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School and Violence

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Introduction

The discussion on violence and school begins with a brief definition of both. One of the more frequent divisions of violence in society and in school is the division into direct and indirect violence or structural violence. Zaviršek (2004) is convinced that both direct and structural violence are immanently connected. The more we allow direct violence, the more structural violence mechanisms are consolidated. When defining the incidence of unacceptable violence, whether direct or structural, it is considered that they are socially and culturally constituted. Systemic or structural violence is a component of school, as it is in its essence a mechanism for the reproduction of existing social relations (Durkheim, 1999; Bourdieu, Passeron, 1999; Apple, 1995). According to Bourdieu's definition of symbolic violence, this form of violence could be noted as a soft, invisible violence, which occurs "in purely symbolic ways of communication and awareness, or, more precisely, unconsciousness, cognition or even emotion." (Bourdieu, 2010, 2). If we connect this to a school, it makes sense to think of it as an important social institution that socializes future generations, while imposing particular meanings as legitimate (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1999), or social rules embracing the symbolic world of students (Horton, 2011). In other words, the school represents a place in which the transfer of social norms and values takes place in a relatively undemocratic and hierarchically structured manner. Therefore, socialization does not take place without coercion, which is constitutive for the entities (Arendt, 2013; Devjak et. al., 2007). Thus, the school helps the child to enter the culture, while also contributing to the preservation and legitimization of the social order. As such it also enables social transformation. Schools should therefore be invited to think and act in the light of the shift of established practices or to ask how they can contribute to reducing violence in school and society. Due to inadequate school policies, a school may encourage violent behaviour, but if the policy is appropriate, it can contribute to reducing violence. However, even with an appropriate strategy or approach, a school must resolve the problem (incidence) of violence on its own, while being aware that it

is not its task to tackle the problem of violence in its entirety. What follows are some definitions of violence in connection with school.

Defining violence and bullying

School violence has many manifestations. The most researched and most common type of violence in school is peer violence. This can manifest itself in various forms: psychological, physical and sexual violence (Bučar-Ručman, 2009, 363). In addition to this type of violence, it is also worth highlighting violence among students and teachers, teachers and parents, violence between the management of the institution and other employees, violence between teachers and other employees, and violence against children in the family (Mugnaioni Lešnik et al., 2009). A special kind of violence that can also occur in school is self-destructiveness. In present paper we focus on peer violence. Therefore, let us start with the definition of the chosen phenomenon. There is no universal definition of violence or bullying. Some authorities have viewed violence as a goal in itself, executed to cause (psychological or physical) damage (Olweus, 1995; Davis et. al., 2000; Besag, 2002), whereby force is used to frighten or cause distress to others. These acts often last over a longer period of time and are often repetitive. In general, violence can be defined as "a symptom of aggressive and hostile activities of individual groups and their members" (Kristančič, 2002, 97). The author further claims that violence is one of the multiple levels at which aggression and hatred are expressed, and describes aggression as "all activities executed so as to cause damage to other persons, animals and inanimate objects" (ibid, 98). Similarly, Ostrman defines violence as "an active relationship towards someone, normally after force or pressure had been used, so the person could achieve their wishes, needs, objectives." (Ostrman, 2002, 137). As mentioned above, in this paper we will focus on most common tip of violence in school–peer violence, which is of course connected to violence in general but has some specific characteristics. The term most often used for peer abuse in the Anglo-Saxon literature is bullying, which means "force and violence used for frightening or harassing others" (Besag, 1989, 2). It differs from wider definitions of violence because it involves an imbalance of power. Safran adds, that within bullying behaviour we can identify direct and indirect forms (2007, 49). "Direct bullying involves open attack on a victim in form of physical, verbal, or sexual abuse /…/ Indirect bullying is distinguished by social isolation, exclusion from a group, or non-selection for activities" (ibid.).

Horton (2011) warns that bullying is mainly a consequence of various group interactions and group dynamics. Relationships of power always appear in or among groups. The ability to exercise power is influenced by various structural factors

(gender, age, social status, ethnic origin, etc.). Also characteristic of school violence is that it occurs in a place where they are joined, not by choice and for a considerable amount of time, various different individuals, with very different interests, desires and characteristics, from very different social backgrounds and with different amounts and forms of capital.

Factors influencing violent behaviour in schools

As mentioned above, school violence can occur for several reasons, most often there is talk about risk factors, which can be family-based (lack of supervision, lack of clearly established boundaries, social circumstances), school-based (level of tolerance, random staff), dependent on the local community (the degree of crime, dangerous neighbourhoods, social imbalance) or they can be of a wider social nature (violence in the media)[1]. Family-based risk aspects, which also include the way parents perceive their children, the emotional relationships that occur during the early years of childhood, a degree of tolerance of violent behaviour, violent educational methods, family disunity, size of family and parents' criminality, are, according to many professionals' opinions (Besag, 1989; Olweus, 1995; Robertson, 1996), often decisive factors which influence the development of aggressive behaviour. The gender of the child also plays an important role in this. Olweus (1995) states that the rapport with and attitudes of parents toward a boy have a significant impact on his violent behaviour. For example, parents of boys often praise them when they show their physical strength and courage, while they do not approve of this in girls. Such practices present violence to boys as completely normal and suitable for conflict resolution. For girls, on the other hand, direct violence is more or less prohibited, and therefore conflicts are "resolved" in a disguised, indirect way (Safran, 2007). Boys are perpetrators of violence in relationships with their peers, both with boys and girls. In addition to this, the violence of older over younger boys often occurs at school. This testifies to the fact that physically stronger boys, due to feeling superior, bully visibly weaker peers. Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) state that there is widespread violent behaviour of boys to girls in schools. Most often this

1 Davis et al. (2000, p. 16–17) summarizes several authors who talk about the reasons for the increased violence of children. In his opinion none of these factors constitutes the main source of violent behaviour, but it is more likely that several of these factors together affect the aggressive behaviour of an individual child. It is therefore noted for risk factors that they can be family-based: (1) little control over children's activities and friends, (2) lack or absence of the limits of admissible and unacceptable behaviour, (3) the use of strict discipline, (4) social and other family circumstances, e.g. unemployment, alcohol and drugs use, (5) family violence; they can also be school-based: (1) excessive levels of tolerance of violent behaviour, and thus a failure to respond to it; (2) arbitrary personnel; while local community factors can be: (1) high crime rates, (2) dangerous neighbourhoods, (3) lack of social harmony among the population, (4) lack of post-school and recreational activities for young people, (5) lack of contact between the community and school; or even social factors, such as: (1) media violence, (2) social fragmentation, (3) the presentation of the concept of right and wrong as something relative and not something specific.

involves verbal and physical harassment, abuse, and taunting on account of gender differences. The selected literature explains that boys who carry out the described violence are mostly those who have traditional and patriarchal views of masculinity. Violence seems to them an appropriate method for dealing with conflicts.

Risk factors in a school environment and the influence of the wider environment also have an important impact on the way aggressive behaviour develops. Many authors (Balson, 1981; Johnstone et. al., 1991; Mendler, 1992; Epp, 1996; Blanford, 1998) point out that this is mainly a consequence of turning a blind eye to bullying, which occurs in the school environment but not in class. It is further a consequence of the unprofessional use of educational measures and punishments by teachers, but it also occurs due to a lack of the child's self-esteem. Violence depends on the environment we live in and is often a way of adjusting to the conditions of life (Edgar, 1999). To many individuals, even bad living conditions are often seen as the only way out, as is written in the Violence-free Schools Policy from 1994. Violence in schools often reflects the state of the society. However, in order to reduce violence support from the wider society must be provided. In this sense, Leschied, a leading Canadian researcher of teenage violence (as written in School Violence in Context, from 2007) emphasizes that violence as a phenomenon is "a combination of the influence of culture with family and school culture". Therefore, one must be aware of the fact that violence in schools was not invented. More importantly, one should first of all understand the entire background of the phenomenon, as also emphasized by Dubet (1999).

Social sciences did not realize for a long time that social institutions were sexually marked, including school. In this regard, the social, cultural and psychological construction of masculinity is connected to violence. Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) state that some types of masculinity are more related to violent behaviour than others. Hegemonic masculinity (Conell, 2012) is this respect the highest on a scale of positions of power. We can say that it is characterized by physical power, assertiveness, authority, self-discipline, courage, adventurism, and so on. The characteristics of the above mentioned hegemonic masculinity promote violent behaviour. This kind of masculinity is namely based on the assumption that women are inferior and thus subordinate to men, and that what we associate with femininity does not fall within male characteristics. Marginalized masculinities are also very susceptible to violence, but only because it seems to be the only way for such individuals to better position themselves. It is worth mentioning that hegemonic masculinity must be thought of as a historical phenomenon, since it is not static. This means that it can be transformed and re-created through the transformation of meanings in social practices. One of the institutions best positioned for such a change is definitely school. Therefore, schools should strive to shift the current meaning of hegemonic masculinity, although

of course other institutions must help in this process too. Current practices in our societies still allow for the exercise of male domination over women. This is also reflected in violent behaviour at school, which prevails among boys.[2] School and violence should therefore also be thought of as previously described, since the school, which participates in the production of hegemonic masculinity, whether intentionally or unintentionally, contributes to the tolerance of violent behaviour. School staff are usually not sufficiently aware that education can contribute to the preservation of hegemonic masculinity, or they may put this issue to the side in their work.

State Policies for School Violence

As Davies et al. (2000) summarizes, there are three sets of risk factors – family, school, and social – that schools should take into account in shaping an integrated policy towards violence. In the following, we will be interested in whether the policies of individual countries (Canada, Sweden, France, Germany and the UK) are associated with these three risk factors (family, school, social) regarding the problem of violence. In the Canadian in province of Ontario, and the preventive program Violence-free Schools policy, which is oriented towards school as a community, emphasis is placed on the design and maintenance of a safe and non-violent environment, an encouraging school climate and physically safe environment. As an upgrade to the design of school prevention programs, the Ministry of Education also appoints a Safe Schools Action Team, whose task is to advise on the development of an integrated approach to addressing security in schools. In 2011, the Memorandum Reporting Violent Incidents was adopted by the Ministry of Education, which provides guidance to school boards on the development of protocols for reporting violent acts to the Ministry. Each school must have such a protocol (Memorandum No. 120, 2018). Already under a law that has been in place since 1994, schools in Sweden must also have a plan for responding to violence (which, as a compulsory part, could also be included in the educational plan for public schools in Slovenia). There is one main difference with Canada in the Swedish system: Within this program, the headmaster, who must tend to the fulfilment of the school's policy, has a specific and precise role. The role of headmaster also includes being responsible for enforcing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating school-wide strategies for preventive action and preventing all forms of violent behaviour. In 2006, Sweden also adopted the Act Prohibiting Discriminatory and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and Pupils, which gives equal rights to all children, and fights against discrimination based on gender, ethnic

2 At this point we have to mention the problems connected to indirect bullying, which is more frequently used by girls than boys, are harder to notice and therefore not as well-researched as direct bullying.

origin, religious or other beliefs, sexual orientation or disability. Schools have also become legally responsible for their actions and a student can sue his or her school if it (the school) does not act in accordance with the law. A school is also obliged to reimburse the material costs for any damage that occurs due to such violence (for example, destroyed clothing) (Svensson, 2003, 216). The provision of a safe school environment is considered a priority by the Swedish National Agency for Education, which believes that the improvement of social relations can also address the problem of violent behaviour (Skolverket, 2000; Svensson, 2003, 224). There are several preventive programs implemented at the state level, including the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). Guidelines for action in the field of violent behaviour are included in the curricula and schools have designed action plans, but the problem is evaluating them, as this would only show which of the approaches they are performing are most appropriate and give the best results.

As Debarbieux et al. note (2003, 26), since the 1990s the authorities in France have been very concerned with the problem of violence in school. However, unlike Canadian and Swedish policies, the cause of violence is seen mainly in the area of poor working conditions for teachers and consequently the frequent changes in staff, which is reflected in the school environment. France has aimed to solve this problem by establishing a new position at school, called an educational assistant (in Slovenia, this could be a tutor). These are people between the ages of 21 and 29 who mediate in interpersonal communication and help with learning, as well as mediating in conflicts. It has been shown that such a scheme works primarily at those schools where there is a positive school environment and where there are many permanent teachers (Debarbieux, Montoya, 1999, in: Debarbieux, 2003). They have also established an Anti-Violence National Committee for the purpose of analysing and identifying violence in schools, and to develop a preventive system. As a target, more teaching positions have been proposed, which means reducing the number of hours of teaching and, above all, motivating teachers to work in those (at-risk) schools where work conditions are poor and staff turnover is greatest. By increasing the number of teachers, each person's weekly work obligation would be reduced (from 18 to 16 teaching hours), which would mean that more time would be devoted to training in the area of (peer) violence (recognizing, reacting, preventive action and prevention). The related authorities found that the organization of the school (in terms of socio-economic factors) indirectly affects the occurrence of violence in school, which is why they emphasize the importance of teacher stability and effectiveness (ibid.). In the area of prevention, the Anti-Violence National Committee cooperate with the non-profit organization COPA (2018), which seeks to recognize and respect human and, in particular, children's rights.

At the national level, Germany followed France (also America) with the establishment of a commission on violence, which promotes preventive action in this regard. The possibilities of preventive action, similar to in France, are seen in smaller class sizes and schools (thus raising a sense of belonging and responsibility in terms of conflict resolution), in improving the school environment (lower norms, less weekly commitments, providing contact persons for teachers), less administrative work, student education in recognizing potentially violent situations (responding and avoiding, non-conflict problem-solving), early teaching of sexual education (partner behaviour), additional teacher education for working with violent students, reducing tolerance to violence (rapid and consistent responses by teachers and school), and creating advisory committees for support and assistance in case of conflicts between teachers and students (Schafer et al., 2003; Cowie, 2006).

In the UK, specific policies regarding violence in school have not been adopted, but the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) stipulates that all schools must have guidelines designed to promote good behaviour, respect for others, and preventive action in the field of all forms of violence in school. In 2000, an anti-bullying package was launched in schools, containing an updated publication called *Don't Suffer in Silence* (2018), which includes videos with topics such as: school policies, students' perspectives, strategies for dealing with violence, peer support, and work with parents and the local community. This package is also supported by an Internet site and an informative film intended for the wider public, which attempts to raise awareness of the problem of violence. In the UK the authorities mainly deal with the whole aspect of the education of students at school, especially with failure, dissatisfaction and social exclusion, but they work more at a preventive level, where they focus on supporting students and mediating (Cowie, 2006).

According to Dubet (1999), there are primarily two aspects of violence addressed in state level policies. The first is social violence, which is the violence blamed primarily on the situation in society and influences of the environment; and the second is anti-school violence, which is aimed directly towards the school, in terms of students, teachers, and equipment. Regardless of whether countries are focusing on the first, second or both levels, it is important to remember that violence is not equally present in all schools, and that these differences do not arise solely from a social context. Dubet (ibid. 25) considers that "violence is effectively countered by those who learn that there are many different background reasons to violent behaviour and combine methods of responses for overcoming their conflicting qualities". Moore, Jones and Broadbent (2008, 14) came to similar conclusions by reviewing the effectiveness of the operation of individual preventive programs in various OECD countries. All OECD member states deal with violence at school, particularly bullying, as a serious problem requiring

systematic engagement. As stated in the publication School Violence and OECD Countries (Moore, Jones, Broadbent, 2008, 8) "violence among peers is a problem in schools but often also a reflection of attitudes and behaviours that exist within the wider community. Children who are violent in school are generally disrespectful of other people outside school too, and in vulnerable or younger students the opportunity to translate that disrespect into violence". All 17 OECD countries (except the US) that are signatories to the Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on Children's Rights have "legislation that provides general protection to children against sexual violence and guidelines and regulations at the school, school board and ministry of education level and also regulate appropriate relationships between children, and teachers and school staff" (ibid. 9).

However, if we look at bullying as a "systemic group process involving bullies, victims, peers, adults, parents, school environments, and home environments", then an intervention which is only focused on one of these levels is unlikely to have the expected effect. What's more, if bullying is, as some consider, "a socio-cultural phenomenon springing from the existence of specified social groups with different levels of power, then curriculum aimed at altering the attitudes and behaviours of only a small subset of those groups is unlikely to have an effect… Overall, the studies of social skills group interventions suggest again that failing to address the systemic issues and social environment related to bullying undermines success. (ibid.).

Formal frameworks tackling violence at school in Slovenia

In Slovenia, the Guidelines for the Analysis, Prevention and Treatment / Management of School Violence (2004, 2) received the first more concrete guidelines from the then Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, in which there are "relatively general guidelines" or possible solutions, which will be necessary if the Minister and Ministry decide on the implementation of individual tasks, to more precisely break down and elaborate operational steps, some of which should lead to results or possible solutions relatively quickly, while others require a longer amount of time.

The commission for the analysis of the problem of violence in the school environment, through comparative analysis and various examples of good practices that have been implemented in Slovenian schools for several years, proposed some key principles for dealing with violence and a set of measures that we also see in the countries discussed above. It emphasizes the inclusion of content and competences relevant to community life in curricular elements (Canada); establishing a positive social environment at school (France); quality time spent at school (the UK); school

responsiveness at all levels (Germany); involvement at school; planning the space in and around school; care and responsibility in realizing a safe school environment, and responding to violence (Sweden); professional training of employees at school; cooperation with local authorities and non-governmental organizations; parent involvement at school, and the inclusion of the media and provision of various materials for teachers, pupils, students and parents.

Moreover, many measures have been proposed regarding the development of different methods and forms of teaching; increasing responsibility for a safe school environment; monitoring the implementation of curricular documents (realization of goals and activities), finding a new form of individual or group assistance for students who often interfere with teaching; supplementing and upgrading the rules on students' rights and obligations; developing the concept of a teacher counsellor (as in France) and additional possibilities for establishing the teacher's authority. Similarly, as in Sweden, we have proposed the establishment of a special council at the state level, where headmasters, teachers, students, parents and experts would be involved, whose primary purpose would be to enforce and maintain specific concepts and models for the prevention and handling of violence. A working group was set up by the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, which, by analysing the Guidelines for the Analysis, Prevention and Treatment / Management of School Violence, concluded that incidences of violence in the future should be dealt with more effectively and systematically. And, on the basis of this, *Smernice za analizo, preprečevanje in obravnavo/obvladovanje nasilja v šolskem prostoru* (Guidelines with a Handbook for Dealing with Peer Violence in Educational Institutions, 2016) was prepared. It is a document that helps employees in public and private educational institutions to implement a publicly valid program, "to better understand the phenomenon of peer violence and to react appropriately and effectively, or act upon the perception of peer violence, especially in cases of severe forms of violence" (ibid. 2). However, instructions still represent only guidelines, which are aligned with national legal bases and by-laws of training and education, and they are not binding legal acts for schools. According to the commission, every school or other educational institution faces various forms of violence to which it is obliged to respond.

A problem also arises from the lack of professional guidance at a very concrete level, which is provided by the aforementioned guidelines (2016). Given the reasons presented for violent behaviour and the related policies of different countries (including Slovenia), we believe that the guidelines and instructions provide a good general basis for the "fight" against violence in schools and the taking of more preventive action. However, in our opinion, a precise document of policies against violence is needed.

Conclusion

Students are often faced with intolerance and violence at school. We would like to point out that most of the related research has shown showed that boys are most often the perpetrators of violence, but we have to bear in mind that the conducted surveys deal mainly with direct forms of violence, because this is much easier to detect. According to the results of these studies, boys and girls are mostly affected by education and socialization, since direct violence, based on the definition of hegemonic masculinity, is an appropriate way of solving conflicts. Safran (2007) believes that girls, due to different forms of socialization than boys, are more affected by so-called alternative types of aggression, including both indirect and social aggression. Alternative forms of aggression pose a problem for research, since as yet there are no effective methods for obtaining legitimate results with regard to these.

The concept of a school's policy against violence, which would primarily include the requirement to accurately determine the presence of violence in a particular school (by expert-designed instruments), and then formulating a school policy against violence (regulated similarly as in Sweden), should be included in a so-called formal (mandatory) framework of educational activity in public schools. An exact and compulsory anti-violence policy document should also require a thorough reflection on education in tolerance, which Waldron (1997) defines as non-interference with the beliefs or customs of a person, even when we have reason to believe that those beliefs or practices are false. Considering the question of whether a teacher in a modern school can take up such a position at all, shows us that the concept of human rights and other international standards, which can be the starting point for education, often set only minimal limits of tolerance. Education in tolerance occurs in the classroom in unforeseeable situations. It depends primarily on how the teacher will react in different situations. The most conflicting and controversial situations are usually those that give a decisive example and operate educationally. So the teacher, as part of a particular structure, and his/her transfer of attitudes to the student, is one of the most important factors and basic limits of education in tolerance in school. It should also be noted that the termination of coercion is not to be equated with tolerance. Termination of coercion (waiving of rules and norms) and the ending of any actual relationships with students will have a counter-educational effect—cultivating intolerance, which is happening today. It is necessary to realize that intolerance is not the same as violence, and so tolerance cannot be the same as non-violence. Violence is, by definition, an act and, analogously, it could then be said that non-violence is a denial of action. Education in tolerance and its effects must be understood in a broad sense, capturing both the school as an institution, classes and generally all activity in it (Krek, 2000). A school's

anti-violence policy must be a matter of the needs of a particular school, formed by a team of experts at the school. The school's policy against violence must therefore be a matter of the needs of a particular school, which is formed by a team of experts at the school (including teachers, student representatives and parents committee) based on information (how much violence, type of violence, where, when, how violence is manifested…) and in cooperation with the wider community (local community, non-government organizations, institutions). The document should be a mandatory part of the actual operational plan of educational activities which would be formed in accordance with the principle of school autonomy.

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Šola in nasilje

Ključne besede: nasilje, šolsko nasilje, trpinčenje, preventiva

V prispevku avtorici predstavita različne pojavnosti nasilja v šolskem okolju. Ob različnih konceptualizacijah in definicijah nasilja v šoli tematizirata tudi različne dejavnike, ki vplivajo na pojav in obstoj nasilja v šoli. Pri tem posebno pozornost namenita šoli kot instituciji, ki v svojem bistvu ni demokratična, temveč hierarhično strukturirana organizacija. Zaradi temeljnih problemov, na katere se navezuje problem nasilja v šoli, večina držav šolam nalaga sistematično ukvarjanje s to problematiko in oblikovanje celostne politike spoprijemanja z nasiljem. V drugem delu prispevka tako avtorici analizirata politike različnih držav (Kanada, Švedska, Francija, Nemčija, Anglija) do problemov nasilja v šoli ter njihove povezave z dejavniki, ki vplivajo na pojav nasilja v šoli. Posebno pozornost namenita analizi uradnih dokumentov, ki usmerjajo spoprijemanje z nasiljem v šoli v Sloveniji, ter na ta način iščeta odgovor na vprašanje, kaj lahko naredijo šole.

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School and Violence

Keywords: violence, school violence, bullying, prevention

In this paper the authors present different incidences of violence in the school environment. Different factors influencing the phenomenon and existence of violence in school are also subject to different conceptualizations and definitions of violence in school. Special attention is paid to school as an institution, which in its essence is not a democratic, but a hierarchically structured organization. Because of the fundamental problems that are associated with the problem of violence in school, most countries require that schools systematically deal with this issue, and the formation of an integrated policy in tackling violence. In the second part of the paper, the authors analyse the policies of various countries (Canada, Sweden, France, Germany, the UK) to the problems of school violence and link them to the factors that influence the onset of violence in school. Special attention is paid to the analysis of official documents that enable violence in school in Slovenia to be resolved, and thus seeking an answer to the question about what can schools do about this.