroup/outgroup, 36, 95
Institution
educational institution, 31, 32, 47, 68, 83, 104, 108, 112, 115, 186, 214, 215
institutional contexts, 210
socio-institutional barriers, 105
Instruction, 18, 24, 34, 66, 67, 70, 74, 78
Intention, 11, 32, 39, 42, 155
Interaction
interactive patterns, 37, 38
Intercultural friction, 89
Internalization/externalization, 37, 41, 107, 109, 169
Interpretation, 6, 36, 42, 44, 80, 152, 163, 171, 174, 176, 202, 204, 213
Intersubjectivity
inter-individual, 10
intersubjective dynamics, 162
intersubjective relations, 150, 151, 154, 155, 157, 159, 163, 164
intersubjective understanding, 151, 161, 162, 164
Intra-psychological function/inter-psychological processes, 54
Intuition, 195, 212

J
Justice
social justice, 1, 58

K
Knowledge
knowledge-based economy, 33
knowledge construction, 112, 149, 150, 164, 176, 210
knowledge society, 33

L
Language
foreign language, 99
local language, 70, 71, 95
Learner
adult learner, 69
Learning
child-centred learning, 78
social learning, 69
LGBTQ+, 8, 10

Life
life "between societies", 89
life course, 105–108, 111, 113, 114, 194, 204, 205
lifespan, 68, 191, 194, 197, 201, 205, 212, 214
life trajectory, 89, 107, 121, 143, 203
Literacy, 14, 33, 69, 72, 73, 80, 81, 99, 120, 152, 163
Local
local culture, 71, 79
local ecology
local language, 70, 71, 95
Location
relocation, 72, 89, 90, 96, 168
Locomotion
socio-political locomotion, 89

M
Meaning
co-creation of meanings, 37
meaning construction, 41, 44, 151
meaningful, 24, 33, 60, 104, 151, 164, 192, 199, 202
meaning-making processes, 168–171, 175, 176
social meanings, 157
Mediation
mediational processes, 154
Memory, 106, 119
Merit
meritocracy, 112–114, 122, 125, 212
personal merit, 114, 125
Message
cultural message, 36, 169
double bind message, 36, 43
Microgenesis/microgenetic, 45, 155, 157
Migration/migrant workers, 71, 74, 75, 88–90, 92, 104, 156, 213
Moral
moral convention, 41
moral development, 32, 34, 39–41, 144, 211
moral ecology, 40
moral education, 39, 212
moral experiences, 40, 104
morality, 39, 40, 155, 196, 211
moral judgement, 133
moral knowledge, 40
moral narratives, 40, 160
moral norms, 41, 192
moral orientation, 113
moral positioning, 39
moral values, 89, 115, 159
Motivation
intersubjective motivation, 211
social motivation, 34, 37

N
Narrative
coherent narrative, 107
multimodal narratives, 152
personal narratives, 180
Nazism/Nazi, 2
Negotiation, 17, 43, 44, 47, 90, 112, 124, 151, 156–158, 192, 195, 197, 214, 215
Normal/normality, 97, 98, 114, 123, 149, 179
Norms
conservative norm, 192, 196
homogenizing norm, 115

O
Obedience, 32, 74, 79, 203
Ontogeny/ontogenetic, 37, 40, 41, 44
Ontology
ontological condition, 107, 196
ontologic dialogue, 2, 3
Open minded, 8, 12, 16, 98
Openness
openness to difference, 59
openness to experience, 54, 59
openness to participation, 59
Opinion, 4, 6, 7, 14, 20, 141, 160, 174, 178–180, 187

P
Paralinguistic signals, 43
Participation
social participation, 40, 103
Passport country, 87, 88, 90, 95, 99
Pedagogical regime, 21, 22
Pedagogy
Christian pedagogy, 212
critical pedagogy, 53
dialogic pedagogy, 1–3, 5–7, 17, 25, 27
modern pedagogy, 212
Peers, 4, 7, 9, 36, 55, 96, 98, 110, 114, 118, 124, 125, 134, 138, 141, 143, 202
Performance, 33, 35, 36, 76, 80, 105, 110, 114, 121, 125, 126, 146, 162, 192, 197, 199, 202
Person, 8, 10, 12, 15, 36, 40, 43, 45, 53, 56, 58, 88, 93, 95, 97, 103, 104, 106, 107, 110, 113, 116, 119, 121, 132, 149, 168, 170,

172, 175, 193–196, 198, 204, 210, 211, 213, 215
Perspective taking, 58, 155, 158
Phenomenon
psychological phenomenon, 170, 171, 173, 174, 176, 193, 195
social phenomenon, 173
Play
fantasy-play, 45
pretend-play, 46
Policy
governmental policy, 103
social policy, 103
Politic
political, 8, 14, 16, 19, 20, 27, 33, 69, 77, 103, 106, 108, 111, 156, 173, 174, 213
political movement, 103, 174
Position
political positioning, 111
positioning, 39, 111, 143, 151, 158, 159, 197, 201, 205, 214
Poverty, 78, 145
Power
power positions, 134, 141
Practices
everyday practices, 210
Prejudice, 36, 38, 109, 114, 115, 126, 167, 170, 171, 173–175, 177, 186, 187, 214
Pressure, 8, 21, 33, 55, 68, 75, 201
Process
inter-psychological processes, 54, 154
intra- psychological processes, 54
Professor
college professor
Programme-based school, 33
Prosocial motivation/pro-sociability, 34, 39
Psychological
psychological formation, 10
psychological functions, 37, 199
psychological higher functions, 33

Q
Queer, 196
Quotas
educational quotas, 83
racial quotas, 110
socioeconomic quotas, 110

R
Race/racism, 9, 55, 177, 181
Reciprocity, 40, 164
Reflexivity, 47
Reform
reform movement, 67
Refugees , 87–89, 91
Regulation
self-regulation, 154, 163, 171
social regulation, 154
Relations
democratic relations, 34
human relations, 32, 34, 132, 172, 176, 187
Religion
african american religion, 8
Christian religion, 8
religious discourse, 10, 39, 89, 174
religious pluralism
religious text, 67
Representation
cultural representations, 125
social representations, 109, 163
visual representations, 176, 181, 186
Reproduction, 31, 55, 115, 170, 209, 210
Republicans, 15
Respect, 2, 9, 40, 57, 60, 90, 134, 138, 139, 143, 158, 162, 172, 179, 187, 205
Responsibility
social responsibility, 47, 126
Rights
civil rights, 8, 9
human rights, 103, 104, 115, 123, 126, 173, 174
Rules
implicit rules, 39
tacit rules, 39
Rupture/disruptive events, 58, 88, 89, 111–113, 196, 201, 203

S
Scaffolding, 78
School
anti-school attitude, 71
basic school, 210
high school, 20, 113, 119, 168, 177, 192
international school, 72, 88, 94, 96
missionary school, 67
school access, 65, 68, 71, 72, 80, 83
school education, 38, 210, 212–214
schooling, 31, 33, 55, 58, 68, 70–74, 76, 78–80, 83, 90, 100, 142, 146, 150, 162, 164, 211
school performance, 35
school psychologist, 15
school system, 67, 94
Science
traditional science, 67
Scientific
scientific concepts, 210
scientific imagination, 172

scientific knowledge, 31, 32, 116, 131, 210
scientific research, 68, 104
scientific thinking, 76
Self
democratic self-governance, 4, 20, 22
interdependent self, 73, 75
self-confidence, 35, 120, 172
self-continuity, 205
self-development, 47, 73, 115, 149, 171, 201
self-discontinuity, 201
self fulfilment, 105
self governance, 4, 20–22, 26
self-sufficient, 149
self system, 195, 198, 201, 202, 215, 107, 158
Selfness, 107
Semiosis, 37, 198
Semiosphere, 42, 112, 115, 191, 198
Semiotics
semiotic process, 41, 191, 193, 199
semiotics complex, 114, 192, 198, 199, 203, 210, 214
semiotic system, 105, 151, 157, 198
semiotic tools, 37, 213
Sense
sense making, 100, 108, 135
Sex
homosexuality, 8, 10, 179, 200, 203
sexism, 170, 173, 175, 176
sexuality, 167, 170, 178, 179, 181, 185
sexual orientation, 10, 169, 173, 177–179, 185, 199, 202
Sign
hypergeneralized sign, 113, 120, 125, 134, 187, 196, 212, 215
Skill, 31, 33, 35, 38, 47, 51, 54, 57, 59, 66, 98, 99, 117, 146
Sociability, 39
Social
social construction, 82, 149
social institution, 33, 69, 132, 133, 176, 197, 201, 209
social media, 13, 197
social messages, 36
social motivation, 34, 37
social other, 36, 37, 118, 121, 125, 152, 155, 163, 171, 184, 195, 197
social skills, 35, 38, 99
Socialization
school socialization, 73, 79
socialization practices, 73
Socializing agency, 73, 78
Society
advanced societies, 68
complex societies, 212
democratic society, 213
liberal societies, 125
multicultural societies, 34
Socio-affective interactions, 35, 46, 116
Socioculture
sociocultural, 33, 37, 57, 74, 114, 116, 150, 154, 161, 193, 215
sociocultural negotiation, 90
Sociogenetic processes, 42
Socio-moral development, 34, 144
Solidarity, 37, 58, 93, 118, 126, 134
Spheres of activity, 108, 204
Stability, 97, 113, 157, 158
Stereotype, 157, 158
Student
disabled student, 114
student with special needs, xx, 103–105, 110, 111, 113, 115–119, 121, 122, 125, 126
undergraduate student, 21, 27, 104, 111, 112
Subjectivity, 124, 149, 151, 152, 155, 156, 160, 163, 164, 192–194, 196, 209
Support
pedagogical support, 105, 115, 117
psychosocial support, 115
Symbol
symbolic, 26, 52, 89, 110, 111, 113, 126, 133, 169, 176, 194
symbolic system, 89, 169, 194
System
open system, 113, 158, 204, 209
social system, 149

T
Talent, 125
Teacher
future teacher, 3, 4, 8
teaching, 1, 2, 4, 9, 16, 17, 20, 31–33, 44, 52, 66–70, 79, 82, 118, 121, 137, 141, 149, 156, 160, 162
Teenager, 177, 180
Tension
dialogical tensions, 193, 203
Territory, 89, 134, 139, 140, 176
Thinking
convergent thinking, 58
divergent thinking, 40, 54
Third culture kids, 90, 91, 93
Three R's
Time

irreversible time, 106, 107, 134, 191, 196, 201, 215
Tolerance/intolerance, 167, 173, 175, 176, 180, 187
Tradition
traditional practices, 23, 33, 69, 82, 83, 133, 192
Training
professional training, 111, 112, 210, 212
Trajectory
developmental trajectory, 198
life trajectory, 89, 107, 121, 143, 203
nomadic trajectory, 101
Transactions
interpersonal transactions, 105, 132, 210
Transgression, 39
Transitions
developmental transitions, 104
Trust
trust relations, 46

U
Uncertainty, 5, 107, 171
Understandings
mutual understanding, 43, 150, 161, 163
shared understandings, 57, 99
University, 12, 14, 16, 69, 105, 111–113, 116–120, 122–124, 126, 127

V
Values
alternative values, 2, 3, 156
conservative values, 39
hegemonic values, 184
local values, 9
ontogenesis of values, xviii, xxi
sociocultural values, 211
values-based decisions, 211
values system, 113, 201, 205, 210, 213
Victim/victimization, 82
Violence, 36, 37, 131–133, 136, 137, 141, 173, 201
Visual images, 181, 186
Voice
generalized voices, 157

W
WEIRD system/-society/-education, 212
Will/good will, 32, 123
Working class, 9
World
industrialized world, 71
urbanized world, 71

Y
Youth/young, 10, 31, 109, 111, 132, 144, 145, 173