

Inner Multiculturalism and Language

Multiculturalismo Interno y Lenguaje



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Abstract

The manifestation and resolution of the "cultural neurosis" in second and third generation migrant families. The new Europeans of the old Europe live in an "intercultural" psychological space and find their home in the new language. There are also questions that need to be understood, metabolized, and resolved during adolescence to avoid dispersion of identity formation.

Keywords: migration, adolescence, language.

Resumen

La manifestación y resolución de la "neurosis cultural" en familias migrantes de segunda y tercera generación. Los nuevos europeos de la vieja Europa viven en un espacio psicológico "intercultural" y encuentran su hogar en el nuevo idioma. También hay preguntas que deben entenderse, metabolizarse y resolverse durante la adolescencia para evitar la dispersión de la formación de identidad.

Palabras clave: migración, adolescencia, lenguaje.

1. INTRODUCTION

Inner multiculturalism is the manifestation and the resolution of „cultural neurosis“. It is common in second and third generation migrant families. New Europeans in Old Europe are living in a psychological space “between cultures” and find their home in the new language. There are also questions which need to be understood metabolised and resolved during adolescence to avoid the dispersal of identity formation.

If migration is a loss of roots, as C.G.Jung writes (Sabin 2002.), it is very important to do psychological work on one’s own identity. Migration means a time “in-between”, a third space between two or three cultures. Working through cultural identity begins at the same time as adolescence normative crisis (Häggglund 1985) and it pertains development. In the first stage of adolescence (11-13-15 years of age) it is mostly connected to one’s own body (color of hair, eyes and skin, attitude towards menstruation and ejaculation) and different demands about competitive behavior at home and school. During that phase the school, and the attitudes and knowledge of teachers about multiculturalism, can either help or traumatize teenagers. (Anna of Green Gables, Tom Sawyer, Oliver Stone, The Famous fymf, Harry Potter).

Second generation migrants often suffer very strong normative adolescent crisis. They are “born to the land, but live between two cultures” (Singer-Kimbles 2004). At home they do not speak the same language they do at school, they have different “good” behavior demands at home and in society, different rules and sometimes also different clothes. Every so often they also have inner cultural and religious schism – which implies that they have psychological work to do in that field too.

In the middle stage of adolescence (15-18 years old), second generation migrants often search for their roots and identity by travelling and trying different roles. They try to find the answer to the question “Who am I and where do I come from?” Examples: Finnish-Swedish, Finnish-Russian, Swiss-Alban, Swiss-Serb, Swiss-Croat, Swiss-German, German-Swiss, Canadian-Panamanian, German-Indian, Chinese-American, Swiss- American, Chinese-Jewish... and so on.

2. IDENTITY

During independence crisis, teenagers use previous human relations, former models of interaction and models based on their peers. In middle stage of adolescence (15-18 years old) their own identity is being built step by step. Migrants also have extra work to do: their former models of interaction don't work properly in the new land's culture. They have to find some resolution between "home and land" cultures or create their own cultural identity – a third culture.

Nowadays we speak about Third Culture Kids (TCK). They have been living the main part of their lives or all of their life abroad and moved 3-4 times during their existence (because of their parents work permits lasting up to 3 or 4 years). They are often lonely, well educated and lost between cultures. They are "world citizens", future businessmen or women, but unable to create close relationships, and every so often also unable to speak about their role of "outsiders". The only ones able to understand their experiences are those who are in a similar situation. "People who don't live what we live, don't understand" (Benjamin 2017).

If development proceeds normally, teenagers perceive identity as psychosocial pleasure and develop an inner certainty about receiving recognition from those who they expect it from (Hägglund 1985).

But if said identity-crisis is longer than usual, creating a new identity takes more time than expected. If the development of identity is somehow disturbed, teenagers develop feelings of dissension towards their identity. For adolescent migrants many different identities are "on the table", and they have to find their way without a proper map. Their parents' map is from another culture and a different country.

If teenagers can't use their parents and their attitudes as a backup during the independency-crisis, they may start to perceive all adults as enemies. They feel that they don't have parents, that their parents have abandoned them – which means that the parents' role is not functional anymore for them as a model. Parents or older population are unable to protect them or help them. This usually happens if parents are from a very different culture than their children's peers.

Adolescents can go through a big cultural identity crisis at the same time, when they have unresolved identity issues, and sometimes also sexual identity crisis. Migrants can have feelings of dislocation and lose themselves within the country or between the countries. This can also include the cultural context or be confused with that. "Where am I, who am I?" (Singer-Kimbles 2004). They are lost in the country and between countries, they don't understand where they belong and which kind of future to expect. Often they don't have an anchor or can't

use it for some reason (ex. inability to learn the land's language properly, bad school votes, outsider of peer group, no supporting friends...).

If the teenagers can't use their parents and their ego-support, maybe because they live in too distant a culture from the one of the teenagers, adolescents need to find something new. And so this becomes a good space for different fundamentalistic and extremist groups, which offer "safe avenue for lost sheep". They offer emotional nourishment, that adolescents can't find anywhere else. Life becomes clear again, simple and limited. They don't need to make their own decisions. That's why they enroll in the holy war.

During the formation of identity the teenager is partly very aware of such a feeling. If the formation takes a long time, the teenager starts to perceive it as a big demanding pain. If the development of identity is somehow disturbed, the teenager perceives a painful feeling of dissension of identity. And if it goes on for a long time, that pain starts to be the only feeling. That's when teenagers may start to look for a resolution... any resolution... And they take with them also those adults and peers who haven't been able help them with their painful dispersion of identity. "He creates his own unique wholeness, and kills other possibilities..."

3. LANGUAGE

Language is very important for integration in a new culture and homeland, and also for identity formation. The mother tongue – the language which the person has been speaking from early childhood onward - is often not the sole language the person uses in life. Bilingualism and multilingualism are increasingly typical for European citizens.

The first language is rooted in the core of identity, and later in life the same position can be occupied by another well developed language.. Some families change their main language every generation, due to their living in different countries. And so their "mother tongue"- language, which they use to speak to their children, is their first language, their main official language. The question then is about "the language of feelings" and it differs very much from bilingualism.

Bilinguals use two or more languages or dialects in their everyday life (Beacco 2005). Bilinguals typically use their two languages with different people, in different contexts and for different purposes (Beacco 2005.). The language is anchored to different people. Children can speak Finnish with their mother and German with their father, or English with their mother and French with their father. With their grandparents they may speak French or English – depending on the language their grandparents use with each other. Using "wrong language" – a

language different than the one that is anchored to the person, is understood as breaking the rules of bilingual families. Multilinguals or plurilinguals know and use two or more languages in whatever level of competence (Beacco 2005).

In different languages, the same words might mean different things and so create different images. The word “maybe” is in some languages closer to “no” and in others to “yes”. The Finnish personal pronoun “hän” e can mean man or woman (the person), while in English the difference between she and he is clear and it is also used for animals. In Russian ona (feminine form) and on (masculine form) are clear, ono is not an alive object, so all animals are also she or he. In German, man is er and woman is sie (a group), es is drive or animal. “A gift” in English can mean present, talent or donation. One needs to be able to understand from the context of the sentence, what is being spoken about. And in German the same word means poison.

Only when one is able to understand jokes of other cultures, one starts to understand the subconscious of this culture, wrote Sigmund Freud (1940) in his book “Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewusstenn”. Freud himself lived between different cultures, so I suppose it was his own experience. This is easy to test with school children. The level to which they are able to understand humor, explains their correct language level. And this is a good way to understand the required level of teaching.

Multilingualism increases communication potential, helps to understand other cultures and their literatures and traditions and opens possibilities for richer social contacts when travelling abroad (Beacco 2005). For mixed families, multilingualism gives the chance of a deeper bond between the children and their ancestors and family history, and at least some connections to their family cultural roots (“where do my parents come from?”), without preventing them from integrating into the local community.

The second most popular language of the country is in itself an interesting phenomenon. In Germany and Austria, the second most popular spoken language nowadays is Turkish. In Poland it’s German, in France Algerian, in Italy Romanian, in Norway Polish, in Finland Swedish and in Sweden Finnish. The second popular language always takes its worlds and images from the host country. Finnishswedish is for example a totally different language or dialect from the Swedish, which is commonly used in Sweden. Swedish is Finland’s second official language – in my generation everybody must learn it in school, but most of my generation uses English to communicate with Swedish people.

4. WHAT IS IMPORTANT ?

Almost 38% of Europeans suffer from some kind of mental disturbance (Nuorisobarometri 2007). In Finland the amount of mental disturbances increases the amount of physical disturbances. Mental disturbance is also the most common reason for long sick leaves and early retirement. The most common are anxiety disorders (14%), which include panic disorders and different phobias, like for example social phobias (Nuorisobarometri 2007).

We know that parents are never perfectly able to control the development of their child, but the child’s possibilities to autonomy are mostly based on the degree of education and role models of the parents. The way teenagers learn to control the contradiction between autonomy and dependency, depends on the parents and other adults. And so the teenager learns to behave in a way, that doesn’t insult the rights of others and at the same time incorporates feelings of justice about one’s own position and demands. (Vuorinen 1983).

In therapy, migrants often have a strong mother complex “Is she a good enough mother...in this culture? She is culturally different from other mothers, but also for me... And my real or imaginary child/children”. It is not easy to shape one’s own future in a new culture. Young migrants lose sight of their children and well educated migrants seem to have children about 10 years later when compared to their native population.

For migrants from second and third generation it is very important to find, meet and see children who are similar from the outside and even more from the inside (on a genetic level) as them, to become able to understand which kind of individual their own child can be. It can also mean a big difference in the “inner culture” of second and third generation migrants from the main culture of the land, even when they use the same language at home as the main culture of the country (for example, swiss-albanians who live according to muslim rules in Germany). That’s why, for adolescents, especially during the early teens, it’s very important to be, at least sometimes, part of their parents’ culture (Christmas, Midsommer Party etc.) and learn in “language and culture”-schools (HSK 2016). In this way, they get the possibility to understand their own relationship to the culture and traditions of former generations.

Third space- inner multiculturalism is something new, a space between two cultures, meeting point, new creation.

5. FUTURE

“A flat in a new country” slowly becomes “a home in new country”. After the stage of “Check point home?” it is possible to find “home in a new homeland”. Language is often a very important key, as well as family hobbies and peer groups. An understanding of the new country’s basic unwritten rules and behavior patterns helps a lot.

Mennonites are third generation migrants. They accept to belong to a culture different than their original one, whatever it might have been. Third generation migrants easily feel at home everywhere in the world. But they are likely to spend most of their time with people similar to themselves

Mennonites are often multicultural, pluricultural and of course multilingual. According to former studies early multilingualism brings cognitive and neurological benefits and advantages. Their children have better mental flexibility, creativity and analysis skills, and they also seem to keep these benefits later in life. Because of this neuro-cognitive flexibility, multilinguals develop less dementia

related symptoms such as Alzheimer, or in any case their insurgence occurs later and displays less severe symptoms than in the monolingual’s cases. (Wachter 2014).

Nowadays there are more and more emigrants, immigrants, settlers, colonists, migrants, refugees, exiles, expats, expands, asylum requesters, visitors, travellers (not just gypsies but also inter-railers, car-caravaners, also businessmen/women, aircraft- and tourist business workers etc.), tourists, explorers, diplomats, residents, first, second and third generation migrants, cosmopolites, mennonites, multicultural and multilinguistic persons. People often don’t live only in one country during their lives or one city anymore.

Universities in Western countries suggest (and partly support) quite long periods abroad for students. It gives them the possibility to get a new view to the world, to see and feel other cultures during studying time.

Maybe this will create a new generation, which is more interested in the whole of the world and is able to travel and use different languages for communication. And maybe this new generation will be able to save the world for the generations to come.

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CONCEPTS

Emigrant	moves from the native country
Immigrant	moves to the host country
Settler	“new clearer”, pioneer, bulldozer (?)
Colonists	somebody who moves from the richer part to the poorer part of the country
Migrant	somebody who moves
Refugee	somebody who has to leave the home country because of war, catastrophe etc.
Exile	somebody who has to leave the country because of political opinions, without the possibility to come back
Expat	somebody abroad, who works in the country (=expatriot, expat wives, expat children)

Expand	somebody who expands something
Asylum Requester	political and/or economical asylum, can be short or long
Visitors	come for a short time
Travellers	not only gypsies, inter-railers and car-caravaners, businessmen and women, aircrafts and tourist business workers etc.)
Tourists	come to the country on journey, interested about resting from their own lives and sometimes about local culture
Explorers	investigators
Diplomats	officially representing some country in the land (diplomat's wives and children)
Resident	lives somewhere because of the post
First generation migrants	born in some other land and culture, where they live
Second generation migrants	born in the destination land, but live between two cultures
Third generation migrants	born in the destination land, but live between two cultures, have created their "own space", exploring their inner space to find their "inner and outer child"
Cosmopolites	citizens of the world
Mennonites	accept belonging to a different culture than the one of origin (whichever it was) 3

