Children's Voices

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Interethnic Violence in the School Environment

Edited by: Zorana Medarić and Mateja Sedmak

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Introduction: the (Un)Importance of Ethnicity and Recognition of Diversity

Mateja Sedmak and Zorana Medarić

The book under review arose from and is named for the international project entitled Children's Voices: Exploring Interethnic Violence and Children's Rights in the School Environment, led by the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska in 2011 and 2012. The collaborative project consisted of research from five universities, in five different European countries – in addition to the University of Primorska, Slovenia, the participating universities were Vienna University, Austria; University of Trieste, Italy; London South Bank University, United Kingdom; and European University, Cyprus.[1]

The project addressed various topics, such as the issue of ethnicity and the processes of intercultural confrontations; the rights of migrants to a safe environment and the free expression of their culture. While European societies are becoming increasingly culturally and racially plural and there is a strong tendency towards intercultural dialogue and understanding, they are also facing an increase in xenophobic and racist attitudes towards ethnic minorities and migrant communities.

1 The project was funded by the European Commission, Directorate of General Justice, Freedom and Security, Directorate D: Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

One of the main issues addressed in the book is interethnic and intercultural violence in the school environment – a theme gaining importance in the last decades, especially because of the abovementioned migration flows and growth of ethnic diversity, which are reflected in an increasing number of students of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the schools. The project aimed to present the question of interethnic violence in schools from various perspectives, including the opinions, attitudes and experiences of children themselves – by listening to their voices as well as giving them a voice. The conditions of interethnic and interracial relations among children and youth across European Union (EU) states are highly heterogeneous, with the situation constantly changing and becoming even more complex due to EU enlargement, the processes of globalisation, and the diversification of migration flows. The multiple perspectives explored in the book, including its analysis of ethnic violence in the school environment in five countries, are therefore even more valuable. The book makes an important contribution to understanding the contemporary European reality around questions of ethnic plurality, especially since the experiences of the countries presented in the book are so diverse: The United Kingdom, as a former colonial power with a rich history of intercultural contact and with numerous, well-organised ethnic communities, has a long tradition of political and academic confrontation with cultural and racial pluralism while at the same time being influenced by the attitudes of its colonial past. Cyprus has its long and still-ongoing history of interethnic conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Slovenia is traditionally and uncritically perceived as relatively monocultural, regardless of the presence of native Italian and Hungarian (and thoroughly denied German) minorities as well as a high number of immigrants from the territory of the once common state of Yugoslavia. Italy has a number of diverse ethnic and linguistic minorities and immigrant communities that are recognized politically in different ways. Finally, Austria has a high percentage of economic migrants, mainly from the territory of the ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey, as well as autochthonous minorities (Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and the Roma and Sinti).

The diversity addressed in the book was also reflected throughout our project, in that intercultural issues of differences and communication were an integral part of the research process: we considered various definitions and differing terminologies used in different countries for describing the same phenomena; we searched for the common understandings and meanings of our research problems; we confronted culturally based differences in perceptions of cultural and racial violence; and finally we contextualised the issues and the project findings.

Researching Interethnic Violence in the School Environment

Interethnic violence is a phenomenon still remaining under-researched and inadequately discussed in many countryes. In Slovenia, for example, there is a lack of a national literature on issues of interethnic violence in schools. In recent decades, there have been some national research projects focussing on peer violence in the school environment (e.g. Dekleva, 1996; Pušnik, 1996; Pušnik, 2004; Krek et al., 2007; Mugnaioni Lešnik et al., 2008; Pavlović et al., 2008), but none focussing specifically on ethnicity. Similarly, in Austria, school violence and its prevention through programmes and initiatives has gained the attention of scholars and government in recent decades, but very few studies have been published which identify the forms and scope of violence (at least in part) (e.g. Karazman-Morawetz and Steinert, 1993; Klicpera and Gasteiger-Klicpera, 1996; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2005; Bergmüller and Wiesner, 2009, as cited in Sauer and Ajanovic, 2011); and even fewer include discussion of interethnic/intercultural violence. In Italy, despite a long history of studies and research in the field of migration, the field of (interethnic) peer violence has rarely been researched. Moreover, the problem of bullying has become a research topic only recently in Italy and is still frequently denied as a problem in schools (Delli Zotti et al., 2011). In England, on the other hand, bullying is recognised as a significant problem in schools, and has been more frequently explored and discussed (e.g. Whitney and Smith, 1993; Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Hill et al., 2007; Anderson et al., 2008; Green et al., 2010, as cited in Inman et al., 2011), including in terms of ethnicity. In Cyprus, due to its history as well as recent immigrant trends, the issues of racism and discrimination in the schools have frequently been discussed (e.g. Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh, 2004; Philippou, 2005; KEEA, 2006; Symeou et al., 2009; Partasi, 2010; Zembylas, 2010; Theodorou, 2011, as cited in Vryonides and Kalli, 2011); but there are only a few studies focussing on the frequency of peer violence.

In Europe in general, school violence has been recognised as an important problem over the last few years, especially the minor and subtler forms of violence (verbal harassment, rudeness) that are increasing (Kane, 2008). In this context an emerging theme is cyber bullying – bullying through the Internet and new technologies. Our project calls attention to the importance of recognising these more subtle and newer forms of violence, along with the need to discuss issues of (interethnic) peer violence with children in the schools. Unfortunately, despite a general recognition of the importance of school violence, there is presently no

EU legal or policy framework regarding violence in schools. Among countries worldwide, there exist significant differences in legislation and governmental intervention related to school violence, as well as differences in expertise and experience. The United States, for instance, has a long tradition of researching school violence in all its varied forms and aspects, including race/ethnic origin. In recent years, attention to school violence has intensified in the United States, especially since school bullying has been seen as playing a significant role in some school shootings. Since school violence was identified as an important public policy issue, US state legislatures have also begun addressing it. The 2011 US Secret Service report on peer-to-peer violence and bullying provides an analysis of the government's efforts to enforce federal civil rights laws with respect to peer-to-peer violence.

Even lacking a common EU legal or policy framework, most European governments have put violence in school on their political agendas and some have adopted legal requirements concerning bullying – in the UK, for example, by law, schools must have their own anti-bullying programmes. There have been, as well, a number of EU action initiatives on violence in the schools, focussing on prevention and reduction under Comenius, Socrates and Daphne programmes (Kane, 2008) – and more recently (2011), a high-level expert meeting on tackling violence in schools involving the Council of Europe and the United Nations, resulting in a number of recommendations on future actions in Europe. These policies and initiatives do touch upon the dimension of ethnicity, at least to some extent, but only a few research projects and discussions have focussed specifically on ethnicity. For example, the 2004 project Youth and Inter Ethnic Schools – Actions Against Inter Ethnic Violence Among Pupils at School (YiES, 2005) focussed on identifying examples of good practice in dealing with intercultural conflict in secondary schools. On the EU level, as well, various recommendations and resolutions concerning interethnic school violence have been adopted, such as Recommendation no. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, issued by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance General Policy, as well as others.[2]

2 For example, The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe issued Recommendation 135 (2003) on local partnerships for preventing and combating violence at school, and Resolution 160 (2003) on local partnerships for preventing and combating violence at school. The Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 1501 (2001) on parents' and teachers' responsibilities in children's education (http://www.coe.int).

The Study on Interethnic Violence in School in Five European Countries

The book presents the results of our research in Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Cyprus and the United Kingdom, which was conducted in four ethnically diverse regions in each country. In accordance with the literature (Sussi, 1994), the criteria used for identifying these areas were the proximity of the border, the urbanity of the area and the "attractiveness" of the region for economic migrants. In each country, four case studies were conducted. To gain multi-dimensional insight into the problem, the issue of interethnic violence in school was examined from various perspectives – from the perspectives of children (through survey and focus groups), from the point of view of teachers and school staff and from the perspective of experts dealing with interethnic violence in each country. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to gain an in-depth, layered perspective on the issue. Quantitative data from the surveys of primary (10 to 12 years old) and secondary (16 to 17 years old) school children were triangulated with qualitative data from the focus groups with children and interviews with school staff and experts. This approach enabled us to apprehend some differences between subjective perceptions and reality. For example, while in some schools (interethnic) peer violence was not considered or recognised as an important issue by school staff – "It doesn't happen in our school" encapsulates the opinion of many – the narratives of children revealed a different picture and often brought into focus more covert and subtle forms of peer violence (avoiding behaviours, talking behind someone's back, spreading rumours, etc.) that are more frequent, but sometimes not recognised as violence. On one hand, this shows the importance of giving a name to (interethnic) violence in schools, and on the other, highlights the important role that schools and school staff can play in raising awareness and in recognising these more hidden forms of (interethnic) violence in the school environment.

Despite the historical and contextual differences of the five countries, a few common points emerged from the research.

First, *school* is an important context of secondary socialisation where children spend a large amount of time and a place that *can make a significant difference* in preventing violent behaviour. It can also play an important role in preventing discrimination and segregation. It should be a safe place for children/youth to communicate and express themselves, but most importantly, a place where they learn and gain skills for non-violent behaviour and peaceful conflict solution.

It is schools' social responsibility to create an environment that promotes children's wellbeing (Tackling violence in school, 2011). Maintaining a consistent school-wide attitude towards (interethnic) violence – such as policies of zero tolerance in response to violence as well as for transmitting values of solidarity, tolerance and respect – is seen as an efficient way to prevent violent behaviour in schools. Examples of good practices we came across in our research show that schools really can make a difference. It is important to mention, however, that despite initiative and hard work, school staff members sometimes lack sufficient resources or training to deal effectively with the issues of (interethnic) school violence.

Second, we found that *ethnic background* per se *is often not an important motivator for peer violence* — instead, peer violence is frequently influenced by a combination of factors, such as gender, age, physical appearance, socio-economic class and personality traits. Ethnic background (nationality) is in many cases used as means of differentiation or a stated reason for hurting someone when a conflict has already emerged. Research implemented in four European countries in 2004, focussing on interethnic violence, found that the reasons for conflict among adolescents in school do not markedly differ when the protagonists are migrant children (YiES, 2005). Indeed, the importance of recognising the complex realities young people live in as well as the intersectional nature of violence has been highlighted in recent years (Kuhar, 2009; Busche et al., 2012). It is important, therefore, to recognise that the reasons for peer violence mainly lie in a combination of different factors, such as the experience of discrimination, socio-economic deprivation and structural violence (Hrženjak and Humer, 2010). This interplay of factors is another issue that should be highlighted for school staff as key creators of an overall school atmosphere which significantly influences relations between children. It is important to mention, however, that in some cases schools also play the role of the "protected area", where interethnic relations are better than in society as a whole.

Third, despite schools' potential for fostering important changes, to some extent *schools* and the attitudes of children *reflect the situation in wider society*. Violence in society permeates school life and children are affected by ongoing or persistent conflicts, such as, for example, in the case of Cyprus or the former Yugoslavia. Also, in the present situation of economic crisis, social tensions around immigrants commonly arise. Since schools are not cut off from local communities and the wider society, societal feelings of growing concern about the presence of immigrants or the prejudices and stereotypes towards them can also be observed in

schools. It is thus not sufficient to implement changes in schools only; they should also be made in local communities and in society as a whole. The most viable approach to combating violence in schools is a holistic one (High-Level Expert meeting on tackling violence in schools, 2011). Although the contexts for our research were very diverse and, consequently, solutions for reducing interethnic violence in schools should be as well, an all-inclusive approach to the problem is indispensable for the effective prevention of school violence.

Overview of Chapters

The chapters cover the issue of interethnic school violence in the varying contexts of five different countries: Slovenia, Italy, Austria, the United Kingdom (England, specifically) and Cyprus.

The first chapter, "*It Doesn't Happen in Our School*": *Ethnicity as a Structural Factor of Peer Violence in Slovenian Schools*, by Tjaša Žakelj and Ana Kralj, explores the issue of interethnic violence in schools in Slovenia, where it is not considered to be a significant problem, despite the existence of intolerance and xenophobia, especially with relation to pupils of ex-Yugoslav ethnic backgrounds (Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Macedonian, etc.) and Roma. The authors highlight the importance of recognising and discussing more subtle and covert forms of violence as well as the intersectional nature of school violence – ethnicity *per se* is rarely the cause of violence, they find; reference to pupils' respective ethnicity or nationality usually occurs only when an existing conflict escalates.

Birgit Sauer and Edma Ajanovic, in the chapter *Schools as a "Protected Space"? Good Practices but Lack of Resources: the Case of Austria*, show that in Austria, interethnic violence is not a frequent issue and schools can be understood as "protected spaces" – in contrast to a prevailing anti-immigrant atmosphere which characterises Austrian society. Their findings also show that incidents of interethnic violence are determined by a variety of overlapping factors; namely, age, gender, classroom dynamics and – to a rather low extent – ethnicity/nationality itself. Ethnicity/nationality or stereotypes are used, instead, as a means of differentiation and for inflicting further damage in an existing conflict.

The article *Educational Institutions in the Face of Multiculturalism: Problems and Solutions to Interethnic Violence in Italian Schools* by Giovanni Delli Zotti and Ornella Urpis presents the situation regarding interethnic violence in Italian schools, in which ethnic diversity is an integral feature. The results show that,

despite the fact that peer violence is a fairly common problem, pupils generally see schools as safe places, since the violence mostly takes place outside school grounds. The authors emphasise the central role of the media in creating a stereotyped view of "others" reflecting in the attitudes of children. They present also some measures for the prevention of violence in schools.

The issue of interethnic violence in schools in England is presented through the lens of Islamophobia, due to evidence of increased hostility and prejudice towards Muslims in English society in recent years. The chapter *Wearing Your Own Culture: a Study of Islamophobia in English Schools*, by Sally Inman, Pip McCormack and Sarah Walker, thus focusses on Islamophobia as a specific form of interethnic violence in schools. The findings show that adopting a dual approach in schools – an ethos of inclusivity and equality combined with a zero approach to racism – can be an important deterrent to interethnic violence in schools. Still, the authors find, there is a need for changes in the wider society in which the schools exist.

The final chapter, *Interethnic violence: a Dormant Problem in Cypriot Public Schools* by Marios Vryonides and Maria Kalli, presents the context of interethnic violence in the school environment in Cyprus, where, besides ongoing conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, there has been growing concern about the presence of migrants in the recent years. Interethnic violence is not a major issue for the Cypriot public educational system, but has the potential to increase due to economic uncertainty and the increasing number of migrants. The authors recommend that educational policy should, therefore, implement interventions to diffuse potential conflicts.

The Challenges of Intercultural Contact

From the historical perspective, it can easily be stated that there are very few (if any) societies that are completely monocultural. Human history is in fact the history of constant and intense intercultural, interreligious and interracial contact. Societies and people have been in contact with other societies and people, out of need (the exchange of goods, trade, in search of marital partners or a new homeland, etc.) or out of coercion (wars, colonialism, forced immigrations, etc.). The enduring colonialist and imperialist tendencies of Europe (from the very first expeditions to the "New World", up to postmodern cultural imperialism, through the liberal economy) have actually complicated the issue of intercultural contact for the old continent; today, with escalating migration flows and the omnipresent

effects of globalisation, questions about intercultural contact and intercultural cohabitation seem to be more important than ever.

Individual and collective everyday life in the third millennium is, as throughout history, pervaded with issues of ethnic affiliation, cultural and religious identities, racial identification and ethnic and racial conflict. The importance of race, culture and religion – even in the global era – has not been eradicated. On the contrary, it seems that in today's fluid, postmodern societies these identifiers are gaining new meanings. We are confronted continuously by this contradictory, even absurd situation. At the global level, we live in a time of extremely intense interethnic contact, which finds no comparison in history. New technologies, increased migration and the overall mobility of people enable worldwide mixing and create the intercultural character of the modern state. However, the contact hypothesis, according to which cultural prejudices, stereotypes and conflicts among ethnic groups should be minimised through the frequency and intensity of contact among the groups, seems to be failing (Tropp and Pettigrew, 2005; Medarić, 2009).

Among the political and academic classes, there is an overall recognition of the multicultural reality of the modern (European) states and of the fact that these states must confront these issues of cultural pluralism in order to obtain long-term political and social stability. Beyond this level of assent, we face a chaotic divergence of ideas as to which type of state strategy or policy implementation would best address the problems arising from cultural pluralism. To what extent do we advocate the ideas of assimilation, or, conversely, the preservation of original cultures? Do we use the same approach in the case of autochthonous or native minorities and with immigrants of the first, second and third generations? Is it better to promote only cultural and social or also political rights? And what are the roles of the state and the school system in this regard? Further problems arise in the process of implementing state regulations. For example, does the implementation of minority language-preservation legislation truly protect the minority language and the minority group? How strictly does the law of formal bilingualism need to be enforced? Do formally guaranteed political and cultural rights increase intercultural tolerance and intercultural contact? Here we encounter also the problem of terminological inconsistency. There are several terms that describe the situation of different cultures living in a limited area, such as cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism. Furthermore, we find a plurality of terms for describing relations among ethnic groups; intercultural tolerance, intercultural distance, intercultural dialogue,

intercultural conflict, assimilation, adaptation, integration, etc. Further problems in interpretation of the mentioned terminology arise from the fact that some authors use the terms *multiculturality* and *interculturality* to describe concrete social *reality* (i.e. cohabitation of different ethnic groups), whereas others use the same terms to describe the *relations* among ethnic groups. The term(s) multi/interculturalism can further be used to define a political programme or formal policy towards immigrants or native minorities (Hacin Lukšič, 1999; Sedmak, 2009; Sedmak, 2010).

Despite the fact that modern Europe was built out of national states – each with a very strong tendency towards political and cultural uniformity, even at the price of nonrecognition of cultural diversity and the often-violent assimilation into one uniform state culture and language – after the Second World War it had to face the challenge of successfully accommodating cultural differences within the existent national borders. In this context, as Rex (1995; 1997) pointed out, Europe had to face two interconnected but separate problems: first, questions of political, social and economic *inequality* and second, the question of accommodation of *cultural differences*. Different states faced the less problematic issue of inequality, in accordance with their different political traditions and social policy systems, in different ways. In states with so-called "guest worker" policies (e.g. Germany, Austria), by definition, political equality could not be enacted. In states where immigrants have received political rights (e.g. Great Britain, France), the issues of cultural inequality and racial and ethnic discrimination have acquired greater importance. In the welfare states, such as the Scandinavian states or the former socialist Yugoslavia, which were very open to cultural diversity and had actually promoted cultural pluralism, another question had to be answered – to what extent should cultural diversity be actively promoted and to what extent might aggressive exposition of cultural differences be counter-productive and again form a base for new inequalities (Rex, 1996, 241–242)? In fact, the main challenge faced by advocates of multicultural societies remains how to recognise cultural differences while at the same time assuring the equality of individuals and the stability of society as a whole. Finally, Rex debunks the common idea that multiculturalism and equal treatment go hand in hand; "multiculturalism and equality are not the same goals under different names. Multicultural society *prima facie* must mean a society in which people are not equally but differently treated" (1997, 206). He clarifies that the only real multicultural society is one which guarantees equality in the *public domain* (law, politics and economy) and which promotes diversity in the *private domain* (culture, language, religion) (Rex, 1997). His concept of ideal multiculturalism is called *egalitarian multiculturalism,* the essence of which

is the existence of cultural diversity along with the parallel existence of equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance (Rex, 1995; 1996).

Interethnic contact in Europe has evolved over a long history. Following the colonial/imperialist period, the incorporation of ethnocentric ideas into Western science and religion, and the racist approach represented by the ethnicity- and race-based clashes of the World War II era – followed by a short period of optimistic confrontation with cultural, racial, linguistic and religious diversity in the second half of the twentieth century, and the development of the ideals of multiculturalism and intercultural cohabitation – we seem to be back at the starting point again. European societies have had to, in a time of overall economic and financial crisis, reevaluate the question of cultural plurality in present-day Europe. In the process, it is important that multicultural realities are neither glorified nor refused, but accepted in all their complexity and ambiguity (Nagel and Hopkins, 2010).

The optimism experienced in Europe in the last decades of the twentieth century, fuelled by the ideals of multicultural, even intercultural societies, was short-lasting. Indeed, Nagel and Hopkins have defined the first decade of the twenty-first century as the "postmulticultural era". They use this term not to refer to a decrease in cultural and racial pluralism but rather to the unsuccessful regulation and integration of differences in modern Western societies (Ibid.). The everyday social life of European states is full of examples of unsuccessful management of intercultural contact: instead of experiencing tolerant multicultural cohabitation, Europe is facing the fight against head scarves, minarets and Islam in general, the deportation of Roma, hate speech at the highest political levels, open attacks, discrimination against immigrants, and so on.

But the situation is even more complex; to achieve long-term social stability, it is not enough anymore to simply preserve cultural, lingual, racial or religious differences and thereby preserve pluralist societies – the approach that characterised the early era of multiculturalism. The successful resolution of cultural pluralism now demands from the broader society actual recognition and legitimisation of differences that are perceived by single ethnic groups as constitutive elements of their identity (Parekh, 2002). The demand for recognition surpasses the traditional promotion of simple tolerance of other cultures, other languages and other religious practices. If, in the first case (affording recognition of differences), it is sufficient to change legislation, in the second case (affording respect and legitimisation), it is necessary to effect change in the broader society and the in entrenched, common ways of thinking (Ibid.).

Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination

On one hand, in everyday communications – the media, school curricula and so on – we are confronted with notions of tolerance, equal opportunity and intercultural communication, but on the other hand we receive messages that perpetuate patterns of racism, discriminatory behaviour and negative stereotypes about immigrants and ethnic minorities. Even though cultural coexistence can lead to openness, acceptance of diversity and higher levels of tolerance – promoted also through European and national policies – immigrants often face unequal treatment in access to goods, employment, education, housing and other aspects of everyday life. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights data show that discrimination against minorities and immigrants is fairly widespread and, in fact, is more widespread than recorded in official statistics. Many such acts remain hidden and unreported (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009).

The sources of European racism and discrimination against immigrants and ethnic minorities are many, and change according to the concrete historical moment and according to the socio-political and economic situation of each European state. Wieviorka (1997), however, argues that we can find the reason for increasing expression of racist and discriminatory attitudes in Europe today in the crisis of national identities, in the general trend towards dualisation of societies, which favours a differentialist logic (the "Other" is completely different from us), and in the phenomena of downward social mobility and economic crisis, which make populist sentiments more attractive.

Much of the contemporary sociological literature insists on the idea of varying forms of racist behaviour and discrimination towards the Other. While the old, classical, inegalitarian racism considers the Other an inferior being, "who may find a place in society, but the lowest one /…/ who can be exploited and relegated to unpleasant and badly paid tasks", a new, differentialist form of racism considers the Other as fundamentally different, which means "that he/she has no place in society, that he/she is a danger, an invader, who should be kept at some distance, expelled or possibly destroyed" (Wieviorka, 1997, 299). While in the past, expressions of prejudice and discrimination in Western societies were much more overt, direct and public, they now manifest themselves through avoiding, disinterest and contempt of "otherness". Expressing prejudices in direct contact with members of certain ethnic groups has been replaced by avoiding contact with them and increasing distance from them (Ule, 2005, 202). When talking about the new racism, some scholars also refer to "cultural racism" (e.g. Balibar). We agree with Wieviorka (Ibid.), however, who argues that there probably are not two

racisms, but only one, with alternating manifestations as cultural differentialism and social inegalitarism.

Balibar (1991), when referring to this posited new form of racism, defines it as a "total social phenomenon", which can be perceived in the everyday practices of violent behaviour, intolerance, social exploitation and special segregation, but also in academic discussions (as, for instance, in the field of evolutionary anthropology). Its typical characteristic is the tendency towards the "pure social body", the preservation of "our" identity and the avoidance of mixing (Ibid.).

This increasingly prevalent new form of racism is defined by Balibar as "racism without race". For this type of racism, biological distinctions are no longer necessary: the core of this racism is comprised by cultural differences, which cannot be overridden. Here we are talking about *cultural racism*, emphasising the incompatibility of different lifestyles and traditions[3] (1991). Also important in this context is the problem of destabilisation of the traditional anti-racist movement and the inadequacy of traditional anti-racist strategies in fighting these new forms of racism. The European Union is, at least at the declarative and normative level, trying to confront (cultural) racism. The question of ethnic discrimination is an issue high on the European agenda and anti-discriminatory principles are integrated into national legislation following EU guidelines (e.g. Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation). In relation to education, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically mentions, in Article 29, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, education in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and equality among all people, ethnic, national and religious group and persons of indigenous origin. Nevertheless, discrimination is often legitimised through hidden curricula, subtle policies and the media (that have an important role in constructing public opinion and often perpetuate negative prejudices and stereotypes), and present in the everyday life of migrants or members of ethnic minorities. To some extent this reality is also reflected in the schools, among children, who are not immune to hierarchies of power or prejudices, even if sometimes schools serve as areas of protection. Stereotypes and prejudices (as means of differentiation between "us" and "them") are often reflected in school violence, particularly in one of the most frequent forms – name-calling.

3 To illustrate the nature of cultural racism, we can cite current US and European attitudes towards the Islamic and Arabic world. These attitudes are not determined by race as such, but by the incompatibility of cultures and values, and the so-called civilisation schism.

Cultural Hybridisation and the Transcultural Character of Europe

In analysing the challenges of intercultural contact and intercultural or interracial conflict, politicians, ordinary people and academics alike frequently and uncritically operate from an assumption that "cultures" and cultural identities are internally uniform and constitute, in effect, clearly distinct islands. To reach a better understanding of intercultural relations, however, it must be emphasised that (national) European cultures are neither internally homogenous, nor externally bound by political borders. According to Sandkühler, "today it is impossible to speak of a uniform national culture inasmuch as it is impossible to speak of an imagined culture of the world" (2004, 81). Moreover, not only can we *not* talk about pure (national) cultures, often we cannot talk about pure cultural or ethnic identity at the individual level either. In discussing and analysing the problem of interethnic violence in the school environment, the process of cultural hybridisation of the present European states and the increasingly transcultural character of Europe are important to keep in mind as we search for an appropriate answer to this puzzling issue.

The question of cultural identification is neither simple nor static. It is expected that someone who lives in Slovenia and is of Slovene origin will define him/herself as Slovene when introducing him/herself to a German, for example. However, according to a number of studies (Sedmak, 2002; SJM, 2003/2), the same person will most probably define him/herself locally or regionally if s/he lives in the Slovene *border* regions of Prekmurje or Primorska. Moreover, in a study analysing ethnic identification of people living in four border areas of Slovenia (near the borders with Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary), the majority declare themselves to be culturally more similar to those living across the border in a different state than to Slovenes living in the central part of Slovenia (Sedmak, 2009). The complex nature of cultural identification is highly noticeable in children from ethnically mixed families and in migrants' descendants who cannot and do not wish to define themselves in culturally monolithic terms (Sedmak, 2002). (Cultural) identity is not a static phenomenon, changing as it does under the influence of new experiences and in contact with other cultures, ideas and so on. An individual who emigrates to another country on a long-term or permanent basis will most probably enhance his/her original cultural identity with elements of the cultural environment into which s/he has moved, thus transforming his/her previous cultural identity. Because we live in a globalised world where we are in constant contact with other cultures (languages, daily patterns related

to food, behaviour and clothes), we all transform our original cultural identity in a similar manner – even if we do not necessarily move in physical space, since other physical spaces enter our very homes through modern means of communication. Not surprisingly, Foucault regards the postmodern era as an "era of space" (Foucault, 1986, 22, as cited in Eigeartaigh and Berg, 2010, 9), adding that in today's world the individual's identity is not a result of cultural and national values and inherited history, but of different spaces through which each individual moves. In other words, the individual's (cultural) identity is no longer an inherited construct, but a flexible and changing category influenced by cultures that we meet in the globalised world. In the postmodern world, the individual is set free of the binary, clear-cut, monolithic definitions characteristic of and functioning in previous periods; s/he is free to assume multiple and hybrid (cultural) identities. The importance and role of the new information technologies in cultural transformation is also discussed by Lenarčič, who points out that today's social networks, independent of time-related and territorial barriers, enable communication among users of different cultural origin, which leaves an indelible mark on intercultural relations (Lenarčič, 2010). Traditional, *face-to-face* intercultural communication is increasingly replaced by indirect and online communication, and according to Lenarčič, what is evolving in virtual communities is the process of transition from interculturalism to transcultural individuals and social formations.

That, in today's world – characterised by mass migration, the flow of "people, goods and ideas" and mass participation in the global virtual world – we are all, in fact, transcultural to a certain extent and, consequently, holders of multicultural identities, which we actualise in our individual and unique manner, is congruent with the theory proposed by Welsch (1995). He was among the first to propose a new view of cultural identity, for the purpose of which he introduced the term *transculturalism*. He launched this new concept as the opposite of the concepts then prevailing in theoretical discussions on culture: the classical concept of the existence of separate cultures and the contemporary concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism, with all three being based on the (same) assumption of the existence of pure and clearly delineated cultures or the so-called cultural islands with visible borders. Welsch uses the term transculturalism to denote the complex intertwining and interaction of contemporary cultures caused by the following three macro processes: (1) *inner differentiation and complexity* of modern societies, that is, the existence of various cultures; (2) transcendence of the old notions of homogenisation and cultural separatism through the *external networking of cultures* – what we are witnessing today is extreme interplay between cultures since lifestyles go beyond the border of the national culture rather than stopping

at it (academics in Italy, Austria and Denmark have similar lifestyles; similarly, attitudes towards human rights, ecological awareness or feminist movement do not stop at national borders, but cross them); (3) last but not least, a high level of *hybridisation* characteristic of contemporary society. For each culture, other cultures are its potential component or satellite, which is facilitated by increasing mobility and the use of communication technologies. As a result, to quote Welsch, there exists nothing absolutely "foreign" and nothing absolutely "ours". Finally, as Welsch points out, as individuals we also are cultural hybrids, which he illustrates with the influence of Russian, French and German literature on writers of different cultural origin. Cultural identities, therefore, should not be equated with national identity, with the differentiation between the two phenomena being of key importance for Welsch. A citizen with a Slovenian passport is not necessarily Slovenian by culture. Within such a frame, the freedom to construct cultural formations is one of the fundamental human rights in contemporary society.

A number of other authors also point out that in postmodern society the borders between previously (seemingly or really) stable cultures are disappearing, leading to less stable, less fixed ways of life, composed of elements drawn from various cultures. Sandkühler (2004) argues that, in the West, such a change is a logical consequence of the following processes: (1) market liberalisation and integration of previously regional markets into world trade; (2) debordering forms of information and communication; and (3) new structures and forms of institutional organisations dealing with economics, politics and law. Just like Welsch, he places emphasis on the omnipresence of transculturalism, as a result of which borders are no longer given, including borders historically imposed by ethnicity, religion or tradition (at this point, one should add the interjection whether they ever *have been* given). "Rather [borders] emerge and change through the dynamics and complexity of flexibly co-existing networks between persons" (2004, 82). In discussing the influence of postcolonial studies on the deconstruction of binary classification, Jurić Pahor (2012) notes as well that national/ethnic purism has become an unsustainable cultural strategy.

The empirical evidence also supports the thesis of cultural hybridisation[4] and transculturalism being a broad and omnipresent phenomenon of present (and

4 In the literature we often find different terminology, which defines cultural mixing as cultural hybridisation and transculturalism, which are often used as synonyms. For a better understanding it is important to note that, although transculturalism is closely connected to cultural hybridisation, the terms are not synonymous. Cultural hybridisation is, according to Bhabha, more closely correlated with the "third" or "in-between" space and with the negotiation process, which enables the construction of different positions (Bhabha, 1990 in Jurić Pahor, 2012). *Tranculturalism or transculturation*, on the other hand, Jurić Pahor (2012) describes as the phenomenon of contact areas, where different cultures (often with very asymmetric positions) meet and struggle.

to a large extent also of past) societies. The existing statistical censuses of various European and American states show that mixed people are the fastest growing social group (Rizman, 2008; Ali, 2011), as a result of which it is no longer possible to deny linguistic, racial, religious, cultural and other pluralities. More and more people define themselves, where the possibility exists, as bi- or multiracial, bi- or multi-cultural, or bi- or multi-lingual (Aspinall, 2009).

From this perspective, further attention could be placed on the phenomenon of hybrid and mixed ethnic identities as formula of future peaceful cultural coexistence and the means for decreasing the incidence of interethnic conflicts and violence – emphasising people's complexity and heterogeneity instead of simplicity, plurality instead of uniformity and intercultural closeness and similarity instead of intercultural distance and schism. The book presents an important contribution to the present situation entailing significant social, economic and political changes to an old continent. Increasing social and economic inequalities, overall poverty, uncertainty and existential distress are effecting perceptions of the Other to a considerable extent. As already seen from history, the present situation may entail a decrease in intercultural tolerance, violence toward social and cultural minorities and increase in tolerance towards violent behaviour of different kinds. In such uncertain times, it therefore becomes especially important to stay aware of and sensible to the various, often more subtle forms of interpersonal and intercultural violence and to redouble our efforts on preventing them in order to avoid the risk of an escalation of violent behaviour. We hope that these contributions may at least to some extent help to improve the general understanding of the complex dynamics of peer interethnic violence.

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"It Doesn't Happen in Our School": Ethnicity as a Structural Factor of Peer Violence in Slovenian Schools

Tjaša Žakelj and Ana Kralj

Introduction

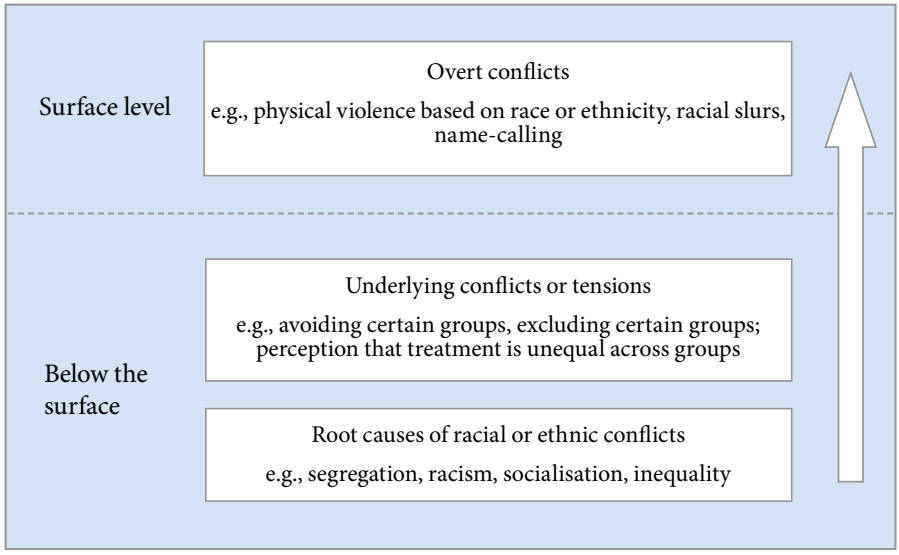
Violence in the school environment, especially violence prevention initiatives, has caught the attention of scholars and policy makers in Slovenia only in the last two decades. The specific issue of interethnic peer violence in schools is still largely an under-researched phenomenon however. There have been some research studies conducted that have focused on peer violence in school environments (for example; Dekleva, 1996; Pušnik, 1996; Pušnik, 2004; Krek et al., 2007; Mugnaioni Lešnik et al., 2008; Pavlović et al., 2008), however none have focused specifically on the issue of ethnicity. According to Humer and Hrženjak (2010), peer violence in schools has been analysed mostly within the framework of psychological and psychopathological concepts. Research has also been carried out with a focus on youth violence and ethnicity in general (though not specifically within the school environment). For example, the research *Odklonskost, Nasilje in Kriminaliteta/ Deviance, Violence and Crime* (Dekleva et al.), carried out in 2000 and 2001 aimed to determine whether there is a correlation between nationality and peer violence. The authors concluded that ethnicity itself was not an important factor in peer violence, neither for victims nor perpetrators. However, the same study

also revealed that young people belonging to ethnic minorities often feel they are subjected to discrimination and intolerance on the basis of their ethnicity.

Thus, we decided to focus our analysis on ethnicity as a structural factor of peer violence in schools. When discussing interethnic peer violence, we remain mindful of the root causes of interethnic tension. Kreisberg (in Henze, 2001, 7) offers the following insight: Overt conflict, such as physical fighting or the use of racial slurs, lies on the surface, like the top of an iceberg. Underlying, latent or potential conflicts or tensions are in the middle. These underlying conflicts or tensions may not necessitate the awareness of those involved, and they may remain hidden indefinitely or surface later as overt conflicts. Beneath both of these layers are the root causes of racial or ethnic conflict, which include the following:

- segregation, which allows for the development and maintenance of stereotypes about other groups with whom one has little actual contact;
- racism, which can be both individual and institutional;
- socialisation, in which parents and other adults consciously or unconsciously transmit to children negative information about other groups;
- inequality, in which power, status, or access to desired goods and services are unequally distributed among groups.

Figure 1: Progression of racial or ethnic conflict



Source: Henze, R. (2001): Leading for diversity: how school leaders can improve interethnic relations. Santa Cruz, Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.

This chapter thus presents the main findings of a Slovenian case study. The study comprised of: a quantitative survey on a sample of both primary school pupils (5th year: 10–11 years old) and secondary school students (3rd year: 17–18 years old) from 17 different schools; a qualitative study which includes interviews with national experts and school staff (teachers, school counsellors and headmasters); and focus groups with pupils and students on their perceptions of the degree of understanding, tolerance and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in their schools and local environments, on their perceptions of their own ethnic group and of "others", their experiences of interethnic peer violence, coping strategies and the role of schools in both preventing such violence and in the development of positive interethnic relationships.

Contextual Background

Ethnic Structure of the Population in Slovenia

Slovenia is characterised by its multi-ethnic social environment in which one ethnicity (Slovenian) is markedly prevalent. The most reliable data on the ethnic composition of the country are gathered from the decennial population census; however, the last available data are from the 2002 population census, which is unlikely to accurately reflect today's situation due to the many changes in Slovenia's ethnic composition as a consequence of European integration processes (Slovenia became a member state in 2004 and entered the Schengen system in 2007).

Out of the 1,964,036 inhabitants registered in the 2002 Census, 83.06% was of Slovenian ethnic origin. The number of ethnic minorities, their extent and real economic and political power has varied through different historical periods with respect to changes in state borders and the sovereignty exercised over this area (Komac, 2005). After Slovenia's independence in 1991 there were members of several non-Slovenian ethnic communities living within the boundaries of the state. These communities can roughly be divided into two groups:

– historical national minorities (autochthonous[5] national communities as defined by the Slovenian constitution), including the Italian, Hungarian and Roma communities;

5 The Slovenian Constitution does not specifically define the term "autochthonous". This means that the differentiation of the various minorities and different levels of protection accorded to them is not established by law. In the context of ethnic minorities, the term is used when referring to an ethnic community, which has occupied a certain geographical area "from old" (Eriksen, 1993). However, due to numerous difficulties and dubious explanations (the definition of "autochthonous", for instance, is largely arbitrary, since a clear definition of what the term autochthonous means and the criteria for fulfilling this condition do not exist in a positive Slovenian legislation), the term is criticised by several authors. For further explanation, see Komac, M. (2005). Due to its arbitrary and potentially manipulative nature, the term "autochthonous" is no longer used in the EU's documents with regard to national and ethnic minorities. In this sense, Slovenia is a discernible exception.

– the so-called "new" national communities, members of which belong to the nations and nationalities of the former common state of Yugoslavia. Most of them immigrated to Slovenia during the sixties and the seventies of the 20th century as economic migrants.[6]

The assurance and protection of rights of (national and ethnic) minorities in Slovenia can be categorized into three spheres:

– the relatively integral legislative protection of historical or autochthonous minorities (Italian and Hungarian), including constitutional provisions (articles 11 and 64 of the Constitution) and about 80 laws and regulations, concerning various aspects of everyday life of minorities;
– the article 65 of the Constitution, which establishes that the special rights of the Roma community in Slovenia to be regulated by a special law. The law regulating the rights of the Roma community was passed through the parliament as late as in 2007 and only after a long-lasting debate;
– members of national communities from the former common state of Yugoslavia do not possess a collective social status in Slovenia. The Slovenian Constitution does not include particular regulations regarding the protection of their (collective) rights and their minority communities. When preserving their national identity, the "new" national communities are only supported by the articles 61 and 62 of the Constitution, which determines their right to express their national appurtenance and the right to use their language and writing.

Being entitled to the status of autochthonous groups, the Italian, Hungarian and Roma ethnic communities are not only given privileged treatment by the legislation but are also implicitly afforded a stronger level of protection. 6,243 members of Hungarian national community (0.32% of total population) are settled in the northern part along the border with Hungary in five municipalities. The Italian national community (numbering 2,258 persons or 0.11% of total population) is settled in three coastal municipalities along the border with Italy. Most Roma live in the north-eastern part of Slovenia. Even though official data report 3,246 citizens of Roma ethnic origin (0.17% of total population) it is unofficially estimated there are between 7,000-12,000 members of Roma minority in the country as many Roma do not declare themselves as such because of the fear of discrimination. Furthermore, not all members of Roma community might enjoy constitutionally guaranteed rights. Those apply only to those members of Roma

6 When using the term "new" national communities we are referring to the definition of Miran Komac (2003, 2007), though it has to be noted that this terminology too is perhaps a relic of the past rather than an adequate expression of the present times. The members of nations and nationalities of the former Yugoslavia have lived in Slovenia for several generations, so the use of the term "new" national communities is disputable.

community who are considered "autochthonous" while "non-autochthonous" Roma who immigrated (e.g. as refugees in 1990s) are not entitled to the protection in spite of obtaining Slovenian citizenship.

The other significantly present ethnic groups are Serbs (1.98%), Croats (1.81%), Bosniaks/Muslims (1.63%), Albanians (0.31%) and Macedonians (0.20%). A vast number of them have arrived to Slovenia after the Second World War and settled in industrial towns, as a result of internal economic migrations within former Yugoslavia. Members of those ethnic communities, together with other linguistic and religious communities (Czechs, Germans, Jews, Slovaks, Turks, Ukrainians and others) that dwell on Slovenian territory, are not accorded the collective rights granted to the autochthonous minorities (Petricusic, 2004).

Slovenian School System

In recent years the Slovene educational system has seen a number of changes, most of them aiming to raise awareness of educational rights and thereby achieve a higher educational level. The nine-year primary school programme, for which no pre-school education is compulsory, is divided into three periods of three years, beginning when children are six years old. After completing elementary school, nearly all children (more than 98%) go on to secondary education, vocational, technical or general secondary programmes (*gimnazija*). The latter prepare school children for further studies and are divided into two groups: "general" (classical *gimnazija*) and professionally oriented (technical, economic or art *gimnazija*) leading to external matriculation examinations. Out of all graduates of secondary school 84% go on to tertiary education, which can be obtained in public universities and private higher education institutions. The educational system in Slovenia is almost fully financed by the state budget.

Ethnicity of School Children and Migrant Education

There are no official data on the sizes of migrant populations in primary and secondary schools since the ethnicity of schooling children is not registered. Some information can be gathered from various sources (Ministry of Education and Sport, National Education Institute, Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia), but they give only a partial picture.[7]

7 The following data are gathered from the "Teacher Education Needs analysis", made by the National Education Institute in 2009 as a part of the project European Core Curriculum for Mainstreamed Second Language Teacher Education.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Education and Sport 886 (772 of these coming from the states in the former Yugoslav territories) – i.e. less than 1% of total population have been registered in Slovene primary schools in the current academic year. 195 out of the total of 440 schools report their education of migrant children and requested resources for additional professional support to these children. 12,665 hours of additional support have been granted with 48 teachers involved. Schools with larger numbers of migrant children are mainly located in major urban areas.

The above numbers can be confronted with the statistical data on the number of foreigners in Slovenia provided by the Ministry of Interior, which on December 31, 2008 show 3.84% (70,723) of the 2,032,362 residents of Slovenia to be foreigners.[8] In the age group 6-14, which roughly corresponds to compulsory years of schooling, foreigners represent 1.66% (2,792 out of 168,209). The numbers are very similar for the age group 7-15: 2771/170369 (1.63%). There are no official data on the sizes of immigrant populations in secondary schools, but the statistics show the share of foreigners in total population in the age group 15-18 is roughly the same as in primary schools: 1.64% (1,398/85,241).

The numbers do not give a complete picture about the size and the nature of the problem. In April 2006 a non-representative survey was carried out by the National Education Institute Slovenia, which showed that the number of students (1997) born in Slovenia, whose first language is different from the language of schooling, is about twice as large as the number of students with the status of foreign residents (993). Thus the statistics do not give a complete picture of the linguistic situation in schools. The cultural and linguistic background in which children grow up is probably at least as relevant for the study as the formal status of the student. As for the country of origin of immigrant students the study found students come from the following states: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Croatia, Estonia, France, Guinea, Italy, Ireland, Japan, South Africa, China, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldavia, Germany, Netherlands, Slovakia, Serbia, Switzerland, Serbia, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and USA.

The Constitution regulates fundamental rights in the area of education by determining that education is free and that the provision of compulsory basic

8 By the definition of the Statistical Office foreigners are: persons with foreign citizenship and permission for permanent or temporary residing in the Republic of Slovenia, who have a registered residence in Slovenia; persons with foreign citizenship and valid work permit or business visa, who have a registered temporary residence in Slovenia; persons without established citizenship or without citizenship, who have a registered permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia; persons according to the Asylum Act to whom the asylum and refugee status were granted in the Republic of Slovenia (refugees). http://www.stat.si/doc/metod_pojasnila/05-007-me.htm.

education is the responsibility of the state. The constitution separately regulates the rights of the Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities. According to the law, the two ethnic minorities are entitled to education taught in their respective mother tongues and are also permitted to devise and develop their own education policies. The law determines the areas of compulsory bilingual education (article 64).

Due to historical reasons, two different models of minority education exist in Slovenia; these comprise preschool, basic school and secondary school education in the areas populated by members of official ethnic minorities. Children from the Italian ethnic minority therefore attend education in their mother tongue, while Slovene language (as the language of the local environment) is also included in the curriculum. On the other hand, Slovenian children residing in the area of Italian ethnic minority community also learn Italian (as the language of the local environment) alongside Slovene in schools. However, children (Slovenian and Hungarian) – residing in the area of the Hungarian ethnic minority – attend bilingual preschool institutions and schools together, where education is provided in both languages simultaneously (Eurydice, 2008/2009, 220). According to the Constitution, members of the Roma population have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. The specific educational rights of Roma children are guaranteed by the educational legislation and the Roma Community Act (2007).

All immigrant children – foreign citizens, children without citizenship, refugees and asylum seekers – residing in Slovenia have the right to compulsory basic school education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens (Elementary School Act, article 10). Immigrant children with insufficient knowledge and mastery of the Slovene language have the right to an additional support in Slovene language – a total of 40 hours per year. However, this support is granted only during the first year of integration of the immigrant child in the Slovenian education system. Schools decide to provide this support individually or in groups, usually outside regular classes; while the funds for its provision are allocated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport. With the amendments of the Elementary School Act, drawn up in 2007, primary schools are obliged to offer additional teaching of the Slovene language to those pupils who need it. The main objective is to prepare immigrant pupils for inclusion into the Slovene education system and society and to support their cultural identity and bilingualism.

Immigrant children are also encouraged to use regular learning support intended for all pupils who need it (supplementary classes, individual and group support). Upon parents' approval, adjustments in forms of and deadlines for assessment and evaluation, the number of grades and similar adjustments can

be offered to immigrant children. The knowledge of foreign pupils/students is assessed according to their progress in the attainment of learning standards, laid down in the curricula. Decisions on the adjustments are adopted by the Council of teachers. Adjustments of assessment and evaluation can be enacted for a period up to two school years.

Immigrant children, who have just arrived in Slovenia and those who were born in Slovenia and belong to the second or even third generation of immigrants have the right to mother tongue instruction and education about their culture (Elementary School Act, article 10). In some cases this is organized under bilateral agreements concluded between the host country and the countries from which the main immigrant communities present in the country originate (bilateral agreements on mother tongue tuition are signed with Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Montenegro, Macedonia, Russia and Serbia). Mother tongue classes for immigrant pupils are financed by the respective embassies, consuls or cultural associations of the country of origin of pupils, and take place in school buildings. In other cases, mother tongue instruction and cultural education is organised on the initiative of the immigrant communities, although a minimum demand threshold should be met and the necessary funds provided by the Ministry of Education. Recently, initiatives for the organisation of mother tongue instructions increasingly come from migrant communities, schools and teachers working with immigrant children. From 2007, foreign or stateless pupils may choose their mother tongue as their foreign language option in the last three years of their compulsory education, provided there is a sufficient number of interested pupils. In 2007/08, the foreign language tuition organised at this level of education, i.e. lessons in German, Spanish, French, Italian, English, Croatian, Macedonian, Russian and Serbian, reflected the languages spoken by immigrant pupils (Eurydice, 2009, 26).

The intercultural approach is defined in all documents which form the basis for the realization of educational activities in Slovenia: The White Paper on Education (1996) says: "/…/ it is necessary to become acquainted with other cultures and civilisations, to learn mutual tolerance and respect for human differences. Parallel learning about national and foreign cultures plays an important role in forming and disseminating national culture and in understanding the processes of European integration, migrations, political changes, etc. /…/. Such intercultural comparisons help in broadening the spirit, making comparisons and reducing ethnocentricity (including Eurocentricity). They also help people to achieve a better understanding of their own identity and tradition". The intercultural approach is also mentioned in other relevant legislation such as The Organisation and

Financing of Education Act (1996), The Elementary School Act and the Strategy for the integration of migrant children and students into the education system in Slovenia (2007). An important role in providing support for schools and teachers in fostering intercultural dialogue is played by the National Education Institute which is implementing various activities for encouraging intercultural dialogue in schools through counselling services, in-service training programmes for teaching pupils from heterogeneous groups (pupils with mixed national and cultural affiliation), in-service training of teachers for cooperation with parents of migrant children, dissemination of examples of good practices etc. (Eurydice, 2008/2009, 223).

One of the most important documents in the field of integration of foreign pupils in the Slovenian educational system is the Strategy for the integration of migrant children and students into the education system in Slovenia, approved by the Ministry of Education in 2007. The Strategy includes analysis of the current situation, an overview of the main problems and obstacles, the definition of goals, principles and measures for integration of migrant pupils and students in educational system and examples of good practices from abroad. Further principles and methods of integrating foreign pupils into the educational system are drawn in the Guidelines for the education of migrant children in kindergartens and in schools; the document was prepared by the National Education Institute in collaboration with various experts in 2009.

Methodology

In order to gather substantive data on the types of interethnic peer violence occurring in our schools, and on their prevalence, quantitative and qualitative research methods were combined. Research was conducted in four regions of Slovenia which share a common characteristic; having an ethnically mixed population. Those areas are the coastal region, the central region (Ljubljana), Jesenice and the Prekmurje region. In the first, quantitative part of the research, questionnaires were completed by primary and secondary school pupils. Our target groups were pupils in the 5th year of primary school and pupils in the 3rd year of secondary school. In the second phase of our research we obtained qualitative data from national experts working in the field of interethnic relations or peer violence, and also from school staff and from the pupils themselves. Pupils presented their opinions and experiences in focus group discussions, whilst semi-structured in-depth interviews were used for experts and school workers.

After implementation of a pilot study in one primary and one secondary school, quantitative fieldwork was carried out between October 2011 and March 2012. The questionnaires consisted of 44 questions covering both demographic data and normative statements on equality and multi-ethnic backgrounds, experiences of violence and perceptions of violence. 767 pupils completed the questionnaires in 8 primary schools and 9 secondary schools, 390 of which were primary school pupils (50.8%) and 377 were secondary school pupils (49.2%). The overall gender breakdown was: 50.2% male and 49.8% female respondents. The age ranges in the of primary school respondents ranged from 9 to 14, with 77.2% of pupils being ten years old and 19.2% eleven years old. In the secondary schools, the majority of pupils were aged 17 (71.2%). The proportion of 18 year olds was 15.2%, 12.2% were 16 and 1.3% of the secondary school pupils included in the sample were 19 years old.

The ethnic structure of the sample was quite heterogeneous, especially in the case of primary school respondents. Just over half identified as Slovenian, followed by 20.0% as mixed/other ethnicity, 13.3% Bosnian and 4.6% Serb. In the sample of secondary school pupils, 75.9% were Slovenian, 12.2% were of mixed/other ethnicity and the same proportion were Bosnian.

Table 1: Ethnic background of pupils in the sample

	Primary schools sample		Secondary schools sample		Total	
Ethnic background	N	%	N	%	N	%
Slovenian	212	54.4	286	75.9	498	64.9
Bosnian	52	13.3	15	12.2	67	8.7
Serbian	18	4.6	6	1.6	24	3.1
Hungarian	7	1.8	5	1.3	12	1.6
Croatian	5	1.3	7	1.9	12	1.6
Macedonian	4	1.0	0	0.0	4	0.5
Montenegrin	3	0.8	1	0.3	4	0.5
Romany	3	0.8	0	0.0	3	0.4
Albanian	3	0.8	3	0.8	6	0.8
Other/Mixed	78	20.0	46	12.2	124	16.2
Don't know	2	0.5	2	0.5	4	0.5
Missing	3	0.8	6	1.6	9	1.1
Total	390	100.0	377	100.0	767	100.0

Qualitative fieldwork was carried out between December 2011 and September 2012. In total, 6 interview sessions were conducted with experts in the field. The interviewees were: representatives from the National Institute of Public Health (simultaneous interview with two experts), researchers at the Peace Institute (simultaneous interview with two researchers), a representative of the School Students' Organisation of Slovenia, an expert from the Institute for Ethnic Studies, representatives of the human rights ombudsman's office and a representative of Unicef.

The qualitative part of the research was conducted in 2 primary and 2 secondary schools in Jesenice. Pupils included in the qualitative research were also included in the quantitative part. In each participating school, 2 focus groups were conducted. Altogether, 8 focus groups were conducted with 46 participants (23 male and 23 female participants): two focus groups consisting of 5 participants, while all others consisted of 6. Predominantly, participants were selected by teachers, who were asked to select according to the following criteria: gender balance, ethnic heterogeneity and loquacity.

In each of the schools participating in the qualitative research, 2 in-depth interviews with school staff were conducted. In total, 8 such interviews were held (4 of our interviewees were school counsellors, 2 were headmasters and 2 were teachers).

Interethnic Relations in Slovenia and Recent Changes in These Relations

Interethnic Relations in Slovenia

When asked about potential changes in relations between ethnic groups at a local and national level – both experts and school staff working within areas of high ethnic diversity – stressed a number of changes and improvements in interethnic relations. Some ethnic tensions from the period immediately after Slovenia's independence (1991) were exemplified, such as: immigrant students choosing not to declare their nationality; immigrants not having the opportunity to learn their mother tongue (as an option in schools); and a historic tendency to change surnames ending with ć into č (the Slovenian alphabet does not include the letter ć, so surnames ending with this letter indicate a non-Slovene origin). The norm of changing ć into č had stopped by the end of 1990s, as the level of tolerance improved. Positive changes in terms of people's propensity to declare their (cultural) differences can be interpreted in the light of a general shift away from intolerance and nationalism:

"/…/ Coexistence became a value, being different is a right. Consequently people declare their difference. /…/" (Institute for ethnic studies, Vera Klopčič)

Our evidence suggests that the social climate with regard to attitudes toward other nations has improved in recent years. This seems especially true in terms of the younger generation and people living in urban areas. Living in urban areas, where ethnic, cultural or religious diversity is greater, offers opportunities for frequent contact with people of different cultures and promotes general tolerance. On the other hand, elderly people and people living in ethnically homogeneous rural areas were recognised as less tolerant:

"Recently, I think it's getting better, but it's a rural, actually suburban environment. So it seems that some of these stereotypes are present, still. /…/ Err, now in practice… hmmm… maybe with these parents, older ones, that actually, when there are some problems that we solve, there's more of it present than with younger generations, who are basically connected in a different way." (school counsellor, primary school)

"These old mums ain't [tolerant]." (m, 16) (laughter)

"They are not tolerant towards whom?"

"I don't know, towards immigrants." (m, 16)

When focusing on the micro level of school environments the interviewees stressed that relations among different ethnic groups in school depend on the general social atmosphere. Slovenia's most prevalent migrant groups are ex-Yugoslav nationals, and so, during the war period in the 1990s especially, interethnic tensions were obvious among children. Some international sporting events encourage distinctions regarding ethnic affiliations. These, and other tensions, are less obvious in periods of relative economic prosperity however:

"This [the relations between students of different nationalities] highly depends on the general social atmosphere or the local atmosphere. When there's something happening in football or handball or hockey, then the relations can be a bit edgy, as in who is supporting which team, or something. If something is happening, like if I think of the war on the Balkans, there were huge tensions between kids. But now, as we're in quite a peaceful period, and the economic status of most

families is acceptable, now there is no special focus on this, and things are really calm. So this, this isn't a problem of schools… it's a problem of general social relations, culture, economic status, etc." (school counsellor, primary school)

"/.../ but there are tensions, when something else goes wrong, now, for example, with this economic crisis as it is, these problems can emerge. Even nationalism has roots in such matters." (sociology teacher, secondary school)

Student's perceptions of interethnic relations in the local area depend on their positioning of themselves in the environment. Slovenian students living in the Jesenice area, an area known for being ethnically diverse, mentioned that they often feel like a "minority" in their own neighbourhoods. They expressed that they felt like they have a "subordinate" position:

"We are in Jesenice, here they rule, don't they?" (m 1, 17)

"Here [in Jesenice] there are so many Bosnians, that we have to accept their language, that they have to accept us and we are in minority." (m 2, 16)

"We are guests." (laughter) (m 3, 16)

Other students, supporting the idea of equality and the need for interethnic tolerance, recognised tensions among residents living in multi-ethnic areas. The presence of a high percentage of people of "other" ethnic groups in any particular area may encourage a feeling in the autochthonous population of "being endangered":

"I, personally am... my nationality does not matter. Anyway, relatives, caretaker, and all those people I know in the block of flats… everyone who is Slovenian does not like 'those from below', namely Bosnians, Croats and so on. I do not know why. You grow up with this, and it seems others would like I would have shared their opinion, but I do not [soft laughter of others]. I do not know why, and I ask: 'Why you do not like this person or that person?' and they do not know how to answer. And it probably comes with the family upbringing. /…/ but here in Jesenice others like Bosnians, Croats, Serbs prevail… /…/ Probably also because of that, Slovenians feel endangered or so, I do not know…, are so intolerant because of that." (f, 17)

Normatively Valued Equality and Interethnic Tolerance in The School Environment

In a similar way to other important equalities (like gender equality for example), data from the normative statements of our questionnaire show the beginnings of positive change in terms of attitudes towards ethnic equality. Generally, pupils included in the research, support equality statements regarding rights and the cultural expression of people from different ethnic backgrounds, but there are evident differences regarding the age of respondents. In the case of secondary school pupils, support for the statement "People who come to Slovenia from other countries should have the right to follow the customs of their countries" and the statement "I like the fact that there are people of different ethnic backgrounds in Slovenia" is lower than for primary school pupils by 0.7 points on the Likert scale (see below). On the other hand, support for the idea of assimilation "I think that children who come to Slovenia from other countries should follow Slovenian language and culture" is 0.7 points greater.

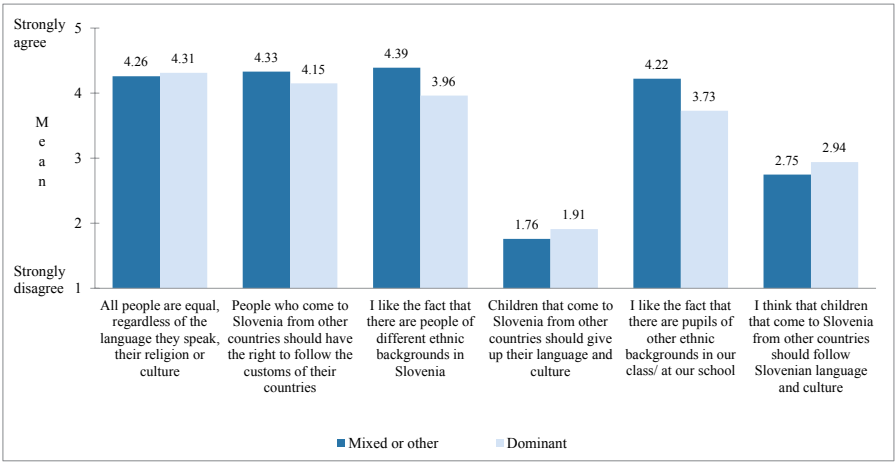


Figure 2: Normative statements by ethnic background (primary school)

In a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the lowest support was given to the statement "Children that come to Slovenia from other countries should give up their language and culture" (support rate reaches 1.9 amongst primary school pupils and 2.2 for secondary). Female participants were slightly more tolerant in their statements, while differences were considerable between the support given to statements by Slovenian pupils and the support given by those of mixed or other ethnicities. These differences were greater in secondary school.

Pupils of mixed ethnicity or an ethnicity other than Slovenian evaluate the fact that there are people of different ethnic backgrounds in Slovenia more positively (average 4.39 for mixed/other ethnic groups and 3.96 for Slovenian pupils in primary school; and 4.0 for mixed/other ethnic groups and only 3.37 for Slovenian pupils in secondary school). This is also true for having a multi-ethnic classroom/school (average 4.22 for mixed/other ethnic groups and 3.73 for Slovenian pupils in primary school; and 3.91 for mixed/other ethnic groups and only 3.40 for Slovenian pupils in secondary school).

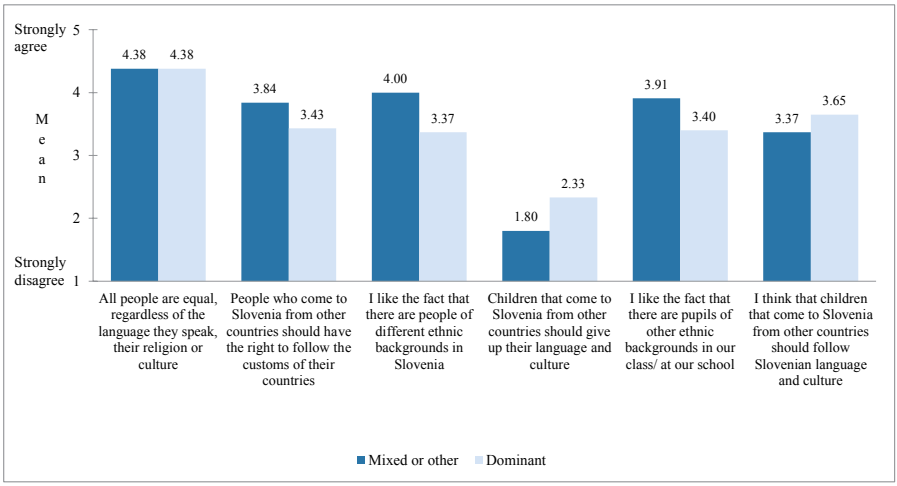


Figure 3: Normative statements by ethnic background (secondary school)

In the qualitative part of the research, pupils expressed that they do not notice intolerance on the basis of ethnic affiliation among their schoolmates and they assume that all pupils feel good in class and in the school. They believe that ethnic background is not a factor in determining how well they get along with each other.

> *"It [nationality] does not matter." (m, 10)*

> *"We hope they do [all feel good]. I personally haven't noticed any problems of this kind, or that someone would say he is not feeling good among us because of nationality or religion." (f, 16)*

In fact, students relayed some individual cases of "others" being isolated in their class or peer group where the responsibility for that isolation was ascribed to the personal characteristics of the pupil:

"Personally I believe that individuals of other nationalities are usually more restrained. I noticed a girl from Bosnia and she was always on her own and she did not talk much with others… but I think this happens because of the fear of not being accepted, not because she actually wasn't accepted." (f, 17)

Younger pupils remembered some cases of pupils being avoided and insulted "by others" when they first join the class. Newcomers having everyday contact with others usually improves their chances of being accepted:

"Last time this happened when a new student from Albania came in our class. Other treated her as if she is inferior, but now we are very good friends." (f, 11)

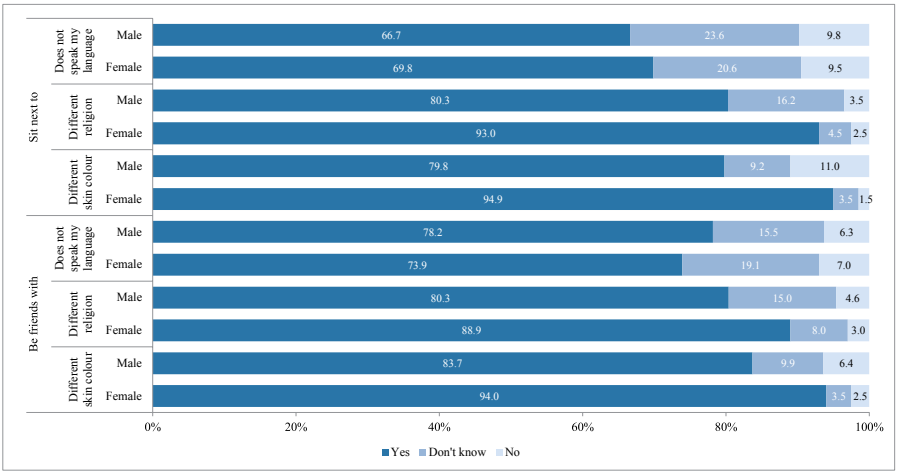


Figure 4: Willingness to sit next to or to be a friend with someone of different culture, religion, race, by gender (secondary school)

Closeness or intimacy in relationships seems to lessen perceptions of "otherness", thus pupils become more willing to be friends with those of different religions, language, or skin colour. Pupils' level of agreement with the statement "I would be happy to sit next to a pupil who does not speak my language" varies from less than a half (47.0%) of primary school pupils to 68.2% for secondary school pupils. The latter seem more willing to be a friend or to sit with someone of other religions, language, or skin colour. The percentage of those who would be happy to sit next to a pupil who has a different religion ranges from 58.9% (primary school) to 87.1% (secondary school). Those who "would be happy to sit next to a pupil of different skin colour" number 67.2% in primary schools and

87.9% in secondary school. 58.8% of primary school pupils and 75.7% of those in secondary school would be friends with a pupil who does not speak their language, while 64.9% of primary school pupils and 84.7% of secondary school pupils would be friends with those of different religion. Skin colour seems less problematic; 73.7% of primary school pupils and 89.2% of secondary school pupils would be friends with a pupil of a different skin colour. Female pupils and pupils of mixed ethnic background or those other than Slovenian, express more positive views towards all of the statements. This difference is greater in the case of respondents from secondary schools.

Categories and Common Perceptions of "Others"

Though students at the beginning of focus groups did not recognise the role of ethnic, cultural or religious differences in building of their relationships, several stereotypes and prejudices regarding "others" came out in discussions. Migrant status was revealed as an experience passing through generations.

> *"Basically, children never get rid of the migrant status. Even if your parents belong to the 1st generation and you're born as a Slovenian citizen, you're still treated as a migrant, /…/ some are still stigmatized even after 4 generations." (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak)*

When answering the question about his perception of the number of students of other ethnicities, cultures and religions in his school, a boy, half Slovenian and half Croat, explained the importance of defining "others":

> *"If you take into account also the ones from ethnically mixed marriages, than we represent more than a half. /…/ Yes, there's more than a half of others." (m, 10)*

Contrary to quite high levels of support in the normative statements, in focus groups several of the pupils' prejudices and stereotypes about people of other ethnicities, religions or cultures were revealed. Common perceptions of "others" can be summed up as follows:

a) People of other ethnic groups, mainly immigrants, scorn Slovenia and Slovenians too often, despite coming to Slovenia in search of a better life. This stereotypical opinion relates to contemporary (legitimate) critics of the welfare state, which lessens social support, and towards the general pessimistic position of the economy.

b) They do not want to learn the Slovenian language (this was mentioned as a problem in the case of immigrants living in Slovenia for longer periods who are still using their own language in public places):

"At least on the street they should speak Slovenian. /…/ It is strange to me that someone already lives in Jesenice for 20 years and does not know a Slovenian word." (f, 17)

c) They stick together in case of disputes. This (otherwise positive) characteristic is regarded as negative in the case of disputes when immigrant boys and/or girls threaten others with the involvement of their friends or relatives. Some girls from secondary school explained that some acts of students of other ethnicities don't seem right to them (loud music on a train, for example), but they do not dare to intervene:

"Because they stick together." (f, 17)

"Yes, there are always 10 of them together." (f, 17)

d) Their subculture is expressed without restraint, which bothers some Slovenian young people (e.g. special clothing styles and listening to Balkan music). Although the subculture of Balkan youth is not accepted by the majority of Slovenian youth, it has become popular for some Slovenian boys:

"One of the interesting things I noticed at an interview with the youth workers Moste and Fužine was that, say boys who are the 2nd or 3rd generation migrants in Slovenia, that is migrants from the former Yugoslavia, that these boys are very popular among Slovenian boys, which we can see from the fact that Slovenian boys are trying to copy their speech, behaviour, their laidbackness, even style – that famous blue sweatshirt with a white line, their music is also popular… /…/ And so this… this somehow puts the perspective that kids from ethnic minorities are excluded upside down. Here we saw that they're not, we saw that they're really hotshots among their peers. /…/" (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak)

"Here this [immigrant subculture] is actually in fashion and there are also Slovenians, who are acting as Bosnians." (f, 17)

Other Slovenian young people expressed several times their disapproval of Slovenian students who choose "Balkan subcultures" (the connotation of this for Slovenian young people being negative). For those students who assume the subculture of "southerners", special terms are used, like "švedi", "čapci" and also "čefurji".[9] As the pupils say, there is no bigger "čefur" than a Slovenian who pretends to be "one of them":

"Who are švedi, čapci?"

"Those are the ones that are actually Slovenians but try to act as 'the southerners'." (m, 18)

Yes, in fact I think those that come from Bosnia or Croatia do not get them on their nerves so much as those who act like them." (f, 16)

e) You can recognise "them" on the basis of their appearance and clothing style:

"Typical appearance of 'čefur' is supposed to be a track suit, and, and, and … /…/ And sunglasses, and this shining hairstyle, and a necklace, a metal jewellery chain. This is typical …" (f, 16)

f) Contrary to Slovenians, they are proud of their ethnicity. Younger participants of focus groups explained that "others" like Bosnians and Serbs "show off", they act like hotshots, there are lots of them in other classes, and they stick together:

"/…/ Bosnians are more, well, pesky, and they, well, compete with others." (f, 10)

Hierarchical Position of "Others"

Between the categories of "others" there is an evident differentiation between nations from South-eastern parts of Europe (like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, etc.) and Western or Northern parts of Europe. Stereotypical beliefs are already rooted in the opinions of our younger research

9 Pejorative term for migrants from other countries of former Yugoslavia.

participants. In their opinion, Western and Northern nations "are more civilised" and differentiation between nations is a consequence of "not being equal". A Macedonian girl explained the reason of this differentiation:

"Because countries like France and England are more developed than Macedonia or Bosnia." (f, 10)

Secondary school students agree that differences in attitude towards migrant groups exist. While tolerance of western nationalities is higher, Balkan nations are less accepted among Slovenians:

"Otherwise I believe there is a difference. That those who come from the West are more respected than those from South." (m, 16)

Pupils agreed that Balkan nations are less accepted, a phenomenon that is also reflected in media discourse. Again responsibility for negative attitudes is ascribed to "them":

"I do not think so [media influence attitude towards nationalities]. To the certain extent it is their responsibility. Because they are a bit more aggressive, but that's just the way they are." (m, 17)

Among ethnic groups within Slovenia, the Roma people are mentioned as an ethnic group that is believed to be a particular target for prejudice and discrimination. Roma in Slovenia (or Sints in Jesenice) are believed to be treated differently than other groups according to the opinion of all participants of our qualitative research – primary and secondary school pupils, school workers and also experts working in the field. If, in general, it is true to say that relations among different ethnic groups have improved in the last decade, intolerance towards Roma people has not lessened. An expert from the Institute for Ethnic Studies explained:

"/…/ I think that for a certain period this really shows how expressing national affiliation to any nation but the Slovenian nation was undesired. This is also shown by reports on human development and other reports after 1999, where it's seen that the level of intolerance is decreasing, while still remaining towards the Roma people. /…/" (Institute for Ethnic Studies, Vera Klopčič)

The persistence of intolerance toward Roma people has been confirmed in many different research papers. Data from the survey Slovenian Public Opinion 2008 (Toš et al., 2009) indicated that Roma people continue to be the least respected ethnic group in Slovenia. In addition, we should also not overlook the importance of media discourse in which negative characterisations of Roma are common place, often depicting them as "different from us" (Erjavec et al., 2000; Kirbiš et al., 2012).

Further to our observation about the changing of surnames that indicate an ethnic origin in ex-Yugoslavia, this trend of trying to hide ethnicity is also very much evident in some Roma populations. It is especially evident in the parts of Slovenia where Roma are most prevalent (Prekmurje, Dolenjska).

In expert interviews, cases of institutional violence towards Roma people were pointed out:

"We've also worked together on some project on the Roma and it's really here that this stigmatisation stands out and we can see how the prejudice of teachers or the whole staff influence the attitude of an individual… /…/ What I can say from my work experience is that there aren't few Roma kids who decide to drop out from the last few years of elementary school and then they enrol to adult education programmes. Many of them say that the reason is that they simply felt pushed aside, that they had no encouragement. A boy directly told me that his teacher said to him: 'why do you bother, you're a gipsy' and I'll say just as the boy reported: 'you won't get any further then this'. For example. But there are more of these examples of underestimation right from the beginning. So I think that we should really raise awareness. Generally on these affects of such attitude. A few years ago, when we had some consultation on the Roma status in Slovenia and Austria, there was a representative of the Society of Allies for Soft Landing from Krško who told us that a kid once asked her if there existed some cream, which you could use so that others couldn't see you were Roma. /…/" (Institute for Ethnic Studies, Vera Klopčič)

Prejudices related to Roma are numerous and diverse:

"They think they are chiefs, but they are not." (f 1, 17)

"And they do not feel like working." (m, 17)

"And there is waste around their cottages." (f 2, 17)

"They are disorderly." (f 3, 17)

"They are unclean." (f 4, 18)

"And are only stealing from the country." (f 1, 17) (laughter)

In another focus group, it was mentioned that the Roma "are living off of social security income". In addition, pupils believe "Slovenia takes care of Roma people more than other (Slovenian) citizens".

Prejudices are powered by the need to prove oneself and this is the basic problem of interethnic violence. As secondary school students suggest, the family has a crucial role in passing on values, as well as prejudices towards "others":

"Usually you perceive others as family does. /…/ Yes, family has the most important role. If at home parents say to you all the time not to socialize with this kind of person, than usually prejudice grow." (m, 17)

The reasons for prejudice towards "others" often lie in history. Historical reasons for intolerance among nations are clearly recognised in the case of disputes among ex-Yugoslav nations for example:

"Yes, in history there were some disputes, and this still drags on, instead of giving the opportunity to the individual to show in a different light." (f, 17)

One of the girls included in a focus group stressed how the burden of past events influences interethnic relations by transmitting from parent to child:

"When you mentioned old grudges... I resent my father. When I was little, we lived on xy street and he has such old grudges, because his parents also had them. And I resent my parents very much, that they had such bad relationship with others. For example, when we used to live in xy street, when I was in the first grade, my father went into a fight with an axe with a neighbour, who is Serb. I resent that, because he has this old grudges. /.../ I do not know why this old grudges are borne, if we now are a new generation. I don't know why..." (f, 11)

Interethnic Peer Violence: Nationality not Among the Top Reasons for Peer Violence

Equal Treatment in the School Environment

All participants of the survey stressed that they felt that they are being treated equally, regardless of their nationality or religion. Though in some interviews with school staff it was mentioned that parents sometimes feel their children are being treated unfairly on the basis of their nationality. In one primary school, the counsellor mentioned a case where at the beginning of a project to keep records on talented students, two parents felt that their children were being discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, as their daughters had not been identified as a "talented student".

When asked about the impression they had of how students of different nationalities feel in school, participants in the focus groups expressed the opinion that others felt "good", "pretty good" or "more or less" good. One student (half Croat and half Slovenian) explained:

> *"Because teachers and all treat Slovenian students and students of other nationalities equally!" (m,10)*

Pupils mainly shared the opinion that teachers treat them equally, but in one focus group in the secondary school students mentioned a case of unfair grading on the basis of a student's ethnic background.

Most primary school pupils shared the opinion that nationality is an irrelevant factor in peer violence. As students described, disputes or fights on the basis of nationality are not an issue on the micro level, for example; in class. The pupils surmised that there is no interethnic violence and that they get along well:

> *"The reason for, I dunno, let's say, that a Bosanec*[10] *would fight with… dunno… Anže who is Slovenian… that this [nationality] would be a reason for the fight, no…" (m, 10)*

10 Pejorative term for an inhabitant of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Issue of Interethnic Peer Violence in Schools and the Wider Social Environment

School counsellors in primary and secondary schools suggested that interethnic peer violence used to be more frequent in the past. When cases of interethnic peer violence occurred, it was generally noticed by students, teachers and sometimes parents. The school counsellor in one of the primary schools explained the context for the occurrence of interethnic peer violence:

"That's it, that's what I've told you some years ago when there was a lot of tension in the Balkans. I personally had an example when the Serbs and the Knin Serbs, all children, were having fights and battles for a long time among themselves and we had no idea of the background. Now there isn't so much of it, but there still is. It's conditioned with holidays. Slovenian holidays are, well, Slovenian, and on those days we are free from work. On the Eid-Ul-Fitr, for example, they are either absent, and 'then why are they absent', 'because they're Muslims'. Do they eat pork or don't they eat pork in the cafeteria… this can sometimes lead to terrible arguments… but I've never felt that there would be something more, like gangs, not that." (school counsellor, primary school)

As it was explained later in the interview, in the time of the Balkan wars, schools had a security guard; tensions were felt in school between students and between school staff and the atmosphere was negative. In recent years, the atmosphere has been more relaxed. One of the school counsellors said that interethnic peer violence does occur in the school, but considering the size of the school and the number of students, it does not seem frequent.

In terms of peer violence, ethnicity is not regarded as a key determinant:

"I've been invited to work on a project within the intercultural dialogue. It was in Ajdovščina and a psychologist from a boarding school was also there. He said: 'You know, this interethnic violence doesn't really interest our pupils, as the majority of them are girls. I mostly witness victimizing based on appearance, overweight, and the interethnic stuff would only come fifth in the row' this is, say, a phenomenon. If we look at it from a developmental point, it's surely important in one period. With the Roma people, it still remains…" (Institute for Ethnic Studies, Vera Klopčič)

The frequency of peer violence depends on the climate of the school; such that if students have a chance to relax during breaks, be involved in sporting activities and talk with teachers, tensions among student tend to be less common:

"It terribly depends on the school atmosphere. If a school is more productively oriented then this is expressed in intermediate violence, both with didactic distress and national distress. If the school is more liberal and it enables children to relax during breaks, to play football, hang out, to have teachers that they can talk to in the hallways then the tension is dispersed regardless of nationality problems." (school counsellor, primary school)

Nevertheless, violence on the basis of ethnicity cannot be denied:

"And here, at safe points, I clearly remember one case that was ethnically based. This was in Nova Gorica, one boy was even older, he was 16. He came from Bosnia and a group of 12- and 13-year-old kids surrounded him, stole his cell phone, stole his money, and kicked him. And then he took refuge at this safe point, he was totally petrified. /…/" (Unicef, Alja Otavnik)

Interethnic violence is not recognised as a problem. This may be because of the denial of how heterogeneous the population is:

"/…/ for some parts of Slovenia a fairly strong tendency and assertion are pointed out: here, there's no violence, especially interethnic violence, there's no such thing, even if, on the other hand, there are evidences of its existence. And also the denial of schools that this problem even exists…" (Peace Institute, Živa Humer)

"Yeah, the heterogeneity of the population isn't seriously recognized. There's still an ideology present, that we're all equal, we're homogenous and there are no differences between us, that there are no class differences, no ethnic differences, and if there are any, they don't play a significant role, because they're not big enough… this isn't well observed and recognised. Another problem is also that the violence is being psychologised – as it is a thing of behaviour, problems that originate in a pathologic family, from such background, and not in structural background that includes different ethnicities, classes, gender." (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak)

In terms of including migrants in to the school system, the main aim of the school is to ease the language problems of newcomers. In the school system, violence is regarded as a discipline problem, and not a problem of conflict arising from class, ethnicity, gender or identity:

"Here, I think, that schools rather individually, alone, as they see best, and especially individual teachers or professional staff of schools, deal with individual cases of migrant children who are coming as the 1st generation… each in their own way they deal with children of the 1st generation migrants – especially from Albania Bulgaria, Kosovo, Romania – and in such cases the emphasis is not on violence when including these children to schools, but on the language. That is to say, the language is the problem, all the rest isn't. That was the impression I got. Here the violence is taken as a problem of discipline and not ethnic, class, gender conflicts, identity conflicts… /…/" (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak)

Perceptions and Experiences of Interethnic Peer Violence

Pupils within our study didn't usually recognise interethnic peer violence as an issue in their school, at least not at the beginning of the focus group discussion. They suggested that relationships among students of different nationalities were "good", "as usual", "as among two Slovenians", etc. Only one 12-year-old Muslim boy described how some students have a different attitude toward others on the basis of ethnicity:

"You have some… stupid ones that would tease…" (m, 12)

Research involving Slovenian secondary school students (Dijaška organizacija Slovenije) shows that 29% of secondary school pupils believe that "religious differences, social position and cultural background are not reasons for violence" (DOS, 2009, 28).

In cases where violence is common in class – in one of the primary schools – pupils stressed ethnicity was not the reason for the violence:

"They beat each other repeatedly, but it seems to me that not exactly because of ethnicity." (f, 10)

"No, not because of that [ethnicity]." (m, 10)

"Yes, there are some fights, but not because of that [ethnicity]." (m, 17)

Students explained the escalation of general violent acts:

"First we insult each other, than we beat each other." (m, 12)

Data on experiences of different types of interethnic violence among pupils are in accordance with findings of several national and foreign research papers that recognise verbal and psychological violence as most widespread in the school environment (National Educational Institute, 2004; DOS, 2009; Popp, 2003; Gittins, 2006). A comparison of Figure 5 and Figure 6 shows that all types of interethnic violence are less prevalent among secondary school students. Differences are also evident in experiences of pupils of mixed/other ethnicity in comparison to experiences of Slovenian pupils. While 30.9% of pupils of mixed/other origin reported being called names or insulted in the primary school sample, only half as many (15.1%) Slovenian pupils reported similar problems. Almost one quarter of the primary school pupils of mixed/other ethnic background (24.1%) reported also that other pupils said untruthful things about them behind their backs. The same is true for 14.2% Slovenian pupils. Additionally, 24.0% of pupils of mixed/other ethnic background said they were ignored or avoided because of their ethnic background. Slovenian students reported 13.7% of such cases.

The differences regarding ethnic affiliation and experiences of interethnic violence are similar in secondary schools. Far more pupils of mixed/other ethnic background experienced the following than Slovenian pupils: being called names or insulted (16.7% mixed/other ethnic background vs. 8.9% Slovenian), having untruthful things said behind their backs (14.3% vs. 9.2%), being ignored and avoided (10.7% vs. 5.3%).

As this data shows, experience of interethnic violence is higher in younger pupils. It seems that age does play a role in interethnic relations:

"If I can tell about one example how it was with me, because my ancestors were from Germany and I am from Ljubljana. In primary school I was not accepted at all. That I come from Ljubljana and they said to me: 'You are 'Ljubljančan', you are something more.', and they also said to me, because I am German 'You are Hitler' and stuff. But I do not know, this was in primary school, maybe we outgrew it." (m, 18)

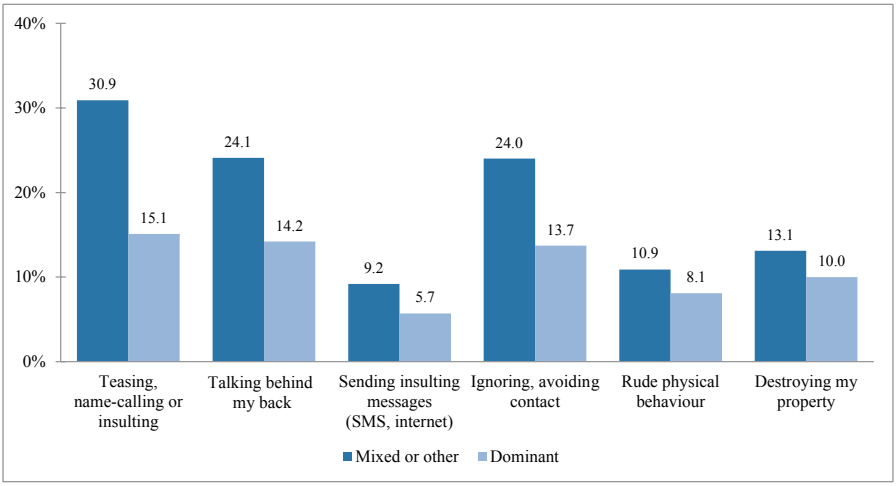


Figure 5: Have you ever experienced interethnic violence? by ethnic background (primary school)

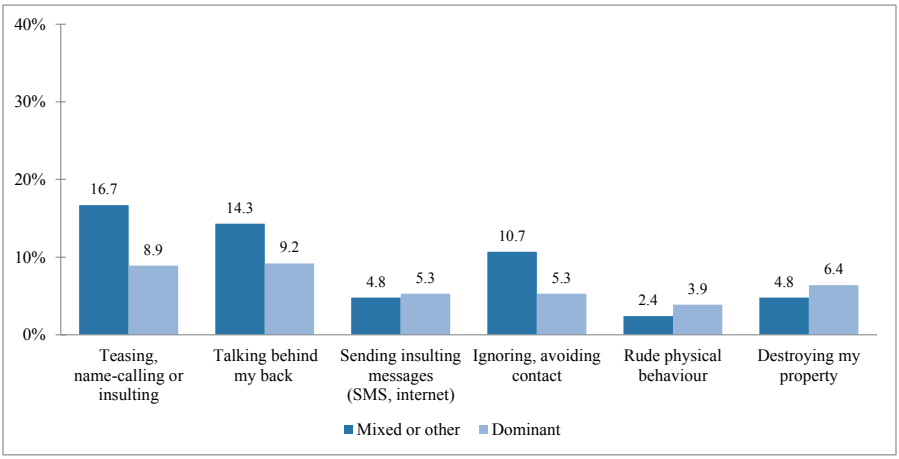


Figure 6: Have you ever experienced interethnic violence? by ethnic background (secondary school)

Quantitative data also shows that girls are less often victims of interethnic violence. In primary schools, the biggest differences can be observed with the answers to "hit me, spit at me or expressed other forms of physical behaviour": 14.1% of boys and 4.4% of girls said that they had experienced this kind of behaviour, and "call me names or insult me": 26.6% of male pupils and 17.6% of female pupils reported experiencing this. In secondary schools, a higher percentage of male pupils experienced name-calling (13.9% male vs. 7.6% female), being talked

about behind their back (12.7% male vs. 8.6% female), receiving insulting texts or e-mails (6.9% male vs. 3.5% female), being hit, spat on or other forms of rude physical behaviour (5.2% male vs. 2.0% female) and having their property hidden or destroyed (8.1% male and 4.1% female) than female pupils.

Though not perceived as frequent, research data revealed that violence on the basis of ethnicity does happen. In interviews and focus groups, several cases were illustrated:

a) Relationship teacher (of other ethnic group) – students (of other ethnic groups)
A case of physical violence of a male teacher, who explained to a counsellor that he had non-Slovenian roots himself and so was sometimes demanding, rough and intolerant towards students of similar ethnic backgrounds:

"'I managed to make something out of myself, what about you? Are you just going to stroll around being lazy?'" (school counsellor, primary school)

b) Relationship teacher (dominant, Slovenian) – student (of other ethnic group)
A secondary school student described an example of unfair grading by one of the teachers. If the surname of the student doesn't seem Slovenian, grades can be lower:

"Yes we have a professor that does not accept them [non-Slovenian students] and this is evident… /…/ when it comes to giving grades, it is not objective, in case when essays are graded etc." (m, 16)

c) Relationship teacher (dominant, Slovenian) – parent (of other ethnic group)
In terms of tensions between teacher and parent, a teacher declared to a counsellor:

"'I'll talk with the lady, when she speaks Slovenian!'" (school counsellor, primary school)

In this case, the counsellor decided to provide an advocacy role for the mother without Slovenian language skills.

d) Relationship dominant, Slovenian male pupils – male pupils of other ethnic groups

A recent case was illustrated of teasing between two groups of boys in a class – three boys with migrant backgrounds and learning problems, and three successful Slovenian boys with strong support from their parents. They annoy each other constantly, not physically but verbally and also through new media channels. They also compete over who will get more girls, etc.:

"/…/ then they compete, if the southerners will get more girls, cuz 'them nerds can study all they want, but we'll take their girlfriends in the meantime'. In here, there's more fun, it ain't terrible, but definitely interesting. This is how they're sending a message that the Slovenian boys are klutzy, that they're a bit more like 'yodel yodel' and make Austrian jokes. 'We're, like, hotshots, we rule in football...' In this sense… not like, I even find it sweet sometimes; it's not rough or anything." (school counsellor, primary school)

e) Relationship other – dominant
As evident in Figure 5 and Figure 6, pupils of Slovene ethnicity experience interethnic violence less often, but in the case of secondary school pupils, the percentage of those experiencing rude physical behaviour, having their possessions destroyed and cyber bullying is higher. Also between students of different ethnicities, it seems that name-calling can sometimes be regarded as harmless:

"At his school, for example, I hear 'kekec'[11] *more often than 'čefur'. And it's very interesting that I also hear 'kekec' from adults who use it thinking that its' nothing special and that they are even sweet when they call someone 'kekec' or when they call me 'pehta'.*[12] *Even I call myself 'pehta' or a witch sometimes and it is OK. But if somebody else says that, then there's the question of how he/she says it." (school counsellor, primary school)*

f) Relationships between different "other" ethnic groups
Secondary school students from Jesenice mentioned fights between two gangs named Harlem and Mahala, which are active in the broader Jesenice area:

11 Derogatory term for a Slovenian. The word was adopted from the film Kekec, often with the implication of stupidity, naivity, clumsiness.

12 Derogatory term for an old Slovenian maid, adopted from the film Kekec.

"Usually it comes to the fight among these gangs, otherwise also among Slovenians and immigrants." (m, 18)

"Are they of different nationality or, lets say one gang is…"

"One are Serbs, others are Bosnians, one are mixed …" (m, 18)

"In my opinion in Harlem there are Bosnians and in Mahala are Serbs." (f , 17)

Conversation with younger pupils visiting an ethnically mixed school indicated a tendency to "search for" students inside heterogeneous groups of "others" who have specific characteristics that serve as a reason for distinction among that group of "others". Othering may originate in language differences (Albanian pupils) or religions (Bosnian Muslims).

The importance of language knowledge for pupils with migrant backgrounds was confirmed by the survey data. 55.2% of primary school pupils (and 49.9% of secondary school pupils) included in the survey reported that they have at least once seen someone being teased or bullied because of their limited knowledge of the Slovenian language or because they could not speak Slovenian (10.8% often and 31.4% sometimes in primary school, and 7.2% often and 32.4% sometimes in secondary school). Secondary school respondents of mixed/other ethnic groups seemed to be more sensitive towards these questions as they noticed more cases of this behaviour (64.3% answered "yes, once", "yes, sometimes" or "yes, often"), compared to the Slovenian respondents (45.2%).

When it comes to their own bullying on the basis of ethnic background, the figures show that 6.7% of pupils from primary schools sometimes bullied someone. However, gender differences[13] can be observed – 10.8% of boys and only 2.2% of girls said they sometimes bullied someone because of their ethnic background (culture, language or religion). Similarly, gender differences are obvious in the sample of secondary school pupils: around 6.1% of secondary school pupils responded that they have bullied someone, because of their ethnic background, the vast majority of which were male pupils (11.8%). Only 1.0% of female pupils answered that they had ever bullied someone because of their ethnic background.

13 Gender differences in the problem of school violence were also confirmed by other researchers who emphasize physical violence is more frequent among male pupils (Popp, 2003).

Places of Occurrence of Interethnic Violence

Children in primary schools mentioned that acts of (interethnic) violence most often happened in the following places: school playground (65.2% female pupils and 53.3% male pupils); school corridors (66.5% female pupils and 58.9% male); or in a classroom (50.3% male pupils and 48.1% female). While toilets and the school playground were the places that pupils felt least safe (67.1% in toilets and 68.2% in the school playground), classrooms and the school canteen were the places that the highest percentage (89.7%) of primary school pupils felt safe.

The majority of pupils from secondary schools responded that interethnic violence was most common in school corridors (78.4% of female pupils, and 71.3% of male pupils) followed by the school playground (57.4% female and 56.2% male), on the way to/from school, at the bus stop and then in the classroom. Generally, secondary school pupils perceive school environments as safe (lowest, though still a high degree of safety, was felt in the toilets, where 80.3% of secondary school pupils felt safe or totally safe; while their feeling of safety was highest in the classroom, where 92.8% felt safe of totally safe).

In conversation with students about interethnic violence, they initially denied its existence. Later however, when they described cases, they mentioned several locations where such violence occurs, predominantly areas where there are no adults/teachers to control it:

"Outside." (f 1, 10)

"On the hallways, in the lobby." (f 2, 10)

"In the wardrobe also." (m, 11)

"And outside in the playground and so." (m, 10)

"Yes, where there are no teachers. Where it is our area and there are fewer chances other would tell a teacher." (f 3, 10)

A study by Unicef on peer violence confirms that it is prevalent in the areas with no supervision by adults:

"This study was also our starting point, it also shows how mainly this peer violence is going on when the adult supervision, or there ain't one, or it's

inadequate. Is that the way school-home. Here's where the starting point for the safe points comes out. Or this could also be the school cloakroom, hallways…" (Unicef, Alja Otavnik)

Ethnic affiliation can serve as justification for some to create distance or difference between the perpetrator and the victim. Ethnicity is not recognised as a key reason for initiating peer violence, but it comes into play later in disputes or physical fights when insulting and name-calling based on ethnicity present a means by which to hurt others. When pointing out ethnicity of the other in such conflicts, the connotation of what is said is very relevant. The same word can be understood as a comment of fact or as an insult. Circumstances, situation, event and intention of the person who articulates a remark on ethnicity are all factors that influence personal perception of the uttered word.

Types of Interethnic Peer Violence

The qualitative component of our research confirmed the data that we had obtained with the questionnaire: psychological violence was the most frequent in both samples (primary and secondary school). As already mentioned in previous subchapters, at the beginning of the conversation with pupils in the focus group, they often did not recognise cases of interethnic violence in their school. The reasons for this may correlate with the policy of zero tolerance towards violence in the school environment. In practice however, this zero tolerance policy is usually applied to physical violence when the response of staff is generally rapid. As the headmaster of one of the participating schools explained, it sometimes comes down to insulting, name-calling or teasing, but physical violence is "very, very rare". Physical violence is rare and is dealt with, while in cases of psychological violence, e.g. name-calling, teasing and insulting, the response usually depends on the social sensitivity of school personnel. Consequently some acts of interethnic violence are not recognised as violence. On the basis of conversations with students, the following types of interethnic peer violence can be identified:

Physical violence

Physical violence among ethnic groups was mentioned mainly by older students in the qualitative part of the research. School cases are usually not an issue, while cases that happen outside school were mentioned:

"In fact they attacked my friend who said to one of his schoolmates that she is Bosnian, because she is from Bosnia. And she accepted this in negative way,

as an insult, but for me it is equal as someone would say that I am Slovenian, and this would be insult. And then they attacked him. They gathered around and attacked. Just because of that. /…/" (m, 18)

Swear words, insults

In the category of verbal violence, swear words are regarded as a violent act, mainly by students from ex-Yugoslav countries who take the meaning of these words seriously:

"The worst thing is when one says to another 'Jebem ti mater'.[14] *This swearword terribly affects them and they could easily fight over it. And then at the confrontation they say: 'because he said bad words'. And then I insist, that even if those were bad words, he should tell me ... I see where… 'You won't …' boys especially protect their mothers and this swearword won't, doesn't mean that much to a Slovenian child as to others. Ours say: 'pizda ti materina'*,[15] *'marš v pizdo materino'*,[16] *for our kids it's like, like for everyday. It's also for those boys, that's why they swear, but the meaning behind is far more scary." (school counsellor, primary school)*

As discussion continued within the focus groups, a point at which pupils shared their personal experiences of interethnic peer violence was commonly reached:

"Our classmate [a Muslim boy] insults those who are of different nationality… and he insults Serbs, too." (m, 12)

"And Croats." (m, 11)

Waiting for a reaction to the insults…

"They insult and wait for you to react, than the five of them will get on to you." (m, 17)

Name-calling

With regard to name-calling, the connotations of the word used and the intention of that person to hurt, matter:

14 A Slovenian swear word meaning: "I fuck your mother".
15 A Slovenian swear word meaning: "Your mother's cunt".
16 A Slovenian swear word meaning: "Go to your mother's cunt".

"These are mostly Bosnian words, also insult expressions, this is all Bosnian and there often breaks open a fight and these words are, well… they're real, it's true if you say 'Shqiptar' to one guy, it's true that he is a 'Shqiptar' [lowers voice], but that's a bad expression." (f, 11)

"Meh, he said to me… because he's Croatian and then he started to mess with me, because I'm Bosnian. Because I'm Serbian. Serbo-Bosnian. /…/ He said to me: 'Haha, you're a Bos… Srbo-Bosanc',[17] *and stuff, 'I hate you', and then he beat me up a bit and such." (f, 11)*

The use of ethnic slurs ("čefur", "bosanc", "čapac", "šved") is quite widespread. Consequently, their negative connotation may be denied:

"This is no longer an insult. If you are čefur, you are čefur…" (m, 17)

Ostracism and social exclusion

Shunning others is not recognised as violence, but it is identified as a common way of mistreating newcomers. Those being ostracised are mainly those who have language problems and do not speak Slovenian. A Macedonian girl, initially denied any negative experiences on the basis of her ethnicity, however her schoolmate mentioned that classmates did not socialize with her when she first came into class. Later she confirmed this:

"Yeah, sometimes they are avoiding me, but it doesn't bother me." (f, 10)

When talking about students being shunned by their classmates, the headmaster of one of the primary schools stressed her opinion that this issue does not depend on the ethnicity of the pupil, but rather on his/her social position. Being shunned by classmates often correlates with ethnicity, but should that pupil have "good social position", ethnicity will no longer be a factor:

"/…/ Or vice versa. If you do not have…, if you wear old clothes and so on, again ethnicity does not matter, you get… kind of excluded." (headmaster, primary school)

"So, that one who is a foreigner, they, so to say, avoid him/her. They're more lonely." (m, 10)

17 Pejorative for ethnic Serbs from Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Teasing

"They also messed with me sometimes, but they don't anymore. Cuz I'm Austrian, and a bit more chubby, and stuff." (m, 11)

The types of violence listed here are supported by findings of an international European study, which found that verbal abuse was the most common type of pupil violence in European schools (O'Moore and Minton in Gittins, 2006, 79).

Gender and Age Differences

Age and interethnic violence

Younger pupils experience interethnic violence more often (see data in Figure 5 and Figure 6), younger pupils feel less safe in school and responding to our normative statements, younger pupils supported equality and ethnicity rights more strongly.

The prevalence of violence of different types varies with the age of students:

"Lower age groups – much more physical violence: kicking, pulling, crowding. Higher age groups – far more psychological type." (Unicef, Alja Otavnik)

In all our primary school focus groups, students mentioned the occurrence of violent behaviour amongst students in the older classes. In one case, a student mentioned numerous cases of violent acts by older boys and girls in the school. Students from 10 to 11 years old mentioned "older boys" as most frequently being violent:

"That there are some three, like bigger, and they start teasing some smaller ones and kicking them." (m, 10)

Gender and interethnic violence

Our quantitative data shows that female pupils would sit next to, or be friends with, someone of other religions, language or skin colour more often than boys would. The only exception is seen in secondary schools where boys are more in favour of being friends with someone who speaks other languages.

Gender differences were noticed also in feelings of loneliness at school: 58.7% of primary school boys and 40.1% of girls never felt lonely in school, while in secondary school, 69.8% of boys and 62.3% of girls never felt lonely.

Girls bully someone because of their nationality or ethnic background less often. Only 2.2% of primary school girls and 1.0% of secondary school girls reported doing so (compared to 10.8% of primary school boys and 11.8% of secondary school boys).

In several interviews it was stressed violence among girls is mainly psychological. Violence among girls is evidently rising.

"It's in fact increasing, this girl violence. /…/" (Unicef, Alja Otavnik)

"Recently, we are witnessing a trend of increased violence among girls, mostly psychological violence in the form of rumour spreading or social isolation of some girls. I believe the social networks and the Facebook can be very problematic in this sense." (school counsellor, secondary school)

In addition to psychological violence, occasional cases of physical violence among girls were reported in one of the secondary schools in Jesenice:

"It's interesting, that recently we had some fights among girls. A fight breaks out between two girls; mostly it happens because of a boyfriend. /.../ I just wanted to add that girls are skilful not only verbally, but sometimes even in using their hands." (headmaster, secondary school)

Violence among girls should be understood as gender specific violence (one of the experts mentioned a case of competing in breath-holding until some of the girls fainted).

Younger students noticed differences in violence by girls and boys.[18] In physical fights, boys are usually involved:

"That's how it is with boys, they fight, and girls, girls are just insulting." (f, 10)

18 Gender differences are evident, especially when statistics are restricted to physical forms of violence, as boys commit much higher levels than girls (Smith, 2003).

Ethnicity as a Structural Factor of Violence and the Importance of a Combination of Factors

Peer violence occurs within many different domains of our social environment, ethnicity is just one of the factors that influence the development of violence:

"It's hard to say that there's more of such violence than among children in general. If the comparison would be made, it'd be hard to say that children from ethnic minorities are more often victims of violence – we didn't find that, violence occurs in many different dimensions. Ethnicity isn't the only one, it isn't crucial… /…/ Yeah, it's about the circumstances, the combination of factors…" (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak)

Ethnicity itself is usually not the reason for the outburst of peer violence, but it becomes an identifying characteristic, which comes out in the conflict.

"It's really when they can't cope with the problems and conflicts, that they start using the insults, that are not necessarily [laugh] directed, like even if they say 'Bosan'c'[19] they don't necessarily mean a member of a nation, it's like an insult, but that's just defence when they can't solve something." (school counsellor, primary school)

Other reasons for peer violence

a) Socio-economic situation of students

"It is visible, it's social violence and it's extremely present. I don't know, but our society in general is getting more and more stratified, there are really starting to come up layers, because I also think that students from their parents take also some rhetoric and also some point of view, you know, you can also see how elite neighbourhoods are being built… And that's present throughout the society and also apparent in schools. /…/" (Unicef, Alja Otavnik)

"Social stratification among students is very visible — those, who are rich and those, who are poor. Then, the violence and teasing may occur because of clothing, behaviour..." (school counsellor, secondary school)

19 Pejorative term for an inhabitant of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

b) School success
Whilst talking about ethnicity as a factor inciting negative attitudes towards some pupils, one respondent, half Slovene and half Croat, explained that ethnicity plays a role together with other circumstances and that being successful can be a problem, for example:

"But you are more often victim if you don't learn or if you learn really good, and others envy you a bit." (m, 10)

Equally, students may choose to make fun of someone simply because they have learning difficulties.

"In our class, this is our B. [m], he is... he needs this help with learning, he's very nice and all, but they often start picking on him, even when they play 'for fun' with him, they start picking on him. These boys also pick a little on each other, so that they'd come out cool, but when they do it with Bojan or other week guys, it's stronger, harder." (f, 11)

c) Addiction problems

"/…/ in primary school, there's definitely alcohol, tobacco, now not in huge amounts, but these things are all connected, also on the field, and pot. And also if there are some other substances and it's a problem who goes in now, it isn't the nationality that is problematic, but the status and personal structure. I personally believe that addiction problematic influences peer violence more than religious and national tensions. And here, very much, really. Be it computer addiction, pot, I really feel that, you know." (school counsellor, primary school)

d) Personality characteristics
A child's personal characteristics (temperament, fragility, etc.) also influence their propensity to be victimised.

e) Physical appearance
Perceptions of someone being overweight.

f) Family upbringing and environmental impacts

Victims and perpetrators of interethnic peer violence

The development of interethnic violence depends on a complexity of factors. When talking about peer violence in general, victims:

- come from socially deprived families,
- have lower school achievement,
- come from a secondary vocational programmes (when compared to other secondary school programmes), and
- have a smaller number of friends

(National Institute of Public Health, Nina Scagnetti).

In general, bullies are:

- students with learning problems,
- those that have experienced violence at home and
- students who do not feel good in school

(National Institute of Public Health, Nina Scagnetti).

School counsellors also mentioned the importance of:

- family support. If there is no cooperation from the family, or the family has hostility towards school, problems of violence are hard to resolve. Some children are left alone in the afternoon and parents don't have control over them.
- low self-esteem. Bullies sometimes try to compensate for these feelings by picking on other children.

These stated factors are mainly congruent with factors mentioned by U. Popp who differentiates between risk factors outside school (family, peers and media) and risk factors inside school (school success, teacher-student relationship and school climate) (Popp, 2003, 33–36).

The roles of perpetrators, victims and witnesses aren't strictly delineated – instead roles usually overlap; very often people appear in all three roles (Peace Institute, Živa Humer), which is also true for ethnic groups (Peace Institute, Majda Hrženjak).

Coping and Possible Solutions

Coping Strategies When Being a Victim of Interethnic Violence

As mentioned before, most cases of interethnic peer violence take the form of psychological abuse (name-calling and the use of ethnic slurs for example), while cases of physical violence are extremely rare, at least among secondary school students. When the pupils do find themselves in such situations however, they use various strategies for coping with the bully or bullies: in some cases they avoid the conflict by ignoring the insulting remarks, some pupils engage in the quarrel by insulting back, or, rarely, they react by engaging in a physical fight.

In primary schools, most pupils responded that they would ask for help (28.8%), however a significant minority would: reciprocate (17.6%), fight back (15.0%), just put up with it (13.1%) or run away (11.1%). Pupils of mixed or other ethnicities seem to choose to avoid the conflict (run away, don't react) slightly more often than Slovenian pupils.

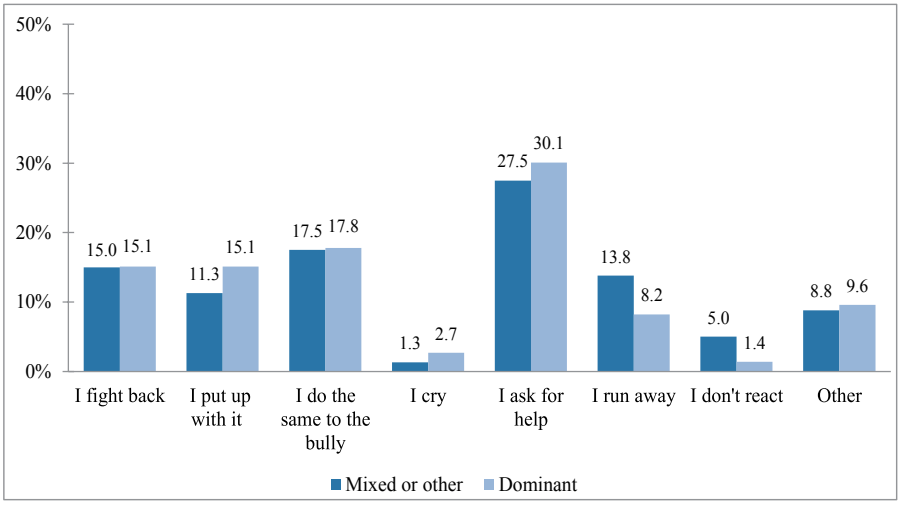


Figure 7: How do you react? by ethnic background (primary schools)

Secondary school students seem to feel that they should deal with the issue by themselves, since they only rarely ask for help (1.9%). Rather, they mostly fight back (35.2%) or reciprocate (16.7%), while others put up with it (18.5%) or don't react (13.0%). Students of mixed and other ethnicities fight back more often than Slovenian students (47.4% in comparison to 28.6%); on the other hand, they also put up with bullying more often than Slovenian students (31.6% compared with 11.4%).

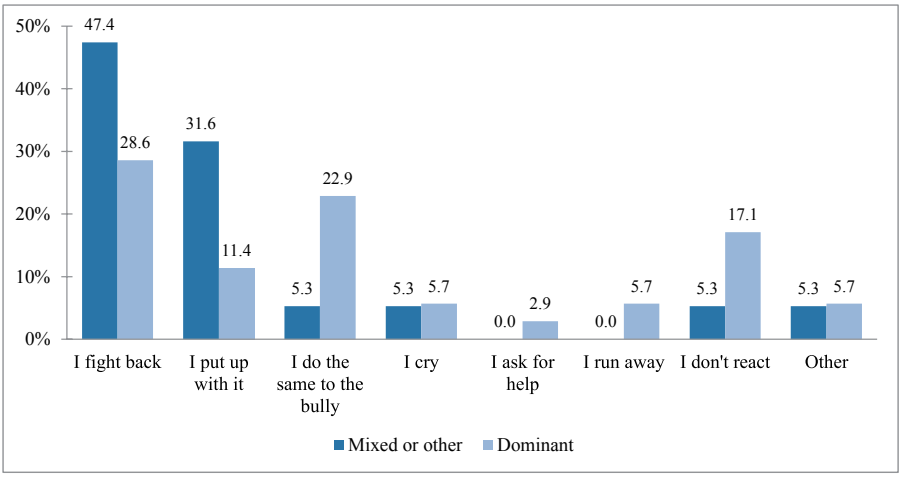


Figure 8: How do you react? by ethnic background (secondary schools)

In the focus group discussion, a Croatian pupil explained:

"I usually say something back; I won't be quiet. I will not allow anyone to insult me. /…/ If someone hits me I start to fight. I turn to my friends for help, if they don't help me and if he hits me again, then I fight. You can't help it, what else can you do? Surely you cannot just let him hit you…" (m, 10)

A Bosnian youngster in secondary school expressed his opinion on the issue by explaining that many times the bullies are just seeking conflict and you shouldn't react to their provocations or, worse, sink to their level:

"I think you should restrain yourself; you ignore it and go away. Because you know their intention is to provoke." (m, 16)

Even though the majority of students were not victims of interethnic violence personally, most of them witnessed at least one case of discriminative treatment or bullying of their schoolmates, mostly in the form of name-calling, the use of ethnic slurs or students of other ethnicities being deliberately shunned.

Witnessing Interethnic Violence – From Intervention to Indifference

When asked how they felt when witnessing such behaviour, most students in primary schools (Figure 9) answered that they felt uneasy (64.0%) or angry and upset (15.8%), some of them were unsure of their feelings (9.9%), while only a few chose other options ("don't care", "feel pleased", "other"). There were almost no differences in the opinions of students belonging to the dominant ethnicity and those belonging to mixed or other ethnicities.

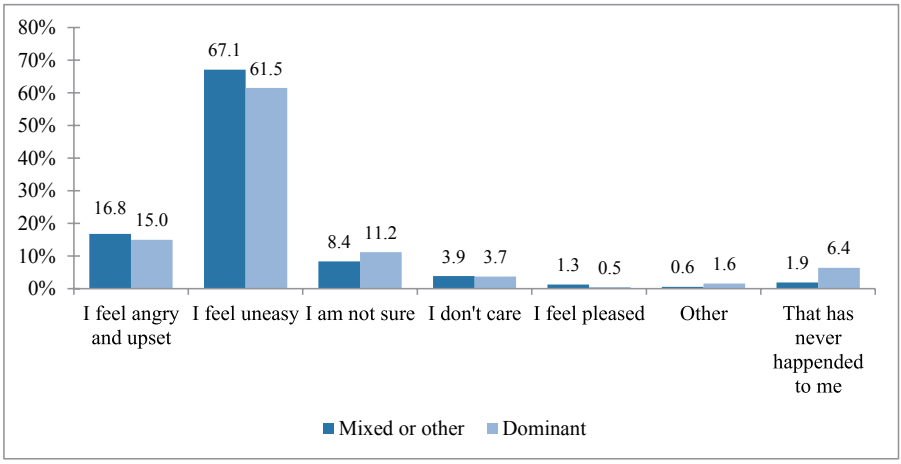


Figure 9: How do you feel? by ethnic background (primary school)

A slightly different situation is revealed in the case of secondary school students (Figure 10). While most of them felt uneasy (52.1%) or angry and upset (18.1%), compared with the primary school pupils, a rise in the percentage of those who felt indifference (11.8%) can be observed. Furthermore, there is a significant rise in the percentage of students of mixed and other ethnicities who feel angry and upset when witnessing interethnic violence (30.6% in comparison to 13.6% of students of the dominant ethnicity). Therefore, it seems that secondary school students of mixed/other ethnicities are more aware of discrimination or injustice and take such issues more personally than primary school students.

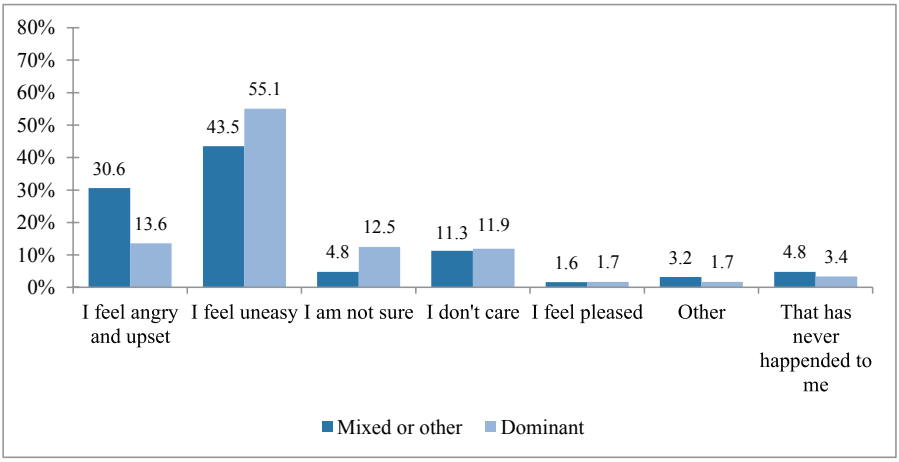


Figure 10: How do you feel? by ethnic background (secondary school)

In the qualitative part of the study, children reported having mixed reactions to observing violent behaviour: these situations can be seen as amusing or funny for some, while others feel a certain sense of discomfort, disapproval or even guilt.

"Some pupils are laughing; others might say that this is not right or fair." (m, 10)

"I disapprove. I feel bad about it." (f, 10)

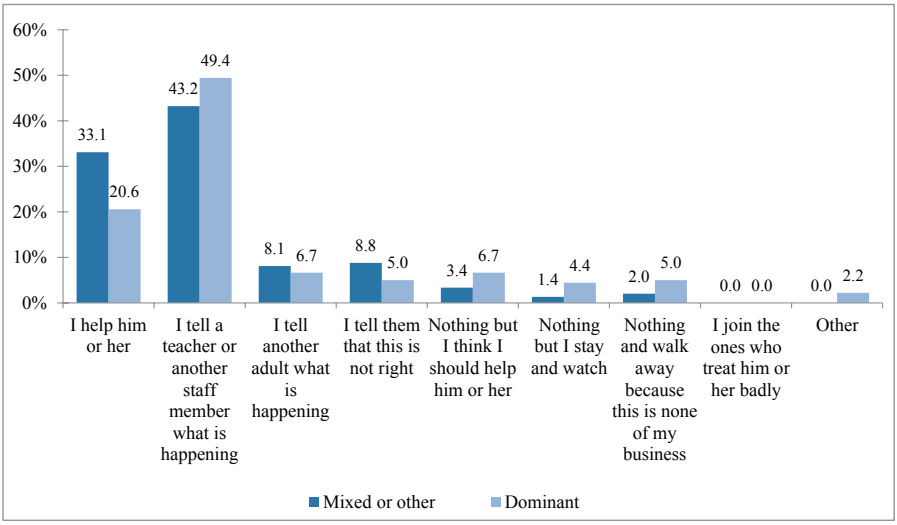


Figure 11: How do you react? by ethnic background (primary school)

When asking about personal involvement when witnessing interethnic violence (Figure 11), the majority of primary school pupils responded that they inform a teacher or other member of school staff (46.6%), while 26.2% get involved personally by helping the victim of violence. Again, it seems that pupils of mixed/other ethnicities feel personally more affected since 33.1% of them declare that they actively step in and help the victim, while 20.6% of pupils of the dominant ethnicity do so.

The situation in secondary schools is markedly different (Figure 12). The majority of students do nothing even though they think they should interfere (31.3%), followed by those who state that they offer help to the victim (18.5%), those who state that they warn the bully about his/her improper behaviour (17.2%) and those who do nothing and walk away since they feel it is none of their business (12.9%). The share of those who inform teachers or other members of the school staff is significantly lower and amounts to just 5.2%. Again, it can be seen that students of mixed and other ethnicities actively interfere (either by helping the victim or by warning the bully) more often than students of the dominant ethnicity.

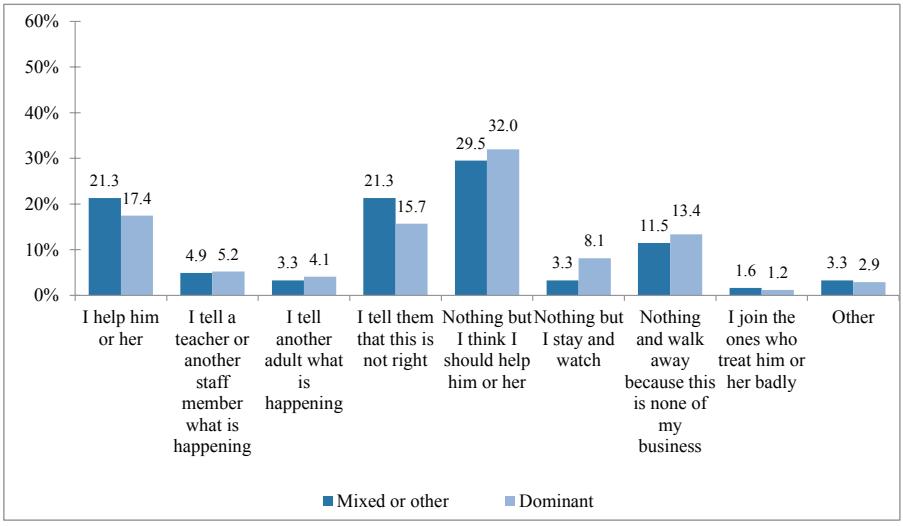


Figure 12: How do you react? by ethnic background (secondary school)

It seems that pupils feel that they can seek advice or help from school personnel, since they believe that safety in the school environment is primarily the responsibility of the school authorities. On the other hand, reporting violence may also have a negative side: sometimes pupils feel that they would be seen as a tell-tale or even worse, that they would be exposed to further harassment and retributive measures by the bully or bullies.

"It doesn't help much. If they are making fun of someone and you intervene, they start to tease you, as well." (m, 10)

"You can tell the teacher, but then they [the bullies] will go after you. Or they can block your way and you have nowhere to go." (m,10)

"Sometimes it happens that they lock you in the toilet, or they block your way, you can't pass them, you can't call the teacher, or the school counsellor, or the headmaster, you can't call anyone. They lock you and you can't go anywhere. They are all around; they block your way, where can you go?" (f, 10)

"Once it happened to me that an older girl caught me when I was in the toilet and she called her friends, they were boys, she resembles a boy herself. So she called her friends and they were all around me and she said that if I tell on her once again, they will find me and…" (f, 10)

Nevertheless, pupils in elementary schools usually do report harassment either to teachers and other school personnel (counsellors, headmasters) or to their parents or elder siblings, depending on where the violence occurs. If the violence occurs in the school environment they mostly refer to school personnel; if the violence occurs on the way to/from school they usually tell their parents.

"The best way is to defend yourself or to tell the teacher if it happens in the school, if it happens outside school you tell your parents. And if the bully is from another school, you should go and tell people from that school." (m, 10)

"You can tell your parents. They are the ones you can trust the most." (m, 10)

"It is because mothers and fathers take care of their children and they don't let anything bad happen to them. And they can even threat those who hurt you." (f, 10)

"I told my parents about it. And they said: 'Well, that's not nice of him, but never mind, just ignore him'." (m, 11)

Secondary school students mostly confide in their friends and sometimes to their parents, especially their mothers, only rarely to their teachers. Interestingly, in our survey none of the students of mixed and other ethnicities who personally

experienced interethnic violence reported the incident to their teachers. It should also be mentioned that 21.1% of all students who experienced interethnic violence didn't confide in anyone – among students of mixed and other ethnicities this increases to 27.8%. The reason for silence is mostly the belief that they should stand up for themselves, either because they didn't want to be exposed to mockery for being a tell-tale or because they were afraid the bullying would get even worse.

"Yes [you can tell the teachers about the violence], but then you can only hope not to get beaten." (f, 16)

The Role of School Staff – Do They Actively Step in?

Most members of school personnel (regardless of their role – headmasters, school counsellors and teachers) point out that interethnic peer violence is not a problem in their schools. They mention only sporadic incidents that take the form of name-calling and sometimes ostracising of pupils of another ethnic origin, which usually takes place when a new pupil with a lack of Slovenian language joins the school. Both, school personnel and pupils think that such problems are relatively quickly overcome since children can be timid and introverted at the beginning, but they usually integrate easily and form new friendships. An active role by teachers is of utmost importance in this:

"For example, when a new pupil comes in the classroom I always try to work on their social skills, to engage them in social games, role playing, for example 'get to know me', or 'ask me a question'. This really, really helps since the process of getting to know someone evolves quickly and the level of trust as well. I think that it really helps them to get rid of their uncertainties and prejudices…" (5th grade teacher, primary school)

"I try to find a student in the school who came from the same country, who speaks his or her language and he becomes kind of a mentor for this student. I have positive experiences with this. It can really help." (school counsellor, secondary school)

"We have a classmate from Albania. In the beginning, they [other pupils] looked down on her. But now we're good friends." (f, 10)

The school staff in our study had no specific strategies or approaches to dealing with interethnic peer violence. School authorities deal with the issue of interethnic

peer violence in the broader context of violence prevention. All schools – at least in principle – apply a zero tolerance policy towards violence. When physical violence occurs, school personnel generally intervene, but it should be mentioned that in less obvious cases, such as psychological violence, it usually depends on the social sensitivity and awareness of the member of staff concerned.

Even though teachers are usually the ones who intervene first when conflict among pupils occurs (e.g. they separate pupils involved in a fight or warn them about their improper behaviour), in cases of severe and/or continuous breaches of school rules and misconduct it is mostly school counsellors or (if necessary) headmasters who are involved in the problem solving. It seems that teachers sometimes don't react or intervene themselves, but instead inform the school counsellor whom they see as more competent to resolve conflict situations.

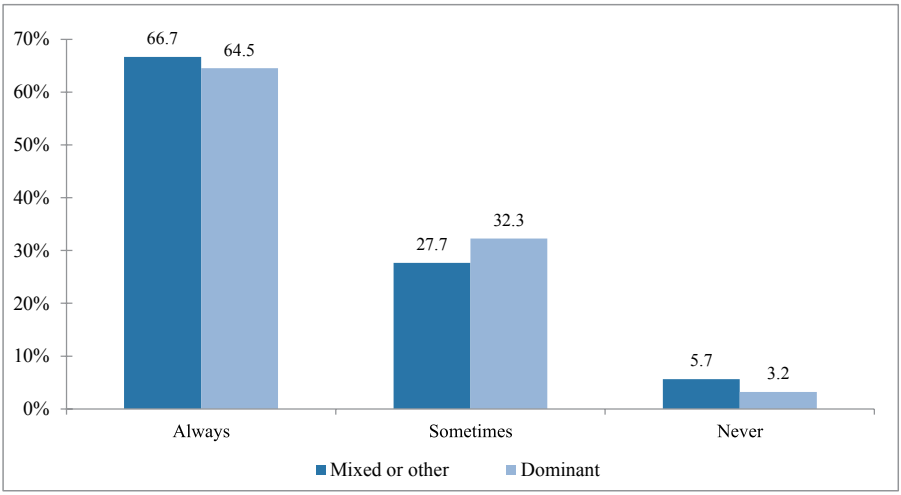


Figure 13: Do teachers step in? by ethnic background (primary school)

Pupils in primary schools believe that teachers almost always intervene when someone is treated badly because of his/her ethnicity, culture or religion. 65.5% of pupils thought that teachers would always step in, 30.1% suggested that they sometimes intervene, while 4.3% said teachers never step in. Among possible reasons for non-intervention, they listed that teachers may not know what is happening (52.8%), that pupils do not listen to them (23.1%) or that it's not teachers' job to intervene (14.0%). The share of those who blame teachers' indifference is higher among pupils of mixed and other ethnicities.

"Mostly teachers say we should inform the school counsellor." (f, 10)

"Usually they [teachers] intervene, but sometimes they say we should settle things among ourselves." (m, 10)

"It depends on the teacher. The one we had last year… she didn't intervene! We had to pull them apart, she didn't do a thing! As if nothing happened. She pretended she was writing something…" (m, 12)

Most of the secondary school students said that teachers sometimes intervene (66.0%), while 18.3% stated that they always step in and 15.7% that teachers never intervene. The share of those who say that teachers never intervene is higher among students of mixed and other ethnicities (23.7% in comparison to 13.1%). Suggested reasons for non-intervention are similar to those in primary schools: ignorance, indifference and unwillingness to step in rank the highest. Similarly, students of mixed and other ethnicities more often suggested that teachers don't care about the violence or that they think it is not their job to intervene.

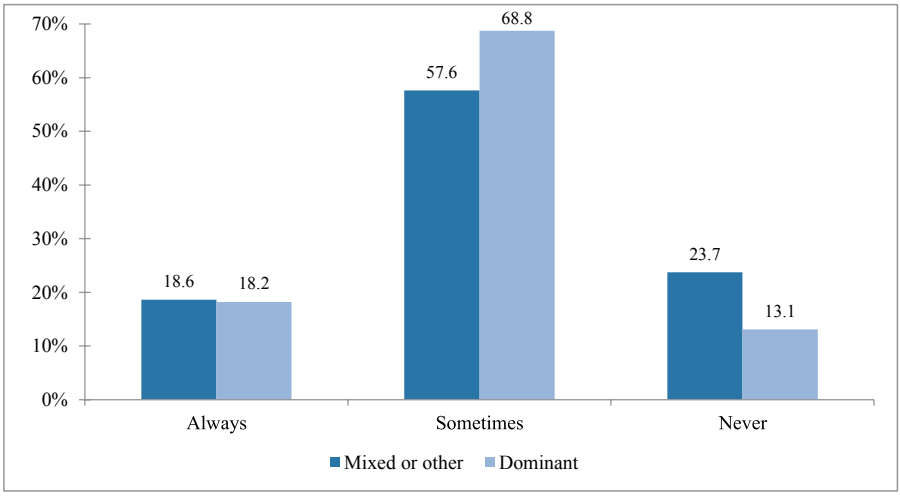


Figure 14: Do teachers step in? by ethnic background (secondary school)

When we interviewed the teachers and school counsellors they unanimously declared that they always intervene in cases of violent behaviour, as long as they witness the conflict or are reliably informed about it.

"Of course, I always intervene. We try to resolve these issues by shedding light on a person's feelings, what does it mean, how does someone feel? So that a child can understand the meaning behind words [in case of name-calling]." (school counsellor, primary school)

"If the children need me, I intervene. If I am informed about the violence, I do. If I am not, then I don't. But if I am, I always intervene." (school counsellor, primary school)

"We have a policy of zero tolerance towards violence. Violence shouldn't be tolerated… we react immediately, decisively and we stop it the moment it happens." (sociology teacher, secondary school)

According to our interviewees, constructive dialogue is usually the best way to deter the pupils from repeating unacceptable behaviour; punishment or severe sanctions are reserved for the most serious or persistent misbehaviour. School counsellors point out that sanctions should be seen as inevitable and consistent (pupils should know that a sanction, when threatened, will be carried out) and should help the pupil and others to learn from mistakes and recognise how they can improve their behaviour (i.e. a learning outcome). School authorities also attempt to link the concept of sanctions to the concept of choice, so that pupils see the connection between their own behaviour and its impact on themselves and others and so increasingly take responsibility for it. Last but not least, they point out that sanctions should always be used in a calm and controlled manner.

Teachers and school counsellors also point out that they advise children that they can and should turn for help, either if they are victims of violence, or if they witness violent behaviour. In this sense, they feel that applying zero tolerance in response to violence is the most efficient way to prevent violent behaviour and to gain pupils' trust.

"Well, we usually try to resolve the problem swiftly. We either stop the fight, in case of physical violence you have to separate pupils, then we talk with the victim, we talk with the perpetrator, then we involve the parents, the teachers... Some resolutions have to be taken... If I walk on the corridor and I see such things I always react. Sometimes children come to me alone, sometimes with their teachers or their parents, sometimes I get phone calls, sometimes I call the parents and I am trying to find a solution." (school counsellor, primary school)

"I always go for the confrontation. First, to calm things down. The first phase is always the calmness. The second phase is containment, when you listen. The third phase is when you try to find some sort of constructive dialogue: to find the motives, explanation. This is always the next day. I am not in favour of punishment, I stand for internal, personal changes and this takes more time. We

meet several times to solve one case. I don't like hasty reactions. Not on national, religious, cultural, not on any other level." (school counsellor, primary school)

"Constructive dialogue, this is the first step. Then further, if this doesn't help, but dialogue is the first thing. To discuss the reasons, why it happened, what to do that something like that wouldn't happen again. Disciplinary sanctions are the last resort. You have to discuss such matters promptly, the minute it happens. Because zero tolerance means exactly that, it shouldn't be tolerated." (sociology teacher, secondary school)

Otherwise, school personnel believe that the best way to prevent interethnic conflicts and violent behaviour in schools is to apply the principles of multiculturalism and tolerance in the curriculum. This intercultural approach is defined in all documents that form the underpinning of all educational activities in Slovenia. The White Paper on Education (1996) says that: "/…/ it is necessary to become acquainted with other cultures and civilisations, to learn mutual tolerance and respect for human differences. Parallel learning about national and foreign cultures plays an important role in forming and disseminating national culture and in understanding the processes of European integration, migrations, political changes, etc. /…/. Such intercultural comparisons help in broadening the spirit, making comparisons and reducing ethnocentricity (Eurocentricity included). They also help people to achieve a better understanding of their own identity and tradition". The intercultural approach is also mentioned in other relevant legislation such as The Organization and Financing of Education Act (1996), The Elementary School Act and the Strategy for the integration of migrant children and students into the education system in Slovenia (2007). An important role in providing support for schools and teachers in fostering intercultural dialogue is played by the National Education Institute which is implementing various activities for encouraging intercultural dialogue in schools through counselling services, in-service training programmes for teachers of pupils from heterogeneous groups (pupils with mixed national and cultural affiliation), in-service training of teachers for cooperation with parents of migrant children, dissemination of examples of good practices, etc. (Eurybase – Slovenia, 2008/2009, 223).

When it comes to the official curriculum, interethnic tolerance and civic rights of minorities are taught in the 7th and 8th year of primary school in the obligatory class subject "Ethics and Civic Education", while in the 3rd year of the secondary school, students have the compulsory/elective subject "Education for peace, family and non-violence". Though, many researchers and experts believe

that one class subject in primary school and one in secondary school is not nearly enough to teach students to respect diversity. Interculturality as an educational principle should be present in all school activities from the earliest stage on, but it is mostly only there in principle and rarely in practice during the lectures on geography, history, Slovenian language and foreign languages, for example. It seems that the education of pupils in the spirit of respect for diversity and prohibition of discrimination is left to the personal initiative of individual schoolteachers.

> *"In the 3rd year students have a compulsory-elective subject 'Education for non-violence'. I taught it this year and it includes issues such as emotional intelligence, zero tolerance towards violence, different forms of violence – economic, social, psychological and physical violence. We discussed these problems and students can also engage in various camps and workshops that deal with these issues. We have to build on this, on the notion that people should help each other, be tolerant towards each other and that violence – in whatever form it takes – should not be tolerated." (sociology teacher, secondary school)*

Conclusion

The research findings of this Slovenian case study, conducted with a sample of 17 selected primary and secondary schools, shows that interethnic peer violence is not recognised as a matter of concern; it is almost described as a non-issue. "It doesn't happen in our school" encapsulates the opinion of the majority of our interviewees regardless of their role in the school: primary school pupils, secondary school students, teachers, school counsellors and headmasters. Nevertheless, even though ethnicity is not regarded as a significant factor influencing peer violence, it would be misguided to assume that the phenomenon does not exist in Slovenian schools.

It may be safe to say that cases of physical violence are rare, especially in the secondary schools where 3.5% of students experienced this type of violence because of their ethnicity at least once in the last school year in comparison to 9.5% in primary schools.[20] However, various forms of psychological violence are quite widespread. Overall 19.0% of primary school pupils and 10.5% of secondary school students reported experiencing rumour spreading, 22.3% of primary

20 Since pupils in primary schools occasionaly had some difficulties with understanding the questions, we cannot be certain they were accurately reporting that these forms of violence occurred specifically because of their ethnicity.

school pupils and 10.5% of secondary school students experienced name-calling, and 18.5% of primary school pupils and 6.5% of secondary school students were shunned or ostracised by their classmates because of their ethnicity. The young people of mixed and other ethnicities are victims of the abovementioned forms of violence almost twice as often as the Slovenian students.

In the qualitative part of the research, the last two forms of psychological violence (the use of ethnic slurs and social isolation) were identified as quite frequent events. Interestingly, the discussion in focus groups revealed that some Slovenian pupils didn't consider name-calling (i.e. use of ethnic slurs such as "čefur", "čapac", "šiptar", "cigo") to be offensive or even have negative connotations. Rather, they explained, that they were actually enunciating an undeniable fact or "truth" about someone's ethnic appurtenances (for example: "*In fact they attacked my friend who said to one of his schoolmates that she is Bosnian, because she is from Bosnia. And she accepted this in a negative way, as an insult, but for me it is equal as someone would say that I am Slovenian, and this would be an insult"* or *"This is no longer an insult. If you are 'čefur', you are 'čefur'…").* The young people of mixed and other ethnicities didn't agree with this "banalisation" of ethnic slurs as they tend to interpret them as abusive, offensive and malevolent. Nevertheless, ethnicity *per se* only rarely instigates peer violence. Making reference to someone's ethnicity (use of ethnic slurs and stereotypes) usually only happens when a pre-existing conflict among students escalates and can then sometimes even lead to physical violence, as pointed out by one of the pupils we interviewed: *"If you quarrel with someone and he says this word it's definitely an insult /…/ It hurts, you are offended if someone says it to you and then a fight can emerge out of it".*

Ethnic discrimination – whether insulting remarks and attitudes or the insidious violence of ignorance – which is based on the alibi of prejudice is never "an event", but rather a process nesting within power relationships. As Leskošek (2005, 168) puts it: "Words whose intention is to humiliate, dehumanise, remove dignity, place in a subordinate position, show someone as a non-human, third-class uncivilised being, influence the position that these people will have in society. What opportunities they will have, how they will live, what their destinies will be, how other people will treat them and, finally, how they will understand themselves – all of this depends on the position into which they are placed by those with social power".

Another topic that came to the fore during discussions in the focus groups was the issue of interethnic violence among individuals or groups of migrant origin. As already pointed out, members of nations and nationalities of the former Yugoslav republics constitute the majority of the migrant population in Slovenia. Due to the violent dissolution of the former common state and the

wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in the 1990s, the legacy of interethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia still resonates in the minds of the older generation (parents of some pupils we interviewed) and strongly affects the interethnic relations of a section of the population. The interethnic tensions are felt primarily among Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Albanians from Kosovo. Some young people feel these tensions as a heavy emotional burden imposed on them by their parents and they resent this since they think these problems are not theirs.

In conclusion, the findings of our study confirm other studies investigating determinants of exposure to bullying[21] which found that peer violence in general, is determined by several factors, such as age, gender, family upbringing, school performance, physical appearance and socio-economic class of the child's family. Bullying is not a natural adolescent behaviour, but a reflection of social context. During the interviews experts and school staff often mentioned that youngsters from socio-economically disadvantaged families are more likely to be bullied than others, which is in line with the findings of other studies in this area (e.g. Due et al., 2009). Furthermore, it should be pointed out that lower socio-economic status often coincides with ethnicity or migrant status; consequently, young people of non-Slovenian ethnicities may be subjected to a "double burden" and they may bring different expectations and experiences of deprivation and frustration into the school.

In this present time of socio-economic crisis, growing unemployment, lack of economic and social reform and absence of equal opportunities, we may expect a growth of inter-ethnic, inter-religious and overall intolerance. Several authors (Kirbiš et al., 2012) have recognised the potential role of the socio-economic crisis as an igniter of xenophobia, intolerance and traditionalistic and nationalistic orientations. The fact that a large part of the population reject the idea of sharing resources and of equal treatment in employment, health, education, and other sectors, comes evidenced not only by official polls, but also by the discriminatory situations and harassment of everyday life. Therefore, the current crisis has the potential to have a substantial impact on the lives, rights and needs of all children and adolescents, ethnic minority and migrant children in particular. It is for this reason that the identification and analysis of both structural inequalities and their daily manifestations are so important. Equally important however, is the understanding and active recognition of social practices through which people communicate mutual respect and validate their standing as moral equals within society.

21 For more on this issue, see: Gittins, Chris (2006): *Violence reduction in schools – how to make a difference. A handbook*. Council of Europe.

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Schools as a "Protected Space"? Good Practices but Lack of Resources: the Case of Austria

Birgit Sauer and Edma Ajanovic

Introduction: Interethnic Violence – an Under-Researched Topic in Austria

Violence in the school environment – and especially violence prevention programmes – have only been drawing the attention of the Austrian government since 2007. At that time the Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture began the implementation of a national strategy aimed at preventing aggression in the school/kindergarten environment and to foster its positive climate (Weiße Feder, 2012; Stefanek et al., 2012). However, academic research and surveys on violence – especially those studying interethnic violence in the school environment in Austria – are still lacking. Some studies that identify the forms and scope of violence in the Austrian context have however been conducted (Bergmüller and Wiesner, 2009). Most of the present studies are quantitative analyses and/or carried out within the framework of a larger education survey as PISA (Bergmüller and Wiesner, 2009) or the World Health Organisation's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, Familie und Jugend, 2007). Only a few scholars have researched on the topic of interethnic violence (Strohmeier et al., 2012; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2007, 2012). These studies only compared differences in the experiences of violence between Austrian and

migrant children and youngsters but did not go into detail regarding reasons or differences among the different ethnic groups (Strohmeier and Spiel, 2005, 10).

Christian Klicpera and Barbara Gasteiger-Klicpera (1996), for example, carried out a quantitative study on the experiences of violence (defined as any form of behaviour which is indicated to harm others, i.e. physical and psychological violence) in the school environment of middle school pupils (Lower and Academic Middle Schools). Klicpera and Gasteiger-Klicpera (1996, 5) conclude that, for pupils in Viennese middle schools, pupils from migrant backgrounds tend less often to be bullies or victims of violence in school compared to Austrian pupils. The more recent studies by Bergmüller and Wiesner (2009) as well as Moira Atria, Dagmar Strohmeier and Christiane Spiel (2005, 216) support this result: migrant pupils less often experience and engage in violence than pupils of an Austrian cultural background.

Furthermore, Dagmar Strohmeier and Christiane Spiel (2005) discuss the issue of racist victimisation in a project dealing with intercultural friendship and enmity among pupils. Their research focussed on multicultural classes in Viennese schools, a context in which about 40% of all pupils speak an everyday language other than German. 689 pupils from 13 to 17 years of age with different mother tongues (262 spoke one of the ex-Yugoslavian languages, 205 Turkish or Kurdish, 128 German and 94 spoke other languages = "rest" group) participated in their study. Strohmeier and Spiel (2005, 22) found not only that violence is present in Viennese schools but also that the violence is based on language and ethnic differences. Racially motivated verbal insults, for example, were experienced by 5% of the pupils questioned whereas 2.4% reported experiencing racially motivated physical violence once a week or almost daily. Everyday-language and gender (especially in the group of pupils with German everyday-language and the rest group) affect the victim's experiences of racially motivated violence. The study showed that male pupils whose everyday language is German and the rest group pupils are more often victims of racially motivated violence than Turkish/Kurdish or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian speaking pupils (Strohmeier and Spiel 2005, 22).

Elisabeth Stefanek et al. (2012) carried out a study on the risk and protective factors related to bullying in ethnically diverse classes of 11-15 year-old pupils. They took up earlier research findings that imply "that the ethnic composition of classes is associated with individual students' bullying behaviour" (Stefanek et al., 2012, 81) and that ethnic diversity in a classroom has positive effects in this regard – meaning that violence occurs less frequently in an ethnically diverse class. Their results underpin the finding that there are differences in bullying and

victimisation among pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils of Turkish, ex-Yugoslavian and Austrian ethnic backgrounds reported lower levels of victimisation compared to the "mixed ethnic group" – pupils who do not belong to the former mentioned ethnic groups. The authors explain this by the possibility that pupils from the "mixed ethnic group […] are often the only representatives of a specific ethnic group and thus might be more excluded from the other groups in class" (Stefanek et al., 2012, 86). However, the authors could not find a relation between bullying/victimisation and the ethnic composition of the classes but instead found that a positive class climate is one important protective factor in this regard (Stefanek et al., 2012, 86).

The studies briefly discussed above illustrate that further research on violence among pupils in general – and on interethnic violence in the school environment in particular – is necessary. Furthermore, since racist encroachments are still present in Austrian society (ZARA, 2011) and migrants are exposed to discrimination, we wanted to get a deeper insight into the issue of interethnic violence in Austrian schools. Our study – carried out under the framework of the EU-commission co-financed project "Children's Voices" in Austria – aimed to identify the factors, scope and forms of interethnic violence in the school environment of 11-12 year-old and 17-18 year-old pupils as well as at tackling the previously discussed research gap.

This article presents the main findings of our study which comprises of a quantitative survey of 11-12 year-old and 17-18 year-old pupils from 16 schools and a qualitative study – including interviews with teachers, national experts and pupils – on experiences and observations of interethnic violence in the school environment. For the purposes of our study, we understand violence as psychological and/or physical aggression in which a person or group of persons hurts/harms or has the intention to hurt/harm another person or group of persons (Köhler, 2006, 1-7; Strohmeier and Spiel, 2005, 21). We understand interethnic violence as violence, which takes place on the basis of different ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural and national identities between groups of people or individuals who identify themselves differently from each other.

We start with some contextual background on the Austrian multicultural structure and the Austrian school system, than we give an outline of the methodology and the sample of our quantitative and qualitative study, afterwards we describe the main results and findings regarding pupils' experiences of interethnic violence in the school environment and the factors determining such experiences and finally we provide a short conclusion on the topics presented.

Contextual Background

As mentioned above, this part discusses facts concerning Austria, which are relevant in the context of our study on interethnic violence in the school environment of pupils. First, we present the Austrian social structure by outlining facts and figures on migration and the Austrian autochthonous ethnic groups. This structure will explain why we selected the regions Vienna, Upper Austria, Salzburg and Carinthia for the implementation of our study. This section will be followed by an outline of the Austrian school system and figures on the pupils' population.

Multiculturality in Austria

Migration

Austria has a long tradition of migration. Migration flows in Austrian history after World War II were mainly characterised by so called "guest worker" programmes with countries as Turkey and Yugoslavia – implemented between the nineteen-seventies and the nineteen-nineties (Bauböck, 1996, 14). Immigration to Austria increased from the nineteen-nineties partly due to the conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia, when Austria received many refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia (Tretter, 2000, 28). Furthermore, when Austria joined the European Union in 1995, migration flows between the EU member states were facilitated. Thus, immigration to Austria has been rising since the nineteen-seventies.

The following population figures give an additional insight into the structure of Austrian society. In the year 2011 8,443,000 people lived in Austria. Migrants[22] – people who do not possess the Austrian citizenship or who are not born in Austria – account for 17.3% (1.5 million) of the overall population. Unlike as in some other European countries, the acquisition of Austrian citizenship (*ius sanguinis*) is very difficult due to the requirement to fulfil various criteria such as 10 years of permanent settlement before application. Hence, 63% of the 1.5 million migrants in Austria do not possess Austrian citizenship.

22 The Austrian Statistic Agency (Statistik Austria) and the Federal Ministry for the Interior use the term "people of foreign origin" in order to refer to people who live in Austria but who do not possess the Austrian citizenship and/or who were not born in Austria. It needs to be stressed that this term is problematic mainly because it does not reflect the self-perception of people concerned. This is why we use the term migrants to refer to figures on people who live in Austria but who were not born there or who are not Austrian citizens.

41% of migrants in Austria are citizens of the European Union member states, EER states or Switzerland while 47% are citizens of other European states. Only 12% are citizens of non-European countries. Regarding the nationality or background of migrants, German migrants are the largest group (227,000 people) among all, followed by migrants from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo[23] (209,000), Turkey (186,000) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (133,000). Figures are significantly lower when looking at citizens of other European Countries or non-European countries such as, for example, Rumanians (75,000), Croatians (63,000) or Russians (28,000) and Chinese (15,000) – the two largest groups in terms of migrants from non-European countries (Statistik Austria, 2012, 26-27). Furthermore, the majority of migrants in Austria live in big cities such as Vienna, Salzburg, Graz, Innsbruck or Linz. Besides the Federal State of Vienna, where 40% of all migrants live, migrants also account for significantly higher percentages in the Federal States of Vorarlberg and Salzburg than in the remainder of the Austrian Federal States (Statistik Austria, 2012, 111).

Autochthonous Ethnic Groups

Austrian society is multicultural on the one hand due to the discussed tradition of migration and on the other hand due to the fact that Austria has six autochthonous ethnic groups. These groups enjoy special rights – for instance regarding education and language – according to the Austrian Autochthonous Ethnic Groups Law (*Volksgruppengesetz*) from 1976. The following section gives further insight into the Austrian multicultural society and justifies the selection of the Federal State of Carinthia as one of the four regions where we implemented our quantitative study.

The term autochthonous ethnic group or autochthonous minority, like ethnicity, is not self-explanatory; its definition is contested. In most European states, the term minority is referred to a linguistic or ethnic minority. In other regions it is also used to refer to religious minorities (Reiterer, 2003, 136). In Austria the term autochthonous ethnic group is clearly linked to the recognition of such groups by the Austrian state and to special rights and support measures provided by the state. Therefore we can differentiate between autochthonous ethnic groups and migrants who do not enjoy minority rights, although they might be seen as an ethnic minority in terms of population figures (Fischer, 2003, 130).

23 Figures for citizens from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo were only available (from the Austrian Statistic Agency) in this summarized form.

The official definition of autochthonous ethnic groups refers to Austrian citizens who live and have their origin in parts of the federal territory of Austria, whose mother tongue is not German and who have their own ethnic traditions (Volksgruppengesetz, 1976, § 1 (2)). The autochthonous ethnic groups in Austria have been defined by taking into account their size, allocation within the federal territory and proportion in comparison to other Austrian citizens in a particular region (Volksgruppengesetz, 1976, § 2 (2)). On the basis of this regulation, the following autochthonous minorities have been recognised in 1977:

- Slovene autochthonous ethnic group – mainly settled in parts of the Federal State of Carinthia,
- Croatian autochthonous ethnic group – settled in parts of the Federal State of Burgenland,
- Hungarian autochthonous ethnic group – also living in parts of the Federal State of Burgenland and
- Czech autochthonous ethnic group – settled mainly in Vienna.

With the Slovak autochthonous ethnic group, which was recognised in 1992, and the Roma and Sinti autochthonous ethnic groups – recognised in 1993 – Austria has six autochthonous ethnic groups, which enjoy special rights. People belonging to the Slovak autochthonous ethnic group mainly live in Vienna, while people of the Roma and the Sinti autochthonous ethnic group do neither live in one main region nor can these groups be referred to as homogenous groups. There are rather different "subgroups" with different socio-cultural background and socio-political status (Halwachs, 2003, 231).

A historical discussion of the developments regarding autochthonous ethnic groups and their rights in Austria would go beyond the scope of this chapter.[24] Therefore, only population figures will be briefly presented in the following. The census carried out in 2001 – the latest available figures – collected data on the everyday language[25] of the Austrian population. Besides German, it was also possible for respondents to choose the "combination" of German and an autochthonous ethnic group language. These figures – available for all autochthonous ethnic groups – can be used to describe their approximate size. However, since the fact of belonging to an autochthonous ethnic group was not

24 For detailed information on these aspects see Rindler Schjerve, R. & P.H. Nelde (Eds.) (2003) and Reiterer, A. F. (2003).

25 Austrian Statistic Agency defines everyday language as the language a person speaks "in private with its family or friends" most of the time. Multiple answers were possible e.g. German and Slovenian language (Statistik Austria, 2002, 24).

part of the census questions, the figures presented below are only estimates. One also has to bear in mind that the census figures often differ from those collected by cultural clubs or religious organisations of the autochthonous ethnic groups themselves, in which far more people than in the census declare that they speak their language in everyday life (Fischer, 2003, 133). Since these clubs and organisations do not collect data on a regular basis, the Austrian census figures are presented here.

The majority of Austrian citizens (95.5%) indicated speaking German as their everyday language in 2001. 301,454 respondents (4.1%) claimed to speak German and another language as their everyday language. Those 4.1% speak German and either Slovenian, Burgenland-Croatian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian or Romanes (one of the autochthonous ethnic group languages). In order to avoid any bias, only numbers for Austrian citizens who were also born in Austria and who indicated that they spoke German and one of the above mentioned languages as their everyday language are taken into account in the following Table (1). However, as the language reference is the only indicator to estimate the population size of the autochthonous ethnic groups, it is difficult to use these census figures to differentiate between "migrants" – who were born in Austria, possess Austrian citizenship and speak one of the autochthonous minority languages – and the autochthonous ethnic group population.

Table 1: Autochthonous ethnic group language speakers

	Burgenland-Croatian	Slovenian / Windisch[26]	Hungarian	Czech	Slovakian	Romanes
2001	18,943	13,772	9,565	4,137	1,172	1,732

Source: Statistik Austria, 2002, 76

Table 1 shows that people speaking Slovenian and Burgenland-Croatian are the largest groups in terms of linguistic figures. As the Carinthian-Slovenes are one of the two major groups and since – when we started our project – they were facing (again) discrimination by the right-wing regional government in the Federal State of Carinthia, we decided to select Carinthia as one of the four regions in which to conduct our quantitative survey on interethnic violence in the school environment.

26 Windisch is a variant of Slovenian language.

The Austrian School System and Multiculturalism in Schools

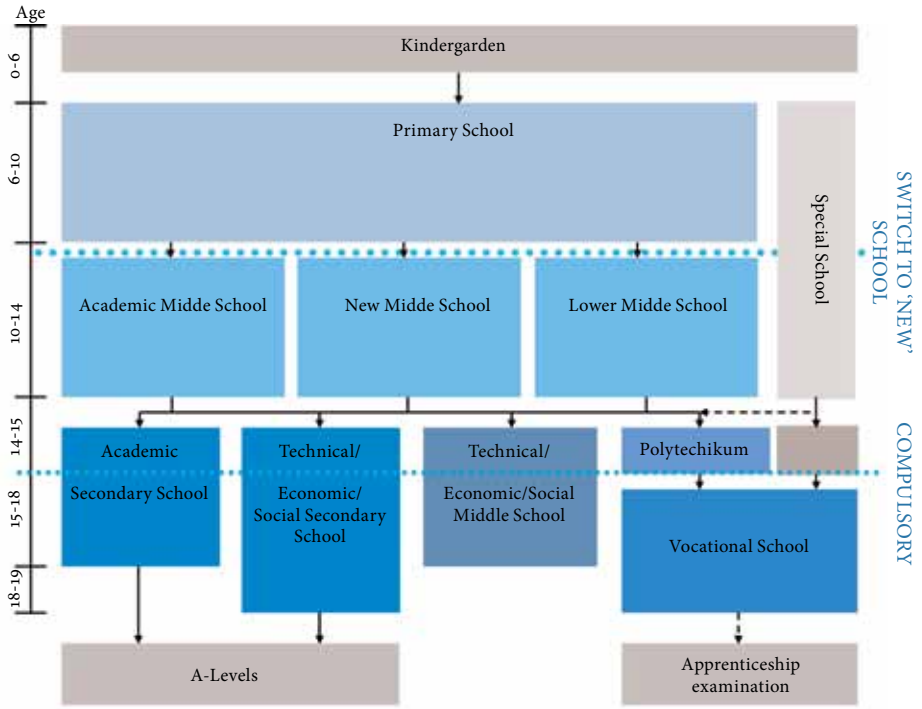
In Austria nine years of schooling are compulsory for every child who permanently lives in Austria from the age of six onwards. As Figure 1 shows compulsory education starts with four years of primary schooling (*Volksschule*) for children between the age of six and ten. In addition to the Primary School there is a Special School (*Sonderschule*) for children with special educational needs – children with physical or psychological disabilities (Schulpflichtgesetz, 1985, §8, (1)). It is a school which can be attended for the whole nine years of compulsory schooling if the pupil concerned is in need of special assistance.

After completing Primary School pupils at the age of 10 can decide among three forms of middle schools: Academic Middle School (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule Unterstufe*), New Middle School (*Neue Mittelschule*) and Lower Middle School (*Hauptschule*). The schools differ in their curriculum as well as in their teaching style. While in the Academic Middle School a more sophisticated curriculum is applied in the Lower Middle School children are often split into three different performance groups, where the highest performance group has a similar level as the Academic Middle School while the other two groups are less sophisticated. Both schools are more performance oriented and are associated with a "frontal teaching style" (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, 2008). In contrast to that pupils in the New Middle School are taught all together by two teachers. The emphasis is put on teaching the children to learn also from each other (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, 2008). After Primary and Middle School every child has to complete one more year of compulsory schooling, either in one of the Secondary Schools or – in a one year Pre-vocational Training School *(Polytechnikum)* which prepares for a Vocational School together with an apprenticeship. After eight years of Special School pupils have the option to stay there and finish one additional year or to switch to the *Polytechnikum*.

In addition to compulsory schools there are different types of Secondary Schools – each with a different emphasis (general/academic, technical, economic or social). The main difference between the Academic Secondary School (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule Oberstufe*) and the Technical/Economic/Social Secondary Schools (*Berufsbildende höhere Schule*) is that the first lasts four years and has a more general curriculum while a Technical/Economic/Social Secondary School's emphasis is either put on technique, economics or social work and it takes five years to complete it. Both school types end with an A-level exam

that qualifies for starting a university education. Pupils who finish compulsory education can also choose to complete the Technical/Economic/Social Middle School (*Berufsbildende mittlere Schule*) – 3-4 years without A-level diploma – or a Vocational School (*Berufschule*) – 3-4 years of school and apprenticeship.

Figure 1: Austrian school system



Next to the general educational regulation, as discussed above, there are some particular regulations regarding the educational rights of pupils belonging to the six autochthonous ethnic groups in Austria. Those Austrian Federal States where members of an autochthonous ethnic group live – as for instance Carinthia – also have established bilingual education and schools (Bundeskanzleramt, 2006, 92). The Treaty of St. Germain (1919) stipulates that primary education – in those towns and districts with a substantial number of non-German speaking citizens – shall be enabled in the respective language. The German language, however, has to be an obligatory school subject in those schools (Staatsvertrag von St. Germain 1919, article 68). The State Treaty of Vienna stipulates similar rights concerning primary and middle school education, however, directly referring

only to the Slovenian and Croatian autochthonous ethnic groups in Carinthia, Burgenland and Styria (Staatsvertrag von Wien, 1955, article 7). Nevertheless, the autochthonous ethnic groups' right for education in their own language has constitutional status in Austria. The Minority Education Law for Carinthia (Minderheiten-Schulgesetz für Kärnten, 1959, § 24) stipulates furthermore the following in regard to secondary education for Carinthian-Slovenes: it foresees one Academic Secondary School with Slovenian as working language (German as an obligatory school subject). This Academic Secondary School for Slovenes was indeed established in 1957. Besides this, the Bilingual Economic Secondary School was established in the school year 1990/91 in Klagenfurt (Fischer, 2003, 193). Both schools can be attended by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds – they are not exclusive for one group but are mainly attended by Carinthian-Slovene and Austrian pupils.

As aforementioned, we decided to interview two age groups on their experiences with interethnic violence in the school environment, namely 11-12 year-old pupils who attend Lower/New/Academic Middle School and 17-18 year-old pupils who attend Academic or Economic Secondary Schools. To decide on schools and regions we further looked at the pupils' population in the different regions. As we anticipated selecting schools with a rather multicultural environment we analysed the linguistic backgrounds of pupils in the different regions – as statistics on the ethnic background of pupils are not available in Austria.

About 17% of the 1,068,934 pupils in Austria do not have German as their everyday language. Among all regions Vienna has the highest share of pupils who do not speak German in their home/private environment – namely 43.9% of all pupils who attend school in Vienna. Only the Federal States of Vorarlberg (19.1%), Salzburg (16.1%) and Upper Austria (14.1%) do also have a notably high share of pupils with an everyday language other than German (Statistik Austria, 2011, 151). These figures reflect the general concentration of migration flows in the mentioned federal states as illustrated in the section before.

The presented percentages give an insight into the ethnic backgrounds of pupils in Austria as well as their allocation within the country. This helped us to decide from which regions to collect data on interethnic violence since we intended to select schools with a rather multicultural environment. Hence, we decided to put the regional focus of our studies on the Federal States of Vienna, Salzburg and Upper Austria. The decision to include Carinthia as one of the four researched regions has been – as already mentioned – less made on the basis of migrant population figures as in Carinthia only about 10% of the population were not born in Austria and/or do not possess Austrian citizenship. The aim of the

survey in Carinthian schools was to learn about the experiences with interethnic violence of pupils who belong to the autochthonous Slovene ethnic group, one of the largest autochthonous ethnic groups in the country. The following Table (2) additionally shows how many bilingual schools, schools which have bilingual classes or Slovenian as an obligatory school subject exist in the Federal State of Carinthia and how many pupils attended in the school year 2010/2011.

Table 2: Slovenian language in Carinthian schools

	Primary schools (pupils)	New and lower middle schools (pupils)	Academic middle schools and secondary schools (pupils)	No. of pupils
Slovenian	70 (2,110)	16 (364)	8 (1,049)	3,523

Source: Landeschulrat für Kärnten, 2010, Bundeskanzleramt, 2010, 91.

Methodology and sample

We collected our data using two different methods, namely a quantitative survey of pupils as well as a qualitative study, comprising of focus group discussions with pupils and interviews with teachers and experts. We selected four schools each in Vienna, Salzburg, Upper Austria and Carinthia for the implementation of our quantitative study. The schools included in the Federal State of Salzburg were located in the City of Salzburg – the region's capital city. In Upper Austria we selected four schools also in the region's capital, the City of Linz. In Carinthia we selected two schools in the capital city Klagenfurt and two schools in the neighbouring city Völkermarkt. Most of the schools also offer special anti-violence programs and measures – of which the program "Peer mediation" is the most frequent one.

During the quantitative survey we were able to ask 715 11-12 year-old and 17-18 year-old pupils about their experiences with interethnic violence in the school environment. The pupils' sample in our quantitative study was well-balanced in terms of gender as well as age: All in all 414 girls compared to 302 boys handed in the questionnaire. In terms of age the sample was split into 350 pupils of 11-12 years of age and 365 pupils of 17-18 years of age.

The qualitative study – which consisted of focus group discussions and interviews – was implemented only in Vienna. We selected Vienna because multiculturality in Viennese schools is the highest compared to other selected regions. As already mentioned, about 44% of pupils who attend school in Vienna

do not have German as their everyday language. We held eight focus group discussions with 41 pupils and interviews with eight teachers from the schools we already went to in the frame of the quantitative study. Also here, the pupils' sample was fairly well balanced in terms of age and gender: 23 female pupils compared to 18 male pupils participated in the focus group discussions. The qualitative study also comprised of interviews with six experts – researchers, academics and practitioners – in the field of violence and/or racism prevention.

Empirical Findings: Social Relations and Intercultural Violence Occurrence

In this chapter we discuss the main results of our quantitative and qualitative study. We start with findings regarding the interviewed pupils' general views on equality and multiculturality. We continue with their perceptions of their school environment. The following sections discuss the frequency and nature of interethnic violence in Austrian schools.

Pupils' Views on Equality and Multiculturality

During our quantitative survey, the first research step was aimed at getting an insight into pupils' general views – apart from their view on their schools – on equality and multiculturality. In this connection, we presented them with seven statements (Table 3) and asked how much they agree or disagree with those statements.

Table 3: Statements on attitude towards equality and multiculturality

Positive towards equality/multiculturality	Negative towards equality/multiculturality
All people are equal, regardless of the language they speak, their religion or culture.	I think that children that come to Austria from other countries should give up their language and culture.
I think that pupils who come to Austria from other countries should have the right to follow the customs of their countries.	I think that children that come to Austria from other countries should follow German language and Austrian culture.
I like the fact that there are people of different nationalities/ethnic backgrounds in the country where I live.	
I like the fact that there are pupils of other nationalities/ethnic backgrounds in our class/ at our school.	
I think that pupils should be allowed to express their religion in school.	

Their average (dis)agreement is presented in the Figure 2.

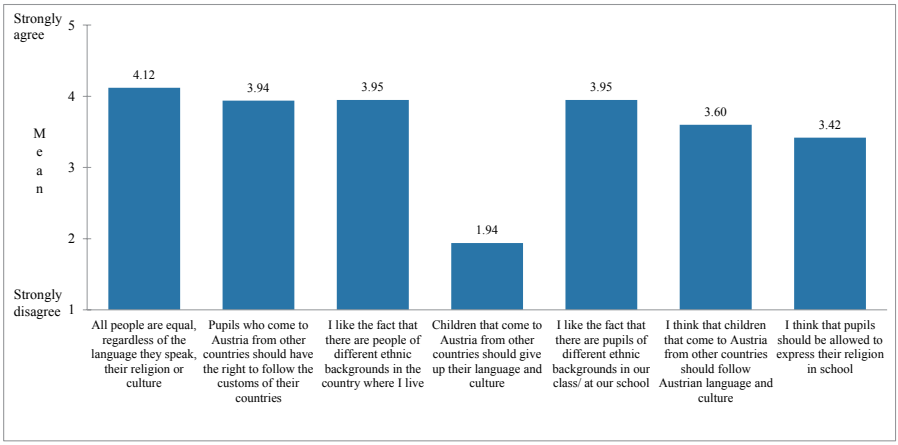


Figure 2: Views on equality and multiculturality

As we can see from Figure 2, pupils rather agree with the positive statements on multiculturality/tolerance, such as e.g. with the statement "I like the fact that there are people of different ethnic backgrounds in the country where I live". They disagree with negative statements, such as e.g. "Children that come to Austria from other countries should give up their language and culture". However, there is a less strong agreement with the last statement "I think that pupils should be allowed to express their religion in school". When we broke down the results according to age, gender and ethnic background criteria, we found slight differences between the two age groups, the 11-12 year-old pupils and the 17-18 year-old pupils, and between pupils of Austrian background compared to pupils of other ethnic – especially in the agreement with the following three statements (Figure 3).

As is evident from Figure 3, younger pupils seem to agree more with positive statements concerning multiculturality than secondary students. On the other hand, the average agreement of secondary students was higher when it came to statements regarding German language. The differences in the agreement can be due to various factors. It seems evident that pupils become less positive in their attitudes towards expressions of cultural and religious difference during schooling. The relatively low agreement with the statement concerning expression of religion in schools might result from a secular attitude that older pupils have developed since they were younger or that they are more suspicious about the "other" religion(s) and their associated practices. Figure 4 illustrates differences in attitudes towards multiculturality between pupils from Austrian backgrounds and those from other ethnic backgrounds.

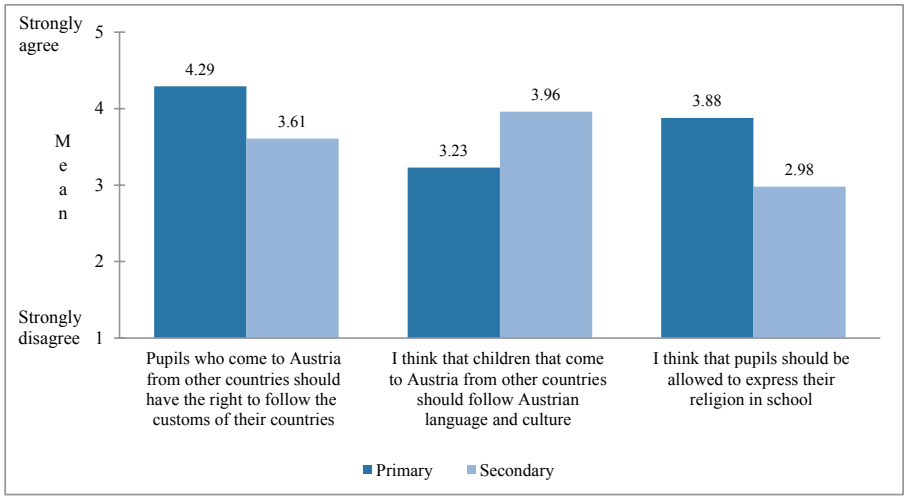


Figure 3: Different views on multiculturality – by age

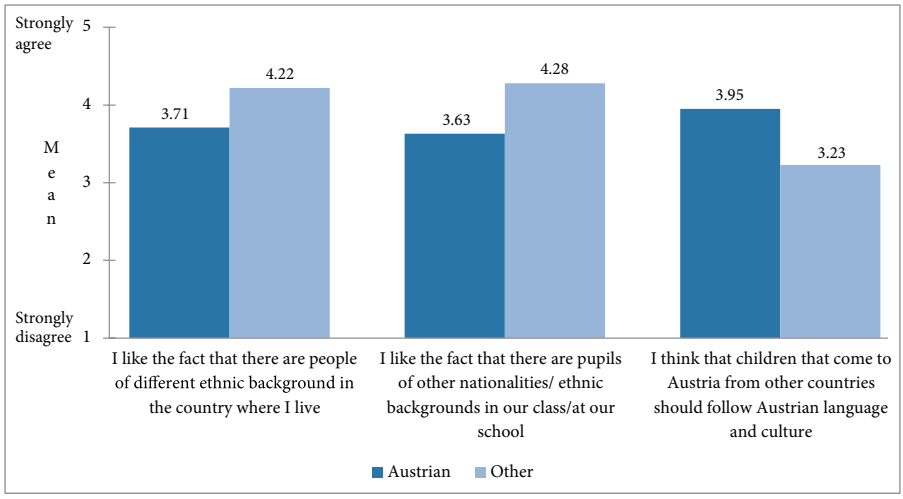


Figure 4: Different views on multiculturality – by ethnic background

Differences in perceptions of multiculturality between pupils of Austrian background and pupils of ethnic backgrounds other than Austrian are slightly evident especially regarding the agreement with the statement "I think that children that come to Austria from other countries should follow German language and Austrian culture": Pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than Austrian more often "strongly agree" with the "positive" statements regarding multiculturality and "strongly disagree" with the "negative" ones. As most of the

statements somehow affect them rather personally, migrant pupils probably want to clearly express a pro or contra statement, which might explain the illustrated differences in Figure 4.

Perception of the School Environment

In order to approach the topic of interethnic violence in the school environment, we asked pupils how they felt about their school in general. This is followed by the results on pupils' perceptions regarding their teachers and schools. Furthermore, pupils' perception on multiculturality in their schools and tolerance among pupils is discussed.

Feel Lonely and Safe in School

In order to identify their general feelings about their school environment, we asked pupils whether they feel lonely and how safe they feel in school. Their answers are presented in Figure 5 and Table 4 below.

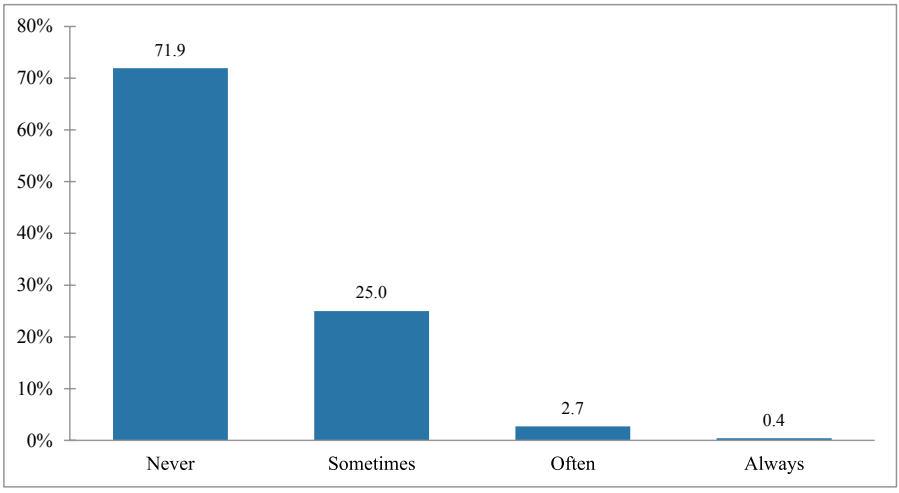


Figure 5: Lonely at school

As Figure 5 shows, the majority of pupils indicated that they never feel lonely at school. Still, about one quarter does feel lonely sometimes or often. This can be due to different factors. During the focus group discussion, some younger pupils mentioned that they sometimes feel lonely because they miss their parents. A lack of friends was not mentioned during the focus group discussions as a reason for loneliness; however, we can assume that this might be the case too. A comparison

of boys' and girls' answers and answers of pupils from Austrian and other ethnic backgrounds did not show any major differences in feelings of loneliness. In terms of safety in school, the vast majority of pupils indicated that they feel safe in each of the listed places in their school (Table 4).

Table 4: Feel safe at the school…

Do you feel safe ...	
Places	Feel safe in %
in the gym	89.1
in the classroom	88.9
in school corridors	82.4
at the school canteen	82.9
in the locker area	79.4
in the school playground/courtyard	79.5
in the toilets	68.4

As showed in Table 4, about 90% feel safe in the gym and 86% in the classroom. However, only 68% indicated that they feel safe in the toilets. As Table 5 on "where does violence happen" shows (see page 107), pupils do not identify toilets as one of the main places where violence happens, which is why it is unclear why a lower percentage indicate feeling safe there. Pupils could have misunderstood the meaning of the word "safe" – although we explained it prior to the survey, namely safe in terms of "to have the feeling that nobody will treat me bad/hurt me in the particular place".

Perception of Teachers and Schools

We additionally aimed to find out pupils' perceptions of teachers' attitudes towards them and towards their schools. In order to learn their opinions, we asked pupils whether they agreed with the four statements presented in Figure 6.

A clear majority of the pupils seem to agree that teachers treat pupils the same way and that their school is a place of equality; only a small part of the pupils disagrees. This is evident from the high average agreement with the first and second statement. Pupils also agree to a large part that their school "is a place where everybody can be themselves whatever their ethnic background is". However, the agreement diminishes slightly when it comes to the statements "In the classroom we learn about different cultures and religions" and "In the school we have special activities that encourage us to be equal and understand our differences". The focus group discussions showed that the reason for the

relatively lower agreement with the latter statement might be due to pupils either not knowing about such activities – of which at least one was indeed implemented in the schools we included in our study – or that they do not judge these activities as helpful in "encouraging them to be equal and understand their differences".

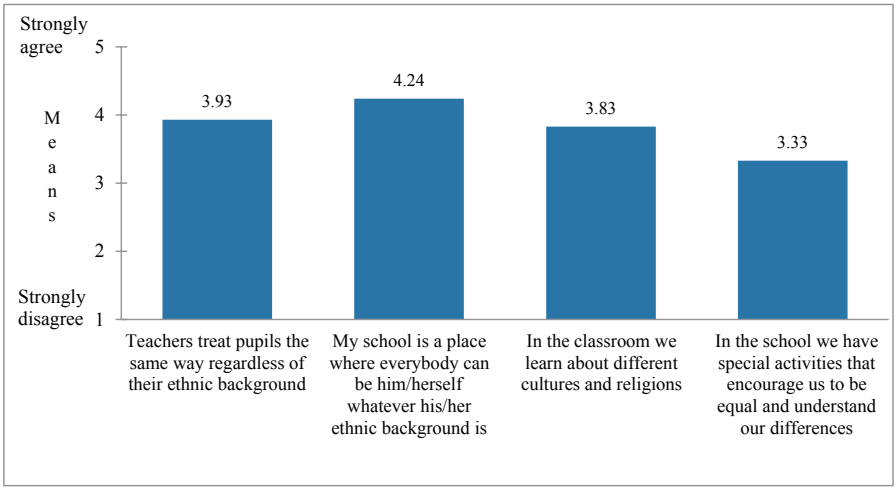


Figure 6: On teachers and schools

The Issue of Language

The issue of intercultural relations and tolerance among pupils in school was one of the first topics we discussed during our focus groups. Both, the 11-12 year-old pupils as well as the 17-18 year-old pupils state that their school provides a multicultural environment and that they like it in general.

"There are different cultures in our school but this is no issue or problem." (m, 11)

Others too agreed that their intercultural school environment in general does not present a problem for them:

"Of course everyone has his/her cultural background which is present in his/her opinion or attitude but this never was a problem for us." (m, 18)

"There are many different nationalities in our school but everyone gets along well." (f, 18)

Given the discussions with pupils, it is clear that most of the time they have a sense of wellbeing in their (multicultural) school environment, irrespective of

gender and ethnicity/nationality. Some mentioned learning about different food or cultural customs as well as learning the everyday languages of their friends at school. Teachers were also interviewed within the framework of our qualitative study about their perceptions of the (interethnic/intercultural) relations and tolerance among pupils in their school. Similarly to pupils, teachers agree that pupils are mainly friendly to each other and that interculturality does not pose a problem for them.

> *"Although our school has a migrant proportion of 83%, the pupils get along quite ok. /…/ What I observe is an unfriendly verbal manner among younger teenagers. For example, they answer impolitely to each other. But this I would not relate to certain ethnic groups. It is rather their teenage behaviour and probably also a social class issue." (teacher, middle/secondary school[27])*

One problematic issue from the pupils' viewpoint is raised, however, if fellow pupils talk in a language other than German at school, especially when their respective mother tongue is used to insult others. Figure 7 shows pupils' answers to the question as to whether they would be friends with a pupil whose mother tongue, skin colour or religion is different from their own. The answers in Figure 7 are grouped by pupils' ethnic backgrounds (Austrian and other) and show the relative importance of language when it comes to friendship.

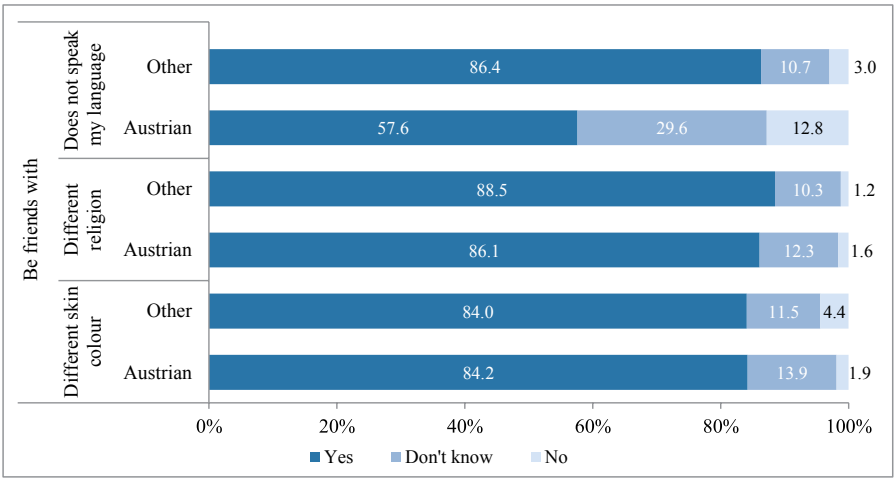


Figure 7: Friendship and language

27 This teacher teaches in an Academic School for pupils from 10-18 years of age, which is why his/her statements refer to both experiences with the younger and older age group.

As Figure 7 shows, the vast majority – regardless of their ethnic background – would be friends with a pupil whose skin colour or religion is different from his/hers. However, the statement "I would be friends with a pupil who is unable to speak (well) my mother tongue" did not meet with a clear approval as much as the other two – at least, when it came to pupils of Austrian background. Only half of those pupils chose "yes" as their answer compared to almost 90% of pupils who are of an ethnic background other than Austrian. The differences between the two groups of pupils obviously result from the fact that the latter do already have more experiences with making friends with pupils who do not speak their everyday language than the former. Thus, language seems to play a certain role when it comes to friendship – at least for pupils whose mother tongue is German – while religion and skin colour do not.

Language was also a central issue during the focus groups. When we addressed things they like/dislike about the fact that their school is multicultural the issue of talking in different languages or insulting someone in a language he/she does not understand emerged as being sometimes problematic:

> *"I also like the fact that we all talk in German [at school] because then no one can feel excluded." (f, 18)*

> *"Sometimes I don't like it when my friends talk in Turkish and I don't understand anything." (f, 11)*

Pupils are concerned about the exclusion of others if bilingual pupils talk in other languages than German in school. This is why in most classes we held focus group discussions pupils agreed to talk in German at school/in class. Furthermore, focus group discussions helped us understand that groups in the classroom are often formed along the lines of same language (next to same gender). We can conclude that language determines social relationships among pupils in multicultural schools and that it is clearly also a matter of negotiation.

Interethnic Violence – a Non-Frequent Issue

Both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study were used to explore the frequency of observation of violence as well as to find out how often pupils experience violence as victims and/or as offenders in their school environment. Our results show that the majority of the pupils we asked did not observe any form of interethnic violence in the last school year either "often" or "very often".

If so, they mainly observed psychological or verbal forms of violence – as the Figure 8 illustrates.

Around 30% of the pupils indicated that they had observed psychological violence like teasing, talking behind pupils' backs and ignoring behaviours sometimes during the last school year. In contrast to this, pupils rarely observed physical and cyber violence: namely, 82% of the pupils indicated that they have never observed cyber violence and about 87% said that they have never observed "pupils hitting other pupils because of their ethnic background" or "pupils hiding/destroying other pupils' property because of their ethnic background" (see Figure 8).

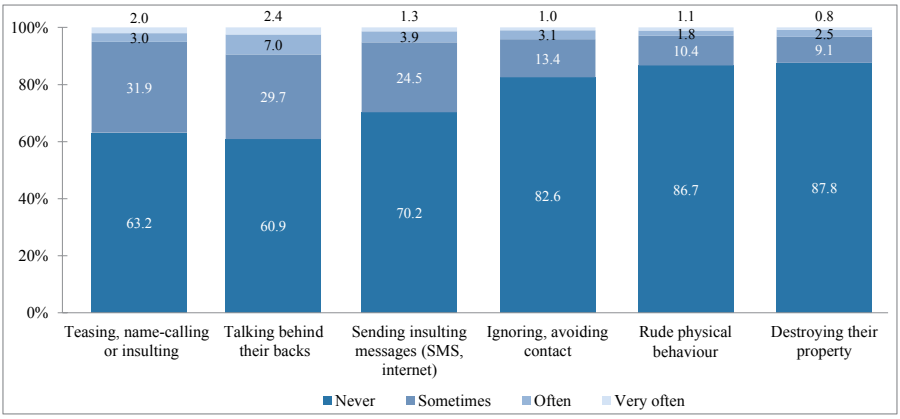


Figure 8: Violence observation

The evidence from interviews with teachers as well as the focus group discussions supports these conclusions: peer violence situations in the school environment were rarely witnessed. However, some of the 11-12 year-old pupils indicated that they had witnessed peer violence:

> *"I watched, for example, how some boys from our class insulted an older boy and called him a gipsy and then he hit them and they cried." (m, 11)*

Most of the 17-18 year-old pupils indicated that they have never observed any violence in their schools, especially not interethnic violence, and thus think that violence is not a frequent issue in their school environment:

> *"I have never experienced interethnic violence in our school. This happens more often outside." (m, 18)*

However, we need to keep in mind that especially the younger pupils primarily associate the term violence with (serious) physical violence and that – as we learned during the discussions – forms of violence which are not "serious" in their opinion, for example verbal violence, do occur quite often. Pupils are often not aware of the fact that a situation they observe or experience is violent or hurtful. This illustrates the importance of addressing the issue of violence in general and the importance of discussing such situations with pupils at school.

Pupils' own experience with interethnic violence is much lower than the observed level. Our quantitative data shows that the most often experienced form of interethnic violence is verbal violence which 10% of the pupils experienced in the last school year as victims. About 3% of the 715 pupils indicated that they had experienced physical violence forms because of their ethnic background, culture, language or religion. Similarly, only about 4% of the pupils mentioned that they have bullied a schoolmate because of his/her ethnic background, culture, language or religion. This was also evident from the focus group discussions with pupils in which the vast majority mentioned that they were seldom involved in interethnic violence situations as victims or offenders.

Nature of Interethnic Violence

In this section, we outline results on the nature of interethnic violence in Austrian schools. First, we discuss the forms of violence identified by pupils and teachers in their school environment. Then we continue with the places where interethnic violence occurs and finally discuss pupils' feelings and reactions to violence situations.

Forms of interethnic violence

As already mentioned, actual physical violence in the school environment occurs quite infrequently. The discussions with the focus group participants support the results presented from the quantitative study and show that forms of psychological violence occur more often than forms of physical violence. Focus group discussions showed further that it is especially the younger age group that is not always able to recognise violent situations as such or does not see the experience or the usage of violence as problematic. In this part we present the main forms of (interethnic) violence that pupils talked about in the focus group discussions.

Psychological violence that takes the form of *exclusion* has multiple modes of expression, as the pupils' statements show:

> *"They say to B. 'you are always alone, you don't have friends, you are strange'." (f, 11)*

> "*[W]hen we walk by a group of Serbian girls, for example, they talk behind our backs in Serbian and this is not nice." (f, 18)*

> *"A few students did not fit in our class because they behaved unpleasantly and they were sort of bullied out by the pupils. /…/ They changed schools." (m, 18)*

Pupils experience exclusion as one form of psychological violence through situations in which ignoring behaviours are displayed or there is talking/laughing behind someone's back. In these situations, as already touched upon, language for instance is used as an instrument to exclude someone. Pupils having German as mother tongue stated that they were sometimes confronted by situations in which other pupils spoke in a language they do not understand. They reported that this makes them feel excluded or insulted, as shown in the statement above. Others whose mother tongue is not German reported that pupils laugh at them when they make mistakes. Some experience this as hurtful while others indicate that they do not care or that they know that their classmates are only joking. As we had only little time for the focus group discussions (about 45 minutes per group, which is the length of one school lesson) it was not possible to discuss with pupils whether bullying – as a form of violence, which aims at hurting and excluding one pupil through frequent and repetitive aggression towards him/her – is a frequent issue. As it is a very sensitive topic, pupils did not talk frankly about it. The statements presented above and others are however signs that these forms of bullying are manifested: in all focus group discussions the pupils identified one or two children from their class who were being excluded (by some) and also insulted by the majority of the class.

Verbal insults are another form of violence experienced relatively often by pupils. In verbal disputes pupils sometimes refer to the culture, nationality, ethnicity, gender or the bodily characteristics of the insulted pupil in order to hurt him/her. Verbal insults are mainly used during disputes but also in the process of excluding someone. In the focus group discussions, 17-18 year-old pupils claimed that in such quarrels they observe or experience personal or bodily characteristics being used by their peers to insult someone rather than nationality, ethnicity or gender.

As already discussed, *physical violence* is seldom manifested among the pupils we interviewed. Nevertheless, pupils and teachers report fights during break time as well as arranged fights in front of the school. As physical violence is often "combined" with other (psychological) violence forms, and vice versa, it needs to be pointed out that the discussed forms of interethnic violence are not strict definitions but rather an attempt to structure the results in order to find out more about the nature of interethnic violence in the school environment.

Places where interethnic violence occurs

Our quantitative results – presented in Table 5 – show that interethnic violence or violence in general occurs in the classroom and at places where pupils spend most of their time in school and where teachers or other school personnel are absent.

Table 5: Where does interethnic violence happen? (percentage)

	392 answers		
Does it happen ...	Yes	No	Don't know
in the classroom?	69.0	13.5	17.3
in school corridors?	49.0	33.0	24.0
on the way to or from school?	44.8	27.8	27.3
in the school playground/courtyard?	43.0	33.8	22.4
in the locker area?	33.3	40.8	25.8
in the toilets?	18.0	53.5	28.5

Although, as discussed before (Table 4), most of the pupils indicated that they feel safe in the classroom, the majority of them indicated that the classroom is the primary place where interethnic violence in the school environment occurs. This contradiction might be – as already mentioned – due to the possibility that pupils did not refer to the proposed meaning of "safe" as "not worried that I will experience violence at this location" when they answered the question. Pupils also identified the corridors (49%) or the school playground (43%) as places where violence occurs.

In addition to the quantitative results presented in Table 5, our qualitative findings also demonstrate that the classroom is the place where violent situations most often occur. The classroom, the corridors and the school playground are places where pupils spend most of their break time – the time when much is going on without teachers/school personnel observing pupils. Hence, we can assume that this is the reason why they identified those locations as places where violence frequently occurs. Furthermore, some pupils mentioned the front of the

school or the area around the school as such a violent space, too. This is mainly when they observed arranged fights – usually located in this area.

"Non-involvement" and "non-telling" culture

In addition to locations of interethnic violence, we also wanted to know more about pupils' feelings and reactions to violent situations. Figure 9 below illustrates their answers concerning the feelings they have when they watch a pupil being treated badly because of his/her ethnic background.

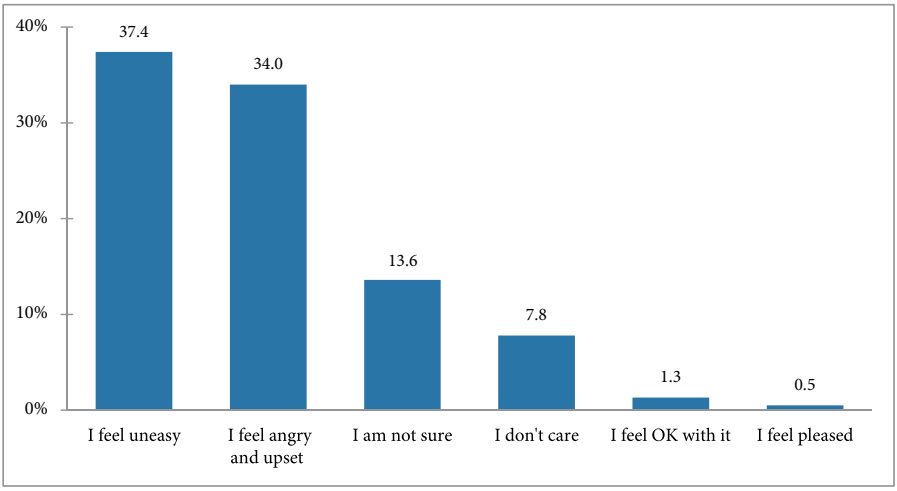


Figure 9: Pupils' feelings

The majority of the pupils indicate that they feel uneasy, angry and/or upset when they observe a violent situation. This was also the main result drawn from the focus group discussions in which the majority of the interviewed pupils indicated that they dislike violent situations in which other pupils are being hurt. These feelings correspond with their reactions when observing violent situations (see Figure 10).

Again, the majority of the pupils indicate that they intervene and somehow help the victim. About 68% of the pupils either "help him or her", "tell them that this is not right" or "tell a teacher". Around 22% do not intervene in any form and only 1.8% of the pupils who observed violent situation actively join the offender(s). The majority of the pupils obviously see that treating someone badly because of his/her ethnic background, nationality, culture, language or religion is not right and that they should intervene somehow. During the focus group discussions, we aimed to clarify the reasons why pupils do not intervene or feel that they should

not. In contrast to the results of the quantitative survey, a large proportion of the pupils indicated that they did not intervene in order to help a mistreated pupil. Focus group participants claimed that they intervene or would intervene only if a friend of theirs is involved in the fight/dispute or if it is a "serious" fight. We can assume that – especially in the case of 11-12 year-old pupils – this is due to a certain peer pressure to which they are exposed to and also possibly due to their often being unaware of the fact that they are experiencing or using violence. Other pupils fear exclusion or insults to themselves, e.g. if they would intervene in a conflict situation by calling a teacher.

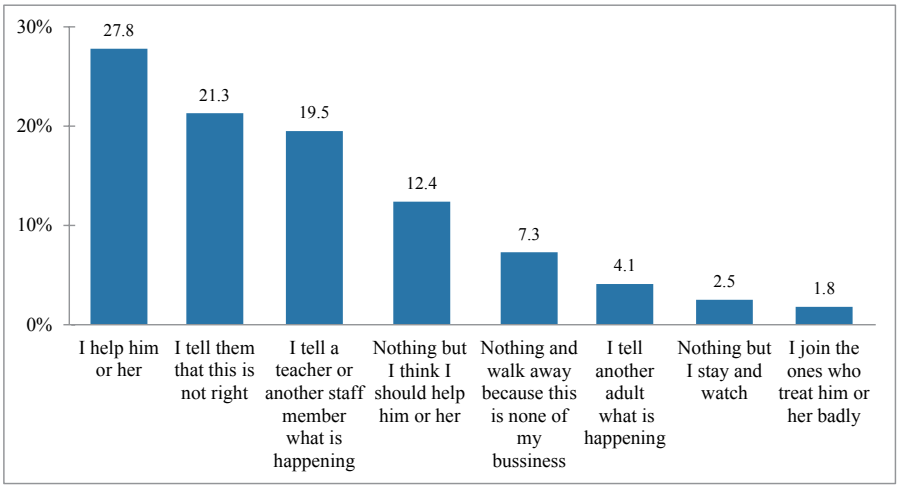


Figure 10: Pupils' reactions

This "non-involvement" culture of pupils is underlined by the fact that pupils indicate that they seldom tell teachers/school staff members about violent situations they experience or observe at school. Some pupils explained that they do not trust the teachers' ability to solve the problem. Others feel that they can only talk to certain teachers about such things. A small number of pupils also mentioned that they consult, for example, peer mediators or social workers when they have problems. Thus, most of the interviewed pupils who had experienced any problems in school, spoke to either their family members or to their friends and sometimes certain teachers.

When it comes to responsibilities and coping strategies in order to avoid and prevent violence in schools, teachers point out that violence in general and interethnic violence in particular are not the main problems. Especially when comparing the situation in their schools with the one in the wider society, teachers

seem to perceive the school as a "protected space", in which they can contribute to making things work better than in the society as a whole. Teachers think that anti-violence measures and the promotion of intercultural tolerance are important and that they are addressing these issues in their schools. Some teachers engage in these activities and organise for instance outdoor weeks or journeys to strengthen the team spirit of their pupils. However, teachers also pointed out the following: since most of the schools have a lack of personnel and financial resources, it is difficult to engage in anti-violence measures and to implement activities that foster tolerance at school. Hence, most of the teachers think that experts, as for example school psychologists, social workers, mediators, should be responsible for conflict management tasks in the first place. But at the same time they point out that these experts are not "financed" by the education boards and that their schools cannot provide sufficient help from social experts or school psychologists. While some teachers try to engage in these measures, others stress that it should be clear that they cannot be held responsible for everything, as their main task is to teach.

As illustrated in sections before, the vast majority of pupils either never or rarely observe and/or experience interethnic violence. However, these positive results in terms of frequency of violence should be interpreted with caution as we also found differences among pupils regarding their observations and experiences of interethnic violence. Our results show that there are certain factors – namely age, gender, classroom situation – which seem to determine or cause interethnic violence. These factors are presented in the next chapter, embedded in additional empirical results from our quantitative and qualitative study.

Interethnic Violence – Intersecting with Other Factors

In this part we discuss three factors – age, gender, the classroom situation – which intersect with ethnicity/nationality as determining factors for interethnic violence. The first section describes to what extent differences between the two age groups, 11-12 year-old pupils and 17-18 year-old pupils are evident. In the next section, differences between girls and boys are illustrated; furthermore, it is discussed how the classroom situation and the ethnicity/nationality of a pupil may affect his/her experiences of interethnic violence.

Age

Violence occurs among younger and older pupils, although – as our quantitative and qualitative study shows – there are differences in the frequency and nature of peer violence between our two age groups. These differences are especially evident in terms of experiencing and observing physical forms of violence. While, as Figure 11 and Figure 12 show, younger and older pupils' perceptions are similar in regard to verbal violence, the younger age group indicates being more often confronted with physical violence than the 17-18 year-old students.

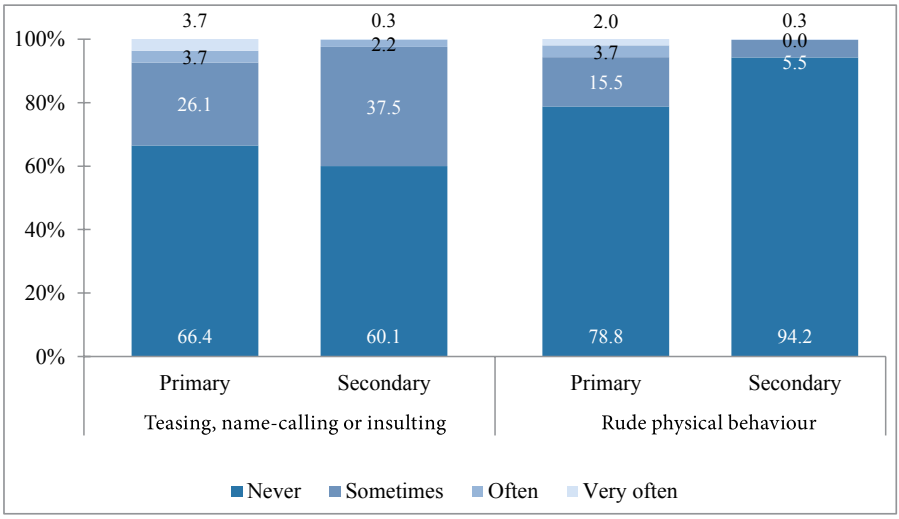


Figure 11: Observation of verbal and physical violence

The two age groups also differ in terms of the frequency and nature of their own experiences with interethnic violence. Again, the 11-12 year-old pupils experience violence as victims more often than the 17-18 year-old pupils. Figure 12 shows that, while about 13% of the 11-12 year-old pupils have experienced "teasing and insult", the same was true of only 7.7% of the 17-18 year-old students. Similarly, 16% of the younger age group experienced "talking behind their backs" in contrast to 6.7% of the 17-18 year-old pupils (Figure 12).

The difference between the two groups is also evident when comparing their experiences of physically violent situations. While hardly any of the older students indicated having experienced physical violence, about 5% of younger pupils indicated that "other pupils hit/spit at me or hide/destroy my property because of my ethnic background" (Figure 12).

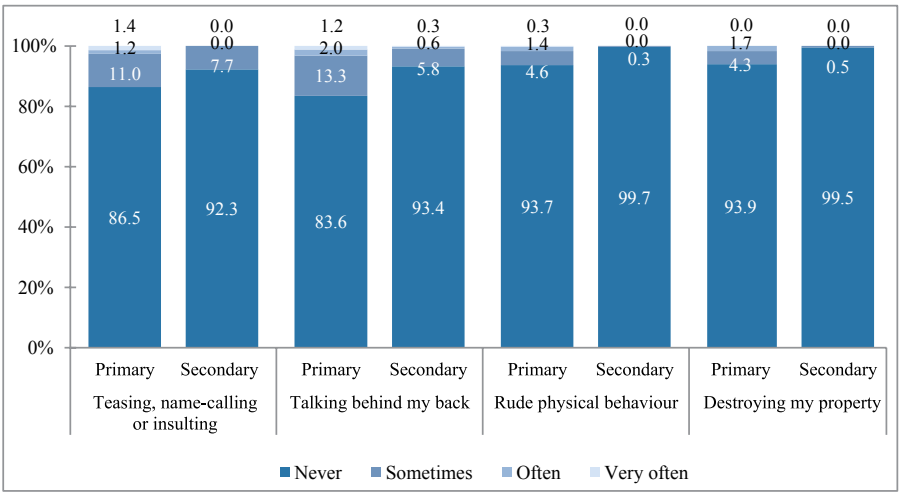


Figure 12: Own experience of verbal and physical violence

The focus group discussions also showed that verbal violence occurs more often than physical violence among the pupils we interviewed and that fights are mainly an issue for younger pupils. Interviews with teachers underpin the finding that younger pupils engage more frequently in violent situations than older pupils. Secondary school teachers indicated for instance that they do observe conflicts and insults among the freshmen in their school – which might be due to the more intensive group building processes in the first year of a new school.

> *"What I experience especially in the younger classes is a very rough communication, which I would not accept, but among them it seems to be ok to talk like this." (teacher, secondary school)*

> *"[Among the primary education pupils] we also had bad fights in front of the school – recently between an Egyptian and a Chechen pupil. But also other pupils from the school were involved as observers." (teacher, middle and secondary school)*

Given the results of the quantitative and the qualitative research, the described differences between the 11-12 year-old and 17-18 year-old pupils can be explained by processes of identity building, which is linked to violence, as well as with the fact that pupils learn how to behave in a more disciplined way during the course of their education.

Gender

Next to age, gender can to a certain extent determine the involvement and experience of interethnic violence or violence in general. Our quantitative and qualitative results show only minor differences between boys and girls in terms the frequency of engagement in and/or observation of violent situations. However, we found out that the experiences of girls and boys differ regarding the forms of violence they engage in as well as regarding their reactions to violent situations.

While boys tend to engage physically in fights, girls tend to be observers of such practices and to support the fighters verbally. Several boys also reported fighting with their classmates during break time but claim that this is only for fun or because they are bored. Others claim to sometimes observe or hear about (arranged) fights between boys. The difference between girls and boys in terms of the forms of violence experienced is illustrated by the following statement:

> *"G. [m] and M. [m] arranged a fight in front of the school because they cannot fight in class, and all the boys and girls watched and also insulted G." (f, 11)*

Additionally, reactions between boys and girls differ in terms of experiences of violence (Figure 13).

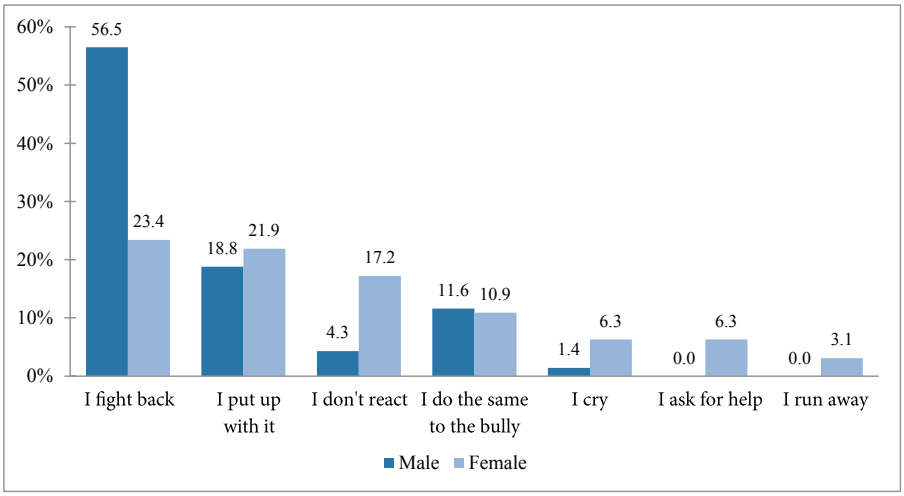


Figure 13: Reactions – differences between boys and girls

Pupils who indicated to have experienced interethnic violence themselves were given seven answer options to choose to the question "How do you react

when you have been treated badly?", as illustrated in Figure 13. The most frequent answers of boys and girls were the same, namely "I fight back", "I put up with it", "I do the same to the bully" and "I don't react". While girls answered in a more differentiated way, boys seem to agree with one predominant statement, namely, "I fight back". The majority (57%) of boys who experienced interethnic violence selected this answer compared to only a quarter of the girls.

Hence, although there are differences along gender lines, especially regarding the experienced form of violence and their reaction to violence, we need to bear in mind that violence is not a "boy thing", as both girls and boys engage in violent situations.

Classroom Situation/Team Spirit

The interviews with teachers showed further that there is another important factor for violence experience of pupils: the classroom situation or the team spirit in the classroom. Most teachers identified differences among classes with respect to the classroom situation:

> *"Their social interaction is friendly /…/. But I think it also depends on the principle which prevails in the classroom – if a certain class culture prevails then the pupils accept it or do nothing to change it." (teacher, secondary school)*

As the above cited teacher stresses each class has its own "class culture", referring to a prevailing concept of behaviour in the classroom. The teacher argues that each class is different regarding its social behaviour in school, which also includes intercultural relations and violence. Teachers and pupils themselves pointed out that school trips, parties or spending leisure time together, for example, help to strengthen the team spirit and avoid conflicts between pupils.

Ethnicity/Nationality – an Intersecting Category

In the case of the Austrian pupils we interviewed, ethnicity/nationality is only a factor that determines or causes violence to a small degree. Our study showed, however, that pupils who belong to the ethnic groups of Kurds, Roma and Sinti are indeed exposed to stereotyping and violence because of their ethnic backgrounds – more so than pupils belonging to other ethnicities. In these cases, pupils referred to stereotypes prevalent in the Austrian society or among pupils of Turkish background to insult these pupils, as the statement of a teacher illustrates:

"Roma pupils often also hide their ethnic backgrounds because they know that they will be insulted." (teacher, middle school)

"Kurdish children are often insulted as 'shepherds' and by shouting 'meeehhh' at them." (teacher, middle school)

As already mentioned, ethnicity or nationality play a certain role in violent situations. Our qualitative study – especially the focus group discussions – helped us to understand that interethnic violence is a dynamic process. For example, pupils often start a dispute about a soccer match and during this dispute or fight ethnicity or nationality – similarly to bodily characteristics – evolve as important factors and are used to insult the respective pupils verbally. Interethnic violence has to be seen in the context of the dynamics of violence: violent situations in the school environment (disputes/fights about a lost soccer match e.g.) might provoke interethnic violent (verbal) practices. During violent processes, for instance, pupils insult each other by referring to each other's respective ethnicity or nationality, which again makes it hard to identify the "real" causes of a violent situation. In many cases the ethnicity/nationality of a pupil does not determine or cause violence but it is used to insult someone during a conflict situation.

Given the above empirical findings it is clear that, while stereotypes regarding ethnicity, nationality, language, religion or culture are used in violent situation, they are not always the causes or determinants of violence. There are other factors and determinants more important than the multiculturality of a school or class when it comes to occurrences of violence. Our analysis showed that age and gender are in particular determining of the frequency and the forms of experienced (interethnic) violence.

Conclusion: Schools as a "Protected Space"

Our analysis of the experiences of pupils with interethnic violence in 16 Austrian schools shows that neither pupils nor teachers perceive violence in general and interethnic violence in particular as a frequent problem in their school environment. On the contrary, schools are perceived as a "protected space" in which teachers, other school staff members and pupils can act to ensure that violence is prevented and tolerance among different ethnic groups can grow. Teachers indicated that they intervene in violent situations immediately and that they are aware of and able to cope with intercultural issues at school – e.g. by

organising multicultural events or outdoor weeks for pupils. However, teachers also claim that financial and time resources for violence prevention in particular and social issues in general are lacking in schools. Thus, the agency of teachers is determined by scarce resources. Most of the selected schools in Austria did not have a long-term approach to fostering (intercultural) tolerance and to avoiding (intercultural) violence. Also, some of our findings indicate that interethnic violence does occur beyond the "protected space" and outwit school bounds. However, multicultural schools might be seen as good examples for preventing interethnic violence.

Furthermore, perceptions and experiences differ among the interviewed pupils. Violence at school is determined by several factors, namely age, gender, classroom situation and to a lesser extent by ethnicity/nationality. Our results show – and confirm previous studies (Stefanek et al., 2012, 80) – that major differences in experiences of (interethnic) violence can be observed between the 11-12 year-old and 17-18 year-old school pupil age groups. While the 11-12 year-old pupils indicate sometimes being involved in different forms of violent situations, the older age group (17-18 years) hardly experiences (interethnic) violence at school. The difference between the two age groups is especially evident when it comes to the observation and experience of physical forms of (interethnic) violence: younger pupils engage in physical fights more often than older ones. On the other hand the Austrian case shows that while both, boys and girls are involved in violent situations their experiences differ mainly with respect to forms of violence and to their reactions to violent situations. While boys tend to engage physically in fights, girls are more often observers of such practices. The results of our quantitative and qualitative studies also show that the interviewed girls are less eager to react with violence when peers (try to) hurt them than boys. Boys do "fight back" when they experience violent situations.

Moreover, we found that the classroom situation – and especially an existing team spirit among pupils – contributes to a less frequent experience of violence in the school environment and to more tolerance among pupils (see also Stefanek et al., 2012, 86). Thus, in the case of the Austrian pupils we interviewed, ethnicity/nationality is only to a restricted degree a factor that determines or causes violence. Rather, violent situations like disputes during sports might also, in the case of violent dynamics, provoke violent interethnic (verbal) practices. However, pupils of certain ethnic backgrounds, namely Roma, Sinti and Kurds, do experience violence due to their ethnicity. This might be due to the fact that pupils of these ethnic backgrounds are more likely to find themselves in a "minority position"

in the classroom than for instance pupils of ex-Yugoslavian or Turkish ethnic background. It is interesting that Strohmeier and Spiel (2005) – as illustrated in the introduction – also found that their "rest group pupils" – pupils who do not have German, ex-Yugoslavian or Turkish/Kurdish as their everyday language, the most frequent everyday languages in Austrian schools – are more likely to be victims of interethnic violence.

In the light of the above discussion, it is clear that we have to be careful when analysing (interethnic) violence in the school environment because experiences are determined by different factors. Violence is not always – as it may seem to be – caused or determined by the ethnicity, nationality, language or religion of pupils, but fights and disputes might evolve into intercultural violence in the course of a violent process, in which pupils insult each other by referring to ethnic stereotypes. Our study also showed that pupils from certain ethnic backgrounds are more often exposed to stereotyping than others. Future studies should thus aim to analyse and compare the experiences of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. This would help to develop concrete measures to invalidate prevalent stereotypes in the schools environment and to prevent violence on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality, language or religion.

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Educational Institutions in the Face of Multiculturalism: Problems and Solutions to Interethnic Violence in Italian Schools

Giovanni Delli Zotti and Ornella Urpis

Introduction

The Italian situation is rather complex in terms of its ethnic and linguistic composition. In fact, in addition to people arriving in Italy as part of recent immigrations, indigenous national minorities and several other ethnic and/or linguistic groups are also present. At school level, this is reflected in the presence, in some regions, of schools where teaching is carried out in the languages of national minorities or so-called local autochthonous groups, the most recent legislation has introduced optional teaching of local cultures and languages. Finally, Italy has experienced, during the first post war decades, a huge internal migration that brought thousands of new immigrants to the north of Italy, mainly from the south of Italy. These "ethnic" groups maintain ties with their languages and cultures of origin by means of creating cultural circles and realising various initiatives, but we may consider them as well established in the territory – to the point that it is hard, nowadays, to find episodes that may be clearly attributed to interethnic relations among these groups.

Thus, in the Italian version of the research on interethnic violence in the school environment, it has been decided to record any kind of cultural and linguistic self-identification. However, the analysis has been limited to the interactions between Italian and non-Italian pupils, the latter further being subdivided into Europeans and non-Europeans, with reference to the country of origin.

Concerning the present description of the research results, we may say that "institutions" is somehow the catchword that will accompany the reader throughout the presentation. As will be seen, the pupils interviewed by means of the structured questionnaire as well as those who participated in the focus groups appear to be quite confident and feel that they inhabit a protected environment when they are in school; they also feel that they can rely on their teachers. We may say that pupils have a true picture in the sense that Italian legislation and, consequently, the Italian school system, as will be illustrated in the first part of the present work, do actually take care of the problem of the presence in schools and classes of non-Italian pupils, primarily children of recently immigrated families.

Thus it is not by chance the chapter concludes with an example of "good practice" that was recently introduced in the Region of origin of the Italian research group (Friuli Venezia Giulia); one that, needless to say, consists in a Memorandum of Agreement between several local institutions aiming at addressing the phenomenon of bullying.

Immigration: Challenges and Changes in Italian Society

Citizenship and Nationality

Citizenship is one of the founding principles of contemporary society and the heart of the concept of democracy and national identity. The classic concept of citizenship remains the one formulated by the economist T. H. Marshall (1976): a set of rights that belong to every citizen, whatever his or her wealth and social position. In Marshall's vision, the development of citizenship consisted in the gradual expansion of these rights (from civil to political and, finally, social rights) to ever-wider layers of the population.

It should be noted that citizenship is a problematic and in some respects a controversial right because on the one hand it binds individuals within a political community while on the other it excludes those who do not belong to it. In many countries today, there are important social groups to whom full participation

in political life is denied. They are not entitled to exercise real rights due to their social, cultural and economic exclusion, which establishes a condition of "differentiated citizenship"; that is to say, they suffer a different type of exclusion, according to a different type of cultural belonging (Kymlicka, 1995). This is the case with those immigrant workers for whom Italian citizenship in not easily achieved (to be euphemistic); almost no matter for how many years they have lived and worked in the country. This also occurs to the children of immigrants from whom the same duties are required as from others but whose identification with the institutions of the state in which they were born (Italy), or in which they have lived for a long time, is problematic. Citizenship, in fact, occurs when people share to a large extent the same culture, institutions as well as a common "destiny"; on the other hand, multiple identification connected with belonging to a different cultural backgrounds, socialisation in different environments (school, family, peer group) and the denial of recognition of citizenship, causes young people to not develop a full anchor to institutions and their symbols and may become a source of tension and divergence (Cammarosano and Urpis, 2012).

As for cultural diversity, at enrolment, schools collect data regarding the citizenship of pupils and not regarding their "nationality", which is a more complex – possibly Janus-faced – concept. On the one hand, nationality overlaps with citizenship and indicates membership of a certain state. But it can also mean membership in a "national" or ethno-cultural group living within a state whose majority belongs to another culture. As an ethno-cultural concept, nationality is opposed to the "political" concept of citizenship and implies, at least in some cases, the possibility of individual and collective choice.

The field research conducted in Italy showed that some pupils, when faced by the question: "what is your nationality" (in the sense of ethnic background, not citizenship), often wonder about the meaning of this word. In some instances, although both parents were of foreign origin – and thus the children have been enrolled as "non-Italians" – they answered: "Italian". The situation is even more confused when parents are from two different foreign countries or one is Italian and the other has a foreign origin. In other cases pupils are well aware of their nationality. For example, they answered: "I am Serbian". But then they added: "But I do not know if I am Italian, so maybe my citizenship is Italian; but I am Serbian", finally asking: "What must I write in the questionnaire?" Notwithstanding, it has been decided to use "nationality" as the auto-identification concept, since the problem would have not been solved if we had instead used the expression "cultural background" in the questionnaire, a phrase whose meaning is not understandable to many people, especially children.

Citizenship has instead been not used as a means for auto-identification because it would have created awkward issues for the analysis of results. In high schools (4th year) there are many young adults who were born abroad but who applied for and obtained Italian citizenship. They would have correctly defined themselves as Italians, notwithstanding their sometimes-different cultural and physical traits. Moreover, many pupils coming from India and Africa, Moldova and Ukraine may be still culturally quite different, even though they are in all respects Italian citizens due to the fact that they had been recently adopted by an Italian family. It must be remembered that adoption in Italy is a fairly widespread practice. In terms of interpreting paradoxical results it may be useful to report what happened at "Cosser" School in Gorizia, where the teacher asked one of the researchers to identify all non-Italian children in the class: all those listed by the researcher as non-Italian because of their dark skin and/or facial traits were in fact Italians (adopted), while three others who were similar to "us" in every visible aspect, were not (they remained citizens of Kosovo). Therefore, the same pupil may, for example: (a) be an Italian citizen for the purposes of the school, (b) identify himself as Serbian, and (c) be categorised as a "foreigner" (having a different ethnic background) or an "Italian" by the teacher, depending on perceptions and knowledge.

A problem finally arises as regards the collective name used to describe pupils having a substantially different ethnic background, given that this expression is not appropriate to the scope of the study. Defining them in this way would be misleading since it might imply the exclusion from the group of Italians of all those pupils who belong to internal cultural minorities (Friulians, for example); therefore, it was decided to simply treat them as Italians, not being perceived as "different" and thus not being in any way potential actors in any interethnic conflicts.

In Italian scientific literature, in official statistics and also in documents of the NGOs responsible for taking care of the immigrant populations residing in Italy, people not having Italian citizenship, no matter how long they have been permanently residing in Italy, are called "foreign" – a term that, at least in Italy, simply describes a factual situation and has no particular negative connotation. Realising that the term has, or possibly may have, a negative connotation in other countries, we have decided to define pupils with a different ethnic background as "non-Italians", even if this, as we have seen, does not solve all the problems (e.g. regarding adopted children). "Non-Italian" anyway correctly defines EU27 citizens: they are clearly not Italians, but at the same time not really "foreign", sharing with Italians their European citizenship. Of course, when using statistical sources or transcripts from focus groups or interviews, we are not entitled to "censor" the words originally used.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity, Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

As with other status groups (in Weber's sense), definitions fall along a continuum between two poles (objective and subjective). Objective definitions regard ethnicity as a set of observable traits (language, culture, race, ancestry, etc.), while subjective definitions are (self)categorisations that may be simply described in terms of a general (or generic) sense of belonging. Subjective definitions blur the concept of ethnicity in terms of ethnic identity, a very inclusive categorisation that comprises cognitive, evaluative and affective aspects (Tajfel, 1981) producing separation and aggregation into categories defined in terms of "we" and "they" (Epstein, 1978). This process is particularly important in the context of the present research project, where concepts of ethnic identity are especially fluid due to both the setting and the young age of the subjects. Moreover, categorisation produces evaluations that can be positive (valuations) or negative (devaluations), depending mainly on the source of the evaluation (Chun, 1983): auto-categorisation will lead almost invariably to a positive evaluation, while an externally imposed categorisation will be usually lead to a devaluation.

Multiculturalism is an ethical and political orientation that provides "recognition" to cultural communities, considered as collective subjects; as such, it goes beyond traditional liberalism that recognises only individual rights (Habermas and Taylor, 1998). Hence, multicultural policies are designed to defend and promote rights that are specific to each cultural group. However, the defence/promotion of the (collective) rights of a cultural group might collide with the defence/promotion of the (individual) rights of their members. Moreover, it would create plural and separate citizenships, collapsing an "open" society into a multiplicity of "closed" societies (Savidan, 2010). This is why many of those who appreciate cultural diversity from a perspective of integration rather than separation prefer to speak of interculturalism: an ethical and political project aimed at solving the problems of coexistence between cultural groups by promoting a constant communication and an active cooperation between them. "Multiculturalism suggests a static situation… a mere coexistence between groups of different origins… interculturalism indicates a situation of mutual exchange and of understanding, resulting in cultural enrichment of both society and the single groups" (Marazzi, 1998, 180-1). Interculturalism, primarily applied in education, thus requires the abandonment of all forms of dogmatism and indicates a propensity to draw the best from other cultures.

Immigration in Italy

Immigration is characterised by high dynamism and a strong "submersed" component; it is therefore necessary to employ a variety of statistical sources that only taken together can provide a complete knowledge of the phenomenon. For regular immigration, a major source consists in the counting of residence permits; the Italian Institute of Statistics (Istat) instead collects registrations to each municipality, producing statistics on migratory movements, broken down by gender and citizenship.

Both sources, however, underestimate the data, since most minors are reported only on the residence permits of their parents; moreover, since 2007 the citizens of EU27 member states are exempted from applying for a residence permit, even if they plan to stay in Italy more than three months. Paramount importance is thus to be attributed to the estimates of the Scientific Committee of Caritas/Migrantes on migrant populations that are regularly present, and to statistics concerning newly registered workers, provided by Inail (National institute for Insurance against accidents at work).

The population of migrants resident in Italy has grown very large, especially over the last few years (Table 1). This growth is such that migrants' share of the total Italian population has almost doubled in less than ten years, from 4.1% at the end of 2004 to 7.5% in 2010 (according to the latest available data, they sum now about 5 millions). Within migrant populations, the share of minors is growing slightly, being now about 22% (two thirds being second generation, i.e. born in Italy).

Table 1: Non-Italian population resident in Italy and demographic balance – Years 2004-2010

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Foreign residents at 31st December	2,402,157	2,670,514	2,938,922	3,432,651	3,891,295	4,235,059	4,570,317
Acquisition of Italian citizenship	19,140	28,659	35,266	45,485	53,696	59,369	65,938
Incidence of migrant population at the end of the year	4.1	4.5	5.0	5.8	6.5	7.0	7.5
Minors	501,792	585,496	665,625	767,060	862,453	932,693	993,238
Percentage of minors	20.9	21.9	22.6	22.3	22.2	22.0	21.7
Foreign residents* born in Italy (second generation)**	-	-	398,205	457,345	518,700	572,720	650,802
Percentage of second generation	-	-	13.5	13.3	13.3	13.5	14.2

* Second generation migrants are not automatically given Italian citizenship.
** Since the immigration for Italy is a relatively new phenomenon, with good approximation almost the totality of foreign residents born in Italy (second generation) are minors.
Source: adapted from Istat, 2011 and Caritas/Migrantes, 2012.

Romanians, recently entered in the EU, comprise by far the largest community (about one million residents, accounting for over 20% of the total), followed by Albanians (with just under 500,000, they account for more than 10%) and Ukrainians (4.4%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Foreign resident population by sex, geographical area and main countries of citizenship – 1st January 2010 and 2011

Continent and country of citizenship	N	%	Male/Female %	Variation 2010-2011 %
EUROPE	2,441,467	53.4	76.4	7.6
Romania	968,576	21.2	83.0	9.1
Albania	482,627	10.7	116.2	3.4
Ukraine	200,730	4.4	25.4	15.3
Moldova	130,948	2.9	48.9	24.0
AFRICA	986,471	21.6	146.1	5.9
Morocco	452,424	9.9	129.1	4.8
Tunisia	106,291	2.3	173.6	2.5
Egypt	90,365	2.0	228.3	10.1
ASIA	766,512	16.8	118.8	11.5
China	209,934	4.6	106.8	11.5
Philippines	134,154	2.9	72.9	8.6
India	121,036	2.6	154.3	14.3
AMERICA	372,385	8.1	60.5	8.5
Peru	98,603	2.2	66.3	12.4
Ecuador	91,625	2.0	70.8	6.6
OCEANIA	2,642	0.1	65.9	0.9
Stateless	840	0.0	121.6	-1.6
TOTAL	4,570,317	100.0	92.9	7.9

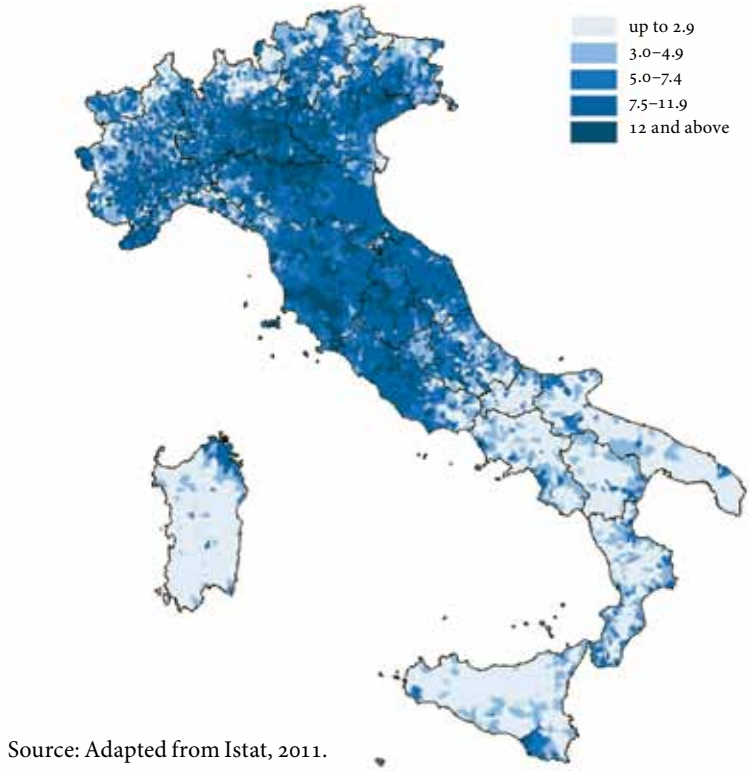
Source: Adapted from Istat, 2011.

More than half of foreign residents in Italy (53.4%) are Europeans, but some very large sized communities come from outside Europe, such as Moroccans (over 400,000, about 10%) and Tunisians (over 100,000, 2.3%); altogether, African immigrants total about 22%. The Chinese community is also quite large (more than 200,000 residents), followed by Filipinos and Indians, for a total of about 17% of immigrants coming from the Asian continent. The share of citizens from the Americas is 8.1%, with most of these coming from Peru and Ecuador.

The last column of Table 2 shows that last year's increase was just under 8%, with several differences at the continental level: a distinct gap can be noticed

between Africa (slowing down, with current growth at 5.9%) and Asia (over 11%.) The highest growth rates are recorded for the citizens of Moldova (+24% in one year), Ukraine (+15%) and Romania (+9%) and, among non-European countries, India (+14.3%) and Peru (+12.4%). The rates of change are lower for Albania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Figure 1: Incidence of migrants by commune at 1st January 2011 (percentage)



Source: Adapted from Istat, 2011.

Figure 1 shows that the spread of migrants in Italy is quite inhomogeneous, with significant concentrations in Centre-North Italy, particularly around urban areas. Summary data in Table 3 show that the presence of immigrants is 10% in Centre-North and less than 3% in the South and the Islands; however, in perspective, the situation would balance, since the youth is currently experiencing much higher growth rates.

The presence of migrant populations in Italy will grow also because of different birth rates: while, in general, the incidence of immigrants is 7.5%, the immigrant population accounts for 16.1% of total births, with a huge difference between

North (over 20%) and South (only 3.9%). This fact reveals that the presence of foreigners in the South is qualitatively different: the much lower percentage of foreign-born children indicates that immigration is a quite recent phenomenon; the "actors" tend to be younger and/or have not yet formed a family union. This can also be noticed by looking at birth rates: on average, it is more than twice that of the Italians.

Table 3: Some indicators related to the balance of the Italian population and immigrants – Year 2010

Region	Percentage composition at the end of the year	Incidence of immigrant population at the end of the year	Percentage last year change	Percentage of foreign born on total births	Birth rate of immigrants (x 1000)	Birth rate of Italians (x 1000)
North-West	35.0	9.9	7.8	20.4	19.8	8.2
North-East	26.3	10.3	6.3	20.8	19.6	8.3
Center	25.2	9.6	7.9	15.7	15.4	8.5
South	9.6	3.1	11.5	3.9	12.5	9.2
Islands	3.9	2.7	11.9	3.9	14.2	9.0
ITALY	100.0	7.5	7.9	13.9	17.7	8.6
Of which in head towns	37.1	9.4	8.6	16.1	15.9	8.2

Source: Adapted from Istat, 2011.

The Italian School System and the Presence of Non-Italian Pupils

The fundamental principles of national legislation on education can be found in the Italian Constitution; specifically in articles 33 and 34, embodied in Title II "*Ethical and social rights and duties*". Article 33 stipulates that it is the State's duty to lay down the regulatory laws of the school system and to ensure that schools of all branches and grades are available to everyone without exception. The same article 33 also states that private schools and other educational institutions may also be established, at no cost to the State. Article 34 introduces the concept of compulsory education for 8 years; more recently, law 53/2003 states that it should last at least 12 years (starting from 6 years old) and defines the duty to ensure that all pupils achieve a qualification within the school system by the age of 18.

In addition to crèche (services for infants), nursery school (from 3 to 5 years old) and, of course, higher education, the Italian school system consists of a first and a second cycle. As regards the first cycle of education, primary school lasts five years (from 6 to 11). Students are divided according to their age into classes (in

small villages schools might have multi-classes) usually made up of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 25-27 students. Middle school lasts three years (from 11 to 14) and concludes the first stage of education with a final exam giving pupils access to the next stage. Classes must have a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 27 students with specialist teachers responsible for teaching one or more subjects.

Presidential Decree 89/2010 stipulates that Lyceums must be divided into 6 different 5-year courses of study/curricula. The first four years are divided into two two-year periods; at the end of the fifth year students must pass a final examination enabling access to university. Four types of lyceums (classical, scientific, linguistic, human sciences) have maintained some features of the traditional pre-existing courses as regards number and type of subjects and timetable (30 hours a week on average). The Technical Institutes courses too last five years and are divided in two biennia and a fifth year, at the end of which students must take a final examination to obtain the Diploma in technical education. The Professional Institutes courses also last five years and award the Diploma in professional education, which enables holders of this qualification to access any university course. They have been reorganised into two main areas: Services and Industry and Handcrafts.

Statistical data show that the proportion of non-Italian students has increased rapidly, from a few thousands in the late 80s to more than 600,000 21 years later; at the same time, the percentage of non-Italian pupils in the total school population grew from a tiny fraction to reach seven per cent. Figure 2 also shows that the non-European component has also increased over time; this must be taken into consideration, since integration of students from these countries is more critical: linguistic diversity adds to greater cultural distance and somatic differences.

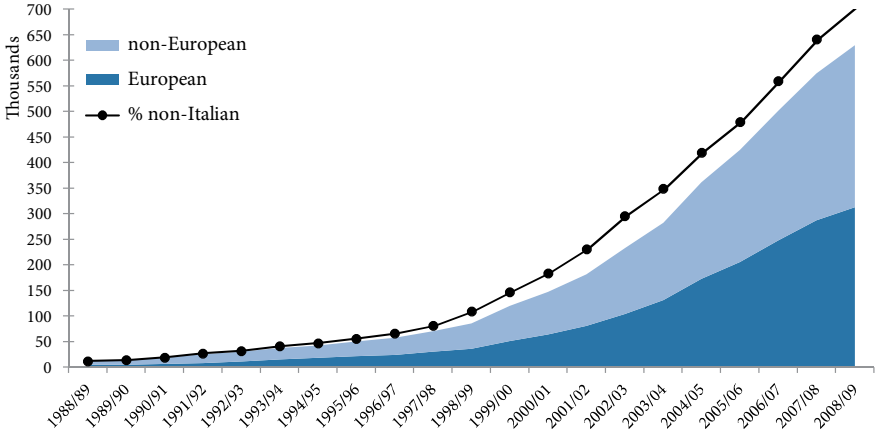


Figure 2: Students with non-Italian citizenship (absolute and percentage values) – School years 1988/89-2008/09

Source: Save the Children - Elaborations on Ministry of Education data, 2011.

The share of non-Italian students in the regions chosen for the research (altogether comprising the North-East macro-region) is higher than the Italian average (Figure 3).

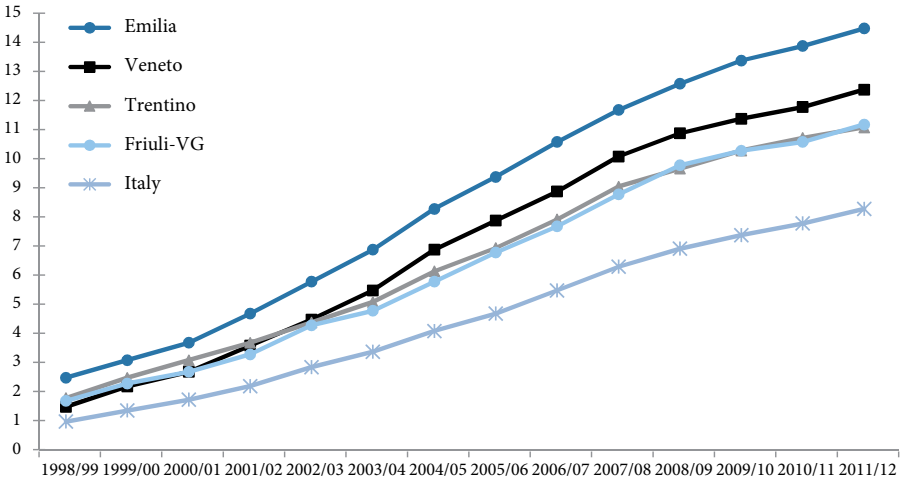


Figure 3: Incidence of non-Italian pupils in Italy and in the North-Eastern regions – School years 1998/99 - 2011/12

Source: Elaborations on Italian Ministry of Education data (various years).

Table 4: Students with non-Italian citizenship by school level for Italy; North-East and Friuli Venezia Giulia – School year 2010/11

	Italy		North-East		Friuli Venezia Giulia		FVG Provinces			
School level	N	%	N	%	N	%	PN	UD	GO	TS
Nursery	144,628	8.6	41,666	13.1	3,753	11.9	16.0	10.6	10.0	8.8
Primary	254,653	9.0	71,857	13.6	5,746	11.2	15.0	9.9	9.2	9.7
Lower Secondary	157,423	8.8	43,841	13.6	3,653	11.7	16.1	9.7	8.7	11.6
Upper Secondary	153,423	5.8	42,585	9.4	4,053	8.7	11.4	8.1	7.7	7.2
Total	710,263	7.9	199,949	12.3	17,205	10.7	14.4	9.5	8.8	9.2

Source: Elaboration of Statistical Service of RAFVG on Ministry of Education data, 2012.

Table 4 allows a quick comparison between the different territories: while the overall incidence of non-Italian pupils in Italian schools is around 8%, in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (FVG) the figures reaches almost 11% and in the North-East area it exceeds 12% (gaps having a similar width for all grade levels). Even more

interesting is to examine the considerable differences among the provinces of FVG; in practice, most of the difference between FVG and Italy overall is attributable to the significantly larger quota of non-Italian students in the province of Pordenone.

The top 10 countries of origin, together accounting for over 70% of non-Italian students enrolled in Friuli Venezia Giulia, are listed in Table 5. In the first place, Albanian pupils amount to 17.4% in Friuli Venezia Giulia and around 14% in North-East and Italy. In second place, both in Italy and FVG, Romanians count for 13.5% in FVG and almost 17% in Italy; in third place Serbs reach 11.9% in FVG and only 2.6% in Italy. The two following ethnic groups (Ghanaians and Bosnians) are fairly numerous in Friuli Venezia Giulia (more than 5% of incidence); while in Italy overall these ethnicities are rather marginal (just over 1%). As regards the Moroccans, we may notice the opposite situation, since their incidence in FVG schools is below 5%, three times less than in North-East and in Italy.

The immigration into the Friuli Venezia Giulia region reveals different features, as illustrated by the fact that the same top 10 nationalities that in FVG count for more than 70%, in Italy count for less than 60% (North-East being in an intermediate situation); actually, several nationalities that make up rather greater numbers in Italy, account for approximately 2% or less to the total in Friuli.

Table 5: Non-Italian pupils by main country of origin and gender (absolute values and percentages) – School year 2008/09

	Italy			North-East			Friuli-Venezia Giulia		
Country of Origin	N	% F	%	N	% F	%	N	% F	%
Albania	91,829	47.5	14.6	24,806	47.8	13.9	2,699	48.0	17.4
Romania	105,682	49.7	16.8	21,423	49.7	12.0	2,101	50.4	13.5
Serbia	16,151	47.5	2.6	9,492	47.7	5.3	1,848	46.4	11.9
Ghana	8,401	49.1	1.3	5,284	49.1	3.0	907	48.5	5.8
Bosnia-Herzegovina	6,751	46.6	1.1	3,771	46.4	2.1	796	45.2	5.1
Morocco	83,608	46.1	13.3	27,829	46.7	15.6	702	46.2	4.5
Macedonia	15,211	45.4	2.4	6,408	45.3	3.6	562	45.4	3.6
China	30,776	46.0	4.9	9,670	46.3	5.4	541	46.8	3.5
Croatia	2,998	49.1	0.5	1,828	49.2	1.0	487	48.3	3.1
Bangladesh	8,960	43.5	1.4	3,558	44.2	2.0	342	43.0	2.2
Rest of the World	258,993	-	41.2	64,345	-	36.1	4,543	-	29.3
Total	629,360	47.6	100.0	178,414	47.7	100.0	15,528	47.5	100.0

Source: Elaboration of Statistical Service RAFVG on Istat data, 2011.

The table also shows that the female percentage on the total of non-Italian students is less than 50%, while their share of total Italian students exceeds 50% (due to an increased participation of Italian girls in secondary school during the last decades). In addition, we notice a lower female participation for Islamic (Bangladesh and Morocco), and partially Islamic countries (Bosnia); Chinese student population too is placed just below the average.

A large proportion of non-Italian students (more than one third) was born in Italy (where *jus soli* does not apply); their incidence varies greatly according to their school level: almost three-quarters in nursery and less than half in primary school, dramatically dropping to less than 20% in secondary and significantly less than 10% in upper secondary. This is obvious enough: immigration changed – both quantitatively and qualitatively – only recently; thus, it had no time enough for its full effect to be felt in the secondary school environment.

Table 6 clearly shows that the choices of non-Italian students are especially directed towards the technical and professional institutes.

Table 6: Students without Italian citizenship by type and school year: school Grade II – School year 2011/12

Type of school	N	%	Per 100 enrolled
Classical high school	6,051	3.7	2.1
Scientific high school	16,936	10.3	2.8
Language high school	504	0.3	3.0
Former school masters	8,240	5.0	3.8
Technical institute	62,981	38.4	7.1
Professional institute	64,852	39.5	12.1
Arts institute	4,960	3.0	5.0
Total	164, 012	100.0	6.2

Source: Adapted from Miur, 2012.

The Italian Legislation on Minorities and Minors

The present work deals mainly with pupils with non-Italian citizenship, children of immigrants; anyhow, it may be of some interest to provide a brief introduction on the legislation dealing with the protection of autochthonous minorities, foreseen in articles 2, 3 and 6 of the Italian Constitution dealing with the inviolable rights of the person, of equality before the law and the safeguard of linguistic minorities.

By virtue of these principles, law n. 482/99 "on the protection of historical linguistic minorities" formally recognises the presence of twelve ethnic and linguistic minorities, but article 6 of the Constitution was actually applied before 1999 in some regions such as Friuli-Venezia Giulia: article 2 of the Regional Law 15/1996 states in fact that that "protection of the Friulian language and culture (is) a central issue for the development of special autonomy".

The state laid down specific rules to protect the Slovene linguistic minority and art. 11 of law 38/2001 specifies that "in schools where the teaching language is Slovene, use of Slovene is permitted when communicating with the school, both orally and in writing, in official documents and public signs".

As regards minors, it has been already stated that non-Italian children are a heterogeneous group: some of them live with at least one parent legally residing in Italy (accompanied minors); others with parents who are not legally resident and others without parents or other adults legally responsible for assisting or representing them (unaccompanied minors). In addition to this, all children in Italy are accorded the rights guaranteed in the New York Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and, according to the Italian Consolidated Act on immigration, "the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration".

Foreign children up to 14 years of age, in possession of a Family Reunion Resident Permit or a Resident Permit for Accompanying Family Members, are registered on one of their parents' residence permits. Children aged over 14 years can obtain an autonomous Residence Permit for family reasons. Unaccompanied minors are reported to the Committee for Foreign Children that firstly searches family members of the child in the origin's country or in other countries and then checks if the authorities of the country of origin can take custody of the child. Additionally, the Committee decides whether it is better for the child to remain in Italy or to be included in an assisted return program.

The Consolidated Act on Immigration also makes provision for rights to health care, to employment and to education. By virtue of the latter, all foreign children who also lack a valid residence permit are entitled to attend any kind of school level (not only compulsory education). Enrolment of non-Italian minors is based on the same procedures and requirements as envisaged for Italian children and can be requested at any time during the school year. The effectiveness of the right to education is guaranteed by the State, Regions and Local Authorities and includes also participation in Italian language courses. In Italy, the legal protection of minors is guaranteed by the Youth Court, acting as first instance courts for all administrative, civil or penal proceedings involving minors. Although there is no "national ombudsman for children" and no specific legislation in

Italy, there have been some Regional ombudsmen established to promote the rights of children and adolescents and the supervision of children living in community or in custody. Italian regional governments have also initiated actions of coordination, collection and processing of data on the condition of children and adolescents in their territory.

The Integration of Non-Italian Pupils into Italian Schools

According to Circular Letters 205/1990 and 73/1994, a simple integration of non-Italian pupils is not enough: a dialogue between different cultures and a wider perspective, taking into consideration common values, is also needed. Thus, school education should promote the knowledge of Italian and European history and culture, at the same time promoting the knowledge of the culture and religion of children's country of origin, this way helping integration and overcoming prejudice. Accordingly, even though the non-Italian pupil's enrolment in the classroom by age is preferred, other criteria may be considered. For example, pupils with an insufficient knowledge of Italian may be enrolled in a lower class, with respect to age and previous studies. However, since this could be penalizing, *ad hoc* courses are organised (e.g. learning groups, laboratories) to strengthen language knowledge in a climate of openness between cultures. Intercultural education is the background against which specific training courses for non-Italian students take place with the purpose of establishing a daily practice of respect and coexistence. Another aim is to reject both the logic of assimilation and the establishment or strengthening of closed ethnic communities.

At present, "school autonomy" enables the construction of educational projects based on the *biographical and relational uniqueness* of the pupils. Even though not explicitly mentioning non-Italian students, school reform Act 53/2003 provides a basis for the potential development of all students, through the personalisation of the curriculum and the construction of individual learning paths.

Compulsory education is planned for all children legally resident in Italy, regardless of their nationality. The application can be filled in by the family of the non-Italian child *at any time* during the school year. Irregular students, or those without personal documents, will be admitted *conditionally*; a condition not affecting the achievement of qualifications at each level of the school system. School staff members are not required to report the illegal status of pupils attending school without a regular permit of stay. In order to activate the procedures for reception and custody or assisted repatriation, the educational institution must instead

report the presence of pupils without parents or other adults legally responsible for their protection. In order to arrange, if necessary, specific interventions, the school assesses the student's previous learning achievement and, at the same time, requests some documents (permit of stay, health documents, education records).

The Ministerial Circular n. 24/2006 underlines the importance of the presence of a *commission*, formed by a small group of teachers, which can handle the communication with the families, if necessary using interpreters or cultural mediators. Non-Italian pupils' families have, in fact, at least two kinds of main problems: language and difficulty in understanding the educational choices made by schools.

In principle, non-Italian students must attend the educational activities of the class in which they are enrolled; otherwise they can attend separate lectures, following a *personal study plan* to learn, for example, Italian. In order to facilitate language learning, schools increased the use of textbooks in original language, bi- or multi-lingual, "eased" texts, dictionaries in different languages, videos and CD-ROMs.

It's also important to remind that article 4 of the DPR n. 275/1999, concerning the autonomy of educational institutions, establishes that schools have the responsibility to find different criteria of evaluation for non-Italian pupils (in particular for the *new arrivals*), in compliance with the national legislation. According to this prescription, schools have been directed towards a model of *formative assessment*, instead of a mere *certification assessment*, adapting educational proposals to the real needs of the pupils and defining individualised objectives for the improvement of processes and outcomes.

The distribution of non-Italian students in the classrooms is defined by the Ministerial Circular n. 2/2010, dealing with specific problems that characterise the education of non-Italian pupils (early school leaving, poor knowledge of Italian language, need of differentiated teaching courses). The number of non-Italian students in a class is fixed on the basis of their knowledge of Italian language: the purpose is to guarantee the right to education, meaning not only access to school, but also to be able to reach a good educational level, regardless of linguistic and cultural diversity. Pupils with non-Italian citizenship normally should not exceed 30% of each class; a limit that may be increased or reduced according to the presence of non-Italian pupils already possessing adequate language skills or, on the contrary, inappropriate knowledge for an effective participation in the educational activities.

Italian law doesn't distinguish between the roles of linguistic and cultural mediator; in fact, there is not a real distinction between the two. The article 40 of the Law n. 40/1998 affirms that State, Regions, Provinces and Municipalities

have the obligation to encourage the employment, in their own structures, of non-Italian people as cultural mediators in order to help migrants in their relationships with the administration. However, just a few areas have a list of mediators who may be employed in case of need. Schools with a constant presence of non-Italian students (that means that a linguistic or cultural mediator is often called to help them), have to establish the characteristics of this professional figure, used as an educational support for those who need it, but must do so in the absence of clear legislation and a lack of money that reduces the range of action of mediators in schools (Urpis, 2010).

The Ministerial Circular 24/2006 identifies four areas of focus for mediators, at the same time confirming the assimilation of linguistic and cultural mediators:

- reception duties, mentoring and facilitation for newly arrived students and their families,
- mediation for teachers: the mediator provides them with information about the school system of the non-Italian student, his/her school and personal story,
- interpretation and translation (school papers, notices, etc.) for the parents of the non-Italian students, especially during the meeting with school teachers and
- proposals on intercultural education, aiming to promote the different cultures and traditions.

As mentioned above, the national legislation defines the way through which the State may finance incentives for projects relating to *risk areas* with a very high percentage of immigration and for projects that aim to reduce exclusion in schools. The General Director of the Regional Education Office, in cooperation with local Trade Unions, may establish the duration and contents of the projects and the system of evaluation of the results. At the national level, criteria should take proper account of the following aspects:

- the project should be inserted within the *Plan of Educational Offer*,
- teaching staff must be involved in the project,
- analysis of the territory and of the particular needs of the students should be carried out,
- particular attention should be taken for students who are at risk of dropping out of school,
- all components of the school, with particular attention to families, must be involved,
- the project must be consistent with the curriculum of the class and the subjects provided,
- the learning process must involve the student through a wide range of activities: laboratories, use of creativity, etc.

Italian Schools in the Face of Cultural Complexity and Bullying

Methodology of the Research

Data have been collected using a structured questionnaire agreed with all the partners of the research; a "school questionnaire" was also employed to collect data about the school and specific data about the classes involved in the survey. The survey was organised in two phases: a *pilot study* (October 2011) and the *field study* from November 2011 to February 2012. The administration of the questionnaires took place in a very cooperative atmosphere among students, teachers and headmasters. Indeed, especially in the primary schools, the questionnaire led to an interesting debate on the issues of violence, racism and diversity.

Although it offered an interesting standpoint for the analysis of the cultural diversity, the questionnaire used to collect information on the school context presented the same critical points. The first aspect is related to the aggregation of schools in *Comprehensive Institutes*: this makes it somewhat difficult to collect disaggregated data for each single school. Another critical aspect relates to enrolled students actually not attending school: school data refer to the first month of the school year and do not take account of ongoing changes in the composition of classes.

Moreover, due to the constraints of a research of a comparative nature, data concerning adopted children were practically lost. At a secondary school in Trieste, for example, 25 adopted pupils should be added to the 90 non-Italian pupils, since they are Italians citizens, albeit with a non-Italian ethnic background. A specific situation is represented by pupils involved in the international protection procedure for obtaining the status of refugee, accorded after only 5 years of permanent residence in Italy (this is very common among immigrants from former Yugoslavia). Another singularity is represented by children who obtained Italian citizenship because of their Italian roots (a typical condition of grandchildren of last century Italian migrants and of Albanians). We can thus say that multi-ethnicity is a feature of Italian schools and that the criterion of citizenship used in collecting administrative data isn't exhaustive in order to describe the complexity of the Italian school system situation.

As regards the qualitative stage of research, four focus groups were conducted in Friuli Venezia Giulia and in Veneto, all of them in schools where the quantitative survey was carried out. Each focus group was attended by 5-6 pupils chosen by

teachers on the basis of gender and cultural difference (three Italians and three non-Italians). One focus group was composed of all females (three of them foreign adopted), since males in the class did not want to participate. The discussion started from the theme of diversity and then went on to collect testimonies of oppression and violence between peers.

Eight teachers were also interviewed: two from each school where focus groups were conducted and six experts, consisting of the Director of the National bureau against racial discrimination, a pedagogue, the Chairman of the Minors court of Trieste, a former undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, a volunteer of San Egidio Community (Rome) and a headmaster. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using a trace, but following an overtly communicative empathic approach.

The elementary schools selected for the research are all located in an urban environment: two are in city centre locations, five in urban areas and one in a suburban location. The number of students enrolled in the eight selected schools in the year 2011/12 is variable: both schools with between 200 and 300 students and larger schools were selected. The incidence of non-Italian pupils is 17.3%, with significant variations from school to school showing a sort of *migration chain*. Since school choice is not necessarily connected to residence proximity, migrant families may tend to choose schools where more structured intercultural programs are present. At the same time, Italian families can enrol their children in schools with a lower presence of non-Italians. Nationalities counted in selected schools are 85, with higher numbers of pupils from Albania, Morocco, China, Romania and Moldova; although heterogeneity among schools is quite high.

The secondary schools which took part in the study are also all located in urban environments: three in the city centre, three in the urban area and two in the suburbs. The survey was conducted only in technical and professional institutes, since almost 80% of non-Italian students are enrolled in this kind of school; a choice probably connected with the possibility to find faster job opportunities. In selected secondary schools, the incidence of non-Italian students is 16.7%, again varying significantly from school to school. As for elementary schools, non-Italian students and their families pay attention to interculturality programmes adopted by schools. The eight selected schools enrolled between 300 and more than thousand students in 2011/12. From the gender point of view, females are prevalent: in this respect, the particular curricula have a strong influence on gender distribution. In selected secondary schools, prevailing nationalities are in about the same proportion as that seen above for elementary schools, with a slight majority of students from Balkan countries (heterogeneity is again very high).

Support and Help in Schools

Some preliminary interesting findings of the research have been obtained by the analysis of the "school questionnaire" that permitted the assessment that prevention projects related to ethnic or interethnic violence are not common. Data on this aspect were not collected, partly because ethnic violence is considered not so relevant by teachers. A broad diffusion of practices connected to interculturality has instead been ascertained in all schools with two different types of intervention for two different targets: newly arrived non-native Italians and Italian natives with a good knowledge of Italian language.

As for the first target, all schools have launched *Welcoming Protocols* (Protocollo di Accoglienza – PDA) for students having already started a scholastic career in other countries. PDAs usually include briefings with non-Italian students and their families, with the presence of linguistic mediators, whose aim is to provide details about the organisation of the Italian school system and to guide students in choosing the most appropriate course of study. Schools establish the language proficiency of non-Italian students and offer support activities and linguistic mediation in the classroom. Inside the PDA, the establishment of an *Interculture Commission* is also foreseen, and many schools created a *Multicultural Library*, with mono- and bilingual dictionaries, classical texts, technical manuals and multimedia tools using a vocabulary appropriate for the language skills of non-Italian students. Extracurricular courses of Italian as a second language are also organised; in some schools Italian students are identified as tutors for non-Italian students.

A second type of practices aims to raise awareness among Italian and non-Italian students about the topic of integration: this is the case of the *Peace, solidarity and interculturality project* and of intercultural festivals, where children learn customs and traditions of the world.

Several schools pay special attention to the relations between families and school institutions; this is possible due to the presence of linguistic mediators that facilitate communication. In some instances, specific Italian language courses are offered to student's parents; thanks to the advice of experts, parents are able to follow the child in performing household tasks, at the same time improving their Italian competence.

As anticipated, specific practices concerning interethnic violence are less common; usually schools don't have specific projects. In general, initiatives of this kind are more present in secondary than in elementary schools. We also noticed self-managed assemblies in secondary schools: students proposing topics for discussion, lectures, views of movies related to the more relevant issues in

school life (often including bullying, violence and integration). A *Do the right thing* project was realised, aiming at promoting the culture of citizenship by training pupils on conflict mediation, cyber bullying and respect in the community.

Cultural Diversity and the Principle of Equality

Students generally have no particular suspicion towards those with a different ethnic background. They tend to observe and judge the personal qualities of their peers, according a particular significance to their specific behaviour and characteristics and neglecting cultural diversity. What matters seems to be the person as such, not his/her origin. At first there may be some hesitation, but eventually this is overcome. They often claim that we are all equal even if we have differences and this open attitude leads them to consider the other for what he/she really is and not for what he/she represents:

> *"The colour of the skin doesn't count as well. What counts is how one is within and without. The colour of the skin doesn't count anyway, even if one is a 'foreigner' he is always a person." (m, 10)*

A battery of seven questions was aimed to explore the attitude of acceptance of cultural diversity, starting from "all men are equal", a statement of principle accepted with "strongly agree" by half of the students. Another third or so chose the answer "agree". This statement is thus shared by the vast majority of students; as such, it becomes more interesting to explore the "disagree" side (about 7% overall).

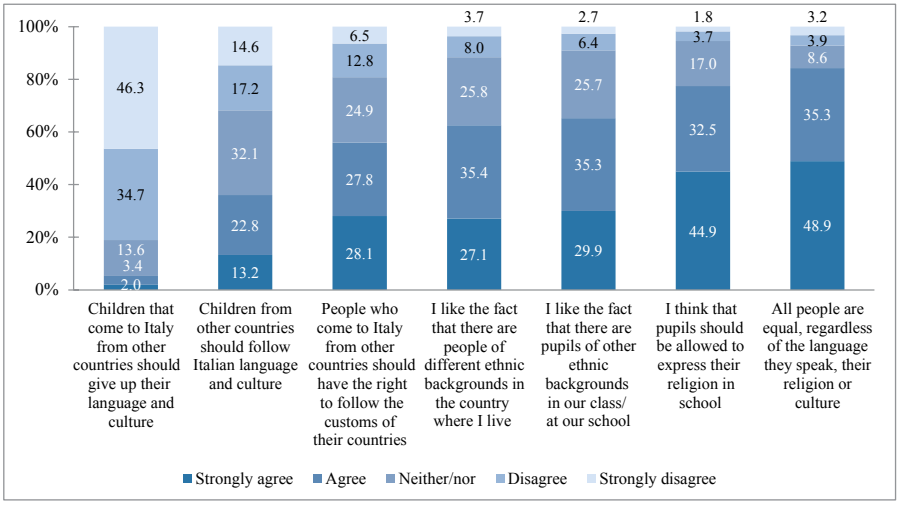


Figure 4: Agreement/disagreement on statements on equality

The breakdown of disagreement by nationality (Table 7) shows an accentuation within non-Italian pupils (13% among non-Europeans). This apparently paradoxical situation helps us realise that not agreeing with the statement does not necessarily mean discarding equality, but simply noting that this is an aspiration that is contradicted by reality (something like saying "it would be nice, but…"). A large majority (77%) also accepts the assertion that pupils should be free to express their religious beliefs at school, with a slight accentuation by females and, unsurprisingly, by non-Italian pupils. A greater difference is found in comparing the answers by type of school (over 85% share this statement in primary school and less than 70% in secondary school).

Table 7: Agree and strongly agree on statements on equality by age/kind of school, gender and nationality (percentages)

Statements	General	Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
		Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
All people are equal, regardless of the language that they speak, their religion or culture.	83.9	90.1	77.6	79.8	88.1	84.0	85.0	82.1
I think that pupils should be allowed to express their religion in school.	77.0	85.6	68.2	73.9	79.9	75.3	82.5	85.1
I like the fact that there are pupils of other nationalities or ethnic backgrounds in our class or school.	64.7	77.6	51.4	62.9	66.6	60.0	88.8	76.1
I like the fact that there are people of different ethnic backgrounds in the country where I live.	62.3	76.8	47.4	59.8	64.9	57.3	83.8	79.1
People who come from other countries should have the right to follow the customs of their countries.	55.7	77.9	33.0	59.6	52.1	50.4	77.5	74.6
I think that children that come from other countries should follow our language and culture.	35.9	21.5	50.6	34.8	36.5	37.6	28.8	29.9
Children that come from other countries should give up their language and culture.	5.3	3.6	7.1	6.7	3.7	6.5	0.0	1.5

Moving from very general statements to situations with highest impact on the lives of respondents, the situation changes. In fact, asking whether they like the fact that there are pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in their classroom or school, the agreement drops to just under two thirds. If one looks only at the answers given by the Italians, the percentage only slightly exceeds half of this sub-sample (non-Italians instead agree in about 80% of cases). Similar results may be ascertained when asking whether one likes or not the presence of migrant people in Italy. More than half of the students (56%) prove to be considerably open-minded when they agree with the statement "people should have the right to follow the customs of their country". It should be noted that the statement is not so trivial as it may appear at first glance because foreign "customs" may include beliefs and practices that many people would judge repugnant or immoral. Hence, the percentage of tolerance is quite high. This positive attitude towards cultural diversity is not fully confirmed by the answers to the statement "children from other countries should follow Italian language and culture", with which around one third of the students agree (32%) and one third disagree (36%). The quota of those who disagree (the "multiculturalists") is perhaps lower than we might expect; however, it is probable that many students think that Italian culture and language are powerful vehicles of integration for non-Italian children living in our country.

Perception and Evaluation of Cultural Diversity

Kids show a clear perception of cultural diversity. Even pupils in the primary school know exactly how to identify those who are different, either because they bear different genes or because they belong to a different culture; they also know how to identify which type of culture an individual belongs to.

Table 8: Ethnic composition of family by internationality/ethnic background

Nationality of parents		General	Nationality/Ethnic background		
			Italian	European	Non-European
Both Italian		71.8	89.2	3.8	6.0
One Italian		7.3	7.2	8.8	6.0
Both non-Italian		20.9	3.5	87.5	88.1
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N	714	567	80	67

In Table 8, parents' nationalities are combined: families in which both parents are Italians slightly exceed 70%, mixed families are 7.3% and those with both parents non-Italian are slightly over 20%. The breakdown by nationality shows many cases of "mismatch" between the nationality of pupils and parents, due in part to adoptions.

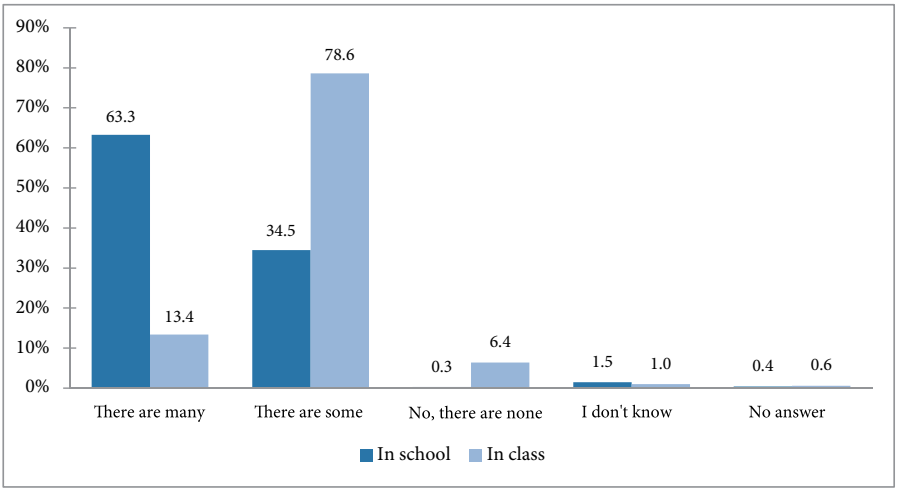


Figure 5: Pupils of different ethnic background in school and class

In the surveyed schools – both in the elementary and in the secondary – pupils of non-Italian nationality comprise little more than 20%, with a perfect balance between Europeans (other than Italian) and non-Europeans in the elementary schools and, on the other hand, a higher quota of Europeans in secondary schools. Since classes have been carefully selected to assure a presence of non-Italian pupils that may be higher than the school average it's interesting to note that, within the classes, the presence of non-Italians is perceived as less "impactful", since only 13.4% of respondents said that they are "many", even when the percentage reaches almost two thirds when talking about the school as a whole. Since in classes pupils with a different background make up just a few units, they may not be defined as "many"; while, summing up to tents in the school, this may be considered "many" even if the share is the same in the two contexts.

At any rate, pupils' perceptions of cultural diversity does not imply the construction of a hierarchy between cultures; they often repeat the mantra that we are all equal but at the same time all different; and that we all have the same rights:

"Well ... what does it mean to be different?"

"In my opinion, being different means, for example, having a different face, having a different hair colour, different qualities..." (f, 10)

"Does the fact of being different from another person help others or yourself in some way to better understand who you are?"

"Well, it helps others and helps me, too." (f, 10)

"It helps you because it makes you different from the others, which means that you are unique." (m, 10)

"So do you think we are all unique or all the same?"

"Unique, but we all have the same rights and the same duties." (m, 10)

"What rights do you have?"

"The right to go to school, to be treated well, to receive respect from people." (m, 10)

The widespread refusal to attach a value (positive or negative) to diversity is very interesting because it means that in students' stereotypes there is little or no implicit negative judgment of those who bear different physical traits:

"So, in your opinion, does the concept of diversity carry with it the concept of inferiority too? You seem to connect the two, don't you?"

"Sometimes yes, but I do not think so." (m, 10)

"So, according to you, to be different does not necessarily mean to be of a lower status…"

"Exactly." (m, 10)

"Or a higher status... What does it mean to be lower then?"

"Someone thinks that somebody is inferior to him because he is not sometimes of the same race, does not speak the same language, does not profess the same religion or doesn't have the same economic opportunities or a wealthy family that pampers him and so on." (f, 10)

"Think so because nobody can be inferior to someone else because we are all equal." (m, 10)

"We are equal in value, even if we are different physically or psychologically. If you have less money, this doesn't mean you are trash or something like that because, being all human beings, we all have a very high value." (f, 10)

The students are likely to recognise diversity without giving positive or negative judgments. An individual may be considered "different" and nevertheless be judged only on his behaviour and his personality. He or she is a person and his or her particular cultural background is not so relevant.

Open–Mindedness towards Cultural Diversity

Students' orientation toward universalistic standards is also confirmed by the answers to specific questions that were aimed at testing "in practice" what was stated "in principle" by proposing real-world situations and asking pupils whether they were willing to accept pupils of different ethnic background.

Firstly, it was asked if they were willing to sit next to a child not speaking Italian well, belonging to a different religion or having a different skin colour. It's (perhaps) surprising that the highest overall level of acceptance is reached by the different skin colour (accepted by about 70%), compared with differences in language and religion (both lie anyway above 60%). The same was also proposed as a motive for being or not being friends of pupils with the same characteristics; in this instance, the level of acceptance rises by five to over ten percentage points.

Looking at Figure 6, one can see in general a greater acceptance in primary schools, with the only exception of being willing to be a friend of someone who does not speak well your language ("no problem" for almost 80% in secondary school and slightly more than 70% in the primary).

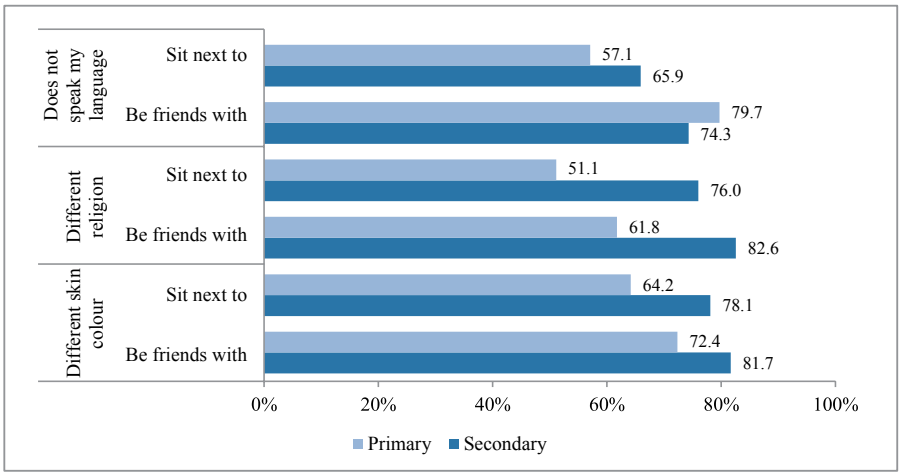


Figure 6: Happy to sit next to and would be friends with pupils of different ethnic background by age/kind of school

Looking at gender (Table 9), there are no exceptions to the general "rule": for all situations, females describe themselves as more open to diversity than males. Finally, non-Italian pupils systematically appear to be more "welcoming" than Italians; quite often the difference exceeds twenty percentage points.

Table 9 - Happy to sit next and to be friends with pupils of different ethnic background by gender and nationality

Statements	General	Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
		Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
Happy to sit next to a pupil who is unable to speak (well) my mother tongue.	61.2	57.3	65.2	56.6	82.5	74.6
Happy to sit next to a pupil who has a different religion from me.	62.3	61.8	62.9	57.8	78.8	80.6
Happy to sit next to a pupil whose skin colour is different from mine.	70.2	67.4	73.1	67.4	78.8	83.6
Friends with a pupil who is unable to speak (well) my mother tongue.	75.9	71.6	80.5	72.8	91.3	83.6
Friends with a pupil who has a different religion from me.	70.6	69.4	71.7	67.5	85.0	79.1
Friends with a pupil whose skin colour is different from mine.	75.5	72.8	78.8	73.7	82.5	82.1

In some instances, open-mindedness overcomes even the most widespread stereotypes, as the following excerpt from a focus group shows:

"People think that all Serbs and Albanians are dangerous people, walking around armed with knives; but also many Italians are like them. Unfortunately only 'foreigners' are seen as bad people." (m, 19)

"People, just because they come from Eastern Europe (Albanians, Serbs, Romanians) are considered more dangerous than let's say the Chinese." (f, 19)

"What were the relations with the Chinese students? The Chinese people are generally very close, reserved."

"I had Chinese mates in my classroom. I sat in front of them, we talked and they were fun people: we laughed, joked... there were no problems; they were nice." (m, 19)

Safety Inside the School

The attitude of students toward the school is generally good. Primary schools especially are perceived as safe and protected places even if interethnic violence and bullying sometimes occur. The presence of teachers in primary schools and the often-disputed authority of professors in high schools avoid the most extreme forms of violence. These occur primarily outside the school.

"Did these situations you experienced happen in your school or not?"

"No". (f, 10)

"No, because there are teachers and janitors who watch them... and then because they know they must behave in a different way." (m, 11)

"No, because in school these guys [meaning the bullies] behave quite well; while, when they go out, they turn into beasts." (m, 10)

Institutions aim to foster a proper standard of behaviour among pupils and, by their nature, convey symbols and shape human behaviours: Italian schools,

at least those we observed, still maintain their pedagogical function, their role in the formation of the individual. They are also perceived as places where pupils are sheltered from either personal or racial violence. Note that this answer given by a Serbian pupil:

> "Then do you feel protected when you're in school?"
>
> *"Yes, it is as if there was a barrier around us [when we are at school], like if you were invulnerable." (m, 10)*

In Figure 7, a complete picture is provided for school environments, ordered according to the sum of "totally safe" and "safe" answers and three locations (canteen, classroom, gym) and exceeding 85% of positive responses. School corridors and locker area are at just under 80%, while toilets and the school playground are around 75%. One should not underestimate the fact that between a fifth and a quarter of respondents do not feel completely safe (some not safe at all) in these last locations. Even more problematic, according to the interviewees, is the situation at the bus stop, since just a little more than half of respondents feel safe there. The difference diminishes a bit considering that the "in between" answer is much more frequent, but the mean "safety score" obtained by each school environment (not shown here) confirms that bus stops, together with toilets and playground, are considered less safe than other environments.

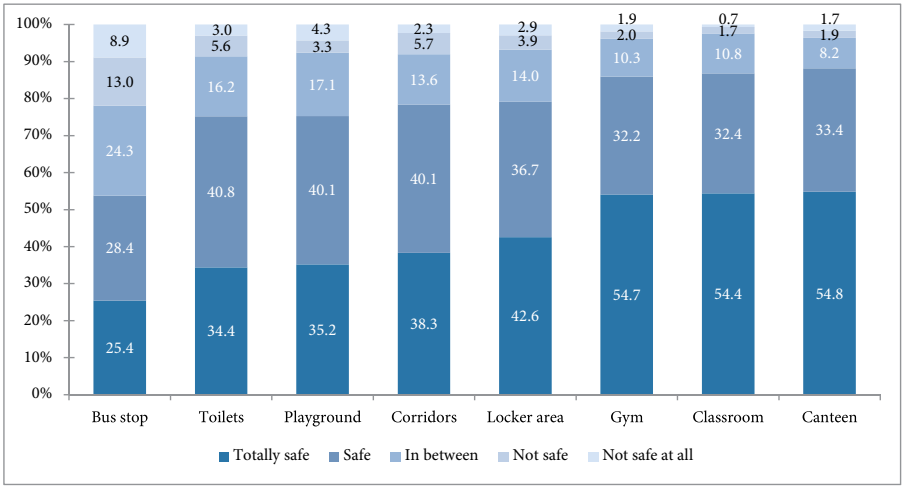


Figure 7: Feeling safe inside the school (items reordered by sum of "totally safe" and "safe")

In order to make group comparisons easier, we have developed a comprehensive indicator by averaging the percentages of pupils that feel safe in the eight sites (also not shown). The difference between males (80.4%) and females (75.8%) is not very high. The difference is a little more pronounced when comparing the different nationalities, with more Italians feeling confident (78.8%) compared with the rest of Europeans (75.6%) and non-Europeans (72.6%). The situation appears much more diversified when comparing the two types of schools: the percentage of confident pupils is much lower in primary (68.8%) than in secondary schools (86.2%).

Bullying

The problem of bullying in the schools does not have a purely interethnic nature and does not always coincide with repeated violent acts on a victim. It very often appears in the form of a generalised violence in which different elements are involved. The relatively low incidence of bullying may be due to the fact it is not always fully understood.

As can be seen from the focus groups carried out in an elementary school, the words and the concepts that children associate with bullying are: "people who want things that belong to others", "mean or unintelligent", "arrogance", "a dangerous person", "greed and without sensitivity", "a wee bit mean", "guys who want to smoke too", "beat other guys", "make heavy jokes", "tease people, want to be noticed", "tease to show up".

Violence – both in interpersonal and in every other kind of relationship – is part of a continuum of behaviours which are pragmatically connected but have different characteristics. We all know how easily acts of affection can suddenly turn into either verbal or physical aggression. Moreover, the very structure of the students' everyday lives, with their simultaneous characteristics of solidarity and competition (school, sex, etc.), leads to dissolution of the differences between unique types of action. For example, students tend to confuse sporadic acts of violence with bullying. They do not always understand the meaning of recurrent acts of violence against designated victims and tend to confuse any expression of violence (including spontaneous violence) with bullying. Teachers are not easily able to disentangle the confusion between the various meanings since both their role and their adult status keep them apart from student's and youth's world.

Of course, interethnic violence exists; but it is part of a phenomena continuum of more or less violent behaviours caused by a mix or combination of different reasons. Violence between peers very often has the characteristics of violence between

different groups, in which ethnic elements may be absent. In other circumstances, ethnic groups are formed to fight against culturally defined aggregations. Finally, there is a continuity not only between violent and non-violent behaviours, but also – within the class of violent behaviours – between those that are ethnically motivated and those that are not (or are far less) ethnically motivated.
Nonetheless, despite the complexity of the situation, interethnic violence is more prevalent outside the school since all the cases of extreme violence that were reported took place after school hours. These findings are confirmed by our questionnaire data: as can be seen from Figure 8, the most extreme forms of bullying, i.e. acts involving physical aggression, are comparatively infrequent in students' perceptions.

Moreover, interethnic bullying (in all its forms) is by no means unidirectional: victims of ethnic aggression, from insult to withdrawal, to overt violence, are present among Italians and non-Italians too, although the quota of victimised non-Italians is obviously a little higher.

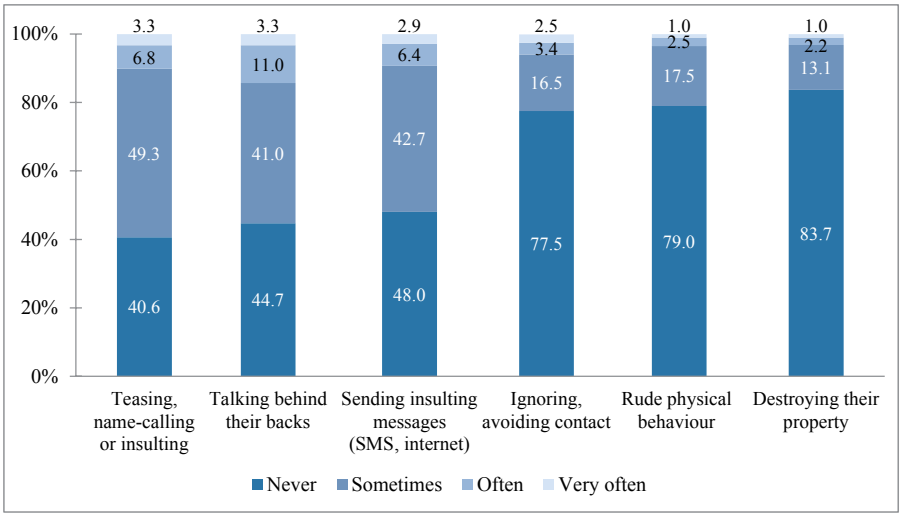


Figure 8: Forms of bullying happened at school (ordered by sum from "very often" to "sometimes")

Aggressors and Victims

The bullies, according to the testimony of the kids and of the interviewed experts, are people who display some knowledge of the human soul and are able to understand the problems of their friends. Through empathy and emotional closeness, bullies obtain the details that enable them to control their victims by

acting on their physical and psychological weaknesses. In some cases a bully may be an individual who has suffered violence and learns that one way to control it is to inflict it in turn. Some of the bully's victims are cowards who, fearing to become objects of violence, turn into bullies themselves and join (even if in a subordinate position) the circle of violence.

Bullies are feared both because they are physically capable of engaging in violence because they are psychologically able through use of positive and negative sanctions to bind people to his or her group. Every action judged positively is rewarded by the respect of the other members; every negative action of defection is punished with blackmail. Blackmail is made possible by the instrumental and cunning use of the knowledge of other's secrets, extorted through the bully's special talent.

Regarding the social typology of the bully, it seems that they don't belong to any specific category, even if the those bullies with a higher social status are less likely to accept diversity:

> *"Well-off girls and those who think they are very beautiful do not accept others. They think they are superior to everyone." (f, 18)*

The use of violence (within certain limits) cuts across cultures, gender, age, since it depends on deeper factors connected to personality traits and life experiences of the subjects. With respect to gender, for example, many respondents claim that now the phenomenon of violence has become, in an almost undifferentiated way, common to males and females, although with different manifestations.

Girls tend mainly to exert psychological violence, which is perpetrated with a very wide range of humiliations and slanders. These actions are less recognisable and are less frequently punished by teachers. This makes them sometimes more harmful to their victims because impunity fuels repetition: a never-ending daily drip-drip. It needs also to be emphasised that, since the male bully normally relies on the typical qualities of his gender (physical force in the first place), he has always to deal with gender's identity. The affirmation of his masculinity passes through a more or less dramatic expression of homophobia.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of the offenders and of the victims among boys and girls: approximately one quarter of pupils did not answer the questions, since they think or believe that bullying never happens in their school. According to three-quarters of the "surviving" respondents, both boys and girls are victims; among the rest, which indicates just one gender, it is largely those who think that it happens mostly to males (17.8%) that predominate as against those who instead think that victims are prevalently females (7.9%).

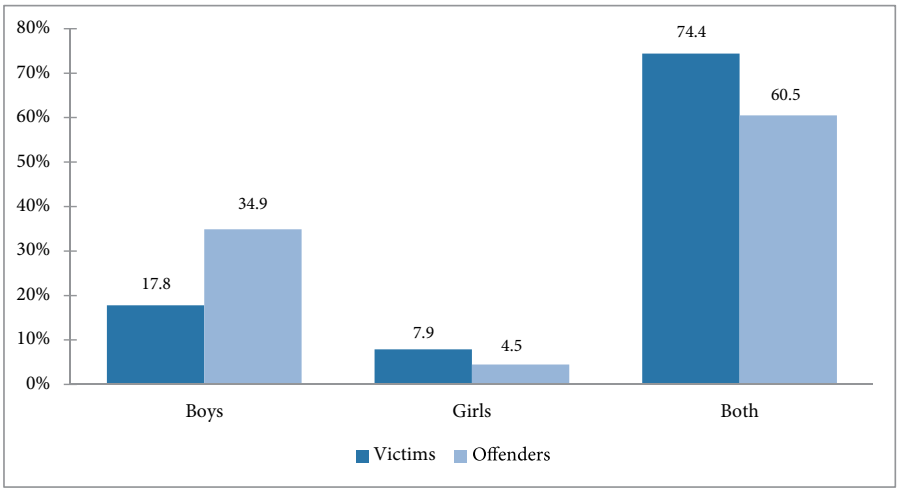


Figure 9: Who are the victims and the offenders of bullying at school

More pupils in secondary school – and a majority of males themselves – are convinced that males are predominantly the victims; and, of course, the same happens "on the other side", girls being more inclined to state that they are predominantly the victims.

People subjected to persecution and violence are usually characterised by some well-defined physical or psychological traits. Generally they are younger, physically weaker and temperamentally fragile and exhibit an overall inferiority status that is typical of any scapegoat.

> *"Yes, for example, those in middle school, the oldest, make fun of the youngest because they think, since they are stronger, they are the best too. Maybe they tease and offend the smaller kids, maybe these kids will react and they will fight." (f, 10)*

Children who exhibit some form of disability, especially those affected by less severe forms, such as character disorders, autism etc., are often subject to violence. Since sometimes disability is not visible, these children are recognised to be at the same time equal and different because "strange". Probably the (relatively) minor pathology of these children is likely to make them be perceived as sufficiently "other" to turn them into the targets of hostility because they are not so ill either to inhibit aggressive behaviour or to arouse feelings of pity and protection.

> *"I have experienced that... we were involved in a fight, but nothing to do with the cultural aspect. Since I have been here, it has never happened to me to have a confrontation because of my culture." (f, 18)*

"We insulted a schoolmate who was handicapped. He was an odd boy, he lived in his own world and we like jerks did everything to make him go crazy. It was not a nice experience. He was different from us, and then we looked at him in a different way. We pulled his legs. Once I brought my camera in the classroom and loaned it to a friend of mine who pretended to shoot him and he made something on my camera because he got annoyed. I got really angry, I grabbed him and stuck him against the wall and from that moment I started to insult him but eventually I realised that we were idiots." (f, 18)

"But in my opinion he was different." (m, 18)

"What do you mean by different?"

"He was distant, did not speak with us although it was apparent that he would have liked to do so. Then sometimes you laughed at him because, for example, he wore his trousers on the other side, he was odd. He was closed-minded, he believed that the stork brought the baby home; there was no way to change his opinion. He was very religious." (f, 18)

In other cases there are other elements that make the subject different or deviant from the dominant cultural model among his peers. Then it is the strangers, the nerds, those who are out of fashion or who express strong religious feelings, who become subject to violence.

"Once it happened that, while G [m] and G [m] were playing football, some older kids arrived and told them, 'Go away!' They said no and the kids began to beat them. They don't let us play and say that I'm just a Moroccan." (f, 10)

"What do they mean when they say: 'you're just a Moroccan'?"

"That I don't have their same rights and that they are superior." (f, 10)

"So do they first ask you: where are you from?"

"Yes, yes... but only the older ones do." (f, 10)

In the case of cultural diversity we have to take into consideration those elements that make the subject weak, such as the lack of language skills or the circumstance that they cannot count on their parents' help. In fact, according to various testimonies, non-Italian children are less protected by their parents than Italian children. This makes them vulnerable in the eyes of the strongest and therefore more susceptible to be attacked.

> *"When I saw that the Filipino child had been targeted by the group, I invited his parents to explain to them that their son had been the victim of systematic violence and that, especially outside the school, his situation was really unbearable. However non-Italian parents do not have the same power to protect their children as the Italians... When an Italian parent knows that his child is the subject of harassment, he immediately complains, while non-Italian parents do not." (headmaster, secondary school)*

As Table 10 shows, non-European students are more likely to ask for help to the teachers, while their Italian and other-European schoolmates more frequently find their families to be the place where they may take refuge and express their grievances.

Table 10: Who would you contact when bullied by kind of school, gender and nationality?

		Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
Who	General	Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
Friends	67.9	58.4	78.8	63.0	73.8	69.8	62.3	61.0
Mother/carer	52.3	64.1	38.8	43.6	62.4	55.6	45.6	35.6
Father/carer	30.4	45.3	13.5	32.9	27.7	33.4	23.2	16.9
Brother/sister	23.6	28.7	17.8	23.2	24.0	23.7	27.5	18.6
Teacher	5.2	7.4	2.7	6.6	3.8	4.4	4.3	11.9
Peer mediators	3.8	4.1	3.5	3.8	3.8	2.6	8.7	6.8
Other	12.9	13.5	12.3	16.6	8.7	12.1	11.6	20.3
No one	13.8	18.8	8.9	11.7	15.7	14.8	10.0	12.5

Non-Italian students are also "tougher" than Italians: the former tend to react to bullying by "fighting back", while the latter are more inclined to "ask for help" (Table 11).

Table 11: Reactions when bullied by age/kind of school, gender and nationality (percentage)

Reaction		General	Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
			Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
I fight back		29.6	24.4	35.3	33.7	24.9	27.3	31.7	41.8
I do the same to the bully		25.3	21.5	29.4	24.4	26.8	23.9	33.3	25.5
I put up with it		16.5	18.7	14.0	15.5	18.0	17.3	11.7	16.4
I don't react		10.3	8.9	11,8	12.8	7.3	12.2	5.0	3.6
I ask for help		9.0	15.9	1.4	8.9	8.3	10.2	6.7	3.6
I cry		4.9	4.9	5.0	1.6	8.8	4.0	8.3	7.3
I run away		2.4	4.5	0.0	1.6	3.4	2.6	1.7	1.8
Other		2.1	1.2	3.2	1.6	2.4	2.6	1.7	0.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N	467	246	221	258	205	352	60	55
No answer		34.6	32.0	37.2	27.8	41.6	37.9	25.0	17.9

Types of Violent Actions

The form of bullying most frequently reported is "talking behind someone's back", reported by 13.1% of respondents, and second is being insulted or called derogatory names (12.3%); so that, in this not pleasant classification, the more frequent facts are, at the same time, the less severe ones (Table 12). The third form is the feeling of being ignored or to be avoided, reported by about 7% of pupils, with noteworthy differences according to nationality (from about 5% of Italians to 12.5% for other Europeans and 18.5% for the non-Europeans). Other more serious forms of bullying (physical violence and damage to objects owned by the victim) reach a total of almost 6% while 6.6% is the observed occurrence of other forms of bullying that may not be traceable to those already described.

Table 12: Being victim of bullying by age/kind of school, gender and nationality

	General	Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
		Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
Other pupils call me names or insult me	12.3	13.3	11.1	14.4	10.3	7.4	25.0	37.9
Other pupils talk or say untruthful things, behind my back	13.1	13.8	12.4	16.3	9.8	7.5	29.5	42.2
Other pupils send insulting SMS or e-mails, post insulting comments on Facebook, Twitter	2.1	3.2	1.1	2.3	2.0	1.8	2.5	4.7
Other pupils ignore me or avoid contacts with me	6.9	8.1	5.7	8.5	5.4	4.8	12.5	18.5
Other pupils hit me, kick me, spit at me or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to me	2.5	4.2	0.9	3.4	1.7	2.1	2.5	1.5
Other pupils hide or destroy my things	3.4	5.6	1.2	4.5	2.3	2.9	3.8	7.7
Other	6.6	3.4	16.7	10.6	0.0	4.8	0.0	33.3

Some differences emerge when comparing the bullying observed at schools with the bullying personally exsperienced by the respondents; some differences emerge in the hierarchy of "troubles", probably because of some over- or under-estimation. Not surprisingly, pupils that report bullying happened to them are much fewer in number; however, the ratio of incidents happening in school should remain more or less the same. Instead, pupils reporting that insults are sent by means of electronic devices are ten times more numerous than pupils saying this actually happened to them. A ratio of about eight times more is recorded for "hit and spit" and for "ignore, avoid", five times for "hide and destroy" and "call names" and only four times for "talk behind someone's back".

Reactions to Bullying

When confronted with cases of violence, students' behaviour varies depending on age. Primary school pupils usually report the facts immediately to their teachers, who are their reference points to which they run every time there is some behaviour that breaks the rules (many times they tell their parents too).

"When their mates behaved badly, they immediately had to tell me the facts; then in class we talked about the issue. They confide in me." (teacher, primary school)

High school boys, instead, sometimes consider their teachers as "aliens" and follow the rules of the group that prescribe them a strict code of silence.

"But have you ever told your teachers?"

"No, because they can't understand." (f, 18)

Table 13: What do you do when bullying happens by age/kind of school, gender and nationality/ethnic background

Reaction		General	Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
			Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
I help him or her		33.8	45.2	21.0	38.5	28.7	30.4	38.8	54.4
I tell teacher or another staff member		18.6	28.7	7.4	19.1	18.0	20.7	10.4	12.3
I tell them that this is not right		16.0	10.6	22.1	11.7	21.0	14.0	26.9	19.3
Nothing but I think I should help him or her		12.9	5.0	21.8	10.4	15.8	13.6	11.9	8.8
Nothing and walk away because this is none of my business		8.0	2.0	14.8	9.0	6.6	9.3	6.0	0.0
I tell another adult		5.4	5.3	5.5	2.7	8.5	5.8	4.5	3.5
Nothing but I stay and watch		4.0	3.0	5.2	6.4	1.5	4.7	1.5	1.8
I join the ones who treat him or her badly		0.5	0.0	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Other		0.7	0.3	1.1	1.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N	574	303	271	299	272	450	67	57

Even as participant observers during the survey, we noticed some discrepancy between the interpretation of reality given by the students and the interpretation given by their teachers. In two cases, during the focus groups held in the high schools where episodes of bullying had occurred, interviewed teachers were inclined to share somewhat bland interpretations and evaluations. The teachers knew the facts but they did not interpret them as bullying. Students instead recognised the behaviour as offensive, often overstepping the limits of human dignity, both in the case of the boy (who later died) and in the case of the girl (who later changed schools).

The difference between primary and secondary school students' reactions also emerges from our quantitative data. While most students show a protective attitude toward the victims (33.8%), their second choice is the involvement of the teacher (18.6%), with significant differences being noted according to the type of school (28.7%) in the primary and only 7.4% in secondary). It's also worth noting that over 20% of Italians will involve the teacher, while the percentage drops down to around 10% for non-Italian students.

Victims' Reactions to Bullying

The feelings experienced during episodes of violence are often cited as feelings of rejection but violence produces contrasting effects. In many cases the fear of violence generates resignation or, in other cases, emulation.

Excitement reigns during the acts of violence: the defensive violence of victim triggers an escalation of more and more aggressive reactions by bullies, due to a perverse mechanism of collective excitement.

> *"Then it happened that we couldn't stand her presence. In the 3rd grade year because of our former class and what we had done to him, it was the year in which he got crazy and started to have a psychological aid. Then, however, they gave him medication to calm him down. He was violent enough if we started to bother him. Once he destroyed the mobile phone of one of his former classmate. And so we couldn't stand him anymore... Afterwards we kept calm since we realised that we had made a bullshit, we didn't give him anymore trouble and we hadn't contact with him anymore." (f, 18)*

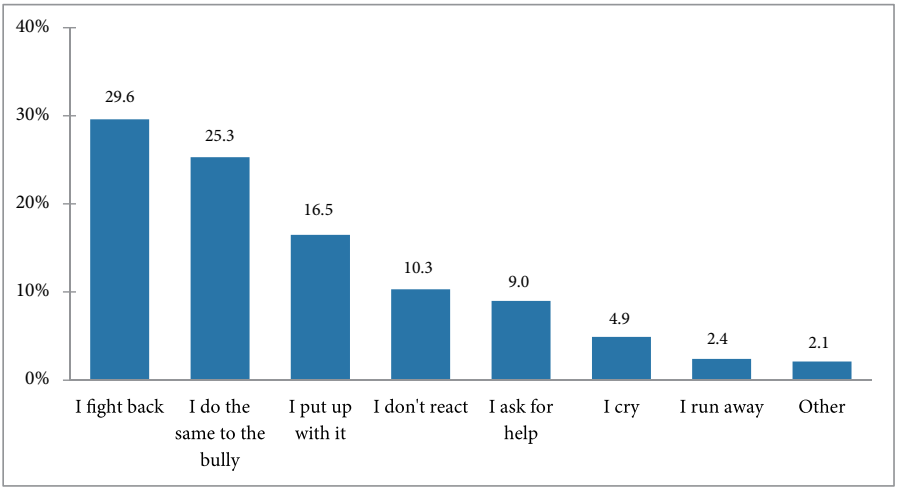


Figure 10: Reactions when bullied

The relative importance of reactions to bullying is showed in Figure 10. Percentages have been calculated excluding non-responses and show that the most "popular" reaction is "fight back" (almost 30% of the responses), followed by "I do the same to those who attack me" (25%); thus, more than half the pupils are willing to use the "eye for an eye" rule. Some will react asking rescue from adults (9%) and the rest exhibit passive reactions: "I put up with it" (16.5%) and "I don't react" (10.3%) sum to nearly a quarter of respondents; adding 4.9% and 2.4% that will cry or run away, one third would thus practically not react at all.

Table 14: What do you think when bullied by age/kind of school, gender and nationality/ethnic background

		Age/Kind of school		Gender		Nationality/Ethnic background		
Think	General	Primary	Secondary	Male	Female	Italian	European	Non-European
Getting revenge	43.2	42.8	43.7	50.4	34.4	43.1	45.0	41.5
Trying to stop bullying in school	40.5	41.3	39.4	36.0	46.4	41.8	50.0	20.8
Putting up with it	25.8	29.2	21.6	26.4	25.5	26.4	11.7	37.7
Changing to another school	4.4	6.1	2.3	4.2	4.8	3.3	6.7	9.4
Skipping school	3.1	3.8	2.3	3.8	2.4	2.5	1.7	9.4
Other	8.2	10.2	5.6	4.9	11.5	7.7	11.7	7.5

Taking into account that pupils could choose more than one answer from a list, two answers stand out from all the others, being selected by more than 40% of respondents as regards "what do you think when bullied". They reveal two completely opposite "prospective" reactions: search for revenge and thinking what could be done to change the situation in the school. More than a quarter think there is no other way than acceptance; acceptance; less than 10% think about changing school or even dropping out.

Although there is not much difference according to type of school, changing or skipping school (chosen by a minority of pupils), is more than doubled in the primary schools; "resignation" is also more frequent (Table 14). Looking at gender differences, "getting revenge" is the choice of more than half the male pupils, and just a little more than one third of females. Finally, for "putting up with it", we notice a striking difference between the two groups of non-Italian pupils (about 12% among the other Europeans and more of one third among non-Europeans). This is confirmed by the fact that other Europeans pupils are more convinced that something might be done to stop bullying (50%), while non-Europeans are much less convinced (20.8%).

Teachers' Attitudes toward Cultural Diversity

Promotion of interculturality, respect for others, tolerance, are a substantial part of teachers' activity. In general, teachers do not miss an opportunity to promote the understanding of diversity through adherence to specific projects or the adoption of different methods of teaching (which provide a comprehensive approach to discipline); or even through activities aiming at developing a stronger concern in their pupils for different cultures and fostering mutual coexistence.

> *"The teacher rather than explaining to us... make us watch many videos on the cultures and countries of other people." (m, 10)*

Similar results are recorded with respect to the statement that in class they learn about different cultures and religions: "agree" or "strongly agree" over 70% of respondents. Strong agreement is strikingly more frequent in primary schools, although this is partially compensated by simple agreement. On the other side of the scale, disagreement reaches about 10% and is more diffuse in secondary schools (over 15%, compared to less than 5% in primary school).

Respondents were also asked to comment on the claim that activities are conducted in their school to encourage students to be equal and to understand about differences. Nearly 40% "strongly agree" and almost 30% simply "agree";

primary school children being definitely much more in favour of the first response are (almost 60%) than those attending secondary school (only 16%).

Unluckily, not all teachers are able to create a favourable environment for mutual exchange and tolerance, either because they themselves do not have adequate training or because they were motivated in their actions by different and sometimes opposing values. In these cases, a mutual exchange occurs between students and teachers and the strength and the ability of the students within the institution seems to encourage their teachers to adopt appropriate role behaviours:

"Have you ever witnessed or suffered acts of physical or verbal violence?"

"Yes, it happened once that a teacher insulted two students because they were foreigners saying that they should go back to wherever they came from and used offensive words against them... They were silent, because I think it was not the first time that they suffered such things. I think that their parents had told them to remain silent and endure." (f, 18)

"Do you think their family helped them or not in this situation?"

"I do not think that to suffer in silence was the right choice. They should have defended their nationality, their being." (m, 18)

"Did your classmates take their defence or stay silent?"

"Actually, they called the professor ignorant. He was silent because he did not expect his pupils to respond that way." (f, 18)

"Were the guys who took their defence foreign or Italian?"

"There were some Italians too, but most of them were foreigners..." (f, 18)

The environment perceived by teachers is distinctly multicultural. Teachers show a positive attitude towards a multicultural reality, where tolerance and respect within the school environment seem to be constant. If the world outside can be characterised by social exclusion, in schools these behaviours appear to be isolated and stigmatised. According to respondents, school curricula, activities and intercultural projects and the efforts of many teachers contribute to promote a suitable setting where differences are transformed into human enrichment and violence tends to vanish.

"No, I have to say with great satisfaction that we have never noticed incidents of interethnic violence. It should also be noted that, ours being a high school, boys come here with an experience acquired during their years at the primary and middle school and most kids who attend our school are students already accustomed to intercultural education programs and are used to living surrounded by people of various nationalities, some of them already from their primary school years. In high schools, at the moment, we often meet students who do not speak Italian but who belong to the second generation of immigrants, having been born here /.../. These projects that are now a cornerstone of the Italian school are essential. These same projects, in my opinion, have meant that this is now the widespread atmosphere, the atmosphere perceived by kids in school." (teacher, secondary school)

The environment perceived by those who work in schools as experts instead is very different. According to them, Italian schools are losing their ability to welcome and are experiencing a sort of multicultural strain, with all the consequences related to different customs and cultures, in many cases producing serious problems of conflict management. They complain that attendance of refresher courses for teachers is no longer mandatory. As a consequence, most teachers (with some noticeable exceptions) are no longer trained to face the challenges of cultural diversity. Even the training of the trainers is seriously flawed and inadequate to meeting the real needs of Italian schools today. At the moment many classes are widely heterogeneous. Conflicts and difficulties in managing them are not easily overcome by teachers and organisational structures.

"We must identify the main problems that a teacher is facing in the context, let me say, of a culturally enlarged school. Rather than speaking of issues of interculturalism, it is proper to say that the teacher now should do his job with an enlarged culturally perspective. Problems are still numerous and, above all, interwoven; it is impossible to keep them separated, especially now that the school has a very different cultural identity from the recent past; a school where there are kids with very different curricula, whereas in the previous educational system skills were fairly standardised so that everyone, especially in the secondary and in the high school, followed a rather homogenous path." (educator)

Asked to agree or disagree with the statement "teachers treat pupils in the same way regardless of their nationality/ethnic background", about 40% of students strongly believe things are this way, and 22.8% simply agree. Less than 14% of

responses are located in between agreement and disagreement; therefore, only less than a quarter of the students somewhat believe that teachers (at least some of them) discriminate against pupils. The positive attitude of teachers is reported especially in primary schools (Figure 11).

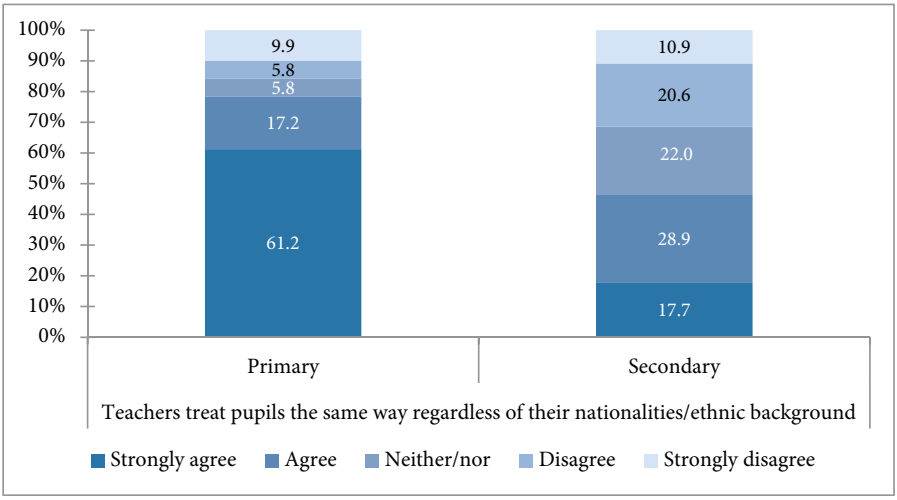


Figure 11: Teachers treat pupils the same way by age/kind of school

Conclusions

Violence between peers in school is a common phenomenon, though not very widespread, that has its genesis in cultural diversity together with other factors such as differences in status or gender. An individual act of violence breaks out even in the absence of a good cause and is aimed at the construction of the group's identity. The identification of the victim is functional to the group's definition through ethnic or gender elements that help to the affirmation of one's national identity or sexual orientation. The victim is thus a powerful catalyst of the energies of the group. The main violent acts range from insults to humiliation, including physical assaults such as spitting (spitting is widespread since it conveys intense contempt), punching, kicking etc. (these last facts occurring much more rarely).

Violence among peers is often triggered by factors or events outside the school community: interethnic wars, established tribal feuds etc. but, above all, by local incidents (theft, robbery, rape etc.) All these exacerbate the relationships between the different nationalities since the media spread the news in a stereotyped way

particularly whenever the offender belongs to another culture. In some vocational and technical schools, where the presence of children of migrants is relevant, the excessive concentration of culturally diverse groups fuels tensions activating an fiery and harsh competition on the expectations of future employment of young students in the labour market.

In the phenomenon of bullying, the identification of the victim is a crucial aspect. The group is structured around power relations and is valued by some particular attributes (ethnic or of other kinds) and identifies his victim in a weak and isolated subject. The psychological aspects are fundamental. In many cases, temperamentally problematic children are targeted. The non-Italian may be the target of the attack while displaying shyness, language difficulties and isolation. In many cases, non-Italian children do not enjoy the same protection as Italian children and therefore are more easily subjected to violence because they are not supported in their rights by their families.

Bullies on the other hand show themselves to possess many skills with which they insinuate themselves into the human soul and are supported by strong stereotypes to reinforce their dominant positions. They have often been the victims of violence themselves and, having experienced it, they fear it.

The most common sites of violence are outside the school, the world of the Internet and especially the public places where young people meet, in particular the parks.

The perception of the school is good. The school is still respected and behaviours of boys and girls are modelled according to institutional expectations. In short, the school is an institution and has all the components values and norms of an institution. At school, the atmosphere is good. Children feel protected and also feel they can develop their personalities in order to interact properly with their classmates. The presence of many teachers who are motivated to develop intercultural topics such as human rights and social inclusion means that many schools are running intercultural projects that stimulate reflection on diversity and lead to a greater awareness of individual rights.

Thanks to these experiences, and with the help of many teachers, students are likely to recognise the other elements of diversity without giving positive or negative judgments. An individual is considered as a carrier of difference and judged on his behaviour and his personality. He or she is a person and his or her belonging to one culture or the other is not so relevant.

Interethnic violence, when it occurs, aims at all ethnic groups as its target in an undifferentiated way. The only but important exception here concerns Roma people, since they are identified as a target even if they are living sedentary lives.

Another relevant category subjected to discrimination and social exclusion is that of children adopted from other countries (especially those with dark skin) who suffer from the same kind of stereotyping, in spite of their Italian citizenship, and who are often particularly fragile and emotionally affected by any racist behaviour. This typology has not been considered in the quantitative analysis of the research.

When episodes of violence occur between peers, it is necessary to talk about it. There is nothing worse than accepting that violence breeds violence and allowing it to be seen as a normal experience of life. It's necessary to go deep into the facts and understand the actions of the individuals involved. For internal reasons, violence triggers escalation mechanisms. For this reason the response behaviours of the victim may lead to the activation of other similar and often more intense behaviours by the aggressor. Both primary school students and those in high school were very appreciative of the focus group, used it as a tool to spread knowledge and found in it a place where they could express themselves and engage with experts about their experiences, their emotions, etc. Young people have a great need to talk and discuss with each other led by someone who can get them to share their emotions.

Teachers play a vital role as educators and often represent a point of reference. They are moral figures and objects of identification. They should never forget their educational mission, which, according to the expectations of the students, should go far beyond the simple transmission of factual knowledge.

When incidents of violence occur, the teachers who are aware usually react with effectiveness. Their principals are kept informed (especially if the facts are relevant) and an itinerary of accompaniment with parents and sometimes with the local social services begins. It's very difficult to talk about bullying. It is necessary to always find the right words to create an effective relationship with parents who otherwise stiffen or even kick back, sometimes trying to assert that the victim is the aggressor, maybe through an official complaint. The parents of non-Italian students do not have these tools and often do not have the competence to solve the behavioural problems of their children. Unfortunately, not all the teachers are able to display a proper attitude towards coping with violent acts due to a specific training gap. There should be a return to a national policy that gives priority to the training of teachers in terms of relational skills rather than a policy that encourages competitiveness and individualism.

Prevention of interethnic violence requires, as a necessary (though perhaps not sufficient) condition, that children can internalise the values of coexistence, tolerance and equality. Our society is increasingly atomised and lacking in specific

cultural references. Through targeted actions, a model of existence free from violence may be proposed to fill the void of culture that prevents many young people from exploring positively the world.

There is a widespread need to communicate and to talk about violence, to create an environment in which to confront issues of diversity.

During the study, we noticed strong demands for positive action too. Among these, much importance is given to intercultural programs offered by the schools and also to programs of direct intervention, such as those developed by the Comunità di Sant' Egidio, in order to keep the young out from the spiral of violence and racism. They have offices in many parts of the country and go into schools where there are problems and organise meetings among the children. They also organise a "School for Peace" that consists in after-school clubs, where kids can share their views freely. Prevention of violence is also brought about through appropriate coercive methods and direct actions of the institutions. With regard to appropriate coercive methods, an interesting judicial process is that which is proposed by the President of the Juvenile Court of Trieste. It assumes that it is legitimate to apply to bullying the same legal instruments that in Italy are applied to stalking. Bullying in fact is certainly a kind of "persecutory behaviour" that makes life impossible for the victim and offends his/her dignity as a person. These actions do not always consist of real crimes but, according the new Italian law, they turn into a crime because of their repetition: taken one by one, they have an almost irrelevant and insignificant penal value but represent a thread of a real bullying harassment when sewn together.

Therefore, the law on stalking (concerning adult behaviour) can lead to an effective preventive action carried out by the police before coming to the court, thus having an approach where the punitive option is not primary, but absolutely residual. In this particular application of the law on stalking, a particular aspect plays an important role: prevention is not assigned to a judicial body, but to a public security organ, the chief of police. By preventing the crime, he in fact exercises the function of public safety, combined with the function of the judicial police. What really matters is what the chief of police can do when he is reported a case of bullying or of other oppressive behaviour. He can summon the parents of bullies and even the same guys and give them a speech of admonition to warn them that the facts that have been exposed constitute a framework of harassment.

A method of direct action for the prevention of risk behaviours and promoting the welfare of young people is exposed in a Memorandum of understanding signed by the Juvenile Court of Friuli Venezia Giulia, the Municipality of Monfalcone,

several schools and territorial educational agencies, local law enforcement institutions (Police, *Carabinieri*, Financial Police) and the Foundation Savings Bank of Gorizia, The Memorandum is inspired by the same abovementioned principles and aims at knowing the characteristics of the phenomenon, fostering collaboration and increasing dialogue between schools and institutions in order to curb violent behaviours.[28]

28 The contribution of authors is as follows: Introduction and Conclusion: *Delli Zotti – Urpis*; Immigration in Italy, The Italian School System and the Presence of Non-Italian Pupils, The Italian Legislation on Minorities and Minors, The Integration of Non-Italian Pupils into Italian Schools, Methodology of the Research, Support and Help in Schools: *Delli Zotti*; Citizenship and Nationality, Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity, Multiculturalism and Interculturalism, Cultural Diversity and the Principle of Equality, Perception and Evaluation of Cultural Diversity, Open – Mindedness towards Cultural Diversity, Safety Inside the School, Bullying, Aggressors and Victims, Types of Violent Actions, Reactions to Bullying, Victims` Reactions to Bullying, Teachers` Attitudes towards Cultural Diversity: *Urpis*.

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"Wearing Your Own Culture": a Study of Islamophobia in English Schools

Sally Inman, Pip McCormack and Sarah Walker

Introduction

In researching interethnic violence and children's rights in the school environment in England, there is a vast tapestry of interethnic relations available for analysis owing to the long history of immigration in Great Britain, related to the country's colonial past. However, in the light of world and home events over the past two decades, in particular the terrorist attacks on 11th September 2001 and the London bombings in July 2005, and the resulting counter-terrorism strategies that disproportionally affect Muslims, there is discernible evidence of increased hostility and prejudice towards Muslims in England and, indeed, Europe more generally (Poynting & Mason, 2007; Crozier and Davies, 2008; Suleiman, 2009; Lambert & Githens-Mazar, 2010; Allen, 2010).

Thus, we opted to analyse interethnic violence in the school environment in England through the lens of Islamophobia, in relation both to children's own experiences as well as attitudes towards Muslims. When referring to Muslims, it is important to note that we do not assume Muslims to have an essentialist, homogenised identity but, rather, acknowledge the multifaceted and dynamic nature of identity and understand Muslims in terms of those who choose to identify as such. Indeed, Muslims in the UK are a very ethnically and theologically

diverse group (Archer, 2003; Suleiman, 2009; Beckford et al., 2006). However, research has shown that often Muslim identity may transcend other aspects of identity (see Tinker, 2009; Shain, 2011) and be utilised politically: as Samad argues, this "signals a 're-working of ethnicity' in response to the public demonisation of Muslims"(1998 in Shain, 2011, 56), a finding of other more recent research (e.g. van Driel, 2004). As Henze et al. state "Identity is not static or disembodied; rather it varies by time, place and interactants according to specific social situations" (2000, 201).

Islamophobia itself is a contested term because it is often imprecisely applied to very diverse phenomena, ranging from xenophobia to anti-terrorism and some have questioned how it differs from other terms such as racism, anti-Islamism, and anti-Muslimness (see for example, Cesari, 2006; Richardson, 2009). However, the term is used with increasing frequency in the media and political arenas – and sometimes in academic circles – and its usage is widespread in the UK. Further, the group FAIR, Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism was set up by Muslim activists (Cesari, 2006). Thus, whilst we acknowledge the limitations of the term, for the purposes of this article Islamophobia is utilised as a shorthand term for discrimination of both an overt and a hidden nature that is a feature of life in the UK for some Muslims, and the aim of this report is to seek to assess the levels of Islamophobia within schools according to this understanding of the concept. So, whilst acknowledging the limitations of the term Islamophobia, we adopt the definition used by FAIR:

> *"/.../ the fear, hatred or hostility directed towards Islam and Muslims /.../ Islamophobia affects all aspects of Muslim life and can be expressed in several ways including: attacks, abuse and violence against Muslims; attacks on mosques, Islamic centres and Muslim cemeteries; discrimination in education, employment, housing, and delivery of goods and services; and the lack of provisions and respect for Muslims in public institutions." (Allen, 2010, 5)*

Whilst it can be difficult to differentiate between racially motivated attacks and attacks determined by religious hatred (Athwal et al., 2010), a significant body of research has shown that after the events of 11th September 2001, the London bombings in July 2005 and other international attacks, as well as the Oldham and Bradford riots in 2001,[29] there has been an exponential increase in Islamophobic

29 These riots saw clashes in northeast of England between largely white and Asian groups of youths and were termed race riots. For further information, see: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/7/newsid_2496000/2496003.stm.

rhetoric and agendas (see CBMI, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2007; Crozier & Davies 2008; Suleiman, 2009; Lambert & Githens-Mazar, 2010; Allen, 2010). Indeed, as Athwal et al. (2010, 8) argue, "[T]he category 'Muslim' is becoming more and more racialised and the distinction between 'racial hatred' and 'religious hatred' is increasingly blurred".

Thus, Islamophobia is not just restricted to hate crimes and more obvious violence, but it also occurs in more subtle, discriminatory ways through forms of structural violence. For example, in educational and occupational attainment, Muslims are found to be more likely to face educational and occupational disadvantages (Khattab, 2009). Indeed, a significant body of literature notes the socially disadvantaged nature of much of the UK Muslim population (e.g. CBMI, 2004; Open Society, 2005; Meer, 2009; Suleiman, 2009). Further, the media and public discourse increasingly tends to portray a monolithic, homogenised and stereotyped view of Islam and Muslims, together with imagery of Muslims as "other", as a threat to British culture and values (CBMI, 2004; Insted Consultancy, 2007; Lambert & Githens-Mazar, 2010; Allen, 2010; Isal et al., 2011).

This chapter will set out the background context to the socio-demographic situation in England; looking at ethnicity and religion within the overall population. It will then outline the school system and legislative context in which the research was undertaken. A short review of the literature on interethnic violence in schools and Islamophobia, in particular, is provided and then the empirical data from the research project itself in relation to the school environment is presented. Finally, the last section presents a discussion on the findings and relevant conclusions and recommendations.

Contextual Background

Population and Ethnicity

Prior to outlining migration flows to and from the UK, it is necessary to note that there is no single data collection instrument for the measurement of migration flows. Therefore, the overall picture can only be established by means of data gathered from a variety of sources that vary considerably in their coverage, detail and accuracy[30] (Champion et al., 1998; Quevedo, 2010; Vargas-Silva, 2011). The most reliable data is gathered from the decennial UK Census; however, the

30 For discussions of limitations of data see Champion et al. (1998), Quevedo (2010) and Migration Observatory Briefings – available at: http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings?tid=10.

last one with fully available results was conducted in 2001[31] and is unlikely to reflect today's multicultural society due to the fast-paced changes in England's ethnic composition.

Indeed, there have been significant changes in the ethnic composition of the UK over the past two decades; data from the last Census conducted in 2001 shows that the number of people who came from an ethnic group other than "White" grew by 53% between 1991 and 2001, from 3.0 million in 1991 to 4.6 million in 2001 (ONS, 2001). In 2001, 13% of the population in England and Wales was from an ethnic minority group. By 2009 this had changed to 17% from ethnic minorities and 83% "White British" (ONS, 2011). Both immigration and natural increase of the non-"White British" population contribute to a substantial change in population, which varies considerably across the local authorities of the UK (Wohland et al., 2010).[32]

Data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on population estimates by ethnic group reveals that the size of the majority "White British" group remained constant between 2001 and 2009 while the population of those belonging to other groups has risen by around 2.5 million to 9.1 million over the same period (ONS, 2011). The largest absolute growth is seen in the "Other White" group. This is strongly driven by net international migration, particularly of people born elsewhere in Europe; however, there is also a substantial net inflow of people from the "Old Commonwealth" countries of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa (ONS, 2011).

In addition to economic migrants, the UK receives a number of asylum seekers each year. Asylum seekers may arrive spontaneously in the UK or, since 2004, the UK accepts up to 750 refugees a year through the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Resettlement programme known as the Gateway Protection Programme.[33] Collating data on asylum seekers is difficult but it can be even more challenging to establish data on refugee populations. Since national surveys such as the Census do not record immigration status, it is very difficult to disaggregate the refugee population from the migrant population or the ethnic minority population more generally (Queveda, 2010). According to UNHCR statistics, there were 269,363 refugees in the UK as of January 2010 (UNHCR, 2010).

31 The 2011 Census survey was conducted in March 2011 and thus not all the results were available at the time of writing.

32 See Wohland, 2010 pp8 for a discussion of ethnic classification in England.

33 See http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/workingwithasylum/integration/local-authorities-gateway/ for further information.

Religion

The 2001 Census contained a voluntary question about religious identity, which over 92% of people chose to answer. Over three-quarters of respondents – more than 44 million people – identified themselves as having a religious faith and just over 15% – more than 8.5 million people – stated that they had no religion. More than seven out of ten people said that their religion was Christian (ONS, 2001). The Census shows a total of 37.3 million people in England and Wales who state their religion as Christian. In England, 3.1% of the population states their religion as Muslim, making this the most common religion after Christianity. According to population estimates, data from the most recent census in 2011 is likely to show a significant change in this area (Change Institute, 2009).

Table 1: Population of Great Britain: by religion, April 2001

	Total population	
Religion	%	N
Christian	71.8	41,014,811
Muslim	2.8	1,588,890
Hindu	1.0	558,342
Sikh	0.6	336,179
Jewish	0.5	267,373
Buddhist	0.3	149,157
Any other religion	0.3	159,167
No religion	15.1	8,596,488
Religion not stated	7.8	4,433,520
All population	100.00	57,103,927

Source: ONS, 2011.

Muslims in the UK

Historically, there has long been a Muslim presence in the UK. However, largely due to post-World War II migration, the British Muslim community has grown from some twenty thousand in 1950 to around two million at present or about 3% of the population (Suleiman, 2009). Muslims are the largest religious minority in Britain, accounting for just over half of the country's non-Christian religious population. The Muslim population of London is highly ethnically diverse but in northern England, Muslim people are predominantly Pakistani (with much smaller Indian and Bangladeshi components in particular towns).

The Muslim population is the youngest and most rapidly increasing faith group in England (Beckford et al., 2006).

Great ethnic and theological diversity can be found in British Muslim communities, a fact often overlooked in the literature, which has a tendency to homogenise and essentialise what it means to be Muslim (Suleiman, 2009; Change Institute, 2009). Indeed, the ethnicity of Muslims in the UK is very diverse with two-thirds being South Asian, and the remainder being predominantly from North Africa and the Middle East. 8% of the UK Muslim population are also classified as "Other white", including Turkish Cypriots and other Turks, Bosnians, Kosovans and smaller groups from the former Yugoslavia (Change Institute, 2009, 9). The largest groups of Muslims in the UK come from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds and research shows that they live in much poorer conditions than the average Briton (Beckford et al., 2006). Over two-thirds live in a low-income household. Nearly a quarter live in overcrowded houses, while only two per cent of white Britons do the same (Cesari, 2006).

Muslims in the UK are disproportionately represented in the most deprived urban communities – 75% live in 24 cities or authorities, including around 38% in London. Even within these cities, Muslims are highly concentrated spatially. For example, although in London Muslims represent 8% of the population, they are concentrated in a small number of London boroughs. Indeed, research has shown there is a tendency for most Muslim populations to cluster by country of origin and ethnicity with ethnically distinctive distributions (Peach, 2006 in Change Institute, 2009, 19). The concentration of Muslims in the poorest areas of cities is indicative of the marginalisation of Muslims (Open Society, 2005, 13). However, it is important to note that there are large variations within communities on the basis of class, educational attainment and ethnicity (Suleiman, 2009; Change Institute, 2009).

School Systems

The Structure of Schooling in England

Compulsory education in England currently starts at 5 years old (Key Stage 1) and ends at 16 (Key stage 4); however, the school leaving age will be raised to 18 in 2015. There is an increasing range of categories and types of schools in England. Schools can be broadly categorised into state schools and independent, private schools (some confusingly referred to as "public schools"), which are fee-paying.

State schools can be further divided into mainstream schools and pupil referral units (PRU's)[34] or special schools.[35] In the last few years – and particularly since the coalition government took office in May 2010 – there have been significant changes in the school system and a plethora of new schools have emerged within a rapidly changing educational landscape. New schools such as academies and free schools are growing in number. These schools are not subject to local authority control and are given more freedom to design their curricula and in relation to the qualifications of their staff.[36]

In January 2011 there were around 8.1 million pupils in all schools in England; of these, 4.1 million were in state funded primary schools, 3.3 million were in state funded secondary schools and 576,900 were in independent schools (DFE 2011a).

Ethnicity of Children in Schools

Regarding ethnicity of children in schools, data released in June 2011 shows that just over 26.5% of children in state primary schools in England and just under 22.2% of children in state secondary schools are of minority ethnic origin (DFE Statistical release, June 2011). The largest group of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) children come from an Asian background (9.9% primary and 8.2% secondary); the next largest groups are Black African and Black Caribbean pupils at 5.2% and 4.9%. The concentration of BME students is not spread equally throughout the country, with inner cities having a much higher proportion than more rural areas. In some inner city areas schools/classes can be almost 100% BME (DFE, 2010a).[37]

Table 2 highlights the changes in percentages of BME children in schools in England and London between 2004 and 2010, and evidences the difference between inner and outer city populations.

34 These are schools which make provision for children who are unable to attend mainstream or special schools because of a range of reasons; this could for example be due to exclusion or illness. Some of these units are described as EBD schools (schools for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties). As with special schools (below) a disproportionate number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children attend these schools.

35 These are schools which cater for children with special education needs (SEN), physical or sensory impairments or behaviour problems. They provide personalised provision for the children and are sometimes purpose built. Most children with SEN attend mainstream schools.

36 For more information see: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools.

37 Further details of the breakdown of these ethnic groups can be found in the document the DFE Statistical Release, June 2011 (DFE, 2011a).

Table 2: Percentage of BME pupils in primary and secondary schools 2004–2010

	England	London	Inner London	Outer London
2004	16.9	55.0	73.6	45.8
2007	19.8	59.7	76.8	51.3
2010	23.4	64.5	79.0	57.2

Source: Ryan et al., 2011

In England all education is conducted in English, although many schools, especially in inner cities, will have a multilingual intake of children and, in some cases, staff. The annual schools census language data provides an indication of the range of languages to be found amongst children in the population. This census was carried out by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Schools are asked to report on the number of children with a first language other than English.[38]

The most recent data released for England in January 2011 shows:[39]

- 16.8% (547,030) of all Local Authority state-funded primary school children have a first language known to or believed to be a language other than English
- 12.3% (378,200) of all state-funded secondary school children have a first language known to or believed to be a language other than English (DCSF 2010a)

This is an increase of 0.8% for primary since and an increase 0.7% for secondary since January 2010.

Legislative Context

From the 1990s onwards we have witnessed a wide range of legislation in relation to race equality with implications for education. At a wider societal level we have seen moves to strengthen and extend legislation around employment, provision of services, education and the promotion of good relationships between people of different ethnic backgrounds. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires all public authorities to promote racial equality. This act builds on the Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976, which provides protection to "racial

38 "Since January 2007, where a pupil's first language was not English, schools were asked to record the actual language (into a coding system which consists of over 300 language categories). However, it was not compulsory for schools to provide this level of detail and not all schools chose to use the extended language codes. In 2008, language data were received for almost 79 per cent of pupils whose first language was other than English. This number of responses was sufficient to provide summary national level findings. The 2008 data records some 240 different languages for these 79% of pupils." (CILT Primary Languages, 2011)

39 A list of the breakdown of languages by LA can be found in an excel sheet at http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000925/index.shtml.

groups", explained as "a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin" (Richardson, 2009, 3). Neither religion nor belief were included as appropriate markers and became subsequently excluded. However, following developments in case law since 1976, mono-ethnic religious groups such as Jews and Sikhs came to be defined as ethnic groups and are therefore protected, but multi-ethnic religious groups such as Muslims and Christians were not included (CBMI, 2004; Cesari, 2006).

More recently, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 makes it unlawful to stir up hatred against persons on religious grounds. Also in 2006, the Education and Inspections Act introduced a new section to the Education Act 2002 giving schools a duty to promote community cohesion from September 2007, and charging the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)[40] with the responsibility for inspecting the fulfilment of this duty. Community cohesion is described as working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities, in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued, similar life opportunities are available to all and strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community. This legislation was supported by guidance to schools. This Act also made it a legal requirement for head teachers to include prevention of all forms of bullying in their school's behaviour policy, including ethnic bullying. The Equality Act of 2010 brought together many different equality laws to harmonise and, in certain respects, to extend the various pieces of discrimination law that had been introduced over the last 30 years. Since 6 April 2011, all public bodies, including all local authorities and educational settings, are bound by what is known as the "public sector equality duty".[41]

However, via the Education Act 2011 the coalition government has removed the requirement of OFSTED to inspect and report on wellbeing and community cohesion, although the duty itself remains in place. The impact this will have on schools is yet to be determined, although some reports point to a dilution in schools' commitment to community cohesion (Rowe et al., 2011).

40 Ofsted is the independent official body responsible for inspecting schools.

41 It has three components, known as three limbs or aims. A public authority must, it says, have "due regard" to the need to: a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (e.g. "race") and persons who do not share it; and, c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (e.g. "race") and persons who do not share it.

Muslims and Education

Muslim children of school age are numerically disproportionately present in the British education system, making up nearly 6% (588,000) of the school population from under 3% (1.8m) of the national population (Halstead 2005, in Meer, 2009, 382). In some local authorities, Muslim children comprise a significant presence within school districts and wards. This is partially the result of concentrated settlement patterns by first-generation migrant workers and is sometimes intensified by "white flight" to the suburbs (Finney and Simpson, 2009 cited in Meer, 2009, 382). Muslim pupils throughout the British education system come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, which mirror that of the Muslim population as a whole. Alongside Pakistani (40%) and Bangladeshi (20%) backgrounds, pupils also come from Turkish and Turkish Cypriot; Middle-Eastern; East-Asian; African-Caribbean (10%); Mixed race/heritage (4%); Indian or other South Asian (15%) backgrounds; as well as a not insignificant number of white converts and Eastern-Europeans (1%) (Burgess & Wilson, 2004 cited in Meer, 2009, 384).

The vast majority (c. 97%) of Muslim children are educated in state schools (i.e. non religious), making up nearly 6% of the overall school population (Meer, 2009). The remainder are educated in state-funded and independent Muslim faith schools (Muslim Council of Britain, 2007 in Tinker, 2009, 540). In addition to state-funded Muslim schools, there are over 120 independent Muslim schools in Britain. There have been independent Muslim schools in Britain since 1979. The size of Muslim schools varies considerably, ranging from 5 up to 1800, and they are in a variety of locations, some in purpose-built accommodation and some in private homes or in mosques. In state-funded Muslim schools, all staff must be fully qualified; but this does not apply to the independent sector. All state-funded Muslim schools and the majority of independent schools follow the national curriculum but a few offer an entirely Islamic curriculum (Tinker, 2009).

Islamophobia and Interethnic Violence in Schools

In the UK, large-scale surveys on bullying in general reveal that about half of primary pupils and a quarter of secondary pupils say they have been bullied at school (Hayden, 2009; Brown and Winterton, 2010). However, the concept of bullying itself is still a somewhat contested issue[42] and, owing to differences in methodology and terminology, it is difficult to find comparative data (Oliver &

42 For further discussion of the definition of bullying see Monks and Smith (2006).

Candappa, 2003; Wolke et al., 2001). Researchers utilise different concepts of bullying, although most draw heavily on the work of Olweus (e.g. 1997). Whilst there is little literature available on interethnic violence in schools in England (Monks et al., 2008), several questionnaire studies have focused explicitly on the degree and frequency of peer victimisation and bullying among ethnic minority children and the field reveals differing findings. Some studies find that children from ethnic minorities were more likely to experience racist name-calling and social exclusion compared to children from a majority ethnic group (Boulton, 1995; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Monks et al., 2008; British Council, 2008; DfES, 2006; Anderson et al., 2008). On the other hand, others (for example, Sweeting and West, 2001; Smith & Shu, 2000; Green et al., 2010) found low levels of racial bullying, and that levels of bullying did not differ according to ethnic background, although the majority of respondents in these studies where "White".[43]

There is also evidence that pupils do not report racist abuse when asked about bullying in general, which Siann et al. (cited in Monks et al., 2008, 510) suggest points to an underestimation of levels of racial victimisation experienced by pupils in schools. Clearly, racist bullying is a complex phenomenon across and between ethnicities and may vary between schools depending on the proportion of ethnic minority pupils (Green et al., 2010) and the overall school ethos.

Whilst there is very limited literature available on instances of Islamophobia in English schools (Shaik, 2006), some research does emphasise that institutional racism towards Muslims within the educational sector, both in relation to teachers' assumptions and prejudices towards Muslim students is a problem (Weller et al., 2001; Archer, 2003; Shah, 2006; Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Meer, 2009; Shain, 2011). Halstead (2005) also lists a range of other issues that are perceived to be relevant by Muslims themselves: "Religious discrimination; Islamophobia; the lack of Muslim role models in schools; low expectations on the part of teachers; time spent in mosque schools; the lack of recognition of the British Muslim identity of the student" (cited in Meer, 2009, 389). A recent OSI report on countries across Europe found that although many schools did engage in inclusive educational practices with Muslim pupils, some Muslim pupils continued to suffer racism and prejudice and faced low expectations from teachers (OSI, 2010). Shain (2011) and Crozier and Davies (2008) found racism to be a central feature of the Muslim pupils in their studies' experiences of school, from both overt, low level name-calling to more covert institutional racism. In line with other studies, they also found teachers often denied this experience. There are

43 Data used is often from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), which encompasses a number of limitations (see for example Gillborn, 2010).

some instances of good practice, with local authorities and individual schools promoting work around understanding Islam and addressing Islamophobia (see for example, Vernell, 2012). However, unfortunately, as Islamophobia is not always recognised as racism and is more often than not referred to in guidance/policy documents by local authorities, Islamophobia in schools can sometimes go unaddressed (CMBI, 2004).

Further, much of the research on racism in schools points to the fact that teachers often deny or are oblivious to the existence of racism in their school (Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Gillborn & Rollock, 2010). Such findings are symptomatic of the often widely held view that racism is obvious, in the form of violent attacks, rather than reflecting the reality that many forms of racism can be much more subtle and even unintended (Gillborn & Rollock, 2010, 157). Crozier and Davies argues that this ethnocentrism and insensitivity to cultural differences can be understood as a form of symbolic violence and that its effect is arguably tantamount to a form of exclusion (2008, 298). Indeed, research has highlighted the importance of identifying both overt and hidden violence in schools, with overt violence being identified as a symptom of underlying tensions (Henze et al., 2001). Thus there is a need for schools to address the underlying reasons for such tensions and violence, as opposed to focusing solely on overt violence and as such merely reacting to conflict (Ibid.). Group alliances and antagonisms may be perceived as linked to ethnic differences; however, it is the underlining social context that is of key relevance (Harris, 1997).

Research has identified a whole-school approach as a means with which to address interethnic violence (van Driel, 2004). As Henze et al. (2000) find in their study based in the USA, a dual approach of zero tolerance and the overall inclusive ethos of school are key mechanisms in preventing violence. Acknowledging differences between students and celebrating the heterogeneity of the school community gives pupils the ability to learn and stay safe within the school environment (Tippett et al., 2011, 23). Pupils also need to see themselves reflected positively in the curriculum of the schools that they attend (Irfan Coles, 2004). Further, research also evidences the importance of trust and a willingness to report bullying as important for the prevention of racist bullying (Scherr & Larson, 2009 in Tippett, 2011, 25). Indeed, Ofsted (2012) recommends that inclusive language be promoted throughout school, finding that those schools that deal best with bullying have clear behavioural policies and an inclusive ethos, promoting respect for diversity. Again they found evidence that, where pupils were confident that firm action would be taken and thus preventative measures were in place, bullying is less of a problem (Ibid.).

Tippett et al. (2011) define bullying based on "identity-based characteristics such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity" as "identity-based bullying" (Tippet et al., 2011, 1). This can also be known as bias bullying or prejudice-related bullying due to the association with prejudiced or stereotyped views of particular social groups (Tippet et al., 2011, 1). Thus, this form of bullying is a social issue, which can stem from a lack of tolerance or understanding of individuals' personal or religious beliefs (Ibid.). As such, in light of the increasingly Islamophobic discourse within wider society, the assumption would be that Muslim pupils are at greater risk of experiencing violence within school. This research seeks to contribute to the debate through focusing on the experiences of children from different religious backgrounds and to compare their experiences and perceptions of violence within the school space, with a particular focus on the experience of Muslim pupils.

Method

The research adopted a mixed approach using both a quantitative survey and qualitative fieldwork. The quantitative study utilised a questionnaire and the second stage a qualitative study employing individual semi-structured interviews with experts, teachers and other educational professionals and focus group interviews with pupils. Pupils were questioned about their experiences and perception both inside and outside the school space. For the purposes of this article, only the findings relating to interethnic violence within the school environment will be discussed.

Quantitative Research

The data collection for the quantitative survey took place between November and December 2011 in five different regions of England: London, the South East, West and East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. However, for the purposes of the research, we treated the East and West Midlands as one region.[44] With Islamophobia as the principal research focus, all the schools selected needed to be in areas with a high Muslim population. This decision limited the choice of regions in which to select the sample. Purposive sampling was used in that the regions and the schools were selected according specific criteria in the project description: the closeness of the border (border region), the urbanity of the area (highly urban areas) and the "atractiveness" of the region for migrants.

44 Due to difficulty in obtaining schools in the Midlands regions we had to use schools across both West and East Midlands.

A brief note on the regions

All the fieldwork regions are ethnically mixed and have areas with large Muslim populations. Table 3 below highlights the estimate percentages of ethnic minorities in the fieldwork regions, as the 2011 census results are at the time of writing not fully available. As previously mentioned, the concentration of BME populations is not spread equally throughout the country, with inner cities having a much higher proportion than more rural areas. All the cities in which the fieldwork schools were located had higher than average BME populations.

Table 3: Estimated population in England by ethnic group by mid-2009[45]

Location	Total population (in thousands)	% White British	% Mixed	% Asian or Asian British	% Black or Black British	% Chinese	% White Other
England	51,809.70	82.8	1.9	6.1	2.9	0.9	4.7
London	7,753.6	59.5	3.5	13.2	10.1	1.8	10.2
South East	8,435.7	85.7	1.7	4.2	1.9	0.7	5.0
East Midlands	4,451.2	87.0	1.6	5.4	1.6	0.7	3.1
West Midlands	5,431.1	82.4	1.9	8.5	2.7	0.6	3.2
Yorkshire & The Humber	5,258.1	86.8	1.5	6.2	1.4	0.6	2.8

Source: ONS, 2011

Participants

A total of 729 children and young people completed questionnaires. Fifty-seven per cent (422) of respondents were in primary school in Year 6, with two classes of Year 5 children. Forty-three per cent (307) were in secondary school in Year 13, with two classes in Year 12. The gender breakdown in the sample overall was 54% female and 46% male.

The ethnic composition of the sample is broken down in Figure 1. The largest ethnic group of the sample was White British (25%) followed by Pakistani (17%), and then Indian (14%).

Religions

Overall, over 40% of the respondents were Muslim, reflecting our choice of schools in areas with large Muslim populations. This was followed by Christian (21%), Sikh (6%), Hindu (4%), Other (1% – including Jehovah's Witness, Taoist,

45 These figures, published for the third year running, are the most detailed available on the ethnic breakdown of the country before the full results of the 2011 census are published - the ONS estimates them by combining data from the 2001 census, the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Population Survey.

Zoroastrian), Buddhist (0.7%) and Jewish (0.3%). Twenty-three percent of respondents stated that they were not religious and 3% chose not to declare their religion.

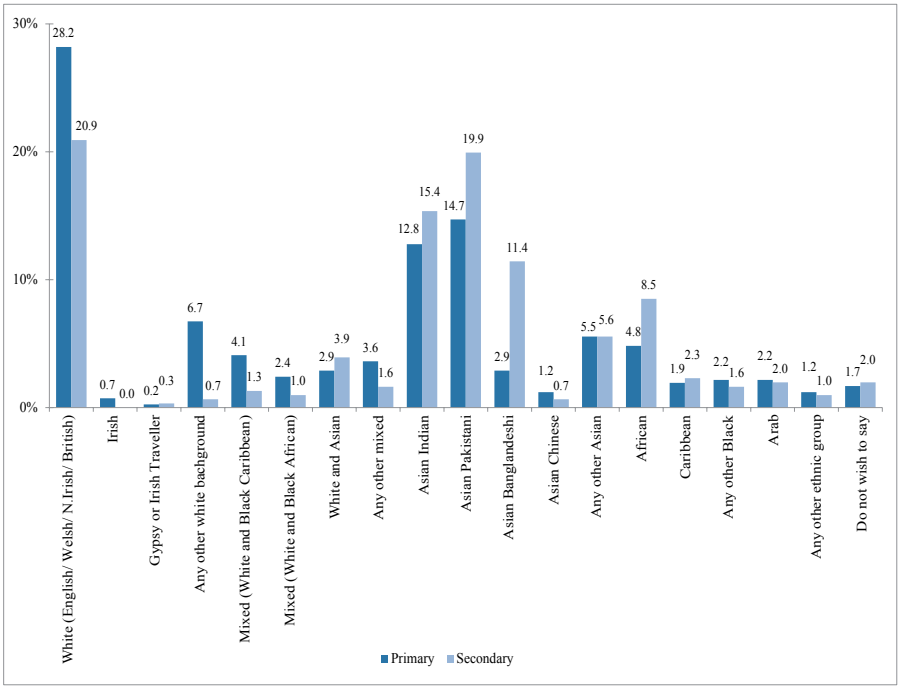

Figure 1: Ethnic background of respondents

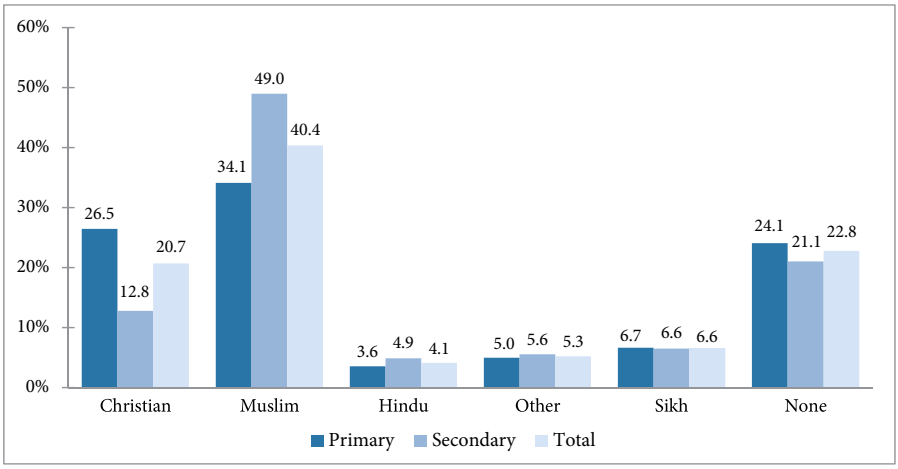

Figure 2: Religious background of sample regrouped

As the numbers of respondents from Jewish or Buddhist backgrounds were so low (2 and 5 respectively), the decision was made to amalgamate these groups together with "Other". Those who chose not to declare their religion were also grouped into "Other" to create a larger group for the purposes of analysis. Figure 2 shows the resulting percentages.

Measures and procedures

The questionnaire was developed with all partners across the five areas, with additional questions added by each partner for their particular focus. The questionnaire explored children's attitudes to their peers with regard to ethnic background and religion, the nature of interethnic violence in school as well as pupil and institutional responses in school, locally and on a national level. Ethnic classifications were taken from the 2011 UK census.

All of the schools, except one, had provision in place for pupils for whom English is not their first language. The one school without provision was a sixth form centre that admits pupils at 16 years or older. Some of the schools had large ranges of strategies and resources for such pupils, which largely reflected the needs of the school population in relation to first languages spoken. All but one school had explicit policies and procedures for dealing with racism and bullying and many had a large range of racial equality and anti-bullying policies and activities.

The schools and sixth forms chosen for the study were all non-selective, mixed gender, state schools with a higher than average ethnic mix. No faith schools were included in the sample.[46] Schools were also asked to provide contextual data on their ethnic composition and anti-bullying policies. All the researchers were white British. The aim was to have a minimum of 40 pupils completing the questionnaire in each school; however, in three secondary school/sixth form centres, figures were slightly lower.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative part of the research was undertaken between December 2011 and April 2012. The interview schedules were agreed across the 5 European partners but with additional questions for England as we were focussing particularly on Islamophobia within the overall context of interethnic conflict in schools. We undertook the research in London, one of the 4 regions used for

46 Faith schools are schools with a religious character (all school stages); they are responsible for setting their own admissions policies and teach religious education according to their religious precepts. Faith schools admit pupils on religious affiliation but many admit those who are not of the school's faith (DCSF, 2008).

the quantitative research. London was chosen because it meets the criteria set out in the original proposal in that it is an urban and very ethnically diverse region with a high proportion of people from minority ethnic groups. Schools in London reflect this ethnic diversity and, in particular, have significant numbers of Muslim pupils.

Measures and procedures

A mixture of one-to-one semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with pupils were conducted. Semi-structured one-to-one interviews were held with 7 experts in the field of race equality. The interviewees included representatives from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), researchers, government agencies, schools and community organisations. Interviews covered a range of areas and were structured such as to enable us to get expert knowledge and experience of key areas of race equality in schools and in the wider society with a particular emphasis on Islamophobia. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Focus groups were conducted in four schools in London – two primary and two sixth form educational centres catering for post-16 year old students. The two primary schools comprised an inner London primary school of 605 pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and 4 5 languages being spoken by pupils and an outer London borough school of 700 pupils, in which the largest ethnic groups are Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi. There is a wide range of languages spoken by pupils in the school with the most spoken languages being Bengali, Urdu, English and Punjabi. The secondary schools comprised a sixth form college of 1971 students in an urban area of East London with a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and languages spoken within the student population, and a sixth form centre of 436 students in inner London where 75% of students are Bangladeshi. The dominant languages spoken are Bengali, English, Gujarati and Punjabi.

We conducted two one-hour focus group interviews with 5-6 pupils in each of the schools and centres. Primary pupils were year 6 (10-11 year-olds) and secondary pupils were year 13 (17-18 year-olds). Pupils were chosen by the teachers but we requested that the groups comprise a mix of gender, religious background and ethnicity roughly in proportion to the pupil population. Pupils were asked about relationships and ethos in the school or centre, any experience of racism including Islamophobia, teachers' attitudes, school strategies regarding race equality, the local and national situation and the portrayal of ethnicity and religion, particularly in relation to Muslims. We also undertook 45-60 minute

individual semi-structured interviews with a senior manager and a teacher in all 4 schools/centres. These interviews essentially covered the same ground as the focus group interviews as we wanted to triangulate the evidence. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were then coded using NVivo software.

Difficulties encountered

As is often the case in researching with schools (see Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000), we encountered a number of difficulties with data collection. Participation in the project was voluntary and finding schools that would agree to take part was difficult. This was partly due to the selection criteria (which restricted the choice of schools), the sensitive nature of the project, which meant that only schools who felt confident with the way they managed interethnic violence were prepared to be involved; and the nature of schools themselves. School staff members are often very busy and research is not a priority for them. Consequently, the schools had voluntarily agreed to take part in the research, were located in diverse ethnic areas and had a strong Muslim presence; as such, they may be more likely be committed to race equality and more confident in their policies and practices than other schools.

In many primary schools, the completion of the questionnaire involved considerable discussion and explanation and classroom assistants and teachers were used to read and sometimes scribe for pupils who had greater difficulties in comprehension, which inevitably could have influenced the answers. As other research, such as that of Hurry, has shown, variation in reading abilities and comprehension of read information varies widely in English primary schools (as cited in Wolke et al., 2001, 3) and thus may be a source of error. Indeed, many of the questions involved the term "ethnic" or "ethnicity" and the idea of ethnicity proved a difficult concept for some of the younger pupils in primary schools to grasp, as other research has found (Cohen et al., 2007). In the sixth forms, where a looser structure exists with regard to attendance, it was sometimes difficult to find enough pupils to complete the questionnaire.

In relation to the qualitative part of the research, the focus group interviews in the qualitative fieldwork were chosen by teachers and, whilst the ethnic makeup of the focus groups was what we had requested, it may be that those pupils chosen were possibly those that were positive about the school and thus not entirely representative of the whole year group. In addition, in some of the focus groups there were strong individuals who may have influenced the other responses in the group. Further, all researchers were "White British", which may have influenced participants' responses.

Discussion

We used the pupils' religious backgrounds as marker against which to compare and contrast the experiences of children from different religious backgrounds in the quantitative study. Findings were then further elaborated in the qualitative study, where we were able to go deeper into exploring pupils' lived realities and the impacts, if any, of interethnic violence in their school lives and the interplay between religious background and violence. This also enabled triangulation of the data with responses from experts in the field of race equality and the school staff we interviewed. In this way, we wished to compare whether children and staff perceived the school environment in the same way, since research points to the fact that staff often deny or are oblivious to racism within their school (Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Gillborn & Rollock, 2010).

Perceptions and experiences of school

In relation to the school environment, the majority of pupils in the quantitative study agreed that their school was a place in which equality and understanding for others was promoted. Pupils in the quantitative survey were asked to comment on their perception of how inclusive their school was and whether it was a place where they felt all were treated equally irrespective of their religious background using a five point scale from 1- "strongly disagree" to 5-"strongly agree".

Chi-square analyses reveal that students from all religious backgrounds were in agreement that their school was a place in which teachers treated students equally and where an inclusive environment was promoted; there was no significant association between religion and perceptions of the school environment. Significantly fewer sixth formers than primary school pupils agreed that they had special activities in the classroom[47] or learnt about different cultures and religions.[48] However, in the sixth form this is likely to be due to the nature of the curriculum in the sense that students often only attend classes in their particular examination subjects.

These findings are reflected in the qualitative study. In all four London schools that participated (both primary and sixth form), the pupils perceived the school environment as positive. Schools were described by both pupils and staff as inclusive and diverse; spaces where pupils of all backgrounds felt safe and secure. Discrimination along racist or religious lines was not a reported feature of pupils' experiences in any of the schools. Pupils reported how diversity in the pupil cohort led to feelings of inclusion; staff shared the same view.

47 $\chi 2\ (700) = 82.02,\ p < 0.000$

48 $(\chi 2\ (700) = 136.34,\ p < 0.000$

"Yeah its good this school because it has a mixture, it's not like there's… like… if you're the only black person in a school you'd feel uncomfortable but it's like we've got lots of black people, lots of white people, we've got different religions and no one will feel 'oh I'm the only one with this'." (f, 11)

"It's safe for every religion and there's no racism." (m, 11)

"I think there's a lot of diversity, it's like to a decent standard, like in this part of London its mainly like, I know colleges that's like mainly black, or like mainly Asian here like you've got... you've got a mix." (m, 18)

This perception was shared by the staff:

"Across the four campuses we see students mix quite happily during lesson times and at break times and lunchtimes as well." (staff member, sixth form centre)

In general, children in both primary and sixth form centres felt they were treated equally by teachers and school staff. Institutional discrimination or prejudice was not a feature within the schools covered by the fieldwork. Students also noted that many staff were also from diverse ethnic backgrounds, which aided the feeling of inclusion and being in a diverse environment. Students obviously valued and appreciated the diversity in the staff body. Indeed, positive role models can play a key role in promoting inclusion and feelings of belonging in children from ethnic minority backgrounds, as previous research has shown (Henze et al., 2000; Halstead in Meer, 2009).

"I don't think anyone is valued above another… I think a lot of our teachers are from ethnic backgrounds as well, that helps as well." (m, 17)

Despite their overall general positive experiences with staff, children in one primary school gave examples of some isolated incidences of children not being treated equally by all staff. However, this seemed to be related to a supply teacher – a teacher called in to cover a class when the usual teacher is unable to work due to sickness or other leave. As such, the teacher would have been coming from an external environment and thus may not have been so privy to school policies as permanent staff members:

"Because I wear a head scarf in year five, one of the teachers they said to me 'oh you have to take it off or you're not doing PE' – but I won't take it off so I ended up sitting out." (f, 10)

"Okay so what happens now? Do you do PE now?"

"Yeah." (f, 10)

"Was that a school rule or something?"

"No it wasn't a school rule." (f, 10)

"No." (f1, 11)

"Miss just made it up." (f2, 11)

"Teacher made a mistake." (f1, 11)

"Because with school you're allowed to wear your culture." (f3, 11)

This example clearly highlights how the usual practice of the school was understood by the pupil as inclusive and enabling; allowing students to express their identity and culture. The pupil was confident that not being able to "wear her culture" was simply a mistake and out of line with normal proceedings in her school.

Both primary and sixth form pupils expressed the view that the schools were very diverse and that pupils mixed well. Whilst some instances of conflict did arise, the general everyday experiences reported by pupils in focus groups were positive. In contrast to the positive perceptions of children and teachers in the fieldwork schools, an expert from the Muslim community interviewed felt that some teachers may hold prejudiced views that could affect the treatment of Muslim pupils:

"I have met teachers who feel, that they actually are liberating these children from Islam and from these backward attitudes that their parents have." (education expert from the Muslim community)

Other research (Suleiman, 2009; Meer, 2009) has identified stereotyped views around Muslims prevailing in some institutions, with pupils stating they felt judged on this basis as opposed to on their individual merit. This did not arise as an issue in the focus groups we held and there was no association between religion and school experiences in the quantitative sample.

However, whilst sixth formers described their sixth form centres in very positive terms and asserted that there was little interethnic tension, the situation appears more complex in that although very little actual overt tension or conflict is reported between ethnic groups, social groups are often based around ethnicity. Students in both focus groups and staff in sixth form centre noted forms of segregation along ethnic lines occurring in the centre's canteen. They referred to the "Black canteen", the "Asian canteen" and "Eastern European groups".

One student reported that he was *"scared of going in to the black canteen, I've never been in there before; I always walk the other way. The longest way just to get something." (m, 17)*

"There is a lot of erm..." (m 1, 17)

"Segregation." (m 2, 17)

"People do come together but it's..." (m 1, 17)

"It's too big too, not too big it's just not, like it is a college, it's not a sixth form where everyone would know each other so in terms of..." (m 3, 17)

"Everyone sticks to their group." (m 4, 17)

However, students also stated that groups mixed in classes as well as in sports or other clubs. This reflects the findings of Henze et al. (2000)'s study on racial or ethnic conflict in multicultural schools in the USA in that social groupings along ethnic lines in our sixth forms appeared to form and deform depending on the context. As Henze et al. state "Identity is not static or disembodied; rather it varies by time, place and interactants according to specific social situations"(2000, 201). The findings of our research underline the complexities of interethnic relations and within school identities.

Indeed, students from the same school also reported:

"Everyone mixes well because I don't think anyone in this college is racist. /…/ everybody mixes well because our school promotes, multicultural ethnicities to work together, to strive together, to play together." (f, 17)

Perceptions of violence within the school environment – safety

Levels of reported safety in school were high in both primary and secondary school in the quantitative study, although slightly lower in primary school, particularly in relation to the toilets[49] and the playground.[50] Areas in which respondents felt least safe were the less supervised areas of the playground, which corresponds to other studies in this field (for example, Wolke et al., 2001), and also the toilets (Brown and Winterton, 2010). When analysed separately by religion, there was no statistically significant association between pupils' religious background and safety in school on the part of either primary or sixth form pupils.

Violence within the school environment – personal experiences

Pupils in the quantitative study were asked to respond to questions around their perceived personal experiences of violence due to their ethnic background and to give the frequency of such experiences from a four-point scale ranging from 1- "never" to 5- "very often".

Primary

Table 4 highlights the percentage of primary school pupils from different religious backgrounds who had experienced bullying in the last school year because of their ethnic background and the frequency of such bullying. Overall, the most common form of bullying reported by all pupils was other pupils talking behind their backs with 40% reporting that it occurred at least sometimes, followed by name-calling (32%), which is a consistent finding in other literature (e.g. Smith & Shu, 2000; Monks e tal., 2008). Sixteen per cent of pupils reported experiencing physical violence sometimes, 4% often and 5% very often,[51] which is lower than the figure of approximately 30% reported in other studies (Monks et al., 2008). Analysis by religious group reveals an association between religion and bullying experienced by pupils in primary school in relation to the following forms of violence:[52] name-calling; rumour spreading; social exclusion and physical violence. As table 4 below shows, Muslims, Sikh and pupils of "Other" religious backgrounds in primary school experienced higher frequencies of name-calling and social exclusion due to their ethnic background than other groups. Fifty-two per cent of pupils from an "Other" religious group reported experiencing physical violence at least sometimes, compared to lower percentages in all other groups.

49 $\chi 2\ (710) = 37.80,\ p < 0.000$

50 $\chi 2\ (713) = 32.53,\ p < 0.000$

51 Data was missing from 2.6% of primary school children who failed to complete this section.

52 Name-calling ($\chi 2\ (404) = 16.69,\ p < 0.005$, phi= 0.28); rumour spreading ($\chi 2\ (404) = 16.69,\ p < 0.005$, phi = 0.20); social exclusion ($\chi 2\ (404) = 16.44,\ p < 0.006$, phi = 0.203) and physical violence ($\chi 2\ (403) = 14.03,\ p < .015$, phi = 0.19)

Table 4: Experience of different forms of bullying due to ethnic background in primary school

		Christian (N =105)	Muslim (N=139)	Hindu (N=15)	Other (N=21)	Sikh (N=28)	None (N=99)	All pupils (N=407)
Other pupils call me names or insult me because of my ethnic background.	never	78.1	56.8	73.3	47.6	46.4	81.8	67.8
	sometimes	18.1	33.8	26.7	33.3	42.9	14.1	25.3
	often	2.9	5.0	0.0	9.5	7.1	2.0	3.9
	very often	1.0	4.3	0.0	9.5	3.6	2.0	2.9
Other pupils talk or say untruthful things behind my back because of my ethnic background.	never	67.9	50.7	64.3	38.1	55.6	70.4	60.1
	sometimes	26.4	33.3	21.4	47.6	29.6	22.4	29.0
	often	1.9	10.1	7.1	0.0	11.1	5.1	6.2
	very often	3.8	5.8	7.1	14.3	3.7	2.0	4.7
Other pupils send me insulting SMS, e-mails, comments on Facebook, Twitter, and similar because of my ethnic background.	never	86.7	82.5	93.3	85.0	89.3	85.4	85.3
	sometimes	7.6	12.4	0.0	10.0	3.6	7.3	8.7
	often	3.8	1.5	6.7	5.0	7.1	4.2	3.5
	very often	1.9	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.5
Other pupils ignore me, avoid contact with me because of my ethnic background.	never	81.0	67.9	71.4	57.1	67.9	85.9	75.2
	sometimes	13.3	20.4	21.4	28.6	28.6	10.1	17.1
	often	2.9	5.1	7.1	4.8	3.6	3.0	4.0
	very often	2.9	6.6	0.0	9.5	0.0	1.0	3.7
Other pupils hit me, kick me, spit at me or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to me because of my ethnic background.	never	79.0	71.5	84.6	47.6	67.9	81.8	74.9
	sometimes	15.2	19.7	15.4	23.8	14.3	12.1	16.4
	often	1.9	2.2	0.0	19.0	7.1	4.0	3.7
	very often	3.8	6.6	0.0	9.5	10.7	2.0	5.0
Other pupils hide or destroy my things because of my ethnic background.	never	87.4	78.1	76.9	75.0	82.1	86.9	82.8
	sometimes	10.7	15.3	15.4	20.0	10.7	9.1	12.5
	often	0.0	3.6	7.7	0.0	7.1	1.0	2.3
	very often	1.9	2.9	0.0	5.0	0.0	3.0	2.5

Sixth forms

Levels of violence experienced in sixth forms were significantly lower than in primary schools, in line with other literature which shows a decline in instances of violence as age increases (e.g. Smith and Shu, 2000). When analysed overall, the most commonly experienced form of violence due to ethnic background in sixth forms in our sample was name-calling, with 16% reporting having experienced it sometimes, 3% often and 1% very often. Levels of physical violence (5% at least sometimes) were significantly lower in sixth forms than in primary school.[53] Chi-square analyses revealed no significant association between religious background and the levels of violence experienced in the sixth forms in our sample.

Frequencies of bullying found in other literature are difficult to compare, as previously noted, due to differences in questions and sample demographics; however, Smith & Shu (2000) found 14% of their sample of both primary and

53 $\chi 2\ (701) = 48.47,\ p < 0.000$

secondary students had experienced racial name-calling in a six month period, compared to 32% of our primary school pupils and 20% of sixth formers, who stated they experienced it at least sometimes in a school year. Monks et al. (2008, 510) suggest an estimate of 38% for levels of racist name-calling that may be occurring in schools.

Table 5: Experiences of different forms of bullying in secondary school

		Christian (N=37)	Muslim (N=143)	Hindu (N=15)	Other (N=17)	Sikh (N=18)	None (N=63)	All pupils (N=293)
Other pupils call me names or insult me because of my ethnic background.	never	89.2	76.2	80.0	76.5	77.8	82.5	79.5
	sometimes	10.8	18.9	13.3	23.5	16.7	12.7	16.4
	often	0.0	2.8	6.7	0.0	5.6	4.8	3.1
	very often	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Other pupils talk or say untruthful things behind my back because of my ethnic background.	never	94.6	81.7	86.7	88.2	88.9	88.9	86.0
	sometimes	2.7	12.0	13.3	0.0	11.1	9.5	9.6
	often	2.7	3.5	0.0	11.8	0.0	1.6	3.1
	very often	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Other pupils send me insulting SMS, e-mails, comments on Facebook, Twitter, and similar because of my ethnic background.	never	100.0	90.9	100.0	100.0	94.4	95.2	94.2
	sometimes	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0	5.6	4.8	4.5
	often	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
	very often	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Other pupils ignore me, avoid contact with me because of my ethnic background.	never	94.6	88.1	66.7	88.2	94.4	88.9	88.4
	sometimes	0.0	10.5	33.3	11.8	5.6	9.5	9.9
	often	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.0
	very often	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Other pupils hit me, kick me, spit at me or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to me because of my ethnic background.	never	100.0	94.4	100.0	94.1	88.9	95.2	95.2
	sometimes	0.0	3.5	0.0	5.9	5.6	3.2	3.1
	often	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
	very often	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	5.6	1.6	1.0
Other pupils hide or destroy my things because of my ethnic background.	never	100.0	95.1	93.3	100.0	88.9	98.4	96.2
	sometimes	0.0	3.5	6.7	0.0	5.6	1.6	2.7
	often	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.7
	very often	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3

Qualitative research also highlighted that experiences of violence due to ethnic background in the fieldwork schools was fairly low according to pupils' perceptions. Primary pupils did offer some contradictory statements and there appeared to be some lack of clarity about levels of name-calling and whether this amounted to "violence" or could be taken as a joke and therefore not considered harmful. Perceptions of what constitutes violence may be different, which leads to difficulties in ascertaining levels of violence. As this seems to be the most prevalent form of violence perceived and experienced by children, it would be interesting to research this phenomenon more thoroughly.

"Does it [bullying] happen a lot or not very often?"

"Not very often." (f 1, 10)

"Not very often you say?"

"Yeah, not very often but some children erm,... think of it as, taking a joke and some people think 'well no it's not a joke'." (f 2, 10)

"Okay. Yeah what does everyone else think does it happen a lot, or not very often?"

"Not very often." (all)

"I think there's a bit of racist because I think the other day, someone's being racist and then they got into a fight. But mostly when there's fight it's not that much to do with racism." (m, 11)

Sixth formers also asserted that overt interethnic violence was not a feature of their experiences within the centre. However, they mentioned occurrences of more low level forms of violence experienced in the form of banter, which they felt not to be harmful but rather joking between friends.

"So if there is like any kind of conflict within the college it's not based on... kind of ethnic... there's no kind of name-calling?"

"No." (m 1, 18)

"Not cultural no." (m 2, 18)

"Oh there's stuff like that but that's just like... Joking between friends." (m 3, 18)

"There's no like racial clashes" (m 1, 18)

Primary school pupils were also of the opinion that those most at risk of violence were those who were visibly different in some way unrelated to ethnicity; for example, children who might be overweight or spotty.

"… some people like bully them cos of their height." (m 1, 12)

"… bully me because I'm the shortest." (m 2, 12)

"… and people in glasses they always call four eyes." (m 3, 12)

"That's true." (m 1, 12)

"… because if you're like, quite chubby or something like that and you like hold your weight in cos you're scared people will call you fat or chubby..." (m 3, 12)

"Yeah like and if you're like spotty they'll call you spotty face." (m 1, 12)

Staff supported this view, stating that violence was rare and that when it did occur it was across different identity boundaries and was variable and changeable. The qualitative fieldwork schools all had very diverse student cohorts, save for one where there was a majority of Bangladeshi students.

"No it [interethnic violence] is very, very rare, I mean we would report those, they're reportable to the local authority and we might have maybe one maybe two in a year. And they wouldn't show any particular, often erm,... I'm thinking of one I reported a couple of weeks ago, er... a black Caribbean boy had said something about, you, you know something about white people to a white European boy. So it's not, it's a very mixed, you know, it's not directed at any particular group." (senior staff member, primary school)

The issue did not arise in sixth form focus groups as the consensus from staff and students was that interethnic violence was not an issue in those centres.

"Ignorance is key": why violence arises

Ignorance and a lack of understanding were cited as reasons for violence by both students in primary schools and sixth forms, as well as some experts. The furthering of stereotypical identities was also reported to be harmful to ethnic relations.

"Cos they don't realise what type of religion or they haven't heard of it or they just don't realise what they're saying." (f, 11)

"Okay."

"Because the other people are different and er, you know no one is the same but you know everyone, like has the vision of a person that they like but I don't think it's really nice to be racist and like, 'oooh I don't like you because you're black', that's not really nice." (f, 11)

"I think it's just predominantly hate." (f, 17)

"But where's it coming from? Do you think?"

"I don't know, maybe lack of education." (f, 17)

"Ignorance is key. Lack of contact with others of different faiths leads to ignorance. We live in a global community and need to know and understand each other to enable social cohesion." (representative from an Islamic NGO)

In line with other literature (Harris, 1997), experts also noted how the underlying socio-economic and political context were often the root causes of violence, as opposed to ethnic divisions, but that violence often manifested itself in a seemingly interethnic way.

"Some schools have had huge problems with erm, with interracial and ethnic issues, for example I advise on a school in [name of city] which has massive issues to do with that. You know always fighting between different groups and so on and er, Bengali children and white children and those kind of things, you know, children who are from very deprived backgrounds. And often that plays a very important in your psychology really. The white children felt that these guys were getting their jobs and they didn't have any prospects because of them." (education expert from Muslim community)

"I think you just can't be complacent ever, you just can't ever think the problem goes away, it's a continual thing of, it's this whole soup of yes worry about the future, difficult economic circumstances, media propaganda, fear and ignorance. And again schools not really giving things the space." (representative from race equality NGO)

Students reported instances where they themselves had been bullied or they had witnessed more interethnic tensions in other schools. As mentioned above, children expressed conviction that as their school was very mixed all children

could feel included and not "I'm the only one with this". They expressed the view that where students were in the minority they may be more likely to experience violence. For example, one child in primary school recounted how he had been subject to violence in the form of social exclusion and name-calling due to his ethnicity at a school in Spain, where he was the only black child in the school.

> *"I just remember when I was in Spain I used to get bullied, so when I come to school in Spain, [the other children used to say]… 'hey look it's the black boy lets run away from him because he's black' and every time I'd go home I started crying and I'd tell my mum, 'mummy, everyone's insulting me and nobody wants to be next to me'. And that's why I left the school and I came to London." (m, 10)*

The family had since moved to the UK, where he felt much happier in his current school. Children in the focus group were in unanimous agreement that this was because the school was very mixed ethnically and there was a respect for diversity. The diversity and inclusivity of this particular boy's current school enabled him to feel welcomed and included, without losing his identity. Children in the focus group affirmed that they felt the school body was diverse and this led to all feeling included. The schools promoted respect and valuing difference so that it was not a question of "fitting in" or assimilating with a mainstream majority identity but rather being able to celebrate diversity in all its forms. Such findings reflect a difference with other studies where there is a distinction between the so-called majority culture, which is seen as the "norm", and cultures that are therefore positioned as "other" to this and where racist attitudes were more prevalent in school children (e.g. Devine et al., 2008).

Children also expressed the view that the United Kingdom itself was an ethnically diverse country and felt that this contributed to less racism. Thus the school was seen as a space for interaction and learning about different cultures in a positive way. As one young girl who had previously lived in India reflected:

> *"I think because United Kingdom's more with other different kind of countries with different types of children, like er, in India you'd only find Indians, so they're not like, they're not aware of different cultures in the same school." (f, 10)*

Whilst instances of Islamophobia between students at our schools did not emerge, students and staff raised the issue of some conflict between students of different Muslim backgrounds. This underlines the complexities of the "Muslim" identity. As previously discussed, Muslim communities can be strongly internally differentiated (Archer, 2003).

"/…/ I think, because in the Muslim religion you have some families and it's like any religion you know, some that follow the code you know really strictly and then others that you know pick and take bits from it, and some children then were saying you're not a good Muslim because you're not doing this, you're not doing that. So there was a little bit of conflict on that, yeah." (teacher, primary school)

"I was saying well basically I've noticed that there is a little bit of conflict, well I wouldn't say conflict but there's a bit of like, well within the Muslim community, there's like, /…/ a few different groups. People are like, they're practicing two different ways of, I think within there's a bit of conflict. /…/ I think the main conflict between our culture is the ones who practice and the ones who don't practice. The reason being is that strict Muslims believe that it's strictly wrong to even talk or socialise with the opposite sex. However, there's a lot of people in this school that have girlfriends that go out with girlfriends, they might like to social drink now and again, so they're not very strict. So between, you know, amongst the same group of people, you know Muslims, there's a bit of conflict. And as you know around the world you've got two types of Muslims, Sunnis and Shiites and they kill each other." (m, 18)

One of the experts we spoke to also reported this issue:

"…and they were saying it's /…/ Sunni versus Shia even in our sixth form college, you know that's where the violence is. It's not about Islamophobia." (academic)

Social identity, it is held can in part be "formulated through a simultaneous and ongoing synthesis of self-definition and the definitions of oneself offered by others. All identities, both group and individual, are constituted through an "internal-external dialectic of identification" (Jenkins, 1996 in Tinker, 2009, 548). Thus in schools with larger Muslim cohorts, differentiation may be within the overall "Muslim" identity. Such instances of conflict thus highlight the complex nature of interethnic relations and the varied identities that interplay relationally amongst students.

Disclosure and response patterns

Those pupils that reported experiencing violence due to their ethnic background were then asked to whom they disclosed this information. In primary school, of the sub-sample of 40% of children who experienced some form

of bullying because of their ethnic background, 54% of pupils would tell their mother/carer, followed by friends (51%) and teachers (39%). Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between religious background and disclosure patterns. Of the sub-sample of 21% of sixth formers[54] who experienced violence due to their ethnic background, 64% reported they would disclose to friends and 21% would disclose to a teacher. Again there was no significant association between religious background and disclosure patterns in sixth formers.

Thus, it would appear that religious background is not a major determinant in pupils' experiences of violence and that perceived levels of institutional violence are low, as pupils in both primary schools and sixth forms in our sample reported feeling able to be themselves. In school they could "wear their culture" and be themselves. Further, a high percentage of students reported that they would disclose to teachers any incidences of their experiencing violence.

The general consensus from pupils and staff in primary schools that we spoke to in the qualitative study was that interethnic violence was not an issue at their school. There may be instances of some racial name-calling; however, it was rare. On those occasions when it did happen, pupils reported that they felt a mixture of reactions, mostly evoking empathy for the victim.

"Angry." (m 1, 11)

"Guilty." (f 1, 11)

"Maybe bad, because maybe you might have done it and then /…/ you feel embarrassed that you done it as well." (m 2, 11)

"I feel sorry for the person getting bullied." (f 2, 11)

Pupils also reported feeling able to disclose any problems to teachers and confident that it would be dealt with, despite some concerns around being called a "snitch" and bullies being made aware of the disclosure.

"I feel like I can turn to my parents because you know they come with great advice but it's more difficult to talk to the teacher because the bullies can look at you and make very dirty faces and send you threats." (f, 11)

54 Data was missing from 18% of this sub-sample, as they failed to answer the rooted questions about their experiences of being subjected to bullying.

"The reason I turn to my class teacher is because she's the one who can understand me the most. She knows how I feel, she's like... she's like the person I can talk to. And she'll believe me." (f, 10)

Pupils in the other primary school also stated they felt confident to talk to teachers because they felt secure in the knowledge that their disclosure would lead to some form of action and would not simply be dismissed. They felt their concerns would be taken seriously and they would be believed.

"Yeah cos in this school adults don't stand for that kind of stuff [bullying]." (m, 11)

Pupils in primary schools also reported using circle time[55] and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE)[56] as a way of dealing with any tensions. Both were seen as safe spaces in which to discuss issues and where the consequences of one's actions could be discussed. Children appeared to value the opportunity for them to have an open discussion whereby those children who may have engaged in bullying behaviour are helped to understand the consequences of their actions in a public forum.

"I like PSHE because it makes other people think as well as me; it makes us think about our actions. But it can be sometimes scary to see what your future will be like if you keep doing these actions. So that's..." (m, 10)

"Do you mean the bad actions?"

"Yes the bad actions, and it's you know great to like make the bullies think about it as well." (m, 10)

Sixth formers came across as very confident and knowledgeable about their sixth form centre's policies on anti-bullying. Students were very clear that interethnic violence would not be tolerated in their centre and thus it was not really an issue, at least in terms of overt conflict. Again, confidence in the consequence

55 Circle time is a mechanism in class for children to share within a safe environment. Tools such as a sharing stick giving children the right to speak may be used to encourage all to have a say. For further information see: http://www.circle-time.co.uk/.

56 PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) education is a planned, developmental programme of learning designed to help learners develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. For further information see: http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/uploads/media/27/7396.pdf .

of any violence created feelings of security in stamping out violence and prejudice, which encouraged feelings of safety within the school and a low level of violence. Students also expressed feelings of confidence in staff responses to any disclosures.

"So why is that not necessarily the case here?"

"You'd get kicked out. You'll get kicked out." (m, 18)

"If it came to something like racism yeah, they'll probably... yeah, oh my gosh... If it's something serious they'll deal with it." (m1, 17)

"I think all the staff they have so many checks and balances on them, it would just, everything would happen really quickly. The principal's office is next door and no one's going to stop you from going in there. Going inside exactly." (m2, 17)

"Okay so you could literally walk in and say... I reported this and nothing happened what are you going to do about it?"

"Yeah." (both)

"You all feel confident to do that?"

"Yeah." (all)

These findings reflect those of previous literature (e.g. Henze et al., 2000; Tippett et al., 2011; Ofsted, 2012) which outlines how clear behavioural policies together with respect for diversity and an inclusive ethos are key mechanisms in preventing violence. Further, in schools where pupils were confident that firm action would be taken and thus preventative measures were in place, bullying is found to be less of a problem (Ofsted, 2012).

Religious discrimination within the school space

Pupils in the quantitative study were asked about their perceptions of the level of respect afforded different religious in three arenas of their lives: school, local area and the media. For the purposes of this chapter, only results pertaining to the school environment will be discussed.

The sub-sample of pupils that reported that religions were not equally respected, were then asked to identify which particular religions they did not

feel were respected. Of the 7% of primary school pupils who felt religions were not all equally respected in their school, 59% of this sub-sample felt Islam was not respected in their school, 52% felt Hinduism was not respected and 30% felt Christianity was not respected. Of the 6% of sixth formers who stated religion was not respected in their school, 67% felt Islam was not respected equally, 47% felt Judaism was not respected and 26% felt Christianity was not respected. It should be noted that as the percentages of pupils who felt religion was not respected were so low, numbers in the sub-sample are very small.

The primary schools and sixth form centres in which we did the qualitative fieldwork were all institutions that were committed to accommodating different religious practices as part of their commitment to race equality. Pupils in the primary schools provided evidence of the schools accommodating different foods, prayer needs and religious clothing. They also were clear that any requests for additional accommodation of religious practices would be listened to and taken seriously and, if feasible, addressed. Clearly, children felt confident to raise such issues with teachers and that their needs would be taken seriously; an important part of enabling people to live their religious identities in full in the school environment.

Pupils in the sixth form centres were positive about how the centres accommodated the needs and beliefs of different religions. Halal and other dietary needs were catered for in all four schools, and a prayer room was available to accommodate religions practices.

> *"I think the amount of opportunities this college gives to ethnic groups and, like the Islamic Society I haven't seen a more dominant Islamic Society in any other college or school than we have here. They have like a separate prayer room I've never seen that, maybe it's just me but I've never seen it in another school. They sell halal food in the canteen; I've not seen that in another school. When I tell my friends I can buy halal food in the canteen, everyone really gets surprised. But they've done loads of things to accept all the cultures. Do you know what else they've done... as well? They've given you man, little heater thing, little blowers, hand blowers for your feet… That's mad, yeah. In the changing rooms, 'cos you know you have to wash your feet, so they've given them little hair dryers, to dry off your feet man... the college they did this thing for them [laughing]." (m, 17)*

Staff in both primary schools and sixth form centres also spoke positively about the need to make appropriate provision for religious differences.

"There's always a halal food option and... I mean we do, with regards to any erm, religious head wear or you know the head scarves and for the Sikhs the bangles you know we have in our policy and our uniform policy we've got those things in place. Erm, now with regards to prayer room, it's really interesting actually. /…/ Some of the year six boys approached X and said er, can we have a prayer room cos we really want to do our prayers in. And X was like, okay, you know erm, yeah we'll sit down and put forward you know why and we'll try and accommodate it. And it's something actually that we're just starting to look in to." (teacher, primary school)

"I mean the kitchen, to the best of my knowledge, is halal. I think it's just, I think that is similar across a lot of Lewisham schools. I think they've just taken the decision that actually all meat is halal and there's no pork served at all. Erm you know the sausages are chicken sausages and things like that. So pork just isn't on the menu." (teacher, primary school)

The experts we interviewed were more mixed in their feelings about how far schools nationally accommodated religious differences. Some of the experts believe that things have improved and there is more accommodation than used to be the case.

"My impression is that… that Muslims are treated… well there's a paradox that… that they're treated far better by schools than they were twenty years ago. Young women and girls would not be allowed to wear hijab in the 80's. There were umpteen schools which were… absolutely out of the question for a girl to be allowed to wear hijab or to be excused swimming or to be allowed to wear different clothes. The idea of providing prayers or prayer space during Ramadan would have been, I think, have been unthinkable in most schools in the 80's and 90's. Where nowadays in this country Islam is accommodated… literally there are prayer rooms… it would be extremely unusual for a school to ban the hijab, I believe nowadays. There is erm… there is erm… there is toleration in the technical sense of toleration as distinct from being against the rules." (academic and representative from an NGO)

Experts felt that much depended on the individual headteacher and that often provision was made as an obligation and was done for a variety of reasons rather than necessarily being carried out as an integral part of the school's ethos and values.

"I mean I met one atheist headteacher to give one example really, he was an atheist himself but er, you know he just believed in fairness and justice and he said look if my parents are, this is important to them, I'm happy to do my best to accommodate them, that's what I believe in he said that's what I've done all my life. You know and I don't to sort of force my ideas on others, people in that sense, I'm happy to accommodate. And then you hear of another type of headteacher who, you know who will make an effort to make an accommodation but rather begrudgingly you might say." (education expert from the Muslim community)

Accommodation or not of religious difference is a key issue in that it conveys a strong sense of whether or not a child's beliefs and culture are legitimated and valued in the school and in the wider society. Thus religious accommodation can be seen as an important indicator of equality and freedom.

"/…/ to what extent a school considers that the children's own culture, faith and their belief and their values should be left outside the school door. Or should be brought in to the school and given recognition is the real issue. At the heart of the whole thing really, this is the big one… whether you know I as a parent or any parent can raise their children upon their belief and upon their culture or not. That's a true measure of real freedom of belief and culture in any society." (education expert from the Muslim community)

The importance of enabling children to live out all aspects of their identities in the school is recognised as an important part of creating an inclusive environment. However, not all practices can necessarily be accommodated and there is sometimes a delicate need to balance the ethos of the school and the belief systems of particular religions.

Addressing interethnic violence

The interviews with pupils and staff in the primary schools and sixth form centres would suggest that if ethnic violence were to occur in these institutions it would be recognised and dealt with through well established procedures, but that generally it was not a feature in their lives within the school/sixth form environment. In fact, it is a requirement for schools to report any incidents of interethnic or other form of violence to the local authority and the issue is treated with due concern.

Interviews with teachers evidenced the very clear policies of the schools in our sample on anti-bullying. One term that came across strongly from staff in schools

was "zero tolerance"; a term which almost all fieldwork school staff mentioned when interviewed about dealing with interethnic violence in their school. Staff were very clear that any forms of violence would not be tolerated within the school and that a clear and implemented policy was at work which all staff, and pupils, were aware of. Teachers cited the need to maintain this policy in order to ensure violence could not be seen to be an acceptable form of behaviour and that confidence in policies would remain high amongst pupils.

"I think things we are doing in schools really. Good practice, people working together, erm, zero tolerance of erm, you know the issues. Yeah, I think it's the sort of things we are doing." (teacher, primary school)

"Well we take it very very seriously, because I mean to pick on someone's ethnicity or race, it's you know racist, you know, or religion, we say it's zero tolerance completely." (teacher, primary school)

"We work very hard to support and to make sure that... you know instances of bullying or harassment or whatever are dealt with. And so, you know, that is always taken back to parents, so they're aware that it is very zero tolerance and things like that." (teacher, primary school)

"Erm... although the lid is on it in college because they know we have zero tolerance, we don't actually have zero tolerance. But pretty close to, if people choose to fight in gangs and groups in that way it is most likely that, at least some of them will lose their place here." (vice principal, primary school)

Students in sixth form centres endorsed this approach, again as incorporating a duality of multiculturalism and no tolerance for violence as a means of reducing interethnic violence in school.

"/…/ I think if you're to make a success of school… I think it has to be like a code of conduct, as a base guideline saying that this is a multi-cultural sixth form we don't tolerate racism." (f, 18)

Experts reflected the views of the sixth formers. School leadership was cited as a key aspect of preventing violence as well as the need to ensure that initiatives were incorporated in a whole school approach. Initiatives also need to be sustained to maintain the overall ethos.

"There is a need to create awareness of Islamophobia – what it is. Testimonies from young Muslims of own experiences, how it has affected them. What was done to them and also to say to young people, not to just ignore these incidents but to actually challenge them – to challenge anyone who is Islamophobic. School leadership is very important. The problem is that currently initiatives are just the odd assembly, and it needs to be far more, sustained, regular activities." (representative from an Islamic NGO)

"/…/ there are schools which conflict resolution and media resolution are taken very seriously, they teach it to the staff and the staff have training in not escalating conflicts between themselves and pupils and also skills in preventing the pupils escalating violence, and they teach those skills to the students themselves. And they penetrate the student body." (academic and representative from an NGO)

Teachers interviewed also reported feeling confident in institutional support and that they had received sufficient training to deal with any interethnic violence (or violence for another reason) should it occur. They stated that they were confident in knowing policies and receiving support for any more complex issues.

"So usually when staff start they will have as part of the induction process, we will talk them through how to deal with racist incidences or homophobic incidences and the kinds of things that we would say to children. That would be in keeping with our ethos and the way that we do speak to children. You know we like to discuss it and we like to be very open with children about but... what they said or you know consequences if what they said. /…/ so I think, in fact also I know if there was something that another member of staff heard or came across and didn't know how to deal with they would just bring it to a member of the senior leadership team or bring it to the class teachers attention... you know they would know erm, that, it needs to be dealt with and if they weren't sure themselves they would go and seek help from somebody who did, who felt more confident in dealing with it than them." (senior staff member, primary school)

"I've been here for five years in London now and I just I'm like 'wow I've learnt this today about this religion'. And you know we do regular staff training and there's always support for you..."

"So there's good institutional support from the school?"

"Yes, definitely. You know and we've got a clear policy on it so you know there's a definite way to deal with things. So I do feel confident… /…/ where I don't feel confident you know there's a great support there that you know they can come and, advise you." (teacher, primary school)

A UNICEF initiative, the Rights Respecting Schools programme,[57] in which one of the schools was involved, was also mentioned by pupils as having had a positive impact in creating an inclusive ethos and reducing instances of violence within their primary school as well as their confidence that teachers would deal with any concerns.

"So do you think, why do you think there's less bullying in this school do you think? Do you think there's a particular reason?"

"Because we've had, we've got school counsellors and the way that the adults know how to handle it makes a difference." (m,11)

"Okay."

"Because we're a Rights respecting school." (f, 11)

"Are you? What does that mean?"

"Erm, that means, that we respect everyone's right. For example everyone has the right to make friends, and that is our duty to fulfil their rights and make them happy." (f, 11)

"Okay does everyone agree?"

"Yes." (all)

The experts also mentioned the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) as well as other international educational rights programmes as mechanisms for preventing violence and valuing diversity. It was felt such initiatives gave a focus

57 For further information see: http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/.

to children's minds and enabled them to have greater understand of others and the boundaries of what is and is not acceptable.

> *"I mean, the way forward, I think, looking at a way forward… is actually, I don't know if you're aware of the… Rights Respecting School initiative…" (representative from government agency)*

An independent evaluation report carried out by the Universities of Sussex and Brighton found that the RRSA had a very positive impact upon the schools involved both in terms of reduction in instances of violence and in increasing positive attitudes towards diversity (Sebba and Robinson, 2010).

The picture emerging from the fieldwork schools was in contrast to that painted by the experts we interviewed, who raised concerns as to how far teachers nationally are trained to understand different faiths and cultures – particularly in relation to Islam – and in understanding issues of race equality generally and particularly Islamophobia. Experts did not feel sufficient training was taking place and felt also that often quality varied from institution to institution. They argued for the need for a more comprehensive approach rather than leaving it to institutions to implement good practice.

> *"I think it's declined because of, well, obviously the amount of time, the length of the course, and so much is school based now. /…/ Whereas I remember the days it was a whole program that used to teach on… on diversity and that was a whole sort of module that went across them. And I have a horrible feeling that it's all got collapsed into things. I don't know… obviously, that would vary across institutions."(academic)*

> *"I don't think there is much training of new teachers. There needs to be coherent programme. Teachers lack confidence as it [Islamophobia] is a sensitive issue. With awareness training and discussion, teachers would feel more confident in dealing with these issues." (representative from an Islamic NGO)*

> *"/…/ if I was to do a survey for you today to give an impression as to how many of them have received erm... done training as you like as heads for, in relation to say, as an example, to say, on Islam and Muslim culture awareness training how many of them have done that? Because they're serving a city which has 35% of children in [name of city] are of the Muslim faith background. So they are a*

very substantial number. So how many would you expect, there are maybe... 375 schools in [name of city]..."

"Right I'd expect all of them really to have done it."

"Er, the actual answer is zero."

"Really?"

"Yes, not one of them have received any training in this area. The local authority hasn't done that kind of training because I work for them. I know they haven't done one, okay. And has the school done one, no of course not." (education expert from Muslim community)

Experts further expressed concerns that schools did not always recognise or deal with issues of interethnic violence. Some had had direct experience of schools failing to recognise and address issues, particularly in relation to Islamophobia.

"My daughters were the only two girls wearing hijab in school and therefore they stuck out, after school they were attacked by a group of girls who told them 'go home!' – this was about three 3 years ago. The school failed to address this issue as initially the old headteacher was not interested. Since then a new headteacher has been more engaged; whereas the old headteacher was previously in denial about the issue. My daughters were also shouted abuse due to their faith and called 'terrorists'. There is a lot of Islamophobia going on but it is not a priority as schools are under a lot of pressure for results, etc. but the new headteacher at my daughter's school has a vision for the school recognising that Islamophobia is an issue… there are instances of good leadership, however, overall, the issue is not recognised. We need a sustained policy of trying to tackle Islamophobia – such as anti-Semitism or any form of racism; it needs to be recognised as a priority." (representative from an Islamic NGO)

In light of such comments from the experts, it would seem that the fieldwork schools were examples of good practice in this area, as their policies and practices were understood and implemented by staff and pupils felt confident in anti-bullying strategies and the mechanism within the school to create a secure environment or deal with any violence that might arise.

Changes in legislation

Experts and school staff raised concerns around changes to educational policy and legislation, particularly the removal of community cohesion from Ofsted inspection and the onset of free schools, which will be outside local authority control.[58] Concerns were raised that multicultural awareness would drop off the agenda and race equality would be less likely to be promoted.

> *"/…/ so I came across a school last week, an academy, a secondary school that's just become an academy. And the racism in it was endemic, really appalling. And so bad that I couldn't believe, you know most kids by year nine do a bit of self-censorship when a visitor comes in. As they're kind of aware, but these kids were completely uninhibited in their racism, unbelievable, and there was a teacher in the corner almost sniggering. So you sort of think 'okay now this school's an academy, who are they accountable to? Their board'." (representative from race equality NGO)*

> *"I think that's the danger that we have to be aware of and I think that is the case. One of the things is that the local authority be a very influential player in its links with schools and its central team because there are some local authorities with strong teams who promoted cohesion, who produced toolkits, who worked with staff who are very concerned about new arrivals, newly arrived pupils, about communities where English was an additional language, who've always done a lot of work, who knew their schools, those schools they would have to work… because that's where the schools got their support from and those are both city schools and outer-city… and I think… with schools becoming much more autonomous/independent and many authorities losing those teams, that that is the danger that that will slip that that will be the way... We've come so far and I don't think we're going to slip beyond a certain point but I think there is going to be slippage within the future." (representative from government agency)*

> *"/…/ oh god, my fear... is that, the way current education policy is going that nobody's [?] the authority to ensure that good practice prevails. I'm very, very worried about free schools. Because they're just being given free rein to, as far as I can see, adopt any jaundiced, prejudiced, activities that they may want." (vice principal, sixth form centre)*

58 For more information on free schools see: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools

Conclusion

The research findings highlight that in contrast to the increasingly Islamophobic discourse prevalent in wider society in the UK, children's experiences and perceptions of violence in our fieldwork schools were, in the main, not affected by their religious background and Islamophobia was not found to be a feature of our pupils' school lives. In terms of the different forms of violence experienced by pupils in our quantitative sample, overall 40% of primary school children reported experiencing rumour spreading and 32% experienced name-calling at least sometimes because of their ethnic background, which corresponds with findings in other literature on racial name-calling (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2001). Levels of violence due to ethnic background experienced in the sixth form cohort were lower than primary school, which is in line with other literature in this area (e.g. Smith and Shu, 2000), with the highest frequency of violence experienced being 20% of all students reporting having experienced name-calling. In sixth forms, there was no association between religious background and experiences of violence.

Primary school quantitative data, however, did reveal an association between religion and experiences of violence, with those from a Muslim, Sikh and "Other" religious background reporting higher frequencies of name-calling and rumour-spreading. Further, those from an "Other" religious background also experienced higher levels of physical violence. Children from a Christian or no religious background experienced lower levels of all forms of violence. Numbers of pupils in the "Other" and Sikh categories were fairly low. However, pupils from Muslim background were a large group and constituted the largest religious group in most schools. Conclusions are therefore difficult to draw and such findings highlight the difficulties in researching interethnic violence, underling the need for more detailed analyses into children and young people's lived realities of interethnic relations and how they interact with one another. Whilst children in this age-group's understanding of the questions may have been somewhat limited and we cannot be certain they were accurately reporting these forms of violence occurring because of their ethnicity, as opposed to another reason, the findings reveal an association that merits further study.

Nonetheless, as levels of reported safety in school were high and not associated with pupils' religious background in either primary schools or sixth forms, it would appear that respondents were not afraid in school and that such experiences were

not defining of the majority's school experience. Both Muslim and non-Muslim pupils overwhelmingly stated their school to be a place that promoted equality, where students could be themselves and "wear their culture". Within the school environment, pupils perceived religions to be equally respected and religious accommodation was high, as qualitative data revealed. Religious background was not associated with disclosure patterns and pupils were confident that were they to suffer any violence, teachers would deal with it appropriately. Thus pupils' perceptions of institutional levels of violence can be said to be low within our school sample.

Qualitative data reinforces findings in other literature (e.g. Henze et al., 2000; Tippett et al., 2011; Ofsted, 2012) that a dual approach of zero tolerance and the overall inclusive ethos of school are key mechanisms in preventing violence. The schools we worked with showed a strong ability to address interethnic violence and had high levels of religious accommodation and an inclusive ethos. However, these schools may well skew data in that all were very multicultural with a strong Muslim presence. The fact that they had agreed to take part in the research could imply that they were more committed to race equality since one would assume that schools suffering from problems of interethnic violence would be less likely to wish to participate in a project of this nature. In fact, evidence from the experts and elsewhere suggests that there are still schools that do not routinely provide the ethos and structures found in the fieldwork schools and where Islamophobia may be an issue. Thus, the picture might not be the same in different sorts of schools (e.g. less urban, faith schools; schools with a higher proportion of white pupils). It would thus be interesting to conduct research into other types of school – perhaps those in less multicultural settings – to ascertain whether there are any differences. The concerns raised that work around race equality may also diminish in schools under current government education policies; the impact this will have on interethnic relations is an additional area that merits further analysis.

In conclusion, our findings show that schools can make a difference to the lives of children and young people, where they provide safety, a sense of belonging, and a valuing of diversity. But we may be in a position whereby pupils experience a form of equality in schools that is at odds with the wider society, in light of previous research findings on the prevalence of Islamophobia in the UK. Since identity-based bullying is a social issue (Tippett et al., 2011; Ofsted, 2012), preventative measures need to also involve the wider community. Schools can only do so much within the particular space in which they operate.

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Interethnic Violence: a Dormant Problem in Cypriot Public Schools

Marios Vryonides and Maria Kalli

Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of students from different ethnic backgrounds and countries are enrolled in Cypriot primary and secondary schools.[59] The percentage of foreign students registered in primary and secondary public schools has increased by 5% between the academic years of 2006 to 2011, currently accounting for almost 15% of the total school population. The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of research that set out to examine the views and experiences of children on issues of violence and conflict that have a basis in their ethnic origin. Specifically, this chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research project "Children's Voices: Exploring Interethnic Violence and Children's Rights in the School Environment" that was conducted in Cyprus. These two phases explored students' beliefs and opinions about violence and conflict based on differences in ethnicity as well as the views of staff working in schools; namely teachers and counsellors.

59 "Cyprus" and "Cypriot" in this chapter refer only to the part of the island that is under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Since the Turkish invasion of 1974 and the *de facto* partition of the country, the two main communities of the island (Greek and Turkish) have been living separately with very little contact. The educational systems of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have always been separate. Essentially, when reference to "Cypriots" is made in this paper, it must be interpreted as synonymous with Greek Cypriots only.

The findings of the research in Cyprus indicate that interethnic violence is a dormant problem in the sense that it is not overtly discernible in the educational system. What came out from the research, however, is that potentially there are factors that might escalate interethnic tensions due to external conditions. For example, it appears that there is an environment of growing concern about the presence of migrants mostly from Asia and Eastern Europe in the Cypriot society. This leads to overall mixed perceptions about interethnic tolerance in schools ranging from negative to (politically correct) positive ones. It seems that at a period when the current economic crisis appears to have effects in all aspects of social relations, multiculturalism as a stated policy in education could suffer the most.

In Cyprus the project started in January 2011 following permission granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Background of the Study

Demographic data derived from the Statistical Service provide us with information regarding migration and the ethnicity of the whole population in Cyprus. The data show that migration in Cyprus gradually increased over the last ten years. Specifically, in 1998 8,801 people were designated as immigrants whereas in 2009 the number of immigrants reached 11,675 people. The peak of migration movements in Cyprus occurred in 2005, during which year 24,419 people immigrated to Cyprus. Some of the reasons recorded explaining what led people to immigrate to Cyprus were educational or employment opportunities and/or long-term permanent settlement. In the 1990s, a large number of people from Asian countries immigrated to Cyprus looking for better living conditions. They worked as child/elderly caretakers and/or domestic workers. However, current data show that in 2009 the highest number of immigrants was from Romania (a total of 1,410 Romanian citizens) and Greece (1,221 Greek citizens).

Table 1: Immigrants in Cyprus 2008 and 2009

Country of origin of immigrants	N in 2008	N in 2009
Greece	1,381	1,221
Romania	1,216	1,410
Philippines	1,221	799
Sri Lanka	540	688
United Kingdom	981	811
Russia	398	280
Bulgaria	816	691
Poland	544	181

Table 1 depicts a list of some of the countries of origin of the majority of immigrants living in Cyprus in 2008 and 2009.

Official records also demonstrate that there has been an increase in the number of illegal immigrants arriving in Cyprus. Specifically, data derived from the Police Annual report show that in 2007, 7,770 people migrated illegally to the Republic of Cyprus. The report also shows that the majority of people who immigrated to Cyprus illegally arrived from the Turkish-occupied part of the country in the north (n=5,162). In 2009, the number of illegal immigrants increased to 8,037. However numerical data show that there was a decrease in the number of illegal immigrants to the Republic of Cyprus in 2010; however, the number is not significantly different from 2009, when 8,005 people immigrated illegally to Cyprus. The Immigration Office has implemented significant immediate actions to tackle the increase in illegal immigration to Cyprus. Some of the essential measures that the Immigration Office and the Police Department have undertaken to combat illegal immigration are the inspection of foreigners' applications to stay in Cyprus, examinations of the authenticity of marriages between Cypriots and foreigners and the quality control/maintenance of the list of prohibited persons known as the "Black List" (Police Department, 2007).

The School System of Cyprus

In the Republic of Cyprus, enrolment in primary and secondary public schools is free for all students. The official language of instruction in all secondary public schools is Greek. It is mandatory for all children aged 5½-6 to attend the first grade of primary school. The compulsory educational system also requires students to attend schools until the age of 15 or until the completion of all levels (Eurydice, 2010). After the completion of primary school all students proceed to secondary school, which comprises another six educational years (3 years of lower secondary and another 3 years of upper secondary education).

Regarding interethnic school attendance, up until the 1990s only certain selected ethnic minorities tended to be visible in the Cypriot student population, such as Maronites, Turkish Cypriots, Armenians and Latins. Currently, Greek Cypriot students constitute of 86.05% of the student population in primary schools, whereas the 4 main minority groups constitute just 0.54% of this population. These percentages are very small but are significant since members of these groups hold political positions that influence legislative decisions regarding educational issues. This privileged position was granted to these communities in the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus in order to protect their historical heritage.

In previous years (2008/2009), data derived from the Statistical Service of Cyprus,[60] indicates that a total number of 5,094 foreign students were enrolled in public primary schools in Cyprus. Some of the nationalities of the foreign students who registered in primary schools during the academic year of 2008/2009 were Bulgarian (n=485), Greek (n= 620), Greeks of Pontos (n=881), British (n=519), Romanian (n=377), Georgian (n=460), Russian (n=320) and Syrian (n=208). Statistics also show that a total number of 3,351 foreign students enrolled in secondary education. Most students are Pontian Greeks or came from Greece (n=656), Bulgaria (n= 235) and Russia (n=206).

However, current statistical information (2010/2011 academic year) shows that the total number of foreign students enrolled in public schools is increasing. Table 2 presents the picture regarding the total number of foreign students who attend lower and upper secondary schools. This information, which was derived from the Ministry of Education and Culture, clearly shows that there is a high percentage of students coming from Georgia and Greece (22.2% and 21.4% respectively).

Table 2: Foreign students attending lower and upper secondary schools (2010-2011)[61]

Country of origin of students who attend secondary schools	N	%
Georgia	827	22.2
Greece	797	21.4
Russia	317	8.5
Bulgaria	316	8.5
Romania	281	7.5
Iraq	216	5.8
United Kingdom	167	4.5
Syria	95	2.6
Moldavia	83	2.2
Iran	51	1.4
Turkey	38	1.0
Others	536	14.4
Total	3724	100.0

60 These are the latest data available by the Department of Statistics.
61 These data were derived from the Ministry of Education.

National Topic-Related Literature Review

Key Concepts Used in Previous Research

Various researchers in Cyprus have attempted to define and explore the concepts of *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity.* Some argue that identity is formed according to the social and political circumstances that people experience. Specifically, the classification that reflects most Cypriot citizens' identity as Greek Cypriots is based on Greek history, cultural values, beliefs and religion (Spyrou, 2001; Philippou, 2007).

Other researchers focus more on the concepts of *interculturalism/ multiculturalism* and how these conceptual understandings play an important role in students' interpersonal relationships. In particular, many studies analyse the relationships between Greek Cypriot students and foreign students. The results seem to show that managing the co-existence of Cypriot students with foreign students is not an easy task to be dealt by children or educators at Cypriot schools (Papadopoulou, Kossiva & Polili, 2007). Most of the research studies present the negative impacts of interculturalism on foreign students, such as experience of racist and discriminatory practices against them (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2004; Zembylas, 2010).

Racialisation is a concept that is presented in most of the studies that explore attitudes and beliefs among Cypriot citizens (Zembylas, 2010; Trimikliniotis, 2004; Spyrou, 2009). This concept is explained as the process of attributing certain characteristics to people of a different race, ethnicity, language and/or religion. As a consequence they are socially classified according to these characteristics and as such they are negatively appraised by others (Human Rights and Equity Office). *Ethnicisation* is another concept that is presented in most of the research studies regarding the Cypriot situation. According to Milikowski (2000, 446), ethnicisation is the process of developing "social boundaries to protect the integrity of (presumed) ethnic-cultural heritages". In this sense, it is Cypriots, who have been provided with a historical and cultural endowment by their ancestors, who feel compelled to "protect" these ideals (Zembylas, 2010).

According to the researchers, the effects of racialisation and ethnicisation tend to explain certain attitudes of Cypriot population. For instance, Zembylas (2010) acknowledged the fact that the political problem in Cyprus (being a divided country since 1974) raises certain *racial and ethnicised beliefs* among Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot citizens. Specifically, in the educational sector both sides (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot) are partly responsible for the

development of such beliefs. That is, schools unwittingly utilise indirect methods to project aversive attitudes toward the other community (national holidays, celebrations of liberation, etc.). As a result, this type of educational action might lead to the development and preservation of racist and nationalistic beliefs and attitudes towards other students (Zembylas, 2010; Trimikliniotis, 2004).

Moreover, studies show that the belief that the number of immigrants to Cyprus is increasing is a major factor that could explain the formation of *racist and nationalist beliefs and attitudes* towards foreign people. A research study conducted by Spyrou (2009) portrayed children's stereotypic beliefs and attitudes concerning "domestic" female workers (whose countries of origin were Sri Lanka and the Philippines). The researcher demonstrated that some children in Cyprus have a tendency to classify these two immigrant groups by their occupation in Cyprus (such as assuming that women from Sri Lanka are cleaners), by their racial characteristics (they have a "darker" skin colour from Cypriots), by their socio-economic status (these two groups are thought to "lack sufficient money and education") and by their cultural traits (such as their "strange" apparel and food).

Findings from Previous Research

Various research studies have been conducted in Cyprus in order to examine the issues of racism and discrimination that arise in Cypriot schools. Some of the researches present a positive vision of how Greek-Cypriot students interact with other students from different ethnic backgrounds.

For instance, in Partasi's (2010) analysis of this phenomenon, it is observed that Greek-Cypriot students gain positive outcomes through their interactions with students from different ethnicities. An example of such a positive outcome is the increase in students' knowledge regarding the historical and social circumstances of others (Partasi, 2010). In addition, Partasi explained that students from other ethnic minorities gain positive outcomes from their interaction with Cypriot students, depending on the intensity of their "social network" and on their preference for forming new relationships with other students (Partasi, 2010).

Most studies, however, presented the issues that arise from inter-ethnic interactions within Greek-Cypriot schools as problematic. A study conducted by Zembylas (2010) examined how Cypriot students understand attitudes towards other students who come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. This study also explores the ways in which Greek-Cypriot students experience issues such as racism and discrimination when they interact with Turkish-Cypriot students in their everyday academic lives. Specifically, the study showed that the

development of definitions of racism and nationalism depends on the age and knowledge of the students. The younger the students are, the less knowledge they possess regarding the meaning of racism and national identity. Some Greek-Cypriot students do not associate with Turkish-Cypriot students due to their knowledge about the historical and political circumstances. They eventually come to develop stereotypical beliefs concerning Turkish-Cypriot students that may subsequently lead both groups into conflict. On the other hand, the study explores the way the Turkish-Cypriot students understand and experience this kind of discrimination and stereotyping. Specifically, Zembylas (2010) supports the conclusion that Turkish-Cypriot students realise to a great extent that they are diversified and marginalised by Greek-Cypriot students in their school. Also, Turkish-Cypriot students feel that some teachers lack a sustainable means of controlling these situations due to their showing favouritism for Greek-Cypriot students. Moreover, the study shows that some Turkish-Cypriot students associate more with other Turkish-Cypriot students due to the fact that they share the same religious views and ethnic identity.

A recent study by Theodorou (2011) focused on foreign students' experiences in Cypriot schools, showing that they may lack useful resources at home compared with other students. For example, teachers assign homework to their students omitting the fact that some students might not have access to useful supplies at home, such as dictionaries and their parents' adequate knowledge and assistance regarding the homework topic. Specifically, Theodorou (2011) focused her research study on Pontian students, explaining that the majority of this group is identified as possessing a lower socio-economic status in the Cyprus. The author states that, as a consequence of this, some of the students from this ethnic group were unable to equip themselves with certain academic tools necessary for their studies, such as electronic devices or access to online sites for obtaining academic information. In addition, Theodorou (2011) commented that teachers' assumptions regarding the way Pontian students understand their belonging to a socio economic class were based primarily on their parents' perceptions. That is, parents project their sense of belongingness onto their children, which in turn perpetuates these feelings at school. Thus, some foreign students demonstrate feelings of embarrassment concerning their socio-economic status when they engage in class and peer discussions and they sometimes lie or attempt to conceal their situation to avoid discrimination.

Philippou (2005) adopts the theory of Lloyd and Duveen (1992), which argues that people understand the concept of ethnicity based on the experiences they gain in the course of their social interactions. The author believes that children

initiate their social interactions from the early years in school and therefore form their knowledge of what is a social "identity" (e.g. classification into ethnic groups, societal classes, and/ or religious groups) and an individual "identity" (e.g. classification into age and gender groups). Philippou's study focused more on the means Greek-Cypriot students in primary schools use to establish their "European identities" as well as their national identities (Philippou, 2005). According to Philippou, Greek-Cypriot students form their "European identity" based on their knowledge of Europe and the European Union. Further, she presents a schema that shows which type of identity is formed first and to what extent it can impact students' social categorisation. Philippou's analysis shows that Greek-Cypriot students consider their Cypriot and Greek identity to be more valuable than their European identity. For example, students place a greater emphasis on the Cypriot religion (Greek-Orthodox), the country as the place of their birth, the Greek language and their culture than their belonging to the larger European entity. Philippou additionally explains that students tend to place more significance on their national rather than European identities because they feel if they don't do so they would be undervaluing and so not appreciating the efforts of their ancestors to save the Greek tradition and its values (Philippou, 2005).

A research study that explored students' experiences and emotions towards issues of multiculturalism in schools illustrated that two immense factors affect the development of certain emotions towards other ethnic groups (Zembylas, 2010). Specifically, the socio-historical and political circumstances of Cyprus and the admission of immigrant students into public schools influence how emotions of hatred, disgust, fear, sadness and pain can be refined within the spectrum of the educational system in Cyprus. According to the researcher, the fact that Cyprus is a divided country (i.e., the Turkish invasion in 1974) is a subject that tends to be refreshed in students' memories when teachers teach the course of history. As a consequence, students develop strong negative feelings towards students who come from Turkish-speaking families and they tend to behave negatively towards these children (e.g., calling them names, isolating and avoiding them). On the other hand, Turkish-speaking students experience and perceive rejection by their Greek-Cypriot classmates, which leads to the development of other kinds of negative emotions. Turkish-speaking students feel that the school system does not protect and support them; consequently feelings of sadness, fear and pain are generated through their interaction with other students in school (Zembylas, 2010).

Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh (2004) examined the ways in which schools shape students' multicultural awareness. They state that it is necessary to implement an educational awareness in all students within the primary schools

of Cyprus concerning the negative attitudes that were developed towards the foreign students. Angelides et al. (2004) pointed out that negative attitudes such as "racism", "xenophobia", "ethnocentrism" and violent behaviours by Cypriot students toward foreign students was an existing aspect in Cypriot schools. Angelides et al. (2004) describe a single episode in which a foreign student felt that the reason that she could not be integrated into the school environment was due to the lack of support offered by the educational system, not her rejection by other Cypriot students. The authors believed that the Cypriot educational system does not motivate students to acquire knowledge about other ethnic groups and cultures. For example, in 2004 all history and religious textbooks included information that related only to the Cypriot and Greek occurrences. Not much has changed since even though several reform attempts have been attempted in the past few years. Any such attempt at reform is usually met by fierce resistance from nationalist and conservative groups.

As a consequence, a lack of knowledge regarding other ethnic backgrounds, histories and ethnic origins leads to the development of stereotypic attitudes against these students. Consequently, these negative attitudes could develop into violent behaviour towards this group of students. Despite the fact that the education system might be failing to assist the foreign students to efficiently assimilate into the Cypriot school environment, this group of students was willing to be part of this society and to enjoy all aspects of the Cypriot culture, such as religious and national celebrations, customs and traditions (Angelides et al., 2004).

A research by the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (KEEA, 2006) examined whether educators in Cyprus were aware and trained in how to promote solidarity and assist the integration of foreign students. The authors focused more on the importance of the intercultural knowledge of the educators and on how they can acquire this knowledge. The research findings show that more than half of the sample of educators were trained on intercultural issues, either by attending seminars or by taking courses during their graduate and undergraduate studies. Moreover, results showed that educators were well prepared to implement practical methods to enhance the intercultural awareness of all students. However, the study showed that even though educators were aware of the institutional instructions set by the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding teaching methods applied to foreign students, few of them were familiar with the "Guide" developed by the Ministry of Education on welcoming students in the school environment. Also, a large number of teachers were not informed about the seminars offered by the Ministry of Education regarding methods of teaching of Greek as a second language. It is important to note that most of the

educators were seeking more training on issues of multiculturalism and further training on practical ways of how they could support the integration of foreign students into the school environment.

Zembylas (2010) showed the vital influence that educators have upon the students by discussing the importance of the implementation of the "integrated education" in Cypriot schools by educators. As Zembylas (2010) discussed in his study, this type of education was derived from the conception of the "inclusive education", which is the integration of a diversity of students in one class or school. The author asserts that this type of educational measure is able to assist all students who come from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds to integrate more easily into the mainstream Cypriot school environment and to avoid being stereotyped or discriminated against. It is assumed that, based on this "integrated" educational system, all educators must be aware that their class encompasses students with different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. They also need to be informed about these differences and to be academically prepared to provide all students with the necessary tools to understand and accept the issue of diversity in their class and school in general. If educators were willing to accept and respect differing opinion and beliefs among the students, this would be an effective tool for influencing all students' reactions and attitudes towards intercultural circumstances (Zembylas, 2010). The researcher strongly states the opinion that the exclusive method of "Reconciliation pedagogies" is just an acknowledgement of cultural and ethnic differences and that it is not sufficient to assist students to question their assumptions and gain a deeper understanding of interculturalism.

Furthermore, Zembylas (2010) demonstrates that when "integrated education" was applied in a private Greek-Cypriot school, this approach was effective in moderating students' attitudes and behaviours. The particular interrelations of groups of students that were examined in the research included Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot students. It was evident that there were many rivalries among these groups due to the increase in stereotypic and racist beliefs and attitudes towards each other. Teachers showed themselves to be increasingly aware of issues relating to the interactions between several different cultures. Specifically, educators in this school tend to show understanding and acceptance of all students' beliefs and to encourage children to think critically and analyse these issues based on their own views. Other teachers use various practical methods to bring Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot students together, such as the establishment of student "clubs" that would include students from all ethnicities. However, the effort that teachers put into creating school harmony

is demanding since most of the students struggle to cooperate and not all of the academic staff is involved in this effort.

In order to recognise the vital impact of the educators on the formation of students' identities, Spyrou (2002) conducted a study to explore this issue. Specifically, the author examined how the educational system influenced the way students form perceptions of their own and others' ethnic identities. The author observed that in order to teach history courses (e.g. Greek liberation struggles) in class, the teachers tended to provide a visual context that might cause various negative effects. As the authors explicitly stated, the teachers provided examples (such as the brutal murders of the Greek population by Turkish soldiers in order to conquer a specific area) that increased the hatred of students towards the Turks. Consequently, as it is stated by Spyrou (2002), students shaped their understanding of Turks as the "enemies" and channelled their negative feelings and hostility towards this group of people. In addition, Spyrou (2002) affirmed that this kind of teaching method compels students to segregate themselves from other ethnic groups. Particularly, Greek Cypriots tend to identify themselves as "Us" and the Turkish as "Them" (Spyrou, 2006).

In his later study, Spyrou (2006) demonstrates that, in their effort to explain Greek history, teachers project a representation of the Greeks as being an incomparable civilisation. Spyrou also emphasised his concern that, if students are urged in school to form positive perceptions about other ethnic groups, this can be a process that continues over the following school years. As the author explained, the current social and political circumstances (e.g., the division of Cyprus, the unresolved political Cypriot problem) mean that the continuous political struggles in Cyprus negatively influence the perceptions and attitudes of Greek-Cypriot students towards other ethnicities (especially towards Turkish-speaking groups).

Moreover, another research study explored the way schools in Cyprus divulged the notion of "patriotism", mainly when history courses are being taught to elementary students (Christou, 2007). Specifically, the study presented the interrelation between the "official" national history (the representation of written events in history textbooks) in schools and the way students understand and remember these historical phenomena. It is argued that students' reconstruction of "unofficial" historical events is influenced by their political affiliations, the views of their parents and family and their membership of certain political youth groups. As a result, students carry these various beliefs and strong emotions about Cypriot history, which for much of the time are in contradiction with the "official" curricular materials taught in history classes (Christou, 2007).

Another study conducted by Symeou, Karagiorgi, Kaloyirou and Roussounidou (2009) reveals how teachers reacted and felt when having Roma students in their class. More specifically, the authors showed that most Greek-Cypriot teachers were not adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge and educational materials to teach classes in which Roma students were enrolled. Even though there was an inadequate supply of instructional materials that would effectively train and assist teachers to help Roma students, teachers also had to cope with the unwillingness of Roma parents to cooperate with them. According to the authors, some Roma parents decided that their children might not attend school to avoid the negative effects of exclusion, segregation and racist actions against them. Therefore, Symeou et al. (2009) argue that a methodological training programme provided to the teachers could support them in overcoming these difficulties. This programme attempted to increase teachers' understanding of the Roma historical and social background in order that they would be able to more easily recognise the learning and social needs of these students. The programme's stated goal was to facilitate the willingness of Roma parents to commit to their children's academic achievement and therefore to reinforce their attendance at school.

In view of what was presented above, an incident that took place in February 2011 should not strike readers as odd. In fact, many have described the following incident as the product of cultural intolerance. According to Philelefthe ros newspaper (2011, February 17), there was a huge clash between Palestinian (n=25) and Cypriot students (n=more than 100) due to interpersonal disputes. According to experts in this field, this incident was attributed to the increased feelings of cultural revulsion between these two groups of students and to perceived difficulties in their coexisting in a particular secondary school. The fighting was so intense that the state ordered all Palestinian students to be removed from the school to ensure their safety. Some of the Greek-Cypriot students stated that there were many occasions when Palestinians provoked them, which had resulted in a brawl (Philelefthe ros, 2011, February 17). The Minister of Education and Culture in turn announced that these types of actions were not acceptable and that they should be avoided by all students, calling at the same time for the educational system, the media and the state to help students to avoid such behaviours. Moreover, the Minister attributed this incident to the Cypriot society holding xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes toward other ethnicities. This is a fact that was actually confirmed by findings from national and international surveys (such as the European Social Survey).[62]

62 Similar incidents continued to take place at this particular school, creating more distressful outcomes instead of reducing the intense atmosphere between the students. This time the cause of conflict was a text message distributed to many Greek-Cypriot Students. The text message appeared as a warning

Against such a background, the investigation of interethnic violence in schools came at a timely period, with the findings of such an investigation expected to play a significant role in shaping relevant educational policy.

Investigating Inter-Ethnic Violence in Cypriot Schools

The investigation into the issue of interethnic violence in schools in Cyprus was done using a mixed method approach, whose first step was a survey into selected schools from four regions of the country. Essentially, because of the small size of the country, the four selected regions covered the whole island. This was followed by a qualitative investigation, which included personal interviews with teachers, principals and counsellors and focus groups with school children of the two age groups.

More explicitly, the stages that have been successfully implemented to date were as follows:

The first stage of the project, intended to involve a quantitative survey in 8 primary schools and 8 secondary schools in Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos. Questionnaires were to be filled out by students aged 11-12 and 17-18 years of age.

The second stage involved a qualitative investigation which included semi-structured interviews with eight school teaching staff and counsellors and with experts whose work was related with the problem of interethnic violence among school children. Also, eight focus groups with children (4 in primary and 4 in secondary schools) were scheduled to be conducted in order to collect data regarding their own perspectives.

Even though, written approval was given for this research by the Ministry of Education, the permission of the principal of each school was also required since this was a necessary step prior to proceeding with the administration of the questionnaires. A pilot study was carried out prior to the main study. For the

to all Cypriot students not to attend school the next day to avoid the violence that it was alleged would be attempted against them by Palestinian students. This incident outraged all educational authorities and all political parties, who stated that this kind of message not only created more fear and insecurity among the students but also encouraged the persistence of prejudice and hatred towards foreign students (Philelefttheros, 2011, February 19). Subsequently, the Minister of Education and Culture was opposed to the call for removal of the Palestinian students from the school, explaining that this action might lead to more serious consequences. He also requested that all students, parents and educators should implement more practical methods in order to assist all students of this school to acknowledge the solidarity and importance of coexistence between the two social groups.

main study, a consent form was sent to the schools that agreed to participate so that children could take it home to be signed by their parents. The researcher and the principal (or sometimes the teacher in charge) decided on a convenient date on which the distribution of the questionnaires would take place. Nine secondary schools and twelve primary schools were randomly selected from all the 4 regions. A total number of 599 students participated in the survey. The distribution of the questionnaires lasted for 2 months (November to December, 2011). The duration of the administration of the questionnaire depended on the academic level of the students. Specifically, 15-20 minutes were needed for the completion of the questionnaires in secondary schools. The students in secondary schools appeared to understand the questions better and appeared to be more acquainted with the concepts of multiculturalism, diversity and interracial violence. Approximately 40 minutes were required for the completion of the questionnaires in primary schools. These results might imply that students in primary schools had some difficulties in understanding issues connected to multiculturalism. Certain nationalities/ethnicities are more prevalent in some participating schools, with Greek Cypriots being the majority and Georgians, Greeks and Russians making up the highest figure of minorities in one school (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Primary school results derived from the demographic data of the research

Ethnicity	N	%
Cypriot	173	71.2
Georgian	4	1.6
Greek	31	12.8
Russian	8	3.3
Bulgarian	1	0.4
Rumanian	4	1.6
Iraqi	1	0.4
English	5	2.1
Syrian	1	0.4
Moldovan	3	1.2
Other	11	4.5
Total	242	99.6

Table 4: Secondary school results derived from the demographic data of the research

Ethnicity	N	%
Cypriot	268	75.3
Georgian	1	0.3
Greek	59	16.6
Russian	3	0.8
Bulgarian	3	0.8
Iraqi	2	0.6
English	11	3.1
Other	7	2.0
Total	354	99.4

Interviews and focus groups with experts, school staff and children were conducted during a two-month period, from February 2012 until March 2012. Each interview and focus group lasted between 45 and 60 minute in all participating schools. Specifically, 13 in-depth interviews with school staff and experts and eight focus group discussions with children took place. At first, in-depth interviews were conducted to elicit responses from five experts who were actively involved in programmes on combating violence between children from various ethnic groups. The experts were recruited from governmental and non-governmental organisations such as, the Coordinator of the programme "Health Promotion in Public Schools" (Ministry of Education), the Commissioner for Children's Rights, representatives of NGO's who lead programmes for violence prevention (Hope for Children) and researchers whose research focused on topics related with violence (of various forms) in primary and secondary school children. Furthermore, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with school- staff members (2 teachers in primary schools and 2 teachers in secondary schools, 2 head teachers and 2 counsellors). Finally, eight focus group discussions were implemented in 2 PS schools and 2 SS schools. The researchers followed a semi-structured interview schedule translated into the Greek language from a common version that was prepared in English. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed word for word (verbatim) and translated into English. Interview and focus groups transcripts were then coded and analysed into categories that were determined in advance by the research partners according to assumptions as to what would best describe the full range of views and experiences relating to the issue of interethnic violence in schools. All adult participants took part in the interviews voluntarily and were quite forthcoming in their responses. Children also participated voluntarily, appeared to be willing to take part in the group

interviews and showed quite a lot of interest in the topic. There were no particular problems during the process of interviews and focus group discussions and there were no problems regarding schools collaboration in the qualitative part of the study. It has to be noted that everybody involved appeared to be highly motivated to take part in the project. All schools made extra efforts to accommodate the smooth running of the interviews.

Research results

The School Environment

From the survey data, it appeared that by and large the majority of students did not have issues with their peers coming from a different ethnic background. Primary school students responded that they would be friends with pupils who had different skin colour, religion and language. The figure below indicates that there were no gender differences on whether they would choose to have a friend with different skin colour, religion and/or language (Figure 1).

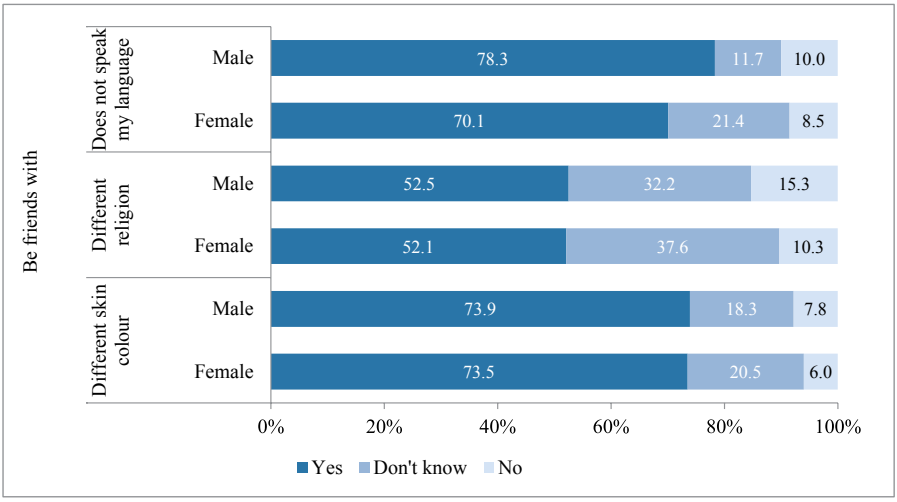

Figure 1: Data from the survey for primary schools "Would you be friends with…"

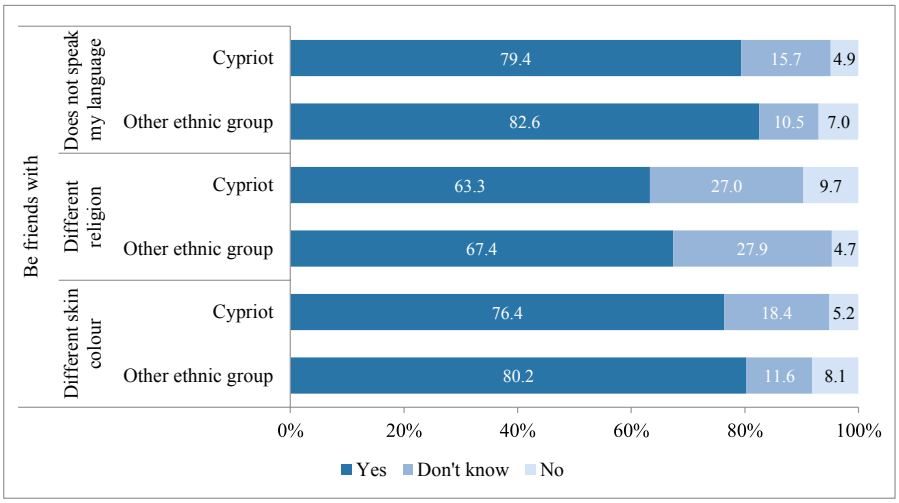

Figure 2: Data from the survey for secondary schools "Would you be friends with…"

Additionally, most of the students – regardless of their ethnic background (70-80% Cypriots and 70-80% other ethnicities) – responded that they would be friends with pupils who spoke a different language or had a different colour. However, only half of the participants (Cypriots 52% and other ethnicities 53%) would have as a friend a pupil who had a different religious background. Similarly, secondary school students, regardless of gender differences, answered that they would like to be friends with pupils who have different skin colour, religion and/or language (a pattern of 60-70% in males and females in all 3 variables). Also, results show that most of the students regardless of their ethnic background (65-80% Cypriots and 65-80% other ethnicities) answered that they would be friends with pupils who have different language, religion and skin colour (Figure 2).

When participants were asked whether they felt lonely at school, 69% of male students responded that they have never felt lonely in school whereas 49.6% of female students gave a similar answer. Figures 3 and 4 show that more girls than boys answered that they sometimes experience loneliness at school. Most of the Cypriots and other ethnic groups responded negatively to this question. That is, regardless their ethnic background, most of the participants (59.5%) stated that they never felt lonely at school.

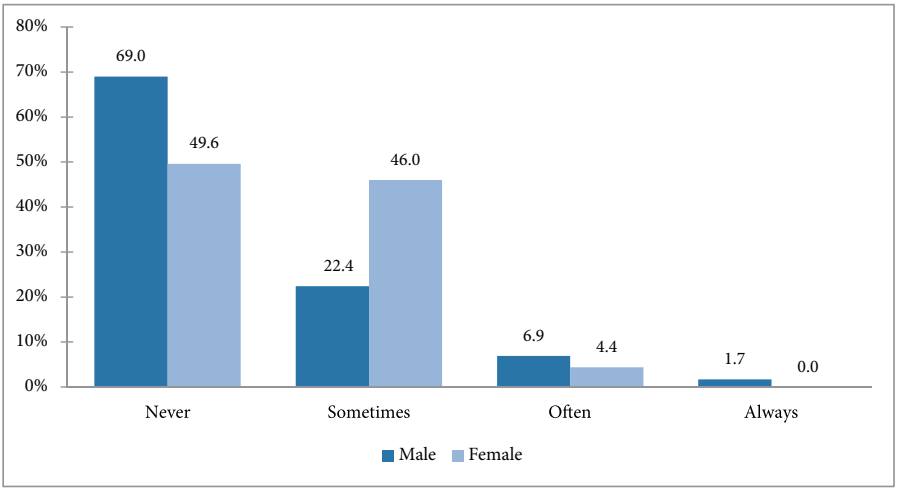

Figure 3: Data from the survey for primary schools "Feeling of loneliness"

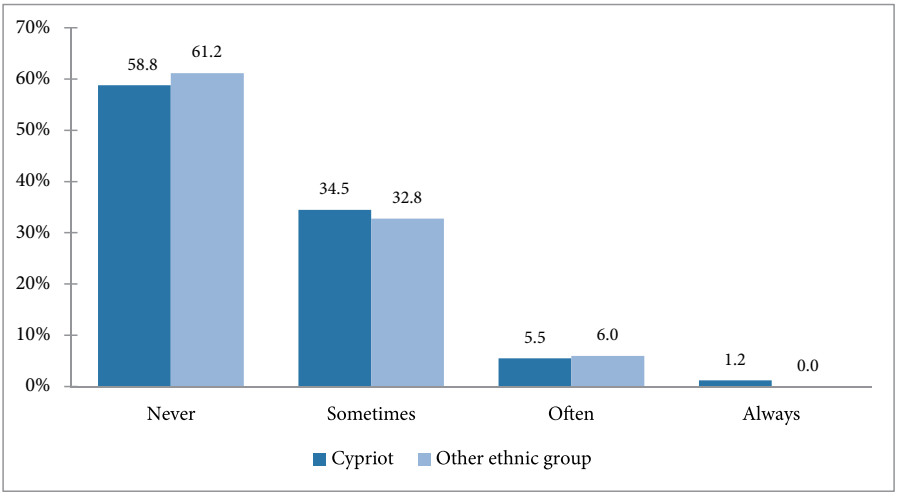

Figure 4: Data from the survey for secondary schools "Feeling of loneliness"

Results from secondary schools show that most of male (75.4%) and female (73.9%) students never felt lonely at school. However, 22.2% of male students and 23.4% of female students sometimes experience loneliness at school. As depicted in the table below (Table 5) most of the Cypriot students (77.1%) and other ethnic groups (67.1%) stated that they never felt lonely at school. However, 30.6% of students from other ethnic backgrounds indicated that sometimes they felt lonely in school.

Table 5: Data from the survey for secondary schools "Feeling of Loneliness"

Gender	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
Male	75.4	22.2	1.8	0.6
Female	73.9	23.4	2.7	0.0
Cypriot	77.1	20.3	2.3	0.4
Other ethnic group	67.1	30.6	2.4	0.0

An issue that merited exploration in the qualitative investigation was the overall school conditions that might foster conditions for negative developments in interethnic relationships. From the interview data, it emerged that generally there was a belief among school staff members that a concrete and a strong leadership/management in schools regarding the conditions of the presence of immigrant students would create the conditions that would allow students to adjust more easily to the school environment. Also, some of the interviewees suggested that overall state migration policies had an impact on the conditions of their schooling experiences. Specifically, it was mentioned that the state needed to be fairer in the provision of social benefits to migrant groups. One of the interviewees, reflecting an attitude that seems to be growing lately in the country, expressed his disdain for what he branded "uncontrolled migration flows" into Cyprus.

"My personal opinion is the state should take care of these people in the Cypriot society, by providing them with language courses, but also to control and fairly distribute social benefits to the general population." (counsellor, primary school)

"It is nice to help but the locals need to feel that they are treated equally with all the others. We do not blame immigrants because they take whatever they have been given. It is solely the responsibility of the government. Incentives must be given to immigrants to work." (teacher, primary school)

"We have enough immigrants and those individuals must be respected. Maybe the government should change its policies on social services, which are sometimes at the expense of the Cypriot citizens. There is an injustice with political benefits, the uncontrollable social services." (headmaster, primary school)

"I am against this attitude that immigration is uncontrollable in Cyprus." (teacher, primary school)

On the same issues some of the older students in secondary schools believed that in Cyprus nowadays policies and treatments have been positively changed towards issues related with immigration.

"They [politicians] provide benefits to immigrants who are unemployed; they basically help them in different ways now, they didn't care in previous years." (f, 17-18[63])

"Now Cypriots view the issue of immigration more positively; because of the economic crisis, many Cypriots are forced to migrate to other countries so they understand better how foreigners feel and deal with certain difficulties." (f, 17-18)

However, most of the secondary school students expressed their frustration in respect to what they perceived as unfairness towards Cypriot citizens. Specifically they believed that politicians and society in general provided more benefits to immigrants compared to Cypriots.

"I think that foreigners cannot have more privileges than someone who lives in a country more than 50 years, it's not right." (f, 17-18)

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

"The bad thing is that they take our jobs and they gain half the money a Cypriot would get if he/she had this job." (f, 17-18)

Few other students stated that foreigners are still being exposed to discrimination and prejudice in Cyprus.

"I think foreigners are treated more badly because they have more disadvantageous jobs than Cypriots. I do not like it because it is my country and I want to see her with just Cypriots." (f, 17-18)

"All labour-intensive jobs are being allocated to foreigners and Cypriots hold job positions in an office." (m, 17-18)

All in all these views seem to reflect an environment of growing concern about the presence of migrant groups in the country, which must be connected with the current economic crisis and the downturn of the economy. There are growing sentiments that the presence of migrants exacerbates the situation.

63 When conducting focus groups in secondary schools, pupils were not asked to specify their exact age, therefore only the age group they belong to (17-18) is presented.

Examples of Violence

According to the interviewees, psychological violence is the most recurrent form of violence in the Cypriot public schools. Students in public schools with different ethnic background are likely to experience psychological violence by other peers (most of the time by the ethnic majority of Greek Cypriots) in the form of mocking, isolation and devaluing (see Tables 6 and 7). There are also instances where children exert physical violence against other children (in the form of bullying) but not because of differences in ethnicity, religion or language.

Teachers and students demonstrate that psychological violence is a predominant condition occurring in primary schools. Specifically, staff members observed conditions, in which students teased, mocked, laughed at and/or verbally abused other foreign students. However, some students believed that psychological and physical violence against other children could occur regardless of students' ethnic background.

Table 6: Data from the survey for primary schools (ethnic differences) "Examples of violence"

Examples of violence	Ethnicity	Occurrence of interethnic violence (sometimes to very often) %
Other pupils call me names or insult me because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	25.2
	Other ethnic group	43.4
Other pupils talk behind my back because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	43.6
	Other ethnic group	58.9
Other pupils send me insulting SMS, e-mails, comments on Facebook, Twitter and similar because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	15.5
	Other ethnic group	13.0
Other pupils ignore me or avoid contact with me because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	18.0
	Other ethnic group	31.8
Other pupils hit me, kick me, spit at me or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to me because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	14.8
	Other ethnic group	17.3
Other pupils hide or destroy my things because of my ethnic background.	Cypriot	12.6
	Other ethnic group	20.2

When asked to report examples of violence, primary school students reported in the survey that other students sometimes tease their schoolmates, call them names or insult them because of their ethnic background. Similar results were also evoked when students were asked whether other pupils say untruthful things

behind other pupils' backs. Few female and male students very frequently perceived some sort of violence (percentage rate below 20% for both genders).

More Cypriot than other ethnicity students responded negatively to questions regarding their personal experience of violence. According to secondary school students' responses, rare occasions of violence occur when other pupils send insulting SMS or e-mails, hit or otherwise physically attack their classmates and hide or destroy other classmates' properties. Almost 10% more female students than male students believed that other students often ignore and avoid contact with other students because of their ethnicity. No differences were observed in the responses of the two ethnic groups regarding experiences of violence. That is, a high percentage of students from other ethnic backgrounds showed that they have never experienced violence (such as, physical abuse, hide/destroy property, insults with sms/e-mails) due to pupils' ethnic backgrounds. Cypriot and other ethnic groups stated that sometimes other pupils would tease and verbally insult, say untruthful things behind other students' backs and ignore or avoid contact with them due to their ethnicity.

Table 7: Data from the survey for secondary schools (ethnic differences) "Examples of violence"

Examples of violence	Ethnicity	Occurrence of interethnic violence (sometimes to very often) %
Other pupils call them names or insult them because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	72.0
	Other ethnic group	77.9
Other pupils talk behind their back because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	73.4
	Other ethnic group	82.4
Other pupils send them insulting SMS, e-mails, comments on Facebook, Twitter and similar because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	39.4
	Other ethnic group	36.5
Other pupils ignore them or avoid contact with them because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	79.3
	Other ethnic group	88.4
Other pupils hit them, spit at them or express other forms of rude physical behaviour to because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	39.8
	Other ethnic group	40.6
Other pupils hide or destroy their things, property because of their ethnic background.	Cypriot	27.2
	Other ethnic group	26.7

This issue was mostly explored with adult interviewees. Some of the adults working in schools when interviewed cited their observation of what they have referred to as subtle discriminatory practices by Cypriot youngsters towards

peers from other ethnicity groups. However, this was not a universal occurrence as there were also observations to the contrary.

"I would expect to see more children hanging out with others from different ethnic backgrounds, but this doesn't happen…" (teacher, secondary school)

"The children differentiate themselves based on ethnicity because they look for common values and characteristics to form their social groups." (counsellor, secondary school)

"Pontic Greeks usually hang out and feel comfortable with each other. They feel that there are strong ties between them; it is rare that they escape from their community. They hang out with the locals and the longer the duration they live here, the easier it is to integrate; but I think they are… and the family begins to try to keep them in the community, make their own families and not go out of the community." (headmaster, secondary school)

"There is a current difficulty… there are some children who fight, hit or swear other children due to various reason and not only because of ethnicity. It is usually caused by our own children [Cypriot] who fail to communicate with him [a boy with different ethnic background]… there is a lack of communication." (teacher, primary school)

"I haven't noticed any type of isolation by Cypriot students and sometimes even the students with different ethnicity might prefer to hang out with them… if you're a sociable kid, you can hang out with others. I saw students from different nationality be friends with Cypriots… they are not isolated." (teacher, secondary school)

"Students choose to hang out together with other students who come from different nationalities because they find common interests and issues. But many times you see some Cypriot students who have developed good friendships with foreign students." (counsellor, secondary school)

Reasons for Interethnic Peer Violence

Ethnicity as explained by its conceptual framework is not an isolated factor contributing to ethnic violence. The conjunction of different skills, economic status, language, experience of domestic violence, etc. is associated with negative

outcomes in schools. Ethnicity is placed at the middle-ranking list among all the factors contributing to violence against peer with different ethnic background.

Most of the participants during the interviews stated that ethnicity was not the major factor that causes violent behaviour among peer groups but that those violent behaviours were the product of a combination of many factors and causes. Generally, the meaning of the word "different" elucidated some of the students' reactions to what was different from the usual. As clearly stated by a teacher:

> *"He could be Cypriot but who varies in his appearance… again we will have a problem." (teacher, primary school)*

Accordingly, many factors contribute to the upsurge of interethnic peer violence in Cypriot schools. Family values and attitudes towards racial and ethnic differences shape children's beliefs and behaviours. In fact this coincides with recent findings from international surveys (like the European Social Survey, 2010), which depict Cypriots as being more xenophobic (or even racist) compared with other Europeans. To a lesser degree, according to the adult interviewees, experiencing domestic violence could be a factor that may explain violent behaviours and attitudes of some students towards other students in schools.

A primary teacher believed that children's attention was sometimes drawn to something different, usually when something was unfamiliar; they tended to mock and make fun of it. Even though nationality influences the way students view others – hence their reaction and behaviour towards others – it was not considered the main factor. The lack of appropriate educational awareness regarding ethnicities was being branded as a contributing factor, which caused violence against students from different ethnicity groups. Other staff members also believed that family, society and the government played an influential role in strengthening racist attitudes among students. Other teachers believe that some children seem to be constantly bombarded with violent actions and behaviours at home, which may lead them to transfer those actions to their interpersonal relationships within school. More seriously, a family's racist beliefs and attitudes could also be transferred to children who then exhibit violent acts against their peers. As stated by a teacher:

> *"/.../ children are [sometimes] fanatically against foreigners because of their parents. The child listens to parents' negative comments regarding the increasing benefits provided to foreigners given the economic recession in Cyprus." (teacher, primary school)*

Negative stereotypes about certain groups, which are often associated with a child's hygiene, might be another factor that students tend to isolate others from their group. For example, when speaking about children of Asian origin, a head teacher had the following comment to make:

> *"They do not hang out, they say they smell [badly], they comment on their breath [garlic]." (head master, primary school)*

Due to difficulties in Greek language acquisition, problems connected with interpersonal communication define another factor that students cite as a possible factor for the occurrence of interethnic peer violence. Specifically, a female student referred to misunderstandings that may occur from the misuse of the Greek language:

> *"Let's say that someone from another country says something and the others understand it as a curse, therefore they start a fight." (f, 12)*

Children and young people have a great need to feel that they belong. In the presence of their group of friends, children react differently than being alone or in other groups. That is, a student may be characterised as "cool", "strong" or "popular" in their group of friends. In order to maintain this high, respectful intergroup status he/she adheres to anything suggested by other members of the group. For example:

> *"One child is a friend with a student with different ethnic background and because of that the other members of the group make fun of him that he hangs out with one who does not understand Greek." (m, 11)*

To avoid any peer rejection the student would stop hanging out with the other one.

Feelings about Interethnic Violence

When students were asked in the survey how they feel when they have witnessed a violent act against students because of their ethnic background, most felt angry and upset or uneasy. There were no differences between Cypriots and other ethnic groups on how they feel when they see other pupils being treated violently due to their ethnic background. Specifically, 50% of both genders in

primary schools felt angry and upset and almost 30% of both genders felt uneasy. Only 3% of male students said they felt ok when they see other students being treated badly due to their ethnic background (see Table 7).

There are no differences between Cypriots and other ethnic groups on how they feel when they see other pupils being treated violently due to their ethnic background. Most of the Cypriots and students from other ethnicities feel angry, upset and uneasy when they come into contact with this kind of violence. 5% of other ethnic groups feel ok with this situation (see Table 8).

Table 8: Data from the survey for primary schools "Feelings about interethnic violence"

	I feel angry and upset (%)	I feel uneasy (%)	I am not sure (%)	I don't care (%)	I feel ok with it (%)	I feel pleased (%)
Male	53.9	30.4	4.9	6.9	2.9	1.0
Female	54.7	27.4	8.5	7.5	0.9	0.0
Cypriot	55.6	30.1	6.5	6.5	0.7	0.7
Other ethnic group	50.0	28.3	6.7	8.3	5.0	0.0

In secondary schools, 59.4% of female students stated that they feel angry and upset, compared to 46.8% of male students who feel uncomfortable when a pupil is treated badly because of his or her ethnic background. Similar responses emerged for Cypriot and other ethnic group of students. Specifically, almost 40% of all students (regardless of ethnic background) feel angry and uneasy when a schoolmate is treated badly by others due to his/her ethnicity.

During the focus group discussions, children talked about how they felt about interethnic violence primarily in terms of discomfort and empathy towards the victims of such acts. They would often wonder how someone would feel if they would be subjected to improper behaviour and ask themselves how they would feel if they were victims themselves.

"I would feel awkward, if I was in their place." (m, 11)

"I feel bad because they do not speak our language and when they make fun of them they do not realize this." (f1, 11)

"I feel upset, it's not right. Because if they [the 'bullies'] were in their place they would have liked to be treated better…" (f2, 11)

"I feel sad, but even if you want to do something about it nobody will listen to you /…/." (m, 11)

"We should be helping because we might get into their position sometimes." (f, 12)

In one focus group with primary school children it was mentioned that sometimes such incidences are provoked and when this is done it changes their perspective and feelings.

"I believed that they deserved it [to be victimised]… but when it's not their fault I feel sorry for them." (f, 12)

"I feel OK when they deserve it [i.e. then they also call them names] even though they might be my friends." (m, 12)

Some children mentioned that their reaction would be to report it to the teacher or that they would like to get involved himself or herself but would be reluctant out of fear for possible consequences for themselves.

"We feel bad about it and we would report it to the teachers." (m, 12)

"I might report them to the teachers." (f, 12)

Similarly, secondary school children express feelings of distress and discomfort.

"/…/ you get affected… Why? Because it could be you in their position in another country." (f, 17-18)

"I never thought about this… Because even when I witness such an incident I would not get involved… these things are unnecessary but it's not something that I would resolve." (m, 17-8)

These older children too would be reluctant to get involved out of fear that such an involvement might lead to negative consequences for them.

"You felt it but you would not split them up out of fear. Unless of course it is someone you know really well." (f, 17-18)

"You don't have to get involved especially if they are not known to you… what's the point of getting involved and getting in trouble." (m, 17-18)

"/…/ I experienced discrimination once not so much for my ethnicity background [the student is from Greece] and I felt anger and became aggressive /…/ I would get into fights for minor issues… and I saw that this was the result of the feelings that are produced out of this. When I hear such incidences I get really mad because I think of myself. If someone I knew was experiencing racism I might get out of control." (f, 17-18)

"Whoever experiences racism, he/she would inflict it on others." (m, 17-18)

"If somebody wants to make fun of someone else they would say anything racist to use. When I was in primary school I would get teased about my surname and I felt really bad about it, but I justify this because they [those who did it] were young… they were babies." (f, 17-18)

Coping with Interethnic Violence

In the survey, students were asked about how they dealt with interethnic violence in schools. Most of them indicated that they would help the students who are treated badly because of his or her nationality. Specifically, statistical data showed that most of the participants (40% males and 35% females; 44% are from other ethnic background and 34% of Cypriots) in primary schools would help the students who are treated badly because of his or her nationality. Also, the same percentage rates can be observed in cases where they would decide to tell a teacher or another staff member (males 30%, females 34%; 33.5% are Cypriots and 28% are from other ethnic background). Few students would walk away and ignore this situation (males 4%, females 4%; 3% are Cypriots and 3% are from other ethnic background). Some of the participants would tell the students who act violently that this behaviour is not right (males 11%, females 12%; 10% are Cypriots and 18% are from other ethnic background). Similarly in secondary schools, most of the students (regardless of gender difference) suggested that in the case of a violent act against their schoolmate, they would help the victim (~20% of both genders), they would tell them that this not right (~25% of both genders) and they would do nothing to help the person (~25% both gender). Similar responses were given by different ethnic groups. For instance, regardless of ethnic difference, students believe that they would tell them that this is not right or do nothing to help the victim. A 10% difference was found between Cypriot (20%) and other ethnic groups (30.8%) of students on whether they would actually help the victim.

In focus groups, the main response of primary school children in dealing with such incidences was to report it to the teachers and to their parents. But they also made references to how children who experience such behaviour get traumatised, cry and may in the end exhibit aggressive behaviour.

"I will get in the middle and then invite a teacher to explain what goes on." (m, 11)

"I would explain to the teacher because this child might not speak Greek and I can tell the teacher." (m, 12)

"A child might get into tears and cry in a corner." (m, 12)

One child who had experienced such behaviours in the past had the following to say.

"In the 2nd grade I was always alone and there was this group of girls who knew that I came from another country and they would make fun of me. I would come home crying to my mum, but then a child hit me and my dad came to school and talked to him and from that point it was finished." (f, 12)

Secondary school children also made references to reporting such incidences to teachers or counsellors, even though, as they report, this might get them into trouble. But frequently what might happen, especially when it is not reported, is to get marginalised. A case was reported as follows:

"In my group of friends we have a coloured boy who frequently experiences discrimination and it took him a while to integrate with us and for others to stop teasing him. We defended him even though when we got into fights; we have called him names but in the end this thing is over." (m, 17-18)

"Some get so disappointed that they chose to be marginalised." (f1, 17-18)

"/…/ one needs courage and the person who experiences racism should try to integrate in a group. Others, however, just give up trying to integrate." (f2, 17-18)

"Basically they get disappointed; that's why they may choose to be marginalised because when something is different it draws attention and comments." (m, 17-18)

Do Teachers Step in When Someone Gets Bullied by His/Her Schoolmates?

On the crucial issue whether teachers intervene when incidence of violence occur primary school children responded that schoolteachers always intervene when someone gets bullied by other schoolmates. Most of the students (regardless of gender and ethnicity) believed that teachers do not intervene in situations when someone gets bullied by his/her schoolmates because they don't know it is happening. There was a slight differentiation with secondary school students in the survey in that the majority of them (nearly 65%) reported that students sometimes intervened.

Female students believed that teachers don't intervene in a violent act due to their ignorance and indifference. Male students on the other hand believed that teachers do not step in when someone gets bullied by his/her schoolmates due to fear. Likewise, students from different ethnic backgrounds assumed that ignorance (36%) and indifference (44%) were the main reasons why teachers did not intervene in violent situations in schools.

It appears that teachers in primary schools can intervene more effectively when incidents of interethnic violence come to their attention. Primary schoolchildren highlighted this type of teachers' intervention very strongly, stating that:

> *"/…/ teachers intervene and separate children involved and may be penalised not to play football next time or their parents might be invited to come to see what happened…" (m, 11)*

In the survey, half of the male participants in primary schools (49%) stated that the school teachers always intervene when someone gets bullied by other schoolmates and the other half (43%) believed that teachers only sometimes intervene in this situation. Similar responses were also found in the female sample. 51% of females indicated that their teachers always step in and 39% believed that sometimes teachers intervene when someone gets bullied by his schoolmates. A analogous pattern is also shown between ethnic groups. Cypriots (49%) and other ethnic groups (53%) believed that teachers always act as mediators in violent conditions among schoolmates.

Contrary to the relatively easier task of primary school teachers to deal with such events when it came to secondary school teachers dealing with 17 and 18 year-olds things were thought of as being more challenging. Students mentioned

that even if they wanted to intervene there might be dangers involved for the teachers themselves. This response was quite characteristic.

> *"I believe that most teachers would intervene but if they over-react this might turn against them. There are limits to what teachers can actually achieve." (m, 17-18)*

Female students in secondary schools believed that teachers don't intervene in a violent act due to their ignorance (38.2%) and indifference (47.1%). Likewise, students from different ethnic background assumed that ignorance (36%) and indifference (44%) were some of the reasons teachers did not intervene in violent situations in schools. In contrast, Cypriots believed that it was not their teachers' duty (13%) to intervene and that teachers were afraid (16.7%) of such circumstances.

No references were made by primary school children during the interviews to specific strategies of teachers and other staff dealing with interethnic peer violence. The impression given was that teachers dealt with such incidences on a case-by-case basis and it usually involved light forms of reprimands when such incidences occurred in class or in the school. On the other hand, secondary school children made references to a number of strategies involving organising discussions on multiculturalism and co-existence in class and helping students who did not master the Greek language to catch up with the rest of the class. There were many references to the issue of language as a basic source of miscommunications and misunderstandings. So much so that there is an overall belief that *"they should first learn the language and then enter regular classes." (f, 17-18)*

> *"We used to have many Muslim students and teachers gave much attention to help them but accepted resistance from other students in the classroom. The teachers did what they could but not students." (f, 17-18)*

Preventing Interethnic Peer Violence

The ideas suggested by the interviewees/focus groups for preventing interethnic peer violence could be sorted into two main categories, the short-term instructive ideas and long-term instructive ideas. Short-term instructive ideas consist of suggestions regarding the effective educational processes within the school to enhance children's and staff members' understanding of the concepts of racism, multiculturalism, ethnicity, prejudice and racial and ethnic differences. The implementation of the ideas that fall into this category requires a shorter period of

time. On the other hand, long-term instructive ideas require an extensive period of time due to the fact that processes involving external actors (family, society and the state) could be followed outside of the school environment, which could lead to a successful outcome in the long-term.

In primary schools, according to children interviewed, teachers appear to organize several activities in order to help children from various ethnicity backgrounds to integrate in the classroom and school life in general.

> *"Teachers put us in groups and we learn about a nationality, its culture, way of life…" (f, 11)*

> *"We had this activity when all children from other countries brought national foods so that we would know about it." (f, 11)*

> *"Our teacher put all Syrian names on top of the board so that we could all see them and learn them." (f, 11)*

> *"Our teachers teach us that we should choose friends based on character not colour… it doesn't mean that if somebody is black you cannot be friends with them." (f, 11)*

Other staff members suggested that teachers and school authorities should recognise the abilities and skills of every student (especially the limited language abilities of foreign students) and provide assistance and motivation according to their needs. Specifically, the headmaster of a secondary school stated:

> *"Not everyone can get the same certificate. /…/ we need to update the technical institution so those who do not succeed in theory should have the opportunity to improve their art skills, therefore they could be happier… we should stop the notion that everybody has to become a scientist." (headmaster, secondary school)*

Also many primary school children made references to a number of activities that might promote better relations between children from different ethnic backgrounds. They appeared to be taking a moralistic attitude as to what needs to be done, possibly reflecting politically correct positions. A characteristic phrase that kept coming up frequently in students' comments was "*we should do this…" or "we should not do that…*" which was not particularly revealing of what actually goes on in class.

Secondary school children, on the other hand, spoke of more organised activities in class on this issue.

"We dealt with this issue because we had it as a thematic cycle." (f, 17-18)

"We had to write this essay on the various cultures, languages and differences in Europe and on how, despite of this, we are all equal." (f, 17-18)

"We have a special topic in our syllabus on racism and there are various discussions in class and essay writing." (m, 17-18)

"We have a special day for different languages." (m, 17-18)

"Last year during Christmas celebrations in school people from different countries appeared on stage and talked about customs and ways of life in their country… but nobody paid much attention to it." (f, 17-18)

Concluding Remarks

The findings from the research in Cyprus present a picture that on the whole suggests that interethnic violence is not a major concern for the Cypriot public educational system. However, the growing economic uncertainty, which is often connected with the presence of migrant groups in the country, could become a source of potential tension. Policy interventions are essential for diffusing potential conflicts because the combination of factors, which are often unrelated to education and multiculturalism, can produce the conditions for violence in schools. Examples from such initiatives include the Strategic Planning (2007) and the Zones of Educational Priority (2003) programmes, which were launched by the Ministry of Education in Cyprus.

In 2007 a "strategic planning" initiative was developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, designed to improve the quality of the educational system. The primary goal of the Ministry was to increase awareness regarding multiculturalism and diversity in school environments. Also, it aimed to adapt the educational materials to students' needs and therefore to support them regardless of any differences in their ethnicity or socio-economic and religious status. Additionally, in 2003 the Ministry of Education and Culture announced one of its supportive programmes, named Zones of Educational Priority, which aimed to provide assistance and guidance to all students who necessitated

more attention and guidance. One of the goals of this programme, as listed in the Newsletter (2006) of the Ministry, was to help students gain trust and self-confidence with their participation in certain programmes within their schools. Also, this educational reform acknowledged the issue of multiculturalism in schools and aimed to inculcate a more effective and positive awareness on the part of students and teachers on this issue. Currently, the Zones of Educational Priority are extended and applied in many schools in Cyprus. Their major goal is to assist students from different ethnic backgrounds to be easily integrated into public school environments. More recently, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched an Emergency Intervention Team, which provides a response to school requests when they are dealing with issues of violence and all forms of delinquency. During the academic school year 2010-2011, the team responded to 101 emergency cases in Cypriot schools, in which five of these cases related to individual foreign students and one involved a group of foreign students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011). The provisions and procedures followed by this Team involve all students of a school without making exceptions based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.

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